Introduction to Proposal Development

NSPAA

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Getting Started……

Identifying the Idea/Need/Problem

Program/Project Opportunity

Interaction Between Project Leadership and Sponsor

Fitting Your Idea to the Agency Guidelines

Developing the Proposal

Locating Funding for Project/Program

- U.S. Government: Grants.gov

- Community of Science: fundingopps.cos.com/

- Sci Val: http:// www.funding.scival.com.proxy2.cl.msu.edu/home

- The Foundation Center: fdncenter.org/funders/

  fconline.foundationcenter.org/

- The Grantsmanship Center: tgci.com

- The best way to determine if the program fits your needs is to read the program description and the guidelines (what part of this do you not understand?)

Reading the Instructions

- Find or Identify the Program Guidelines (does your problem or idea fit the guidelines?)
- Are there any forms associated with the guidelines? (Look for them)
- What signatures are required for the proposal submission? (Except Yours)
- What is the deadline for the proposal? Is it to be postmarked or received by the deadline (This is Important)
- Do the guidelines specify a specific format for the proposal? (Yes/No)
- Are there any other specific requirements for the proposal?
- ESTABLISH A CALENDAR

Getting Started:

- Read and understand the guidelines (you didn't hear me, did you?)
- Do a lot of homework: review past awardees
- Develop a plan of action
- Identify supporting data needed to validate that there is a problem
- Establish a timeline for the completion of the proposal
- Identify the primary writer and establish the role of the other collaborators
- Contact your sponsored programs office and then the granting agency

The 90% Rule of Grantwriting

- Understanding the guidelines/requirements
- Developing a sound project concept, including the identification of appropriate data that supports your concept
- Identifying and correcting the gaps that are required in the proposal
- Expanding your concept to match the guidelines
- Identifying costs

THE ABOVE EQUALS 90% of the GRANTWRITING/THINKING PROCESS

- Writing and Submitting the proposal

THIS INVOLVES 10% of YOUR EFFORTS in the GRANTWRITING PROCESS

A Pre-Proposal By Any Other Name….

- Your idea is not worth a damn, if it does not follow the most current agency format or guidelines
- It can be called a concept paper
- It can be called a letter of interest/inquiry
- It can be called a white paper
- It can be called a preliminary proposal or
- It can be called a letter proposal

Starting with a Basic Idea

- Brainstorming to develop a framework for your idea
  1. Mind Mapping begins with your proposal question that then branches off to every conceivable thought related to your topic or question
  2. Gap Analysis requires that you identify your current state of where you are now and where your end goal is to be, then fill in the gap with what you need to do to get to where you want to end up
  3. SWOT Analysis is a strategic planning exercise that evaluates your project with a reality check (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats)
  4. The 5 Whys comes from being interrogated by a toddler when you give an answer to a question and you get an increasing series of why (who, what, when. where and why)
  5. Starburting comes from a reporter trying to discover the pivotal information to a story, the 5 whys and then adding how long and how much associated with your idea

Developing Your Project Proposal

- Your project description should follow this outline:
  1. Who is proposing this project?
  2. What problem is the project expected to solve?
  3. Where will this project be applicable: local, statewide, regionally, nationally or internationally?
  4. Why is this project worth doing, why it important?
  5. How long will the project last?
  6. How much will it cost?

The Function of a Proposal

- Presents a compelling argument for funding
- The proposal tells why it is unique and is alone in the state of the art
- Represents the institution's credibility and capacity
- Describes the project in persuasive terms
- Describes a convincing mechanism for evaluation
- Tests the ability of the individual to articulate/conceptualize: If you can state it well, you probably can deliver the project

The Essential Components of a Proposal

- Introduction: what makes you and your institution special?

- Statement of Need: why is this project needed and what will it solve?

- Goals/Measurable Objectives (Program Logic Model)

- Organizational Support: is the institution willing to put its resources behind this project? (Do you need another institution?)

- Personnel: do you have top-notch colleagues working with you on this project?

- Expected Outcomes: what will happen as a result of this project? (Science or Services Logic Model)

- Evaluation: How will you know if your project is successful or not?

- Budget and Budget Narrative: Do your dollars match your objectives?

The Approach to Solving the Problem

- The approach identifies, then it modifies, then it improves, then it expands previous efforts; and may suggest a new approach

- The approach discusses specific actions and methods of implementation

- The approach justifies the actions taken in terms of the outcomes to be achieved

- The approach provides information as to how the process and outcome will be measured

Linking the Actions and Statement of the Problem

- The problem that is being addressed is always the essential element
- Each action should link the proposed solution to the problem
- Whenever possible, each action should also tie directly to how success will be measured (Note: sometimes identifying the completion date of an activity can be evidence of success)
- Budgets evolve from the actions required

Are Others Doing Similar Work?

- Spell out how your project is unique based on your review of the state of the art literature
- This does mean that there is an expectation of you having performed extensive delving into the state of the art literature

Who Will Perform the Work?

- Identify the persons/institutions who will perform the proposed work

- Identify collaborators (individuals or institutions)

- State the collaborators expertise, roles they will play on the project, and institutional capacity to assist in the work (no free loaders)

- Network early with potential collaborators; you may need documentation from collaborators stating that they agree to assist in the project's activities

- Develop institutional capability/qualification statements (why are you good enough to do this project?)

When to Partner

- When the sponsor requires collaboration
- When elements of the work are being done in separate locations
- When facilities of expertise are not adequate to do all the work
- When an external evaluation component is needed
- When the project design mandates comparisons
- When costs could be leveraged by having institutions with common goals working together

Partnering Pitfalls

- No clear understanding of what and how resources are to be allocated

- Timeliness of data sharing

- Deliverables between institutions and personnel working together

- Indirect Cost Return for each institution especially if indirect cost rates are different or how they are created

Make it Easy for a Funding Agency to Choose You

- Keep it simple

- Use plain language, no Jargon

- Less is more

- Know what others are doing so you can initiate or complement a project

- There needs to be transparency in the budget, make sure the numbers add up, and the numbers match the objectives of the project

- Engage an external reviewer who is unfamiliar with the subject matter

Establish a Contact with the Funding Agency

- It promotes your institution

- It tests the possible compatibility between funder and your institution

- It permits you to gather additional information about the funder and possible reaction to your proposal before you submit

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Monitoring Demonstrates Impact and Measures Progress
- Evaluation Wants You to:
  - List each outcome from your research or service logic model
  - Provide the measurable characteristics of change that represents achievement
  - Tell where you get your data
  - Explain the methods used to collect the data?
  - Describe the tool used to collect the data
  - Tell how often do you collect the data
  - Explain the sample size of the project
- There are Two Types of Monitoring: Fiscal and Programmatic
- There are Two Ways to Provide Accountability: External Evaluation and taking advantage of Self-Correcting Opportunities

Impact and Outcome

- Provides the sponsor with evidence that the project was completed
- Provides documentation of impact or the change that has occurred
- Identifies areas for future improvement
- Identifies "dead ends" can be helpful in identifying what doesn't work
- Describes how the outcome and useful information can be shared with others
- Please note that sponsors are accountable for the investment of the agency's funds, a well-defined evaluation or measurement of outcome will be viewed quite favorably

Steps to Sustainability

- Your current funding agency is not the only agency interested in your project, so seek additional funding from other agencies

- Integrate training on partnership activities in order to build additional institutional capacity

- Throughout the course of conducting your project, it would be advisable to make sure your state of the art community is involved

- Sustainability will come from training those stakeholders who have an investment in the project to continue these efforts once the project partners have fulfilled their commitments and the current funding has expired

Budgeting and Accounting

- Be realistic in terms of the following costs:
    1. Travel
    2. Accommodations/Lodging
    3. Local Transportation
    4. Office and Laboratory Supplies
    5. Communications (institution provided or personal)
    6. Equipment (computers, software, supporting materials, etc.)
    7. Publications (only state of the art, juried manuscripts or journals)
    8. External Evaluation Services
    9. Content Consultants
    10. Miscellaneous
    11. It is very important to keep all of your receipts

Budgeting Goals

- Accurately Estimate Your Needs for the Funding of this Project
- Properly Estimate Cost-Sharing to Meet the Requirements of the Agency and Your Institution's Cost-Sharing Agreement
- If You Are Collaborating, There will Need to be an Up Front Agreement Concerning Indirect Cost Sharing Between the Two or More Institutions
- You Must Use the Format Required by the Funding Agency, Even If You Do Not Like It, So What, Deal With It

The Budget Line – By - Line

- Salaries
  - Always include this as the first line-item
  - Note the % of effort needed to complete a task, I did not say the entire project
  - Amounts paid on a grant is NOT supplemental pay (how many administrators allow payments of over 100% of a salary base?)
  - Include inflation factor of between 4% -7%
- Fringe Benefits
  - Use rate increase for future periods
- All Other Direct Costs
  - Subcontracts for projects with collaborators
  Indirect Costs (based on the latest agency agreement)