

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

Although the required format varies from funder-to-funder, the following components are almost always required in some form:

- Summary
- Needs Statement
- Program Description
- Evaluation
- Staff & Organizational Experience
- Budget
- Appendices/ Supporting Documentation

SUMMARY

Usually limited to one page, this component of your proposal should briefly describe:

1. The problem you are addressing.
2. Your overall program goal, expected outcomes and program plan to address the problem
3. Briefly highlight your organizational and staff qualifications for the program.
4. Your financial request from the funder.

The proposal summary should always be clear, concise and compelling. Often, the board members of a funder may only read the program summary (the review of the full proposal is usually left to staff.)

NEEDS STATEMENT

This section of your proposal should explain the following:

1. Why the proposed program/project is necessary.
2. Who (e.g., individuals, children, families) will benefit from the program.
3. Where (geographically) the need is.

Statistics and other supporting data, if available, should be used in this section to help support the contention that the need exists, for the population to be served, in the geographic area identified. You should be able to present the needs statement on 1-2 pages.

The following represents five basic needs assessment approaches:

1. Key Informant. - testimony from people who know the problem
2. Community Forum
3. Case Studies - example of clients in the population in need
4. Social Indicators - data which establishes the need
5. Survey - Random

The information provided through your needs assessment should indicate that there is a compelling need to be addressed. You want it to stand out from the rest of the competition.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This section should clearly describe the following:

1. Description of the services to be provided
 - What services will be provided?
 - Who will receive the services?
 - Who will provide the services?
 - When will the services be provided?
 - Why you are providing these particular services?
 - Where services will be provided?
2. Your plan of action to achieve the program outcomes. This is often referred to as the program plan or the service delivery plan. Your plan of action should be designed so that it is clear that the expected outcomes for the program can be achieved through the implementation of your program plan.
3. The timetable for the program. This should reflect a thoughtful approach including time needed to realistically phase in the program until it becomes fully operational.

EVALUATION

This section must clearly describe:

1. Your goal(s) and expected outcomes for the program. The program goal is a broad statement of what you intend for your program to accomplish. The outcomes for the program, however, should be specific, time-limited, realistic and achievable.
2. How you will measure the effectiveness of the program.
3. How data will be collected.
4. Who will analyze it.
5. How and to whom will the results be reported to.

It is important for funders to know to what extent projects have met the expected outcomes. Most will want information to help them determine what went right and wrong and why. Many funders will want to learn if the project had potential meaningful impact beyond- the funded project. Others will want to know the likelihood of replicating the project and disseminating information regarding your project.

STAFF & ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCE

In this section you must describe both the qualifications of the key staff who will be assigned to direct and operate the program· as well as the qualifications of the agency to administer the type of program you are proposing. It is important that the funder feel comfortable with both the people involved directly with the program and the sponsoring organization.

It is also very important that your organization have or establish a good reputation · in the community for providing quality service. This will be essential for funders who check with individuals and other agencies in the community regarding your staff and your organization.

Sometimes it is required that you provide the resumes of key staff. In the absence of identified staff to direct and operate the program, provide specific information regarding the qualifications you will be requiring of the staff to be hired.

Many funders place a great deal of emphasis in this area. A good program plan is not that important without the right people to implement it.

BUDGET

The budget generally includes the following primacy components:

1. **Expenses**: This section identifies all costs associated with your program. The expenses should identify and support all components of your program. You should do your homework and make sure that the costs that you project for various budget services/items are in line with comparable services/items.
2. **Revenue**: This section identifies all sources of financial support for your program. You should reflect all sources (if applicable) including other grants from governmental funders and foundations. United Way allocation, agency fund raising, program fees, in-kind donations (personnel and other). Your total program revenues should add up to your total program expenses.
3. **Budget Narrative**: This section provides the justification and calculations (formulas) for all budget expenses in this section you should detail your cost assumptions and calculations for all budget items.

A carefully thought out budget will reflect the financial need associated with the phase-in of program activities as outlined in the timetable you establish for your program. It should be realistic!

APPENDICES/SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Depending on the guidelines of the funder, this section could include the following items:

- IRS 501(c)(3) Certificate
- Resumes
- Most Recent Agency Audit
- Articles of Incorporation
- Letters of Support

Make sure you provide, at minimum, all items requested by the funder.