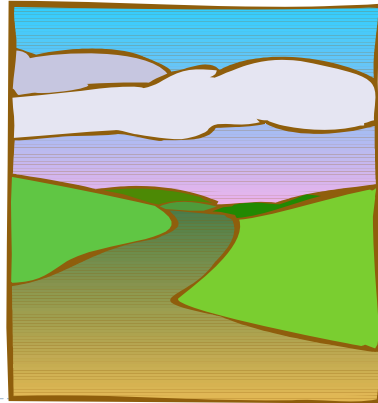


In this presentation, we will introduce much of the course material, including the basic components of a an effective federal grant proposal as well as the larger surrounding context. You will also be introduced to essential tips for organizing and starting the grant-writing process at your organization.

Many people have a tremendous feeling of anxiety when first approached to write a Federal RFP. This course offers effective building blocks and a wide array of resources that will greatly enhance your ability to successfully navigate a Federal Grant RFP and will reinforce a great sense of accomplishment.

First steps...

- ▶ Consider the context
- ▶ Lay out specific outline of proposal components
- ▶ Develop proposal concept
- ▶ Get organized



Upon completion of this module, students will be able to:

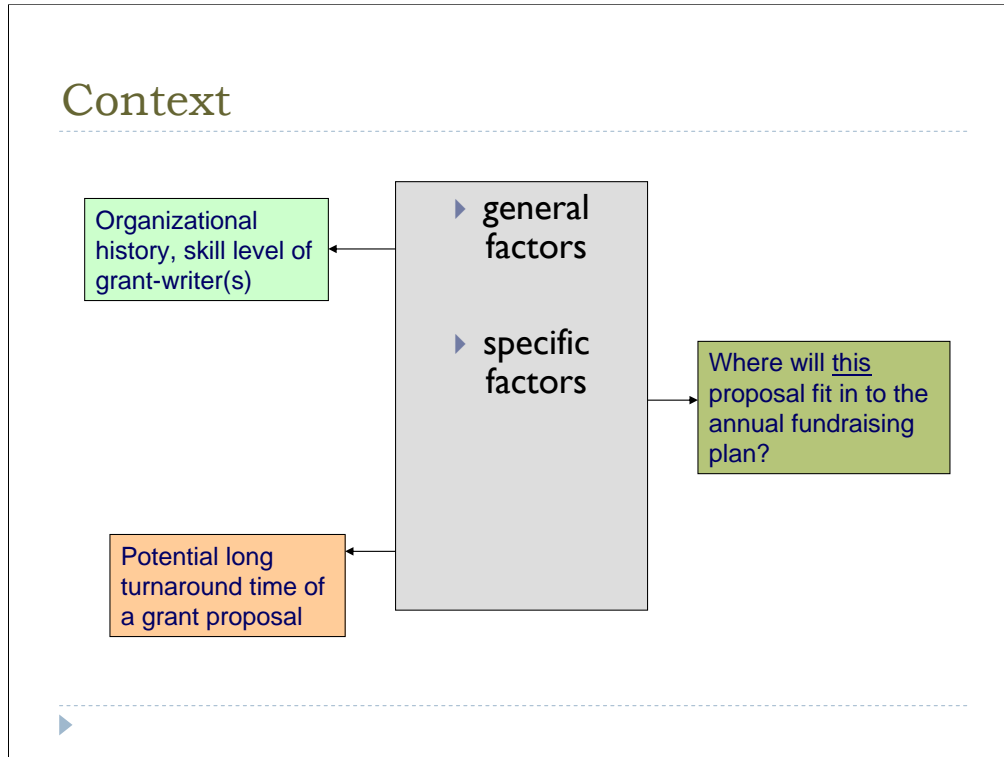
Understand the multi-faceted context in which a grant proposal is generated and reviewed

Develop an appropriate outline for a grant proposal when given specific guidelines for a Request For Proposals (RFP),

Apply best practices in preparing for and starting a grant proposal; and

Craft a proposal concept that fits both your organizational/institutional mission and the RFP specifications

Context



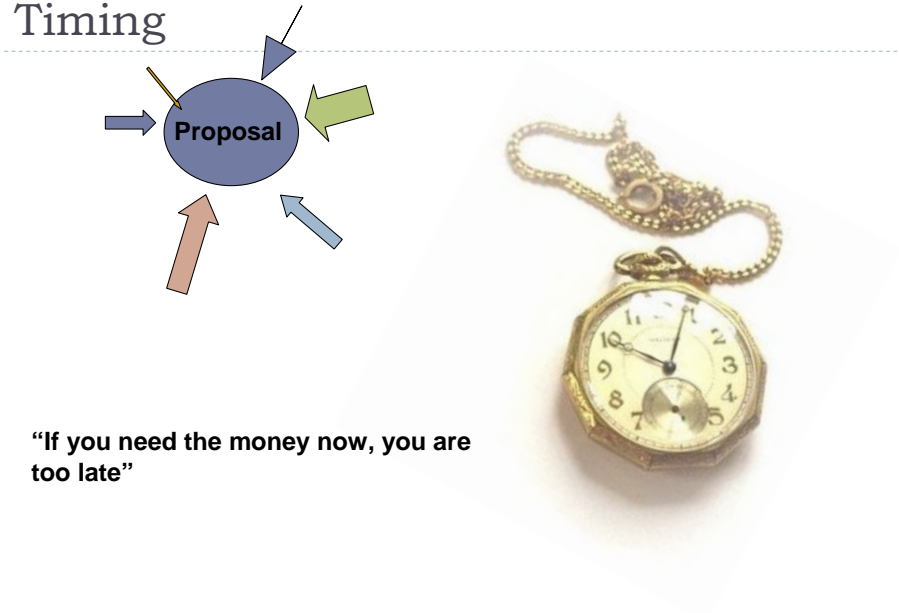
We will start by looking at the wider context, or atmosphere, that your organization and the federal agency exists in. Knowing the strengths and limitations of your organization is a great asset. Your organization's history, size, complexity and financial health play a pivotal roll in identifying a grant that meets your agency's programming needs. Knowing your staff's grant writing skill level is just as important as the viability of existing collaborations in determining a successful funding outcome.

You can work to understand these dynamics by spending time talking with other organizations and agencies themselves.

Parallel to the process of communicating with agencies and building partnerships, there is another process internal to the organization, the annual fundraising plan. Every proposal should fit into a larger fund development plan.

Timing is another factor that shapes the context of a proposal. For example, the turnaround time on a grant proposal can be as much as one year and this should be taken into account.

Timing



“If you need the money now, you are too late”

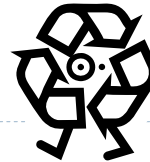
▶

More planning time usually means a better written well thought out program implementation strategy. The strategic significance of proper attention to timing in grant writing is expressed in the adage, *‘If you need the money now, you are too late.’* You should plan your grant-writing calendar well in advance, and tie it to cash flow projections with a solid backup plan. In today’s economy more than ever, even the best-written proposals are frequently turned down. Expansion of or development of new programming should always include multiple funding streams.

Proposal components- Follow the RFP Guidelines!



Use material from
old proposals with
caution



Next, in terms of content, the first thing to note is that every grantor has different guidelines, priorities, deadlines, and related expectations. While templates are helpful, they are no substitute for a careful review of and response to every grantor's unique RFP. It is absolutely essential that you follow funder guidelines and instructions exactly. A grantor may get hundreds of responses to a particular RFP. If you don't follow their guidelines explicitly, you will likely be disqualified before you ever get started. For example, all RFP's have "key words" that are mentioned repeatedly through out the application-
Tip: Be sure to use these exact words in your application!

Mastering the basic components of a grant proposal will serve you well in the long run, regardless of the type of funder or proposal. What counts is how you build the sections of a grant proposal into a cohesive document that makes the case for your funding request.

Common Components of RFPs

- Needs Assessment
- Goals and Objectives
- Timeline/
- Logic Model
- Evaluation
- Future Funding
- Supplementary Materials
- Budget



Some common components of RFPs include:

Needs Assessment or Statement

Goals and Objectives

Timeline

Logic Model

Evaluation

Future Funding (Plan for Sustainability)

Budget/Budget Narrative

Supplementary Materials (e.g. list of board of directors, documentation of nonprofit status, list of other funders including dollar amounts, previous year's audit, etc.)

Not all RFP's are the same. Some will have all the components listed above, some will have variations.

Develop the program concept



=conceptual
cohesion between
your program and
Federal RFP

Brainstorm



If you aren't sure where to begin, a pre-proposal brainstorming session with others (i.e. colleagues in your own organization, board members, or partner organizations) could help clarify your thinking. The most important starting point is one we often take for granted: the way in which the Grant RFP concept fits or matches your organization's mission. Does your program need fit with the goals and objectives of the Federal RFP? Are they COHESIVE.

For example:

Is the concept sufficiently clear and compelling to generate interest on the part of the funder?

Is your organization fully capable of launching and operating the proposed project or program? If not, what would you need to put in place? Are there existing relationships with collaborative partners?

Does the RFP offer enough funds to support your program implementation?

Is program sustainability feasible after the grant funds are gone or if the grant is not funded?

Getting Organized



- Use a planning team
- Write the core sections first
- Keep track of good ideas throughout
- Secure the data before writing
- Re-read the RFP several times over



In order to get organized, we suggest the following:

Use a Planning Team

"Whenever possible, organizations should use a team approach to plan new projects, involving staff, clients and volunteers. The planning team develops a project plan first and then uses it when writing the components of the proposal..."

Write the Core Sections First

"When preparing a proposal, outline the sections requested in RFP first (need statement, objectives, methods, evaluation, program sustainability, and budget) because these are the core of the proposal. They [then] write the organization background section and finish with the summary."

Plan to Keep Track of Good Ideas Throughout the Writing Process

Secure the data you need before you start writing.

As mentioned before, copy and paste material from past proposals with care.

If there are documents you will need from someone else in the organization to complete the proposal, contact that person early in the process. The more "eyes" that are viewing the RFP as it is being developed and written, the more opportunity for clarity and vision. Whatever approaches you use make them fit your comfort zone. However, always have several individuals read through the finished proposal to look for consistency and confirm you have addressed everything requested in the RFP. Saving all you past proposals and past drafts builds a data base of concepts, budgets and agency vision that can be used over again in future proposals.

Register with Grants.gov asap

- Required to apply
- <http://illinoisresource.net>



You are ready to begin the grant development process, but to apply for federal grants, registration with Grants.gov is required. You can learn more about this process at: <http://illinoisresource.net> in the Training and Resource section of the site.