Grant Writing for Healthy Communities

Workbook

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INTRODUCTION

Many organizations, including Band Councils and other First Nation organizations rely on grants as a primary source of funding for many programs and services. Proposal writing can be a good method of raising money for your organization. A well-written and well-organized proposal can bring in large amounts of funding to your organization.

Many organizations may be competing for the same grant dollars so it is necessary to be able to write proposals that are clear, concise and make a strong case that your agency can accomplish important outcomes with the funding received. You may have a great idea for a project or program that meets a real need in your community, but in order for your idea to be supported by a funding agency, you must be able to convince them that your idea is indeed required. An important component of demonstrating need is ensuring your proposal is focused and well laid out. Often, despite a great idea a proposal is not awarded funding because is not clear enough for funders to believe it can be accomplished with the available funding. While there are many interconnected issues in the community, and we like to approach them in a holistic manner, this manual will assist in breaking down large issues into a project description that is manageable within the project time frame and funding available.

This manual will provide you with the tools to help you turn your ideas into a proposal that the funders will see has the potential to make real and meaningful change in your community. Funding agencies want to see that the money they spend by way of grants is put to good use and is used in the most efficient manner possible. The design of this manual is to take a systematic approach to developing a great proposal by outlining steps that are common in most proposals. ***After completing each step in this workbook, you will have a well-written and well-organized proposal that has all the necessary elements that most funding agencies require.*** While this manual is lengthy, we have attempted to provide enough information in each section so that if you are new to proposal writing, you will have all the information you need, and to provide a reference point for those who are more experienced with developing proposals.

OVERVIEW

Calls for proposals or grant opportunities can come in many forms. You might be interested in funds to operate a particular program or service or, you may be seeking dollars for capital expenditures or equipment. Whichever the particular grant you are interested in, the basics of a good proposal are the same. The keys to a successful proposal are: developing a clear program plan, researching the right funder or grant for your idea, and focusing your idea to the grant.

The major components to a proposal that will be discussed in this manual are as follows:

- Agency Overview – presents your agency/organization's qualifications to carry out the proposed program
- Need Statement – a description of the need to be addressed by your organization
- Goals and Objectives – sets out what specific results you will accomplish
- Activities and Methods – describes how exactly you will achieve your objectives
- Evaluation – describes your plan on how to measure the success of your program
- Budget – a line item summary of your expenses and revenues

DEVELOPING YOUR PROPOSAL IDEA

Before beginning to draft a grant proposal, the first step is to make sure you have fully developed your idea. With some careful consideration before the writing process, you will have a much easier time producing a strong proposal. Some of this work may already be done by your organization so it may simply be a matter of looking at some of your own organization's existing documents. However, it is important to make sure you do some of this strategic planning before you work on the actual writing of a proposal.

In your job, you may have some great ideas for new programs and services that you would like to offer. These ideas may be tied to a real need in your community. However, you should consider what the mission of your organization is and if your ideas can fit in to the broader strategic vision of your organization.

Remember your audience

You should always write for a particular audience. For example, if you were to write a children's book, you would not use complex words. So, for a proposal you want to direct your writing towards the proposal reviewers. They may have to read hundreds of applications for the same funds, so you want to make sure your proposal stands out among the many proposals received. You may have a more holistic vision of the needs of your community and your ideas may relate to a broader vision of the overall health and well-being of your community; however, it is important to focus your writing toward the particular grant for which you are applying.

Try to put yourself into the position of the proposal reviewer. The reviewer probably does not spend a large amount of time reading each proposal so you want to make sure your proposal can catch the attention of the reviewer on a first quick read. You want to make sure that you write in a style that is clear, concise and well organized. A well-organized document will have a logical flow throughout the entire document. You do not want your reviewer to have to flip back and forth between pages to get the information they need.

TIP

Ask yourself: Does this information relate to the overall argument I am trying to make? If not- Why have I included it?

Key Questions to Consider

In developing your proposal, there are some questions you may want to consider:

1. What new projects (or expansions to current programs) is your agency planning for the next 2-3 years?
2. Does your program idea fit within the mission of your agency?
3. Is your program idea already in place by another agency or organization?
4. Does your idea meet the needs of your community?
5. Can you document this need?
6. Does your idea have a well-defined target population (target population may also be called target group or client group. It is the group of people your project is intended to service. Often defined by culture, age, gender, geography, socio-economic status etc.)?
7. Does your agency have the capacity (staffing and experience) to meet this need?
8. Is this a service or program that your community members will want and use?
9. Does your idea enhance or support the future development of your agency?
10. Where can you get support for your project?

At this stage, it is a good idea to review your agency's purpose or mission. Not only will you be able to see if your idea fits within the mandate of your agency but also you will be able to use this information in your proposal.

PROPOSAL IDEA WORKSHEET

1. What new projects (or enhancements to current programs) are you planning for the next two to three years?

Project I:

Project II:

Project III:

Project IV:

2. Which of the above projects are compatible with the mission and vision of your organization? **NOTE:** You will need to find considerable justification to apply for funding for projects that fall outside of your organization's mission and vision.

	Project	Compatible with mission (Y/N)
I		
II		
III		
IV		

3. Are any of these projects currently being done by another organization? Are there possibilities to partner with another organization?

NOTE: Many funders like to see partnerships and collaborations.

Project	Duplication? (Y/N)	Possible Collaboration (Y/N) If yes, with whom?
I		
II		
III		
IV		

4. Do your ideas meet the needs of your community?

Project	Community Need
I	
II	
III	
IV	

5. Can you document this need? What data do you have or can you collect to prove that there is a need (e.g. Community Needs Assessment, Aboriginal Peoples Health Survey, Government Statistics)?

6. Does your idea have a well-defined target population?

7. Does your organization have the capacity to implement each project? For example, can the work be done with current staff or will new staff be required?

8. Is this a service or program that your community members or target population will want and use? How do you know?

9. Does your idea enhance or support the future development of your agency?

10. Where can you get support for your project? (E.g. Chief and Council, community, Board of Directors, etc.)

Project	Possible Supporters
I	
II	
III	
IV	

READING A CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Now that you have some idea of what types of programs and/or services you think would be a good fit for your organization and that clearly fills a need in your community, you can now begin your search for an agency that may fund your project idea. Your agency may regularly receive what are known as RFPs (requests for proposals) or proposal calls from funding bodies or you may have to do a bit of searching for funding agencies that grant funds for programs or services specific to your need. Once you have identified a potential funder and before beginning the application process, it is a good idea to ask yourself a few questions in order to find out if your project is in line with the funding criteria.

Key questions to consider when reading a call for proposals.

1. What do we need to do to be eligible for this grant?
   - For example, you may need to find another organization to partner with for your project as the funding agency will only fund collaborative projects. Or you may have to ensure that your organization has charitable status.
2. When is the proposal due? Do we have enough time and resources to submit a solid proposal?
3. What form of approval do we need for this grant?
   - For example, you may need to get a Band Council Resolution or a letter of support from your Board of Directors or communities that may be involved.
4. Is this grant open to communities or an organization such as ours?
5. Does our plan for the initiative match the funding priorities of the funder?
6. Is the grant a direct award or does it require matching funding or multiple funders?
7. Can our community/organization carry out this project or would our proposal be strengthened by collaborating with other organizations?
8. What community/national/international information and data do we have regarding our proposal area?
9. Do the demographics of our community match the priorities of the funder?

TIP

If you are still unclear about any aspect of the call for the proposal, it is always a good idea to contact the funding agency for more clarification. Most funders will have a contact person to answer any of your questions. They may be a valuable source of assistance regarding the type of information they are looking for in the proposal.

Letter of Intent

One process used by funders to simplify the proposal call is to request a Letter of Intent (LOI) be submitted initially, rather than a full proposal. The Letter of Intent outlines your idea, amount of funding needed and timelines. It is used by funders as a screening process, indicating the number of interested organizations (total $ needed), and areas of proposed projects.

Guidelines typically indicate what is to be included in the Letter of Intent. An effective Letter of Intent will generate positive reaction from the reader and provide an opportunity for funders to place your proposal at the top of the list when they finalize the proposal call.

TIP

To make your LOI stand out make sure to:

- **Use selected vocabulary to draw attention to the potential impact of your project**
- **Stay within page or word limits**
- **Write in the active voice**
- **Avoid jargon, slang and acronyms**
- **Persuade the reader that your idea has excellent merit and is achievable**

Letters of Support

Typically, agencies send a letter requesting support for a particular project to organizations that have worked with the agency or may be involved in the project. If the work involves various First Nations' communities, their support for the project should be obtained and it is important to receive support as early as possible. In the letter you should include a brief summary of the project including project title, potential benefits of participation, the funding source you are applying to and specific instructions for writing the letter (as well as to whom the letter should be addressed and whether to mail/fax/email the letter to the funder or your agency). The letter should be followed up with emails and phone calls and should be completed with adequate time for response.

Most often, organizations will request that you draft a letter of support on their behalf and send a draft copy to them. Sending an electronic copy will allow them to make any changes and place the letter of support on letterhead. Submitting a draft to organizations is ideal because it reduces the workload of the organization (improving response rate) and allows you to be specific regarding items you want emphasized by each supporting source.

COMPONENTS OF THE PROPOSAL

AGENCY OVERVIEW

The main goals in providing an agency overview are establishing agency credibility, identifying key contributions that reflect the project and demonstrating community recognition and support. The agency overview establishes an organization's credibility to successfully undertake the project. It indicates who is applying for the grant, what qualifies the agency to conduct the project and what resources are available to support the effort. This section helps to generate confidence that the organization is competent in the particular area, qualified to address the needs/problem and fiscally sound and responsible.

Depending on the funder's guidelines, the content of this section may vary and may be included in the introduction, project description or in a separate section of the proposal.

TIP

A capability statement should accomplish two things:

- **It should describe the agencies characteristics and its track record**
- **It should demonstrate how those qualities make the organization qualified to undertake the proposed project**

A typical Agency Overview will reflect the majority of the following information (depending on the criteria identified and number of pages allowed for each section):

- *Mission of the Agency* (overall philosophy and aims)
- *History of the Agency* (brief overview of when, why and how the organization started. May also include geographic service area, population served)
- *Organizational Resources* (Description of funding received, grants awarded, funding track record and human (staffing qualifications and workload) and material resources (infrastructure) available to the organization)
- *Community Recognition and Support* (indication of how the agency is regarded-honors, awards, accreditations, letters of support)
- *Interagency Collaboration and Links* (Support available from other organizations, participation on other boards, national organizations)
- *Agency Programs* (Overview of programs, number of people served)
- *Agency Strengths* (Characteristics that make the organization particularly suited to undertake the project)

TIP

Reviewing the agency's purpose, past and present programs and its future directions is useful in determining how your proposal fits within the agency's vision.

Viewing the agency based on the overall service direction provides you an opportunity to see how programs connect with each other. If the proposed program does not reflect current services, is there a reason for moving in this direction? Secondly, a survey of the agency should reflect whether the agency has the capacity, connections, staff and infrastructure capabilities to lead the proposed program or initiative.

TIP

Once you have completed an Agency Overview, it is a good idea to keep the information on file for future grant proposals, and update if needed over time.

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION WORKSHEET

NAME What is the name of your organization	
LOCATION Where are you located	
LEGAL STATUS Non-profit organization? Charitable status?	
START DATE Date the organization began operations	
MISSION Organization’s mission statement	
TARGET POPULATION What groups of people do your programs serve?	
PROGRAMS What programs do you offer?	
MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS List of major accomplishments and/or accomplishments related to this proposal.	
PERSONNEL Who makes up the organization? (Board of Directors, #s of employees, volunteers)	
LINK TO NEED STATEMENT Include a statement or two about the need the proposed project will meet.	

[redacted]

[redacted]

THE NEED SECTION

The Need Statement provides a thorough explanation of the need or problem existing in the organization or community for which the proposal attempts to resolve. It is rooted in information derived from research findings, demographic data, and other sources of supported information. The needs section not only provides a rationale for the proposed project, but also demonstrates to the funder the applicant's knowledge of the current situation. In addition to demonstrating expertise in understanding the various factors associated with the problem, the needs section helps your agency tie its concern to the funder's mandate or mission.

TIP

The Need Section is key to the proposal, establishing a rationale for the proposal by clearly identifying the concern and cause requiring attention in your community.

Many organizations regularly conduct a Needs Assessment for their community. This can be a great source of information for your Need Section, as some of this work may already be compiled.

The Needs Statement should accomplish the following tasks:

1. Identify and describe the needs you seek to address.
2. Describe the causes of the problem and the circumstances creating the need.
3. Identify approaches or solutions to date (if any). You may want to include past programs that addressed this need.
4. Demonstrate that you have a thorough understanding of the need.
5. Demonstrate this is the same need as the funder seeks to address.
6. Demonstrate your program intervention is the best possible solution.

The Need Statement is supposed to answer the question, "What is the need in your community that your project is going to address?" In answering this question, there are a few things you might want to consider:

- Does the need addressed in your proposal have some clear relationship to your organization's mission and purpose? If you went through the steps in developing your proposal, you should be able to answer this question with a "YES!"
- Your Need Statement should focus on community need rather than the needs of your organization.
- The Need Statement should be supported with evidence. Do you have statistics and facts to show this need is real?
- The Need Statement should be consistent with your organization's ability to address the need.
- The Need Statement should be clear and easy to read with no slang or jargon.
- If you think this project could be a model for others, this can be included in your Need Statement that it addresses a need on a larger scale.

TIP

Use statistics, not assumptions for evidence. Make sure the statistics you use are clear and support your argument. Statistics that compare one item to another (comparative statistics) work best to support your Needs Statement.

When discussing the causes of the problem/need, one of the most common mistakes made in proposals is to fall into a pattern of circular reasoning. Circular reasoning occurs when one argues that the problem is the lack of service that one is proposing.

> **Example:**
> The problem facing many teens is that there is not a community center.
>
> The statement has failed to identify the needs teens have that could be met through a community center.

To avoid this problem keep asking the question "why do we need X?" The factors you highlight as contributing to the problem should connect with your proposed objectives and intervention strategies. What are the factors that cause the need?

Therefore, for the example above, you might want to ask yourself "Why do we need a community centre?" Keep in mind as you write that the way you define the cause of the problem will reflect the way you attempt to solve it. Therefore, the factors you highlight as contributing to the problem should connect with your proposed objectives and intervention strategy.

Need in the example provided above may stem from numerous factors including:

- Lack of space for programming
- Impacts of colonization
- Lack of teen activities
- Consumption of alcohol and drugs
- Teen pregnancy

Finding the Data (demonstrating the need)

The use of data provides documentation of the problem. Data informs the nature of the needs and factors contributing to it. The information can be provided from a number of sources including statistical references as well as quotes from agency directors, community leaders and professionals.

Some common sources include:

- Program data such as evaluation results, client intake information, client and staff surveys, waiting lists and service records.
- Journals, periodicals, newspapers and books.
- Reports and documents prepared through government sources.
- Reports prepared by Foundations, community groups and other non profit agencies.
- Interviews with professionals in the field.
- Feasibility studies or needs assessments.

Types of Useful Data

Data collection categories that may be useful in writing statements include:

- Data on the incidences of the need: whether the need has increased, decreased or remains the same. Clients' current physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, social and/or economic status.
- Data indicating the factors contributing to or causing the problem and data on related problems.
- Data comparing the need in your target area with other communities.
- Data on short an long term consequences of no intervention (social costs as well as cost benefit analysis if possible).
- Data on the activities and outcomes of other organizations responding to the same or similar need.
- Data from experts in the field, including research studies and evaluation results.

TIP

If data does not exist at your community level it is acceptable to use provincial or national data from similar communities. The incorporation of appropriate data collection techniques may be used as one of the proposal objectives.

STATEMENT OF NEED WORKSHEET

WHO Who is your target population? Who are the people in need of the program or service you want to offer?	
WHAT What exactly are the issues facing of the target population?	
WHERE Where are the people with the need? (e.g. on reserve, off reserve?)	
WHEN When is this need evident?	
WHY Why does this need occur?	
EVIDENCE What data and information do you have to support your claim?	
SO WHAT? What are the consequences of addressing and not addressing this need? How is your organization best suited to address this need?	

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project Description section of a proposal consists of three main sections; each with different aims:

1. *The Goals and Objectives section* – this section identifies the results or benefits expected from the project.
2. *Project Activities* (also referred to as the Action Plan, Methods, work plan or Implementation Strategy) – this section provides a detailed account of the activities designed to accomplish the results.
3. *The Evaluation Plan* – this section explains the criteria and methods used for determining the results.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A goal is the main reason or purpose of an activity. Think of it as the big picture. A goal is a vision of something to be achieved. Goals are not the same thing as objectives. Objectives follow goals and are activities that are completed to achieve a goal. Most projects are based on one, two or at the most three goals. For example, a goal would be to improve the lives of teens in our community.

TIP

To create the goals for your proposal, return to the Need Section and state the major reasons for your work. The following questions will help you identify your goals:

- **What ideal outcome will exist if we eliminate, prevent or improve the situation?**
- **What population will you target (Elders, youth, new moms, etc.)**
- **What is the overall, long term situation that is desired for our target population?**
- **What type of change are you looking to influence?**
- **What timeframe is needed to achieve this level of change?**

Project Objectives

Objectives are the small picture. They specify steps and actions needed to reach your goals. While goals are usually longer term, objectives can be very focused and short term. There can be many objectives attached to one goal. Objectives reflect a change in behaviour, skills, attitudes/values/beliefs, knowledge, or conditions.

Well-stated objectives provide the following information:

- A target population of the service or study
- The number of clients to be reached
- The expected measurable results or benefits
- A timeframe for the service or study

Example:

Goal: Improve the lives of teens in our community
For this goal the objectives might be:

- Increase the number of activities for youth
- Increase the space for programming
- Reduce the number of teen pregnancies
- Reduce the number of teens consuming drugs and alcohol

Your goals and objectives section should tie directly to your need statement. If your goals and objectives do not relate to your need statement the funding agency will get the impression that you do not have a good understanding of the problem and they will not look favourably at your proposal. The manner in which the objective is written will determine the type of evaluation to be conducted (discussed in greater detail in the evaluation section).

TIP

Objectives use action verbs (reduce, increase, decrease, promote, demonstrate) to indicate the expected change you hope the project will create.

Allow plenty of time for your objectives to be accomplished, as they usually take longer than planned to achieve.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES WORKSHEET

Use a separate sheet for each goal of your proposed project. Try to limit the number of objectives for each goal to make sure your goal is manageable.

GOAL:____

Objectives	1	2	3
Key issues you are seeking to change			
Target Population			
Direction of Change (E.g. to reduce, to increase, to decrease, to expand)			
Time Frame			

PROJECT ACTIVITIES and PROJECT METHODS

The Project Activities section provides a clear account of what you plan to do, why you have chosen the particular approach, who will complete tasks and in what time frame the tasks will be completed. This section builds on the objectives, explaining how you will reach each objective. This section should be clear in describing your methods and why those methods were chosen.

Preparatory Activities

Reflecting the services to be offered, begin to list activities necessary to get the project underway. With each activity it is useful to identify the person responsible for accomplishing the activity and to estimate the time needed for completion. While activities will vary depending on the project, examples may include:

- Staffing plans
- Site/facility selection
- Special equipment needs
- Interagency agreements and collaboration plans
- Community involvement linkages
- Outreach to target population

Implementation Activities

These activities relate to the service delivery process and the specific approaches to be employed with the target population to accomplish the project's objectives. In general health and human service programming can be grouped into three main categories: training or education, support services and provision of resources. Depending on your project, some common questions useful in formulating your implementation strategy include:

- *Training or Education* (e.g. workshops, prep. training, family life education, prevention campaigns, posters, training manuals)

  - Who is the target population?
  - What are the training or education objectives?
  - What will be the content, format and schedule?
  - How will it be developed- who is responsible?
  - What strategies/techniques (teaching aids and tools) will be used?
  - Who will conduct the training?
  - How will materials (if manuals, newsletters, video rather than workshop is used) be distributed?

- *Support Services* (e.g. counselling, support groups, crisis intervention)

  - What support services strategies will be used?
  - What are the underlying assumptions or evidence supporting this strategy?
  - What will be the support service process, format and timeline?
  - What issues and content will be addressed?
  - Who will be included (support systems, professionals) and what will their role be?

- *Provision of Resources* (transportation, meals programs, recreation programs, health care screening)

  - Who is our target population?
  - What resources will be provided?
  - When and how will they be delivered?
  - Who will develop, organize and deliver them?
  - Is there any special equipment needed- how will it be obtained?

Job Descriptions

It is often useful to include job descriptions for all key positions. They should provide information on the major responsibilities and tasks of the position. Examples of job descriptions can be found on websites such as www.workopolis.com, www.monster jobs.ca, and www.bcjobs.ca.

A job description typically includes:

- Definition of the position
- Reporting relationship
- Major responsibilities and related tasks
- Knowledge and skills required for the position
- Training and experience requirements

Methods

In the previous section, you made sure that there was a strong connection between the Need Statement and the project goals and objectives. Now it is important to ensure that the methods/activities are directly related to the objectives and need statement. Making sure of this continuity between sections will result in a proposal that is clear and well-organized.

> **TIP**
>
> **It is a good idea to explain *why* you chose a particular method to meet your stated needs. Why is your method best suited for the work to be undertaken? The funding agency reviewers might be aware of other methods, so you will want to justify why the method you are using is best suited for this project.**

After you complete your objectives and methods section, you might want to ask yourself some review questions to make sure your methods section is complete. If you can answer, "yes" to each of these questions then your methods section should be complete.

1. Do your methods and objectives flow from the needs statement and goals/objectives?
2. Do your methods explain the specific activities to be undertaken?
3. Have you explained why you selected specific methods or activities?
4. Have you explained the timing and order of specific activities?
5. Is it clear who will perform the specific activities?
6. Given the projected resources (including staffing), are the proposed activities possible and realistic?

METHODS WORKSHEET

OBJECTIVE 1:

___

TASKS	RESOURCES REQUIRED	START AND END DATES

OBJECTIVE 2:

___

TASKS	RESOURCES REQUIRED	START AND END DATES

EVALUATION SECTION

The evaluation is an important component of the proposal because it enables the funder to determine how you will measure the progress in meeting the objectives stated in the proposal. For your own benefit, a sound evaluation clarifies objectives so they are measurable, demonstrating success to the funder and providing learning in the process. Evaluation will enable you to refine approaches to service delivery.

Organizations often conduct evaluations in order to do six things:

1. Find out whether the program did what was expected.
2. Determine if the methods specified were used and if the objectives were met.
3. Determine if an impact was made on the need identified.
4. Obtain feedback from the target population and others.
5. Maintain control over the project.
6. Make adjustments to strengthen what is working and address what is not during the program to help its success.

Your organization might already have an evaluation process in place for other programs. You can adapt these evaluation processes for your project. Funders often provide guidelines on the evaluation tool expected. Read the Request for Proposals (RFP) or application instructions to determine the nature of evaluation desired.

Typical evaluation topics include:

- Number of clients served
- Demographic profile of clients
- Length of client involvement
- Client satisfaction
- Materials created or distributed
- Client demand for service
- Changes in client behaviour, attitude, knowledge or condition
- Community or client perception of service
- Staff perception of service

Some typical sources for evaluation data include:

- Agency records
- Progress reports
- Agenda and meeting minutes
- Activity Schedules
- Visitor logs
- Questionnaires, interview notes and client survey forms
- Standardized tests
- Staff notes and documentation of observations
- Client intake/exit interviews

After you complete your evaluation section, you might want to ask yourself the following questions to determine if your section is complete. If you can answer, "Yes" to these questions, you should have a complete evaluation section.

1. Does the evaluation section focus on assessing the projected results?
2. Does your evaluation assess the efficiency of program methods?
3. Does the evaluation describe who will be evaluated and/or what will be measured?
4. Does your evaluation section state what information will be collected in the evaluation process?
5. Does the evaluation state who will be responsible for making the assessments?
6. Does the evaluation section discuss how the information and conclusions will be used to improve the program?

TIP

Ask a co-worker to read over the proposal sections and verify the checklists are complete. This will help to prevent missing information, sections or questions that might have been overlooked and spelling mistakes.

EVALUATION PLANNING WORKSHEET

1. What questions will your project evaluation try to answer?
2. What are your specific evaluation plans and what time frame do you have?
3. What kind of data will you collect as a part of the evaluation process?
4. How often will you be collecting data for the evaluation?
5. How will you collect the data? What are your methods for data collection?
6. Are you making comparisons in the data collection?
7. If you are using a participant survey, how will you decide who to survey?
8. Who is responsible for the evaluation of the program?
9. Who will receive the evaluation reports?

BUDGET INFORMATION

Government funding sources generally require considerable detail and provide instructions and budget forms that must be used. Foundations and corporations typically require less detail, but they still rely on the budget to help them evaluate the merit of the proposal. Be sure to follow a format or form for the proposal budget if the funder specifies one. Make sure you understand what the funder is and is not willing to fund. For example, some funders will not fund capital expenses. The best budgets 'translate' the methods section of the proposal into dollars.

A budget may include:

- ❖ Project or program budget – income and expenses associated with your proposed project.
- ❖ Agency budget – income and expenses for your whole organization. This might be necessary if you are seeking general operating funds.
- ❖ Budget detail and justification – line by line detail on your project budget.
- ❖ In-kind contributions – expected donations (good and/or services) that will be used on your proposed project. These are discussed in detail below.

If you are seeking funds from more than one agency, it is generally a good idea to let each funder know you are doing so. As well, some funders may feel more comfortable awarding you a grant if they know others have already recognized the merit of your project.

Line Item Budget

The most common budget format for expressing expenditures in health and social fields is a line item budget. In general, costs for a project are divided into two main budget categories: personnel costs and operating expenses. Personnel costs include the salaries and benefits of the staff required to complete the project. It may also include consultants and other professionals needed such as Elder advisors. Operating expenses include expenditures such as rent, printing, travel, telephone, honorariums, administration and supplies.

Example Budget

Staffing	
Coordinator	45,000.00
Benefits (16%)	7,200.00
Subtotal	52,200.00
Operations	
Travel	5,000.00
Meals/ Gatherings	4,800.00
Supplies	4,000.00
Equipment	8,000.00
Honorarium	5,000.00
Translator	5,000.00
Administration (10%)	8,400.00
Subtotal	31,800.00
Total	84,000.00

TIP

Make sure to read the grant carefully as some grants indicate the *maximum* amount you can devote to 'administration' while some grants do not allow for funds to be allocated to 'administration'. The general guideline is to include 10% of the overall project cost for your administration budget line item.

In Kind Contributions

It is common for funders to require the agency to cover a portion of the costs; typically referred to as an in-kind contribution. An in-kind contribution can be a financial contribution but is most often services provided by the organization (example a portion of the staff's time spent on the project where the pay is not included in the proposal budget, office space, computers, printing, etc).

NOTE: It is important to include in-kind contributions into your budget because it gives the funder an accurate picture of the overall project budget and it shows community support.

Example In-Kind Budget

	Funder	In kind
Staffing		
Coordinator	45,000.00	
Benefits (16%)	7,200.00	
Admin Support		3,000.00
Subtotal	52,200.00	3,000.00
Operations		
Travel	5,000.00	
Meals/ Gatherings	4,800.00	
Supplies	4,000.00	
Office Space		4,800.00
Phone		600.00
Equipment	8,000.00	
Honorarium	5,000.00	
Translator	5,000.00	
Administration (10%)	8,400.00	
Subtotal	31,800.00	5,400.00
Total	84,000.00	8,400.00
Total Budget	92,400.00	

In this example, Administrative Support was determined by the worker providing 10% (.5 days per week) of their time to the project at a yearly salary rate of $30,000. The office space for a one-year project was included as $400 per month and the phone calculated as $50 per month. These figures will vary by organization. Information such as this can be included in a budget justification page.

TIP

Check over the proposed budget to make sure it corresponds to the methods section. The budget should not raise any concerns with the funding agencies guidelines and eligible expenses.

Some questions you may want to ask after you have completed your budget section:

1. Is the budget consistent with the proposal's program and methods?
2. Is there a budget narrative that explains the items that may not be immediately clear?
3. Does the budget include in-kind contributions?
4. Does the budget address the question of how overhead costs will be recovered?
5. Can you accomplish the intended objectives with the proposed budget?

BUDGET WORKSHEET

	FUNDS REQUIRED	IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS	TOTAL BUDGET
Personnel Wages Benefits Consultant/Professional fees			
Honorariums			
Travel			
Supplies / Materials			
Office / Meeting rentals			
Accommodations			
Meals			
Administration			
TOTAL EXPENSES			

PUTTING THE PACKAGE TOGETHER

If you have worked through this manual and made sure you have each section of the grant proposal completed, congratulations you are almost finished and ready to submit your proposal. There are just a few more things you need to consider.

Cover letter

A good cover letter is important as it is the first piece of information about your proposal that will be read by the funding agency. You should try to limit your cover letter to one page and in it, you should discuss: a quick description of the organization making the request, support of the Board of Directors or Band Council, and the specific financial request being made.

TIP

Your cover letter is the first thing the grant reviewer will see. Ensure it is clearly written and contains all the relevant information to make a good first impression.

Appendices

Most funding bodies give a list of what they wish to receive in the appendices. If no list is given, it is a good idea to include: Organization's tax # (for charitable organizations), a list of board members, organization's overall budget, organization brochure, most current newsletter, latest annual report, organization's long range plan, and letters of support.

It is a good idea to keep a current copy of all supporting documents such as Audited Financial Statements, Certificates of Good Standing, organizational information in a proposal folder so that you do not have to continually find this information each time you draft a proposal.

TIP

The appendices should support your proposal, therefore, they should be referenced to when the information in the appendices are referred to throughout the proposal to direct the reviewers where to find this added information.

Following up with Funders

After the proposal is submitted, a phone call to the contact person will confirm that they received your proposal. During the call you can also find out when a funding decision will be made if this isn't already stated in the call for proposals.

Since you may have sent more than one proposal for the same project, each funder should be kept informed of changes in the status of other requests for funds.

Once a grant is received, the organization should acknowledge funding contributions through a formal announcement such as a press release, Annual General Assembly, or bulletin in your agency's newsletter, etc. (depending on the size of the grant and commitments you made to recognize the funder's contribution).

Proposal Development Checklist

- ☐ Determine which project ideas have the best chance of being funded.
- ☐ Form a planning team – this may include people affected by the project, community leaders (Elders, Band Councilors, youth etc.), key staff, volunteers and other collaborating organizations.
- ☐ Design a program plan.
- ☐ Find sources that might fund your project.
- ☐ Contact the funding source for more information if necessary.
- ☐ Read through the funder's materials to make sure you follow their directions.
- ☐ Prepare the proposal components – need statement, goals and objectives, methods, evaluation and budget
- ☐ Prepare the final proposal pieces – cover letter, summary and all required appendices.
- ☐ Ensure your proposal is clear and well-written by having at least one person not closely involved in the writing of the proposal review it and give feedback.
- ☐ Check the funder deadlines and the number of proposal copies to be submitted.
- ☐ Keep a copy of the proposal for your records.
- ☐ Phone the funder within two weeks after submitting the proposal.

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APPENDIX A

Common Weaknesses in Proposals

Common reasons proposals are not accepted by funders are:

1. Not clearly identifying and substantiating a significant issue.
2. A lack of clarity regarding how monies will be spent for project activities
3. Nature of the problem is unclear
4. Inappropriate method of addressing the problem
5. Inadequate documentation of the problem
6. No clear plan for evaluating the program
7. Objectives are not clearly measurable
8. Time schedule is unreasonable
9. Problem is more complex than can be addressed within the funding parameters
10. Agency has no experience in the proposal area
11. Community was not involved in the planning process

APPENDIX B

GENERAL WRITING TIPS

You may have a great idea for a project or program that meets a real need in your community, but in order for your idea to inspire the people who might fund your project, you must be able to convince them that your idea is indeed brilliant. Many people with great ideas do not get to see their ideas come to life because they do not have the skill and training to make a convincing enough argument that inspires others to think it is brilliant as well.

Key points to keep in mind:

1. Aim for clarity in your writing. Convoluted sentences and jargon are barriers to understanding.
2. Keep in mind that technical terms or abbreviations might be known to you but not necessarily to your reader/reviewer.
3. Try to use gender-neutral terms. The easiest way to do this is to use plural. The exception may be when your proposal is directed at one gender.
4. Avoid contractions.
5. Avoid slang and colloquialisms.
6. Avoid one-sentence paragraphs. Avoid paragraphs that jumble too many ideas together.

Active and Passive Voice

Sentences written in an **active** voice tend to be clearer, more direct and more concise as fewer words are needed to express action in active voice. Sentences written in **passive** voice can sometimes be awkward.

Examples:
Active: The coordinator will consult with community members.
Passive: Community members will be consulted by the coordinator.

Active sentences place the focus on who or what is making things happen. Passive sentences place the focus on who or what is affected by the event or action. Passive sentences contain a form of the verb *to be*: am, is, was, were, are, been, have, will be, have been, would be, will have been. The form of *to be* is generally followed by a **past tense verb** (watched, presented, consulted)

TIP

If you are using word processing programs there are tools that allow for checking of spelling and grammar. For example, you can set the program to alert you anytime you write in the passive voice.

Editing

- Go through your proposal more than once
- Edit a printed copy – you can sometimes miss errors if you only edit on your computer
- Read the proposal out loud – try to read *exactly* what is on the page, not what your mind assumes is there. Have someone else read the proposal aloud to you.
- If you are using a computer, use a spell checker– BUT be aware that it does not catch every mistake, especially if you put the wrong word in a sentence but it is spelled correctly (for example: two, to and too)

Editing Checklist

It is always a good idea to edit your work more than once and for a specific purpose each time you edit. You can often miss finding errors because as the author of the text, you know what you wanted to write and sometimes read what you think you have written and not what you actually wrote. Reading out loud will help you notice many errors.

1. Edit for Argument
    a. Are your main points or arguments clearly defined?
    b. Are your facts complete and correct?

2. Edit for Organization
    a. Does your introduction have suitable background information?
    b. Are your paragraphs well arranged and developed with topic sentences
    c. Is your conclusion effective?

3. Edit for Style
    a. Is the writing clear and concise?

4. Edit for Grammatical Correctness
    a. Run-on sentences and sentence fragments –
        i. Does each sentence have a subject, verb and a complete thought?
        ii. Have you put two sentences together incorrectly?
    b. Omissions –
        i. Have you left out any words?
    c. Punctuation –
        i. Does every sentence end with a period, etc.?
        ii. Have you made proper use of commas?
    d. Subject-verb agreement –
        i. Check every subject and verb to make sure that if you have used a singular subject, you have also used a singular verb and if you have used a plural subject you have used the plural form of the verb
    e. Sentence length –
        i. An average sentence is 22 words long. Do you have short, choppy sentences? Do you have run-on sentences that could be made into two or more sentences?
    f. Past, present and future tenses –
        i. Does each sentence have consistent use of tenses?
        ii. Have you used the correct form of the verb to express the tense you want?
    g. Capitalization –
        i. Have you capitalized names of persons, cities, countries, streets and titles?
    h. Spelling –
        i. Check any words you have doubts about.
        ii. If you are unsure about the spelling of a word – look it up. (www.dictionary.com)
        iii. Have you removed contractions (eg. From "don't" to "do not")

Common Word Usage and Punctuation Problems

- "Alot" is not a word. A lot of people think that it is.
- Do not confuse colons (:) and semi-colons (;). Colons indicate a list will follow whereas semicolons are used to join two independent clauses together.
- Avoid run-on sentences – when two complete sentences are joined inappropriately.
- Do not confuse "i.e." and "e.g." The former means "in other words" and the latter means "for example"
- Do not confuse "affect" and "effect". Affect means to cause an effect in something. The effect is produced by a cause. E.g., "This project will affect a number of homeless people." "The effect of this program will be to empower youth to make healthier lifestyle choices."
- Do not confuse "it's" with "its". "It's" is the contraction of *it is*. "Its" is the possessive of *it*. The best way to avoid this confusion is to never use contractions.

While some of the editing tips may seem overly concerned with details, the style and presentation of your proposal will make an impression on the proposal reviewer. If your proposal is well written, the impression you will leave with the reviewer is that you and your organization are well organized with a capable staff.

APPENDIX C

THROUGH THE EYES OF THE FUNDER

If you were reviewing your proposal, could you check each of the following considerations:

Credibility Component

_____ Establishes credibility of the organization/agency as a good investment
_____ Indicates who the contact person is and their role in the project
_____ Establishes qualifications of the organization and staff in areas of activities for which funds are requested.

Need Component

_____ States a problem with a reasonable dimension
_____ Supports a client need with relevant data
_____ Establishes the project/program's current need for funds

Objectives Component

_____ Describes measurable outcomes to be achieved
_____ Appears possible considering the agency resources
_____ Is achievable within the time frame of the grant

Methods Component

_____ Describes how objectives will be achieved
_____ Includes staffing, timelines, and client selection
_____ Appears cost-effective

Evaluation Component

_____ Tells process for evaluating accomplishment of objectives
_____ Tells process for evaluating and modifying methods
_____ Tells who will be doing the evaluation
_____ Tells how data will be gathered, analyzed, and reported

Budget Component

_____ Is complete and accurate
_____ Seems sufficient to cover cost of methods and achieve objectives
_____ Indicates how funds will be used
_____ Provides information on other sources of income
_____ Will be balanced with addition of this grant

APPENDIX D

EXTRA WORKSHEETS

PROPOSAL IDEA WORKSHEET

1. What new projects (or enhancements to current programs) are you planning for the next two to three years?

Project I:

Project II:

Project III:

Project IV:

2. Which of the above projects are compatible with the mission and vision of your organization?

NOTE: You will need to find considerable justification to apply for funding for projects that fall outside of your organization's mission and vision.

	Project	Compatible with mission (Y/N)
I		
II		
III		
IV		

3. Are any of these projects currently being done by another organization? Are there possibilities to partner with another organization?

NOTE: Many funders like to see partnerships and collaborations.

Project	Duplication? (Y/N)	Possible Collaboration (Y/N) If yes, with whom?
I		
II		
III		
IV		

4. Do your ideas meet the needs of your community?

Project	Need addressed
I	
II	
III	
IV	

5. Can you document this need? What data do you have or can you collect to prove that there is a need (e.g. Community Needs Assessment, Aboriginal Peoples Health Survey, Government Statistics)?

6. Does your idea have a well-defined target population?

7. Does your organization have the capacity to implement each project? For example, can the work be done with current staff or will new staff be required?

8. Is this a service or program that your community members or target population will want and use? How do you know?

9. Does your idea enhance or support the future development of your agency?

10. Where can you get support for your project? (E.g. Chief and Council, community, Board of Directors, etc.)

Project	Possible Supporters
I	
II	
III	
IV	

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION WORKSHEET

NAME What is the name of your organization	
LOCATION Where are you located	
LEGAL STATUS Non-profit organization? Charitable status?	
START DATE Date the organization began operations	
MISSION Organization's mission statement	
TARGET POPULATION What groups of people do your programs serve?	
PROGRAMS What programs do you offer?	
MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS List of major accomplishments and/or accomplishments related to this proposal.	
PERSONNEL Who makes up the organization? (Board of Directors, #s of employees, volunteers)	
LINK TO NEED STATEMENT Include a statement or two about the need the proposed project will meet.	

STATEMENT OF NEED WORKSHEET

WHO Who is your target population? Who are the people in need of the program or service you want to offer?	
WHAT What exactly are the issues facing of the target population?	
WHERE Where are the people with the need? (e.g. on reserve, off reserve?)	
WHEN When is this need evident?	
WHY Why does this need occur?	
EVIDENCE What data and information do you have to support your claim?	
SO WHAT? What are the consequences of addressing and not addressing this need? How is your organization best suited to address this need?	

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES WORKSHEET

Use a separate sheet for each goal of your proposed project. Try to limit the number of objectives for each goal to make sure your goal is manageable.

GOAL:____

Objectives	1	2	3
Key issues you are seeking to change			
Target Population			
Direction of Change (E.g. to reduce, to increase, to decrease, to expand)			
Time Frame			

METHODS WORKSHEET

OBJECTIVE 1:

TASKS	RESOURCES REQUIRED	START AND END DATES

OBJECTIVE 2:

TASKS	RESOURCES REQUIRED	START AND END DATES

EVALUATION PLANNING WORKSHEET

1. What questions will your project evaluation try to answer?
2. What are your specific evaluation plans and what time frame do you have?
3. What kind of data will you collect as a part of the evaluation process?
4. How often will you be collecting data for the evaluation?
5. How will you collect the data? What are your methods for data collection?
6. Are you making comparisons in the data collection?
7. If you are using a participant survey, how will you decide who to survey?
8. Who is responsible for the evaluation of the program?
9. Who will receive the evaluation reports?

BUDGET WORKSHEET

	FUNDS REQUIRED	IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS	TOTAL BUDGET
Personnel			
Wages			
Benefits			
Consultant/Professional fees			
Honorariums			
Travel			
Supplies / Materials			
Office / Meeting rentals			
Accommodations			
Meals			
Administration			
TOTAL EXPENSES			

Proposal Development Checklist

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