Grant Writing Basics

Turning Ideas into Dollars

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Introductions

- Name
- Representing
- Area of Community Interest
What You Will Learn

- Attributes of grant writers
- Benefits of grant writing
- A new vocabulary
- Grant resources and grant components
- Funding sources
- Hallmarks of successful proposals
- Common problems & mistakes
A New Vocabulary

- Alphabet soup of acronyms
- FOA; RFP; RFA; CFP
- Facilities & Administrative Costs or IDCs
- PI/PD
- Fringe benefits
- Matching/cost sharing
- Assurances/regulatory compliances
How to Get Started
Grant Writing Fundamentals

- Start EARLY
- Do your homework
- Match your idea with a funding source
- Make contact with the funding source
- Read & re-read grant guidelines
- Consider collaborators/partners
- Review a successful proposal
Ideas for Grants
Clever & Compelling Ideas
Devon and Sweetgrass Hills, TOOLE COUNTY
photo by Dean Hellinger
Passion for the Project
Don’t Overstate the Need
Basic Tips

- Sort your thoughts
- Prepare an outline
- Prepare an abstract or summary
- Avoid jargon
- Be compelling/don’t overstate your case
- Keep it simple
- Revise and edit – three reviewers
Grant Thinking Outline

- Justification/Need
- Goals & Objectives
- Documentation (baseline data)
- Program/Intervention
- Evaluation/Measurement Tool
- Expected Results (outputs/outcomes/impact)
- Timetable
- Sustainability
Basic Parts of a Grant

- Title that fits the project
- **Statement of Need**
- Goal(s) and objectives
- Work plan – intervention
- Expected outcomes and evaluation
- Sustainability
- Dissemination plan – model for others?
- Budget and budget narrative
Grant Writing Resources

- Internet
- Foundations
  - The Foundation Center
  - The Chronicle of Philanthropy
- Colleges & Universities
  - MSU-Bozeman – Grants & Contracts, Office of Sponsored Programs
    http://www.montana.edu/wwwvr/osp/index.html
Attributes of Grant Writers

- **Activists** – act to bring about change
- **Visionaries** – see things others can’t see
- **Opportunists** – seize the opportunity
- **Initiators** – energizers/starters
- **Team players** – work well with others
- **Persistent** – persevere in difficult times
Additional Attributes

- Good organizational skills
- Good communication & writing skills
- Ability to think outside the box
- Ability to stay focused and on task
- Good computer and web-based skills
- Punctual and dependable
- Works well with others/teamwork
Benefits of a Proposal?

- Your ideas get spelled out on paper
- Expands your network/partnerships
- Expands your skills, knowledge & abilities
- Expands your level of visibility
- Adds to your professional development
- Teaches patience and perseverance
- Provides support for your community
The Universal Grant Triad
The Universal Grant Triad

1. **Data-driven**: Need well-documented background information, data and stats

2. **Results-oriented**: What are the outputs, outcomes and measurements?

3. **Forward-looking**: Is the project a model for replication? What are the plans for sustainability? How will results be disseminated?
What is Most Important?

- 20% - Statement of the Problem
- 30% - Proposed Approach/Intervention (Program Design, Objectives & Methods)
- 30% - Management Plan (Capabilities, Communication, Sustainability)
- 10% - Evaluation Plan
- 10% - Budget & Budget Justification
Don’t Miss the Boat
Types of Funding

- Grants (Formula, Block, Competitive, etc)
- Contracts
- Cooperative Agreements
- Loans
- Fellowships/Scholarships
- Gifts/Memorials
Funding Sources

- Federal Government
- State and County Government
- Foundations
- Corporate Sponsors
- Charitable Organizations
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Individuals
Places to Look for Funds

- Grants.gov
- Federal Register
- Individual Federal Agencies
- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
- Foundation Center
- The Chronicle of Philanthropy
- State and Local Resources
Federal Funds

- Over 900 grant programs
- Total of 26 grant-making federal agencies
- Over $360 billion distributed annually
- Amounts to about $173 million per hour of the 40 hour work week
Foundation Funds

- Montana Foundation Directory
  - MSU-Billings Library $25
  - Foundations operating in MT and other foundations funding projects in MT; 2012-2013 19th edition lists about 300 foundations

- Montana Community Foundation
- The Foundation Center – established 1956
  - Supported by 550 foundations
What to Look for in RFAs

- Purpose/Description
- Eligibility of Applicants
- Key Dates (letter of Intent & appl deadline)
- Funds Available (restrictions)
- Length of Project Period
- Cost Sharing/Matching (cash or in-kind)
- Review/Selection Criteria (points/percents)
What to Watch For

- Pre-application submission information
- Pre-application registration
- Web conference calls
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Webinars (live Q&As and PPTs)
- Regional on-site workshops scheduled
- Online submission of a brief proposal
Key Components

- State benefits of funding your proposal (compelling need)
- Focus on what is novel, creative, or new
- Name collaborators or partners
- Provide data on any preliminary work done
- Identify expected outcomes/benefits
- Address whether or not the project is replicable elsewhere
Goals & Objectives

- A **Goal** is a broad general statement focusing on the ultimate result being sought.

- **Objectives** are clear, concise, **Specific**, **Measureable**, **Achievable**, **Realistic**, **Time-bound** statements that are stepping stones to achieving the overall goal; thus, objectives are SMART.
Evaluation

- Inputs – staff, facilities, equipment, etc
- Activities – what your program does
- Outputs – products of activities
- Outcomes – benefits to participants
- Outcome Indicators – specific items
- Outcome Targets – numerical objectives
- Benchmarks – performance data
# Logic Model for Your Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve my golf game</td>
<td>Score below 45 on 9 holes</td>
<td>Reduce the number of putts per hole</td>
<td>- Buy an expensive putter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Take 2 lessons with pro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce the number of shots that end up in the rough</td>
<td>- Buy an expensive driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Go to driving range 2x/wk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Defining Program Outcomes

- What possible outcomes will I be able to measure?
- What outcomes are most clearly linked to “core business” of program?
- What outcomes are the most in your control?

Possible Measurable Outcomes for “Healthy Kids” program

- participants can answer questions about healthy eating and exercise habits
- participants change these habits
- participants lose weight and are fitter
Example of an “Outcome Statement” and “Outcome Chain”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Change</th>
<th>In What</th>
<th>For Whom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>understanding of proper eating and exercise in reducing obesity</td>
<td>among youth who have attended our classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Providing youth with facts on obesity and healthy lifestyles and tools to eat healthier and exercise

Increase in understanding of these among those attending program

More participating youth choosing healthier foods and exercising

Reduction in the obesity rate among participants
## Sample Outcome Measurement Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
<th>When will data be collected?</th>
<th>Who will collect data?</th>
<th>How will it be collected?</th>
<th>How will data collection be monitored?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in youth obesity</td>
<td>% of participants who have lost weight and feel healthier</td>
<td>pre- and post-program data collection and survey</td>
<td>6 months following program</td>
<td>Program staff will collect participant surveys</td>
<td>Mail survey to participants &amp; follow up with postcard 2 wks. later</td>
<td>Program director will track number of completed surveys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Budget & Justification

- Does the budget match the timeline and scope of the project?
- What makes you and your group MOST qualified to be funded?
- Why is your approach so unique, creative or innovative?
What Reviewers Look For

- Innovation – creative/novel ideas
- Evidence-based strategies
- Collaboration/partnerships
- Competency
Successful Proposals

- Meet all grant requirements
- Clear concise justification/need
- Clear goals and objectives
- Good methodology or design
- Good evaluation linked to objectives
- Qualified management/staffing
- Adequate time period and funding
- Good writing skills and editing
Problems & Mistakes

- Failure to meet grant requirements
- Failure to follow grant guidelines
- Weak or insufficient justification/need
- Unclear/vague goals and objectives
- Problems with design and/or methodology
- Problems with management/staffing
- Proposing too much for the time period
Problems & Mistakes (con’t)

- Sloppy writing and poor editing
- Lack of logical flow from need to plan
- Goals or objectives not measureable
- No link between objectives and evaluation
- Weak budget justification
- Items in budget that are not allowed
- Unrealistic budget amounts requested
Concluding Remarks

- Identify a need and/or innovative approach
- Identify a potential funding source
- Review successful proposal(s)
- Do your homework/draft a concept paper
- Re-read guidelines
- Draft proposal for review and comments
- Submit proposal
- Request reviewers comments
THANK YOU