“Tips And Tricks To Perfect Your Proposal”
A Grantwriting Webinar
Sponsored by AIDS United
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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
  – Now accepting applications

• Syringe Access Fund
  – Request for Proposals Coming Soon!
In Need of Technical Assistance?

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

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_datVvQgU2p6oAAAd