

2010 State Public Affairs Grants (SPAG) Program Guidelines

The **State Public Affairs Grants** program was created in 1997 as a resource to help ASCE Sections undertake public relations (PR) and government relations (GR) projects at the grassroots level. The goal of the program is to enhance the image of civil engineers as leaders and experts on America's vital infrastructure systems and to encourage advocacy on issues that are important to civil engineers.

Through the years, the PR and GR programs produced through SPAG funding have grown in size and scope. Sections are addressing complicated policy issues and planning large, multi-year outreach programs. In order to better serve the changing PR and GR needs of Sections, an all-merit award structure with two categories of funding – Small Grants and Large Grants – was adopted in 2004. Each grant category has its own proposal and reporting guidelines.

Small Grants: Proposals up to \$1,500 are eligible for Small Grants. One grant proposal is required per project. Small Grants are designed for Sections to fund a single component of a larger program or for a one-time expense. An abbreviated proposal and report is used for Small Grants.

Large Grants: Proposals between \$1,500 and \$7,500 are eligible for Large Grants. One grant proposal per project is required. Large Grants require more comprehensive proposal information and more detailed reports than Small Grants. The Section should do a considerable amount of project planning prior to applying for a Large Grant.

Submission Deadline

2010 SPAG proposals must be submitted electronically, postmarked, or faxed by:

Friday, October 30, 2009.

- E-mail an electronic copy of your proposal to spag@asce.org; or
- Mail proposals to: 2009 SPAG Proposal, Attn: Sharon Baber, ASCE, 1801 Alexander Bell Drive, Reston, Virginia 20191; or
- Fax them to: (703) 295-6491, Attn: Sharon Baber

Please note that no proposal is deemed received until the submitting Section receives electronic notification that the proposal has been received.

Committee Review

The State Public Affairs Grants Committee, comprised of representatives from the Committee on Communications and the Committee on Government Affairs, evaluates grant proposals. Sections will be notified of the status of their proposals by December 4, 2009. Funding priority will be given to new, innovative proposals that, in the committee's judgment, best support the public relations and government relations goals of the Society and have a measurable impact on a desired audience. The SPAG committee will make a conscious effort to equitably allocate funds among Regions. The committee recognizes that all Sections have different resources, needs and goals; they will award grants based on the programs that will help Sections best achieve their specific goals.

Eligibility

1. Items and events funded through SPAG must correspond to the Section's and ASCE's public relations and government relations goals and that relationship must be demonstrated both in the Section's grant proposal and in the final report.
2. SPAG proposals from Branches, Younger Member Forums or Student Chapters must be submitted through their Sections, with Section approval.
3. Sections may submit up to four Small Grant proposals, and any number of Large Grant proposals.
4. Sections are eligible for multiple awards in one grant cycle. If a Section submits more than one Small or Large Grant proposal, it is helpful to the committee if the Section prioritizes their preferences for funding, by indicating which proposal they would prefer the committee approve.
5. Sections are encouraged to work together as coalitions to submit joint proposals. A maximum of \$15,000 will be awarded to joint SPAG proposals.
6. If for any reason a Section is unable to complete the approved project as described in their SPAG proposal, the Section must receive written approval from the SPAG committee regarding any reallocation of awarded SPAG funds. Sections should work with staff to ensure that their revised program meets the requirements of the SPAG program. If a revised program is not found or approved, the SPAG funds should be returned by check to "ASCE SPAG Program," to the attention of Sharon Baber.
7. All SPAG projects should be completed by August 1, 2010 to be eligible for funding in the 2010 SPAG cycle (see section on 'Project Completion and Final Reports').
8. **Sections failing to submit SPAG final reports, related materials or requested information, including copies of all receipts and invoices documenting all expenses associated with the project, will forfeit any remaining award amount and not be eligible for SPAG funding for two years.**
9. SPAG funds are intended to be used to try out new and different programs. Proposals submitted for projects that have been previously funded by SPAG will NOT be given priority.
10. Grant proposals for the following items will **not** be considered by the SPAG committee:
 - ▶ Social events hosted primarily for current or potential ASCE members, including meetings, awards dinners and receptions. Such events have no discernable public awareness or legislative value.
 - ▶ Scholarships, cash prizes or memorials. The audience for these programs is too small.
 - ▶ Office equipment, assets or other capital investments. SPAG is intended to build communication with the public, the media and influential policy makers, not with members or professional contacts.
 - ▶ Event sponsorships or endorsements. If sponsorship is a component of a SPAG program, then the proposal must also demonstrate how members will be actively involved with the program planning and execution, not simply lending the Section name to a program.
 - ▶ Travel expenses to ASCE-sponsored programs, including the Leadership Training in Government Relations/Legislative Fly-In. Should expenses exceed the per diem,

participating Sections or members must cover the costs.

Example A: The Section's contribution to the Engineer of the Year banquet attended primarily by engineers would not be eligible for SPAG funding. However, the Section's purchase of supplies for the annual National Engineers Week display at the shopping mall would be eligible.

Example B: Contributing \$500 to an engineering scholarship would not be eligible for SPAG funding. Expenses incurred to host a reception for state legislators to discuss legislation that impacts the profession would be eligible.

If you have any questions about the eligibility of a program, contact ASCE public or government relations staff for guidance before submitting the proposal.

Proposal Criteria

The merit award structure means that items and events funded through SPAG must correspond to the Section's and ASCE's public relations and government relations goals and that relationship must be demonstrated both in the Section's grant proposal and in the final report. Sections are encouraged to be creative and inventive when proposing PR and GR programs. Some examples of SPAG-funded programs are listed below:

- Event supplies and expenses
- E-Week activities
- Publication design and production
- Media training and expert consultation
- Securing a state lobbyist
- Producing a local Infrastructure Report Card
- Design and installation of an exhibit on civil engineering
- Community improvement projects
- Promotions of Local Report Cards

Public relations and government relations SPAG programs must meet certain criteria. The proposal guidelines outline the materials that must be included with Large and Small Grant SPAG proposals.

SPAG funds are intended for new and original projects. Priority will be given to projects that have not previously been funded, even in part, by a SPAG grant.

Public Relations:

1. The program must reach an audience outside of the civil engineering profession.
2. The program or event must be used to support a Section goal or a specific message on an issue of interest to the Section.
Example: The Blue Section's goal is to increase understanding of infrastructure issues among voters in Yellow City. The Section will produce a guide on how local voters can impact funding for local infrastructure.
3. Appropriate publicity and/or media relations must be a component of the program.
4. Programs that produce a publication, brochure or other materials must be accompanied by a distribution plan.

For questions about public relations SPAG programs, contact Karen Albers, kalbers@asce.org, 703-295-6404.

Government Relations:

1. The program must be used to support one of the top legislative priorities of the State Government Relations Program (infrastructure issues, smart growth, procurement of professional services, licensing, transportation infrastructure, and math and science education).
2. Training civil engineers in government relations advocacy must be a component of any program.
3. Programs to enhance a key contact program must have a training component.
4. Programs to fund a lobbyist must have a specific legislative goal (i.e., additional infrastructure funding, changes in licensing laws).
5. Programs to fund a Capitol Day must have a specific legislative goal.

For questions about government relations SPAG programs, contact Adam Gagnon, agagnon@asce.org, 202-789-7845.

Small Grant Proposals

Proposals up to \$1,500 are eligible for Small Grants. One grant proposal per project is required. Do not submit multiple projects in a single proposal. Small Grants are designed for Sections to fund a single component of a larger program or for a one-time expense. An abbreviated proposal and report can be used for Small Grants.

Small Grants will receive full funding for the approved amount upon approval. Sections that fail to submit their final reports by the deadline will not be eligible for SPAG funding for the following two years.

Small Grant proposals must include:

1. A cover letter with complete contact information for Section President and Treasurer, and include their P.E. designation if applicable;
2. A brief summary of the project proposed (no more than 250 words);
3. A project overview that answers the following questions:
 - What are the project's goals and objectives?
 - What is the target audience of the project?
 - What methods will be used to achieve the goals?
 - What is the project timeline?
 - How will the project be evaluated?
4. A budget indicating resources needed for the project, as well as available resources and additional funding sources and amounts. Programs that have secured additional funding or commitments from non-ASCE sources will be given first consideration.

Large Grant Proposals

Proposals between \$1,500 and \$7,500 are eligible for Large Grants. One grant proposal per project is required. Do not submit multiple projects in a single proposal. Large Grants require more comprehensive proposal information and more detailed reports than Small Grants. The Section should do a considerable amount of the project planning prior to submitting a proposal for a Large Grant.

Large Grants will be awarded 50% of the amount initially and the remaining 50% if the final report is received by the deadline. **Sections that fail to submit their final reports or additional requested information by the deadline will not be eligible for SPAG funding for the following two years. Sections awarded Large Grants will also forfeit the remaining 50% of their award if they fail to submit a final report.**

Multi-year programs (up to three years) can be submitted for SPAG Large Grant funding. The grant proposal should include an overall project schedule indicating the phases of the project. First-year funding is not a guarantee of future funding, though preference will be given to continuing project grants in the following years. The Section must apply for continued funding each year and include a thorough status report with their proposal indicating whether or not the project is on schedule.

Large Grant proposals must include:

1. A cover letter with complete contact information for Section President and Treasurer, and include their P.E. designation if applicable;
2. A brief summary of the proposal (no more than 250 words);
3. Background information about the problem/issue that will be addressed through the proposed program;
4. A realistic budget indicating resources needed for the project, including consultants, training, equipment, supplies, communication, materials preparation, travel, facilities rental and indirect costs. Expenses should be allocated by project phase. The budget should also describe available resources, including volunteers' time, materials, and local contacts and experts. Programs that have secured additional funding or support from collaborating organizations will be given favorable consideration.
5. A detailed schedule for the entire project. The planning, programming, execution and evaluation phases of the program should be clearly outlined in a comprehensive project timeline. Complete timelines should be included for multi-year projects.
6. Reporting and evaluation
 - How will the Section share periodic project status updates?
 - Describe how the Section will determine if the project has met its goals and objectives.
7. Project details, including:
 - The project's goals and objectives: Goals are broad statements of what the Section hopes to accomplish, but are not quantifiable. Objectives are operational and measurable, outlining specific actions that will be undertaken during the project. The proposed program or event must be used to support a Section goal or a specific message on an issue of interest to the Section.
 - The methods and activities that will be implemented to meet the goals and objectives.

- The project partners and their interests in the program: Collaborative efforts are generally considered very favorably.

Project details for **public relations** proposals should also include:

- Information about the target audience. The proposed program should reach an audience outside of the engineering profession.

Project details for **government relations** proposals should also include:

- Information about what legislative issue is being targeted and what is the specific legislative goal.
- Information about how civil engineers will be involved in the advocacy component.
- Information about how coalition building activities better support the government relations program.

Project Completion and Final Reports

All SPAG grant recipients (Small and Large) are expected to **complete their projects by August 1, 2010** and prepare and submit a Final Report.

The Final Report is due August 6, 2010.

If the project is not completed by August 1, the grant recipient must still submit a Final Report on August 6 and then a “Final Report Addendum” to the report before November 2 outlining all project activity that took place subsequent to August 6, including all documentation of expenses. Failure to submit the report by this deadline will make the Section ineligible for SPAG funding for two consecutive years; Sections awarded Large Grants will also forfeit the remaining 50% of their awards. Specific guidelines for the SPAG program final reports will be issued after the 2010 grants are awarded. However, Sections should be prepared to address the following items in their final reports:

1. A detailed description of SPAG funds allocation with corresponding expense reports and/or invoices. **Grant recipients are required to include with their Final Reports all invoices and copies of paid bills documenting all expenses associated with the project.** Failure to provide this information by the deadline may result in grant ineligibility for the Section the following year.
2. A description of member participation in the program.
3. The public or government relations goal of the program, and an evaluation of the Section's efforts to reach the goal.
4. Target audience for the program and any feedback from audience and participants.
5. Examples of media coverage generated by the program.

Sections will also be required to return any unused grant funds to ASCE.