



# What to Do When Your Grant Application is Rejected

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ResourceAssociates

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# Today's Speaker



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- 8 Years with Resource Associates
- Bachelor of Science Degree in Journalism from California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo
- Reviews over 200 applications a year
- Federal Reviewer
- Contributor to some of the highest scoring federal proposals in the Country
- Background in Technical Writing and Journalism

# When it's Rejected?

- The most common reasons why grant applications are rejected
- How to find out exactly why your application was rejected
- Action steps you can take to turn a loss into a win
- Why “no” doesn't have to be the final answer

# When it's Rejected?

Step #1.....

# When it's Rejected?

Don't be sad!



# When it's Rejected?

Don't be sad!



Or Mad!





# When it's Rejected?

Realize that this is part of the process!



# When it's Rejected?

Because getting a non-award (Rejection/Denial) letter is sometimes and often times the first step to getting the Grant!



# When it's Rejected?

- If you aren't able to hit the mark with your first attempt at a particular grant competition, you can treat it like a learning experience.
- There are a few common things that will lead to the denial or non-award of a grant.

# When it's Rejected?

- Common mistakes that lead to a grant rejection:
  - Not following the Request for Proposal
    - Award Ceiling/Floor or Cost per Participant
    - Years funding is requested
    - Including non-eligible partners/consortiums
    - Not including all of the required items (signed assurances, audits, non-profit documentation, etc.)

# When it's Rejected?

- Common mistakes that lead to a grant rejection:
  - Not providing enough information in the narrative
    - Not addressing all of the required criteria
    - Not providing enough information/detail for the reviewer to score a section higher
    - Not thinking a program through and planning last minute

# When it's Rejected?

- Common mistakes that lead to a grant rejection:
  - Not addressing competitive preference priorities
    - Ignoring extra points
    - Not designing a program which is consistent with what the government is wanting to fund
    - Ignoring geographical preferences



# When it's Rejected?

- Common mistakes that lead to a grant rejection:
  - Sometimes it is out of your control
    - Process is supposed to be objective and based on score, but that's not always the case
    - Sometimes the political climate plays a part, even though it's not supposed to contribute
    - Some funders have an un-written rule that they want you to compete for the funding more than once.

# When it's Rejected?

Once you receive a denial letter....

1. See if the letter is accompanied by Reviewer Notes.
2. If not, then see if there are instructions for requesting the Reviewer Notes.
3. Do this in a timely manner. Sometimes there are rules that they have to receive the request within 60 days.



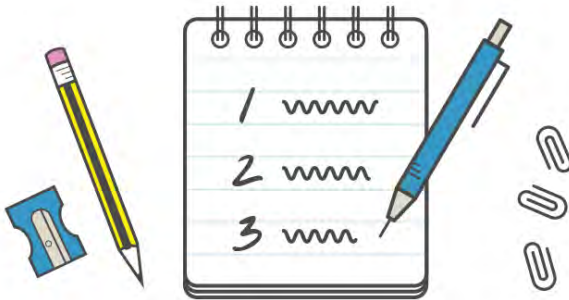
# When it's Rejected?

- Most of the time, the funders are required to provide you with a response due to the Freedom of Information Act, which states that there has to be transparency of the process and the documents.
- In the case that your application is not reviewed, they are also required to tell you the reason behind the decision.

# When it's Rejected?

## 3 Scenarios

1. Reviewer Notes are included with the Denial Letter
2. Denial Letter includes instructions on how to request reviewer notes
3. No instructions are provided
  - In this case, email or contact the person in the letter to ask how you request the notes.



# When it's Rejected?

In the Reviewer Notes:

1. You didn't address things that you thought you had addressed
  - This means that you didn't explain them in a way that the reviewer clearly understood. Unfortunately, this isn't up for discussion, so you must begin seeing how you could better explain your point

# When it's Rejected?

In the Reviewer Notes:

## 1. You left out information

- Sometimes this happens because there is no need for the information what was being requested and that was not understood by the reviewer. **DO NOT BE AFRAID TO REPEAT YOURSELF AND WRITE OBVIOUS STATEMENTS**

# When it's Rejected?

In the Reviewer Notes:

## 1. You didn't provide enough detail

- Sometimes this is a matter of just not providing enough information because you hadn't thought out the details of the program well enough.
- Think of your application as a road map that someone off the street could read and begin implementing your program tomorrow.



# When it's Rejected?

- Read the reviewer notes when you are in a healthy frame of mind
- Re-read them again later (a day or so)
- Begin the process of addressing the shortfalls
  - Don't wait until the competition is out again
  - Begin thinking about things that need to change, as if you could resubmit the proposal tomorrow
  - The work you do today will be useable when the same competition or similar competition comes out.



# When it's Rejected?

- Begin the process of addressing the shortfalls
  - Sometimes it takes time to address some of the shortfalls. For example:
    - » Partnership Development
    - » Consortium Development
    - » Match (cash or in-kind) Identification
    - » Personnel Recruitment

# When it's Rejected?

## Action Steps:

1. Request Reviewer Notes
2. Read Reviewer Notes
3. Set up meetings with team to address shortfalls
4. DON'T BLAME, WORK TOGETHER IN A CONTINUOUS CYCLE OF IMPROVEMENT
5. Begin addressing shortfalls with tasks

# When it's Rejected?

Remember sometimes the first step to getting an award is getting a denial!

# When it's Rejected?

Grant Writing is like baseball!

You can't hit a home run if you aren't willing to strike out!



# When it's Rejected?

- Stay with your team!
- Improve weak elements!
- Assign tasks to strengthen shortfalls!
- Plan for another submission (either to the same competition or a similar one)
- Keep working at it!

# Need Help?

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