AMPLIFUND VIDEO SCRIPT/NOTES

Slide 1: Hello and welcome to our video where we'll talk about applying for a grant using our new application software known as Amplifund!

Slide 2: Now as a reminder, or if you are new to applying for Illinois state grants, all potential grantees must first be registered in the Illinois Grant Accountability Transparency Act Portal, also known as the GATA portal. If you need to set up an account, go to the link shown on the slide and click create account to register and receive an Illinois.gov account for your organization. The role of the GATA portal is to check to make sure your organization has met or is up to date on all of the pre-award requirements needed to apply for a state grant. The GATA portal is also where you can complete the most recent Fiscal and Administrative Risk Assessment, which is also required to apply for grants. If these pre-award requirements are not met, any applications you submit cannot be scored, so make sure your organization is up to date and in compliance with all of the pre-award requirements in the GATA portal.

Slide 3: Here is a screenshot of what the GATA portal looks like. Here you can create an account, sign in to the GATA portal, sign in to Amplifund to apply for grants, see frequently asked questions, or get further assistance as needed for the GATA portal.

Slide 4: So, what exactly is Amplifund? Amplifund is an online application portal where organizations can apply for Illinois state grants. It guides applicants through the application process and helps reduce the opportunities for errors or incomplete applications. Please note that Amplifund will not allow applications to be submitted after the grant application deadline has passed. Another note is that existing users will need to approve subsequent users, such as consultants, before they can access Amplifund for their organization. You can use the link provided here to walk through how to add and approve subsequent users. Once a NOFO is live, the public Amplifund link to the NOFO will be provided on the grant's webpage and in the public announcement. When an applicant clicks on the public link, they will need to login with their Illinois.gov account which was created in the GATA portal to access the application. If you are a consultant who is managing applications for multiple organizations, please double check that you're completing the application under the right organizational account! It is EXTREMELY difficult to fix if an application has been submitted under the wrong organization.

Slide 5: Now, let's get into the NOFO and the application process. After clicking on the public link, you'll come to a page which looks like this one. This first page is the "Opportunity Details" which explains the grant opportunity. Be sure to read through this section thoroughly to ensure the grant is applicable to your organization and you are an eligible applicant. At the top, you'll also see a tab that says, "Evaluation & Scoring." That page explains how applications will be reviewed and scored. Once you decide the grant opportunity is applicable to you, click on the "Apply" button in the upper right corner of the screen.

Slide 6: The "Apply" button will take you to the first application form titled "Project Information." Here the applicant will fill out the basic details of their project including how much funding is needed and the primary contact information for the project. All required fields will have an asterisk next to them, like the one circled in red. These fields must be filled out in order to mark this form as complete.

Slide 7: At the bottom of all of the forms will be the following three buttons: Save; Mark as Complete; and Save & Continue. Please note, Amplifund will time out after 20 minutes of inactivity, so remember to save often! Hit "Mark as Complete" when you have completed the form and then hit "Save & Continue" to move on to the next form. If the form is not complete but you wish to move to the next form, just hit "Save & Continue" to save your work and come back later to continue working on it.

Slide 8: The next section, "Forms," contains the application forms. Notice the progress bar at the top of the page. The green dot in the middle of a circle indicates where you currently are in the application process. Green check marks indicate sections which have been completed successfully. If an area has not been completed, it will remain white. Be sure to click "Mark as Complete" when you fully complete a section for the green checkmark to appear. You will not be able to submit your application at the end if any of the sections are deemed incomplete.

To complete the application forms, click on the form to open it up. You'll also be able to continue through each one in succession as you're completing the forms. Let's take a look at a couple of these so you know what to expect.

Slide 9: The first form is the Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance, which is a standard form for state grants. For forms like this one, applicants will need to provide the required information in the designated data fields. Remember, all starred data fields are required and must be completed in order to submit the application.

Slide 10: At the bottom of this form, you'll see the same three buttons. Remember to save often, click "Mark as Complete" when the form is completely finished, or save & continue if you wish to come back to work on it later. You may also click "Save & Continue" to continue on to the next form. **A quick note for this form, you'll notice that Applicant Contribution is a starred section. A 0 will automatically be entered here, but you must enter something into this field for it to register as being completed. If the applicant will not be contributing any of their own funds, just retype the 0 into this field.**

*Don't forget to complete the "Applicant Certification" at the bottom of the page!

Slide 11: Many of the forms will be similar to the first form where the applicant fills out the requested information or marks boxes to acknowledge something. A couple of the forms, however, will be like this one, the Executive Compensation Data (5 Officer Form). For this one, you will need to first download the PDF which is available towards the bottom of the page, complete the form with your organization's information, and then reupload the completed PDF. You'll reupload the PDF where it says, "Choose File." Mark as Complete and Save & Continue when finished to move on to the next section.

Slide 12: The next section will be the "Budget Information." Please note that the Total Expense Budget Cost, which will be calculated as information is entered, must match the Total Revenue Budget Cost which was entered at the beginning of the project under "Project Information." The Revenue Budget will pull numbers from the "Project Information" page automatically. For this screenshot, no numbers had been entered into the "Project Information" page and therefore the Revenue Budget is showing as zero. Line-Items showing how the funds will be used will need to be entered by the applicant in the Expense Budget. In this case, the budget line item for "Contractual Services & Subawards" will need to be completed for this particular grant. To do this, click the "+" button which is circled here in red.

Slide 13: The "+" will open the "New Line-Item" screen where you can enter information about the contractual services you plan to utilize under this grant. There is a description on what kind of product or service is allowable in this line-item if you need further guidance.

Slide 14: When completing the Budget New Line-Item, remember to complete all of the starred sections. If you plan to use all of the grant funds for one sole contract, you can fill in the direct cost with the total amount of grant funding you are applying for. If you plan to break the funding up between multiple contracts, be sure to add a new line item for each expected contract. If any contract will be non-grant funded, or even partially non-grant funded, select yes under non-grant funded. This will give you further options to designate how much of the contract will be funded by the grant and how much from other funding sources. As a friendly reminder, the line-item totals must match up with the numbers that were entered on the “Project Information” form.

Slide 15: If the totals do not match, the budget is not considered complete, and you won’t be able to click the “Mark as Complete” button at the bottom. Notice, in this example, I’ve only entered in one line item with a total of $30,000 to account for the requested grant funds but have yet to account for the non-grant funds listed below in the Revenue budget. All of the funds listed in the Revenue budget must be accounted for in the Expense Budget. When correct, the Total Overall Budget will zero out and the Total Expense Budget Cost will equal the Total Revenue Budget Cost. Let’s see what a completed budget looks like:

Slide 16: Here is an example of a completed budget. Notice the Total Expense Budget Cost now equals the Total Revenue Budget Cost, and the Total Overall Budget Cost is zeroed out. All of the project costs have now been accounted for. Now you may click Mark as Complete and then Save & Continue.

Slide 17: Next, we have the “Performance Plan.” Here the main milestones or deliverables for the grant program will be listed. The applicant will need to “Add Goals” for each of these milestones. This includes a description of how the applicant plans to meet said goal and what date they anticipate the goal to be completed by if awarded the grant. To add a goal, click on “+ Add Goal.”

Slide 18: Clicking on “+Add Goal” will bring you to the “New Goal” screen. Here you can add the name of your goal and the date you hope to have the goal completed by. Make sure to set realistic dates and keep in mind that it can take a couple months to get an executed grant agreement. When completed, press Create to add the goal to your “Performance Plan.”

Slide 19: This is what the completed “Performance Plan” should look like. Notice there are now items listed under each plan section. If you have no further edits, you may click “Mark as Complete” then “Save & Continue.”

Slide 20: Now, you’ve reached the end of the grant application! Make sure all of the items in the green progress bar have a green check mark. If all are not checked, you’ll need to go back to the unchecked sections and make sure they have been completed properly. You can navigate to any section by clicking on the name of the section under the green progress bar. If your application is complete, then click “Submit” to send your application to the Grantor for review. We strongly advise that you review and double check all of the pages on your application to make sure all of the information is correct before submitting. Once an application is submitted, it cannot be altered.

Slide 21: If your application has been properly submitted, you will see this page as confirmation. You can download your completed application if you wish, or you may exit to return to Amplifund’s main screen where all of your grant applications are stored. We hope you found this video helpful! If you have any questions, you can reach out to us at EPA.IFASGrants@Illinois.gov or 217-782-2027.