

A survey was sent to 131 Conservation Partner Legacy (CPL) grant applicants from the FY09 and the FY10 application cycle. They were asked a series of questions on how the online application process performed and if they were able to find appropriate answers. The response rate was 44% (57 respondents). DNR Office of Management and Budget provided the following review of the results.

– EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Grant Application Findings

- 1) Technical difficulties with website
 - Respondents were required to fill in sections in order (couldn't skip around) and had to complete an entire section before saving.
 - Respondents were unable to print the application.
 - Creating the digital maps and uploading photos was difficult.
 - Space provided for answering questions was not adequate.
- 2) Redundancy of information
- 3) Complexity of information required (State-wide plans, Match Requirements)
- 4) Did not re-apply due to 1) change in priority, 2) application cycle 3) belief of nonfundable project.
- 5) Suggestions to improve application cycle included 1) technical computer improvements, 2) make it easier/shorter/simpler, 3) decrease redundancy, 4) clarify exactly what information you are looking for, 5) simplify the criteria requiring adherence to various plans.

OMBS Grant Application Recommendations

- Simplify and remove redundancy wherever possible.
- Consider reverting back to the 2009 applicant process where reviewers ensured applicants meet these criteria *OR* develop a set of measures based on the plans applicants are required to adhere.
- Consider minimizing links to other sites from the program manual and website.

Technical Recommendations

The online application process was a major source of frustration to applicants. Decreasing technical issues can improve the application process dramatically.

- The online application should allow for applicants to save their work throughout the process, and skip around as they have appropriate information (and not have to do it all in order).
- Text boxes should include word counts and either automatically stop typing after 1000 words or warn them that they are over 1000 words and only the first 1000 words will be saved.
- Allow applicants to print the application.
- Revise map system so it is easier to use.

Notable Findings on CPL Staff

92% in 2009 and 96% in 2010 of those who contacted staff were able to get the answer they needed. For the most part, applicants were very pleased with staffs availability and ability to answer questions.