

Gaining Access

Gaining access to, and effectively utilizing, additional resources.

It is common to hear even savvy people say that things are "stacked in favor of huge corporations", "lobbying only benefits the big guys", or even that "government and the big corporations are in cahoots" --- but none of these things is true. While it may seem that only big corporations benefit --- and statistically it may be true --- the simple fact is that anyone can get the same benefits IF they go after them. However, another simple fact is that, while those huge companies have whole departments that know how to gain access to all that is available to them, most smaller companies simply do not have the knowledge or internal company resources to take advantage of all the incentives and supports that will help them to flourish.

Simpson & Partners levels the playing field and provides the expertise and tools that allow smart businesses to get what is their due. No matter how big or how small, every business can benefit from programs that exist, and were designed, specifically to help them grow. The process can be daunting --- hence those big departments in major corporations --- but, with the right tools and help, it is well worth the effort, with the average return on each lobbying dollar being \$21.00. At the most basic level, any new or expanding business can simply contact the

State Department of Commerce, which will provide a list of "economic development incentives". These are generally tied to job creation, which is why when you read the news about a company coming to, or expanding operations in, your state, the news will always highlight the number of jobs which will soon be available. That's a good start, albeit very limited --- but it is also where most folks stop --- and there is so much more! Here, step by step, is what the insiders know.

1. FOUNDATION. It all starts with information, information about your company --- from financials to mission to regulations on what can/can't be done --- and information about the possible resources that are available.

There are literally thousands of funds, programs, grants, and awards available, each with specific defined targets and applications, and the list is always changing. The first step is to find a core group of resources that are appropriate for your company/project as a foundation for securing benefits. Incentives from multiple resources with seemingly disparate goals can be stacked to provide truly exceptional returns, but knowing where to look and what to combine is part of a specialized skill set. This typically takes four to eight weeks or more.

2. APPLICATION. Once target funds have been identified, contact can be made with the granting agency for an information package that will lay out the specific requirements for receiving incentives. Depending on the requirements, telling your company/project story in terms that reflect, and are responsive to, the requirements is vital. Applications may be a few short pages, or almost overwhelming, running on to 100 pages or more --- and filling out every requirement is vital --- nothing can be ignored, overlooked, or left blank, as the first empty space can disqualify you!

3. DOCUMENTATION. The application itself will need to be accompanied by "exhibits" which support the story and give assurance to the grantor that monies will be well and appropriately spent.

4. PRESENTATION. While most people might assume that filling out the paper work is all it takes, the reality is that all those long hours of assembling and submitting information simply gets you a place in line. As the major corporations know, this is where real knowledge of "the system" makes a difference, because knowing how to move to the head of the line to present your requests in person and to win the respect and support of decision makers is critical. There will be meetings, phone calls, perhaps even in person presentations --- whatever it takes to build the relationships that make your company/project become memorable and meaningful to the granting entity.

5. DETERMINATION. Depending on the nature and size of the award, the actual decision to grant can take anywhere from 60 to 180 days or longer from the date of application. Sometimes, however, a pre-existing relationship can shorten the process and we have on rare occasions won and received incentives in as little as 30 days. Once a determination has been made, payout can be either single event or phased, with some programs running for years, such as utility bill

rebates each quarter for 5 years, or tax abatements annually for 10-15 years.

6. IMPLEMENTATION. Monitoring and documenting how incentives benefit the company/project strengthens the foundation and provides the ability to continue reaping rewards. Seeing a ripple effect provides insights into additional opportunities, and with new programs becoming available all the time it is possible to keep adding to the amounts received.

This is an arena where success truly breeds more success, but it is a marathon, not a sprint, which is why big companies with full time legislative staffs seem to have an advantage. So now you know.

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