

## Grant Writing

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## Grants

- What is a grant?
- Different types of grants (research, capitol, programmatic, etc)

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## Developing competitive grant proposals

- Become a field reader
- Read other institutions' grants
- Develop a professional network through programs, state and regional councils for resource development

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## Establish a plan for development

- Consistent with organizational mission
- In response to identified organizational needs
- In response to initiated projects
- In response to appropriate funding areas of opportunity

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## Factors that contribute to success

- Commitment of the organization
- Successful partnerships
- Targeted initiatives: build credibility
- On-going funding agency relationships
- On-going federal relations/technical assistance

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## Process

- Solicitation* is made by the funding agency (also, RFP, ITN, and other "buzz" words)
- 30-60 days before proposal is due
- Many funding agencies will ask for a *Letter of Intent* to submit a proposal
- The funding agency usually provides an opportunity for applicants to ask questions about the solicitation. This usually takes the form of a bidders conference (face-to-face or teleconference), electronic question submission protocol, written Q & A protocol, etc. Don't become involved in *ex parte* communication!
- Proposal is submitted

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## Process ~continued

- Funding agency usually sets a time limit for review of proposals and notification of awards
- The funding agency may ask you to make a presentation about your proposal. Sometimes referred to as *grant defense*.
- The presentation may count towards your overall score. Make sure you ask before you present. Be prepared!!!!
- Awards are made. You may or may not receive all of the funds you asked for.
- The funding agency makes your reviewer scores and comments available to you. If not, ask from them. Learn from your mistakes!
- There is usually a process for a bid -protest.

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## Key Elements of a Grant Proposal

- Application overview
- Need that generated the project proposal
- Planning
- Project goals & objectives
- Implementation timeline and responsibilities
- Key personnel
- Project management

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## Information you will need

- Current guidelines and application materials
- Current funding priorities
- Current funding levels and anticipated number of new awards
- Number of applications received vs. number funded
- Average grant award and high/low range
- Examples of highly ranked funded proposals

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## How to begin

- Read the application!
- Make sure you meet the qualifications
- Follow the directions.
  - If it says use 12 point, Times New Roman font then use 12 point, Times New Roman font
  - If it says 20 pages then submit ONLY 20 pages not 27 or 22
  - DON'T reorganize the presentation or order of the proposal even if it makes more sense to *you* to present the info another way. **You** will not be reviewing your own proposal
- Research the grant source and/or legislation pertinent to the grant. This is the *most important* step *before* writing your proposal!
- Read the project evaluation criteria- How will your proposal be evaluated and how much weight will be given to each section
- Draft an overview with key personnel involved. Plan, plan, plan!
- Determine who the senior author will be? How will the work be distributed? Make sure stakeholders are aware of how the money will be distributed *before* you allocate work!

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## Identify your need or opportunity

- Are you aware of your need? What criteria did you use? What is a gap analysis?
- Whom did you involve in your study/research?
- What documents did you use to assess this need?
- What standards did you use and where are they identified in your organization/community?
- What is the history of the need and the community's involvement in it? Have other solutions been sought? When and by whom?

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## Identify your solution

- Be clear and concise
- Research! Research! Research!
- Develop timeline. If your need is critical to your organization, community, etc you should have an implementation plan even if your proposal isn't funded.
- How committed is your organization, community to address the problem in some form? (Identify your commitment and the commitment of the community. i.e. letters of support)

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## Develop goals and objectives

- Keep the goals simple
- Make your goals measurable, measurable, measurable!
- State **how** you will meet the need, **who** will be affected, and **when** it will happen. (As a result of our post-placement case management intervention, employment retention for clients of vocational rehabilitation entering employment will increase by a minimum of 10% in the first quarter)
- Make sure goals are reflective of the needs stated in your proposal. The whole proposal needs to reflect relationships between all parts of it!

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## Implementation timeline and responsibilities

- Narrative
- Chart:
  - Key personnel (make sure key personnel are identified by name. Even if you aren't sure if that person will eventually work on the grant or in that capacity)
  - Management (who will be managing the grant? Report individual and collective experience)
  - Time (time allocation to the grant, grant loading chart, etc)
  - Sustainability (how do you plan to continue your project when the funds run out?????????)

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## General Evaluation Criteria

- Is the project rooted in theory, accepted practice?
- Are outcomes part of your evaluation?
- What tools (measures) will you use to determine your success? (Many times the funding agency will tell you how your project will be evaluated)
- How often will you measure the success of your project/proposal (monthly, quarterly, etc)?
- How will you disseminate critical information to stakeholders (contributors, participants, key personnel, community, taxpayers, etc.)?

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## Project Management

- Who will be the fiscal agent? Also referred to as the administrative entity, lead agency, etc. Does the fiscal agent meet the grant requirements?
- Under which established policies will the budget be handled?
- Who will oversee the monies?
- Who will report to the agency granting the monies and when? (in other words, are there subcontractors, consortium of partners, etc.) Many funding agencies award points for a consortium of partners not one agency applying for ALL the funds.

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## Project budget

- Is the project fundable?
- Be specific about all monies
  - Other state and federal grants
  - Community business and in-kind support
  - Is there a financial commitment from your organization
  - Some funding agencies will only allow 5, 10, 15% of monies for indirect or administrative costs
- How does your organization intend to sustain the project beyond the life of the grant?

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## Budget: typical cost categories

- Personnel
- Fringe benefits
- Travel
- Supplies
- Equipment
- Consultants or contractual
- Indirect and other costs

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## Budget ~ continued

- Always double check your math
- Always include a budget narrative and explanatory notes
- Always keep reviewers in mind. Errors, omissions of line item descriptions, or inflated budgets will detract from the overall credibility of your proposal

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## Writing

- Choose a grant writing team of individuals who have experience!
- WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT!**
- If your experience is in job placement of persons with traumatic brain injury don't write and submit a proposal to fund a juvenile justice program to put teenagers with substance abuse back to work.

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## Review your work!

- Before submitting your proposal to any grantor, have a colleague read it. The less knowledgeable the colleague is about your proposal, program, etc the better
- Remember, the individual reviewing your proposal may know "Nothing" about your program, areas of expertise, research, etc.
- Make it easy for the reviewer to find information. Write to the solicitation- think of it as a take home exam!

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## Important points!

- Just because you have experience writing grant proposals doesn't mean you are experienced in writing **all** grants
- Stay on top of the solicitations in your particular area of expertise.

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## Resources

- United States Department of Labor
  - <http://www.dol.gov>
  - Employment and Training Administration (ETA)
  - Office of Disability and Employment Policy (ODEP)
- United States Department of Education
  - <http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>
  - National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)
  - Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)
  - Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

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## Resources ~continued

- Federal Grants Notification
  - <http://fedgrants.gov/ApplicantRegistration.html>

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