**Hints for a Successful Grant Application**

Most projects, visions, plans and ideas originate with one or two members of a private volunteer organization. In some cases these members do accomplish great amounts of work and are literally the backbone of the organization. Even with modest projects, however; it is best to have broad organizational involvement and support. Share your project ideas with your group’s members. Provide many opportunities for them to make contributions and to buy into the group’s plan before an application is finalized. It is desirable for all members of the organization to feel ownership. It is a wonderful accomplishment if all users of the service and most members of the community acknowledge responsibility for maintenance and express pride in owning the project.

Large non-profit organizations are a source of many diverse talents and interest. You may have a professional planner, landscape architect, engineer, attorney, accountant, contractor, group facilitator, administrator and so on. Your group might be made up of less professional or less experienced people, but you can plan a project which best matches your resources and complete an application which reflects determination to find the knowledge and guidance required for the project. The application requires basic information and plans but this can be provided as simply or as intricately as desired. A professional grant writer is a wonderful resource for your project but a dozen committed organization members are at least a dozen times more important.

Individuals often see needs but are not affiliated with an appropriate organization. The first and best action is to search for an appropriate organization. If one does not exist it is possible to charter a non-profit organization for the purpose of carrying out a project. This is a long and demanding process and should not be attempted without allowing six months to a year for organizational development prior to applying for a matching grant.

Sources of information and assistance listed in the Introduction are always a good place to start in seeking help with your project and grant application.

An organization contemplating submitting a Matching Grant Application should already have a needs analysis, a project work plan and a cost estimate or budget. Start with some knowledge of your objective and the application will not be difficult to complete.

The “Contact Person” is key to the success of your project in so far as the Grant is concerned. If the project stalls halfway through, this person gets it going again and reports to the DOST on progress. When the project is complete the “Contact Person” makes yearly contact with the County’s program administrator. Few organizations will have the same person serving in this capacity for more than a year or two but by making this responsibility a part of an organization official’s job/responsibilities it will pass from one person to the next and provide continuity over the years.

The contact person and chief official cannot be the same person!

A funded project will do two things; (1) secure and preserve open space, and (2) provide services to users. In each case it is the applicant’s responsibility to clearly document needs.

**Grantee organization officials are encouraged to invite the County’s representative to meet with them at the project site once a year to assure continuity in both project maintenance and communication.**