

Grant Writing Project from Dr. Gerlad Merwin's "Grant Writing and Administration" course at Valdosta State University:

Project Overview

This is a project oriented course. The best way to learn about "Grant Writing and Administration" is to do it! So, it is important to start at the very beginning of the term thinking about what type of project you might do. Some students already work for an organization that might have some need for a grant and perhaps even know of funding sources. Others will have to identify an organization, ask the leadership of the organization if the student might be able to help them with a grant project, and then get information from the organization to do the project. There is generally a lot of networking in doing this type of project. Therefore, while we will not all have an immediate idea about the project, we can work to quickly find some possible projects and choose one. Whichever way you do it (in other words, you already have a project in mind, vs. you haven't the faintest idea), remember that the project should generally be designed to meet some needs of the organization or the needs of some client or constituent population served by the organization. So, you will need to learn enough about the organization to either determine their needs early through interviews or work with the organization members to identify some needs that can be met with funding from an outside source.

Concept Statement When you have identified an organization and have some idea of the type of project you might do, then you will write a brief description of the project and send it to the professor. These will often be vague, because the student might not yet know enough about the organization or the project to say definitively what the project will be or to name the funding source. This initial description will be the "Concept Statement" and will be the best way to get you going toward the eventual project. It is possible and even likely that the project will change or evolve as the term progresses and the student learns more about the circumstances. That is OK! (*See more detail below about each step of the project.)

Detailed Project Description (also known as the Proposed Agreement) As you learn more about the organization and their needs, you will hopefully have a clearer idea of the project and how it will best be described. If you are doing this as a volunteer for an organization you might not know very well, there might be limited information available to you. In these cases, through consultation with the professor, you might have to come up with some descriptions of project details or budget information without the "real data" or accurate information. I want to emphasize that this will be done **only** with the involvement of the professor. It will be for purposes of the project as an exercise and not something you would actually submit to any funding source. Hopefully these situations will be exceptions and will be rare.

Final Project - Grant Application or Proposal for Funding - Completion of the Case Study Project When you have all the information and have completed the forms (if required) or written the application letter to explain the project, drafted a budget, compiled resumes for the project staff, and provided all the information required or requested by the funding source, you will submit this to the professor. This document (or these documents as needed) should be as close as possible to the material you would actually submit if you were going after the grant or funding.

Project Presentation In many cases you will be required to make a presentation to a grant review committee, a foundation board of directors, or some other group that will determine whether or not you receive the funding. For our class purposes, you will develop the presentation and present all relevant information to the class. This will be done with a PowerPoint and might be very different from the actual forms or application materials. In other words, you often get the flexibility to "tell the story" of the organization or the project to the people who decide about who gets the money. You can make it much more interesting to them than the dry paperwork generally required for a grant application. This is a good thing! Make use of it. We will have some information this week on the story and how to develop it.

Step **Concept Statement:** Each student will send the professor in a one-paragraph
1 description of the project she or he has in mind. This may be accomplished through an e-mail. This is a very brief description of the following pieces of the concept: **for whom the project will be done** (nonprofit, public school system, private educational institution, college, local government, etc.), **from whom might the funding be sought** (any ideas you might have or information from the nonprofit about possible grant funding sources such as state or local grassroots art funding, Coastal Zone Management funds, Garden Club funding for historic gardens, etc.), **why will the organization need the funding and how will they use it** (some idea of the project that the organization will do if funding is provided), and anything else the participant cares to add. The sooner this is accomplished, the better for the participant, as she/he can then commit to larger scale efforts.

Step **Detailed Project Description:** (15% of grade)

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The Detailed Project Description or Proposed Agreement becomes our contract on what the completed project will look like. For a small scale, well-defined proposal, we would expect greater scope and completeness than for a larger scale matter where we would expect that the project net a portion of a proposal. It is recommended that, whenever possible, students opt for a more clearly defined project of limited, though meaningful scope. This document, **no longer than three pages**, is sent as an attachment to e-mail to the instructor employing the conventions detailed below. This document might or might not require


adjustments. Once approved, the participant will work toward achieving the project as described in this document. Completion of the "Case Study" will be fulfilling this description.


Due Dates: If you have a project in mind already, let's work toward the original August 28th date for this second step of the project. However, if you are casting around looking for the project, we can extend the date by a week or more. Please communicate with the professor about this before the 28th of August.


Step 3 **Actual Completed Grant Application or Proposal for Funding - Key Component of the Project:** The **case study**, i.e. **grant application or proposal**, is the completed document that accomplishes the delivery of information, forms, documents, etc., outlined in the Detailed Project Description or Proposed Agreement. This document is **no longer than 20 pages plus supporting materials**. You will provide all pertinent documents regarding the program from which funding is sought (usually a **request for proposals or RFP** and other key materials outlining the requirements of the funding source). These documents, descriptions, or materials will be identified as **Appendix A** and will accompany each project package. This will be the primary method of judging the quality of the project. Therefore, **no project will be accepted without this material**.

Step 4 **Project Presentation:** A PowerPoint will be developed to provide a description of the project that is the basis of the grant proposal along with any necessary or interesting information about the organization or the population served by the programs. This will be approached and organized very differently from the application. Typically the funding source will provide very loose guidelines (if any at all) for this presentation. It gives the applicant the flexibility to provide interesting information about the organization, project, proposed recipients of the service funded, etc. Be creative! This will be viewed by the members of the class and they will provide feedback as if they were the review board who will give out the money. You will try to impress them (without going too far out to the point of bizarre, hopefully).

Project Submission All project files and assignments will be submitted as attachments to E-mail and formatted as outlined below unless another format is negotiated with the instructor. These files will follow the formatting and **file naming conventions** listed and explained below:


 **Text documents** will be formatted as Microsoft Word documents (or if some problem exists, then Adobe Acrobat).


 **Data files** (if needed) will be Excel files (for spreadsheet data) or Access files (if database information is required).


 **Presentations** will be PowerPoint files.

 **Project File Names:** for the proposed agreement, use "agreement.doc" as the project

name; for the case study, use "case.doc" for the project name.

 **Ownership of files:** to indicate your ownership of submissions, use your first and last names with either a dot *(.) or underscore *(_) between the parts. For example: gerald_merwin_agreement.doc and gerald_merwin_case.doc

 **Course Codes in Subject Line:** If email messages are sent through VSU BlazeNet or any other methods besides WebCT, use the **PADM 7860** in the subject line. This should be done with all messages sent to the instructor to associate your submissions with our course to aid in filtering of E-mail.

 **Questions:** Please ask questions if any part of this information is unclear.