

# Making Your Case: Best Practices in TWC Workforce Development Grant Applications



# Meet Your Presenters: Commission Initiatives and Special Projects (CISP)



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  - Areas of Expertise: Veterans Programs, Youth Programs, Program Evaluation

# What does CISP Do?

## Program Development

- Request for Applications (RFAs)
- Application Development (Competitive and Non-Competitive)
- Interagency Agreement Design
- Program Evaluation

## Program Areas

- Youth
- Foster Youth
- Veterans
- Adult Education and Literacy
- Apprenticeship
- Internships
- Other





# TWC Program Initiation: Where do Program Ideas Come From?



# Mandatory/Legislatively Determined Programs

- Programs required by state or federal legislation that must be implemented through competitive procurement processes.





# Commission Programs

- Strategic initiatives approved by the Texas Workforce Commission to address identified workforce development needs.



# Staff Programs

- Operational programs developed by program staff to support ongoing workforce development activities.



# Partnerships and External Programs

- Collaborative initiatives with external stakeholders, including other state agencies and community organizations.





# Federally Granted Programs

- Programs funded through federal grants that require competitive sub-award processes to local entities.



# How TWC Builds Programs: Basic Steps

1. Program Approval

2. Program Concept Design

3. Public Posting and Application

4. Evaluation and Selection

Final stage.....







**Award  
Formation!!!!**



# Where do I find funding opportunities?

Public Posting Websites– “Let’s get this bread!”

1. TWC’s Grant Opportunities Page

- <https://www.twc.texas.gov/agency/funding-opportunities/grant-opportunities>

2. TWC’s Euna Procurement Portal

- <https://twc-texas-gov.bonfirehub.com/portal/?tab=openOpportunities>



# Public Posting– “I found the bread, but how do I secure the bag?” Questions to ask when researching applications.

1. First and most importantly, Read Everything!
2. Determine if you are eligible
  - a. Can my organization apply for this program?
  - b. Is the maximum amount allotted enough for what we need?
  - c. Is there a full understanding of what allowable and unallowable costs are?
  - d. Do I have a budget plan already established, and is my math correct?
  - e. **\*Can my organization execute the program in its entirety as designed from start to finish?\***



# Application Completion and Submission – “Asking for the Bag”

1. Make sure your signature is valid on the final submission;
2. Again, Read Everything!;
3. Complete all required sections;
4. Enter all required data;
5. Check your grammer' and spelltings (grammar and spelling!);
6. Do not answer a question by repeating the question in the answer (happens more often than you think!); and,
7. Fully read and understand the submission instructions.





# Application Completion and Submission – “Asking for the Bag” Cont’d

## Application quality matters!

- Answer the questions in the format the application is in (you do not want your evaluator hunting or trying to decipher your response!).
- “Proof is in the pudding,” the greater the detail in your responses, the higher the score you should receive.



# Application Completion and Submission – “Asking for the Bag” Cont’d

## Budget Workbook Submissions

- DO NOT ALTER THE EXCEL FORMULAS! This will be an immediate disqualification of your application.
- Budget item name and justification are key, remember to more detail you have in your justification, the higher the score.
- Break down every line item, do not bundle!  
requests together.

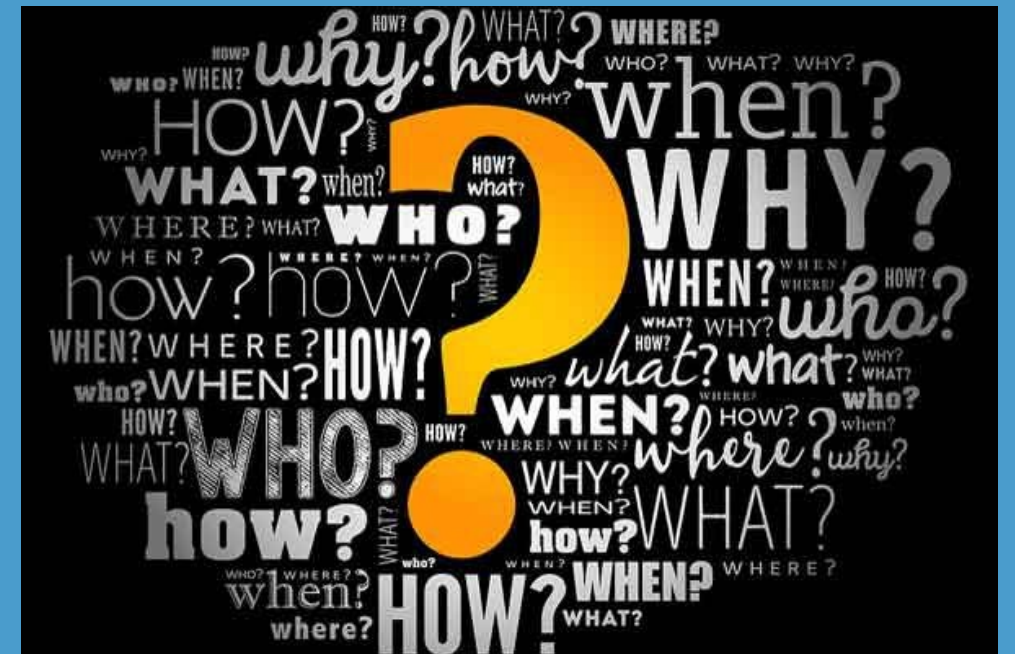


# Post Submission Questions & Answers – Ask Why, Or What, Or How, and most importantly When!

1. One more time (with feeling....) **READ EVERYTHING!**

Most questions will be covered in the solicitation.

2. There will be a fixed Q & A window on competitive applications (RFA) so take advantage!
3. There will be a rolling Q and A for non-competitive applications, so utilize the portal. Questions submitted by email will be requested to be submitted through the portal.





# TWC Application Evaluation – The Waiting is the Hardest Part

## How TWC Evaluation Works

1. Minimum Qualifications Screening
  - a. Clear signatures;
  - b. No document manipulation; and,
  - c. Submit on time, and with documents in correct format



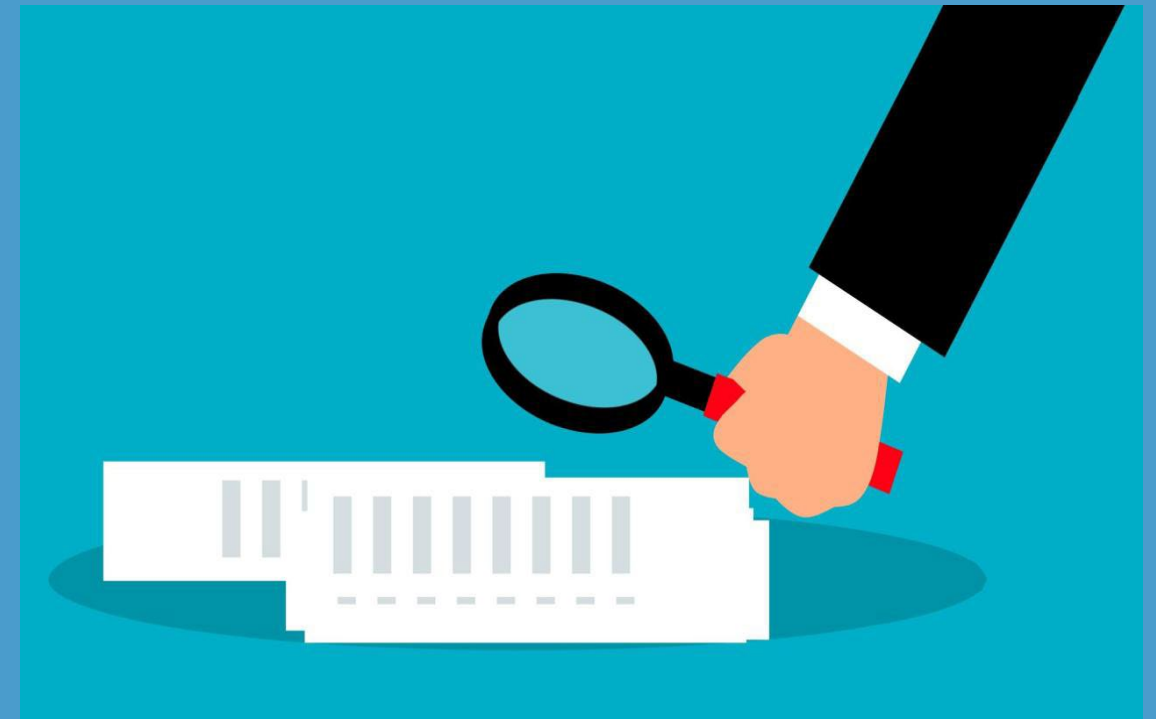
# TWC Application Evaluation – The Waiting is the Hardest Part – Cont'd

## 2. Competitive Application Reviews

a. Fixed window for evaluations; and,

b. **\*Remember, not all applications will be awarded\*.**

Awards depend on funding amount, number of applicants received, and the quality of the submission.



# TWC Application Evaluation – The Waiting is the Hardest Part – Cont'd

## 3. Non-Competitive Application Reviews

- a. There is not a fixed time frame for evaluations. Since the applications are submitted on a rolling basis, the evaluation process will begin when it is received.
- b. Awards will be given based on quality of application, and will only end when funding has depleted, or grant opportunity is closed by TWC.





# TWC Evaluation – Judgement Day

## What do evaluators look for?

1. Comprehensive Program Requirement breakdown (Remember: “Proof is in the pudding!”);
2. Complete all tables (deliverables, timelines, etc.;
3. Clean, clear writing (evaluators should be able to following along with your responses easily!);
4. **Follow the work plan!!!**; and,
5. Budget Accuracy – calculations are correct, and there is detailed justifications for all line items.



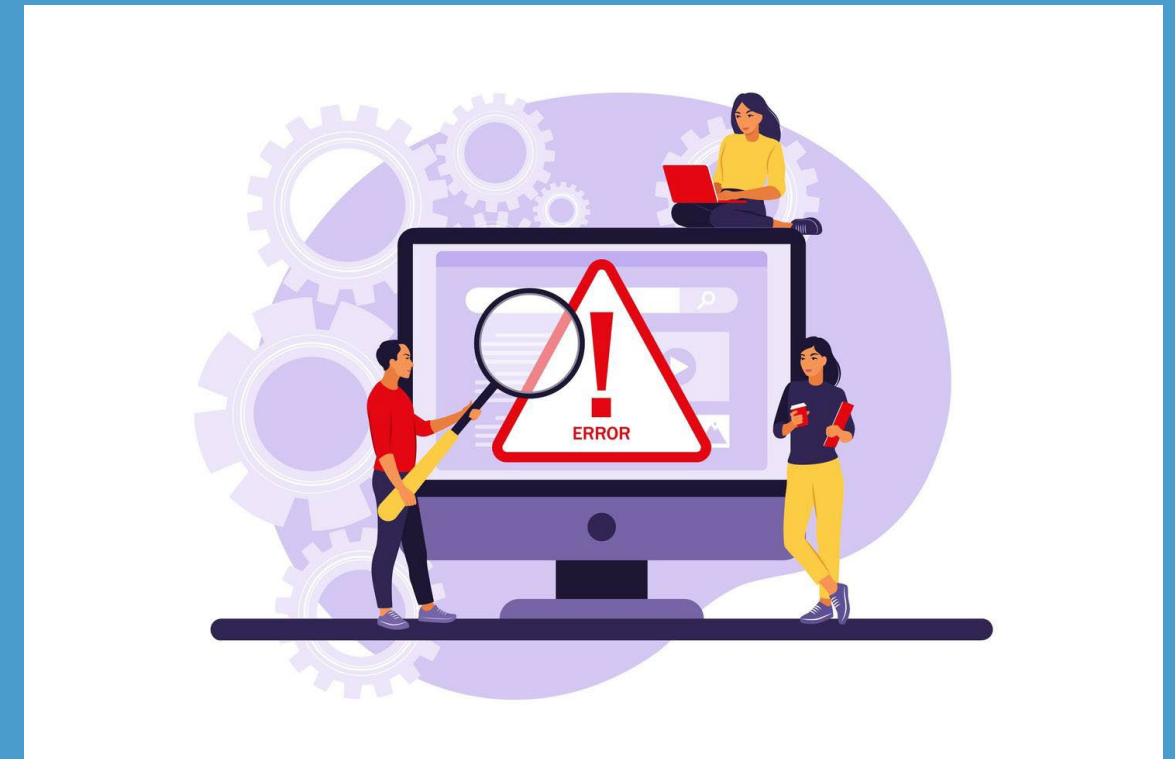
# Common Application Errors

1. Application is not signed;
2. Missing sections;
3. Partial responses;
4. Lack of clarity (These are common in initiatives that require partnerships);
5. Requesting unallowable costs (\*Read the solicitation and budget instructions which list all allowable and unallowable costs and ASK QUESTIONS during the Q and A period!\*);
6. Lack of detail (All together now..... “The proof is in the pudding!”);



# Common Application Errors - Cont'd

7. Answer repetition (applicants will sometimes provide a response that is repeating the questions or will repeat the same information in many different portions of their responses); and,
8. **\*Explain the how!\*** (Applicants will sometimes neglect to provide the overall picture that will show the evaluator that they are able to start AND finish the grant).





# Audience Q and A

What else would you like to know?

