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CENTER for URBAN TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH

Grant Writing Basics

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Module Goals

- Learn the benefits of the grant proposal writing process
- Identify the components of the proposal writing process
- Learn to avoid the trap of circular reasoning
- Understand how to write SMART objectives
- Focus of this session is on the HOW, not the WHERE, to get funding
- Plus descriptions of types of foundations

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Think-Pair-Share

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL WRITING PROCESS?

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Benefits of the Proposal Writing Process

- Enhance credibility
- Obtain more clarity of goals
- Develop tangible objectives
- Increase knowledge in the program area
- Improve record-keeping systems
- Design better program evaluations
- Assure better financial management

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7 Sections of the Proposal Writing Process

1. Introduction
2. Problem Statement or Assessment
3. Objectives
4. Methods
5. Evaluation
6. Future or Other Necessary Funding
7. Budget

– Clearly and concisely summarize the request

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7 Sections of the Proposal Writing Process

1. Introduction
2. Problem Statement or Assessment
3. Objectives
4. Methods
5. Evaluation
6. Future or Other Necessary Funding
7. Budget

– Documents the need to be met or the problem to be solved by the proposed funding

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7 Sections of the Proposal Writing Process

1. Introduction
2. Problem Statement or Assessment
3. Objectives
4. Methods
5. Evaluation
6. Future or Other Necessary Funding
7. Budget

– Establishes the benefits of the funding in measurable terms

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7 Sections of the Proposal Writing Process

1. Introduction
2. Problem Statement or Assessment
3. Objectives
4. Methods
5. Evaluation
6. Future or Other Necessary Funding
7. Budget

– Describes the activities to be employed to achieve the desired results

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7 Sections of the Proposal Writing Process

1. Introduction
2. Problem Statement or Assessment
3. Objectives
4. Methods
5. **Evaluation**
6. Future or Other Necessary Funding
7. Budget

– Presents a plan for determining the degree to which objectives are met and methods are followed

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7 Sections of the Proposal Writing Process

1. Introduction
2. Problem Statement or Assessment
3. Objectives
4. Methods
5. Evaluation
6. **Future or Other Necessary Funding**
7. Budget

– Describes a plan for continuation beyond the grant period and/or the availability of other resources necessary to implement the grant

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7 Sections of the Proposal Writing Process

1. Introduction
2. Problem Statement or Assessment
3. Objectives
4. Methods
5. Evaluation
6. Future or Other Necessary Funding
7. Budget

– Clearly delineates costs to be met by the funding source and those to be provided by the applicant or other parties

Categories May Differ But Similar Elements

Proposal Writing Process

1. Introduction
2. Problem Statement or Assessment
3. Objectives
4. Methods
5. Evaluation
6. Future or Other Necessary Funding
7. Budget

TIGGER

1. Application Information
   – Project Management
   – Project Readiness
2. Project Information
   – Executive Summary
   – Project Scope
3. Project Calculations
4. Project Useful Life
5. Project Scalability
6. Budget/Timeline

Basic Principles of Proposal Writing

- The proposal should be neat, clean and easy to read!
- "De-jargonize" your proposal
- Make it brief
  - Online submittals may restrict the number of words or characters
- Be positive
- Avoid unsupported assumptions

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Proposal Components

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The Proposal Summary

- Identification of the applicant and a phrase about the applicant's credibility
- Objectives to be achieved
- Activities to be conducted to accomplish these objectives
- Total cost of the project

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Checklist for Proposal Summary

- Belongs at the beginning of the proposal
- Identifies the grant applicant
- One sentence on:
    - credibility
    - problem
    - objectives
    - methods

Checklist for Proposal Summary

❑Includes total cost
❑Should be brief
❑Should be clear
❑Should be interesting

What to put in your Introduction

• When, how and why the organization was started
• Statement of purpose, goals and philosophy
• Significant events in your history
• Prior and current activities
• Accomplishments and impact

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What to put in your Introduction

- Size and characteristics of your constituency or clientele
- Assistance given to other organizations
- Referring agencies
- Your funding sources and their positive comments of your work

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What to put in your Introduction

- Results of evaluations of your programs
- Quotes from letters of support
- Invitations you've received to provide testimony on legislation
- Important agency publications
- … and more that you will think of

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What to put in your Introduction

- Brevity is a virtue
- "We believes" are inappropriate
- Provide sufficient evidence so that the *reader* will believe

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Checklist for Proposal Introduction

❑Who is applying for funds

❑Applicant agency purpose and goals

❑Describes agency programs

❑Describes clients

❑Evidence of accomplishment

❑Offers statistics to support credibility

❑Endorsements to support credibility

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Checklist for Proposal Introduction

☐ Supports credibility in area where funds are sought

☐ Leads logically to problem statement

☐ Interesting

☐ Free of jargon

☐ Is brief

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The Problem Statement or Needs Assessment

- Clearly relate to the purposes and goals of your organization

- Should be supported by evidence to be knowledgeable

- Reasonable dimensions

- Stated in terms of clients rather than the problems of your organization

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The Problem Statement or Needs Assessment

- Needs Approach
  - Usually describe those of a particular group of individuals at a particular time in a particular place, but this would limit funding options.
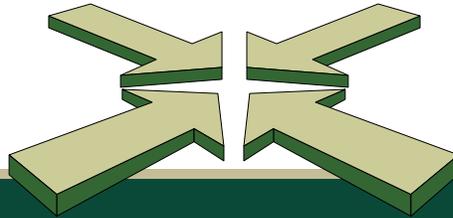
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The Problem Statement or Needs Assessment

- Problem Approach
  - Presents your program as potentially beneficial to people beyond the bounds of your own community. Widens your potential funding to more sources, as it implies a greater social benefit.

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What Basic Need(s) Do You Serve?

- Why is your community better off with public transportation than without it?

- What benefits would the ideal public transportation service or program bring?

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Customers' Needs

- Who are your customers?
- What do the customers need?
  - Different needs for different customers
- What do your customers value?
- How do you select what products and services to offer?

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Who Are Your Customers: Identifying Market Segments

- Define the program in terms of customers:
  - Geography/location
  - Demographics
  - Mode
  - Lifestyle

Identifying Market Segments

- Identify secondary markets such as:
  - Elected officials
  - Employers
  - Florida DOT
  - Funding agencies
  - Local and regional planning officials
  - Media
  - Transit agencies

What Do Your Customers Need?

CAUTION!:
Circular Reasoning Ahead

- <u>Avoid</u> stating that the need or problem is the lack of the solution you are suggesting.
  - "The need in this community is for a vanpool program"
  - "This neighborhood needs a bus circulator"

CAUTION!:
Circular Reasoning Ahead

1. The need is for a vanpool program
2. The objective is to create a vanpool program
3. The method is a plan for developing a vanpool program
4. The evaluation question becomes "is there now a vanpool program or is there not"

Nowhere in this discussion are the needs of the targeted customers mentioned!

Validating Goals With Needs

- Examine program goals in terms of market needs met by the program
  - How do we know those market needs exist? Are the needs changing?
  - What is the extent of the need?
  - Are we using facts or assumptions in validating the extent of the needs? Is more research warranted?

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Identifying Performance Measures

- What kinds of measures are available to demonstrate the level of those needs?
- Performance measures:
  - Quantifiable
  - Relate back to need/factor
  - Applicable to your specific product/program

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Activity

- Develop a list of 3 needs for your public transportation system or program
- Describe the extent of these needs (based on fact or assumption)

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Next Step

CONVERTING NEEDS INTO SMART OBJECTIVES

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What Are Goals and Objectives?

- Goals
  - Identification of basic needs met/filled
  - Broad statements of program purpose or mission

- Objectives
  - Measurable, quantitative assessments of problems
  - Goal levels on those measures

Why are quantitative objectives important?

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5 Steps of Strategic Planning

My • What is your mission?

Customers • Who are your customers?

Value • What do your customers value?

Real • What are the results?

Plans • What are your plans?

Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.
--Albert Einstein

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The Problem Statement or Needs Assessment

- Who are the people or agencies with whom the applicant is concerned?

- What is the problem or need that the agency will focus on?

- Is the problem of reasonable dimensions?

- Is it something that can be changed for the better over the period of a grant?

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The Problem Statement or Needs Assessment

- In what direction does the problem statement seem to lead?

- Does this statement appear to be concerned with the needs of clients or with the needs of the applicant?

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Checklist for Problem Statement

❑ Relates to purposes and goals of organization

❑ Is of reasonable dimensions

❑ Supported by statistical evidence

❑ Supported by statements from authorities

❑ Stated in terms of clients or beneficiaries
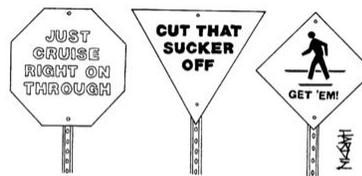
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Checklist for Problem Statement

❑ Developed with input from clients

❑ Is not the "lack of a method" (unless the method is infallible)

❑ Doesn't make assumptions

❑ Doesn't use jargon

❑ Is interesting to read

Program Objectives

- Talking about *methods*, and not objectives when using words like:
  - To provide
  - To establish
  - To create

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Program Objectives

- Talking about *objectives* when using words like:
    - To increase
    - To decrease
    - To reduce

Program Objectives

- To be really useful, program objectives should:
    - Tell *who*,
    - Is going to be doing *what*
    - *When*
    - How much
    - How we will measure it

Approach To Developing Objectives

- Identify basic needs and select relevant performance measures
  - Who are the customers and what are their needs?
  - How are those needs measured?
- Use performance measures to develop SMART objectives

A public transportation program is in the business of mobility, not vehicles

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SMART Objectives

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time-framed

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Specific

- Applicable to any product or tactic
  - Who: Who is involved?
  - What: What do I want to accomplish?
  - Where: Identify a location.
  - When: Establish a time frame.
  - Which: Identify requirements and constraints.
  - Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.
- Always relate back to need/factor influencing need

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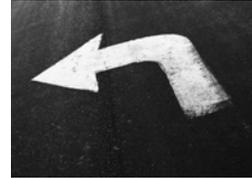
Specific

- Criteria to keep in mind
  - Relevance of measure to need/factor
  - Beware of "forcing" available data to fit need
  - Availability of data

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Measurable

- Data that can measure transportation program impacts:
  - Marketing/product effectiveness
  - Implementation/Production Activity
  - Cost effectiveness measures
  - Transit benefit program results
- Criteria:
  - Relevance of data to goals/objectives.
  - Availability of data

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Measurable: Questions to Ask

- How do you select your performance measures?
- What measures monitor progress in achieving goals and objectives?
- What measures highlight accomplishments?
- What measures give the reality of the situation?

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Example:

- Reduce congestion
  - How can congestion index be measured?
    - Peak hour flow
    - Vehicle trips per person per day
    - Peak hour vehicle trips
    - Time lost of traffic delays
    - VMT

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Measurable: Possible Measures

- NTD performance measures
- Measures used by key stakeholders
- Marketing effectiveness
  - Awareness – Interest – Desire – Action
  - Market share
- Implementation activity
  - Adherence to schedule
  - Reliability
- Cost effectiveness

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Achievable

- Don't set yourself up for failure by setting goals that are out of reach
  - Transit ridership tripled in 3 years
  - Carpool share increased from 12% to 50% by 2010

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Realistic

- Taking the time, talent and resources into account, what can you expect from the program within the given time frame?
  - What will be the best case outcome?
  - What will be the worst case outcome?

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Time-Framed

- SMART objectives have starting points, ending points, and/or fixed durations
- People are better able to focus their efforts on goal attainment when they are committed to deadlines
- Goals without schedules or deadlines tend to get lost in the rush of day-to-day life

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Activity: Critique these objectives

- Increase transit ridership
- Decrease average commute time from 23 minutes to 18 minutes by 2020
- Increase awareness of regional transit service by 15% among those age 35-45 within 12 months

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Why Spend Time Setting Good Objectives

- Builds on foundation (mission) for Strategic Plan
- SMART Objectives help your program
  - Offer products and services customers want
  - Design marketing strategies that work and determine why they work
  - Identify poor results and recommend improvements

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Checklist for Objectives

❑ Describes problem-related outcomes of your program

❑ Does not describe your methods

❑ Defines the population served

❑ States the time when the objectives will be met

❑ Describes the objectives in numerical terms, if at all possible

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Checklist for Methods

❑ Flows naturally from problems and objectives

❑ Clearly describes program activities

❑ States reasons for selection of activities

❑ Describes sequence of activities

❑ Describes staffing of program

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Evaluation

- Extent to which program achieved stated objectives

- Extent to which the accomplishment of objectives can be attributed to the program

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Evaluation

- Conduct of the Program (process evaluation)
  - Has it been conducted in a manner consistent with the plan
  - What is relationship of different program activities to the effectiveness of the program

"Well, then try another independent research organization."

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Evaluation

- Designing the Evaluation
  - Clarify program objectives
  - Determine the potential audience
  - Process evaluation or product evaluation, or both?
  - Who will conduct the evaluation?

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Evaluation

- Designing the Evaluation (cont.)
  - Analysis of cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness?
  - How will evaluation data be collected?
  - How will data be analyzed?
  - How will the information be reported?

Checklist for Evaluation

❑ Covers product and process
❑ Who performs evaluation and how evaluators will be selected
❑ Defines evaluation criteria
❑ Describes data gathering methods
❑ Explains any test instruments to be used

Checklist for Evaluation

❑ Describes the process of data analysis

❑ Shows how evaluation will be used for program improvements

❑ Describes evaluation reports to be produced

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Checklist for Future Funding

❑ Presents a plan to provide future funding if program is to be continued

❑ Maintenance and future program funding if program is for construction

❑ Other needed expenditures if program includes purchase of equipment

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Types of Foundations

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Show Me the Money!

Types of Foundations: Each has a specific organizational structure and operates in a different manner with respect to grantseekers

Private Foundations

- Most common type of foundation
- Generally endowed, usually from a single individual or family
- Frequently considered family foundations if relatives of the original donor are still active on the board of trustees or in the operation of the foundation

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Independent Foundations

- Have no relative of the donor involved in the grantmaking process.
- Grant decisions may be made by the original donor, by members of the donor's family, by an appointed board of directors or by a bank trust officer acting on the donor's behalf
- Trustee decision or the will of the donor often limits the geographic and interest areas of these foundations.

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Corporate Foundations

- Private foundations
- Independent grantmaking organizations whose originating donor is a corporation rather than a family or individual
- They may have an actual endowment, or they may receive annual funding from the corporation.
- Grantmaking decisions are usually made by a board of directors consisting of top corporate management, local corporate officers, employee committees and sometimes outside community members.
- Geographical range is often limited to areas where there is a corporate presence.

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Corporate Giving Programs

- Functionally similar to corporate foundations, except that they are not legally foundations and therefore are not required by law to grant a certain percentage of assets or to publicly disclose their grantmaking activities.
- Many corporations run both a foundation and a giving program, coordinating the grantmaking activities of the two.
- A corporate grantmaking budget is usually determined by the company's economic health and is sometimes set by a formula related to profits. Often the giving program works closely with their company's marketing, community and public relations departments.

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Public Foundations

- Receive much of their financial support in the form of contributions from the general public

- Support a variety of interest areas with or without geographic limitations as defined in their organizing charter and/or by their governing boards

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Community Foundations

- Made up of a considerable number of individual endowments managed by a single administrative body with all the funds pooled for greater investment return
- Usually have a very distinct and limited geographical area.
- The trustees are chosen from the public for a specific term.
- The board typically has full discretionary responsibility over some funds while some funds may be donor-advised and others directed to a particular agency or organization.

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Other Giving Methods

- There are many other types of philanthropic entities, such as federated funds (United Way), giving circles (these can be formal or informal), pooled funds, and organizations that don't fit into any of these other categories but still make grants (Junior League, Comprehensive Health Education Foundation).

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