

Good Grant Writing Never Goes Out of Style

by Mickey McCarter
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By Mickey McCarter, HSToday Senior Washington Correspondent

Homeland security officials continued to explain the process they used to award homeland security grants to cities and states in recent days, seeking to provide reasons why New York City and Washington, D.C., saw their urban area grants funds greatly reduced from the previous year.

But regardless of whatever other factors may go into the process of making grants awards at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Joshua Filler, the former director of the Office of State and Local Government Coordination at DHS, told HSToday.us that good grant writing remains a key factor in any awards process.

"You have to know how to write," Filler remarked. "You also have to understand how to articulate, not only in a well-written way but in a technical way, what it is that you are trying to do and how it ties into the national preparedness priorities and the target capabilities.

"You have to explain not only how the immediate funding you are looking to get from DHS will do that but also how you can sustain what it is you are trying to do past a given grant cycle and beyond even federal funding," he added.

Filler now assists clients with devising strategies and tackling grant applications in the private sector at his own firm, Filler Security Strategies Inc., based in Washington, D.C. Filler warned that grant writing is only part of comprehensive preparedness programs. His firm assists clients with tackling any preparedness challenges they may encounter.

Good grant applications, however, must describe how well the state or local initiative aligns with national priorities and how that program makes comprehensive and regional use of federal and other funding, Filler noted.

"I think the federal government is looking to state and local governments to demonstrate that they can sustain these things beyond federal funding," he said. "If a program can only live with federal dollars, I believe that would cause some hesitation on the federal part because they don't want to be in a position where without their assistance, there is no program. So it's a balance."

Filler resigned as the first director of the Office of State and Local Government Coordination last Nov. 5. He had been with the department since its creation and previously worked in the White House Office of Homeland Security and in the Mayor's Office in New York City, which is where he was on Sept. 11, 2001.

More information on Filler Security Strategies is available on its Website at www.fssconsulting.net.