

Grant Application 101

Concept to Submission

December 17, 2015

Florida Grants Consortium Workgroup



Objectives

- Provide an overview of the grant application development and submission process
- Promote best practices for grant applications
- Increase the knowledge base of today's audience



Agenda

- Overview
- Deciding to apply
- Application preparation & planning
- Developing the application packet



Agenda

- Submitting an application
- Commits from panel members
 - At the end of each section
- Open Forum – Q&A & Discussion
 - At the end of each section



Overview

- Goal of the application process
 - Develop a proposal that:
 - Serves a public purpose
 - Addresses agency needs
 - Is compatible with the agency's mission, goals, & objectives
 - Is selected for funding by the grantor



Deciding To Apply

- Solicitation/RFP review
 - Eligibility requirements
 - Grantor's goals, objectives, & purpose
 - Purpose area (what problem, issue, deficiency is expected to be addressed by the award)
 - Service population/area
 - Expected outcomes
 - Grantor's success measures



Deciding To Apply

- Priority considerations
 - Typically spelled out in grant solicitation
 - Linked to the grantor's purpose
- Amount and length of the potential award
- Allowable usage of awarded funding



Deciding To Apply

- Project cost sharing (match funding)
 - Cash match
 - In-kind match



Deciding To Apply

- Internal assessment
 - Is the opportunity purpose consistent and compatible with needs (how & why)?
 - Because we need more money is generally not a good answer
 - Are the grant priorities and outcomes aligned with the strategic direction and mission of the agency?



Deciding To Apply

- Internal assessment
 - Purpose area expertise
 - Is there expertise within the organization to plan, implement, and manage a funded project?
 - Resource requirements and availability
 - What resources are available compared to needed?
 - What resources can be grant funded?
 - What are the budget implications for using grant funds for additional positions, for example?



Deciding To Apply

- Management Approval
 - A grant award becomes a contractual relationship when accepted
 - Award acceptance requires signature by a person authorized to contractually obligate the agency



Deciding To Apply

- Executive Office of the Governor (EOG) Approval
 - Applications for federal funding require approval from the EOG **prior** to submission
- Federal Grants Tracking System (FGTS)
 - Is the vehicle for requesting EOG approval for a grant application submission



Federal Grants Tracking System (FGTS)

- Setup with a threefold purpose
 - To create and maintain an inventory of all programs partially or fully funded with federal sources
 - To document and implement an internal process whereby information on all federal funding (received or denied) can be collected, assimilated, and evaluated as needed.



Federal Grants Tracking System (FGTS)

- As the portal for agencies to provide notification to the EOG of their interest in applying for federal funding & initiate EOG review and approval



Federal Grants Tracking System (FGTS)

- Agencies received EOG notification about the FGTS in a memo dated November 10, 2015
 - New grant applications should be given priority and entered in FGTS as soon as possible
 - Agencies are expected to enter information on existing grants by the end of January 2016



Federal Grants Tracking System (FGTS)

- FGTS input requires some basic information
 - Term
 - Value
 - Budget Authority
 - Identifying information



Federal Grants Tracking System (FGTS)

- Grant description
 - Brief description of program and/or federal award
 - Specific program/project to be funded
 - Service/client population
 - Numbers
 - Type/description
 - Linkage to Governor's priorities



Federal Grants Tracking System (FGTS)

- Impact of non-approval or cessation
 - What happens if the EOG denies the application request or funding ceases?
 - Program impacts
 - Mitigation options
 - Notification requirements
 - Any other relevant comments



Deciding to Apply & FGTS

Panelist Comments

Workgroup Questions – Answers - Discussion



Application Preparation & Planning

Preparation

- Determine who will be doing the submission
- Download and thoroughly review the application
- Review submission instructions
 - Look for things such as
 - Page count limitations
 - Specified fonts and margins
 - Page numbering
 - File naming instructions
 - The goal here is for there to be no surprises or “Oh –Nos” on the day of the submission!



Application Preparation & Planning Preparation

- Download required forms
 - Ensure required information is available and correct
 - Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)
 - # unique to each agency/organization
 - System for Awards Management (SAM) registration
 - Authorization to submit and password
 - For whomever is doing the electronic submission



Application Preparation & Planning Preparation

- Assurances & Certifications
 - Standard Assurances
 - » A laundry list of statutes, executive orders, policies, procedures, that federal grant recipients must agree to comply with
 - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
 - Accounting system and financial capability questionnaire
 - Indirect Cost Agreement



Application Preparation & Planning

Proposal Development

- Determine who will lead the development of the project proposal
- Pre-Development Meeting with Stakeholders
 - Best Practice: Inclusion of all stakeholders who will be impacted by or obligated to the project
 - Get all the questions – issues – concerns on the table
 - Get consensus on the scope and direction of the project



Application Preparation & Planning Proposal Development

- Define the proposal development team
 - Grant writer(s)
 - Programmatic expertise
 - Budget expertise



Application Preparation & Planning

Proposal Development

- Grant Writer or Writers?
 - Caution: Writing by committee can be problematic
 - » Differences in writing style can create flow issues when trying to combine information written by multiple writers
 - If compelled to use multiple writers
 - » Assign a lead writer to blend writing styles
 - » Assign individual writers to specific sections



Application Preparation & Planning

Proposal Development

- Delegate tasks and assignments
 - Research
 - Literature review
 - Budget draft
 - Proposal review
- Completion timeline
 - » Consistent with submission due date
 - » Cognizant of internal agency review and approval process



Application Preparation & Planning

Proposal Development

- Prepare an application packet checklist
 - Comprised of everything required for the submission
 - Invaluable for monitoring and managing the application process



Application Preparation & Planning

Panelist Comments

Workgroup Questions – Answers - Discussion



Proposal Objectives

- When completed the proposal packet should answer all of the following questions
 - Who is your agency and why are you exceptional?
 - » Answered in:
 - Introduction
 - Staff qualifications and agency expertise
 - What is the measurable problem or need being addressed?
 - » Answered in:
 - Problem/Needs Statement



Proposal Objectives

- What measurable impact will there be on the problem or need?
 - » Answered in:
 - Goals & objectives
 - Outcomes
- How will the impact on the problem be accomplished?
 - » Answered in:
 - Methods and design



Proposal Objectives

- How will methods and impact be evaluated?
 - » Answered in:
 - Project evaluation
- How will grant funding be spent?
 - » Answered in:
 - Budget



Proposal Packet

Project Abstract or Summary

- Executive level summary of the proposal
 - Written last - read first
 - » First and best chance to make a good impression
 - An “overview” of the key elements of the proposal
 - Generally 1 page, not more than 2 pages



Proposal Packet Project Narrative

- Introduction
 - Who is your agency?
 - How long has it been in existence?
 - What public purpose does it serve?
 - Make a connection between agency and grantor
 - » How is the agency a fit for the funding
 - » Prior accomplishments
 - Best Practice:
 - » Introduction should lead logically to the problem statement



Proposal Packet

Project Narrative

- Problem statement / Needs assessment
 - What is the problem or need being addressed?
 - » Why is it a problem or need?
 - » Where is it a problem?
 - In a population?
 - In a geographic area?
 - » Who will benefit and how will they benefit?
 - » Social and economic costs to be affected
 - » How severe is the problem?
 - Present as much concrete evidence of the problem's or need's magnitude as possible
 - Ensure support data is current, relevant, and defensible



Proposal Packet

Project Narrative

- » How was it determined there is a problem or need?
- » What current gaps exist between the problem/need and how it is being addressed?
- » How will the project close the gap?
- Best Practice:
 - Avoid defining the problem/need as a lack of money, program, or facility
 - » Money buys methods to achieve solutions
 - » Programs & facilities are possible solutions



Proposal Packet

Project Narrative

- Goals, objectives, and outcome expectations
 - Linked to the grantor's goals, objectives, outcome expectations, and priority considerations
 - Describes the intended impact on the stated problem or need area
 - Goals are the broad statements of achievement
 - » Reduce recidivism
 - » Improve education levels
 - Objectives are specific & measureable outcomes
 - » Reduce recidivism from 30% to 25%
 - » Improve test scores by 10% from current baseline



Proposal Packet Project Narrative

– SMART

» Specific

- Clearly defined benefit

» Measureable

- Can and how will progress be measured



Proposal Packet Project Narrative

- » Achievable
 - Is there a reasonable expectation of success?
- » Realistic
 - Where did the figure come from?
 - Based on sound reasoning or is it “pie in the sky” but sounds good?
- » Time based
 - Is it doable in the time frame



Proposal Packet

Project Narrative

- Project methods and design
 - How is the project expected to work and solve the stated problem or address the needs
 - How does it address the grantor's priority considerations?
 - Is linked to project objectives
 - » Plan of action for achieving each objectives
 - What is going to be done
 - How it is going to be done
 - Where it is going to be done
 - Who is going to do it



Proposal Packet Project Narrative

- What other resources will be utilized to do it?
 - Assessments
 - Learning activities
 - Equipment
 - Facilities



Proposal Packet Project Narrative

- Why is this the method of choice
 - » Are there other methods?
 - Were they considered?
 - What lead to the conclusion that the selected methods is the right methods?
- Is the project innovative or does it contain innovative elements?
- What are the critical timelines?



Proposal Packet

Project Narrative

- Agency expertise and staff qualifications
 - Build the case that the agency has the capacity and capability to successfully implement and manage the proposed project
 - » Note prior success stories
 - Demonstrate the qualifications of key staff
 - » Education
 - » Accomplishments
 - External collaborations and expertise



Proposal Packet

Project Narrative

- Project Evaluation
 - Directly linked to the projects objectives
 - » Note: if deciding what to measure is problematic, the objectives should be revisited
 - Can serve two purposes
 - » Measurement of effectiveness
 - » Guide project adjustments and improvement



Proposal Packet

Project Narrative

- How will the program’s achievements and success be measured?
 - » Evaluation design
 - Change in relation to an established baseline?
 - Comparison to a like group that do not receive project benefits?
 - Individualized pre and post program assessments
 - » Evaluation techniques
 - » Evaluation time period



Proposal Packet Project Narrative

- Who will do the evaluation?
 - » Internal staff
 - Be cognizant of the perception of bias
 - » External
 - Becoming common for federal grantors to require external evaluation
 - NOTE: Consult with your Procurement Office and exercise care regarding external evaluations to prevent running afoul of Florida's procurement laws and rules



Proposal Packet Project Narrative

- Sustainability
 - What happens when the grant funding ends?
 - » Does the program end?
 - » What is the funding mechanism for continuation?
 - » Note: remember discussion of sustainability is a requirement for EOG approval



Proposal Packet

Budget & Budget Narrative

- Cost are allowable
 - Per OMB circular & guidance
 - Per the specific grant
- Consistent with the project/program methods
- Realistic
 - Estimate as accurately as possible
 - Don't overstate or understate
- Justifiable



Proposal Packet

Budget & Budget Narrative

- Categorized
 - Application instructions will generally provide categories
 - » Personnel Costs
 - » Operating Costs
 - » Contracted Services / Consultants
 - » Facilities & Equipment
 - » Indirect Costs



Proposal Packet

Budget & Budget Narrative

- Cost calculations
 - Demonstrate how costs were determined
 - Consistent with the project design
- Cost Sharing (Match Funding)
 - Show by category/item
 - Calculate as with grant funding
 - Allowable costs the same as for grant funds



Proposal Packet

Budget & Budget Narrative

- Budget narrative
 - Describes the need and use for each category/item
 - » Links costs to the project's design and methods
 - Identifies the source of match funding



Proposal Packet

Project Timeline

- Timeline
 - Identifies key project milestones and target dates
 - » Consistent with the project design and methods
 - » Logical
 - » Sequential
 - » Realistic
 - Serves two purposes
 - » Demonstrates pre-planning to the grantor
 - » Serves as an implementation and operational plan post-award



Proposal Packet

Other

- Letters of support
- Indirect cost agreement
- Position descriptions
- Org charts
- Any other information that supports the application



Proposal Packet

Certificates and Assurances

- All grantor required certificates and assurances
 - Ensure signature by a person authorized to contractually bind the agency
 - » If signed by delegate – letter of delegation must be attached



Proposal Packet Final Review

- A last review by the application team
 - Ensure application instructions have been followed
 - Ensure required elements have been addressed
 - Re-read
 - » Content
 - » Flow
 - » Grammar
 - » Spell check



Proposal Packet Final Review

- Route for internal agency management approval



Proposal Packet Submission

- Submit packet following grantor application submission instructions

**Eagerly Anticipate Notification of
Award!**



Proposal Packet & Any Other

Panelist Comments

Workgroup Questions – Answers - Discussion



Workshop Panelists

Martha Asbury
Assistant Deputy Commissioner
Finance and Operations
Florida Department of Education
850-245-0420
Martha.Asbury@fldoe.org

Juliet Westmoreland
Federal Grants Coordinator
Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
850-717-2440
Juliet.Westmoreland@djj.state.fl.us

Glenn Elmer
Financial Administrator
Florida Department of Financial Services
850-413-5683
Glenn.Elmer@myfloridacfo.com

Ronnie McLane
Grants Coordinator
Florida Department of Corrections
850-717-3458
McLane.Ronald@mail.dc.state.fl.us

