



# Your Site Visit - What To Expect And How To Prepare

A compelling grant application is not enough to secure funding through our competitive Community Grants Program. Although an application can certainly tell part of the story of your program, it doesn't compare to the impact of a personal site visit. The site visit may be the opportunity to secure your organization's chance to receive funding, so prepare for this visit with that thought in mind!

We rely on community volunteer panels to conduct site visits, provide us with an evaluation of their visits, and rank the agencies they've visited in order of most deserving of funding. These reports then determine our funding decisions.

## Purpose of the Site Visit

- To gather subjective as well as objective information
- To see, feel and understand the impact of your mission
- To provide a comparison with other organizations your panel will be reviewing
- To verify the accuracy of your grant proposal
- To meet the people who make the programs come to life

## What to Expect During the Visit

- On average, you will have one hour to showcase your organization and the program for which you have applied. Plan, in advance, how to make the most of that time.
- Three to eight panel members will be present at your visit.
- Be prepared to answer questions about items in your grant proposal.
- If you are a state-wide agency and can't participate in a panel site visit, be prepared to have a phone or Skype interview with members of the panel.

# Preparing for your Site Visit

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In preparation for your site visit please be sure to keep these key things in mind.

- 1.** Be prepared to explain the project as it was presented in the grant application (know the budget, work plan, organization's history, proposed outcomes, similar projects, etc.). Brief staff, or others attending the site visit on your behalf, on the program/project so they can be prepared to answer questions as well. Be sure everyone is aligned on the details so that all can speak with "one voice."
- 2.** Know who from your organization will assist with the presentation. You are welcome to have any staff, volunteers, clients, or board members present although we suggest you have no more than five people present. Please make sure you have someone present who can address your grant request as well as your proposed outcomes as well as questions that may arise about your budget.
- 3.** Have relevant supporting materials on hand for easy reference and be sure to follow up on questions or send additional information if needed. The site visit is your chance to share information that you couldn't include in your original application.
- 4.** If applicable talk about partnerships and/or collaborations you have with others in the community to include other nonprofits, volunteers, churches, etc.
- 5.** Make a strong case for the need for the project and why the organization is uniquely positioned to deliver on the project. Although you will not know the other agencies your panel is visiting, you need to present your organization so they will feel you should be funded over other applicants.
- 6.** Give a tour and/or show the project to the panel. Although you will want to talk about your organization overall, remember you need to spend most of your time selling the program/ project outlined in your proposal.
- 7.** Remember the value of a positive visual impression. Be sure the office, building, and grounds are as neat and uncluttered as possible.
- 8.** Do not hide any bad press or challenges the organization is facing; be upfront. In many cases, people may already be aware the organization has had struggles.
- 9.** If possible, allow the panel to meet former or current individuals connected to your proposal (e.g., youth, volunteers, etc.). This is perhaps the most rewarding aspect of a site visit from the panel's perspective because it truly shows the impact of the grant award.

