

Federal Grantwriting: An Overview

Judee Richardson, Ph.D.
University of Illinois Extension
Illinois ResourceNet

jar@illinois.edu



 ILLINOIS

Today's Discussion

- A. Your organizational self-assessment
- B. Understanding the differences between federal and foundation funding
- C. Where to look for opportunities
- D. Planning ahead
- E. Common federal grant components
- F. Increasing your chances of success



ILLINOIS.EDU



First things First: Your Organizational Self-Assessment

- Before you sit down to write a proposal, it is very important that you:
 - Are able to articulate your organization's story. Where have you come from and why? Where are you now and where do you want to be in the future? Why do you want to go there?
 - Know what makes you unique as an organization and what makes your project/goals unique. Why should an agency give its money to you rather than someone else?



ILLINOIS.EDU

Your Organizational Self-Assessment

- Understand who you are as an organization, your mission, your passion, your short-term and long-term goals, your financial health, your strengths and your weaknesses.
- Develop a project idea and be able to discuss the significance of it as well as the need for it.
- Know your grant writing skill level.



ILLINOIS.EDU



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION

UIC UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

neighborhoods initiative



Your Organizational Self-Assessment

- Understand that this is a significant undertaking. Knowing what you are getting into and the time commitment and expertise required is essential for success.



- Commit to following directions and paying attention to detail. You can be the best at what you do, but if you do not follow directions and pay attention to details, you will not succeed in securing a federal grant.
 - *More than 50% of proposals are rejected because they did not match program objectives as stated by the funder and/or the applicant did not follow directions as stated.*



ILLINOIS.EDU

Your Organizational Self-Assessment

- Identify your professional partners and the expertise that they offer. Doing so will help you see where you need to develop additional partnerships – perhaps before applying for a grant.



ILLINOIS.EDU



Today's Discussion

- ✓ Your organizational self-assessment
- B. Understanding the differences between federal and foundation funding
- C. Where to look for opportunities
- D. Planning ahead
- E. Common federal grant components
- F. Increasing your chances of success



ILLINOIS.EDU



Foundation vs. Federal Grants

- There are real and important differences between applying for foundation and federal dollars.
 - Proposal Requirements – the specificity of requirements in federal grant applications are often more stringent than those of foundations.
 - Scoring system – federal grants are graded using point scales that are explained in the Request for Proposal (RFP).
 - Logic models – most federal grants require a logic model as a way of understanding your goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes



ILLINOIS.EDU

Today's Discussion

- ✓ Your organizational self-assessment
 - ✓ Understanding the differences between federal and foundation funding
- C. Where to look for opportunities
- D. Planning ahead
- E. Common federal grant components
- F. Increasing your chances of success



ILLINOIS.EDU



Where to Find Opportunities

- There are many websites and informational resources. The key is to target your search in order to find the most relevant opportunities for your organization and your goals.



ILLINOIS.EDU

Where to Find Opportunities

➤ Both subscription fee and no-cost resources exist.

▪ No-cost resources include:

✓ Illinois ResourceNet – federal, state, local resources

<http://www.illinoisresource.net/page/funding/home/Funder-Resources>

✓ Grants.gov <http://www.grants.gov> – federal announcements – email alert sign-up

<http://www.grants.gov/search/subscribeAdvanced.do>



ILLINOIS.EDU

Where to Find Opportunities

- ✓ Foundation Center - resource directory for non-profit
<http://foundationcenter.org/pnd/>
option to sign up for Foundation Center alerts
- ✓ Fundraising & Grants Directory - federal and foundation resources by category
<http://www.fundsnet services.com/>



ILLINOIS.EDU



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION

UIC UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

neighborhoods initiative



Where to Find Opportunities

- ✓ Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)
<http://www.cfda.gov>
 - Provides online access to more than 1,800 programs administered by Federal departments and agencies.
 - Search by area and a listing of program titles, responsible agency and types of assistance is generated.
 - Also includes a link to American Recovery and Reinvestment Act programs and a grant tutorial.



ILLINOIS.EDU



Where to Find Opportunities

- ✓ <http://www.faithbasedcommunityinitiatives.org/>
 - White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI)
 - Purpose it to educate and assist the application and qualification for competitive Federal funding.

- ✓ Stimulus money
 - <http://www.illinois.gov/recovery/>
 - <http://www.recovery.gov/>



ILLINOIS.EDU



Today's Discussion

- ✓ Your organizational self-assessment
- ✓ Understanding the differences between federal and foundation funding
- ✓ Where to look for opportunities

D. Planning ahead

E. Common federal grant components

F. Increasing your chances of success



ILLINOIS.EDU

Planning Ahead

- Begin now in preparation for future funding submissions. There are many pieces of a proposal that you can write now and tweak for a future submission.
- Keep the RFP point scores a primary focus throughout the proposal writing process.
- Review the RFP over and over, highlighting important points, making notations in the margin.
- Many federal grants are cyclical. Prepare early and continuously add to your materials-in-waiting.



ILLINOIS.EDU

Today's Discussion

- ✓ Your organizational self-assessment
 - ✓ Understanding the differences between federal and foundation funding
 - ✓ Where to look for opportunities
 - ✓ Planning ahead
- D. Common federal grant components
- E. Increasing your chances of success



ILLINOIS.EDU

Common Federal Proposal Components

- ✓ *Needs Assessment*
- ✓ *Goals and Objectives*
- ✓ *Logic Model*
- ✓ *Methods*
- ✓ *Evaluation*
- ✓ *Sustainability and Future Funding*
- ✓ *Budget*
- ✓ *Support Materials*



ILLINOIS.EDU



✓ Needs Assessment

- Makes a compelling case that an important need exists which no one else is addressing, or addressing effectively. As you conduct background research on your idea, you may also identify potential partners.
 - Be sure this is a need that the funder also has a passion to fund.
 - Answers: Who, What, When, Where, and Why?’
 - Ask yourself, “Who Cares”, and “So What” as you write about the significance of your project.



ILLINOIS.EDU



✓ Goals and Objectives

- Goals are broad-based statements about the ultimate result of the change being undertaken by your project.
- Objectives are specific and concrete, observable and measurable statements about either the method for achieving the goals (process objective) or the change in behavior, skill, awareness, health status, etc. as a result of your project activities (outcome objective).



ILLINOIS.EDU

✓ Logic Model

“A logic model is a graphic that lays out the basic components of a program, illustrating how day-to-day program activities are linked to the outcomes the program is working to achieve.” (Harvard Family Research Project)



ILLINOIS.EDU



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION

UIC UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

neighborhoods initiative



✓ Logic Model

“The logic model can be used to help answer questions about program implementation – to what extent a program is accomplishing its goals and why this is so. It provides a mechanism to continually incorporate feedback into the program plan and helps staff and [clients] realize how services are connected to a program’s long term outcomes.”

(Planning for Success: Mapping Goals, Services, and Outcomes for Program Improvement, Ounce of Prevention Fund, p. 2)



ILLINOIS.EDU



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION

UIC UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

neighborhoods initiative



✓ Logic Model

Components of a Logic Model include:

- **Situation:** problem or issue that the program is to address sits within a setting or situation from which priorities are set
- **Inputs:** resources, contributions and investments that are made in response to the situation. Inputs lead to
- **Outputs:** the activities, services, events, and products that reach people and users. Outputs lead to
- **Outcomes:** the results or changes for individuals, groups, agencies, communities and/or systems.
- **Assumptions:** beliefs we have about the program, the people, the environment and the way we think the program will work
- **External Factors:** environment in which the program exists includes a variety of external factors that interact with and influence the program action.



ILLINOIS.EDU

Develop a Strong Program Logic Model



* Adapted from the University of Wisconsin Extension Program Action Model



ILLINOIS.EDU

✓ Methods

- ✓ Describes how you will do what you say you will do and who will do it.
 - Qualitative Methods
 - *Involve direct contact with people involved in a program or service, such as clients, staff, or board members.*
 - ✓ *Data collection methods include interviews, focus groups, direct or field observation and document review.*
 - Quantitative Methods
 - *Translate experience into units that may be counted, measured and analyzed numerically (i.e. , financial data, census statistics, number of clients served, number of housing units developed, etc.)*



ILLINOIS.EDU

✓ Evaluation

- ✓ Developing your evaluation plan as you develop your program will increase the likelihood that the program will be effective and responsive to community needs.
 - Align program outcomes with benchmarks commonly used in the industry and by your funders.
 - Identify indicators that may be easily measured, and over which you have influence or control.
 - Design intake tools and other program documents to track data that may be used in outcome evaluations.
 - Communicate how you will determine programmatic impact, project effectiveness.
 - Include how you will utilize the results of your evaluation for ongoing improvements.



ILLINOIS.EDU



✓ Sustainability and Future Funding

- Sustainability refers to the organization's demonstrated ability to maintain and carry out its mission over the long term
 - Future funding
 - Staffing
 - Community partnerships
 - Sharing and transfer of leadership
 - Organizational Business Planning (where applicable)
 - Will show how well this program fits in organizational long-term plan for products and services
 - Strategic Planning (where applicable)
 - Positions organization to be proactive in dealing with changes in its environment and increases likelihood that this program will weather those changes.



ILLINOIS.EDU



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

neighborhoods initiative

✓ Budget

- Includes financial figures, verbal description of how each line-item will be used (i.e., a budget narrative), creating effective tracking systems and reporting the organization's financial activity and plans.
- Accountability and transparency are essential for federal funders.
- Be sure that you have the records and systems in place.



ILLINOIS.EDU



✓ Budget

- Follow the instructions
- What can I include in my budget?
 - Budget MUST follow the program
 - Allowable federal costs
 - *OMB Circular A-122 – Allowable costs for nonprofits*
 - *<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a122/a122.html> Follow the budget categories*
- Is there a cost-sharing (i.e. match) requirement?
- Most grants require a budget narrative
- Check, re-check and triple check math



ILLINOIS.EDU

✓ Supplemental Materials

- These vary from agency to agency
 - Depends on the program
 - Depends on the size of the funding requested
- Handout includes a list of common materials.



ILLINOIS.EDU



Today's Discussion

- ✓ Your organizational self-assessment
 - ✓ Understanding the differences between federal and foundation funding
 - ✓ Where to look for opportunities
 - ✓ Planning ahead
 - ✓ Common federal grant components
- D. Increasing your chances of success



ILLINOIS.EDU

Increasing your chances

- ❖ 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



ILLINOIS.EDU



Increasing your chances

- ❖ Ask funders to share successful applications
- ❖ Speak with funder point of contacts
- ❖ Speak with successful grantees and review winning grants at Web Gems found at <http://www.minerandassociates.com/>
- ❖ Get a copy of the American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual 5th Edition - www.apastyle.org.
- ❖ Access technical assistance resources



ILLINOIS.EDU

Increasing your chances

- ❖ Assign a dependable and knowledgeable writer and proposal project manager to stay on track
- ❖ Read and re-read application requirements
- ❖ Create a checklist and timeline
- ❖ Attend and/or view (via web) funder-sponsored trainings
- ❖ Create drafts of your application with all required documentation
- ❖ Prepare the final application and verify against a checklist
- ❖ Ask for feedback, review and rewrite, proofread



ILLINOIS.EDU



THANK YOU!

Judee Richardson, Ph.D.
Illinois ResourceNet Technical Assistant

jar@illinois.edu



ILLINOIS.EDU



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION

UIC UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

neighborhoods initiative

