GRANT WRITING 101

Central Pennsylvania Food Bank
Annual Agency Appreciation Conference
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Judy Chambers
Extension Educator

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Objectives

- Give you a broad understanding of grant-writing and funding sources

- Increase your efficiency in preparing and organizing your grant-writing efforts

- Provide you with general guidelines and resources to pursue future grant efforts

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Types of grant funding

Restricted
> must be used for specific purpose within a certain timeframe

Unrestricted
> no specific designation, can be used for general operations. Not widely used outside federal and state government

Matching
> requires the applicant to 'match' grant dollars with other funds and/or in-kind services

Challenge
> requires the applicant to raise matching funds for the project

Who gives grants?

Public Agencies – federal and state
- Largest source of funding

Private Foundations
- Sometimes tied to a business or corporation
  examples: Target, Lowe's, banks, insurance companies
- Sometimes tied to geographic area
- Usually tied to specific priorities
  examples: literacy, child welfare, sports

Foundations in PA (2007)

There are approximately 4,100 foundations in Pennsylvania
- 2008 assets $\rightarrow$ 33 billion dollars
- 2008 <u>grants</u> $\rightarrow$ 2.4 billion dollars
- The 100 largest foundations account for 90% of the assets
- 93% of PA foundations are located in the southwest and southeast regions of the state

A great team: your project and their money

- Your job: convince them that your ideas and your organization are worthy of their resources
- Actual grant writing is a small part of the process

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First you need a project

1. What do we need grant money for?
   (remember most funders are looking for a specific project)
2. How much do we need?
3. Will we look for public funding or foundation funds?

_____
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If an opportunity comes your way, you still need to ask questions

1. What do we need the grant money for?
2. How much do we need?
3. Are there strings attached?

Is this a good fit for us, or are we just chasing the money?

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Establish a need – funders like to solve problems

- What is the problem?
- Why is it important?
- What are you going to do about the problem?
- How will you do it?
- What do you need money for?
- How much money do you need?

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Find the right funder

- Does your project fit the funder's priorities?
- Does the funder give to your type of organization? In your geographic area?
- How does the dollar request and scope of your project compare to the size of the funder and its average grants?

Have a conversation with the funder BEFORE you begin the grant process.

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Get to know your funder

Be a detective
- Who works for them?
- Who is on their board?
- What grants have they given before?
- What's the typical dollar amount?
- Are the organizations who have gotten grants similar to you?

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Now dig a little deeper

Contact the funder and ask if you can discuss your project with them before you apply.
- If it's a local foundation, try to get a face-to-face meeting

At the meeting or on the phone call
- Describe your project, starting with the need
- Listen carefully and take notes
- Are they using 'buzz words'?
- What are they looking for? What do they like to fund?

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Don't sweat the jargon

Pre-application (not always required)
  – Have to pass this step before submitting application
  – Usually used only on very large grants

Letter of intent (not always required)
  – Similar to a pre-application, often used by small foundations

Application or Proposal
  – Usually funder tells you what needs to be in this
  – If there are no instructions, follow the 'typical proposal components' in this presentation

Bottom line – these terms mean whatever the funder says they mean. Just follow the directions!

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General guidelines

- First, read all the directions
- Build a 'model' of your grant application in a notebook
- Choose a good name for your project: short but descriptive
- Pay attention to the deadline
- Keep the language simple and direct; avoid technical terms, slang, and abbreviations

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More guidelines

- Include tables, charts and diagrams only if they are useful
- Put supporting information in an appendix
- Explain all abbreviations and terms
- Proofread the proposal, proofread the proposal.
- Make a final copy that is neat and legible
  – Are there instructions for font, font size, number of pages?

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Typical proposal components

- Cover Letter
- Executive Summary
- Needs Statement
- Project Description
  - Goals
  - Objectives
- Methods
- Staffing & Administration
- Budget
- Organization Info
- Conclusion
- Appendices

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Cover letter

This is the last thing you write
- Personalize each cover letter
- Include the amount requested
- Briefly explain your project
- Tell why the funder should be interested
- Offer to meet with them or provide more information

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Executive summary

Write the executive summary <u>after</u> you finish the grant application.

The executive summary is a 1-page description of the whole application. It should include a summary of:
- Problem statement
- Proposed project
- Funding needed
- Organization description

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Needs statement

- Show your understanding of the problem
- Use facts and figures to tell your story
- Emphasize the community or individual's need –*not your organization's need*
- Give the reader hope. Avoid exaggeration or overly emotional appeals.

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Design the project: how will you address the need?

- You've described the need, now what are you going to do about it? How?
- Is your project a model for other organizations?
- Will your program address the need differently than other projects?

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Project description

- Goals: what you want to achieve
- Objectives: your specific plan of action
- Methods: how you're going to do it
- Staffing/Administration: who is going to do it
- Evaluation: how will you measure its effectiveness?
- Future Funding: how will it continue after the grant and who will support it?

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Evaluation

- How will you know if you've done a good job?
- Have you met the need, worked on the problem?
- Your objectives and methods (your action plan) should set you up for evaluation
- *A good evaluation plan shows responsibility – you are determined to use the funding well!*

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Evaluation tools

- Written surveys
- Interviews
- Statistics: How many people participated? How many times?
- What did you do with the $$$ you received?
- What was the impact of the project?

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Staffing

- Who will run the project?
- Who will handle the money? How?
- What kind of experience is needed to staff the project? Where will you find it?
- Will you use volunteers? Hire consultants?
- Does the application require an organization chart? Resumes? Job descriptions?

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Budget

- Be realistic-don't underestimate or overestimate costs
- Make sure to include everything that grant money will be spent on
- How else will you pay for project costs?
- Is a match required? Is it real dollars or can you use in-kind services?

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In-kind services

In-kind is something that has value, but you are getting for free.
- use of office equipment
- meeting rooms that usually charge rent
- volunteers
- professional services that are donated, such as legal or accounting

Check the funder's description of in-kind services.

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Budget details and narrative

Determine all program and administrative costs
- be as specific as you can
- use worksheets for hours, miles, postage, rent, supplies, other costs
- explain your future funding plan

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Make sure the funder understands

- Use the funder's budget categories

- Write a budget narrative

- Describe in-kind contributions

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Make sure **you** understand

Are there any extra expenses required by the grant?
- – Separate checking account
- – Audit
- – Travel for meetings with the funder

What about cash flow?
- – Do you get the money up front?
- – If it's a reimbursement, how long does that take?

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Organizational information

- Describe your organization
  - – Who are you? What do you do? Why do you exist?
  - – Public, non-profit, private?
  - – Who's in charge? Board of directors? Church council? etc
  - – What successes have you had?

Why are you uniquely qualified to carry out this project?

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Appendix – if required or allowed

List of board members

Brochures, newsletters, annual reports

Letters of support from the community

– Write a draft letter of support and ask others to put it on their organization's letterhead, or personalize it themselves

News articles, website links

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The grant review process

- Usually multiple levels of review
- Reviewers may not know your world at all
- Projects typically receive scores
- Project Description, Budget, and Needs Statements are usually weighted most heavily

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Congratulations !

If your proposal is accepted

– *Make sure to thank the funder and your network of supporters*

– Set up reporting systems now

– Make sure everyone is clear on expectations

• Find out when you can start grant activities

– Plan a public announcement

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Or not . . .

If your proposal is rejected
- *Make sure to thank the funder and your network of supporters*
- Contact the funder and ask why you were rejected
- Get advice on how to do better in the future
- Ask about other organizations that might fund your project
- Above all, maintain the relationship

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In summary,

- Get organized
- Design a strong project – and redesign as necessary
- Do your homework – you can't do enough
- Remember that every application has different requirements
- If at first you don't succeed, try and try again!

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