

“Tips And Tricks To Perfect Your Proposal”

A Grantwriting Webinar Sponsored by AIDS United September 2, 2015

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aidsunited.org



Learning Objectives

At the end of the Webinar:

- ✓ Participants will understand the 10/60 Rule of Grant Writing.
- ✓ Participants will understand 10 tips for writing an effective grant application.
- ✓ Participants will understand 5 reasons why grant applications are denied.
- ✓ Participants will be able to write stronger grant applications after receiving an “insider perspective” from an experienced and successful grant writer and grant reviewer of private and federal grants.

Agenda

- 10/60 Rule of Grant Writing
- Top 10 Tips for Writing a Grant
- Trending of Grants
- The Proposal Narrative
- The Budget
- Top 5 Reasons Grants are Denied
- Resources
- Conclusion: Something to Think about Exercise

10/60 Rule of Grant Writing

- 1) Mission Statement
- 2) Years in Existence
- 3) Accomplishments of Last Fiscal Year
- 4) Services Provided
- 5) Geographic Area Served
- 6) Number of Clients Served
- 7) Revenue Sources
- 8) Current Needs from Client's Perspective
- 9) Impact
- 10) Number of Staff, Board Members, and Other Volunteers

Top Ten Tips for Writing a Grant*

- 1) Start preparing early.
- 2) Follow the Request for Proposals instructions.
- 3) Keep your audience in mind.
- 4) Be brief, concise and clear.
- 5) Be organized and logical.
- 6) Show evidence of fiscal stability and sound fiscal management.
- 7) Attend to technical details.
- 8) Be careful in the use of attachments.
- 9) Proofread and review your application.
- 10) Submit all information at the same time.

*Adapted from HRSA's How to Apply – Top Ten Tips for Applicants

#1 Start Preparing Early

- Yes, I know you are busy BUT there are many advantages to starting early:
 - Once completed, you can move on to other pressing issues with your organization.
 - Gives you time to have someone else read the grant request and suggest revisions.
- Funders may be impressed that you got it in early. However, just a good practice, you do not get extra points for doing so.

#2 Follow the Request for Proposals Instructions

- The number one reason why your grant request is denied is that you did not follow the guidelines.
- This is not Burger King, you cannot have it your way!
- Think about all the work you did putting this grant proposal together. Ensure your hard work gets a fair chance of being reviewed and funded by getting it in on time.

#3 Keep your audience in mind

- Remember, reviewers have experience in the HIV/AIDS field.
- Their perspectives are varied and probably includes experience in program development, fundraising, advocacy, governance, management, etc...
- No need to give them an overview of HIV 101.
- However, do not be afraid of telling the story of your organization and why funding is needed.

#4 Be brief, concise and clear

- Focus and work within the page limitations.
- People say that's hard because there is so much they need to say.
- MACFS (Making A Case For Support) does not mean you need 20 pages to tell your story. If I told every webinar participant that I know a foundation where you can get a \$25,000 grant but there was a page limitation of three pages, you could and probably would do it!

#5 Be organized and logical

- Make your proposal reviewer friendly.
 - Use headings and sub-headings.
- Ensure you address all factors in the RFP.
- Take a positive approach.
- Do not make assumptions.

#6 Show evidence of fiscal stability and sound fiscal management

- Increasing deficit the past three years – NOT.
- Financial discrepancies noted in your annual audit – NOT.
- Organization lacks capacity to manage financials - NOT.
- Diversification of revenue streams – YES.
- Clean audits – YES.
- Strategies to ensure financial sustainability – YES.

#7 Attend to technical details

- Just follow the guidelines – margins, page numbers, characters, maximum number of pages, font....
- Do not reformat forms!

#8 Be careful in the use of attachments

- Don't overdue it.
- Provide only attachments requested.
- Videos, CDs are usually not accepted.

#9 Proofread and review your application

- Spell Check is NOT proofreading.
 - Too, Two, and To sound alike but the meaning is different.
- You have tunnel vision because all you know is that you have to meet the deadline.
- Let an objective third party review it for you. They may see some things you missed. You are too close and they have fresh eyes!

#10 Submit all information at the same time

- Some funders may consider the application incomplete if all information is not available.
- Submitting information late may be a sign to reviewers to question your capacity to provide services as requested in your grant request.
- Grant seekers do not want Grant makers making “assumptions” about their capabilities.

Trending of Grants

- **Collaboration**
 - Your organization cannot do it alone.
 - Strengths in numbers with complementary services.
- **Outcomes**
 - What will happen during the grant period?
 - One local funder calls this the “So What” question.
 - What change will occur?
- **Sustainability**
 - How will you sustain the project after the grant ends if it is suppose to be ongoing?
 - If you say, it will end, that’s a red flag!
 - Can you continue the project at some level to ensure continuity.

The Proposal Narrative

- Who are your allies (collaborators) and your opponents?
- What evidence (research, statistics) can you provide to demonstrate the need?
- What specifically (outcomes) do you want to accomplish by the end of the grant period?
- How will you sustain the project after grant funding ends?
 - Have a plan in place: Use proceeds from an event such as a golf tournament, dedicated gifts from donors, put funding in operating budget.

The Proposal Narrative

- Writing a grant is like Storytelling
 - Connecting people to your mission.
 - Nonprofits have not done a good job of telling their story.
 - Approach your narrative like you are telling a story.
 - Use client testimonies - "This agency saved my life and I am forever grateful."
 - Use impact statements - "97-cents can save a life."

Advocacy Grant Pitfalls/Challenges

- Failure to describe the desired outcome.
- Previous specific advocacy accomplishments.
- Failure to define the role of PLWH/A in advocacy activities or fully explain the barriers for a lack of involvement.
- Questions about the amount of staff involvement.
- Collaboration beyond the HIV/AIDS field.
- Totally or highly dependent upon the grant funding in question.
- Insufficient budget justification.
- Failure to provides specifics about sustainability of the project.

The Budget

- Should coincide with the narrative.
- Practice TIA (Truth In Asking).
- Include a detailed justification for each line item.
- Volunteers are a valuable asset. The Independent Sector determined that the value of one hour of volunteering equates to \$23.07 (national average).

Top 5 Reasons Grants are Denied

- 1) The application guidelines were not followed.
- 2) The application did not make a case for support.
- 3) The budget was not supported by the project design.
- 4) The applicant organization did not demonstrate sound fiscal management or capacity to implement the project.
- 5) The application was not received by the deadline.

Resources

Advocacy

- Consumer Health Foundation
- The Joyce Foundation
- AIDS United's Current Request for Proposals for Southern REACH

Syringe Access

- Comer Family Foundation
- The Robin Hood Foundation
- Elton John AIDS Foundation

Acronyms

- FTG
 - Follow The Guidelines.
- MACFS
 - Make A Case For Support.
- TIA
 - Truth In Asking.

Conclusion: Something to Think about (Uniqueness) Exercise

- 1) What makes your (name of your organization) the best at what you do?
- 2) What does (name of your organization) offer clients they can get nowhere else?
- 3) Why should a funding source give (name of your organization) a grant over another organization in your field.
- 4) What does (name of your organization) offer funding sources they can get nowhere else?

Open or Upcoming Funding Opportunities

Southern**REACH**

REGIONAL EXPANSION OF
ACCESS AND CAPACITY TO
ADDRESS HIV/AIDS

- Southern REACH
 - Now accepting applications
 - Visit: <http://www.aidsunited.org/Southern-REACH/REACH-RFP.aspx>
- Syringe Access Fund
 - Request for Proposals Coming Soon!
 - Visit: <http://www.aidsunited.org/Programs-0024-Grantmaking/Syringe-Access.aspx>

In Need of Technical Assistance?



Getting to
zero

Getting to Zero staff work with CBOs to engage in strategic planning and the implementation of interventions focused on:

- People living with and at high risk for contracting HIV; and
- Organizational development and program development best practices to improve impact and sustainability



Expert
G2Zero staff



Extensive
AIDS United
network



**Deepest
bench with
broadest
possible
reach**

*To learn more about the Getting to Zero Initiative, contact
Kelly Stevens at cba@aidsunited.org.*



Brief Evaluation Survey

- Please click here to complete a brief evaluation survey:

https://survey.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_datVvQgU2p6oAAd