Grant Writing 101

Steps for Preparing a Proposal
Worthy of Consideration
Grant Writing Steps

• Know Your Funding Priorities
• Draft the Basic or “Master” Proposal
• Package the Proposal
• Research Potential Funders
• Contact & Cultivate Potential Funders
• Respond to the Result

Source: The Foundation Center’s Guide to Proposal Writing, 3rd Edition
Know Your Funding Priorities

- Map out all of your community’s priorities
- Include all priorities whether or not you’ll seek funding for them
- Be sure priorities are included in an adopted plan and determined in a public planning session
- Decide which priorities align with funding opportunities offered
- Develop funding proposal for those that fit

Source: The Foundation Center’s Guide to Proposal Writing, 3rd Edition
Draft the Basic or “Master” Proposal

• Have at least a rough draft of the proposal in hand at all times
• Assemble detailed background information on the project
• Select proposal writer

Source: The Foundation Center’s Guide to Proposal Writing, 3rd Edition
Draft the Basic or “Master” Proposal

• Write the actual components of the document
  – executive summary,
  – statement of need,
  – project description,
  – Budget, and
  – Organizational information

• Prepare and rehearse “elevator speech”

Source: The Foundation Center’s Guide to Proposal Writing, 3rd Edition
Package the Proposal

• Groundwork is now in place for the application
• Projects have been selected that will further the goals of the community
• Master proposal is written
• Before assembling the document for distribution, need to tailor the “master” proposal to the specific funder’s priorities

Source: The Foundation Center’s Guide to Proposal Writing, 3rd Edition
Package the Proposal

- Identify a team of at least three (3) individuals to review final product
  - Must have working knowledge of funder’s requirements
  - Must have keen eye for details
- Reviewer #1 = experience with planning
- Reviewer #2 = experience with implementation
- Reviewer #3 = experience with grant administration
- Look for errors, omissions, etc.

Source: The Foundation Center’s Guide to Proposal Writing, 3rd Edition
Package the Proposal

• For certain projects, determine whether the project can be at least partially financed
  – If so, what’s the gap that must be filled?
• Add cover letter, where appropriate
• Add an appendix
• Pay careful attention to the components of the package and how they are put together

Source: The Foundation Center’s Guide to Proposal Writing, 3rd Edition
Research Potential Match
Funders/Donors

• Identify those sources that are most likely to support your proposal

• Use various criteria for developing this list
  – Funders geographic focus
  – Demonstrated interest in a project

• Prepare a finished proposal package based upon guidelines of specific funder(s)

Source: The Foundation Center’s Guide to Proposal Writing, 3rd Edition
Contacting & Cultivating Potential Funders/Donors

• This step is designed to save unnecessary or untimely submissions

• Take time to speak with funder about your community and planned proposal submission to set the tone for potentially supportive future relationships

Source: The Foundation Center’s Guide to Proposal Writing, 3rd Edition
Contacting & Cultivating Potential Funders/Donors

• Judicious use of phone and/or email communication, face-to-face meetings, board contacts and written updates & progress reports is important in this step.

• Each form of cultivation is extremely important & has its own place in the fundraising process.

• Goal: Build a relationship with the potential donor. Be persistent. Help them to learn more about your community & its assets.

Source: The Foundation Center’s Guide to Proposal Writing, 3rd Edition
Respond to the Result

• Regardless of the decision, assume responsibility for taking the next step
• Positive response = good follow-up is critical to turning a mere grant into a true partnership
• Denial = follow up to find out if you might
  – Try again at another time; or
  – Try again with another proposal; or
  – Learn how to improve your chances of getting your proposal funded by others.

Source: The Foundation Center’s Guide to Proposal Writing, 3rd Edition
COMPETING FOR OCRA &/OR IHCDA FUNDS
Application Preparation Phases

• Project Development Phase
• Scanning Phase
• Application Preparation Phase
• Application Refinement Phase
• Post Application Phase
Define the gap.

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PHASE**
Project Development Phase Tips

• Remain true to your mission
• Know your project & what is required to make it happen
• Avoid chasing funds by redefining your project to make it fundable
• Use current data & maps that are clearly labeled & high quality
Define the size of the gap & what source(s) are available to fill it.

**SCANNING PHASE**
Scanning Phase Tips

• Consider which funding sources you think you’ll need to apply for
• Choose funding sources that align with your project goals
Scanning Phase Tips

• Align timeline with the application deadline to ensure ample time for preparation of the application
• Attend any & all sessions offered by funder to better understand requirements
If application is submitted electronically, test the system in advance.

Don’t wait!
Scanning Phase Tips

• Read the application policy & forms thoroughly
• Understand policies regarding budget limitations to be sure the source will work for your project
• Submit requests for public records information for previously submitted applications
Select which funding to pursue & establish framework for applying for funding.

APPLICATION PREPARATION PHASE
Application Preparation Phase Tips

• Start working on the application early
  – Rushed application look rushed
• Utilize site visits to obtain technical assistance
• Be sure to ask plenty of questions
Application Preparation Phase Tips

• Less is more
• Assume reviewers will NOT be familiar with your proposal
Application Preparation Phase Tips

• Answer all questions pertaining to the project
• Answer only the question being asked
  – Extra information only confuses an otherwise good answer
Application Preparation Phase Tips

• Avoid using “Not Applicable”
  – Explain why the question is unanswered
• Use “will” and “should” vs. “can” or “could”
APPLICATION REFINEMENT PHASE

Align proposals in accordance with lender/funder requirements.
Application Refinement Phase

• Spellcheck the document
• Make sure all numbers match & add up – budgets, support letters, etc.
• Make the information easy to find
  – Clearly label attachments, use searchable PDFs
Application Refinement Phase

- Have an extra set of eyes review the application
  - Reviewer should be someone unfamiliar with the project
POST APPLICATION PHASE

Obtain feedback.
Post Application Phase

• Prepare for the worst
• Stay persistent
• Ask for feedback
• Proceed with what can be done
• Track & measure your successes
Remaining Courses

- Registration through IHCDA website
- Location: Indiana Government Center South from 10:00 ~ 3:00
- Cost: $20.00 per person

- **Course 110** – April 22
  Identifying Community Strengths and Weaknesses

- **Course 120** – June 17
  Building Local Capacity for Planning and Action

- **Course 130** – July 7
  Coalition Building / Building Partnerships

- **Course 140** – August 5
  How to Seek and Implement Public Feedback

- **Course 150** – September 6
  Strategies for Leveraging Public & Private Funds

- **Course 160** – October 20
  Fundamentals of Project Management

Source: The Foundation Center’s Guide to Proposal Writing, 3rd Edition
Thank you for your time!

Any Questions?