



# What Do Grant Funders Want?



# So you want a grant!

Understand and respect the grant funder's  
priorities,  
processes  
and needs.



# General Points



# They want you to understand their priorities

- Funders have restrictions on how the funds are used – your project must match the priorities.
- It is frustrating to read a proposal that has limited impact on the funder's goals or doesn't match the priorities at all.
- Nearly all funders are willing to talk to you about their priorities, so make the effort to reach out and discuss your proposal.
- Not meeting the funder's priorities shows you didn't read the documentation.



# Application Process



# They want you to follow directions

- It's hard to sort through the proposal if you didn't follow the directions.
- It's hard to find files if you didn't name them correctly.
- It's hard for reviewers to read through disorganized materials.
- You signal that you may not follow directions with use of money and reporting needs if your proposal is funded.
- It shows you didn't read documentation.



# They want you to meet deadlines

- Because they have deadlines.
- It signals you may not manage the grant well.
- It shows you didn't read the documentation.



# They want you to understand reviewing

- Reviewers are vital to the grant process.
- If you don't understand you are writing to the reviewers, not the staff, your proposal may not read well.
- If you don't understand the review of the proposal is where the decisions are made, not in the interactions with the grant officer, you may waste your time and the grant officer's time.
- If you don't, it shows you didn't read the documentation.





# They want you to understand the timeline

- They can't move faster no matter how many times you call.
- If you need funds before the review and contracting is complete, it doesn't demonstrate need, it demonstrates how your proposal doesn't fit the guidelines.
- It shows you didn't read the documentation.



# Grant Proposal



# They want an answer to every question

- Don't skip questions – they need that information!
- If you don't understand the question, contact them.



# They want you to justify your request

- Don't stop at saying a program is important or the community needs a service – tell them why and how you know that.
  - Who asked for the service?
  - How many people are below the poverty line?
  - Which demographics don't have Internet access?
  - Why do you need their \$ for the program?



# They want well thought out program activities

- If you have a good plan, you are more likely to accomplish your goals.
- You won't have time to recover from a lack of a plan during the grant timeline.
- You need details!



# They want well thought out outcomes

- How can you work towards a goal if you don't have one?
- Their funders want to know what impact the grant had and the only way to know that is to measure!
- Be realistic. You can't make all children read well, but you can increase reading skill by a grade level for children who participated in the program.
- You need details!



# They want a well thought out budget

- You will be ready to get started if you've already figured out which staff, what products and which contractors.
- They can figure out if your costs are appropriate for your program ideas and are within any financial restrictions they have.
- You won't have time to figure out the budget and then do the project during the grant period.
- Write an accurate for the project, not a wish list.
- They may lose funds if you can't spend the money within your grant period, depriving the funder and other possible grantees of the funds.
- You need details!



# Grant Funding





# They want you to understand the grant administration process

- Don't skip the grant administration meeting.
- Especially don't skip the grant administration meeting and then make it clear you don't know there is a grant administration manual.
- Read the grant administration documentation
- It is frustrating for funders when you don't know or follow the basic instructions.



# They want you to follow your approved budget

- Don't spend funds in an unapproved or unallowable manner – they won't enjoy making you return funds. And they **HAVE** to make you return funds.
- Do your documentation correctly – no one wants to withhold funds because of documentation problems.
- Reimbursement means reimbursement – you must document you paid for it.
- Spend all the funds you are allotted - it's a problem for their budget if they don't expend all the funds they held for you.



# They want you to meet deadlines

- They need your reports to make their reports.
- They need your reimbursements so they can expend funds before their deadlines.
- Late reports or reimbursements tend to be jumbled, long and yet incomplete – don't make them work to figure out what you did and what you spent.



# They want you to follow through on the grant evaluation

- They need to document the impact your activities and their funds had on your community.
- Their business isn't giving money, it's helping your community. Make sure you can document how your project did that.



So how do you meet those  
expectations?



# Grant Writing Tips – The Basics

1

**Read the  
documentation**

2

**Follow the  
directions**

3

**Do not skip a  
question**

4

**Meet the  
deadlines**

5

**Use the correct  
file formats and  
names**

6

**Get signatures  
for certifications  
on time**



# Grant Writing Tips - Proposal

Your proposal is a demonstration of how well you can manage the grant activities and budget. You are showing your ability as well as your idea.

Your program should be consistent with the criteria and priorities.



# Grant Writing Tips - Proposal

Hit the sweet spot  
of not too general,  
but not repetitively  
detailed.

Be concise & clear.  
Respect word  
limits!





# Grant Writing Tips - Proposal

Design the proposal to make the most important points early, then make it compelling with supporting arguments and CLEAR explanations of how you will accomplish your goals.

Answer the questions: Who?  
What? When? Where? Why?  
How?

Or, you will do **what?** for  
**whom?** to **what end?** for **what**  
**purpose?**



# Grant Writing Tips – Proposal

Use percentages rather than numbers for justification and use comparative data when available.

Statistics alone are not useful but are appropriate if used effectively.



# Grant Writing Tips - Proposal

Include partners in the activities, budget and timeline

Include all facets in the timeline – program, evaluation, promotion, report...



# Grant Writing Tips - Proposal

## Language and Grammar

- Keep your language factual, concise, and clear (this is a repeat, I know)
- Write in the active voice.
- Make sentences and paragraphs short and to the point.
- Do not try to say several things at once.
- Present only one point per paragraph.
- Be wary of jargon, acronyms, abbreviations and vague references.
- Each question is different. Provide a different answer.
- DO NOT BE REPETITIVE within or across questions.



# Grant Writing Tips - Proposal

## REVIEWERS

- Write the proposal with the grant reviewers in mind.
- Remember that they have many proposals to read.
- Help them to understand your project.
- Do not make them search for misplaced information.
- Address all the topics in the order listed.
- Do not leave unanswered questions in the mind of the reader.



# Grant Writing Tips - Proposal

## EVALUATION

- Be sure to use MEASURABLE outcomes in your activities and evaluation.
- Stress the impact on participants or patrons.
- LSTA funds are intended to improve services to patrons so that matters in the proposal review.
- Outcome Based Evaluation is required for LSTA and is common with other funders.



# Grant Writing Tips - Proposal

## APPENDICES

- Use appendices only if the information is DIRECTLY relevant to the proposal.
- Put items such as job descriptions, references, extensive statistics, etc. in an appendix.
- Do not let additional information interrupt the flow of your arguments. Instead, put a reference to an appendix in the text.
- DO NOT CONTINUE THE PROPOSAL IN THE APPENDICES!



# Grant Writing Tips - Budget

Everything in the proposal should be in the budget.

Everything in the budget should be in the proposal.





# Grant Writing Tips - Budget

- MAKE SURE YOUR ADDITION IS CORRECT!
- You can't ask for reimbursement for something that you didn't list in the budget.
- List SPECIFIC materials and services as well as amounts.
- List SPECIFIC staff members and estimate time when including salaries.
- Ask for only what you can spend in that time period.



# Grant Writing Tips – Final Notes

## Proof Reading

- DO HAVE SOMEONE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE PROGRAM READ THE PROPOSAL!
- Does it make sense to a non-librarian?
- Did you skip a step in the program description?
- Are there calculation mistakes in the budget?
- Are all the elements in the timeline?
- Is the spelling correct?
- Is the grammar correct?
- Typos and errors do not make the case you can manage grant documentation.



# Grant Writing Tips – Final Notes

## Submission

- **SUBMIT EARLY!!!!**
- Terms & conditions, resolutions, etc. must be signed **AND** signed by the correct people!
- Did you upload or send attachments?
- Are the attachments the correct name, size and format?



# Questions

Contact me any time!

Karren Reish

- [reishk@michigan.gov](mailto:reishk@michigan.gov)
- 517-241-0021

