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Best Practices to Find and Win Grants for Distance Learning Projects
What Every Applicant Should Know

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Discussion Points

Assumptions:

- This session is for beginner to intermediate grant writers
- You are interested in learning tips and tools to secure funding!

Learning Objectives:

- Understand how to become grant ready and linking to common grant evaluative criteria
- Learn how to search for funding that supports education technology
- Common mistakes made in grant proposals
- Overview of current and upcoming funding opportunities

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Best Practices

Becoming Grant Ready

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Getting Grant Ready

- Grants are mini strategic plans
  - Need
  - Target Audience (beneficiaries)
  - Impact
  - Timeline
  - Sustainability

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Need

- Identify and document the need or problem in your area
- Consider multiple levels of data to illustrate the problem
  - Provide a national statistic
  - Provide a state statistic
  - Provide a local (community, county, region) statistic
- Are there other organizations currently providing this type of program? If so who?
- How Innovative is your project and what level of evidence-based practices exist to substantiate your strategy?
- Have you included important stakeholders in your research and planning processes?

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Target Audience

- **Clearly identify the target audience (beneficiaries)**
  - Document whether you are currently working with the target audience
  - Has the target audience been involved in the project design?
  - Use data to show how many people your organization serves now and will serve in the future – impact statements
  - Use demographic data (age, poverty, income, education, NSLP)

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Impact

- Are the goals and objectives
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Aggressive but attainable
  - Results oriented
  - Time bound
- Are the goals and objectives tied to measurable needs in the problem statement?
- Is there a plan in place to measure and evaluate the project's impact and progress?
  - Logic Models – W.K. Kellogg Foundation (www.wkkf.org)

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Timeline

- When is the funding needed?

- Can the project elements be accomplished within the time period indicated
  - Can match funds be secured?
  - Can equipment be bought and deployed during the grant period?
  - Do you have adequate staffing to support operational and technical feasibility or do you need to include them or contractors in the budget?
 - What tasks are dependent on others?

Sustainability

- Has a project budget with been developed and are costs reasonable?

- Have you separated and explained ongoing costs for after the grant ends such as staff and maintenance costs?

- Have other potential funding sources been identified?

- Can the applicant bring matching funds to the project now or can you phase in match in subsequent years showing a trend toward sustainability?

- Have you projected potential savings?

- How will the applicant continue the project after the grant period has ended?

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Data Resources

- Census Bureau
  - Factfinder http://factfinder2.census.gov/
  - County Quick Facts
- Federal Data
  - www.USA.gov – government data by topic
  - www.USA.gov/government/state_local/statistics.shtml - state and local information
- Library of Congress' Thomas
  - www.thomas.loc.gov/cp110/cp110query.html - Database of Congressional Committee reports; may contain current information or provide useful quotes
- FedStats
  - www.fedstats.gov – statistics from more than 100 agencies
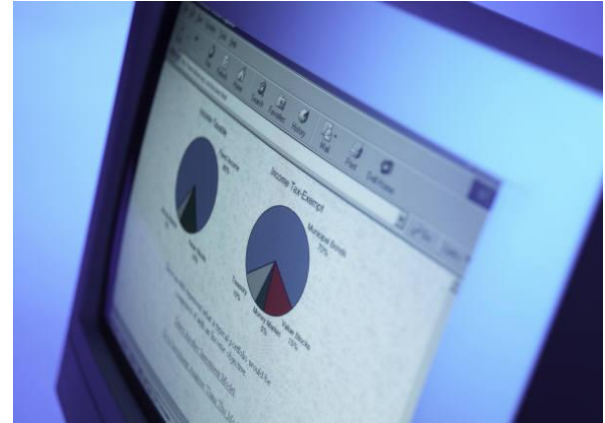
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Identify Organizational Telepresence Needs

Choosing the right Polycom video and telepresence solution, and finding the right funding source, involves identifying your organization's needs to ensure grant funding, rapid ROI and wide-scale adoption:

- Who will be using video: headquarters staff, branch office, remote workers, partners, customers?

- How will it be used: for group interactions, one-on-one conversations, educational/training sessions or multiple uses?

- What environments will video be used in: large conference rooms, small meeting rooms, lecture halls, user desktops, home office, on notebook PCs?

- Will content be shared and if so, what type: spreadsheets, detailed schematics, full motion graphics, or more?

- What applications will be supported over video: product reviews, interviewing/training?

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Getting Grant Ready

- **Grant Ready Assessment and Navigational Tool®**
  - A self-assessment tool that provides organizations with an evaluation of their "grant-readiness"
  - Based on the most common evaluative criteria used in grant reviews

Grant Ready Element	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Project Implementation	The organization can not complete project and close grant, and make all equipment purchases within 24 months after grant award. ☐	The organization can complete project and close grant within 24 months; Equipment purchases can be made within 12 months after grant award to allow for project implementation and achievement of outcomes. ☐	The organization can complete project and close grant within 12 months; Equipment purchases can be made within 6 months after grant award to allow for project implementation and achievement of outcomes. ☐	The organization can complete project and close grant within 12 months; Equipment purchases can be made within 3 months after grant award to allow for project implementation and achievement of outcomes. ☐
Internal Resources	The organization has no grant writing experience, and will not participate in researching or writing the grant proposal. ☐	The organization's staff has some grant writing experience, and will conduct research and provide information to the Grant Expert; the organization does not have a grant writer, and will not assist in writing the grant proposal. ☐	The organization has extensive experience in writing grant proposals; The organization's grant writers can provide limited help in writing the grant proposal in cooperation with a Grant Expert. ☐	The organization has extensive experience in writing grant proposals, employs its own writers and will utilize them to write the grant proposal. ☐

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Grant Ready Checklist

- ❑ Have you conducted a strategic planning process that identifies goals and measures, and an implementation plan?
- ❑ Have you conducted a needs assessment?
- ❑ Do you have a viable, fundable project idea aligned with your organizational goals?
- ❑ Does your proposed project have a set of outcomes with performance targets that are measurable?
- ❑ Do you have an evaluation plan for measuring the success of the project to be funded by the proposed grant?
- ❑ Have you conducted a stakeholder analysis, and do you have formal partnerships or collaborations in place?
- ❑ Are your board members, executives and other leaders on board and willing to participate in the grant process?
- ❑ Is there a plan for sustaining the project after the funding has ended?

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Elements of Successful Grant Proposals for Distance Learning

Elements of a Winning Proposal

- Clearly defines problem and needs
- Clearly describes what will be accomplished
- Has well thought-out distance learning curriculum
- Has a complete technology plan
- Presents detailed budgets that match the proposed program
- Presents the material in a logical manner
- Has formalized partnerships
- Written in positive terms
- Does not overuse jargon
- Gives something back
- Follows all the guidelines in the RFP
- Professional looking
- Not too short or long

Virtual Classrooms

Sharing teachers between small and large schools

Teacher Collaboration

Lecture capture

Education Grant Projects

Connecting to 2 or 4 year colleges for credits

Foreign Languages

YOUR PROJECT HERE!

Faculty and Professional Development

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Why Grant Proposals Fail

- Assumption that the funder knows your organization
- Failure to get the appropriate leadership support for the proposal
- Technical issues
  - Failure to submit proposal electronically
  - Problems with DUNS and CCR registration
- Did not follow application guidance
- Problem statement was not well formulated – not backed up by data

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Why Grant Proposals Fail

- Weak performance metrics and evaluation plans
- Project goals do not match those of the funder
- Missing forms
- Budget errors or budget that doesn't align with project description
- Misspelled words or grammatical errors

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Best Practices

Searching for Grants and Current Opportunities

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Learn the Language

- FOA = Funding Opportunity Announcement
- RFA = Request for Applications
- PA = Program Announcement
- RFP = Request for Proposals
- NOFA – Notice of Funding Announcement

- Grants.gov Grants Glossary:
  - http://grants.gov/help/glossary.jsp

Types of Funders

- Government Agencies
- Foundations
- Professional Associations

Government Funding Resources

- Grants.gov (www.grants.gov) – collect info from all gov't agencies – portal for funding announcements and applying

- Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (www.cfda.gov)

- The Federal Register (www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/Index.html) – search or sign up to receive daily emails of grant opps

- Various Agency Websites
  - NIH Guide (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/index.html)
  - U.S. Department of Education (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html)
  - (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html)

Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) Development Competition

- Deadline: Notice of Intent to Apply – March 15, 2012; Pre-Application submitted by April 9, 2012

- Purpose: To improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, increase college enrollment and completion dates

- Eligibility: LEAs; Non-profit organizations in partnership with (a) one or more LEAs, or (b) a consortium of schools.

- Estimated Award Size:
  - Up to $3 million per award
  - Up to 20 awards

- Other requirements: applicants should have proven success in student achievement, attainment and/or retention

Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) Development Competition

- **Required for All Applications**
  - Improve Achievement for High-Need Students
- **Absolute Priorities (must address one)**
  - Teacher and Principal Effectiveness
  - Promoting STEM Education
  - Parent and Family Engagement
  - Improving Achievement in Persistently Low-performing Schools
  - Improving Rural Achievement
- **Competitive Preferences (may address up to two)**
  - Early Learning
  - College Access and Success
  - Serving Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students
  - Productivity
  - Technology

RUS Distance Learning & Telemedicine

- Application Deadline: Expecting RFP any day
- Purpose:
  - Supports projects to develop and expand local distance learning and telemedicine capacity through the acquisition of equipment, technical support, and training in highly rural, economically disadvantaged locations.
- Eligibility:
  - Public or private nonprofit organizations that may include hospitals, higher education institutions, workforce investment boards, tribal organizations, education and training providers, health care providers, and faith-based community organizations.
- Average Award Range:
  - $50,000 - $500,000

Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Program

- Deadline: May 24, 2012

- Purpose:
  - Provide community colleges and other eligible IHE's with funds to improve their ability to deliver education and career training programs that can be completed in two years or less.

- Eligibility: Institutions of higher education which offer programs that can be completed in not more than two years

- Available Funding: $500 million
  - Grants of $2.5 to $3 million each to one individual applicant from each State, D.C. and Puerto Rico (for a total of approximately $150 million)
  - Grants of $5 million to $15 million to consortium applicants that propose programs that will impact TAA-eligible workers and adults across a state, region or regions (for a total of $350 million)

- No match requirement

Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Program

- Core Elements:
  - Evidence-Based Design
  - Stacked and Latticed Credentials
    - Stacking certificates that lead toward a degree
    - Latticing – side to side credentialing that allow students to shift to a related field of study
  - Online and Technology Enabled Learning
    - Interactive simulations, personalized and virtual instruction, educational gaming, and strategies for asynchronous and real-time collaboration among learners and instructors
  - Transferability and Articulation; and
    - Must have articulation agreement with at least one four-year institution
  - Strategic Alignment
    - Align with three key stakeholders: (1) employers and industry; (2) public workforce system; (3) educational institutions and other organizations

Race to the Top

- Deadline: Expected late spring, early summer
- Purpose: Previous priorities: Turn around lowest-performing schools, adopt standards and assessments that prepare students for the workplace, recruiting and rewarding effective teachers and principals
- Eligibility: LEAs (K-12 school districts)
- Available Funding: $550 million

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Strengthening Institutions Programs (SIP)

- Also known as Title III, Part A

- Deadline: Register as Eligible Institution by February 10, 2012; Request Cost-Share Waiver by March 9, 2012

- Purpose: Expand capacity to serve low-income students by providing funds to improve and strengthen the academic quality, institutional management and fiscal stability of eligible institutions

  - Includes innovative, customized, instruction courses designed to help retain students and move the students rapidly into core coursed through program completion

  - May include remedial education and English language instruction

- Eligibility: Institutions of Higher Education

- Average Award Size: $300,000 - $400,000

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E-Rate

- **Under authority of the Federal Communications Commission**
  - Administered by Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), Schools and Libraries Division
  - $2.25 billion in funding available annually; collected by surcharge on telephone bill

- **Federal program designed to provide connectivity to school buildings and libraries by wiring classrooms, and connecting buildings to each other and the internet.**

- **Provides discounts of 20% to 90% to schools and libraries for the purchase of videoconferencing equipment, bridges, and voice equipment.**
  - Discount is based on the number of students in the school district that are eligible for the NSLP

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Federal Grant Funding Eliminated in Final FY 2012 Budget Enacted by Congress

- Foreign Language Assistance Program

- Teaching American History Grant

- Improving Literacy through School Libraries

- Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education – Comprehensive Program (FIPSE)

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Foundations

- Subject Searching
  - The Foundation Center
    - Foundation Directory Online – comprehensive information on U.S. grantmakers
  - Community of Science (COS) Funding Opportunities
  - SPIN (from infoEd)
  - GrantsNet
- For more information
  - Review foundation's website
  - Read annual reports and IRS990 filings (www.foundationcenter.org/findfunders/990finder/)
  - Talk to program officers

Foundation Funding Sources

- **National**
  - Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
  - Gateway Foundation
  - Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
  - Ford Foundation
  - Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy
  - Walton Family Foundation
- **State**
  - Oldham County Education Foundation
  - Kentucky and Professional Business Women's Foundation
  - Toyota Foundation
  - Danville Schools Education Foundation
  - North Central Education Foundation
  - Corning Incorporated Foundation

Next Generation Learning Grants – Wave 3

- **Wave 3 Focus**
  - Breakthrough School Models for College Readiness (Wave IIIa)
    - Personalized, mastery-based, blended learning models; focus on innovation
    - Coherent interplay between technology and teacher-led instruction
    - Up to $450,000 in funding per project
      - Incubation grants of $150,000
      - Matching grants of $300,000
    - Applications accepted on rolling basis: October 5, 2011, November 11, 2011, February 9, 2012, June 8, 2012
  - Eligibility: School districts and charter schools
  - May partner with technology vendors and consulting firms

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Next Generation Learning Grants – Wave 3

- ## Wave 3 Focus
  - Breakthrough Models for College Completion (Wave IIIb)
    - Stimulate the development of new, nest generation online and blended programs that lead to associate's or bachelor's degrees
    - Deliver affordable, accessible, quality education
    - Up to $1,000,000 in funding per project
      - Expect to award 6 grants
    - Applications accepted on rolling basis: November 11, 2011, February 9, 2012, June 8, 2012
  - Eligibility: Public, private not-for-profit, or for-profit institutions of higher education accredited to offer associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, or both; coalitions or consortia of higher education institutions, both within states and regional or national in membership
  - May partner with technology vendors and consulting firms

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Resources

Polycom Grant Assistance and E-rate Programs

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Program Mission

To assist public, private and nonprofit organizations in every aspect of proposal preparation, funding selection and application for telecommunications solutions.
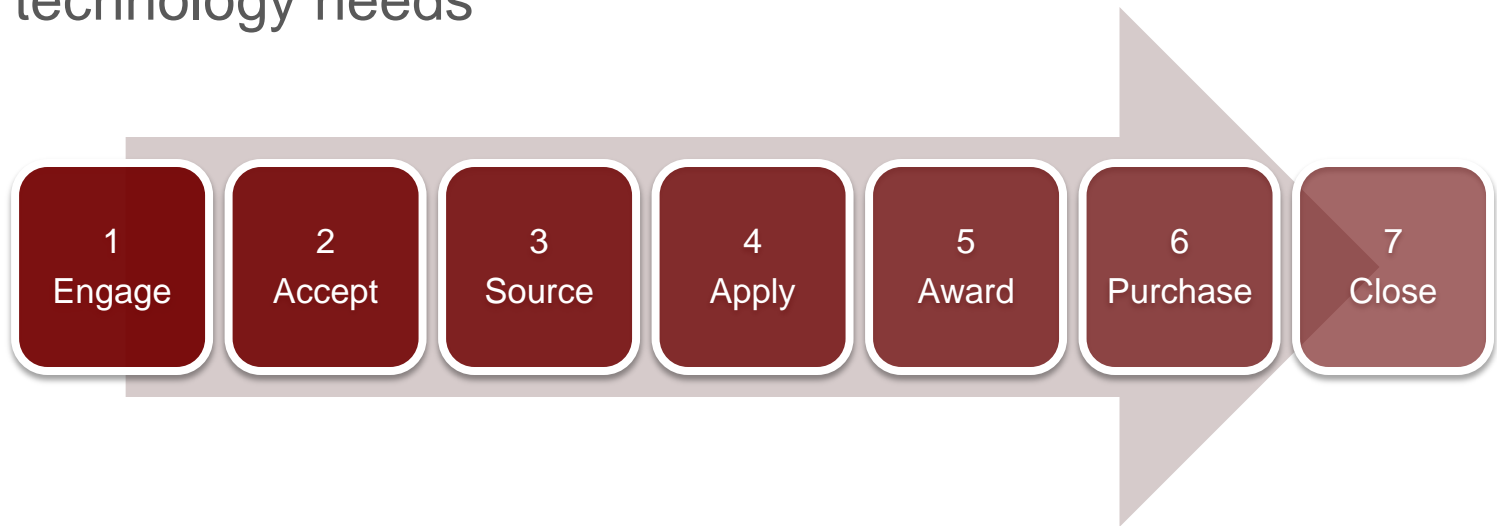
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Examples of Educational Agencies and Organizations We Work With

- K-12 School Districts
- Education Cooperatives
  - Education Service Centers (ESCs)
  - Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)
  - Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESA)
- State University Systems
- Community Colleges
- Private Universities
- Charter Schools, Magnet Schools, and other non-traditional schools

Polycom 7-Step Grant Assistance Process™

- Only trademarked grant assistance process in the telecommunications industry

- Customized and scalable pre- and post-award funding assistance

- From engagement to project close, the PGAP Team helps you find and apply for funding to support your education technology needs

| 1 Engage | 2 Accept | 3 Source | 4 Apply | 5 Award | 6 Purchase | 7 Close |

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Polycom E-rate Assistance Program

- One-on-one, customized E-rate assistance and support throughout the E-rate application process

- Answer general questions about the programs, including required forms, required certifications, deadlines and timing

- Assist with specific, detailed questions on product eligibility and Item 21 preparation
  - Polycom E-rate Eligibility Database

- Provide useful resources, including free educational webinars and links to helpful organizations

The E-rate Team

- Bob Richter, E-rate Consultant and Program Manager
  - 860.404.8883
  - Bob.Richter@Polycom.com

- Sam Steel, E-Rate Coordinator
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  - Sam.Steele@Polycom.com
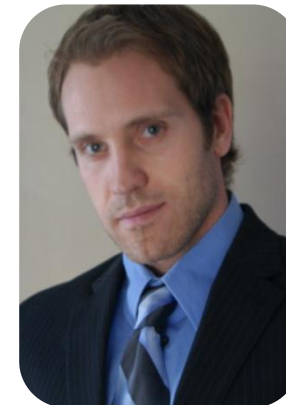
Polycom Grant / E-rate Tools and Resources

- www.polycom.com/grants or www.polycom.com/erate
- Funding announcements and customized funding reports
- Grant calendar with deadlines
- Grant profiles and white papers
- Grant Ready Guides
- Recorded grant / E-rate webinars
- Grants Navigator Newsletter

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Other Proposal Preparation Resources

- DHHS Toolkit for Faith-Based and Community Organizations (www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ccf/resources/toolkit.html)

- Rural Assistance Center's Grant Writing Guide (www.raconline.org/info_guides/funding/grantwriting.php)

- Non-Profit Guides (www.npguides.org/index.html)

- Minnesota Council on Foundations – "Writing a Successful Grant Proposal" (www.mcf.org/mcf/grant/writing.htm#future)

- Michigan State University's Nonprofit Fundraising Web Resources – 100s of tips and guidelines (www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/4fcelec.htm)

- Charity Channel – (www.charitychannel.com)

- EMS Resource.net – (www.emsresource.net/articles/granthelp.shtml)

- FEMA's Writing a Good Narrative – (www.firerescue1.com/data/pdfs/FEMA-goodnrrative.pdf

- Grantproposal.com – (www.grantproposal.com)

- The Idea Bank – (www.theideabank.com/onlinecourse/samplegrant.html)

Questions?

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Thank You!

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