General Grantwriting Workshop:
How to Write Effective Proposals
June 5, 2015

Dolores E. Roybal, Executive Director
Workshop Description & Objectives

- Designed for writing effective proposals to foundations
- Open to all (beginner to advanced level)
- Topics:
  - general proposal writing guidelines
  - best practices and do’s & don’ts
  - strategies to increase your opportunities for funding
- Info not specific to Con Alma Health Foundation

For more info on Con Alma funding, visit:
  - Pre-proposal information
    http://conalma.org/2015-grant-cycle-pre-proposal-webinar-resources
  - On-line application process
    http://conalma.org/faqs
Context: Sources of Revenue for Nonprofits

- Other (e.g. investment income, corporate donations)
- Bequests
- Foundation grants (9 – 13% of nonprofits revenue)
- Governmental contracts
- Fees for service
- Individual donors
Giving and Assets

New Mexico:
Giving +11.8%
Assets +7.4%

In NM, 181 foundations granted more than $64.6 million, representing 11.8% increase in dollars granted from the last study two years ago, and a 7.4% increase in the assets of foundations across the state.

Source: Philanthropy Southwest 2014 Giving Study
https://www.philanthropysouthwest.org
Proposal Writing

- Types of Funding: 1) Foundations; 2) Governmental; and 3) Corporate/Business

- One-step or Two-step Process
  - Letter of Inquiry (LOI)
  - Invite to submit full proposal

- Basic Elements of a Proposal
  - Introduction/Organizational Information/Contact info
  - Project/Program Description, Goals & Objectives, Activities
  - Budget & Evaluation
  - Attachments

*Note: Do NOT include a cover letter unless requested.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Basic Elements of a Proposal</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source:</strong> The Foundation Center, <a href="http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/components.html">http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/components.html</a></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Executive Summary:</strong></th>
<th>Umbrella statement of your case and summary of the entire proposal</th>
<th>1 page</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statement of Need:</strong></td>
<td>Why this project is necessary</td>
<td>2 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Description:</strong></td>
<td>Nuts and bolts of how the project will be implemented and evaluated</td>
<td>3 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget:</strong></td>
<td>Financial description of the project plus notes</td>
<td>1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Information:</strong></td>
<td>History and governing structure of the nonprofit; its primary activities, audiences, and services</td>
<td>1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion:</strong></td>
<td>Summary of the proposal's main points</td>
<td>2 paragraphs</td>
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General Proposal Writing Guidelines

1. Do your homework
2. Follow instructions
3. Stay within your mission
4. Be specific
5. Statement of Need
6. Avoid circular reasoning
7. Use data appropriately
8. Budgets
9. Avoid “proposalese”
10. Maintain integrity
1. Do your homework:
Make sure that your proposal fits the guidelines (e.g., grant amount, geographic area of service, funding priority, etc.)

Research funder (e.g., review website for current & former grantees; review 990s, etc.)
General Proposal Writing Guidelines

2. Follow instructions:
   - review & respond to all questions
   - pay attention to special requests, font size, margins, number of copies
   - include all attachments as instructed
General Proposal Writing Guidelines

3. Stay within your mission:

Avoid mission drift. Be clear on how the funding will be used to fulfill project objectives and how the request fits with the funder’s mission.

Funders are interested in the needs of your target population and in fulfilling your (and their) respective missions, but... there has to be a good fit.
4. Be specific: Provide specific info re: target pop, partners, etc. that your program will address.

- **Specific**
  - (Clear, Concise, tangible)

- **Measurable or Motivational**
  - (Dollars, volume, time, experiences)

- **Actionable or Attainable**
  - (You can do something to actually make this happen)

- **Reachable or Realistic**
  - (Partial is fine!)

- **Timely**
  - (Deadlines are announced and committed too)
5. Statement of Need: Don’t assume that the funder understands your need/problem. Nonprofits are passionate about their mission and sometimes assume that everyone understands (and agrees) why a project is worthy of funding.
6. Avoid circular reasoning: This is when your solution is the same as the problem, e.g., “The problem is that there is no health clinic; therefore, establishing a health clinic will solve the problem.”
General Proposal Writing Guidelines

7. Using data: Don’t use national data to describe a local need/problem. National data is helpful to include as part of the framework, but you need to support local needs with local data.

8. Budgets: Check your math. Match budget with program request. Ask for what you need (within funder’s guidelines) and substantiate it with sound figures. Don’t ask for 100% of the project funding, unless justified (project/request ratio).
9. Avoid *proposalese*:  
- Write clearly & concisely, make every word count  
- Avoid jargon  
- Define important terms & concepts

10. Integrity: Maintain a high level of integrity.  
- Don’t pad your budget  
- Don’t promise what you can’t deliver  
- Follow through if funded and keep funder informed of any changes
Levels of Change

Systems

Community

Groups & Organizations

Individuals & Families
Definitions (levels of change):

- Direct services focus on individuals, families or small groups
- Systems change moves beyond individuals, individual organizations, single problems and single solutions
- It involves thinking about systems (e.g. health care system, economic system, educational system, environmental system) in order to impact a larger group, community or society
Sample Grant Review Process

Application/proposal submitted

Initial review (Meet guidelines? Address priorities? Compelling? Greatest impact?)

Site visit and committee review

Funding recommendations

Board approval/action (award & decline letters)
Sample 2015 Grant Cycle Timeline

- **RFP (May 2015)**
- **Proposal Deadline (June 2015)**
- **Grant Review Process (July – Oct.)**
- **Grant Period: 1/1/16 – 12/31/16**
- **Award & Decline Notices (Nov.)**
- **Final Report Due (Jan. 2017)**
Research Funding Restrictions:

EXAMPLE: CAHF grants will *not* Fund

- Direct Services
- Lobbying
- Scholarships/Fellowships
- Fundraising Campaigns
- Event Sponsorships
- Clinical Research
- Capital Expenses, including
  - Construction, renovation
  - Property
  - Equipment costing more than $5,000 per item
Recipe for success: Mix 2 cups of good fit with equal amount of good ideas, add in 1 cup each of organizational capacity and positive approach. Mix well and season to taste. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 min. Serve with integrity.

- A good fit (between your funding needs and funder’s priorities; and a good fit with type of funding you are seeking e.g., governmental, foundation, corporate, etc.)
- Organizational capacity (governance, leadership, operations, etc.)
- A positive approach
- A good idea
Glossary

Grant: An award (generally funding) awarded by a funder/foundation to a nonprofit applicant.
Proposal: An application for funding.
Fiscal Sponsor: A nonprofit, tax-exempt 501c3 that a non-tax exempt organization uses to receive foundation grants.
Donor Advised Funds: A philanthropic vehicle at a public charity (e.g. community foundation), which allows donors to make a charitable contribution.
Indirect Cost: Those costs for activities/services that benefit more than one project and/or are unable to be traced directly to a project (e.g., utilities, audit).

For a full Glossary of Terms, visit the Foundation Center: https://fconline.foundationcenter.org
www.conalma.org – Con Alma Health Foundation

www.centerfornonprofitexcellence.org – Center for Nonprofit Excellence, NM Grantmakers Directory, resources/instructions for grant researches, etc.

www.nmag.org – Visit the New Mexico Association of Grantmakers (NMAG) website for information on philanthropy in NM, and NM Grantmakers Directory

http://foundationcenter.org - Foundation Center - maintains comprehensive database grantmakers and their grants; proposal writing info, glossary, etc.
Questions?

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