TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE GRANT WRITING

OFFICE OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
AGENDA

- Grant Preparation
- The Response!
- Funders/Resources
PRE-PROPOSAL
OVERALL TIPS

- Idea → → → → → → → Proposal
- Do the necessary homework - figure out the feasibility of the concept
- Understand the needs required to write a proposal
- Articulate the organization’s capabilities, the community needs and support, or the solution to the problem
OVERALL TIPS

- Address the needs of the funding agency
- Compliment strategic planning/organizational planning - proposed idea should further, enhance or strengthen a stated goal, either short-term or long term, of the organization
- Make sure there is internal organizational support throughout the process
KNOW YOUR ORGANIZATION

- History
- Current Mission, Vision, Values
- Function and methodology of the organization
Know Your Organization

- Leadership – board, parent organization
  - who makes the decisions? who can be held accountable?
- Who is charge and capable of taking on a project?
  - personnel specific to the proposal's success should be identified by position, expertise and credentials, and have the time!
- Overall Budget - information on the size, scope, financial stability, breadth of resources, and organizational commitments, restrictions
- Annual Reports - excellent way to communicate the success and capability of your organization
EXPLORE THE IDEA

- All proposals come from an original idea!
- Most successful proposals are concepts that have been dreamed of, discussed with others and carefully thought through before work on a grant proposal begins
- Clearly Identify Local Needs/Local Issues – breakdown of the problem and solution that address the need
EXPLORE THE IDEA

- Identify Gaps – could be services, information, funding
- Gather information:
  - Anecdotal information or statements generally are not sufficient
  - Basic information obtained from surveys, research, official records, etc. is essential to be able to develop the proposal and to demonstrate success of the funded idea
Funders not likely to fund an entire project, break down project ideas into pieces

Sugar Creek Elementary Energy Project
Cost - $1 million

Project 1 – Solar
Cost - $400,000

Project 2 – Electric School Bus
Cost - $150,000

Project 3 – Lighting Upgrades
Cost - $100,000

Project 4 – New Efficiency HVAC System
Cost - $350,000
FURTHER DEVELOP THE CONCEPT

- Define the specific goals, for example:
  - Internal issues such as capital improvements, infrastructure development, staff growth or program expansion
  - External issues such as populations served, behavior modified, or community changes accomplished

- Goals should be SMART
FURTHER DEVELOP THE CONCEPT

Define Outcomes: generally, begin with a verb like increase, expand, or improve, how do you define success?

| Quantitative vs. Qualitative | Changes in behavior or condition that reflect a positive impact | Data available | Directly attributable to your idea |

Achieving an outcome indicates fulfillment of purpose and program toward long-term impact
DEVELOP THE PROJECT’S BUDGET

- Clearly identify the gaps and needs
- Idea should coincide with the need
- Costs should align with the tasks and needs

Develop a realistic project budget:
- Personnel
- Fringe (benefits)
- Travel
- Construction
- Equipment
- Contractual
- Supplies/Services
- Other
- Indirect
PLANNING TOOL - LOGIC MODEL

- A tool to chart your organization's planned work and intended results for a given project

**Inputs (Resources):** The human, financial, and physical resources that support your grant-funded project or program. These include grant funding, cash and/or in-kind matching funds, staff and volunteer time, facilities, equipment, transportation, and community partners.

**Activities (Strategies):** What your project does with the inputs/resources. Your goals.

**Outputs:** These are concrete, quantified indicators of productivity. Delivering what you proposed.

**Outcomes:** The short-, intermediate, and long-term benchmarks for your target population during and after program activities.

**Impacts/Impact Statement:** The fundamental change that is anticipated as a result of your project.

Adapted from: https://blog.ecivis.com/bid/109854/your-grant-proposal-s-blueprint-the-logic-model
PLANNING TOOL – GRANT PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- Contact Information
- Address/Website
- Project Specific Concept Paper
  - Title
  - Abstract/Executive Summary
  - Project Description (Short/Long)
  - Project Period
  - Logic Model
- Key Staff List with Credentials/Resumes
- Executive List (i.e. Board)
- Detailed Budget with Line Items
- Financial Statements
- Annual Reports
- Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation
- Tax ID (EIN, SSN)
- Status (i.e. 501c3 tax exemption letter, 990)
- Images
- Letter of Commitment Templates
- Board Resolutions, other Approval Documents
HELLO
I AM...
PREPARED

WRITING THE PROPOSAL
GRANT REQUEST

- Initiated by a Funder – foundation federal/state/local agency, business, or other non-governmental organization
- Specific set of criteria, unique to each funder
- If the writer has been diligent in the pre-writing phase, much of the background work has been done and what is left is to develop the idea to fit funders request
- No matter how much you like your own system/format - follow theirs!

Source - https://conservationbytes.com/2015/05/04/twenty-tips-for-writing-a-research-proposal/
SAMPLE GRANT PROPOSAL CONTENTS

- Introduction
- Purpose of Proposed Project
- Statement of Need
- Project Description
- Goals and Objectives
- Methodology
- Organizational Capability
- Budget
- Documentation of Support (letters of commitment, intent, leveraged funding)
- Approval forms and clearances (authority from your organization to move forward, if awarded)
PAY ATTENTION TO DETAILS

- Determine **Eligibility** first and foremost
- Format
  - Number of total pages, paper size, character limits margins, fonts and font sizes may be specified
  - Spelling, grammar, math
- Understandability
  - Do not try to impress the funding agency with an extensive vocabulary to the point of making the proposal unreadable
  - Also be careful with jargon, acronyms and “inside” terminology that persons outside your organization may not understand
- Completeness
  - Go over the package repeatedly to make sure that all the requested components are present
REVIEW & SUBMITTAL

- Understand how the funder wants to have it submitted
  - Via online systems, physically mailed
  - File formats (pdf, excel, other file types)
- Make sure the proposal is attractive, organized - it is a reflection of your organization
- Create a Checklist – then Review, Review, Review
- Submittal – Don’t be late!! Create a timeline that allows you to submit a day or two early. Unforeseen circumstances can make the effort you put into preparing the package futile
- Follow the funders rules for submission
- Make sure to receive a response from the funder – application has been received on their end
THE RESPONSE

- Positive – Congratulations!
  - Now comes the work!
  - Period of budget negotiation, contract development, possible site visits, establishment of accounting procedures and financial reporting
  - Establishment of a reporting system to measure the progress of the funded project

- Negative – It’s Okay!
  - If the response is negative do not give up
  - If possible, request a debrief from funder to look for ways to improve
  - Re-evaluate your process and, at the appropriate time, try again

- Either result – Write another one!
LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL RESOURCES
FUNDERS

MISSION DRIVEN

DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ACCOUNTABILITY & REQUIREMENTS

WITH EVERY GRANT THERE WILL BE RESPONSIBILITY AND WORK – DON’T TAKE ON MORE THAN YOU CAN HANDLE

STAY ORGANIZED TO BE ABLE TO RESPOND QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY

BE AWARE OF REGISTRATION TIME – DAY OF VERSUS DAYS/MONTHS OR SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS
LOCAL RESOURCES

- Marquette University Foundation Funding Guide (fee) - http://www.wifoundations.org/
Samples of State funding for businesses and local governments:

- Main Street Bounceback Program (WEDC) - https://wedc.org/programs-and-resources/mainstreet-bounceback-grants/
- Community Development (WEDC) - https://wedc.org/community/
- Rural workforce and economic development grants (WEDC) https://ruralwi.com/
STATE RESOURCES

- State Funding cont’d
  - Energy Innovation Grant Program (PSCW) - [https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/OEI/EnergyInnovationGrantProgram.asp](https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/OEI/EnergyInnovationGrantProgram.asp)
  
  Grants available from many agencies Wisconsin
- Additional State Resources
  - Wisconsin Small Business Development Center - [https://wisconsinsbdc.org/](https://wisconsinsbdc.org/)
  - Center for Technology Commercialization - [https://wisconsinctc.org/](https://wisconsinctc.org/)
- Agencies receiving Federal Formula Funding & Competitive Funding
• 2021 US Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act H.R. 3684) - $1 Trillion ($550 billion in new federal spending)
  o Focuses on clean energy, high-speed internet access, roads bridges, airports, passenger rail, electric vehicles, power and water systems, environmental remediation
  o Addresses climate change, including strategies to reduce the climate change impacts of the surface transportation system

• Building a Better America - Guidebook
FEDERAL

- Federal Agency Grants - Grants.gov
  - 7-10 days to register in this system
  - Use the above to track specific grant programs and search
  - Some federal agencies allow you to apply through this system
ADDITIONAL TIPS/RESOURCES

- Subscriptions services and consultants available – generally at a cost
- List of organizations/business that offer grant services - https://lwm-info.org/1655/Grants
QUESTIONS?
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