



technical bulletin

Municipal Technical Advisory Service
Institute for Public Service, The University of Tennessee
In cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League

February 17, 1978

GRANTSMANSHIP ASSISTANCE

(MTAS received a copy of the following letter mailed by U.S. Rep. Albert Gore, Jr., to cities and counties in his district. We thought that all cities should receive this information, so we requested his permission to distribute it in this form, which he readily granted.)

It has come to my attention that a management consulting company from outside Tennessee has been visiting mayors, city managers, and county judges in our state to promote their services.

The company offers two basic contracts:

- 1) A "research and information" contract, for which the client pays between \$5,000 and \$7,500 per year. For this amount, the client receives a newsletter about federal programs and access to a toll-free phone number to ask questions about federal aid programs and/or congressional and agency activities which might have an affect on federal aid programs.
- 2) A "guarantee contract," for which the client pays between \$15,000 and \$25,000 per year. For this fee, the client receives the same newsletter and phone line access. The company offers two other technical services as part of this contract - "direct assistance in grant writing" and preparation of "cost allocation plan" for indirect grant costs. However, these two services are not included in the \$15 - \$25,000 contract fee and to use the company's talents in these areas results in an extra charge. The company also notes that clients may use their Washington office facilities while in the Capitol.

The pursuit of federal grants has become a concern for all of us who serve our constituents, and I know you want to achieve the best possible results with your public funds.

As you may know, there presently exist several outstanding governmental resources available to you, providing all the services noted above and many more at little or no cost. These include:

- 1) Your development district staff, which is funded by federal, state, and local funds to provide up-to-date information about federal aid programs, expert grant proposal preparation, and other technical assistance.
- 2) The County Technical Assistance Service and Municipal Technical Advisory Service, both located in Nashville, with field offices across the state, funded by the University of Tennessee and Tennessee state Government. CTAS and MTAS offer professional expertise in many areas, including development of a Cost Allocation Plan, at little or no charge to you.
- 3) The State of Tennessee Planning Office, located in Nashville and with field offices in Cookeville. TSPO also provides professional planning

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services to local officials at a moderate level of local matching costs.

- 4) Officials of the federal agencies from which you seek funding. Each of these agencies is manned with personnel ready to answer questions about availability of funds, procedures, etc.
- 5) The offices of the National Association of Regional Councils, in Washington, offers its office space, telephones, and meeting facilities, free, to you when you are in the Capitol.
- 6) My office. My staff is highly skilled in the area of federal aid to local governments. We provide support to each of the above agencies in their effort to give you better service. Moreover, we can help you in a variety of ways to enable you to make better use of available federal funding.

There are no secrets in the system of applying for and receiving federal aid for your local projects. No private company can give you a "magic wand" to enable you to receive a federal grant.

If you are approached by such a company, I urge you to proceed with caution. Contact my office if you have questions about firms proposing to give you a better chance to get federal funds. Should you decide to enter into any such contract, be certain that you will receive appropriate services for fees paid.

Many highly competent consulting companies operate in Tennessee and provide important services to local officials--certified engineers, architects, attorneys, financial management firms, and others.

However, in the case of the grantsmanship services I have outlined above, I seriously question whether these services warrant the very large fees their contracts require.

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