Introduction to the Grant Writing Process
Purpose

Make a credible, persuasive case for support to a government agency, foundation, or corporation for funding of programs, services, or infrastructure.
Components of a Grant Proposal

- Abstract or summary
- Introduction or organization background
- Problem or need statement
- Project goals and objectives
- Strategies and/or methods
- Activities and timeline
Components of a Grant Proposal

- Key personnel/project management
- Measurable outcomes
- Project evaluation
- Sustainability plan
- Project budget
- Budget narrative
Where to Start

- Identify a significant need or problem.
- Does the problem impact your students, department, organization, or community?
How Do You Know?

- What data supports your need?
- Is this a local, state, or national need?
- Is there comparative data from other institutions?
How Significant is the Problem?

- List all of the long-term implications if this need or problem is not addressed.
- Where does the data lead you?
- Is the problem measurable?
So There is a Problem...

Now ask...

• What are the possible causes for this problem? Make a list!
• Can you categorize the causes?
• Is it student related: access, resources, information, or support?
• Is it institutional: lack of a program, resources, or faculty development?

Look at your list again...

• What items are out of your control?
  Strike those!
Problem or Need Statement

- The items left on the list should be things that you have control or influence over.
- Can you write a succinct statement of the problem?
- Focus on the problem in your draft — solutions will be addressed in the strategies and methods section.
Goals

- Goals are large statements of what you hope to accomplish or change.
- Goals are not measurable.
- Goals create the setting for the proposal.
Objectives

- Objectives are operational and measurable.
- Two kinds of objectives:
  - Process
  - Outcome
Process Objectives

- **Process objectives** identify deliverables or activities that the organization must complete in order to implement the project.

Examples of process objectives:
- To establish a writing center . . .
- To send five people to training . . .
- To implement a new system . . .
Outcome Objectives

- **Outcome objectives** measure a program’s overall effectiveness.

- **Examples of outcome objectives:**
  - Increase the percentage of females in the engineering program by 30% by fall semester 2013 (baseline: 23%).
  - Increase the veterans graduate transfer rate to four-year schools from 40% to 50% by December 2013.
Be Objective About Objectives

- To increase or decrease something is not an objective.
- To make it an objective, add *by what degree* the performance will increase or decrease, against what starting *baseline*, and *by when*.

- **Process** objectives are defined in terms of deliverables, activities, or steps that are necessary in order to make interventions or to provide services on behalf of participants.

- **Outcome** objectives are written in terms of the participants (students or other participants).
The S.M.A.R.T. Approach

Objectives should be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Action oriented
- Realistic
- Time delimited
Output Measures

- **Outputs** identify targets for how many participants (students, faculty, etc.) will be served or participate in targeted programs or services.

- **Examples of outputs:**
  - 100 students will complete basic computer skills training.
  - 500 students will participate in service learning.
  - 30 faculty will complete the faculty advising training program.
Outcomes measure the specific changes in program participants’ behavior, knowledge, attitudes, skills, or level of functioning.

Outcomes are quantifiable and measureable.

Examples of outcomes:

- Increase by 15 percentage points the number of students in developmental writing courses who successfully pass these courses with an A, B, or C (baseline: 60%).
- Increase by 20 percentage points the number of electronics technology graduates who are placed in employment within 6 months after graduation (baseline: 55%).
Strategies, Methods, Activities, and Implementation

- This is the most detailed part of the proposal and usually is awarded the most points.
- It describes who, what, when, where, and how:
  - What strategies or methods will you use to achieve your goals?
  - What resources are required?
  - What are the major activities to be completed?
  - Who is responsible?
  - What is the timeframe?
  - How will you know the activities have been accomplished?
Evaluation

- Relates to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposal.
- Begin with the end (evaluation) in mind.
- Key question: did you achieve the impact you targeted?
- Included in periodic progress reports to grantor.
Evaluation Considerations

- What data will be needed?
- Who will collect the data? How? When? From where?
- How will the data be analyzed? By whom?
- Is an external evaluator needed or required?
Two Types of Evaluation

- **Formative evaluation** assesses the process of project implementation and asks, “how well is the implementation going?”

- **Summative evaluation** asks, “have you achieved the targeted project outcomes?”
Formative vs. Summative

"When the cook tastes the soup, that’s formative; when the guests taste the soup, that’s summative."

- Robert Stakes
Data for Measuring Outcomes

- Focus groups and interviews
- Surveys, questionnaires, and checklists
- Pre and post tests
- Anecdotal information
- Case studies
- Student information system
Budget –
A Picture of the Proposal Using Numbers

- The budget must relate to the activities in the grant proposal, i.e., expenditures must be planned and incurred solely to advance the work under the grant.
- Costs must be necessary, reasonable, and allowable.
- Note: Grant funds always come with strings attached.
Budget Line Items

- Personnel salary and fringes
- Consultants and contractual
- Travel/professional development
- Supplies
- Equipment
- Other direct costs
- Indirect costs
- Administrative costs
A Word About Sustainability

- A sustainability plan generally must be included in the proposal: how will the project be sustained as an institutional priority and funded after the grant ends?
- Highest level of governance must agree to the sustainability plan.
Remember

- Read the grantor’s RFP carefully and outline the requirements.
- Follow all instructions carefully.
- Align content to funder’s priorities.
- Be clear. Be specific. Be concise.
- Vagueness signals poor planning and lack of effort!
Grant proposals are often rejected.
Grants are an investment by the funding source.
Funders want to support something new, unique, and dynamic — not current day-to-day operating expenses.
Grants often provide seed money for new projects.
Grants should not be approached as a short-term solution to a long-term problem.
Prove to the Funding Source That You:

- Have broad understanding of the problem.
- Have read and understand the applicable current literature in your discipline.
- Are qualified to design and deliver a solution to the problem.
- Have a well-developed plan and a reasonable budget.
- Are committed to sustaining the improvement long-term.
A Winning Proposal . . .

- Demonstrates the credibility of the organization and its capacity to complete the project.
- Demonstrates mastery of the problem and the evidence-based solution.
- Shows grantors how they can optimize their philanthropic goals by investing in your project.
- Brings the proposal to life with clear, concise, persuasive writing and thoughtful illustrations.
- Convinces the reader of the case for support.