Grantwriting 101

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Building Drug-Free Communities

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Workshop Objectives:

➢ Develop a better understanding of the sources, types, and reasons for funding.

➢ Review some basic writing suggestions that will give your writing greater strength.

➢ Network with others from Arkansas!

What is a Grant?

A PARTNERSHIP

They're ***investing*** in your vision of a better community.

How will you add value to their money? How will you further their goals?

You don't write a grant for an agency, you write a grant for a project idea.

What is a Grant?

A grant proposal is an appeal through a <u>formal plan</u> for services yet to be performed.

When approved, a grant becomes a <u>contract</u> between you and the funder to carry out your proposed plan.

Substitute the phrase "Show me the money!" with "Show me the plan!"

What are Your Odds?

Proposal success rates average 25 to 33%

More than half are rejected ON OR BEFORE first reading because:

✓ Applicant did not follow directions

✓ Proposal did not match program's intent

Types of Grant Funding

- Demonstration - trying out a new method or idea
- Planning - funds to plan thoroughly
- Implementation - putting a plan in place, or expanding a demonstration grant
- Expansion - funds to increase your service area or numbers
- Capacity Building - making agency improvements to serve clients better
- Operational - funds for your agency or program to continue services you currently provide
- Facilities/Structure

Group Discussion

What kind of grant is the grant or grant project idea you have brought today?

What data do you need to offer to support your project idea/plan?

Types of Funders

Family/private Foundations

Large or issue-oriented foundations

Government agencies (local/state/federal)

Corporations / Businesses

Understanding the Types of Funders

Family/private Foundations	Strategies
• Usually all-volunteer • Usually don't issue grant notices • Smaller gifts • Usually select the organizations they give to themselves	• Research their 990's • Deduce their interests from their giving • Find a connection • Send them information first, not a grant request

Understanding the Types of Funders

Large or issue-oriented Foundations

- Well-established and staffed
- Established giving history
- Gifts range in size
- Usually give through competitive RFP process

Strategies

- Review all you can: website, annual reports, publications
- Find your fit
- Check with previously funded programs (especially out-of-state)
- Ask for help
- Partner

Understanding the Types of Funders

Government Agencies (Local, State, Federal)	Strategies
• Priorities follow politics • Usually reactive, not proactive • Grant awards are usually large • Give through competitive RFP process • Often require collaboration	• Know local, state, and federal issues • Keep informed through contacts and issue groups • Know RFP schedules; check the web often • Build real partnerships

Understanding the Types of Funders

Corporations	Strategies
• Usually only fund areas where they have a corporate presence *but,* sometimes policies require local funding • Self-promotion • Often give goods in place of money • Often value collaboration	• Check your area; check with community officer for giving priorities and requirements • Connect your service with theirs • Promote their giving

Remember: Funding follows priorities:

Know the priorities, and you will make a better match of your plan to them.

Discussion: How can you find out a funder's priorities?

Activity: Anticipating the Funders' View

Your group is the Board of the Arkansas Regional Foundation and have $50,000 to distribute.

You have been approached by the Little Rock Food Pantry to request funding.

1. What do you want to know about the Agency?

2. What do you as the Foundation want as a "return" for your investment.

Keys to Improving Your Odds

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that good ideas often fail because of poor grant preparation.

Most Popular "Starts"
(both semi-misguided)

"I've got a great idea for *(a service or program)*. Can you find me a grant to do it?"

"I just heard about *(a funding source)*. How can we get a grant from them?"

The Starting Blocks

What is the problem and why is it important?

Who is affected by the problem?

Why are existing strategies/practices inadequate?

How is your idea better? What's different in your approach?

Who will benefit from your program/practice?

DO YOUR RESEARCH!!!

Before you type word one –

VERIFY that there is a match between the funders goals and your intentions.

READ THE PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT THOROUGHLY!

IF you meet eligibility criteria make contact with the program officer and attend the grantee meeting if convened.

ASK questions and get clarification around any requirements.

Structure the Proposal

Project Abstract/Summary
Introduction/History of your Organization
Problem Statement/Needs Statement/Community Assessment
Project Goals & Objectives
Strategic & Action Plans (Project Plan & Methodology)
Evaluation Plan
Budget & Budget Narrative
Future Funding & Sustainability

Everything else – Appendix/Attachments
      Qualifications, Letters of Support, Memorandums of Understanding

Structure the Proposal

Exactly as it is outlined in the program announcement. In the order of the:

➢ Sections – double check no sections missing or signatures

➢ Use required font & font size (Times New Roman, 12)

➢ Follow spacing guidelines (single space, margins)

➢ Budget narrative – check your math

➢ Do NOT go over page limits

➢ Do NOT submit late! Make sure to bind as requested with the proper number of copies.

Make Your Case – Tell Your Story with Passion

State your purpose and make a strong argument for your project up front.

Data is important, but so is the human interest story. You need BOTH!

Your writing style needs to be in a storytelling style (Op-ed), not an academic journal. You want to pull the heartstrings of the reviewer.

The person that tells the most compelling story is more likely to get the grant.

How to Make a Compelling Case

Something they know v. Something they don't know

Something frightening v. Something inspiring

Statements of ability v. Statements of need

Make the Reviewer's Job Easy

➢ Keep it SIMPLE! Use clear, direct language.

➢ Avoid acronyms

➢ Grammar and spelling are important

➢ Reframe their question in the beginning of your response

➢ Less is more

Passive vs. Active Voice

PASSIVE

It has been demonstrated by research that…

Following implementation of the third session, assessment measures will be taken…

The Take Back program is being implemented by our department…

ACTIVE

Research shows clearly that…

After the third session, we will measure…

Our department launched Take Back program this year…

Detail Illustrates Need

Instead of:	Try writing:
"There is growing poverty in Gypsum County."	"With a Census-reported poverty rate of 21.2%, Gypsum County families are the third-poorest in the state. A 23% increase in food pantry visits over the last six months suggests that the problem is growing."

Whom Will You Loan Money More Easily to:

"I would pay you back the $50 on Friday."

or

"I will pay you back the $50 on Friday."

Formulate SMART Objectives

S Specific

M Measurable

A Achievable

R Relevant (& Realistic)

T Timed

+ C (at the community level)

Measurable Objectives

POOR

It is anticipated that implementation of the new curriculum will result in better student scores.

It is expected that youth that participate in the literacy program will read better.

GOOD/BETTER

The implementation of the new curriculum program will result in a 5% increase in student PSAT exam scores.

Youth who participate in the summer literacy program will increase their reading level by 2 grade levels by the start of next calendar year.

Strategic & Action Planning

Provide a detailed implementation plan with specific tasks, timelines and responsible parties.

Explain how you will accomplish your stated objectives.

Be specific, but avoid over promising (under promise and OVER PERFORM!)

Use charts and graphs to assist the reviewer in visualizing your plan.

Evaluation

➢ Fundamental: Funders/Donors have a right to expect results for their investment (ROI).

➢ Build your program around your evaluation to ensure that you can collect and analyze measures repeatedly and show improvements over time (short, intermediate, long-term).

➢ Consider your audience when developing your Evaluation Communication Plan to report results.

➢ Don't make promises you can't keep!

Reviewer Criteria

Pay special attention to the reviewer criteria as this is what your proposal will be scored against.

Whenever possible, use their wording in your response.

Provide the reviewer criteria to an English teacher or journalist and ask them to evaluate your proposal before submitting. Allow enough time to make edits before deadline.

Following Up on your Proposals

What can you do during the waiting period?

- Send thank-you notes to those who wrote you letters of support or did you favors to develop the grant

- Keep in touch with your partners

- Continue to collect data that relates to your project

- Check the funder's website frequently

- Continue to cultivate your networks

- Look for additional funders

Submitting isn't the end – keep researching and planning

Continue to communicate with your community partners

Ask for feedback on your proposal, even if you're funded

Your project plan is developed – how else can you use it? Who else can you approach/apply for additional funding?

www.guidestar.org

Research

TIP:

*990's are public documents – looking at them is **not** spying!*

The 2-1-1 on 990's

➢990's are tax documents prepared by nonprofits, <u>including foundations</u>

➢990's have information about the funder's contact, the Board, and the giving history (past grant awardees and grant amounts)

Stay Connected!

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