

Seattle Communities Online

Boost Grants

2011 Application Guidelines & Resources

Application deadline: July 12, 2011

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Background

The Online Boost Project was developed in response to what we learned from the Seattle Communities Online assessment and presentations at Neighborhood District Council and community group meetings, of the current capacity of neighborhood groups to do effective outreach online, maintain their content, foster online engagement and use city widgets and tools.

We are looking for up to 15 projects who will receive up to \$1000 in matching funds and will also participate in workshops with CTTAB and other experts in using social media. Our goal is to boost their capacity through a project that takes them 3 months or less to complete. This is a one-time initiative and not something we're currently able to commit to on an ongoing basis. This program is administered by Community Technology Program of the City of Seattle Department of Information Technology (DoIT).

Program Goals

The Online Boost Project is designed to enhance skills and proficiency on the use of online resources for community groups with workshops, mentorship and seed funding to implement and/or increase their web presence. In coordination with the Seattle Communities Online initiative, we are seeking opportunities to enhance:

- Increased awareness of community issues;
- Increased community participation in problem solving; and
- Increased interaction with government.

Online Boost grantees will have access to:

- Up to \$1000 mini-grants for a quick, specific project to be completed within 3 months.
- Workshop (required in order to receive funding) where participants would leave the workshops know what resources are out there, what their plan of action will be, and how to go about implementing.
- Mentorship and networking opportunities

Funds Available

Online Boost grants will be up to \$1,000, and we anticipate funding up to 15 projects this year. This is a one-time initiative/pilot project and is not something we can commit to funding next year and beyond. Grants are awarded for distinct projects that can be completed within three (3) months. You will be required to match the value of the city's money with cash, time or other contributions, and your match must be equal to or greater than 50% of the amount you are requesting from the fund. See Appendices B and C for more information on the match.

Eligibility Requirements

Informal and formal non-profit neighborhood and community groups that draw their memberships from commonly recognized geographic neighborhoods in Seattle are invited to apply.

Applicant groups must have a non-discrimination membership policy and actively seek the involvement of community and neighborhood members.

The following groups are not eligible to apply directly:

- Individuals or single businesses;
- State, local and national foundations;
- Fraternal organizations; and
- Organizations not located in or serving Seattle residents.

Non-eligible groups may participate as partners or contribute match to the projects of eligible applicants.

The following kinds of projects are not eligible for Online Boost funding:

- Projects that duplicate an existing private or public program;
- Projects that conflict with existing City policy. For more information on the City's Charter, Municipal Code and legislation visit <http://www.seattle.gov/html/citizen/cityfacts.htm>; and
- Civic engagement projects that seek only to increase lobbying for a particular position.

Application Scoring

A committee made up of City staff and the City's Citizens Telecommunications and Technology Advisory Board (CTTAB) will review your application. They will rate your application based on the following set of criteria, with 30 total points available. Your application will be given points for how well it meets each of these criteria.

1. Meets Boost Goals (up to 15 points)

Your project description should explain how your project will help you use technology to actively engage community members. Who will work on this project? Please limit your response to three paragraphs.

What technology tools (hardware, software, or online-based) do you plan to use in your project? At the end of your project, what improvements or outcomes do you expect to see?

Additionally, we are interested in the community/group you will be engaging. Who will you be engaging and how will you ensure that there is diverse participation?

Finally, you (or your representative's) ability to attend one of two workshops on either Wednesday, July 27 or Tuesday, August 2 from 6:00 to 8:30 PM.

2. Project Timeline and Clarity (up to 5 points)

Your timeline should:

1. List no more than 4 to 6 well-defined project steps;
2. Be easy to understand and include clear steps and completion dates; and
3. Finish within a 3-month timeframe.

3. Project Budget (up to 5 points)

The budget you include should clearly outline:

1. Your proposed activities and associated costs;
2. The specific costs to be funded by the Boost Grant; and
3. Match at the ration of 1/2 to 1.

Your budget is realistic and well planned. The numbers add up correctly. Your cost estimates are researched and reflect market prices. The budget narrative clearly explains your proposed expenses. You identify how you will meet the minimum match requirement. You show that you have the resources to implement the project successfully.

4. Sustainability (up to 5 points)

You must include a short description (1 to 2 paragraphs) of how you plan to sustain the improvements after the Online Boost Project is completed. For example:

1. An explanation of how you will fund ongoing costs, like hosting and domain registration;
2. A summary of the community/volunteer support you expect as you move forward; and/or
3. An explanation of how you will continue to manage use of the tool.

Submitting an Application

You can apply for funding online at <http://www.webgrants.seattle.gov>

Application Assistance

Community Technology staff is available to help. If you have general questions about the grant program or would like to discuss your project idea, please contact:

Vicky Yuki at (206) 233-7877, vicky.yuki@seattle.gov

Amy Hirotaka at (206) 733-9445, amy.hirotaka@seattle.gov

Granting Timeline

Following are key dates for the 2011 Online Boost Grant.

Application released to public	June 23
Workshop dates (must attend one)	July 27 August 2
Application deadline.	July 12
Pre-award notification. All applicants will be notified of award decisions	July 15
Contracting. Successful applicants will sign a contract with the City to receive funds for their project. The City will reimburse grantees for expenses incurred only after the contract is signed. You are not allowed to spend project funds before the contract is signed.	August 15
Project completion	Within three (3) months of completed contract agreement

Appendix A: Eligible Project Expenses

The Online Boost Project will consider most project-related expenses. See Appendix J for technology recommendations and sources of discounted or donated hardware and software. Here are examples of items typically covered by the fund:

- Computer workstations and printers.
- Network routers and wifi access points.
- Software.
- Cameras and multimedia tools.
- Assistive and adaptive equipment.
- Handheld devices.
- Insurance specific to the project.
- Consultant and/or staff costs.
- Outside instructors or technical support.
- Outside evaluators.
- Printing and marketing costs.
- Project supplies.
- Fiscal agency fees.
- Stipends for project-related work.

The Online Boost Project will not pay for:

- Technology given to individuals for use in their homes.
- Technology used by staff only.
- General operational expenses not related to your project.
- Expenses made before the project contract is signed.
- Food, beverages and/or catering services.

Make sure all budget items are reasonable and justifiable.

Appendix B: Community Match Requirements

You must provide a \$0.50 to \$1 match for your project. However, this doesn't need to be in cash. For example, if you request a \$500 grant, you must prove that your organization can come up with a matching contribution valued at \$250 or more. The match can be in a different category than the money you are requesting. For example, a \$500 grant to buy hardware can be matched with \$200 in volunteer training time and \$50 in donated software.

Your total match package can include items from any combination of the following categories:

In-kind Match:

- Application preparation expenses up to \$100 (5 hours x \$20 per hour) in value;
- Volunteer labor valued at \$20 per hour.
- Professional services valued at the “reasonable and customary rate”;
- Materials or supplies such as computers, furniture, software, or paper;
- Additional cost of utilities for the space for your project; and
- Staff time dedicated to the project, but not paid for by Online Boost funds.

Cash Match:

- Money that you have collected and approved for use on your project;
- Money that you will raise during the course of your project by fundraising;
- Grants received from other foundations for your project.

Match Restrictions

- Your match must be appropriate to the goals of your project.
- You must obtain your match during the life of the project.

The following sources are NOT eligible as match:

- Grant funding from other City of Seattle programs;
- Staff time paid by other city departments;
- Assistance from city staff to prepare your proposal;
- Your time spent preparing your proposal in excess of 5 hours (\$100 maximum)

Appendix C: Documenting your Match

We encourage you to consider including additional materials in your application package, to prove that your cash match, in-kind materials, and/or volunteer time is secured. These may include:

- Pledge letters or emails from individuals and organizations promising to donate time, materials or money to the project;
- A written fundraising plan to secure additional project funds;
- Grant award letters; and
- Invoices for items secured for the project.

Appendix D: Completing the Budget

You must submit a detailed budget on how you will spend the funds on your project and where you will find matching contributions. Please read Appendix A for a list of eligible project expenses. See Appendices B and C for more information on the match requirements.

Following is a list of definitions for terms used in the spreadsheet:

- **Cost** – This is the amount you are requesting from the Online Boost Project. The maximum request is \$1,000.
- **Match** – This is the amount that you are contributing to the project in-kind, cash or through volunteer time as match.
- **Total** – This is the total value of your project (cost + match)

There is a section where you can enter in a budget narrative to provide a short description of budget items so that it is clear to the review committee how you intend to spend the funds. Your budget estimates should be realistic, well researched and reflect market prices.

Here are some examples of budget narrative statements:

- Funds will be used to pay for 25% of the salary for a work study lab assistant for 1 months (10 hrs/week x \$13/hour x 4 weeks)
- Supplies and materials include inkjet paper (\$35 per ream x 4 reams) and miscellaneous supplies such as printer toner, markers, poster paper and poster boards
- Outreach will be conducted by neighborhood youths and seniors. They will distribute flyers (4 youths x \$20/hr x 3 hours, 3 elders x \$20/hr x 3 hours)
- 2 copies of Brand X software (\$100 per copy)

Appendix E: Fiscal Agency

Your organization may act as its own fiscal agent or use another organization to manage the pass through of grant funds. An individual can serve as your fiscal agent, if he or she obtains a tax identification number and complies with IRS rules. Fiscal agency fees are eligible project costs or can be applied to your match contribution.

Appendix F: Tips for Writing a Strong Proposal

1. Keep it simple. It's better to do a small project successfully than a large scale project that's difficult to execute.

2. Assume the reader knows nothing about your project.
3. Understand the selection criteria -- this is how your proposal will be judged.
4. Describe your project in a clear and concise way. Don't be vague in your descriptions.
5. Check the math on your budget. Double check that all the columns add up and the numbers are accurate. Make sure that the budget items are reasonable and justifiable.
6. Have concrete measurable steps for your project.
7. Nail the details. The more your proposal provides details about your project the better. You will impress the interviewers with your preparation. Conversely, don't try to fudge the details. If you don't have details, be clear about your plan for filling them in.
8. Make the proposal compelling and readable. Use your grammar and spell checker to ensure that the proposal reads well.