

Grant Writing Workshop SC Obesity Prevention Summit April 22, 2009

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Agenda

- Rationale for Grants
- Fundamentals of Grantsmanship
- Proposal Elements
- Program Planning

What are grants?

- A grant is a limited financial award from a funder to implement a defined scope of activities to serve a particular target population during a certain time period.
- A grant requires an agency to provide the funds and an agency to provide the services/activities.
- Directions to apply for a grant are posted in a "Request for Proposals" (RFP) or "Request for Applications" (RFA).

The Essentials

- A solid, well-thought-out idea for a program or project that addresses a clear need
- A thoughtful match between the idea and the targeted funder
- A proposal/application that is clear, concise, and written well.

Why Pursue Grants?

- ❑ Address a particular need for services
- ❑ Pilot/test innovative, creative approach
- ❑ Evaluate existing programs
- ❑ Advance strategic plan
- ❑ Examine and refine processes
- ❑ Build capacity
- ❑ Secure training or Professional development.

Why Not Grants?

- ❑ Lack of interest in actually implementing the program
- ❑ Focus is on money rather than programs
- ❑ Too many concurrent programs blurs impact and overwhelms
- ❑ Top-down imposition of grant program
- ❑ Not enough space, resources, or support
- ❑ No leadership support or enthusiasm.

Fundamentals of Grantsmanship

1. Assess the need(s) for services.
2. Cultivate the right partners.
3. Plan the program and budget to the last details.
4. Ensure sustainability.
5. Investigate funders and opportunities.
6. Present your program well (write a competitive proposal).

1. Assess the Need(s)

- ✓ Identify Need(s) and Causes
- ✓ Gather Evidence
- ✓ Explore Consequences of Problem
- ✓ Analyze Other Efforts to Address
- ✓ Identify Gaps in Other Efforts

Listen, Study, and Prioritize

- ❑ Talk/Listen with teachers, staff, administrators, parents, students, and community about the most significant problems your school/team/unit faces
- ❑ Consider multiple needs (academic issues, professional development, school environment, etc.) and prioritize
- ❑ Use instruments (surveys, focus groups)

Understand the Problem or Need for Services

- ❑ List all the causes of the problem or need that you can generate
- ❑ Which of these causes can you do anything about?
- ❑ Which of these causes do you plan to address through program activities? These are the ones to help form objectives and shape the needs/problem statement.

Examine Evidence

- ❑ School Report Card
- ❑ Kid's Count
- ❑ Surveys
- ❑ Census 2000
- ❑ ORS
- ❑ SC Indicators Project
<http://www.ipspr.sc.edu/scip/PubHealth/General.asp>
- ❑ PACT/PASS scores
- ❑ Other test scores
- ❑ Praxis scores
- ❑ DJJ Statistical Report
- ❑ Health Index
- ❑ SC Statistical Abstract
<http://www.ors2.state.sc.us/abstract/index.asp>
<http://www.sciway.net/statistics/health.html>

Analyze Impact, Initiatives, and Gaps

- ❑ What happens if the problem is left unaddressed?
- ❑ Identify potential and real obstacles and barriers.
- ❑ Talk with community leaders/groups to learn about other efforts to address the problem.
- ❑ Why did these other efforts not work?
- ❑ How will you learn from their experience?

2. Cultivate the Right Partners

- ❑ Partners help plan, implement, and evaluate the program.
- ❑ Cultivate the most appropriate partners to help address the problem.
- ❑ Donors/Contributors provide materials or resources, but they do not help shape the program.
- ❑ Communication and listening are the keys to effective, sustained partnering.

Assess Yourself

- ❑ What establishes you as THE agency to implement this program?
- ❑ Why should the funder have faith in your agency?
- ❑ What evidence can you include to prove that you are capable, innovative, thorough, and respected?
- ❑ Include mission, significant dates, growth, and service areas

Network

- Network with local business and organizations:
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - State Chamber of Commerce
 - Rotary, Lion's Clubs, civic organizations
 - Educational Associations
 - Local industry

Potential Partners

- Agencies with similar interests
- Target population
- Parents
- Community and business leaders
- Colleges and universities

3. Plan the Program and the Budget

- Establish Grant Teams (site, area, subject)
- Divide work among team members
- Develop realistic work plans
- Research Topics and Approaches
- Designate regular (brief) meetings to review current progress on tasks.
- Details count, so keep RECORDS.

Questions to Start Planning

- What results do you want? (outcomes)
- Can our goals be achieved in this time period?
- How will the program address the need you identified as a reason for the program?
- What will you do to ensure the results are achieved?
- How will the program be structured? (daily, weekly, and monthly operations and services)
- Who will be required to manage the program?
- How will you evaluate the program? (initial, interim, and end-of-funding assessment)
- What do you need funds to be able to do?

A Winning Grant Project...

- Reflects a carefully and thoroughly designed program, including:
 - Need (problem)
 - Clearly defined intended outcomes/results
 - Selected research-based strategies to address the need
 - Clear management practices, clear roles for all partners, qualified personnel, and program sequence
 - Effective evaluation
 - Expenses that are legitimate and necessary.

Need for the Services

- Who needs the services?
- What services do they need?
- How do I know they need help? What evidence/data can I use to support the need for services? compare to
 - Statewide statistics
 - Nationwide statistics
- What happens if the need goes unaddressed?
- What best practices exist to address the need?

Clearly Defined Outcomes

- Goals (ultimate results)
 - What does the program target?
 - What is the program designed to do?
- Objectives
 - What will the client be able to do at the end of the project component?
 - How will the client demonstrate the ability to do that?
 - How many clients (of the total number served) should be able to do that?
 - SMART

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- Goals are general statements that reflect a change in behavior
 - "The First Elementary School will open an after school program to help raise its students' academic achievement."
 - Objectives are SMART:
 - "After attending the after school program for one year, at least 80% of the students attending the program will achieve an increase of at least 7% on the PACT, as compared with those students' scores the previous year."

Strategies/Activities

- ❑ For each objective, identify what you will do to help the client achieve/advance. (strategies).
- ❑ For each objective, identify what the client will do to learn/advance/achieve (activities).
- ❑ How will this activity/strategy help address the need you have identified?
- ❑ Create Timeline or Action Plan

Management and Personnel

- ❑ What is the management plan?
- ❑ Who will implement the project?
- ❑ Who will be responsible for daily oversight?
- ❑ What are your credentials and that of key staff? If key personnel have not yet been hired, a job description must be developed
- ❑ Timeline and important events
 - ❑ Who will do what and when?

Evaluation Plan: Data and Methods

Success toward achieving objectives

- Did you achieve the objectives? Why or why not?
- What element worked the best?

Quality of Planning and Implementation

- Did you foresee problems and resolve them quickly?
- How could you improve the project?
- Did you use funds wisely?

Dissemination

- How will you share the results of your project with others?
- What “product” will you produce for others to use?
- Who will you share with?
- How will you report findings and results to funder?

The Budget

- ▣ Two forms: spreadsheet (itemized) and narrative (written explanation/justification)
- ▣ Must be reasonable, relevant, allocable
- ▣ Use real figures
- ▣ Round numbers (don't show cents)
- ▣ Must be logical
- ▣ Write as activities are developed

4. Ensure Sustainability

- ▣ What will you do to ensure that the project lives beyond this grant funding?
- ▣ Can the project become part of a strategic plan, an academic unit/approach, standards, etc.?
- ▣ What will you do to ensure that the personnel "pass on" the project (sustainable leadership)?

5. Identify Potential Funders

- Investigate:
 - Federal agencies and programs
 - Private foundations and community organizations
 - Local businesses (corporations) and industry
- Private companies
- State government
- Individual donors
- Use the web
 - Foundation Center's Cooperating Collections
 - Electronic Alerts
 - Networking (local resources and SC foundations)

Web Sites

- www.grants.gov
- www.ed.gov/funding.html
- www.ed.sc.gov/grants/
- ww.fdncenter.org
- www.tgci.com
- www.schoolgrants.org
- www.edweek.gov
- www.neafoundation.org
- <http://www.fundingfactory.com/>

Electronic Alerts

- www.grants.gov—offers multiple autoalerts
- www.fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp
- www.schoolgrants.org

Determine the “Fit”

- Research the funders (drill into the website); each funder
 - Has a mission
 - Describes its favorite programs
 - Prefers a geographical area of giving or has a required service area
 - Has restrictions, timelines, and mandatory reporting guidelines; visit the web site and read it thoroughly.
- Read the annual report.
- Study projects previously funded to see what the funder is seeking.
- Are you eligible? Is the funding amount what you need?

6. Present the Program Well

- Read, reread, reread the directions (RFP)
- Create a workplan (checklist) of everything that must be included in the application/proposal.
- Explain the project clearly and concisely.
- Write the proposal one section at a time so you can focus just on that section.
- Draft early, rewrite, revise, do it again.

Basic Elements of a Proposal

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| ▪ Needs Statement | ▪ Background or Org Capacity |
| ▪ Goals & Objectives | ▪ Budget |
| ▪ Strategies/Activities | ▪ Timeline(s) |
| ▪ Management | ▪ References |
| ▪ Evaluation | ▪ Supporting materials |
| ▪ Sustainability | ▪ Resumes |
| ▪ Dissemination | ▪ Letters of support |
| | ▪ Program documents/forms |

Tone

- ❑ Write to a reader who is unfamiliar with your school, area, or this program.
- ❑ Talk about what you will do, not what you might do or could do. (Write with confidence—you already have the money)
- ❑ Do not beg or plead; you are an equal partner.

Adhere to the RFP

- ❑ Did you follow the directions for the section?
- ❑ Is it organized in the sequence of the RFP?
- ❑ Did you dance around the subject or did you answer the question?
- ❑ Are your answers clear and concise?

Qualities of a Winning Proposal

- ❑ Organized
- ❑ Focused
- ❑ Clear and Concise
- ❑ Energetic and Vivid
- ❑ Correct
- ❑ Specific

Is your proposal organized?

- ❑ Follow the structure provided in the RFP (use the same titles/subtitles)
- ❑ The first sentence of each section should be a one-sentence response to the directions for that section
- ❑ Each paragraph should be short and focused on ONE point. Each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence.
- ❑ Does each paragraph begin with a topic sentence?

Do you have topic sentences?

- ❑ The topic sentence serves as the controlling idea for the entire paragraph
- ❑ Each sentence in the paragraph should clearly connect/relate to that topic sentence
- ❑ When drafting, create a clear, focused sentence that tells the reader what the paragraph is about. Edit it later.

Are your answers focused?

- ❑ Answer the question or address the issues in the order asked.
- ❑ Provide complete information BEFORE editing at the sentence/paragraph level.
- ❑ Don't waste time setting everything up; get right to it.

Are you clear, direct, and concise?

- ❑ Use small, short, familiar language
- ❑ Avoid jargon or big words
- ❑ Use short, active sentences rather than long, passive constructions
- ❑ Edit wordy sentences and remove “take up space phrases”
- ❑ Remove redundancies

Is your language energetic/vivid?

- ❑ Energy comes from active verbs and action sentences.
- ❑ Use Active Voice NOT Passive Voice
- ❑ Avoid “is” or “was” sentence constructions because they create weak sentences
EX. The generators were destroyed by the storm last night.
EX-Corrected: Last night, the storm destroyed the generators.

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- ▣ Grammar/usage
 - ▣ Math & formulas
(budget)
 - ▣ Dates
 - ▣ Credentials
 - ▣ Page numbers

Final Tips

- ▣ Number pages.
- ▣ Insert Table of Contents (unless this is not allowed).
- ▣ Involve content specialists in the drafting, and the best writers in the final stages.
- ▣ Follow the directions.
- ▣ Answer the questions.

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