GRANTSMA NHIP 101

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Objective:

• Review the basics for preparing a grant proposal and highlight the importance of presenting your request persuasively
Topics of Today’s Presentation

- Why grant proposal writing?
- Finding funding sources
- Basic elements of a grant proposal
- Submitting the proposal
- The money is yours – now what?
- Final thoughts on grant proposal writing
What Are Grants?

• A federal grant is monetary assistance that is provided to support a public good
• Other public grants (e.g., state, municipal) generally have the same intent
• Private grants (e.g., non-profit foundations, industry) may have other purposes
• Grants give you the opportunity to address a need identified by both you and the funder as a community concern
Initial Planning

- Step 1: Identify and define your project
- Step 2: Identify funding sources
- Step 3: Grant proposal writing
Identify and Define Your Project

- Identify your need and create a project or program to address that need
- Make sure you ask for support for a manageable project; you may want to break a bigger project down into smaller components and do them one at a time
Identify Funding Sources

- Federal & State
  - grants.gov
  - Individual federal agency email subscriptions
  - State agency email subscriptions
Tailor Your Request

• Tailor your request to the source’s announcement and requirements
• Remember to include all the items the funding source requires
• Check with your grants office for standard elements (the institutional employer ID number, DUNS number, indirect cost rate, etc.)
• Follow the headings in the opportunity announcement
Assemble Your Grant Proposal Writing Team

- Who should be on this team?
  - Project Coordinator
  - Teachers
  - Administrators
  - Parents
  - District Grant Writer

- Why a team?
  - Division of labor (writing, research, editing, etc.)
  - More opportunities to identify gaps, grammatical and spelling errors, etc.
  - Brainstorming ideas for the project/program
Review the Request For Proposal (RFP) and Application Guidelines

- Eligible applicants
- Deadlines & submission guidelines
- Funding range or maximum grant award
- Funding focus (Geographical, Community need, etc.)
- Application format
- Allowable & non-allowable expenses (personnel, materials, etc.)
- Other criteria and eligibility requirements
Write the Proposal

• Common Elements of a Proposal
  • Cover sheet – general applicant information (administrative)
  • Table of contents
  • Abstract – brief, concise (one page or less)
  • Executive summary – mission statement, background
  • Problem or needs statement
  • Goals & objectives
  • Project design or methodology (including personnel)
  • Evaluation
  • Budget & budget narrative
  • Attachments – resumes, letters of collaboration, etc.
Abstract Presentation

• Clear, concise, overview of the project
• Avoid use of first person
• Stand alone description of the project (may be the only part of the application the reviewer reads)
• Cover all key elements (anticipated outcomes, whom & how many it will impact, key activities, who involved)
• Often used to route the grant to the appropriate reviewer(s)
• Often number of paragraphs or word count limited by funder
Persuasive Presentation

- Clarity of concepts and methodology
- Use of active verbs
- Thoroughness and conciseness
- Inclusion of all elements needed for evaluation
- Well-written text
Funding Request/Need Statement

- The funding request/need statement is your opportunity to show you clearly understand the need the funder is trying to resolve and prove that your project is worthy of their investment
Organizing & Writing the Funding Request/Need Statement

- Establish a foundational statement – what is the need and how do you plan to address it?
- Build your case with data
- Be succinct & persuasive
- Anticipate questions
- Use active voice, avoid first person references
- Draw a logical conclusion that leads into the goals and objectives – what will be the result of your project?
- Address sustainability – how will the project continue after their investment?
- Follow the guidelines exactly
Funding request for inner city exercise program:

I want to receive funds to establish an after-school exercise program in inner city schools. My idea is to get public school teachers to volunteer time after school to work with kids who are not getting enough exercise. I think that many of society's problems are the result of not enough exercise among kids after school. I estimate that a grant of $10,000 would be a good amount for this project. If the program works, I would like to establish another program to let kids have sports activities on weekends.
Funding Request/Need Statement

- Was the previous paragraph a good example of a well written statement?
- What can/needs to be added?
Funding Request/Need Statement

Some Suggestions for Improvement:

- Title
- Purpose
- Project population and methodology
- Project personnel and qualifications
- Budget request
- Budget narrative
- Evaluation/reporting of results and expected outcomes
Funding Request/Needs Statement

• The original paragraph description didn't provide enough detail to judge whether the project would be a reasonable one.

• The suggestions for improvement will provide enough details for the reader to be able to understand what activities are going to take place and how the budget numbers are derived. Now it is much easier to evaluate whether the idea is sound, whether its implementation would be feasible, and whether the costs to support the project are reasonable. It gives the impression that the writer has put thought into developing a coherent project and that he or she would be capable of conducting it and obtaining useful results.
Goals and Objectives

• Goals defined:
  • Goals are a concise statement of the project’s overarching purpose

• Objectives defined:
  • Objectives are the measurable elements of the goals: Who is going to do what, when they will do it, and how it will be measured

• Outcomes defined:
  • Outcomes are quantifiable results of actions taken in pursuit of the goal
Project Design or Methodology

• Most lengthy and detailed section (most heavily weighted)
• Breaks your objectives down into multiple, task oriented activities required to complete the project
• Each activity should flow logically to the next
• May include a timeline and organization chart
• Include all the essentials: who, how long, where, and how
• Are you using tactics proven in previous studies? If so, identify that source and why you believe it will be beneficial for your project
• Be sure to follow the format provided in the RFP, e.g., headings and subheadings organized by the required elements of the proposal
Evaluation

• Who is responsible for evaluation and reporting?
• What measurement tools will be used?
• How often will progress and/or success be measured?
• When will reports be prepared regarding progress?
Budget Development

Common budget categories include personnel, fringe benefits, equipment, supplies, contractual, and travel

- Dream big with the initial budget
- Review grantor’s range and allowable expenses
- Don’t include non-allowable expenses (common exclusions are salaries, food, etc.)
- If over budget, determine what expenses are “luxuries” or could be acquired through other partners/funders
Budget Development

• All expenses must be reasonable and project specific
• Include partner contributions – in-kind and cash—if required/allowed
• Use a budget format recommended by the funder. If none is recommended use an Excel document
• Ensure that anything you ask for in the budget is at least mentioned in your proposal
• NEVER include a miscellaneous category
Budget Narrative

Clearly explain how you plan to spend the investment.
• Briefly but fully explain each item in your budget
• Reiterate the cost for each item – if it’s in the budget, it should be here!
• Include computations - 3 textbooks x 15.00/each x 25 students = $1,125
• Recheck your math! All calculations must be correct and equal the project budget total
Documentation

• Cite any resources from which you get data, statistics or documentation of effectiveness
  1. Case studies
  2. Objective statistics
  3. Surveys
  4. Relevant graphs and charts
  5. Focus group results
Review Process

When your proposal is complete, be sure and do the following:

• SPELL CHECK (but don’t rely on that alone!) and review grammar
• Compare sections to funder’s criteria
• Check to ensure each section flows and is logical
• Recheck all your math
• Review format (font size, margins, page count, etc.)
• If uploading to an online site, ensure that you are using the version of Word or other software they require
• If cutting and pasting from Word to an online form, ensure that word count or character count meets their requirements and erroneous characters are corrected
• Be sure to attach all requested documents (and only allowed documents)
Grant Submission

• Procure all appropriate approval signatures (generally, internal signatures prior to submission; authorized institutional signature on proposal)

• Submit the grant on time – or better yet – EARLY!

• Use the grantor’s required submission process
  • Online – most common– if you submit after the given deadline time, access will be refused
  • Mail/hand delivery/courier service – sometimes requires multiple copies. Few are submitted this way now; make sure whether deadline is postmark or receipt
  • E-mail or fax – rare. Some are still emailed
Now You Wait…

• The RFP or web site should indicate when to expect notification
• Don’t contact the funder about the status until the notification date(s) have passed
• Promptly acknowledge notification – even if the answer is no
The Money is Yours…Now What?

- CELEBRATE!!!!!!!!
- Put your dream in motion!
- Purchase supplies, equipment, etc.
- Implement all project and promotional activities in the appropriate timeframe
- Keep concise records and conduct all measurement activities
- Prepare funding reports as required
Why Did They Say No?

• Didn’t include everything they required
• Didn’t follow word or page count limits
• Submitted irrelevant material
• Misspelled words and calculation errors
• Missed the deadline
• Your problem isn’t a problem
• Your solution doesn’t address the problem
• No measurable objectives to determine progress (what’s the biggest bang for their buck?)
• Used expensive paper, flashy presentation folders, expensive videos, etc.
Summary/Final Thoughts

• Follow guidelines and criteria exactly
• Proposal should be comprehensive, clear and concise
• Review, revise, and then review again. Get an outside reader to proofread
• Spend funds as indicated in your proposal
• Keep records of activities, receipts, test results, etc.
• Prepare & submit reports to funders on time
• Remember: often only 5-10% of submitted proposals are funded. But don’t give up – most failed proposals are eventually funded if resubmitted
More Information/Readings

  (especially starting page 9) The National Science Foundation’s proposal writing tips
- [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/writing_application.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/writing_application.htm)  
  Links to National Institute of Health grant programs and proposal tips
- [http://grantspace.org/training/courses/introduction-to-proposal-writing](http://grantspace.org/training/courses/introduction-to-proposal-writing)  
  The Foundation Center’s online short course on preparing proposals for submission to nonprofit organizations
  A search tool on Grants.gov, the federal grants portal, to find federal grant opportunities.
  A Learning Center about Federal Grants on the Grants.gov website