



Proposal for Capacity-Building Assistance for CSPF TAC Grant Opportunities

TVT Consulting is pleased to provide this proposal to CSPF for the upcoming Technical Assistance Center (TAC)-related grant cycle for 2016. By providing grants focused on capacity building and organizational development for California park partner organizations and entities, the program aims to increase partners' competencies and abilities to more successfully meet their missions.

There couldn't be a better moment for focusing on improving the management, operations, and capacity of state park partner organizations. An ongoing emphasis in the Department of Parks and Recreation's (DPR) Transformation Team's work is pointed toward improving DPR's culture, policies, and practices for working with partners. CSPF's continued investment and support in partners will help ensure that partner organizations come to the table, ready to effectively and successfully achieve mutual partnership goals.

For the capacity-building grants awarded, it will be critical to have clear and realistic expectations about the organizational learnings expected within the grant timeframe and the production of deliverables that demonstrate an application or extension of those learnings. Each grantee client will have different organizational starting points, proficiencies, resources to dedicate to the task, and goals for what it means to increase their capacity. As such, the inputs, outputs, and outcomes for each grantee will vary and the learnings and deliverables will be calibrated to their unique circumstances.

Proposed Services

TVT Consulting proposes to make the following services available to partner organizations in this program:

Partnership & Ally Development

Establishing, maintaining, and growing partnerships with other entities can expand the impact, resources, and reach of an organization's work. For example, working with local schools creates opportunities to engage and train teachers in delivering park-relevant curriculum or topics, as well as reach students directly, to increase youth access and interest in parks. Partnering with local service groups and clubs creates opportunities for new volunteer (and donor) recruitment and engagement. But partnering is more than just sharing logo space on a letterhead or press release. The most effective partnerships are intentional, planned, and cultivated. Capacity-building assistance in this area includes the following services and deliverables:

- Strategic counsel and assessment of organization's existing partnership resources and capacity
- Environmental scan and recommendations of current and potential partners/partnerships to amplify programmatic reach and impact
- Design of strategic visioning process to align partners' goals, responsibilities, and work

Stakeholder Outreach & Engagement

Authentic connections with key stakeholders and influencers are critical to keeping an organization "top of mind" with key audiences. Whether a park partner organization has a new program being launched, is

reaching a key milestone in a park project, is fending off a proposal or issue that would negatively affect its park, or generally desires to be more visible and connected in the community, engaging stakeholders outside the organization’s board or staff are critical to giving those efforts additional credibility. Stakeholder awareness and support of the organization’s priorities, achievements, and mission – in advance of any crisis or ask – will help build external champions who can serve as important third-party endorsers in key moments. Capacity-building assistance in this area includes the following services and deliverables:

- Strategic counsel in identifying and engaging target audiences, constituencies on programmatic and organizational priorities
- Design of outreach and engagement plans and metrics
- Strategic counsel on outreach strategies and approaches to elected officials and policymakers

Issues Analysis & Strategy

Sometimes, an issue or question is presented to, or asked of, an organization that requires assessment from multiple angles, including from the outside. Perhaps the question is whether and/or how to engage on a local, regional or state policy issue or position. Or the organizational implications of taking on a new role or request with the organization’s affiliated park(s). Or whether or how to expand programming to serve additional or new audiences to the organization’s park(s). Teasing out the root question being posed, reviewing and synthesizing relevant context, data or research, and providing a set of recommendations for proceeding – or not – essentially “unpacks” the issue for the board, staff, and stakeholders of an organization to review and make a decision. Capacity-building assistance in this area includes the following services and deliverables:

- Issue analysis, research and recommendations
- Design of issues awareness campaign plans

Communications

Effective communications require on-target, persuasive stories and messages to be delivered at the right times, to the right audiences, in the right venues. Regardless of how vast or limited a park partner organization’s communications assets and resources are, the information, messages, and appeals that come from the organization should be reinforcing its core strategies, goals, and mission. Sometimes, that requires an objective and intentional review of all the ways in which the organization is currently communicating about itself, its programs, and its work, in order to successfully pivot or refresh the stories and messages. Capacity-building assistance in this area includes the following services and deliverables:

- Strategic review of existing communications vehicles, messages, intended audiences, and goals
- Writing assistance

Proposed Approach

Prior to being engaged by an individual organization, TVT Consulting expects to have consultation phone calls with prospective grant applicants prior to an application being submitted that requests CSPF funding for TVT Consulting services. The consultation calls will be essential to ensuring that there is an appropriate and effective fit for the services requested and the organizational outcomes anticipated. Where it is the right fit, we will develop a scope of work and budget for the grant applicant that reflects the goals and anticipated outcomes of the work together.

Once a grantee is awarded, the method of services provided may vary. It is anticipated that much of the work can be conducted virtually – via phone, webinars, electronic communications – to ensure cost-effectiveness

for the grantee. However, in-person meetings and sessions will be scheduled as appropriate and as needed, especially at critical milestones of the project. At this stage, there is no predetermined “formula” for how the work will proceed, as it will be individual to each organization.

Key Personnel

Consulting services will be provided by Traci Verardo-Torres, Founder of TVT Consulting. Traci is an experienced professional who creates, designs, and implements successful strategies for advancing policy and organizational goals. Before founding TVT Consulting, Traci worked for the California State Parks Foundation for more than 10 years. She established and led the organization’s portfolios in lobbying, legislative affairs, grassroots activism, policy, and nonprofit support and development. During the state park closure threats of 2008, 2009, and 2011, Traci led successful campaigns to generate statewide opposition to park closures and result in additional state funding to avoid closures. She also drafted and spearheaded the successful passage of legislation allowing nonprofit organizations to manage state parks and was the lead author of the 2011 Park Excellence Report, *A Vision for Excellence for California's State Parks*.

Traci previously worked as legislative staff for former State Senator Jack O’Connell after completing a prestigious Senate Fellowship with the California State Senate in the mid 1990s. She served as Executive Director of the California Tobacco Control Alliance where she managed a multi-stakeholder coalition of health care industry, public health and policy representatives focused on increasing tobacco cessation in California. She previously worked as a public relations executive with Ogilvy Public Relations and managed accounts for public agency and nonprofit clients on social services, public health, and environmental topics.

Traci holds a Masters in Public Policy and Administration from CSU Sacramento, and a Bachelors in Political Science from UC San Diego.

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