

SETC One-Stop Conference 2004



BASIC FACTS OF LIFE FOR ORGANIZATIONS

- The days of entitlement are over.
- Funding comes from contracts & grants.
- Most funding awards are competitive.
- To get funding, organizations need to sell themselves.
- The proposal is your major sales tool.

**Ten Commandments
Of Successful
Proposal Writing**

1. Get to Know the Grant Maker

- Research the Grant Maker in advance.
- Learn all you can.
 - Visit their website.
 - Study their Annual Report.
 - Get their brochures & information packets.
 - Google them for news articles.
- When possible exchange visits with the Grant Maker.

2. Study the RFP

Analyze the RFP carefully.

- Outline key sections in your own words.
- Identify and understand what the Grant Maker really wants.
 - What outcomes?
 - What specific tasks?

3. Build the Project First, Then Write Your Proposal

- Figure out what steps are needed to carry out each specific task.
 - Develop sub-tasks as needed.
- Determine the sequence of the tasks.
 - Develop a timeline.
- Determine the resources you will need.
- Develop a cost estimate.

4. Lay Out Your Proposal by Following the RFP Exactly

- Use the RFP as your proposal template.
- Make each RFP section a chapter.
- Follow your outline exactly.
 - Reviewers may have 40-50 proposals to read.
 - Put information where reviewers expect to find it.
 - Don't make them hunt for it.
 - Make it as easy as possible for them.

5. Prioritize the Points You Want to Make

- Analyze the RFP scoring.
- Prioritize each section by its score.
 - Put your main emphasis in sections where the most RFP points are.
- Figure out what to put in each section.
 - What do I need to say?
 - Where do I need to say it?

6. Get Ready to Write

- Clearly state the points you want to make in each section before you begin writing.
 - Draw a map of each section.
 - Detail each point you want to make.
 - Show how the points are linked.
 - Phrase the points emphatically.

7. Write for the Reader

- Make it easy for the reviewer.
 - Write in plain, clear, concise English.
 - Never use a 50¢ word when you can use a 5¢ word.
 - Avoid jargon.
 - Use very few ACRONYMS.
 - Make sure they are absolutely clear.
 - Don't use current buzzwords just because they're current.

8. Show What's New and Special about Your Project

- Be specific.
 - Tell exactly what you are going to do.
 - Tell why you need to do it.
 - Tell how you are going to do it.
- Tell what makes your approach different from other applicants.
- *Be enthusiastic!* *Be passionate!*
Be upbeat!

9. Be Realistic about What You Can and Cannot Do

- If your organization is weak in a needed skill area, don't try to fake it.
- Find a person or agency that has strength and partner with them.
- 50% of *something* is better than 100% of *nothing*.

10. Think of the Grant Makers As Investors

- Show Grant Makers what their return on investment (ROI) will be.
 - What results are they going to get for their money? What outcomes?
 - Be specific.
 - Be brief.
 - Lists are good.

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Typical Proposal Structure

The Components

1. Proposal Summary
2. Introduction of the Organization
3. Needs Assessment or Problem Statement
4. Project Goals
5. Project Methods or Design
6. Project Evaluation
7. Plans for Future Funding
8. Project Budget
9. Appendices

1. Executive Summary

- An overview of the project.
- The summary presents highlights of *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*.
- It forms reviewer's first impression -- sometimes *only* impression.
 - Keep brief and to the point.
 - 3-5 pretty short paragraphs.
 - Write it like a newspaper story -- key points in the first couple of sentences and then more detail.
- Write it last.

2. Introduction of the Organization

- A brief overview of your organization.
 - When it was founded,
 - Where it is located,
 - What its mission is,
 - Who its principal officers are,
 - What some of its major projects are.
- A page or two to establish your credibility as an organization that can do the job.

3. Needs Assessment or Statement of the Problem

- Explain the problem to be overcome.
- Be compelling.
 - Present facts.
 - Present evidence.
 - Third party accounts -- i.e. newspaper stories.
 - Present statistics.
- Be clear and concise.

4. Project Objectives

- Explain the goals of the project.
- Present supporting objectives.
 - Show the anticipated results and benefits for each objective.
 - Explain how the results and benefits for each objective will meet the specific criteria of the grant program.

5. Project Narrative

- Describe the tasks that will be accomplished and the resources needed to accomplish them.
- Present project workplan timelines.
 - GANTT Charts, PERT Charts.
 - Use project planning software.
 - *MS Project* or *Business Plan Pro* are both good.
- Make the charts the basis for the narrative.

6. Project Evaluation

- Develop criteria to evaluate your progress towards project goals.
- Create milestones.
 - Define exactly how your project's progress toward success will be determined.
 - Show when each determination will be made.
 - Use months after award, not calendar dates.

7. Other Funding

- List sources and amounts.
- List organizational matches.
- Show what happens at the end of the funding period.
 - If the services are to be continued, describe how they will be funded.

8. Project Budget

- Your Budget is Your Estimate.
 - Be specific.
 - Be thorough.
 - Match it to your workplan.
- Use a Convenient Summary Format.
 - Personnel
 - Non-Personnel
 - Project Total

8a. Project Budget Summary

	Requested Total	Matching Total	Total
1. Personnel			
a. Salaries & Wages	68,420.00	114,018.00	182,438.00
b. Fringe Benefits @ 28%	19,157.60	31,925.04	51,082.64
c. Consultants/Contract Services	<u>22,600.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>22,600.00</u>
Total Personnel	110,177.60	145,943.04	256,120.64
2. Non-Personnel			
a. Space/Facilities	2,000.00	14,500.00	16,500.00
b. Equipment (Lease or Purchase)	4,175.00	1,100.00	5,275.00
c. Supplies & Materials	6,650.00	8,857.00	15,507.00
d. Travel	2,200.00	2,200.00	4,400.00
e. Telephone	1,875.00	1,875.00	3,750.00
f. Other Costs	<u>4,150.00</u>	<u>4,150.00</u>	<u>8,300.00</u>
Total Non-Personnel	<u>21,050.00</u>	<u>32,682.00</u>	<u>53,732.00</u>
3. Project Total	131,227.60	178,625.04	309,852.64

9. Appendices

- Present strong resumes.
 - Include everyone who will play major role.
- Present your organizational capabilities.
 - Give history and describe successful projects.
- Include partnership agreements.
- Include letters of endorsement if appropriate.
 - Addressed to your organization, not the funder.
- Keep other stuff to a minimum.

Follow these guidelines, and if your ideas are on target, you are sure to have success with your proposals.

Best wishes for GOOD LUCK.

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