Grant Proposal Writing 101:  
*Questions Every Grant Must Answer*

*Show me the money*

Colleen M. Brickle RDH, RF, EdD  
Normandale Community College

---

A grant can . . .

- Provide funding for new initiatives or support expansion and improvement of existing projects
- Take an organization or program in new, innovative directions
- Strengthen or create new external partnerships
- Forge new internal relationships

---

Before you start writing

- Consider your organization's ability to prepare an application by the deadline
- Determine if the organization has the capacity to carry out the project if funded
- Consider the competition – perhaps they could be partners instead
Being Grant-Ready

- Other steps before you start writing:
  - Written vision and mission statements
  - Strategic plan
  - Organization chart
  - Verification of eligibility for funding
  - Ability to provide “match” if required
  - Assignment of project team leader
  - Partnerships in place

Read the Guidelines

- RFP (request for proposal); FOA (funding opportunity announcement)
- Read it twice, highlight the second time
- Follow the directions of the RFP
- Ask questions of funder if needed
- Minnesota Common Grant Application

Writing is only half of the work

- It takes a village... or a project team
  - Define roles and responsibilities for grant writing
  - Create a work plan and timeline

Role of the following:
- The project team leader
- Project team members
- The grant writer
- External evaluator
“Why” of writing a grant proposal

- What is happening in dentistry?
- What are goals and initiatives?
- What will be different at the end of the grant project if funded?
- What needs improvement or promotion?

“Why” would a funder give you money for your project or program?

- It matches their mission statement or priorities
- A foundation board member has a personal interest in your organization or services
- You’ve come up with a replicable solution to a common situation
- Uniqueness or variation on other approaches
Why are you doing this?

Project Goals and Needs Statement

- Goals
  - What you want the future to look like

- Needs Statement
  - Comparison to any current efforts
  - Value of the project to the community
  - Desire to propel the organization forward

What do you hope to achieve?

Objectives

- Short-term, mid-term and long-term
- Anticipated outcomes and benefits
- Measureable

Who will this affect?

Stakeholders and participants

- Clients, customers
- Organization’s staff
- Partners
- Neighborhood, city, state
Who is responsible?
Project leader or team

- Resumes or position descriptions of key personnel
- Place in organization
- Ultimate responsibility

How and when this will happen?
Work plan and timelines

- Activities and strategies
- Enter activities in chronological order
- Identify who is responsible, by title or name
- Dates or specific time periods
- Assignment for partners
- Reasonable deadlines

Work plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time frame</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expand the ADT Community Advisory Committee</td>
<td>July - August 2013</td>
<td>Dean's Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand Advisory Committee and meet at least four times during the grant period</td>
<td>July 2013-June 2014</td>
<td>Project Director Program Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule meetings with advisory members and clinical partners</td>
<td>July 2013-June 2014</td>
<td>Project Director Program Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess and evaluate</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Project Director Advisory Committee Curriculum Consultant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How will you know if you succeeded?
Plan for Evaluation

- Formative evaluations help you to improve your project
- Summative evaluations prove whether your project worked the way you planned

Plan for Evaluation continues

- Describe the plan for gathering and recording data
- Deliverables
- Tie to objectives and data in needs assessment
- Include an external evaluator
- Create logic models for the project

Logic Model

- A logic model is:
  - A snapshot of your organization, its partners and resources, and their relationship to the project
  - Can help a project team keep its focus on the larger goals of the entire organization
  - May be linear or illustrated with graphs
  - Show the connection between your planned work and your intended results
Logic Model Template for ATE Projects & Centers

Created by Lori Wingate • Evaluate • www.evalu-ate.org

Examples:
- NSF funding
- Industry sponsor
- Advisory panel
- Industry partners
- NSF contribution
- ATE resource centers
- People engaged
  - Faculty, students, community members
  - Community members
  - Field experiences
  - Key personnel
  - Advisors/mentors
- Activities
  - Establish regional partnerships
  - Develop curriculum
  - Conduct workshops
  - Provide research/field experiences
  - Hold conference
  - Establish articulation agreement
  - People engaged
    - Students, faculty, industry partners
  - Curriculum materials developed
  - Policies created
  - Contributions made
  - Indirect cost rate:
  - Increased regional effectiveness
  - Increased diversity in the technical workforce
  - Increased regional economic vitality

How much will you spend?
Budget and Justification

- Adequate staffing
- Allowable expenses only
- External funding
- Financial health of the organization
- Indirect cost rate
- In-kind or matching

Who else cares?
Letter of commitment

- Be sure letters are allowed as attachments
- Contributions of money, time, or tangible items
- Credibility letters confirm qualifications
- Not “feel good” letters of support
Reports
Grant Project Manager

- Time needed for:
  - Managing the Grant
  - Work with Grant Office
  - Accounting Rules/Regulations
  - Staff Concerns
  - Project Team Members
  - Quarterly, Bi-Annually and/or Final Reports
  - Communication to all stakeholders: faculty members, community partners and college administration

Writing grant proposals:

- Write to the guidelines, using same order and heading
- Follow formatting instructions
  - Margins, type size, font, spacing
  - Avoid jargon and trendy phrases
  - Be concise by using bullet points and subheadings
  - Use acronyms sparingly; spell out first reference
  - Avoid circular reasoning
  - Assume reviewers have never heard of your organization
  - Don’t direct people to a website for more information
  - Proofread and have others read the proposal

Other Helpful Tips

- Prepare the summary and abstract after you write the proposal
- Pay attention to letters of intent and online pre-applications
- Ask for review criteria
- Avoid attachment “stuffing”
- Don’t wait until the last minute to submit
- Realize grant applications are time consuming
- Always ask for reviewer comments, read them and learn from them
Funding Resources

- Grants.gov federal grant announcements
- Irs.gov – 501©(3) under Charities and Organization
- Grantprofessionals.org - association (membership)
- Apfnet.org - Assoc. of Fund-raising Professionals (membership)
- Linkedin.com – explore the groups directory
- Guidestar.org – register for free access to non-profits’ IRS 990s
- Wordpress.com – search to find blogs about grant writing and fund-raising
- Subscribe to Listservs

Style guides:

- *The Associated Press Stylebook* (AP): Journalism style
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*: Non-journalism professional writing
- *MLA Style Manual and Guide*: Scholarly writing
- *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White: a general guide

Thank you