

The Components of a Proposal

How to
Successfully Win
Grants!!!

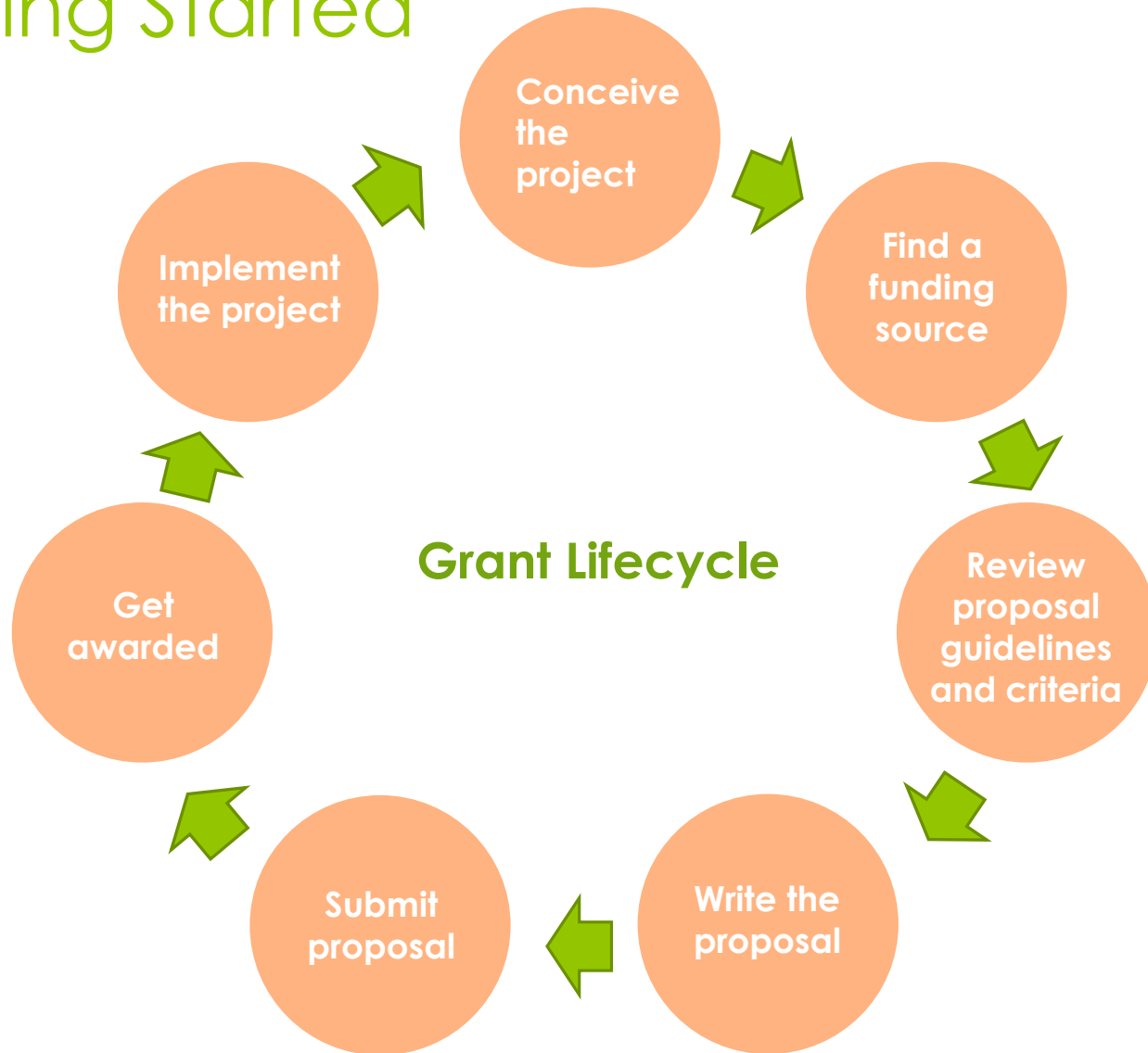
Office of Grants and
Sponsored Research
Development

Winthrop University

What is a Grant?

- A **grant** is a sum of money or resources given by an organization, foundation, government, or corporation for a particular purpose.
- A **grant proposal/application** is a written document used to apply for a grant or to a grant program.
- A **grantee** receives financial assistance to carry out the proposed activities.

Getting Started



Guiding Principles



- Conceive your idea
- Research funding agencies
- Contact Program Officers
- Contact previous awardees

- Align project to vision and mission of funding agency
- Read RFP for guidelines and criteria

- Respond to each criterion
- Tell a compelling story
- Construct each component thoughtfully

PLANNING

Understanding the Fundamentals

- Develop and maintain contacts and networks
- Be proactive
- Research the sponsor's needs, priorities, and thrusts
- Talk, listen, listen, and listen
- Deliver what the sponsor needs not what you want

Strengths

Craft
your story

Certify your
capabilities

Assess
your
ability to
deliver

Cultivate
resources and
collaborations

Differentiate
your assets

Demonstrate
proof of
superiority

Know thy institution!

Strengths

- What is unique about your institution?
- What do you offer that is 'Best in Class?'
- What do you offer that surpasses your competition?
- How do you maintain your competitive edge?
- What are your relevant credentials and experiences?

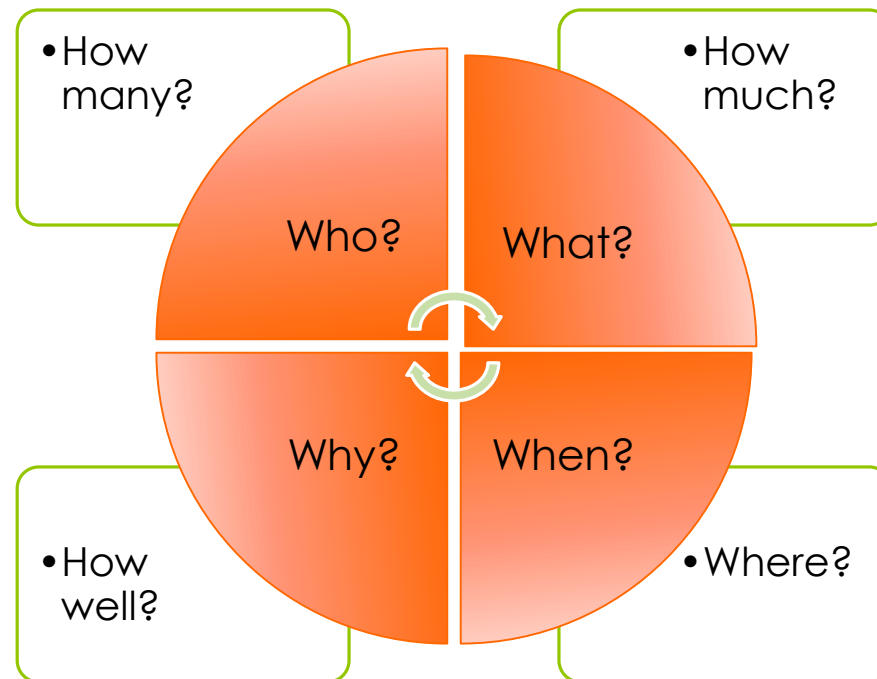
Strengths

Demonstrate superiority in your approach.

- Why did we select our approach?
- What is the rationale?
- How does it compare to alternatives or competing ideas?
- What ideas did we discard and why?
- What can we deliver that no one else can?

The RFP

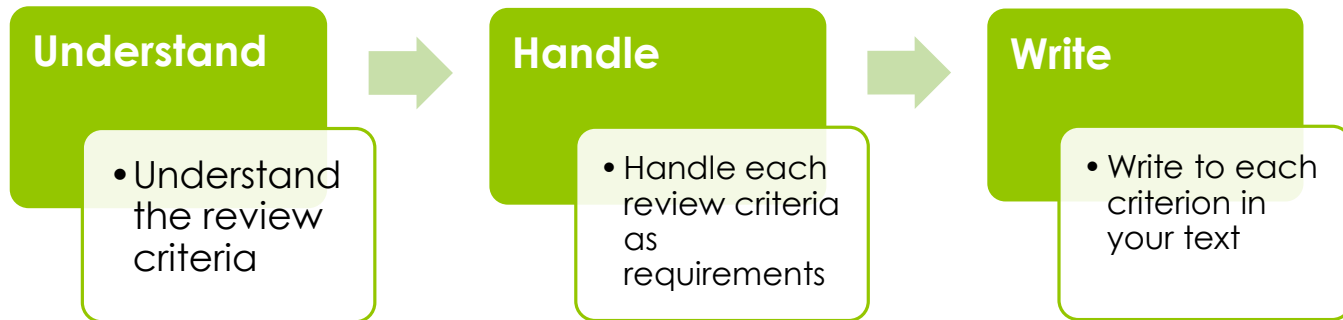
- Read the RFP repeatedly until the application is submitted
- Develop a matrix/outline using the Solicitation
- The funder asks the questions:



The RFP

- “**Shall**” and “**Must**” are requirements
- “**May**” and “**Should**” indicate desired requirements

The RFP

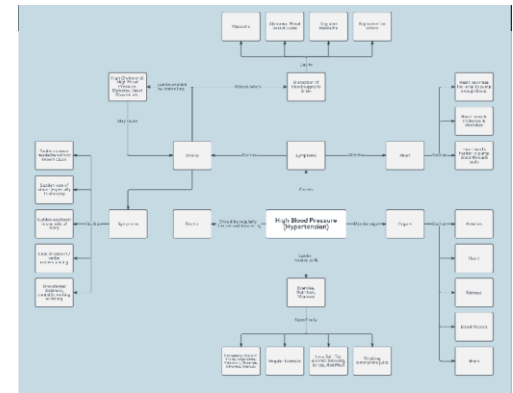


- ✓ **Grant funding is shrinking!**
- ✓ **Competition is getting larger and more aggressive!**

DEVELOPING

Before you write, develop a conceptual map of the project.

- What is your idea?
- What is your project?
- Why is it needed?
- What makes it compelling and significant?
- When and where will it take place?
- Who will conduct the project (project team)?
- How much will it cost?





WRITING

10 Basic Proposal Components

1. Abstract/Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. Needs Assessment (Problem Statement)
4. Goals and Objectives
5. Project Plan/Methodology or Approach
6. Evaluation Plan
7. Dissemination Plan
8. Sustainability Plan
9. Budget/Budget Justification
10. Support Materials (letters, CVs, resources)

Abstract

- aka Executive Summary
- Appears at the beginning
- Written last
- No more than one page
- Outlines the proposed project
 - Includes key summary points (series of short paragraphs)
 - Communicates clearly the goals, objectives, approach, and evaluation
 - Cornerstone of your proposal
 - Initial impression

Introduction

- Provide pertinent data about your institution
- Show organizational structure
- State your institution's mission, goals, track record with grantors and success stories
- Present information that is relevant to the grantor
- Establish credibility & strengths

Needs/Problem Statement

- Key component of the proposal
- Area of focus should be relevant to the funding agency
- Include target audience/beneficiaries
- Include institutional commitments to the problem
- Makes clear, concise, well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed in your proposal

Needs/Problem Statement

➤ Collect data

- Current & relevant statistical (quantitative) data
- Qualitative data (anecdotal)
- Research reports
- Needs assessment in the target area
- Factual data related to the problem (ex. NCES, NSF.gov/statistics)

Goals

- An overarching principle that you want to accomplish; drives decision making
 - broad
 - general
 - intangible
 - abstract
 - generally difficult to measure

Objectives

- Are steps that can be taken to meet the goal; considered milestones
- SMART
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Attainable
 - Realistic
 - Time specific
- Specific activities to be accomplished
- Will be used to evaluate your project

Example

Goal: The Environmental Science department will increase the number of students entering the environmental science workforce with the ability to use remote sensing and cyberinfrastructure to advance research.

Objectives:

1. 60% of environmental science students will complete the newly created remote sensing course within Year 1.
2. Two (2) new courses in cyberinfrastructure and remote sensing will be developed and implemented by Year 3.
3. 70% of students will participate and complete a research project in environmental sensing before earning a baccalaureate degree.

Useful Verbs for Writing Goals & Objectives

Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Define	Choose	Apply	Analyze	Arrange	Appraise
Identify	Cite examples of	Demonstrate	Appraise	Assemble	Assess
List	Demonstrate use of	Dramatize	Calculate	Collect	Choose
Name	Describe	Employ	Categorize	Compose	Compare
Recall	Determine	Generalize	Compare	Construct	Critique
Recognize	Differentiate	Illustrate	Conclude	Create	Estimate
Record	between	Interpret	Contrast	Design	Evaluate
Relate	Discriminate	Operate	Correlate	Develop	Judge
Repeat	Discuss	Operationalize	Criticize	Formulate	Measure
Underline	Explain	Practice	Deduce	Manage	Rate
	Express	Relate	Debate	Modify	Revise
	Give in own words	Schedule	Detect	Organize	Score
	Identify	Shop	Determine	Plan	Select
	Interpret	Use	Develop	Prepare	Validate
	Locate	Utilize	Diagram	Produce	Value
	Pick	Initiate	Differentiate	Propose	Test
	Report		Distinguish	Predict	
	Restate		Draw conclusions	Reconstruct	
	Review		Estimate	Set-up	
	Recognize		Evaluate	Synthesize	
	Select		Examine	Systematize	
	Tell		Experiment	Devise	
	Translate		Identify		
	Respond		Infer		
	Practice		Inspect		
	Simulates		Inventory		
			Predict		
			Question		
			Relate		
			Solve		
			Test		
			Diagnose		

Project Plan/Methodology

aka Implementation Plan

- How the project is expected to be conducted
 - What will you do?
 - How will you do it?
 - Who will do it?
 - How will it be assessed?
 - What will be the outcome?

Project Plan/Methodology

aka Implementation Plan

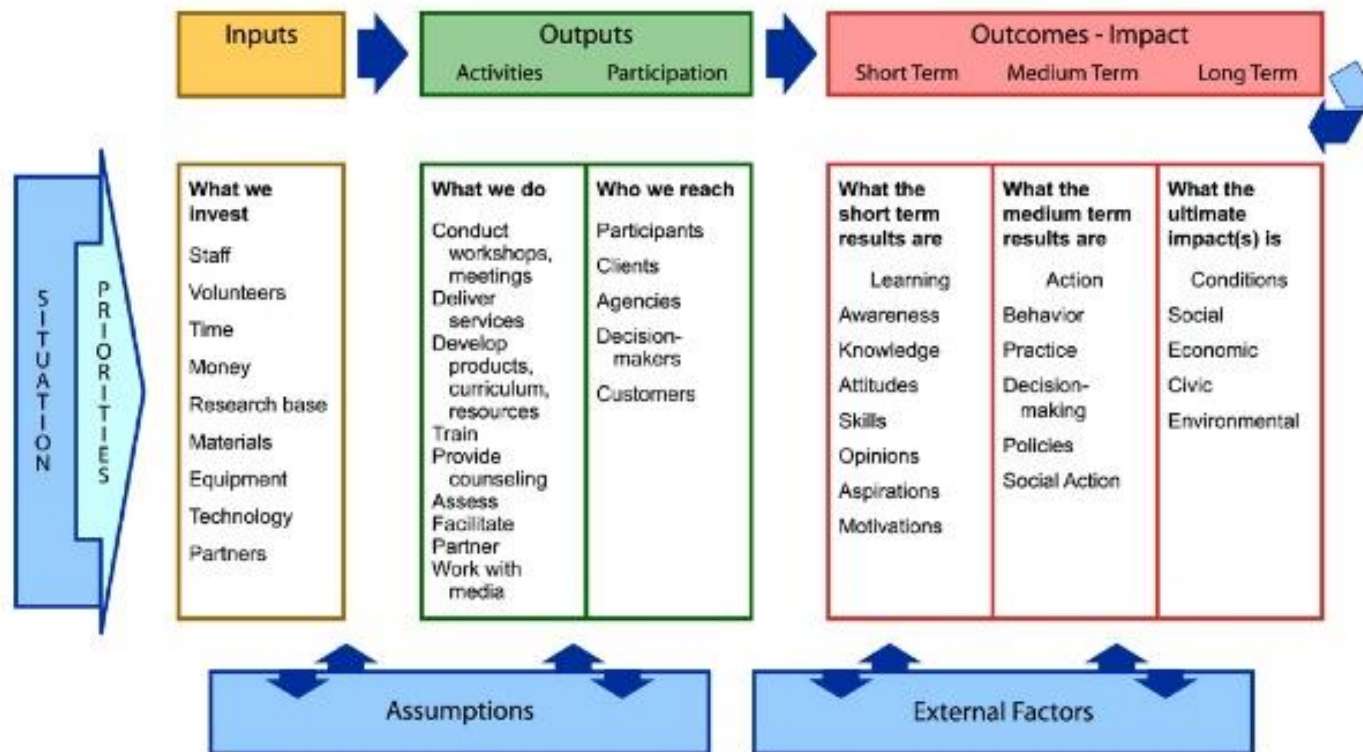
- How the project will solve the stated problem
- Discuss methods to be employed to achieve the goals
- Defined timeline (tells sponsors when project milestones will begin and end)
- Identify activities to occur (inputs)
 - processes
 - related resources
 - personnel needed

Project Plan/Methodology cont'd

- Consider using a Logic Model or Gantt charts/diagrams/matrices
- A *Logic Model* is a graphic blueprint of the key elements of a proposed program. It shows inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts.
 - How the parts interrelate?
 - Where personnel will be needed/used?
 - What they are expected to do?
 - Identify activities, facilities, and support services required

Project Plan/Methodology

LOGIC MODEL



Source: University of Wisconsin Extension, Program Development and Evaluation

Project Plan/Methodology cont'd

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts
<i>what resources go into a program</i>	<i>what activities the program undertakes</i>	<i>what is produced through those activities</i>	<i>the changes or benefits that result from the program</i>
e.g. money, staff, equipment	e.g. development of materials, training programs	e.g. number of booklets produced, workshops held, people trained	e.g. increased skills/ knowledge/ confidence, leading in longer-term to promotion, new job, etc.

Project Plan cont'd

- Identify expected measurable results (outputs)
 - What will be achieved via inputs?
 - Ex. Increase the number of students earning a grade of 80 or above by 25% as demonstrated by final course grades.
- Highlight the innovative features of the proposal
- Use appendices to provide additional pertinent details (supplemental data and references within specified page limit)

Evaluation Plan

- **Formative evaluation**
 - Assess how the project is conducted and effectiveness of the activities
 - Use a proven approach
 - **Quantitative** describes the approach you take to measure the progress of your SMART objectives
 - **Qualitative** describes the approach to understand the quality of our project's implementation process

Evaluation Plan

➤ **Summative evaluation**

- Measures outcomes, effectiveness and project impact on the problem
 - Demonstrate linkage between the proposed activities and the expected project outcomes in clear and explicit way
 - Use of a qualified external evaluator

Sustainability Plan

- Long-term project planning
 - Project sustainability
 - Institutional support
 - Other extramural funding
- Equipment maintenance
- Services to constituents

Dissemination Plan

- Dissemination is the act of making the results known:
 - to the project participants
 - to your own institution
 - to other professionals in your field (locally & nationwide)
 - to the general public

- Questions to be addressed:
 - How will the results of this project be disseminated?
 - To Whom?
 - When?
 - Where?

- Methods of dissemination include:
 - journal articles/publications
 - presentations at professional meetings, conferences, etc.
 - media presentations

Budget

- Consistent with the proposal narrative
- Salaries consistent with institutional salaries
- Equipment purchases should be allowed by the grantor
- Indirect cost rate should be clearly specified
- Matching funds should be specific
 - Cash
 - In-kind

Other Important Proposal Components

- Cover Page
- Table of Contents
- Project Description
- References
- Biographical Sketches
- Past, Current and Pending Support
- Letters of Support
- Budget Justification Narrative

Peer Review

Basic Evaluation Criteria

- Intellectual, scientific, technical, community, and social merits
- Likelihood to enhance research capabilities and broaden knowledge base
- Quality of management and evaluation plans
- Quality of PI and other personnel
- Cost Effectiveness

Write to Win

- Intellectual merit
 - Advancing knowledge
 - Qualifications of the PI or team
 - Suggest, support and explore original concepts
 - Well-organized and conceived
 - Sufficient access to resources

Write to Win cont'd

- What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity (National Science Foundation specific)
 - Promote teaching, training, and learning
 - Broaden the participation of underrepresented groups
 - Enhance infrastructure for research and education
 - Dissemination of results
 - Benefits to society

Characteristics of Competitive Proposals

- ✓ Easy to read, well written, responsive, and persuasive/compelling
- ✓ Use active voice, i.e. conduct, identify, compare, assess
- ✓ Use headings, bullets points, tables and graphics (make good use of white space)
- ✓ Answer all required questions and respond to all criteria

Characteristics of Competitive Proposals

Winning proposals must be compelling, concise, use RFP language with a well-thought out plan for execution

- ✓ Identifies who will perform the work and their qualifications
- ✓ Describes where the work will be performed and the resources available to support it
- ✓ Offers a schedule or timeline demonstrating how much time the project will take
- ✓ Provides a reasonable and realistic budget

Do's and Don'ts

- Be specific
- Use the Sponsor's language
- Ensure your proposal fits within the Sponsor's guidelines
- Get to know the Program Officers
- Stay away from words like 'excellent', 'wonderful' and 'unique'
- Include design constraints (limitations) and potential problems

Do's and Don'ts

- Create a title that engenders enthusiasm
- Number your pages – make life easier for the reviewers
- Don't be too ambitious or propose too much work (leave the kitchen sink at home!)
- Include future work beyond what is proposed

References

- Johnson, Victoria M. (2011). Grant Writing 101: Everything you need to start raising funds today. New York: McGraw-Hill.