Grant Writing 101

The most significant barrier to successfully finding funding for your organization:

- a. Your organization is unaware of potential funding sources
- b. Your organization does not have an organized and coordinated approach to researching and submitting competitive proposals
Best Advice You Will Ever Receive

- Start Early!

Best Advice You Will Ever Receive

- General Information for all grants
  - Mission and vision
  - Half page description of your agency
  - Document existing partners
  - Document successes
  - Promote your story
Two Biggest Mistakes Applicants Make

› 1. CHASING FUNDING:
› - e.g. “How can we spend the $200,000 that is available?”

› 2. IGNORING THE PURPOSE OF THE GRANT:
› - e.g. “We want a school nurse.”

Key Initial Questions to Ask Yourself:

› What is the purpose of the grant?

› Why would the funder want to fund our project?
Different Types of Funding

- Foundation grants
- Corporate giving
- Government grants

Foundation Grants

- Fewer guidelines, usually want short narratives.
- Set their own priorities.
- Built on relationships
Corporate Giving

- Usually targeted to where the employees are located.
- Funding can be tied to marketing.
- Priorities are set internally and can change when management changes.

Government Grants

- Funding is set by a public agenda.
- Clear RFP, usually with points assigned.
- Requires more reporting and evaluation.
- Learn the “lingo”.
Planning and Project Development Tip

- Schedule an inclusive “brainstorming” meeting at least six weeks before the proposal is due and develop a comprehensive “to do” list.
- Your proposal should be so well planned that an individual who knows nothing about your community and this type of program can use it as a “blue print” for implementing, operating, and evaluating the program.

Planning and Project Development Tips

- Read the RFP several times while writing the grant.
- Follow the RFP directions in detail.
- Attend TA sessions if offered.
Needs Assessment Tips

- Your needs assessment should provide the justification as to why funding this particular project is so important.
- Make the funder feel obligated to fund your program.

Needs Assessment Tips continued

- Involve your partners in the needs assessment- survey parents, businesses, school, CBOs
- Collect data from local, state and national sources
Community Assessment Mistakes

- Assuming the funder is familiar with your area.
- Relying on previous community assessments.
- Using old data.
- Ignoring your “target population”
- Ignoring the existing services in the community.

Goals and Objectives Mistakes

- The goals do not relate to the needs identified in the community assessment.
- The objectives do not provide a clear means of measuring whether or not the goals have been achieved.
- The objectives are not stated in precise quantified terms.
- The goals and objectives do not relate to the RFP.
**Goals and Objectives Mistakes (continued)**

- The objectives are not time sensitive.
- The objectives can not possibly be obtained by the end of the project.
- Process and outcome measures are not included.
- Objectives and outcomes are not measurable.

**Goals and Objectives Tip**

- Keep it SIMPLE !
- Keep it REALISTIC !
- Keep it PRECISE !
Time Line Tip

- Include a chart that identifies each project related activity, responsible staff and community partner who is responsible for accomplishing each objective.

Time Line Mistakes

- A concise chart, which includes each project related activity is not included.

- If a time line is not requested, you can include one in the appendix to show evidence of planning.
The funder must believe that the applicant (individually and the partners as a group) is the best possible entity to receive this funding and has determined appropriate responsibilities and lines of authority.

An organization chart is helpful, especially when you have several partners.

**Organizational Capability and Project Management Mistakes**

- Does not justify why the applicant is qualified to receive funding.
- Does not adequately describe the day to day program management.
- Does not explain how the partners will work together (responsibilities and lines of authority)
- Very general regarding coordination and communication
Community Partners Responsibility and Commitment Tip

- The roles and responsibilities for each partner must be evident and in line with the information contained in the letters of commitment.

- RELYING ON GENERAL LETTERS OF SUPPORT IS INADEQUATE !!!!

Community Partner Responsibility and Commitment Mistakes

- No tangible evidence of partner commitment.

- No tangible evidence of general community commitment.
**Evaluation Tip**

- Describe a comprehensive evaluation process that provides periodic feedback (at least quarterly). This feedback will be used to:
  - Modify the program during the current year.
  - Generate additional funding.
  - Plan program modifications for future years.

**Evaluation Mistakes**

- Is not realistic (requires too many resources for a grassroots initiative).
- Too general.
- Does not identify a process for periodic feedback and subsequent program modification.
Budget Tip

- Provide a narrative of the budget by category, be as specific as possible.
- Include a matching funds summary table that documents partner’s commitment.
- Delineate funding sources- in-kind, fees, other funding.
- Show the cost per person and compare to costs of more serious interventions.

Budget Mistakes

- Does not provide a detailed line item summary
  - Common Example:
    - Does not break out salary and benefits (including each component).
    - Requests $5,000 for travel but does not include a per mile calculation.
    - States that there is $10,000 in local matching funds but does not provide specifics.
Sustainability Tips

- Do not simply state that “you will continue to apply for all available grants”. You must also include other options such as: billing for some services rendered and/or local organizations providing funding for part of a position.
- This is where agency experience and commitment of community partners is particularly important.

Sustainability Mistakes

- Does not include a realistic and feasible plan to ensure continued funding of the project.
- Plan only addresses issue continuing to seek grant funding.
- Does not phase in this future during the grant period.
In Conclusion

- Start early!
- Involve “everyone”
- Settle all of the planning issues before submitting proposal.
- Follow the directions.
- Spend a great deal of time on your budget.
- Include a believable sustainability plan.