Mind the Gap!
Grant Strategy and Execution for Small Ports

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Haley & Aldrich
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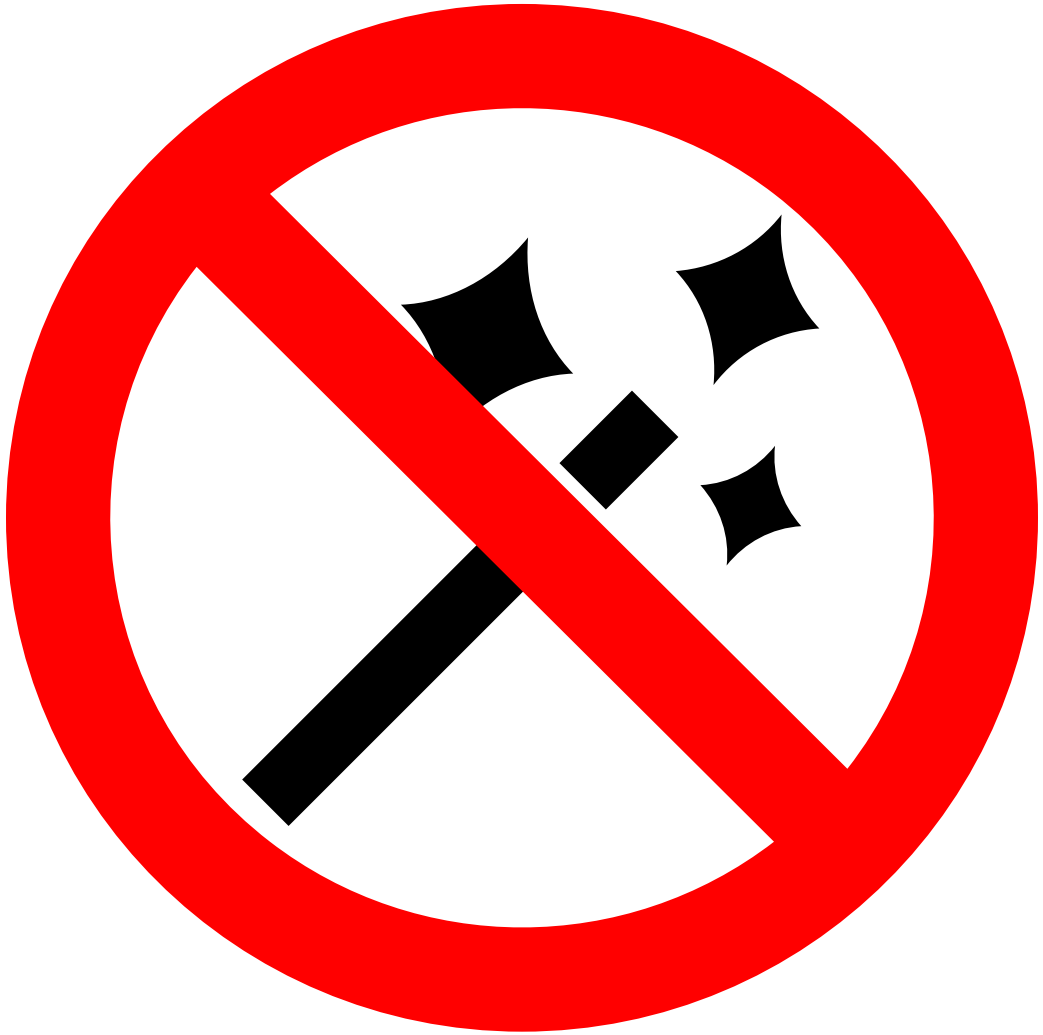

Where we're headed

1. Setting up for success
2. The fine art of reading (and responding to) a NOFO
3. From drafted to done

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Setting Up for Success

It’s a marathon. And a sprint.

Start early.

-- The end

Any grant application should be

- Complete
- Compelling
- Competitive
- Community-informed
- Creative
- Collaborative

Socialize the project, and start early

- **Key agency staff**
- Local and state electeds
- Members of Congress
- Governor's office
- Community partners

"It's an even playing field, if you make it one."

-- Anonymous DC lobbyist

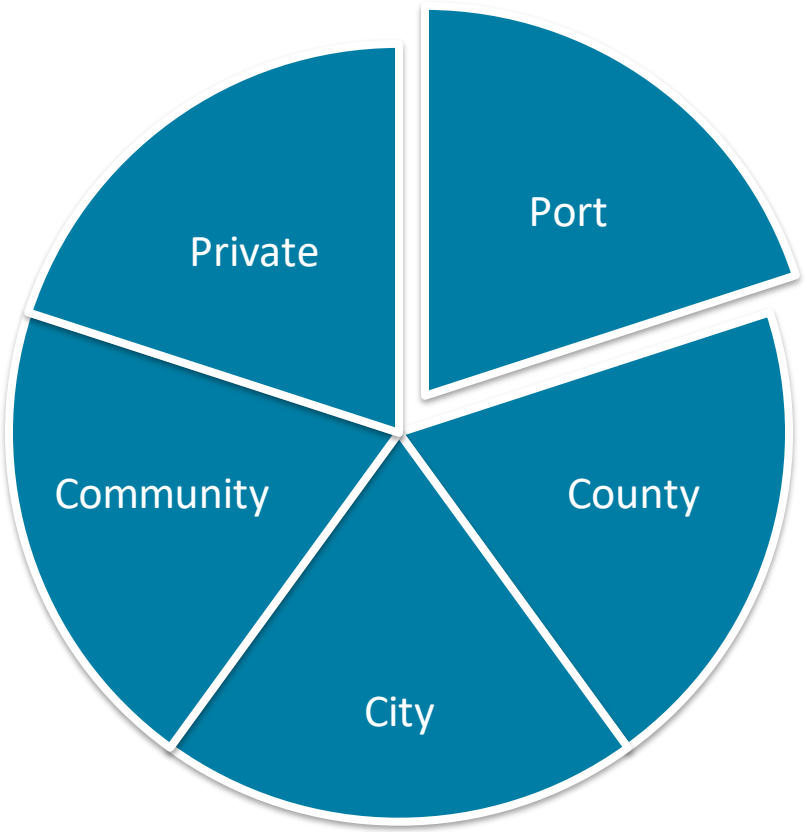
Scan the landscape, do it early

- Grant requirements
- Know your partners
- Bootstraps v. hired guns
- The longer view

1. Grant requirements

- Implementation timeline
- Benefit-cost analysis
- Market study
- Business plan
- Public participation plan
- Attachments
- Maps, GIS files
- Page limits

2. Know your partners (hint: they should know you, too)



- Increasingly highly encouraged or even mandated
- Think cross-sector, including nonprofits
- Talk early and often
- Should be substantial, specific, and meaningful
  - Clear contributions
  - Clear benefits
- **Should you even be the lead applicant?**

3. Bootstraps v. hired guns: in-house or hired out?

- Consider staff capacity, timing
- Your familiarity with the grant program
- Grant requirements
- Cost of application prep (time = $)
- Success rate
- What do you most **need?**
  - Strategy? Writing? Assembly? Review?
- Remember grant applications are a form of gambling

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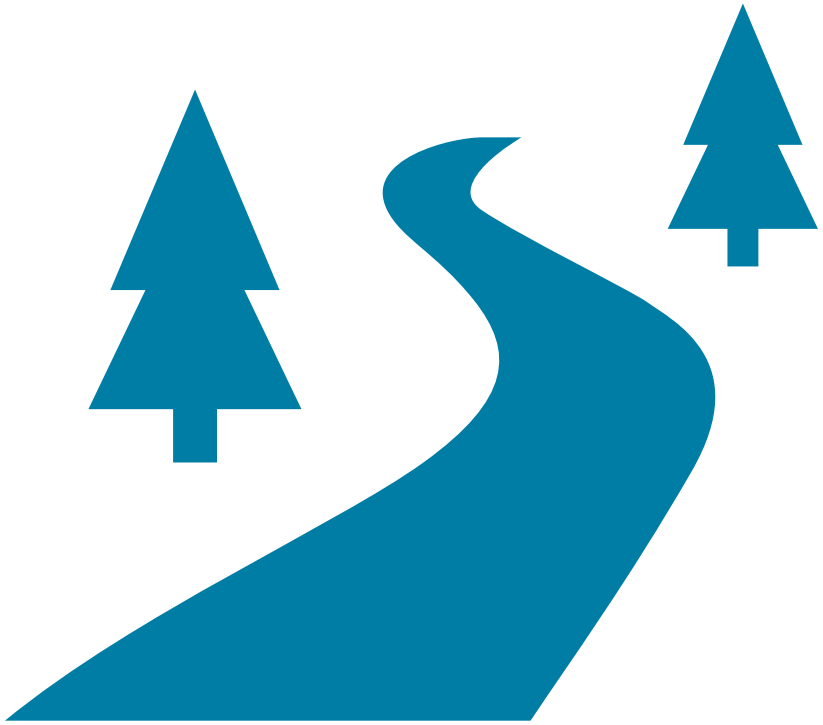
Newsflash: HB 1783

- Passed in 2023
- Provides funding to Associate Development Organizations to recruit, hire and retain full time grant writers
- Targets distressed areas under RCW 43.168.020.
- Pending appropriations, funding available July 1, 2024

4. The longer view…because they're going to ask

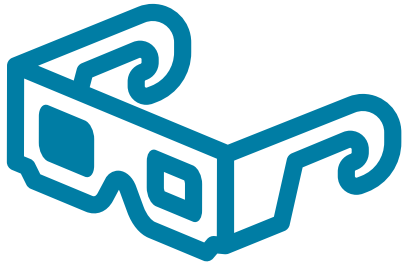
- What can be leveraged?
- What's next, and why?
- Who else have you talked to?

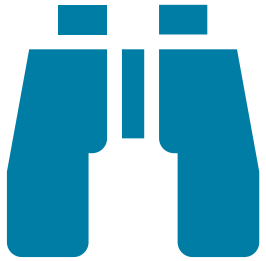


juice > squeeze?

The fine art of reading (and responding to) a NOFO

Finding the right lens





- Be aware of agency priorities and how they've changed
  - Environmental justice and equity
  - Climate change and resilience

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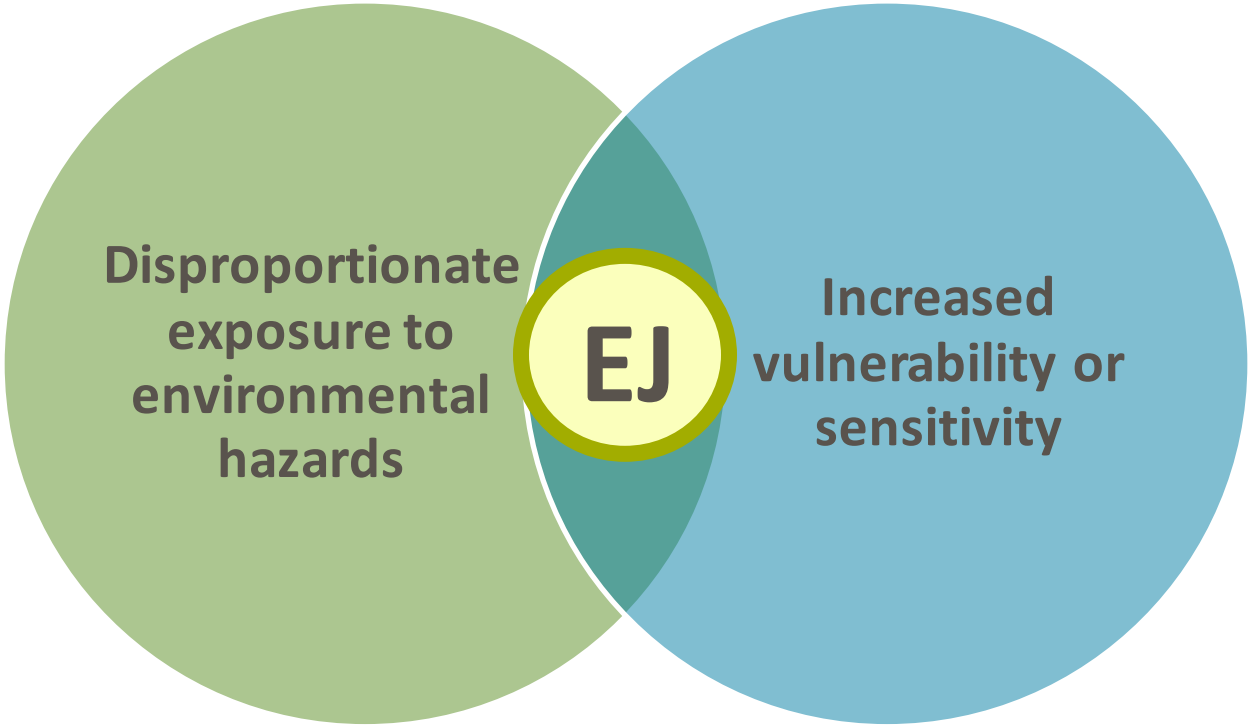
Example: Environmental justice



Environmental justice (EJ) *is the* ***fair treatment*** *and* ***meaningful involvement*** *of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. (USEPA)*

How EJ shows up in grant guidelines

Example: Resilience and climate mitigation in grant guidelines

MARAD encourages applicants to (1) consider climate change, sustainability, and environmental justice in project planning efforts and (2) incorporate project elements dedicated to mitigating or reducing the impacts of climate change, improving sustainability, and addressing environmental justice. In particular, applicants should address the extent to which the project

Source: MARAD PIDP FY23 Guidelines, Section V(2), Selection Criteria E: Climate Change and Sustainability

Example: Community engagement in grant guidelines

Applicants should ensure that they are adequately informed about how the proposed project will potentially impact affected communities and that diverse views are heard and considered throughout all stages of the consultation, planning, and decision-making process. To that end, applicants should include a description of all public engagement related to the project, including engagement that is inclusive of minority, low income, limited English proficiency (LEP), and other Historically Disadvantaged Communities, including individuals with disabilities, and the degree to which public comments and input have been integrated into project development and design. The applicant should review the DOT Title VI Program Order 1000.12C,[23] DOT LEP Guidance,[24] and DOT Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making[25] prior to submission.

Source: MARAD PIDP FY23 Guidelines, Section V(2), Selection Criteria F: Equity and Justice40

What's next?

IDENTIFY THE TOOLS

GATHER THE DATA

TELL THE STORY

Step 1: Identify the tools

- Which tool(s) are the right fit?
  - Grant requirements
- Recognize tool limitations
  - Data granularity
  - Ground truthing
  - The **data** aren't the **story**

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Example EJ screening tools

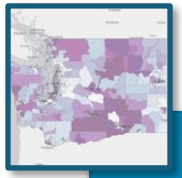
EJScreen

- US EPA's publicly available EJ mapping and screening tool
- Nationally consistent data sets
- Combines environmental and demographic indicators
- Does not identify cumulative impacts or EJ/disadvantaged communities

CEJST

- Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool
- Used for programs covered under Justice40
- Identifies disadvantaged communities
- Does not use race as an indicator

EHD



- Washington State Department of Health's Environmental Health Disparities Map
- Provides a single, cumulative impact score by census tract
- Focused on "health equity"
- Used to analyze factors driving cumulative impacts to inform policy and decision-making

ETC Explorer

- US Department of Transportation's Equitable Transportation Community Explorer
- Assesses cumulative burdens based on five components informed by 40 indicators
- Complements CEJST by taking a deeper dive into transportation disadvantages
- Combines maps with data dashboards

Step 2: Gather the data

Step 3: Tell the story

- **Who or which** communities are disadvantaged?
- **Where** are they?
- **What** is impacting them?
- **How** does this impact your project, or how will your project impact these groups?

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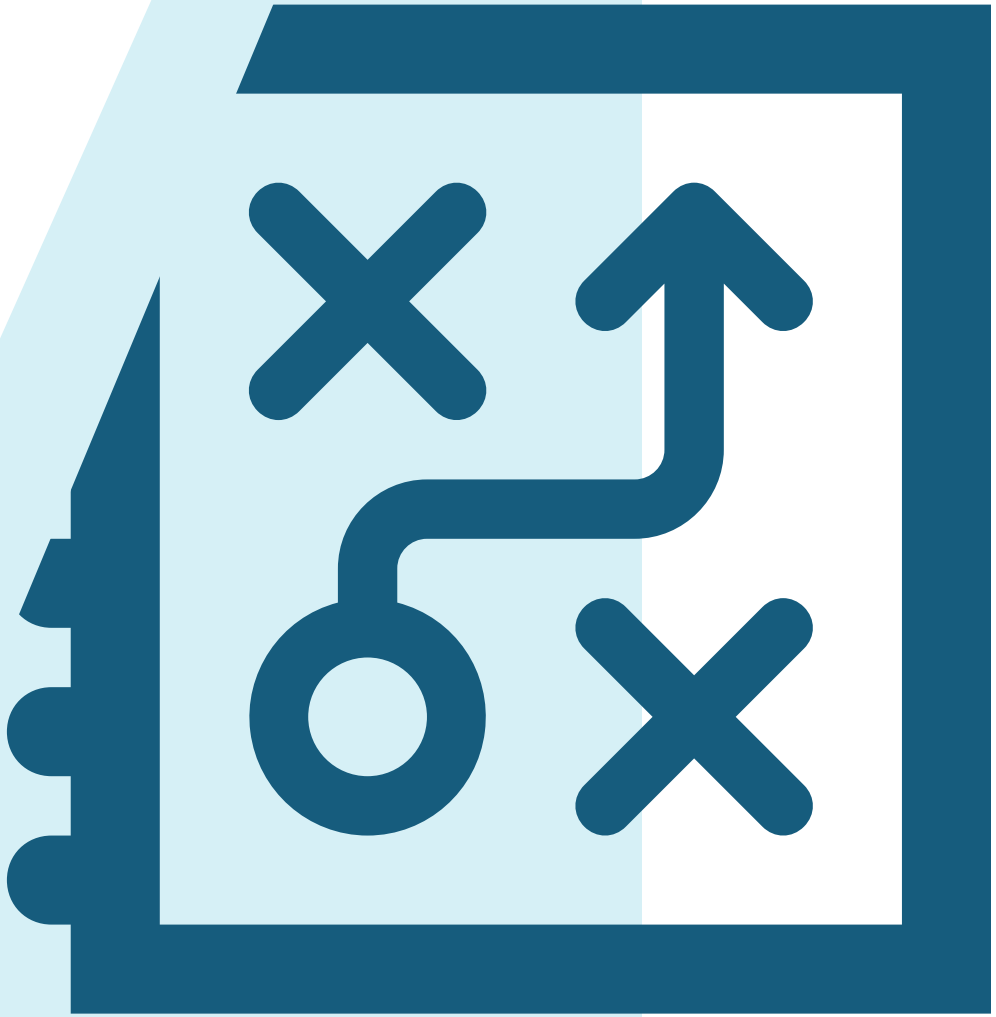
From drafted to done



Field a team

- One lead
- Focused roles
  - Researchers
  - Writers
  - Subject matter experts
  - Graphic designer
  - Editor (not optional!)

Set the stage

Application requirements checklist

- With due dates!

Internal schedule

Roles *and* responsibilities

Outline smarter *and* harder

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Sample internal schedule

***At kickoff:**

- Checklist of required items with responsibility assigned
- Pre-outline with questions

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Final thoughts

- Look before you leap (set up for success)
- Know what's required and how to respond (read the NOFO, then read it again)
- Get it done (deep breath and go for it)
- Sometimes you win, and sometimes you learn
- Good luck!

Thank you!

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