GRANT WRITING & CONTRACT MANAGEMENT BASICS

As we all know writing, contracting and managing of district projects can be very stressful even for a seasoned administrator. This module puts together some of the basics for grant writing & contract management . The information provided was from various procurement training documents.

Grants
&
Grant Writing

3 Main Steps for successful grant seeking

1. Identify potential grant makers who would be interested in supporting your project.

2. Contact key people who can help you plan your proposal before you start writing.

3. Write a carefully written, well reasoned proposal.
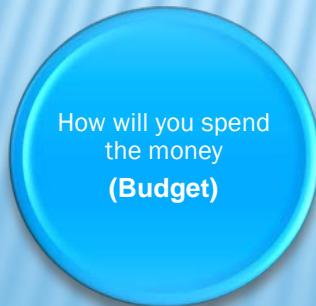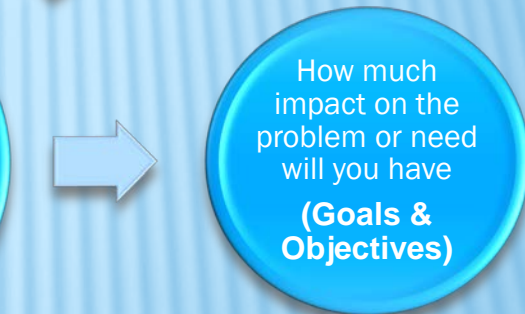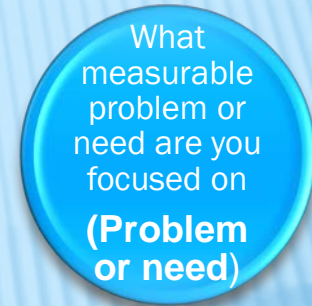
Grant Writing Basics

Start by asking these basic questions :

1. What will the grant be for?
   a. Project
   b. Need / Operations
   c. Event
2. What will the timeframe be?
   a. Short term
   b. Long term
3. What is the desired outcome?

Proposal Types

There are basically 2 types

1) Long Proposals to government agencies

2) Short Letter Proposals to private sponsors
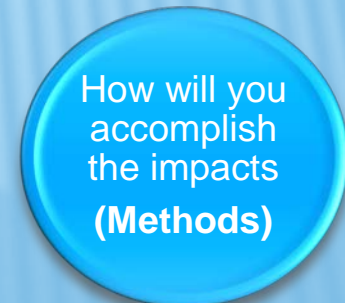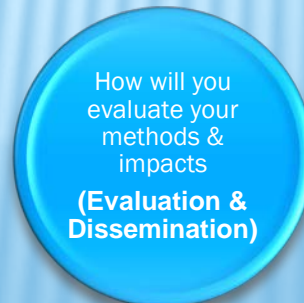
Introduction & Credibility

Purpose: The introduction is a credibility statement that describes your professional and organizational qualifications and establishes the significance of your idea. For private foundations it should be extensive perhaps even half the length of your proposal. Your qualifications, or credibility, may have more to do with your being funded than anything else. In a government proposal, the application guidelines may or may not ask for an introductory section. The introduction section establishes the tone of the whole proposal. Novice proposal writes focus on their own need for funds instead of using the introductory section to link their project with the sponsor's priorities.

Key points to include as you write your introduction & credibility statement

1.   Clearly establish who you are.
2.   Describe your organizational goals.
3.   Establish your credibility in the project topic area.
4.   Lead logically to the problem statement.

Writing Tips: The introduction section of a proposal represents a credibility statement about you and your environment. While your resume is an important credibility statement, particularly in government proposals, it may not communicate the fact that you work in an environment conducive to conducting your project. Weave this point into your introduction.
Tell the reviewer about your track record in projects of this kind and how this project fits into your overall organizational goals. If you don't have a strong track record in your proposed project area, borrow credibility from other field experts through the use of project consultants , letters of endorsement, and supporting statistics.

Statement of Problem or Need

Purpose: Your statement of the problem- or need – represents the reason behind your proposal. It specifies the conditions you wish to change. It should be supported by evidence drawn from your experience, from statistics provided from authoritative sources, and from appropriate literature reviews. Your problem or need statement should quickly summarize the problem, show your familiarity with prior research or work on the topic, reinforce your credibility for investigating the problem, and justify why this problem should be investigated. Do not assume that everyone sees the problem as clearly as you do. Even if the problem is obvious, your reviewers want to know how clearly you can state it.

Key points to include as you write your statement of problem or need.

1. Demonstrate a precise understanding of the problem or need that you are attempting to solve.
2. Clearly convey the focus of your project early in the narrative.
3. Indicate the relationship of your project to a larger set of problems or issues and justify why your particular focus has been chosen.
4. Establish the importance and significance of the problem.
5. Justify why your problem should be of special interest to the sponsor.
6. Demonstrate that your problem is feasible to solve.
7. Make the reviewer want to read further.
8. Indicate how the problem relates to your organizational goals.
9. State the problem and outputs in terms of human needs and societal benefits.

Writing tips: A common error is to paint the problem in too grand or general terms. Don't say "little is known about…" "there is a lack of information about…" or " no research as dealt with…" this problem. Arguing for something that isn't makes a weak need statement. Instead, go one step further. Explain the consequences of the information void. Describe the need in human terms. For example, you want to buy computers for your school, talk about the happy, computer-literate students who will benefit in the future. Beyond discussing the importance of the project's topic, demonstrate the need for your methodology; the reviewers should be able to anticipate your solution based on your analysis of the problem. This important transition paragraph is frequently left out of proposals written by beginning proposal writers.

Objectives

Purpose: Your objectives specify the outcome of your project- the end product(s). When sponsors fund your projects, they are literally "buying" your objectives. That's why it is extremely important to specify your objectives clearly. More precisely, your objectives should tell *(1) who, is going to do (2) what, (3) when, (4) how much, and (5) how it will be measured*. For example, a proposal objective might be for the Midwest Home Shelter Agency (who) to reduce the number of homeless (what) during the next 24 months (when) by 15 % (how much) as noted in the Department of Social Welfare Homeless Survey Report (measurement). Your objectives should be very specific in contrast to your goals, which are your long term idealistic ambitions, usually not measurable. Your objectives provide the yardstick you will use to conduct your evaluation; that is , if you write your objectives in precise, measureable terms, it will be easy to write your proposal evaluation because you will know exactly what will be evaluated.

Key points to include as you write the objectives section

1.   Clearly describe your project's objectives, hypotheses, and /or research questions.
2.   Signal the project's objectives without burying them in a morass of narrative.
3.   Demonstrate that your objectives are important, significant, and timely.
4.   Include objectives that comprehensively describe the intended outcomes of the project.
5.   State your objectives, hypotheses, or questions in a way that they can be evaluated or tested later.
6.   Demonstrate why your project's outcome is appropriate and important to the sponsor.

Writing tips: List your specific objectives in no more that one or two sentences each in approximate order of importance. Don't confuse your objectives (ends) with your methods (means). A good objective emphasizes what will be done and when it will be done, whereas a method will explain why or how it will be done. Include goals (ultimate) and objectives (immediate) statements.

Methods

Purpose: The methods section describes your project activities in detail, indicating how your objectives will be accomplished. The description should include the sequence, flow, and interrelationship of activities as well as planned staffing for the project. It should present a clear picture of the client population, if any. It should discuss the risks of your method, and indicate why your success is probable. Finally, tell what is unique about your approach.

Data Collection: You will probably need to collect some data as a part of your project. Common data collection methods include achievement tests; physiological tests; role playing activities; clinical examinations; personal diaries; ratings by program staff, management participants, or experts; interviews; observations by program staff or evaluators; daily program records (telephone logs, tracking slips, referral forms); historic program records and archives; government records; searches of news media; questionnaires; and surveys.
You can either make up your own data gathering instrument or use existing ones.

Writing tips: Begin with your objectives. Describe what precise steps you will follow to carry out each objective, including what will be done, who will do it and when it will be done. If you have trouble writing this section, assume the sponsor's check just arrived in the mail. What is the first thing you will do? Hire additional staff? Order equipment? What will you do next? Keep asking and answering the "what's next" question and you will lead yourself through the methodology section (sometimes called the procedures in other proposal guidelines).

Once you have determined the sequence of events you will follow in completing your project, cast the major milestones into a time-and –task chart. In graphic form, it segments your total project into manageable steps and lets your reviewers know exactly what you will be doing and when. It says to the reviewers that you are organized and have thought out the major steps of your project. It lets the know you have done significant planning and are not just proposing on a whim. It gives them a road map of the territory you plan to cover. Finally, the time-and –task chart represents a clear, one page, visual summary of the entire methodology section.

Evaluation

Purpose: Evaluations pinpoint what is really happening in your project efficiency. Based on evaluation information, you can better allocate resources, improve services, and strengthen your overall project performance. Beyond these immediate benefits, a project evaluation can uncover needs to be served in your next proposal and make it easier to get and sustain funding.

If you want to include an evaluation component in your proposal but know nothing about the subject, consider borrowing ideas from the evaluation plans developed for similar programs or as a colleague or consultant to review the rest of the proposal and develop an appropriate evaluation strategy. Too frequently, proposals don't explain how the project will be evaluated. At best, they mention some vague process, such as holding a discussion meeting or assigning the evaluation to an expert, with no specifics on how the evaluation will be conducted or what will be learned from the evaluation.

Using Evaluators Effectively: Whether you use an internal or an external evaluator, or both, be sure to include them in the proposal development process. A common proposal writing mistake is to budget an amount for evaluation costs and worry later about the evaluation procedure. Instead, involve evaluators in the proposal writing. Be sure to give them a copy of your project objectives. Remember that pointed objectives will simplify the evaluation process. An evaluator should provide you with important proposal information. Specifically, ask your evaluators to identify precisely what will be evaluated, what information they will need to conduct the evaluation, where the information will be obtained, what data collection instruments will be used to get that information, what evaluation designed will be used, what analyses will be completed, and what questions will you be able to answer as a result o the evaluation.

Key points to include as you write the evaluation section

1.   Describe why evaluation is needed in the project.
2.   Provide a definition of what is meant by evaluation.
3.   Clearly identify the type and purpose of your evaluation and the audiences to be served by the results.
4.   Demonstrate that an appropriate evaluation procedure is included for every project objective.
5.   Provide a general organizational plan or model for your evaluation.
6.   Demonstrate that the scope of the evaluation is appropriate for the project. To the extent is the project practical, relevant, and generalizable.
7.   Describe what information will be needed to complete the evaluation, the potential sources for this information and the instruments that will be used for its collection.
8.   Clearly summarize any reports to be provided to the funding source based on the evaluation, and generally describe their content and timing.

Writing tips: Include a separate evaluation component for each project objective. Strengthen your evaluation section by including examples of surveys, questionnaires, data collection instruments, data analysis forms, and other evaluation methodologies in order to demonstrate the credibility of your evaluation section. If you use an outside evaluators, identify costs, credentials, and experience. Evaluation sections are less likely to be included in basic research than training grants. Replicability is the primary evaluation criteria in most basic science research proposals.

Dissemination

Purpose: Dissemination is the means by which you let others know about your project; its purpose, methods, and accomplishments. As grants become more competitive, dissemination of results is increasingly important. No longer is it sufficient to say you will submit a journal article or present a paper at a professional society meeting. Instead, specify the tentative titles, target journals, and submission dates. Likewise, indicate which meetings will be attended, including dates and locations for presenting papers.

Key points to include as you write the dissemination section

1. Indicate why dissemination activities are important to your project.
2. Clearly identify the intended outcome of the dissemination effort.
3. Include a feasible and appropriate plan for dissemination.
4. Succinctly describe any products resulting from the dissemination effort.
5. Demonstrate that the applicant is well grounded in theory and research on the dissemination and utilization of knowledge.
6. Provide sufficient detail on proposed dissemination procedures to justify the budget request.
7. Specify clearly who will be responsible for dissemination and why the are capable.
8. Indicate why the dissemination will get the necessary information to the appropriate audiences in a form they can use when needed.

Writing tips: You will have to choose which dissemination option is best for your proposal. Examples are: project newsletter, conferences and seminars, site visits, interim working papers, convention papers, journal articles, pamphlets, books or manuals, displays at meetings, demonstrations, audiovisual materials, speeches, press releases, posting on computer networks, or executive fax summaries.

Budgets

Purpose: The project budget is more than just a statement of proposed expenditures; it is an alternate way of expressing your project. Programs officers will look at your budget to see how well it fits your proposed activities. Incomplete budgets are examples of sloppy preparation. Inflated budgets are a signal of waste. Budgets that are too low cast doubt on the planning ability of the applicant. In essence, your budget is as much a credibility statement as your project narrative.

Direct Costs: Costs that are line items listed in the budget as an explicit project expenditure. These costs are usually categorized into personnel (people) and non-personnel (things) components. Personnel costs include such items as salaries, wages, consultant fees, and fringe benefits. Non-personnel costs include such items as equipment, supplies, travel and publication charges. *Space and utilities may be reflected as direct costs or included as a part of your indirect cost rates.*

Indirect Costs: Costs that are not directly listed in the budget and yet are costs incurred in the project. Indirect costs are real costs that are hard to pin down, such as payroll and accounting, library usage, space, equipment, and general project administration. *Rather than calculating a strict cost accounting of these nebulous factors, many sponsors allow you to calculate a percentage of your direct costs and add it your budget request.*

The federal government uses the term indirect costs to refer to these extra project operating costs. These costs are usually figured as a percentage of the grant, either of the total direct costs or the total project salaries and wages. Organizations that regularly receive federal grants have a approved federal indirect cost rate that is included in the budgets of federal proposals.

Foundations usually use the term administrative costs rather than indirect costs when referring to extra project operating costs, though the terms are interchangeable. Foundations vary considerably in their policies regarding the allow ability of administrative costs. Some will pay administrative costs on grants, and their application guidelines specify the allowable percentage of the total direct costs. Others say explicitly in their application materials that they do not allow administrative costs.

In contrast to governments and foundations, and corporations use the term overhead to mean administrative or indirect costs. As business professionals, they are accustomed to the concept of overhead and are apt to have a fairly high overhead rate. In most instances, corporate application materials do not specify a policy regarding payment of overhead. You can either ask what their policy is or include all costs as direct cost items.

Budgets continued..

Cost Sharing: Costs that your organization will contribute to the total project costs. You may contribute partial personnel costs, space, volunteer time, or other costs towards the total project expenses. Your cost sharing may be in the form of a "hard" dollar match or by donating "in-kind" contributions. In-kind contributions are costs that do not require a cash layout yet would cost real dollars if you had to pay for services rendered.

Key points to include as you write your budget

1. Provide sufficient resources to carry out your project.
2. Include a budget narrative that justifies major budget categories.
3. Present the budget in the format desired by the sponsor.
4. Provide sufficient detail so the reviewer can understand how various budget items were calculated.
5. Separate direct costs from indirect costs and describe what is covered in the latter.
6. Relate budget items to project objectives.
7. Include any attachments or special appendices to justify unusual requests.
8. Identify evaluation and dissemination costs.

Writing tips: Make sure that your calculations are as clear as possible..
Example Fuzzy =Travel =$324.00   Specific= Local mileage for project director, 100/mi/mo@.27/mi X 12 mos. +$324.00
Indicate name, location, and date.
Estimate office supplies at an average per year and per person. List the components of your fringe benefit rate; indicate if they include FICA, health, life, dental or disability insurance, and other benefits. In multi-year budgets allow for annual increases; indicate annual percent increases. If the project is to occur in phases identify the costs associated with each phase. Don't overlook budget support for things as service or maintenance contracts, insurance, shipping or installation. If you anticipate training costs associated with the purchase of new equipment, include those costs in your budget as well. Include a budget narrative immediately following your budget to explain or justify any unusual expenditure items, even if one is not required by the sponsor.

Some sponsors expect you to continue funding your project after the grant expires. If you have a financing plan for future funding briefly outline it. Other fund raising options include; membership fees, user charges, local organizations, other granting agencies, wealthy individuals, product sales, publications, service fees, direct mail, bequests, memorial gifts, telethons, and capital campaigns.

Abstract

Purpose: The abstract is usually the last written and the first read section of your proposal. It should be carefully written, providing a cogent summary of your proposed project. It should provide a quick overview of what you propose to do and clear understanding of the project's significance, generalizability, and potential contribution. Project end products should be clearly identified. Often, proposal reviewers must write up a summary of your project for presentation to a larger review panel. If you write a quality abstract, you make your reviewer's job easier. If the abstract is poorly written, the reviewer's job is more difficult and your funding chances diminish.

Key points to include as you write your abstract

1. Does my abstract effectively summarize the project?
2. Does it place appropriate emphasis on the various proposal components?
3. Does it enumerate project outcomes?
4. Does it comply with length or word requirements of the sponsor?
5. Does it use key headings and subheadings to highlight proposal sections?

Writing tips: Don't write the abstract until you have completed the proposal. Generally the abstract sections contains 250 - 500 words. Include at least one sentence on problem, objectives, and methods, using the major subheadings you used in your proposal.

Appendices

Purpose: Appendices contain information peripheral to your proposal, such as reprints of articles, definitions of terms, subcontract data, consortia agreements, tabular data, certifications, lists of board members and officers with titles, recent annual reports, organizational charts, resumes, past success stories, significant case histories, agency publications, publicity, and letters of support.   Some grant-making agencies do not circulate copies of appendices when transmitting proposals to reviewers.(Ask your program office about this, and if materials are not circulated, include essential proposal in the narrative,) Nevertheless, the use of appendices is recommended, especially when page limits are sponsor imposed.

Key points to include as you write your appendices

1. Could reviewers evaluate the proposal without any appendix information?
2. Have strong letters of support and commitment been included?
3. Are assurances of cooperation provided in instances of inter-agency support?
4. Are the resumes included for all key project personnel and consultants?

Writing tips; After your proposal is written, reread it to make sure your reviewers could make an informed funding decision without any appendix information. Include strong letters of support and endorsement. Attach assurances of cooperation in instances of interagency proposals. Be sure to include the resumes of all key project personnel, including consultants.

PROPOSAL APPEARANCE

While you will obviously spend much time working on the content of your proposal, you should also pay attention to the appearance or design of your proposal. Just as clothing is important in the business world for establishing initial impressions, so, too, is the appearance of your proposal as it reaches the reviewer's hands. The proposal should "look" familiar to the reader. A familiar proposal is a friendly proposal. Look at the printed materials issued by the sponsor. Note their use of type size and style, white space, and headings. Structure your proposals to match the 1 private foundation's publication preferences; when appropriate, use the same type size, style, layout, and headings as they do in their publications. Your proposal will look more credible when you consider these factors.

As you learn about your audience and consider proposal appearance, try to anticipate which reading styles the reviewers are likely to use: skim reading, search reading, or critical reading. Recall that your earlier prospect research from a past reviewer or program officer identified the likely manner in which your proposal would be reviewed. Reviewers skim proposals when they have many pages to read in a very short time. Reviewers search proposals when they are following an evaluation sheet that assigns points to specific proposal sections. Reviewers always critically read proposals, especially when the reading occurs in the time luxury of a mail review. The following writing and editing tips are particularly appropriate for all three reading styles.

Proposal Writing Tips

Read and reread proposal guidelines--and believe them! Use the guidelines and the reviewer's evaluation form, if available, as a basis for creating your proposal outline. Strengthen your proposal by following the format tips that experienced proposal writers use.

Bold Type: Bold type is easier to read than underlining, italics, or all capital letters as a means of creating emphasis. Use bold type to emphasize key words and ideas, but avoid overemphasis.

Lists: Lists help to get the message to the reader with a sense of immediacy, without being wordy. Furthermore, because lists are easy for readers to skim, they convey chunks of information quickly. Use a numbered list when items need to be examined in a specific sequence. Use a bulleted list when items are all equally important.

Ragged Right Margins: A ragged right margin is easier to read than one that is right justified because the proportional spacing slows readability. It is easier for the reader's eye to track from the end of one line to the beginning of the next line when the right-hand margins are jagged.

Type Size: Adjust your word processing program for a 12-point type style. Text smaller than 12-point becomes difficult to read and makes the reviewer's job harder. Rather than reducing type size to make all your ideas fit on the page, try tightening sentences and editing wordy phrases.

Type Style: If a type style is not specified in the application guidelines, consider using serif typefaces for the text of your proposal and sans serif typefaces for titles and headings. Serif type styles such as Times Roman and Courier have small strokes that finish off the main stroke of a letter and make it easier to read. Sans serif type styles such as Universal and Arial, which do not have the small finishing strokes, are ideal for titles and headings because they stand off from the body of the text. Avoid using ornate type styles, such as Cloister Black and Freestyle Script, which are hard to read and distract from the content of the proposal.

Proposal Editing Tips

Successful grant seekers estimate they spend 25 percent of their time writing the first draft of their proposal and 75 percent of their time editing it. Editing is a multistage process: edit for only one feature at a time. The multiple editing loops through the proposal ensure that all elements are presented with punch and persuasion.

Headings: Headings and subheadings act like a table of contents placed directly in your proposal text; that is, at a glance they reveal the main ideas and the organization of your proposal to the reader. Ask your program officer for a copy of the reviewer's evaluation form, and use those same headings and subheadings in your proposal. If a reviewer's evaluation form is not available, use headings and subheadings that are specific to your proposal.

Page Numbering: Place page numbers in the top right or bottom center of the pages of your proposal. Do not number the first page.

Proofreading: Proofread and proofread your proposal. Proofread your proposals in multiple readings, looking for different features on each reading. As you proofread, look at

1. Content and Organization: Does your proposal have enough substance? Are your ideas complete? Is your organization logical?
2. Clarity: Have you included appropriate transitions? Are ideas expressed clearly? Are all acronyms defined?
3. Mechanics: Are words spelled correctly, especially proper names? Are all numbers and computations accurate? Are sentences grammatically correct, including subject-verb agreement? Are sentences punctuated properly?
4. Design: Is the proposal design visually appealing? Did you include ample white space? Are headings specific to your project?

Transitions: Transitional expressions are words and phrases that signal connections among ideas; these connectors can help you achieve coherence in your writing. Common transitional words can indicate: addition (also, and then, further, moreover), example (as an illustration, for instance, in fact, that is), result (accordingly, consequently, hence, in short), and summary (finally, in conclusion, on the whole, to sum up).

White Space: Use white space to break up long copy. Ample white space makes your proposal appear inviting and user-friendly. White space can indicate that one section is ending and another is beginning, or that an idea is so central to the proposal that it needs to be set off by itself. Judicious use of white space breaks your proposal into smaller, manageable chunks of information. Even a simple use of white space between paragraphs helps the mind to see the information in that paragraph as a unit. One creative use of white space is the making of lists.

LETTER PROPOSALS

A letter proposal is a short grant proposal, usually two to four pages long. Written in letter form, it is primarily targeted to private sponsors, such as foundations and corporations, though it can be used as a pre-proposal for federal sponsors. Most federal program officers like to receive a letter proposal because it presents them with a "concept paper," or a "conceptual shell" of what you propose. With many private sponsors, the letter proposal is all that is required; they make funding decisions on the basis of your brief letter, whether you are asking for $100 or $1 million. However, some private sponsors use the letter proposal as a screening device and request an expanded proposal if your idea captures their interest. In either case, you face the challenge of clear, concise writing. In certain respects, a short proposal is more challenging to write than a long proposal. In seven brief sections, you must anticipate and answer the major questions that the sponsor will be asking as your letter proposal is read. Each sentence must carry a heavy load of information. To aid in the writing process, the components of a letter proposal are identified and discussed below.

Part One: Summary: Your objective is to summarize the entire proposal in one sentence. The critical elements of the sentence include: (1) self-identification (your organizational name); (2) uniqueness (your claim to fame); (3) sponsor expectation (what you want them to do); (4) budget request (how much money you want); and (5) project benefit (major project outcomes).

Part Two: Sponsor Appeal: Your objective is to explain why you are approaching this sponsor. Conduct background research on the sponsor to determine prior funding patterns, usually available in annual reports and tax records. Identify values that the sponsor seems to cherish as evidenced by their funding patterns, e.g., high-risk projects not normally funded by the government, cutting-edge research, demonstration projects with a national impact, or low cost/high benefit projects.

Part Three: Problem: Your objective is to briefly summarize the current problem. Focus the problem or need statement from the sponsor's perspective, not yours. Funding your project is not their end goal. You must show how funding your project can be a means for them to reach their end goal--their mission. Remember that a need is really a gap between what is and what ought to be. Document that gap with statistics, quotations, reasoning, or surveys and express it in human terms. Limit your documentation to brief but clear statements. Beware of the excessive use of statistics, which only confuses the reader.

LETTER PROPOSALS CONTINUED

Part Four: Solution: Your objective is to describe your approach to the problem. Summarize the objectives that you will meet with your approach. Convey confidence that you can close the gap between what is and what ought to be. You can detail your precise methodology in a one-page attachment by use of a time-and-task chart. This visual device lets reviewers know exactly who will be doing what and when. Do not include extensive methodological detail in the letter proposal.

Part Five: Capabilities: Your objective is to establish your credentials to do the project. More precisely, your job is to establish three types of credibility: you have a (1) credible organization proposing a (2) credible idea to be directed by a (3) credible project director. You must demonstrate what is unique about your group in order to show that you can solve this problem.

Part Six: Budget: Your objective is to request a specific dollar amount in the proposal. Ask for a precise amount. Base your request on the review of tax records or other giving references so you are asking for a reasonable amount as viewed by the sponsor. Express your request in meaningful 2 units, e.g., hours of instruction, numbers of students, or healthy patients. If you plan to submit this or a similar proposal to other sponsors as well, mention this.

Part Seven: Conclusion: Your objective is to identify the desired action you wish the sponsor to take. Avoid the hackneyed "We'd be happy to talk with you further about this. Please call if you want more information." Identify a contact person for more details if requested. Have a "heavyweight" sign the letter.

Grant Writing Tips for DNRC Programs

Most of DNRC's grant programs are competitive. Applications are compared and ranked. It is not always the best projects that get funded. Rather, it is the projects that clearly meet the program's mission and objectives that are ranked highest. These tips will help you prepare competitive applications for DNRC's various grant programs.

➢ **Vigilantly abide by application instructions.** If you think an application question is senseless, it doesn't matter. Even your eligibility for a grant may depend on following this tip. Call and ask questions if an instruction is unclear.

➢ **Format and write the application to meet review criteria.** Reviewers typically use some kind of ranking criteria when evaluating an application for funding.   Understand what reviewers will value most and put your greatest effort toward addressing those criteria in your application.

➢ **Be clear about your project purpose, goals & objectives.** Present your goals in visionary terms and your objectives in measurable terms. Objectives should be specific and realistic.

➢ **Address objectives in your schedule & budget.** Provide a timeline of activities. Research budgeted costs. Be clear and realistic with your schedule and budget. Reviewers will notice wild guesses.

➢ **Connect the project to the past and the future.** Tie your project to existing plans or past successes. Show how the project or the results of the project will continue after the grant money runs out.

➢ **Connect the project to the community.** Grants come from public funds. Include letters of support. State how the project fits into community goals and plans or how it will serve the public.

➢ **Provide graphics to clarify.** Don't frustrate reviewers by making them guess your project location and geographical extent. Use a map. Use graphics and pictures if that helps clarify the project.

➢ **Look good.** Have someone check your spelling, grammar, and clarity of statements before submitting the application. The quality of the application is an indicator of the ability of the applicant to manage a grant.

➢ **Learn from rejection.** Ask someone from the grant program how your project could be better presented the next time you submit an application or what program would be a better fit. This information will help you build a better proposal no matter where you seek funding.

Common Grants CD's use:

DNRC Conservation and Resource Development Division
See the DNRC website below for information about eligibility requirements, contacts & deadlines. Most grant programs listed below are available only to government entities.

<u>**Grant Programs**</u>

❖ **Renewable Resource Grant & Loan (RRGL) Program** funds projects that conserve, develop, preserve or improve management of Montana's renewable resources for amounts up to $125,000. Examples of projects funded include irrigation rehabilitation, dam repair, riparian protection and restoration, and water and sewer infrastructure improvements. Applications for the next cycle are due May 15, 2016

❖ **RRGL Planning Grants** are available for amounts up to $15,000. Use these grants to fund project planning. Examples include preparation of a technical report for a stream bank revegetation project and a preliminary engineering report for a leaking water main replacement project.

❖ **Watershed Planning Grants** are available for amounts up to $50,000. These grants These grants must be used to pay for project planning activities that lead to long term protection and restoration of a watershed. Watershed planning grants used to address infrastructure protection must include a plan that leads to improvement in the natural structure and function of the watershed. Watershed planning grants may address any part of a watershed including floodplains, wetlands, connected groundwater resources and tributaries. These grants may include up to 5% of the total amount of the grant for administrative purposes.

❖ **Irrigation Development Grants** are available to private and public entities for projects leading to development of new irrigation or increased value of agriculture. Examples include ditch lining, headgate repair, and feasibility study of a large-scale Tribal irrigation project.

Common Grants CD's use:

❖ **Reclamation and Development Project Grants** fund activities that reclaim natural resources damaged by mineral extraction, hazardous waste or activities that meet a crucial state need. Project examples include monitoring impacts to groundwater from coal bed methane development, stream reclamation from placer mine damage, and a basin-wide watershed planning effort.

❖ **Reclamation and Development Planning Grants** are available and designed to support planning for a natural resource projects eligible for RDG project grants (above). Examples include watershed mapping, a hazardous waste site investigation, and a small mine reclamation work plan.

❖ **Reclamation and Development Aquatic Invasive Species Grants:** Available for projects up to $25,000 that address control of AIS. Grants are available to public entities and non-profits. Eurasian Water Milfoil control projects receive highest ranking.

❖ **Grants to Counties for Revolving Septic Loan Program** – these grants will be available July 1st to counties. The grant will be open to counties only. The grant program will assist counties to create a revolving loan program that will assist private individuals in repairing and restoring their failing septic systems or hooking into a municipal system.

Low-Interest Loan Programs

➢ **Irrigation Loans** are available to private individuals and associations for projects resulting in quantifiable benefits to water that will exceed costs. Example of a typical project is conversion from flood to sprinkler irrigation.

➢ **Rangeland Improvement Loans** are available to private landowners for fencing, seeding, stockwater development and other range improvement practices.

➢ **RRGL Loans** are available to public entities for projects that conserve, manage, develop, or preserve the state's renewable resources. Examples include: diversion dam repair on the Bitterroot River and terminal outlet replacement at Deadman's Basin

Common Grants CD's use:

DEQ Grants

319 Project Funding

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) solicits project proposals from eligible applicants to further Montana's NPS Program goals. DEQ issues a Call for proposals every year under Section 319(h) of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA). Section 319(h) funds for projects are distributed competitively to support the most effective and highest priority projects. Applicants must be either a governmental entity or a nonprofit organization.

319 Education and Outreach
Mini-Grant Program
For more information on the current grant cycle, please visit the
Mini-Grant Wiki

A limited amount of funding is available under the federal CWA Section 319 to assist local groups with education projects that are focused on water quality and nonpoint source pollution through the mini-grants program. These projects are funded up to $2,000 per project and are awarded twice per year beginning in July and January.

The mini-grants provide a mechanism to increase awareness of pollution issues and to improve water quality through educational activities. Successful projects focus on one activity addressing water resource needs. Examples include workshops, conferences, equipment, leveraging funds, etc. Projects must address larger watershed efforts in the applicant's region.
Applicants may be local watershed groups, conservation districts, a county extension service, counties, schools, etc., but must have the ability to manage federal funding. Applicants must provide a minimum 40% local non-federal, in-kind or cash match. The grants are provided on a reimbursement basis. Each application will be reviewed and approved by a panel from the Montana Watershed Coordination Council's Education and Outreach Work Group.

Other Grant Ideas

Cinnabar Foundation

www.thecinnabarfoundation .org

Vision: We envision the future of Montana and its greater ecosystem that safeguard this landscape of people , graced by generations of people with a commitment to preserve & conserve its clear waters, restored wildlife, wild lands, & epic national parks along side sustainable economies.

NRCS CIG Grants

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/cig/

NRCS provides funding opportunities for agriculturalists and others through various programs. Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) is a voluntary program intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production. Under CIG, Environmental Quality Incentives Program funds are used to award competitive grants to non-Federal governmental or nongovernmental organizations, Tribes, or individuals.

Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks

Future Fisheries

For more than a decade, FWP's Future Fisheries Improvement Program has worked to restore rivers, streams, and lakes to improve and restore Montana's wild fish habitats. About $750,000 are available each year for projects that revitalize wild fish populations.

Living with Wildlife

Living With Wildlife is a grant program developed by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and funded by the Montana Legislature to promote the successful coexistence of people and wildlife in urban and suburban settings.

Sometimes local business such as Walmart and Lowes will have opportunities as well for small projects.

So you

1. Wrote a stellar proposal ✓

2. Made it through the review process ✓

3. Were awarded funding ✓

Now where to go from here. . .