

## **Tips for Developing a Responsive Grant Proposal**

**Introduction:** The Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton believes that a successful grant proposal presents a clear, integrated plan to define service and remedy a significant problem or need in the Stark County community. The successful proposal will identify and document the problem or need in the community, specify the size and characteristics of the group targeted for program services, discusses the theory that connects the proposed program intervention to the problem, detail the plan for implementing program services, identify the program outcomes expected to result from the program, and discuss the plan for evaluation.

**The overall elements of developing a Responsive Grant program plan are summarized in the, “Logic Model Diagram of Proposal Requirements”.** This logic model diagram illustrates the steps that can be used in developing the responsive grant proposal. The diagram also identifies the issues that need to be considered within each step and illustrates the process with the hypothetical example of an extended after-school learning program.

**Problem Statement:** Specifically describe the problem or need the program will address.

- Are you defining this problem in terms of your client’s needs or the needs of your organization? How do you know this is a problem today in Stark County? You must provide documentation in the proposal. Your documentation should specifically identify the character and extent of the problem in Stark County.
- Be sure to also discuss what other organizations or programs are presently doing to address the problem in Stark County. If other programs are dealing with the problem, justify why there is a need for your program.

Your documentation can consist of primary and/or secondary information.

- Primary documentation is information you collect yourself because it doesn’t readily exist, such as a survey of clients to document the need for a particular service.
- Secondary data is information already collected and available through a variety of sources such as the United Way, the County Health Department or the State of Ohio. Using this type of data is more practical and cost effective. The example of an after-school learning program in the logic model diagram uses secondary data, available from the Ohio Department of Education, to document the problem.

**Specify Target Population:** The “targets” or clients of your proposed program must be

clearly identified.

- Specify the number in the target group and the demographic characteristics of the clients that will actually receive your program services. Document how they are related to the problem statement and why these people need your program.
- Explain specifically how they will be recruited into the program, and also explain how you plan to keep them coming back for program services.
- If cooperation with another organization is necessary to gain access to clients, describe exactly how that relationship will work. (The after-school learning program example in the logic model diagram involves securing agreements with three participating public schools). You must identify and include letters of agreement from all organizations with which there will be a direct relationship.

**Proposed Program Approach/Theory:** Specifically describe how the program you propose will affect the problem you wish to remedy.

- Are you proposing a new program or something “tried and true” that has already been used successfully elsewhere? The proposed program must be based upon a theory, best practices or a research-based expectation about the effects program services will have on clients. The United Way and other funding organizations have recently referred to this as a “logic model” approach to program planning.
- In this section of the Proposal you should describe and defend the logical connection between your proposed program activities and the changes you wish to bring about. (It may be helpful to diagram or draw the connections between services and client outcomes and ask yourself if the links appear logical and supported by research and best practices).
- The logic model diagram available in the forms section of this website, illustrates the logic model for the hypothetical after-school program. The program planning logic suggests a direct immediate connection between tutoring and improved math skills as measured by math grades and proficiency test scores. Longer term, the program expects the tutored youth to do better in high school and to have an increased potential for success in college.

**Proposed Program Implementation Plan:** Describe in detail how you plan to implement or carry out your program.

- Your program plan must also include a plan to document service activities by maintaining good program records. **The Implementation Plan - provides a worksheet for identifying and measuring your service activities during program implementation.** The Implementation Plan must be completed as part of the Responsive Grant proposal. It will help you develop a plan to monitor services

and keep them on course as planned.

- You should describe all of the major activities that your proposed intervention will require. It is best to develop this sequentially or in time-order. Specifically, provide a brief description of your objective(s), what your program will do (key activities), when (timeline), how you will evaluate/show progress of achieving the objective(s), and whom is responsible for conducting the activities.

The Foundation values an approach to planning that monitors program implementation and utilizes the information collected for continuous program improvement. We recognize that solving social problems is not yet a perfect science. **You should be realistic and develop a program plan that fits your organization's capacity and resources.**

For example, the logic model diagram illustrates the process for the hypothetical after-school program. The Canton Community Center will be the site for tutoring sessions three times weekly for twelve weeks. Sessions will begin at 3:30 and last for two hours. Arrangements have been made for access to this site. Seven retired math teachers have been recruited as volunteers for the program and a schedule developed to assign them to the tutoring sessions. The Canton Public Schools has provided a van to transport the children after school to and from the site. Snacks are available both for nutritional purposes and to interest the youth in returning for future tutoring sessions. All of the relevant agreements with the Canton Schools and the Canton Community Center have been arranged in advance.

**Program Outcome Evaluation Plan:** In this section you specifically identify, "What should happen to the target population because of the program". Outcomes are generally changes in the knowledge, attitudes, status, skills, values or behavior of program targets. They must be clearly specified in your **Outcome Evaluation Plan** which must accompany your proposal. The Foundation strongly believes that planning and evaluation are interrelated aspects of organizational mission. Evaluation should be perceived as an on-going learning experience for the grantee organization as well as for the Foundation. Evaluation results are intended for feed back into the planning process at every phase of a program, to be assessed and reflected in changes in programmatic goals and objectives.

You need to describe how you will measure both the service delivery of your program plan as well as the outcome objective(s) outlined in your Outcome Evaluation Plan.

- What information will you need to collect?
- Determine what your organizational capacity is for this and then formulate a measurement and data collection plan. Who will collect what data, from whom, where and how often?

- How will you analyze or “examine” the data to reach a judgment?
- Do you need to include funds in this proposal to support your evaluation research activities?
- Objectives for program outcomes can be immediate, or short-term, or intermediate, or longer-term in nature.
  - Short-term outcome are the **first important changes we expect to observe in program clients** (either in knowledge, attitudes, values, skills or behaviors) because of the program. If achieved, these in turn will lead to other desirable intermediate outcomes. Most programs funded by the Foundation are of limited duration and can expect to achieve only short-run objectives. Program funded for multiple years, however, can aspire to achieve intermediate-term objectives.
  - **For this proposal every applicant organization must specify at least one clearly written short-term outcome.** Larger funding requests to the Foundation involving multiple years of service delivery should also specify intermediate and/or longer-term outcomes.
  - Outcome objectives should be stated emphatically and generally should:
    - contain strong verbs;
    - indicate a specific time frame for achievement;
    - clearly identify the target population;
    - specifically identify what is expected to change and possibly how much;
    - be limited to a single objective per statement
    - document how the outcomes will be measured (surveys, interviews)
    - specify how the results will be used for evaluation purposes; and
    - be realistic given your organization’s capacity and the timeline of the grant

**Project Budget and Budget Narrative:** A clearly defined budget is an essential element of any proposal. Potential revenues should also be described. The budget itself should include a detailed listing of all potential sources of revenue, all possible expenses related to the project, any dollars requested from other funding sources related to this project and the status of those requests. The budget narrative should include each line item and explain how each of these costs and expenses were determined.

- The budget and budget narrative provided in the proposal package have been designed to assist applicants in the development of their budget listing of revenues and expenses and the budget narrative. If a particular item is not applicable to your budget mark the item N/A.