Writing Winning Grant Proposals

AETC Hands-On-Workshop

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Workshop Overview

- Review the Process
- Establish the Context
- Identify Funding Sources
- Prepare – Get Organized

- Design a Proposal
- Create the Management Plan
- Develop an Evaluation Plan
- Pull It All Together

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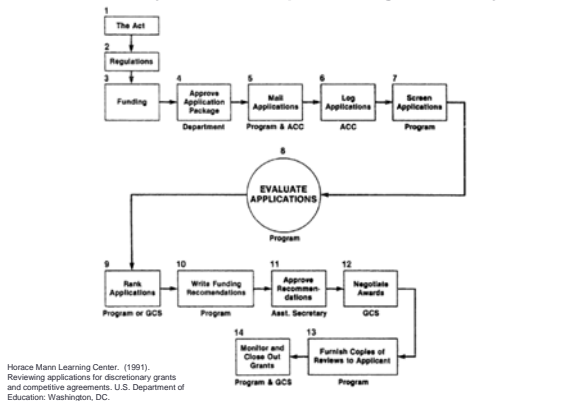*Improving Learning through Research & Development*

Discretionary Grant & Cooperative Agreement Cycle

Horace Mann Learning Center. (1991). Reviewing applications for discretionary grants and competitive agreements. U.S. Department of Education: Washington, DC.

Review the Process

What do reviewers look for in proposals?
- The project is compelling and is likely to have a positive, lasting impact
- Elements of the proposal are integrated
- The document is visually appealing
- The project will contribute to the field

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Review the Process

What do reviewers look for in proposals?

- The proposal addresses grantor's priorities
- The need for the project is well documented
- Intended outcomes are clearly stated; project activities are likely to lead to the realization of desired outcomes

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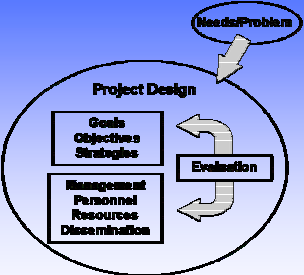
Basic Elements of the Proposal

Needs/Problem

Project Design

Goals
Objectives
Strategies

Evaluation

Management
Personnel
Resources
Dissemination

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Establish the Context - Needs

Is it a Need or a Want?

- More computers
- Improved professional development
- Increased student performance on reading assessment
- Money
- Teachers using technology to teach
- Technology resources correlated to the curriculum

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Establish the Context - Needs

Is it a Need or a Want?
- School technology specialist full-time
- Lesson plans using technology
- Improved access to Internet connectivity
- Opportunities for students to learn careers using technology
- Internships for teachers to mentor colleagues who are new technology users

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Establish the Context - Needs

What is a Need?
- A NEED is the gap or discrepancy between a present state (**what is**) and a desired end state (**what should be**).
  - It would be nice to have 20 computers in every classroom.
  - We have only 1 computer in each classroom now, and need 5 to ensure that every student has the access time required to meet the 5th grade technology standards.

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Establish the Context - Needs

In your "Needs" section, answer:
- Why does the institution/school/district need the project?
- What problem(s) will be solved? How?
- What difference will the project make in the long run?
- How can you document the need for the project?
- What does the professional literature say about the approach you're proposing?

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Establish the Context - Needs

- Identified needs provide the rationale for your proposed project.
- Identified needs drive your proposal's goals, objectives, activities, evaluation, personnel, resources, and budget.
- A need is the discrepancy between the state of what is and what should be

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Establish the Context - Needs

Write a needs statement that includes the following components:

- Needs data
- Within a context
- Problem
- Solution
- Research

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Establish the Context - Needs

- Needs assessment--define technology needs and/or problems (e.g., staff skills)
- Solicit information from students, parents, teachers, businesses, community, university partners
- Consider use of existing tools:
  - http://www.seirtec.org/
  - http://www.taglit.org/taglit/login.asp
  - http://profiler.hprtec.org
  - http://www.ncrel.org/toolbelt/

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Identify Appropriate Funding Sources

See complete list in session booklet
- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)
- Federal Register (GPO Access)
- U.S. Government
  - (ED, DOC, DOE, NSF, NASA)
- Businesses
- Foundations

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Identify Appropriate Funding Sources

- Read applications; notice funding priorities and look for a match with your priorities.
- Talk to the program officer - how many grants will be funded, how many proposals are expected, are they looking for anything in particular, are abstracts from former projects available for review.
- Ask colleagues for "intelligence"--who else is applying, does anyone have an "inside track."

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Prepare for the Process – Get Organized

- Communicate within your organization that you intend to write; seek support.
- Identify organizations that can serve as partners, communicate with individuals.
- Form a proposal development team (content experts, writers, editors, graphics, coordinators).
- Make a checklist of everything required for the proposal and share with your team.

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Prepare for the Process – Get Organized

- Make writing assignments based on your checklist of proposal requirements.
- Develop a common calendar with deadlines.
- Contact the funding agency to determine submission requirements, especially if the proposal must be submitted online through a password-protected system. Establish any necessary accounts.

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Prepare for the Process – Get Organized

<u>Files</u>
- Create a reference file: language from legislation; results from technology studies; sample professional development, assessment, evaluation, and technology integration models to adapt or adopt

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Prepare for the Process – Get Organized

<u>Files</u>
- Create a resume file for staff likely to serve as key project personnel
- Create a financial file to aid in budget development: salaries, benefits overhead rates, per diem rates, etc.
- Create a data file: school demographic information, school survey results

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Prepare for the Process – Get Organized

- As soon as possible, ask partners, consultants, and others involved to write letters of support.
- Start working on the budget earlier rather than later to ensure your plans fit within the funding limit. Avoid revision of activities later in the process.

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Design an Effective Project Proposal

Outcomes, Impacts, or Goals
- Convene your team to discuss needs data and develop potential goals and objectives to address needs (2 or 3 goals are sufficient).
- Are the goals in line with the funding agency's stated priorities?
- Are the goals outcome oriented (rather than process oriented)?

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Design an Effective Project Proposal

Objectives, Intermediate Outcomes, or Short Term Goals
- What objectives will you accomplish in order to meet the goals?
- Are the objectives measurable?
- Can objectives be met within the life of the project?
- Are the goals realistic and attainable?

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Design an Effective Project Proposal

Strategies
- Strategies specify the major programmatic components that will be implemented in order to achieve the objectives, such as professional development, technology integration, infrastructure and technical support.
- Specific project activities are incorporated within the strategies.
- Strategies must be measurable

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Design an Effective Project Proposal

Inputs
- Inputs or contexts are factors that should be considered when planning and implementing the project, e.g., policies, plans, needs assessment data.

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Design an Effective Project Proposal

Developing a Logic Map
- With goals and objectives in mind, develop a logic map to help you plan related strategies and necessary inputs.
- A logic map shows relationships among the important elements of the project.
- If a project is not reaching its desired outcomes, a logic map will help you see where the breakdown might have occurred.

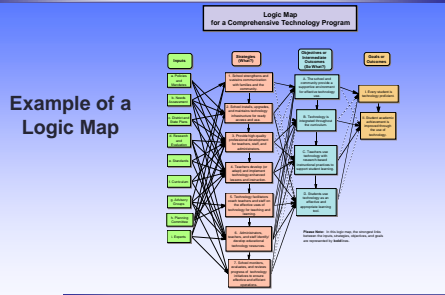SEIR•TEC   **p. 27-32**   SERVE

Design an Effective Project Proposal

Logic Map
for a Comprehensive Technology Program

Example of a Logic Map

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Basic Elements of the Proposal

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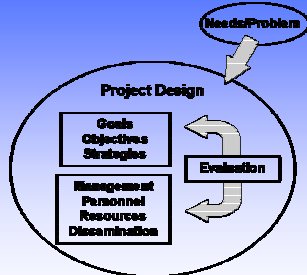
Create the Management Plan

- Timeline/GANTT chart - for all proposals
- Organizational chart showing the relationship among the project staff or the relationship among project partners (for federal grants)
- Person loading chart showing the amount of time each key person will spend per project objective (for federal grants)

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Create the Management Plan

- What activities and procedures will you carry out in order to accomplish each objective?
- What are the key events?
- Will there be any products? Describe.
- What are the timeframes for completing each major activity?
- Who will carry out each major activity?

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Develop the Evaluation Plan

- What does the school or district expect to get our of the project evaluation? How will you use the results?
- How will you determine whether each objective has been met? Whether desired outcomes have been realized?
- What formative evaluation strategies or methods will be used? What kinds of information or data will be collected?

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Develop the Evaluation Plan

- What summative evaluation strategies will be used? What kinds of information will be collected?
- How will you determine the impact of the overall project?
- What evidence of success will be collected?
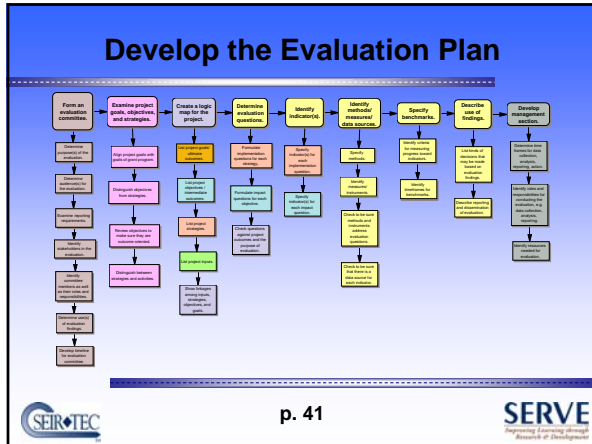- Do you have benchmarks or indicators of progress?

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Develop the Evaluation Plan

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Pull It All Together

Write - Introduction

- Start your proposal with an introduction or executive summary in which you briefly state the educational problem.
- State the project's goals. Explain how the school, teaching, and learning will be different as a result of the project.
- Explain how the project will address the problem.
- Convince the reader that the program will have a sustained impact.

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Pull It All Together

Write – Project Design

- What is the design or model for the project? How do the pieces fit together?
- How was the design developed or adapted?
- Who are project partners? Why are they involved? How are they involved?

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Pull It All Together

Write - Key Personnel
- What are the qualifications of key staff in terms of this project?
- What is each person's role in the project?
- About what percentage of each person's time will be spent on the project?

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Pull It All Together

Write – Resumes
- Prepare a current resume for every key staff person. You need not include resumes for support staff.
- Include education, employment history, and expertise.
- Tailor resumes to fit project activities.
- If you have time, use a standard format for all resumes.

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Pull It All Together

Write – Resources (Capability Statement)
- What resources will be available for the project to use (things the school system or partners will provide)?
- Facilities?
- Technologies?
- Equipment?
- Human resources?

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Pull It All Together

Write - Budget
- Are each of the budget items explained in the body of the proposal?
- Can you show that costs are reasonable, that the budget isn't padded?
- Are there any in-kind contributions or matching funds?

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Pull It All Together

Write – Appendices
- Letters of commitment or agreement to participate in the project
- Letters of support
- Supporting material
- Please note, not all funding agencies allow appendices, be sure to check the application

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Pull It All Together

Format and Submit
- Give your first solid draft to a colleague
- Proofread to see if:
  - basic elements are there
  - concepts are sound
  - writing and charts are clear
  - sections fit together into one cohesive design
  - no inconsistencies, especially in discussion of goals and objectives across chapters

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Pull It All Together

Format and Submit
- Double-check deadlines; When is the proposal "due"? Postmarked or Received?
- Make sure necessary forms have been signed by organizational representatives (note: give warning weeks in advance)
- Pass revised copy to person responsible for word processing, insert charts and graphics
- Return to your "checklist" to ensure all required proposal elements are there, and review criteria have been addressed

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Pull It All Together

After Submitting
- Call Congressional representatives to let them know you have submitted a federal grant. They might ask for a copy.
- After a few months, call the grant program officer to ask if grants have been reviewed and when announcements will be made.

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Pull It All Together

The Interview
- Select the interview team carefully
- Know the proposed project inside and out
- Be enthusiastic
- Answer the questions that are asked

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Presenter Contact Information

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