A proposal has five primary functions:

1. It is a written presentation of a program that describes an activity or project that an organization, group, or individual wants to conduct.
2. It is a solicitation of funds.
3. It is a persuasive instrument that seeks a source to assign resources.
4. It is a commitment and a promise of the solicitant to conduct certain activities, in a certain fashion, in a pre-determined time and with a certain amount of money.
5. It is a plan that seeks approval to establish a series of activities.

There are five different types of proposals:

1. Service
2. Research
3. Planning
4. Development or Training
5. Technical Assistance
Before you start writing the grant proposal you must:

☑ Rule #1: Believe that someone wants to give you the money!!
☑ Project your organization into the future
☑ Start with the end in mind...look at your organization's big picture. Who are you? What are your strengths and priorities?
☑ Create a plan not just a proposal
☑ Do your homework: Research prospective funding agencies. Try and search locally first.
☑ Target funding source that has interest in your organization and program.
☑ If you need the money now, you have started too late

THINGS TO DO WHEN WRITING THE PROPOSAL

☐ READ the request for proposal carefully!
☐ Find the idea and develop the concept

Before actually writing a proposal, you should determine which projects in your organization are most likely to be funded through a grant. To help in developing a fundable proposal idea, answer these six questions:

1. What new projects are you planning for the next two to three years?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

2. Which of the above projects are compatible with your current mission and purpose?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
3. Who else is doing these projects? Is there duplication of effort? Can a partnership be formed that will benefit all organizations concerned with the project?


4. What community need does each of your projects address?


5. What members of your community support each project?


6. Does your organization currently have expertise to undertake each project? Will new staff be necessary? Can the organization manage growth of personnel effectively?


DEVELOPING A PROPOSAL

A grant proposal is an exercise in logic. When developing a proposal, the writer must build a logical argument that justifies funding. A proposal must convince the prospective donor of two things:

1. that a problem need of significant magnitude exist, and
2. that the applicant has the means and the imagination to solve the problem or meet the need.

The proposal’s points must be well thought out, and the argument must flow rationally through all of the proposal sections.

A successful grant proposal is one that is thoughtfully planned, well prepared, and concisely packaged. There are nine basic components in a solid proposal package:

1. Proposal Summary or Abstract
2. Introduction of the Organization
3. Problem Statement (or needs assessment)
4. Project Objectives
5. Project Methods or Design
6. Project Evaluation
7. Project Budget
8. Certifications and Assurances
9. Appendices

ALWAYS REMEMBER TO…

- **Read the Request for Proposal (RFP) or guidelines carefully!!**

  It is important to follow the guidelines. The guidelines will specify the format that the funding agency wants you to follow to present your project. Organize your proposal according to the RFP.

- **Find the idea and develop the concept (concept paper)**

  This document should be at least 2 or 3 pages long and it should at a minimum describe the goals, objectives, methodology, the targeted population, estimated cost and expected outcomes of the project.
THE PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

Project Summary or Abstract:

The proposal summary appears at the beginning of the proposal and outlines the project. It can be a cover letter or a separate page. It should be brief: no longer than two or three paragraphs. It is often helpful to prepare the summary after the proposal has been developed. This makes it easier to include all the key points necessary to communicate the objectives of the project. The guidelines will indicate the format that the funding agency would want you to present the information.

The proposal summary should provide:

- A description of the general purpose for the project
- A need for the project
- A description of the targeted population
- The goals and the objectives
- The methodology or strategies to be used
- The evaluation, results or intended outcomes
- Total costs, funds already obtained and amount requests

Introduction of the Organization

Most proposals require a description of an applicant's organization and its past, present, and projected operations. Some features to consider are:

- Be concise, specific and compelling.
- Build credibility for your organization. (Start a "credibility" file.)
- Reinforce the connection between you and the funder.
- Establish a context for your problem statement.
- IN BRIEF: Who, what, when, why, and how much!

Problem Statement or Need for the Project
The problem statement (or needs assessment) is a key element of a proposal. It should be a clear, concise, well-supported statement of the problem to be overcome using the grant funding. An applicant could include data collected during a needs assessment that would illustrate the problems to be addressed. The information provided should be both factual and directly related to the problem addressed by the proposal.

- Get on target!!! Zero in on a specific problem you want to solve or an issue you want to address.
- Do not make assumptions of the reviewers.
- Use statistics to support existence of your problem or issue.
- Make a connection between the issue and your organization.
- Make a case for your project locally, not just nationally.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the issue or problem.
- Set-up the delivery of your goals and objectives.

Goals and Objectives

Once the need to be met has been agreed upon and written into a need statement, it is necessary to develop goals and objectives.

**Definition**  
A goal is a broad-based statement of the ultimate result of the change being undertaken (a result that is sometimes unreachable in the short term).

An objective is a measurable, time specific result that the organization expects to accomplish as part of the grant. It is more narrowly defined than a goal. Like the goal, the objective is tied to the need statement.

The project objectives should clearly describe the goals of the project. Applicants should explain the expected results and benefits of each objective. They should also list the specific criteria of the grant program. When writing objectives we must answered the following questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Question</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who?</td>
<td>How?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What?</td>
<td>At what degree?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To whom?</td>
<td>When?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Implementation Plan**

This section of the proposal must describe the activities to be conducted to achieve the desired objectives.

A straight-forward, chronological description of the operations of the proposed project works most effectively.

The Implementation Plan allows you to visualize the project in general terms, and provides the instrument to monitor your project during its implementation.

The Implementation Plan should include the following:

- Detailed listing of the activities
- Description of resources
- Personnel responsible for performing each activity
- Time required to complete each activity

**Evaluation**

An evaluation is a process that determines the effectiveness and efficiency of a project. How a program will be evaluated must be determined prior to the project’s implementation.

The evaluation design should clearly indicate criteria for success of the project. It is actually a very simple matter. Evaluation merely asks: Did the project meet its objectives and, if so, how do you know?

Your project evaluation section should:

- Present a plan for evaluating accomplishments of objectives
- Present a plan for evaluating and modifying methods over the course of the program
- Tell who will be doing the evaluation and how they are chosen
- Clearly states evaluation criteria
- Describes how data will be gathered
- Explains any test instruments or questionnaires to be used
- Describes the process of data analysis
- Show how evaluation will be used for program improvements
- Describes any evaluation reports to be produced
Key to the proposal is the budget for the project or the agency seeking support. Usually, government funding sources require considerable detail and provide instructions and budget forms that must be used. Foundations and corporations typically require less detail, but still rely on the budget to help them evaluate the merit of the proposal. The budget is the plan you have for your project expressed in the language of dollars. It should reflect the costs of the items and activities described in the project narrative. A budget may include various components:

- Program or project budget – The income and expenses associated with the special project for which you are seeking funding.
- Budget detail or justification – More detail on certain income and expense items.
- In-kind contribution budget – The expected donated goods and services that will be used on the project.

**Steps in the Budgeting Process**

- Establishing the budget period
- Estimate expenses
- Decide whether and how to include overhead cost
- Estimate In-kind contributions
- Estimate anticipated revenues for the project
- Check to be sure that the budget as a whole makes sense and conveys the right message to the funding agency.

**Certifications and Assurances**

Certifications and assurances are an important part of the proposal. Generally, the guidelines will indicate what certifications or assurances to include with the proposal. Assurances must be signed by the authorized certifying official of the institution or organization.

**Appendices**

Some attachments are recommended in all proposals, but you must follow the guidelines at all times, to see what can be included as an Appendix.
Appendices may include:

- Biographies of key personnel
- Endorsements, commitment letters
- Need assessments
- Verification of tax-exempt status
- Negotiated rate contracts
- Other relevant information to the project

Proposal Packing

- Always follow the guidelines!!!
- Time should be taken to make sure the proposal is paginated as requested, and that appendices are clearly marked.
- Original proposal and other copies, as indicated in the guidelines, should be mailed to the funding source.
- Proposals should not be submitted with binding
- Assemble the proposal in an organized, concise, and attractive manner

PROPOSAL WRITING REQUIRES TEAM WORK

Developing an effective, convincing grant proposal is an art. As in any art, you need to understand the technical aspects to produce a work that is coherent and that has the desired impact.
AND FINALLY, DO NOT GIVE UP!

- More than 50% of submissions result in a rejection.
  - Not because projects were not worthy, but primarily because money is tight!
- Request reviewers’ comments.
- Request copies of winning proposals.
- Funding levels increase to 70% for resubmissions!!

External Funding Resources

There are a number of publications that provide information about funding opportunities. These include opportunities from public as well as private agencies. Those available from the Grants Office include:

- **Federal Assistance Monitor**

  An independent news service published twice monthly. This publication includes information about federal agencies, their funding priorities, the process for submitting an application, and contact information for requesting more information or submitting a proposal.

- **Foundation & Corporate Grants Alert**

  Published monthly, this publication includes information about major foundations, their funding priorities, the process for submitting an application, and contact information for requesting more information or submitting a proposal.

The Internet provides a wealth of information about funding opportunities at the Federal and State levels, as well as through private foundations. Several Web page addresses that you will find useful are listed below:

- **Grant Advisor Plus**

  The Grant Advisor Plus provides full access to the powerful on-line features available at their web site. Faculty and staff may visit this site for browsing, searching, and downloading files. You can access the Grant Advisor at [www.grantadvisor.com](http://www.grantadvisor.com)
Internet Sites of Interest

Federal Agencies

- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) www.usda.gov
- U.S. Department of Commerce www.doc.gov
- U.S. Department of Defense www.dod.gov
- U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) www.dod.gov
- U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) www.doe.gov
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) www.epa.gov
- General Service Administration (GSA) www.gsa.gov
- Health and Human Services www.dhhs.gov
- Health Resources and Service Administration www.hrsa.gov
- U.S. Information Agency www.usia.gov
- Housing and Urban Development www.hud.gov
- U.S. Department of Justice www.usdoj.gov
- U.S. Department of Labor www.dol.gov
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) www.nasa.gov
- National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) www.nea.gov
- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) www.neh.gov
- National Institute of Standards and Technology www.nist.gov
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) www.noaa.gov
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) www.nih.gov
- National Science Foundation (NSF) www.nsf.gov
- U.S. Department of Transportation www.dot.gov
- Veterans Affairs www.va.gov

Other Sites of Interest

- *Chronicle of Higher Education* www.chronicle.merit.edu
- *Federal Register* www.archives.gov/federal_register/

Published daily by the Federal Government, this publication includes proposed and final guidelines, and other administrative regulations of programs announced by Federal agencies. By closely monitoring the *Federal Register*, you can often get a head start on funding opportunities by tracking programs from the proposed guidelines stage to the final announcement stage. Since the proposed guidelines seldom change significantly from the final guidelines included in the RFP, you can begin preparing your proposal as soon as the proposed guidelines are published.

- Library of Congress www.loc.gov
- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance www.cfda.gov/