Grant Writing Workbook

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Introduction to Grant Writing

1. What is your interest in grant writing?

2. What is your experience with grant writing? What do you know about grant writing?

       Federal grants
       Private foundations
       Public grants
       Corporate foundations

       As an Evaluator
       As a Reviewer

3. Are there negative aspects to writing proposals or grant writing?

4. What is grant writing?

✴ Homework

Explore these websites:

> http://www.npguides.org/index.html
> http://www.cpb.org/grants/grantwriting.html
> http://www.scn.org/ip/cds/cmp/modules/res-prp.htm

What did you learn from these websites in relationship to grant writing?

What are the important and common elements of a grant proposal?

What did you gain from examining these websites?

Overview of the Proposal or Grant Writing Process

Carlson (1995) created an overall framework or process for writing a proposal or grant (items 2-5). Items 1, 6, and 7, are additional modifications to Carlson's framework.

Step	Activity
1	Pre-Proposal Activities
2	Develop A Clear Program Plan
3	Research Funders Thoroughly
4	Target Your Proposals Carefully
5	Write A Concise Proposal
6	Manage the Grant
7	Evaluate and Report Results To Funding Agency
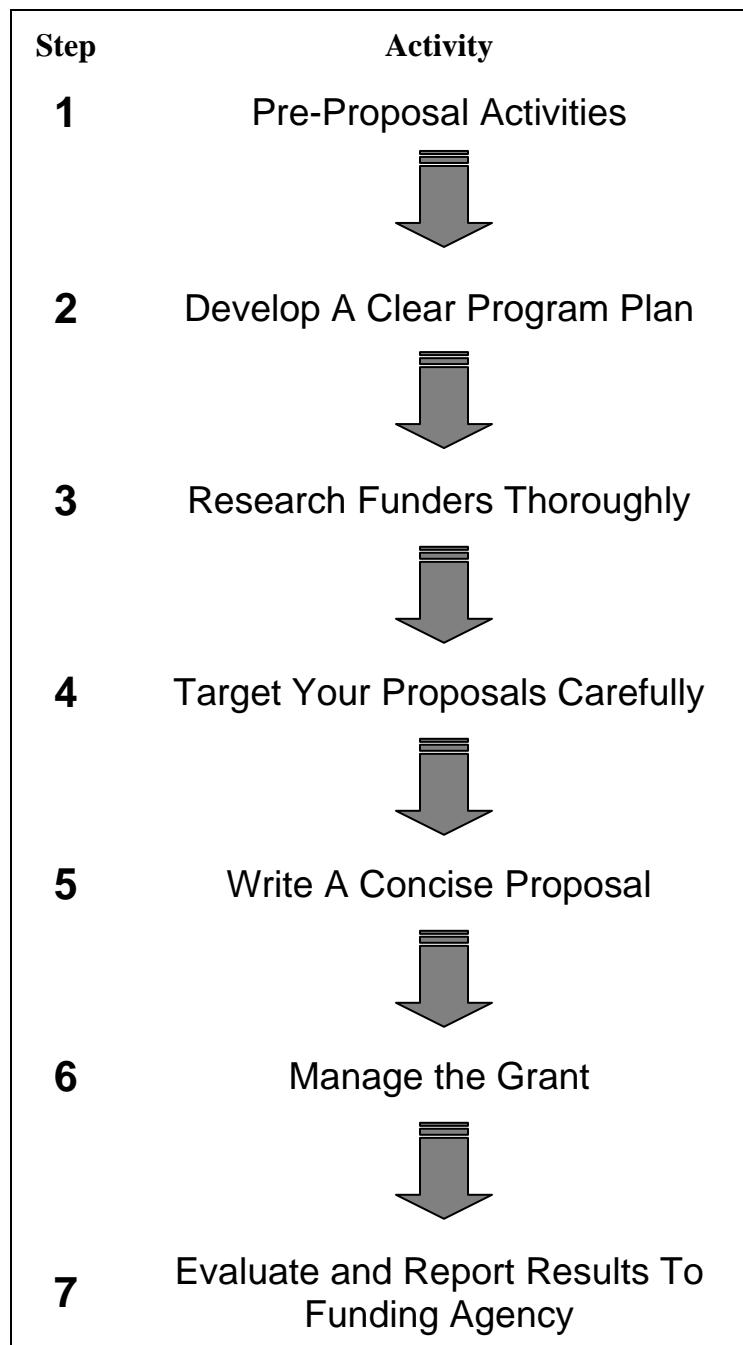
1. Pre-Proposal Activities
(and sometimes considered literature review: RESEARCH)

1. What do I mean by pre-proposal activities?

2. What plans or strategies have you considered for your grant proposal?

Pre-proposal activities require reflection, questioning, and research. Here are some questions to considering regarding your grant preparation

- Why are you writing a grant proposal?

- Why are you interested in writing a grant proposal?

- Who's going to benefit if you write a grant proposal?

- Can you identify the problem or idea that you want to address?

- What is your idea (problem)? What are some of the issues surrounding your idea?

- What do others think about this idea?

- Will this idea assist an agency, a school, a church, a club, a festival, an art show, your research idea? What?

There is much more reflection, questioning and researching for grants than just writing a grant proposal. It requires hard work. And yet, the results can be rewarding!!! It requires various skills--among which is generating an idea **that matches** a grant or foundation.

What is your idea, problem, or interest? This is probably the hardest part in grant writing---what do you want to do and how do you convince others that you have a great idea (that should be funded).

Sometimes foundations are in "vogue" with certain issues---so you may have a great idea but the foundation has other interests that they will fund.

Other issues to consider prior to writing a grant: Are your personal and organizational commitments clearly defined?

Personal Questions:

- Will I write the proposal? Do I have the skills to write the proposal? Should this be a team-oriented process, and if so, how is that to be negotiated?
- Can you maintain current job responsibilities while developing a grant proposal?
- Do you have the necessary support personnel?
- Am I willing to put a high level of energy into a competitive proposal?

Institutional/Organizational Questions:

- Is this grant activity within the responsibilities or scope of the agency or institution?
- Will this grant activity support the mission of the agency or institution?
- Do I have support for this grant activity from the agency or institution?
- Are there matching funds for this grant activity from the agency or institution?
- Does the institution or agency have facilities to support this grant proposal?
- If funds are cut off, do I have the support of the institution?
- What are the hiring requirements?

Other Important Strategies To Consider In Planning Your Grant Proposal:

- Gather data on the nature of the problem
- Determine who is affected by the problem
- Has anyone else tackled the problem

Review Website:

Proposal writing short course--read the first 2 pages.

http://fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop1.html

2. DEVELOPING A Clear Proposal Plan

1. What new thoughts or plans do you now have about your proposal?

Explore More Websites:

Federal Agencies   http://www.fedworld.gov/

US Department of Education

Federal Register

State Agencies in Michigan   http://www.mich.gov/
                                    http://www.mich.gov/mde   (look for grants link)
                                    http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/

Foundation Center   http://fdncenter.org/
Council of Foundations   http://www.cof.org/

On the next page, Carlson (1995) used a proposal conceptualization plan to assist grant writers think about the full plan of the grant.

Proposal Conceptualization Worksheet (Carlson, 1995)

Understand the Problem	Brainstorm Solutions	Identify Solutions	Indicate Expected Results & Benefits	Tasks to Accomplish Solution

Resources Needed		Reassess		Outcome Measures
Personnel	Non-Personnnel	Solutions	Results/Benefits	

More Information Regarding Grant Writing

There are generally 4 writing formats for grant proposals.

1. A letter of intent, which is usually a two-page summary to brief the funding agency about the idea (I prefer to talk to the agency) (usually used with independent foundations).

2. A two-page letter proposal (used for corporate, independent, and family foundations).

3. Long-proposal format is rather detailed, structured, and has a page limitation. It follows the **9 steps** outlined below. These are usually for state and federal grants.

4. The grant agency provides an application form (if you are so lucky).

Carlson (1995) provided 9 key areas or sections that are usually requested in most state and federal grants, and sometimes independent foundations for a <u>concisely written proposal</u> or a long proposal

	Key Area	Notes or Description of Key Area
1	Cover Letter	
2	Summary	Brief (one or two paragraphs) description of the project proposed. Sometimes called abstract.
3	Introduction	Describe the organization's qualifications and establishes credibility.
4	Need Statement	Document the need or needs to be met by the proposed funding.
5	Objectives/Goals Or Outcomes	State goals and objectives for the project. Make sure they are in measurable terms.
6	Methods	Describe the strategies, programs, and activities to be used to achieve desired results.
	Key Personnel	My addition to Carlson's Areas. Indicate the credentials of the people who will be coordinating and working with the grant.
7	Evaluation	State a plan to assess the objectives/goals or outcomes.
8	Future Funding	Strategies in place to continue project after grant is completed.
9	Budget	A detailed, line item summary of project's budget.

3. RESEARCH Funders Thoroughly
4. TARGET Carefully!!!!!

By now you should have some idea or ideas for a proposal. Now you need to explore funders!!

There are many potential funding sources. However, it will take more research to locate a specific funding source that matches your ideas/interests.

Exploring Grant Types

Typically, there are two types of grants: Competitive and Non-competitive.
- A **competitive grant** is considered open, although there may be specific categories.   For example, a federal grant states in its guidelines that only public institutions may apply. These competitive grant announcements are listed in the Federal Register.
- A **non-competitive grant** is based on a formula (congressional district, # of youth served—Title III funds). A non-competitive grant is sometimes referred to as an entitlement grant and is awarded if you follow specific guidelines. And, it is considered a contract, not a grant.

Grant Sources

- Federal Funds
- State Funds
- Community Funds: Distribute many small funds under a single management (culture and arts). Usually geographic restrictions.
- Corporate foundations: Coordinate the philanthropic interests of the founding corporation. Their fields of interest usually limit these funds. Detroit Edison, Ford Motor Company.
- Independent Foundations: Funds are derived and disseminated from an individual or single family and appeal to their interests.

As you review independent foundations, it is important to consider investigating a foundations' 990 tax return. This is a big extra step but it can be invaluable. The 990 tax return provides the yearly contributions and areas that the foundation has previously funded.

A website that lists Michigan foundations 990 information
http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/990a.htm

The above website has some outstanding links for grant seeking information. Very noteworthy is the website listed for the Michigan Foundation link. This link provides invaluable information about Michigan foundations.

Tips For Finding The Right Funding Source

Activity	Why?
Utilize websites.	Websites are a good way to explore a wide area of information, very quickly. Keep looking! There is alot of information on the web–you may have to dig deep to find grant information that suits your needs.
Investigate public libraries.	Sometimes librarians can be a key source of help in identifying certain data as well as locating foundation directories and computerized databases
Look for a match between your ideas and those of the funding agency.	Submitting proposals/grant applications to only funding agencies that would be interested in funding you saves time and money!
Make direct contact by phone.	Find out if your idea is reasonable, and if there is interest by the funder.
Request for proposal guidelines. • Proposal guidelines include: • Submission deadline • Eligibility • Award level • Funding priorities • Contact person	Make sure your proposal or application exactly matches the requests and needs of the funder. Organize according to THEIR criteria/requests, not your own.

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5.   Write A Concise Proposal

Generally, there are 9 areas of a grant proposal. They include:

1. Cover Letter
2. Summary
3. Introduction
4. Need Statement
5. Objectives/Goals Or Outcomes
6. Methods
   Key Personnel
7. Evaluation
8. Future Funding
9. Budget

1.   Cover Letter.

Some grants request a cover letter, while others do not. It depends on the granting agency.
However, many state and federal grants do not request a cover letter but provide a required
cover page. This cover needs special attention since this is the first item viewed by a
reviewer.

2. **Proposal Summary.**

This is written when you have completed the proposal. Usually you are tired of
developing and reorganizing the grant. You are ready to just complete it---***Don't!!*** This
is more important to a state or federal grant because it may be the only item a grant reader
will read, plus look at your program activities and budget!!!!

A summary should include purpose, plan, and evaluation in 3-5 sentences or 150-200
words.

Example
The XXX institution requests $50,000 for a two year job training program for homeless women in Washtenaw County. Four shelters will offer job training skills that include interviewing skills, relocating information, and support groups. __ % of participants will secure a job.

3. **Introduction.**

Sometimes a grant proposal requires a brief introduction, while other grants provide guidelines. It is good to explain who you are, what the organization is, how many years in existence. Carlson (1995) indicated the introduction should include:

- The mission of the organization
- The organizations' goals
- When and how the organization was started
- Significant events for the organization
- Program accomplishments
- General information about the proposed project request

Example

Following is part of the introduction for a 2 page proposal letter requesting funds for the EMU counseling clinic (Hobson & Broughton, 1998). Note how some of the items for the introduction are included in the example.

"This project involves the upgrading, expansion and operation of the Counseling Clinic housed within and operated by the Department of Leadership and Counseling at Eastern Michigan University. The Counseling Clinic serves the dual goals of (1) providing free counseling to university students as well as residents of the Ypsilanti/Ann Arbor area and (2) serving as an essential training component in our master's degree program. Graduate students nearing the completion of a master's degree in counseling (with specialties in school counseling, community counseling, and college student personnel work) are responsible for providing counseling services free of charge to individuals (children, adolescents, and adults), groups, couples and families.

Eastern Michigan University has already recognized the potential value of the Counseling Clinic (to community members and to its master's degree students being trained as counselors) by dedicating space and funding for renovation in the new John W. Porter College of Education Building. The Counseling Clinic will be housed within the Clinical Suites Area of the building and will include a number of rooms for individual counseling, a large play therapy room, and rooms for working with families and couples."

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4. Developing a NEED or Problem Statement.

A need statement is a key element for all grant proposals. It should be clear, concise, and well-supported statement of the problem that will be overcome should grant funds be awarded.   It is the explanation for the granting agency to award funds. Carlson (1995) stated that a "need statement describes a critical condition or set of conditions or a social need affecting certain people or things in a specific place at a specific time." A strong word of caution, write a need and NOT a want or a solution!!!

This requires you to conduct research (literature search) to support your idea, interest, or problem---both nationally and locally.

Several Examples

If the problem is preventing child abuse, then what are the national and local statistics regarding child abuse?

If the issue is providing more teen alcohol abuse in the school district, then what are the national statistics, local statistics, and any other evidence (not because it is a good and moral contribution to society).

If you want a computer lab in your school, what is the need for the lab and how will it improve the education of the students.

"(*The problem*) is experienced by (# of people) each year within the state and the nation.

 (The problem) is defined as _____ and is found in (provide populations affected). On a local level, (the problem) affects (# of people and specific population factors). Over the past __ years, the problem (improved, worsened, stayed the same) and the reason for this is_____." Coley & Scheinberg, 1990.

Items to think about for the need or problem statement:

- Fine tune the specific problem that you want to solve or address
- Be clear for the reviewers
- Use data or statistics to support the existence of the problem or issue
- Make the connection between the issue and your institution
- Focus on local data to make your case, not just national statistics

Also a question to ask yourself, is the issue interesting and compelling?

5. Defining Clear GOALS and OBJECTIVES.

The goals and objectives should clearly describe what changes will result if funds are provided.

Remember the goals and objectives need to be connected to the need/problem statement!!

A *goal* is a board-based statement with the ultimate result that change occurs. Goals are ambitious. (Can't be reached in a short term)

Example
Child abuse will be reduced in Washtenaw County significantly by 2005.

An *objective* is a <u>measurable,</u> time-specific result that the organization expects to accomplish as part of the grant. It is much more narrowly defined than a goal. Objectives are considered the actions taken to support the goal.

Example
There will be a 5 percent decrease in the number of child abuse cases reported to our organization in Washtenaw County.

6. Developing Program Activities or Methods.

This is usually the easy part. This is what you want to do with your grant proposal. Most people have this step imagined or planned. But this is not the bulk of your grant, it is just one section.

This section is a detailed explanation of the activities to be accomplished in order to conduct the grant. Also, the method describes enough detail, so grant reviewer/funding agency understands what you want to accomplish in a timely manner. The activities must link to the need statement and goals and objectives.

The project method outlines that tasks that will be accomplished by whom (personnel), with what resources or materials, and when it begins and ends . It is suggested that along with an explanation that a timeline is added to make it clear to the funding agency or foundation how the project plan will accomplish its goals and objectives.

Key Personnel.

Often the proposal guidelines request information on who will be involved with the grant. Another words, are you the expert on this topic or will you enlist the assistance of someone with this expertise. Often grant reviewers examine in detail the expertise of individuals and the involvement of the institution with the grant.

A strategy to enlist key personnel in a grant proposal is to form an advisory committee to participate in the grant.

7. Program Evaluation.

Ugh!! This is often the place that grant writers find most difficult. Often, grant writers do not spend enough time articulating the evaluation section, particularly for state and federal grants. This may be that grant writers believe that they may not have enough experience in evaluation.

Evaluation should be planned carefully. It should reflect 10-15% of the proposed budget for state and federal grants. If you do not have the expertise, then add it to your budget. For example, add a consultant who can conduct an evaluation or seek information from others.

Program evaluation is so important. In the grant proposal, the writer is now describing to the funding agency how the program measures the wonderful program activities that are addressed in the proposal.

Most grant/proposal writers do not spend enough time thinking about this section. Consider carefully how and exactly the way that success can be determined.

For example, if you state in the objectives that a decrease will occur, how will this be measured. Evaluation can be conducted in two ways or a combination of both.

- **Process or Formative Evaluation.** The evaluation monitors the progress of the grant from the beginning to the end. It is concerned whether the project is on the correct track and are the services delivered. The data tends to be more qualitative with such items as, newspapers articles, public speaking appearances. Other collection techniques can be attendance records, items that are used in a class or workshop to demonstrate learning.

- **Outcome or Summative Evaluation.** Outcome or product evaluation measures impact. Impact is measured in various ways, such as surveys, interviews, tests, etc. To increase the strength of the evaluation, research designs (pre-post design) are designed so statistical significance can be demonstrated regarding impact.

Review our evaluation section. Does it clearly include the following:

- Presents a clear plan for evaluating achievement of outcome objectives.
- States what will be measured
- States method of collecting data
- Describes any testing instruments to be used
- States who will do the evaluation
- Shows how evaluation will be used for program improvements

8. Future Funding.

Sometimes the grant requests you to discuss future funding---how is this program going to proceed after the grant is over!!!!!!! Some grant agencies may request that the proposal provide a plan or list expected sources of continuing the program after the grant concludes.

9. Preparing the Program Budget.

This is usually not a problem to develop in the grant proposal. The cost of the program is developed through the budget. The budget is the plan for the project, and it is expressed in the language of dollars.

Depending on your institution, you may have staff that can assist you in determining costs--many times we underestimate the costs!!!

Budget Line items or categories include: Personnel (salaries and benefits), Operating Expenses (equipment, supplies, printing, phone, facilities), and Travel. Always check the proposal guidelines, sometimes certain items are not allowed, like food.

Does your budget reflect:

- Consistency with narrative
- Explain items that may not be immediately clear
- Include sufficient funds to conduct the project
- Matching items???

Other budget terms:

- Indirect costs
- In-kind or matched funds

6. Managing The Grant Proposal.

Remember the saying, "Be careful what you wish for…." It is very rewarding to receive a grant, however, managing a grant can be very time consuming. It is important that when you submit your grant proposal, make sure you have the commitment from your supervisor and the institution.

Consider these items:

- While managing this grant, what happens to your other job responsibilities
- Can you consider some release time
- Add this new grant to your work performance (percentage)
- Add personnel to the grant, so that you can hire and train

7. Evaluating And Reporting Results To The Funder (Agency).

After you receive a grant award, it is your responsibility to follow what you stated in your proposal. What are the ethical concerns?? What happens if you change something in your proposal? How do you handle these issues?

Make sure that you have an organized plan to submit a mid-term, quarterly, or final report(s) and budgetary requests to the funding agency when the date is listed. (You do want to receive future funding from this agency).

Keep the funding agency happy and excited about your program. Consider doing the following:

- Send a thank you note
- Recognize the agency in some manner (plaque or luncheon)
- Invite the staff from the funding agency to your institution to show your program
- If you can't invite the staff, send a video clip or pictures!!

Ideally, you want to keep the funding agency staff interested in your program!!

Other Useful Information

Once You Have A Proposal Draft

Watch your submission deadline. Allow enough time to review your proposal.

- Let it cool. Leave some time to look at it refreshed.
- Allow a colleague to review it.
- Read what you've written out loud to yourself.
- Once it is done, have a tough critic review it. Afterwards, consider incorporating the suggestions

The Phone Call

So when you receive a phone call to discuss/negotiate the grant proposal, here are some suggestions:

- Re-read the proposal, and be very familiar with it.
- Take your time, think about what can be adjusted without sacrificing the grant.
- Be prepared to discuss the rationale for keeping certain items
- Maintain integrity

The Role Of A Grant Reviewer

If you ever get a chance to review grants, this is a great experience so that you can actual observe the award process.

There are several ways that grants are awarded. For local, state, and federal grants that are competitive, there are points applied to each guideline section. A reviewer is trained to examine if the guidelines were followed, and provide a "grade" (points) for each section. Sometimes, even if the grant scores high points, it is simply politics involved based on geographic location, congressional area, etc.

For foundations, the director/staff reviews the grant proposal based on the foundations interests as described by the board members. At quarterly or monthly meetings, the board members approve the grant proposals (of course, based on how much that can be allocated)