GRANT WRITING BASICS: DO'S AND DON'TS OF PROPOSAL WRITING

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Why Write Grants?

- Program startup or expansion of existing services
- Provide needed community services
- Establish research possibilities
- Create or maintain jobs
- Acquire needed resources

Where are the grant opportunities?

- Foundations

- Federal and State Opportunities

- State and National Professional Organizations

Foundation Resources

- Southwest Border Nonprofit Resource Center
  - http://www.utrgv.edu/gcr/departments/community-engagement-and-assessment/non-profit-center/index.htm

- Foundation Center
  - http://foundationcenter.org/

- Some Examples of Major Foundations
  - Meadows Foundation (http://www.mfi.org/)
  - Houston Endowment, Inc. (https://www.houstonendowment.org/
  - Brown Foundation, Inc. (http://www.brownfoundation.org/)

Federal and State Resources

- Federal Portal
  - http://grants.gov
    - U.S. Department of Education
    - Department of Health and Human Services
    - National Endowment for the Arts

State and National Organizations

- Google "Literacy program funding"
- Examples include: GrantWatch, ProLiteracy, NEA Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, Latino Family Literacy Project, etc.

Format of a Generic Proposal

- Cover Page
- Table of Contents
- Summary or Abstract
- Project Description or Narrative
- Budget
- Personnel Vitae
- Facilities
- Appendices
- Certifications

Funnel Approach to Writing

Funnel Approach

- Organization system to present information for the reader.

- Goes incrementally from broad/general to more specific.

- At the end of the "funnel" the writer tells the reader specifically what the grant is proposing.

Writing Guidelines

- Be concise, clear and specific
- Avoid jargon, define and explain the terminology you use
- Be positive
- Remain as client-focused as possible throughout your proposal
- Use combination of statistics, quotes and anecdotes

Writing Guidelines

- Use the funding source's language
- Do not overuse boilerplate material
- Follow **all** formatting and packaging instructions to the letter
- Number the pages, unless otherwise directed
- Margins should all be 1"

Writing Guidelines

- Text narrative should be 12 point typeface, unless otherwise directed

- When using acronyms or abbreviations for the first time, state the full name and use the acronym or abbreviation between parentheses; define acronym or abbreviation again when first used in subsequent sections

Writing Guidelines

- Be descriptive – this is not creative writing
- Provide a logical flow; weave a theme throughout the narrative
- Use accents (for example, bold, underline) effectively; not overdone
- Make it easy to read and comprehend
- Use titles and subtitles to break the density of the text in the page, unless otherwise directed

Writing Guidelines

- Write to all categories including obscure requirements
- Some proposal categories will overlap so you must repeat sections sometimes
- With early drafts, record your essential statements not being overly concerned with space limitations. Then edit down
- Know the difference between letters of support and letters of commitment

Things to Do in your Proposal:

- Be positive
- Help the funding agency reach their own goals
- Communicate the need for the service/activity
- Explain how you are going to get the project done
- Explain what will be your outcomes

Things to Do in your Proposal:

- Spell out the benefits of your approach
- Substantiate all facts
- Use simple, easy to understand language
- Give the funding source what it wants
- Know the competition
- Redress any weaknesses
- Give the funding source ammo they can use to defend your proposal

Things you Don't want to do in your proposal:

- Point out what is wrong with existing programs
- Have misspellings and grammatical mistakes
- Exceed the page limits or other limitations
- Have mathematical mistakes in the budget
- Provide limited justification to the budget
- Exceed the allowable amount in the budget
- Provide an unclear role for personnel and/or consultant(s)

Things you Don't want to do in your proposal:

- Provide little background, research for the intervention
- Provide little support of the significance, importance of the project
- Lack clarity throughout the proposal
- Provide unclear objectives
- Have goals and objectives not relate

Thank You!