Grant Writing Reference Guide

Division of Criminal Justice
State Office of Victim Witness Advocacy

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*Materials Taken from "**Anatomy of a Grant Proposal**" by Richard Lambert (2002) & **The Collaboration Challenge** by James Austin (2000).*

PROJECT SUMMARY

Purpose: The project summary represents your best shot at capturing the reviewer's imagination and interest. This section should provide the framework from which your whole project can be visualized. The rest of your proposal serves to amplify and deepen this vision. Your challenge is to summarize the entire proposal in a few short sentences. The project summary essentially ties everything in your proposal together.

What to include:

- **The need**: a description of the need your organization has recognized, and is prepared to address.
- **The solution**: what will take place, how many people will benefit, how and where it will operate, for how long, and who will staff it?
- **Funding requirements**: an explanation of the amount of project grant money needed, and what your plans are for funding in the future.

Tip: Grant writers sometimes write the project summary first because it is the first section of the proposal. It's a better idea to write it last, when you have all your arguments and key points developed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- The sections in your table of contents should be listed in the order in which they appear, with page numbers indicating where they can be located.
- The table of contents should be laid out so that it takes up one full page.

AGENCY, BACKGROUND, MISSION, EXPERIENCE & CAPABILITY

Purpose: This section introduces your organization and your qualifications for funding to the grantor. It also serves to establish your credibility. Your programs and accomplishments will be examined within the context of how you are currently addressing the needs of your community. The information you provide in this section is your opportunity to demonstrate to the grantor that you have the means as well as the creative ability to solve the community need your proposal addresses.

A well written introduction…

- Clearly establishes who is applying for funds
- Briefly addresses the rationale for the funding request
- Describes your organization's purpose and long-range goals
- Describes your organization's current programs and activities
- Describes the victim population you serve or plan to serve
- Provides evidence of your accomplishments
- Establishes qualifications in the area for which funds are being sought
- Leads logically to the problem statement

THE PROBLEM STATEMENT/ NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Purpose: The problem statement presents the facts and evidence to support the need for the project you are proposing. It also establishes your organization as the best candidate to address the need. Your supporting materials for this section may come from authorities in the field as well as from your own organization's experience. Your goal is to be succinct and persuasive. Like a good debater, you need to assemble your arguments and present them to the reader in a cogent, well-organized manner.

An Effective Problem Statement….

- Describes the target population to be served
- Defines the community problem to be addressed
- Is related to the purposes and goals of your organization
- Describes a need that is about the same size as the solution
- Includes both quantitative and qualitative supporting materials
- Does not make any unsupported assumptions
- Is jargon-free
- Describes the situation in both factual and human interest terms

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Purpose: Your goal is the end to which your objectives are directed, and the outcome of your project is measured by your objectives. So, when funding agencies approve projects they are literally "buying" the objectives. That's why your objectives need to be concrete, specific, and achievable. It is good to list your specific objectives (one or two sentences) in order of importance. A good objective emphasizes **what** will be done and **when**.

Guidelines:

- Include at least one objective for each need listed in your problem statement.
- Avoid confusing your objectives (what & when) with your methods (how)
- Describe the population that will benefit from the project
- State the time frame in which your objectives will be accomplished
- Make your objectives specific and measurable

Goals vs. Objectives: Grant writers often confuse goals and objectives. Goals are long-term, objectives are short term. Goals are general while objectives are specific. Your **goals should complement** the mission of the funding source, and your **objectives should help move** the funding source toward that mission.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose: This section describes your "plan of action" showing how you will meet your proposal's goals and objectives. If your methodology section is well organized, it will help the reviewer clearly visualize how your project will come together. It also demonstrates that you've planned the project thoroughly and will add credibility to your proposal in the eyes of the reviewer.

A good methodology section…

- Flows naturally from the problem statement and the goals and objectives
- Clearly describes your project's activities and provides a time line for them
- States reasons for your selection of methods
- Describes the sequence of activities
- Describes staffing for the project
- Identifies the target population
- Lists any innovative techniques or strategies you intend to employ

Tip: If you have difficulty writing this section, pretend a check for the full amount of your grant request came in today's mail. What is the first thing you'd do after depositing the money?...Hire additional staff?...Order equipment?. What will you do next? **Just keep asking and answering the "what's next?" question and you'll lead yourself step by step through the methodology section.**

PARTNERSHIPS, COLLABORATIONS, COORDINATION OF SERVICES

Benefits of Partnering:

- **Cost savings** (opportunity to eliminate duplicative cost through shared facilities, equipment, services, activities, etc.)

- **Strategy enrichment** (opportunity to broaden the approach and become more embedded in the community)

- **Synergies** (opportunity to accomplish more together than separately by leveraging each partners competencies, capabilities and resources.)

- **Revenue enhancement** (cross-sector relationships that provide new opportunities to expand resources and revenue.)

Questions to ask before collaborating….

Why should we collaborate? The organization should specify the function and value of collaboration in terms of where the collaboration fits into the organization's overall strategy and how it contributes to the accomplishment of its mission.

With whom should we collaborate? The organization must select the right partner, the organization must find the right fit between missions, values, needs and competencies.

How should we collaborate? The organization must view the partnership as part of an ongoing process that evolves with the relationship.

EVALUATION

Purpose: Your evaluation section pinpoints what is really happening (or has happened) in your project. It helps you effectively allocate resources, improve services, and strengthen your overall performance. The evaluation is an important tool for the funder because it offers a way to measure the success of your project. In fact, the funder may want to collaborate on how the project will be evaluated because the evaluation represents your plan of accountability to the funding agency.

How to evaluate…a four step process…

1. Identify precisely what will be evaluated. If you have written measurable objectives, then you already know what to evaluate.

2. Determine the methods you will use to evaluate each objective. Describe the information you will need and how you propose to collect it.

3. Clarify the analysis you plan to make, then carry out your evaluation by collecting and interpreting the data required for each objective.

4. Summarize the data, indicating how it will be used for program improvements.

Note: Good tools for strengthening your evaluation section include: surveys, questionnaires, data collection instruments and data analysis forms.

BUDGET

Purpose: A project budget is more than a statement of proposed expenditures; it is an alternative way of expressing your project. Grant reviewers will look at your budget to see how well it fits your proposed activities. Incomplete budgets are a reflection of sloppy preparation. Inflated budgets are signals of waste. Budgets that are too low cast doubt on your planning ability. In effect, your budget is as much a credibility statement as your project summary.

Your budget should…..

- Tell the same story, in financial terms, as your project summary
- Relate line items to project objectives
- Include project costs that will be incurred at the time the project is implemented
- Contain no unexplained amounts
- Include all amounts asked of the funding source
- Include all amounts paid for by other sources
- Include indirect costs where appropriate
- Be sufficient to perform the activities described in the project summary.