Fundamentals of Grant Writing for Public Health

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Outline

• Basics of grant writing
• Finding funders
• Strategies for success
Basics of Grant Writing
Why do you want a grant?

- Well...money, of course, but....
- What else?
Essentials of Proposal Development

• Pre proposal development
• Partners, collaborators, supporters
• Goals and objectives
• Specific, measurable aims
• Methods, data collection, human subjects protection
• Outcomes and reporting
Pre proposal development

- Who, what, where, when – don’t be afraid to write it down and revise it often
- Begin to gather information –
  - about the problem or issue (focus, focus, focus)
  - about the population (specific, specific, specific)
  - about the setting you will work in
Pre proposal development

• Who else in the community or state works in this area?
  – Can I make connections?
  – Get support?
  – Who will do what?
Pre proposal development

• Do I have sufficient information about my organization? –
  – Budget
  – Services
  – Reach,
  – Success with similar initiatives
Pre proposal development

• TIMELINE for submission
  – When is the due date?
  – Will this be reviewed internally (how long will it take?)
  – Who would be a good reviewer to look at this before I submit?
  – Is a letter of intent (LOI) required or requested
Pre proposal development

• Develop a schedule for writing
  – Outline (2-3 days)
  – Introduction and background
  – Goals and objectives
Pre proposal development

• Required organizational information
  – Mission statement
  – Vision statement
  – Organizational history (timeline)

• Past projects – point to OUTCOMES not process

• BOD members, affiliations, bios
Typical proposal format

- Project Abstract/Executive Summary
- Project Description
- Applicant capabilities
- Program Plan
- Evaluation Plan
- Impact Statement
- Budget and justification
- Sustainability plan
- Letters of Support
- Additional Materials - appendices
Think you are ready to write?

• How many times have you read the RFP, funding announcement or application guidelines?
  – Read the **entire** RFP
  – Note due date (due or post marked?)
  – Note preferred delivery method
  – Follow pre-submission guidance
  – Call for clarification
Statement of Need

• Informs the reader about the issues.
• Presents the facts and evidence that support the need for the project
• Demonstrates your understanding of the problems
• The information used to support the case can come from literature, data, reports, authorities in the field, as well as from your agency's own experience.
• The statement should be succinct, yet persuasive.
Statement of Need

• Census data, published data - national to state to local
• Health status indicators, goals (HP 2010)
• Local data – the hardest to find
  – BRFSS, YBRFSS, IL State or County BRFSS
  – Focus groups; key informant interviews
  – Local survey, secondary data
• Community assessment
  – Asset mapping
• IRB considerations
Goals versus Objectives

• Goals are general and offer the evaluator an understanding of the thrust of your program.
• There is ONLY ONE goal; there may be multiple objectives.
• Objectives are specific and measurable outcomes.
• Be realistic.
Writing the goal statement

• Goal statements should tell what you hope to accomplish in the next 3-5 years
• Provide the direction-for the development of your project objectives
• Each goal statement has three features:
  • It tells what you want to do
  • It defines the target population
  • It tells the purpose
Writing the goal statement

• Be realistic - Can you really save the world with $10,000?

• Your goals must have a direct connection to your evaluation methods.....don’t say you can do something and then find yourself unable to prove you have.
Writing the goal statement

• Most reviewers have been in your shoes
• Reviewers can recognize “unreasonable”
• When your idea exceeds the “reasonable” a good idea may be pushed aside
Preparing Measurable Objectives

• Logical steps you need to take to accomplish your goals
• Details your strategy. The methods or “recipe” to accomplish the goal
• Identifies the time frame to achieve goals
• Specifies the population
Types of objectives

Outcome Objectives
• Shows measurable change in target group within specified time.
• Contains one of the following:
  – a proportion of the target population expected to show a change in a health indicator and/or
  – the amount of change expected in the indicator
Types of objectives

• Example of an outcome objective

Of the 400 high risk, substance abusing pregnant women identified for service in 2008, the prevalence of low weight births will be reduced from an anticipated 50% of live births to 35% of live births
Types of objectives

Process Objectives

Refers to something the target group will receive or do within a specified time frame.

Example:

By 12/31/08, thirty outreach workers will attend a full day training focused on the care of high risk, substance abusing pregnant women.
Program plan

• Describe what will be done with the grant support

• Is this new or ongoing?
  – Determines presentation approach and justification
  – If ongoing, what is different?
Program plan

• Provide the detail
  – Who’s in – who’s not
  – How will they be recruited, consented?
  – Describe the process step–by-step in a sequential manner
  – When will they be assessed – how, what instrument will be used (appendix)?
  – How will subjects be protected – what IRB will review and when?
Program Evaluation

• Quantitative
  – Survey

• Qualitative
  – Focus groups/interviews

• Quasi-experimental
  – Non-randomized pre-test/post-test
Program evaluation is good for you!

• You’ve put a lot of time and energy into developing a good idea.
• You hope it will succeed and spread.
• Sound evaluation convinces others.
• Evaluation shows you and others how to do it and improve it.
• You won’t get funded without some level of evaluation.
Program Abstract or Executive Summary

- The abstract may be the MOST IMPORTANT part of the application
- Often, it is ALL that most of the reviewers see.
- Provides a brief but comprehensive overview of ALL the parts of the application.
- Organize the abstract components in the order of the application.
- Carefully follow any special instructions.
- Make sure late changes are in abstract
Dissemination Plan

Communication Tools

- State and national conferences
- Publications, i.e. journal articles
- Newsletters
- Web Sites
- Podcasts, Webinars
- Interactive Television; Videoconferences
- Commercial Television Ads or PSA’s
- News Releases
- Newspaper Ads
- Community Organization Meetings
- School Classes
- Speakers’ Bureau
# Project timeline

**Goal:** Reduce falls of homebound elders by 50% in Champaign County by 2011.

**Objective:** Institute a community fall prevention program by **December 31, 2008.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.a. Increase social service referrals and follow-up 75% of homebound elders.</td>
<td>October 2008</td>
<td>Project Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.a. Increase direct care services for 90%.</td>
<td>August 2008</td>
<td>Field staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developing a budget

• Read the guidance carefully. What about:
  – In-kind contribution
  – Administrative allowance
  – Indirect cost allowance
  – Matching funds

• Develop a budget shell

• Determining the amount to apply for

• About 80% of the budget will be personnel
Developing a budget

• The budget must match the scope of work (objectives)
• Request the amount of funds you need to do the project you propose
• Don’t ask for items to reach a budget maximum
• If travel required (and paid for), include it
Developing a budget

• Reviewers want to see a commitment on the part of the leader – 10-20% effort, minimally

• Is this a one year or multiple year project?
  – Estimates for each year separately, total
  – Factor in salary increases, inflation

• Include cost of evaluation
Budget justification

• Be as detailed as possible
  – Provide actual costs or estimates for all items (computer, travel)
  – Show detail of personnel costs – Salary effort and length of time, role,
• Are there in –kind resources contributed to the project? Detail
• Are indirect costs or administrative cost allowed?
## Project timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hire coordinator</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Recruit two social workers</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identify target elders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finding Funders
Categories of Awards and Funding Agencies

- Grant
- Contract
- Cooperative agreement
- Government
- Private Foundations
- Business and Industry
Finding Funders

• Keep an open mind about which funding source you will approach
  – Don’t get stuck on one agency
  – Determine how your topic could be broadly viewed or fit into specific interests of a variety of agencies or funding sources
Finding Funders

• Agency home pages
  – Check for mission statements/audience/research interests
  – Program announcements/RFPs
  – Sign up for “alert” emails when possible
  – www.cdc.gov
Finding Funders

• Professional organizations
  – Publications
  – Electronic mailing lists
  – www.apha.org
Finding Funders

• Networking
  – Never underestimate the power
  – Get to know everyone who might possibly help you
  – Make your name/face known
Thank Goodness for the Web

- Illinois Researcher Information Service (IRIS)  [http://www.library.uiuc.edu/iris/](http://www.library.uiuc.edu/iris/)
Finding Funders

• Key Word Search
  – Key words will match up exactly with interests or topics of a specific interest in many search engines
  – You must use the EXACT words listed in the search engine
  – Full text search vs. a narrow, specific search
Finding Funders

• What do you do when you don’t find a match?
  – Try rearranging your phrase
  – Try different key words, topics or descriptive words
  – Use key words from related fields
  – Broaden or narrow your search
Web Guide to Funding Agencies

- Foundation Center: [http://fdncenter.org/](http://fdncenter.org/)
Strategies for Success
Your Success Depends On:

• Good idea
• Good match between your project and the agency
• Good plan (short-term and long-term)
• Well-written, focused proposal
• Don’t make the reader work – lead them by the hand to the only solution . . . Give you money
Most common mistakes

- Missing the deadline – not reading the RFP
- Failure to follow instructions
- Failure to provide contact information
- Sloppy, error filled submission
- Failure to use appropriate forms
- Unclear relationships between needs and intervention
- Failure to secure necessary support
Most common mistakes

• Incomplete intervention description
• Unclear goal and objectives
• Target group not clear, exclusion criteria unstated
• Asking too much for too little
• Asking too little for too much
• Missing attachments
• Irrelevant support letters
Consider Your Audience

– Visual cues to make proposal reader-friendly
  • White space - a document’s best friend
  • Informative headings
  • Headers/footers
  • Appropriate and easy-to-read typefaces
  • Labeled graphics
  • Lists (for showing sequence of tasks or grouping similar items)
The good news about funding

- Most grants are NOT funded the first time out.
  - Your success rate increases with each resubmission.
- Most proposal formats are similar enough you can:
  - Modify the same proposal for different sponsors
  - Reuse the same standard “boilerplate” material for different proposals
- Only submit one proposal for each idea at a time
Strategy

• Good idea and well-thought plan
• Organizational buy-in
• Identify funding source
• Determine interest of funding source
• Write proposal (FOLLOW THE RULES)
  – Foundation Center Website
• Proof readers
• Revise, revise, revise, and revise
• Organizational approval
• Mail proposal (with optimistic pessimism)
Traits of a Grant Writer

- Salesmanship
- Communication skills
- Ingenuity and flexibility
- Administrative skills
- Good human relations
- Persistence, dedication, patience
- Political awareness and action
- Integrity
Some Additional Thoughts

• Funders are more likely to put their money where it can do the MOST good and reach the MOST people. Rural areas at a disadvantage.

• Relationships with the community have to be apparent. Less to choose from in a rural area.
Websites for Proposal Writing

• Foundation Center Proposal Writing Short Course:  
  http://fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop.html

• Grantproposal.com: Aesthetics and Technicalities for Grantwriters:  
  http://www.grantproposal.com
Websites for Proposal Writing

• Nonprofit Guides of Grantwriting Tools: http://www.npguides.org/
• Handout
Questions?
Thank you for your time!!