TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL GRANT WRITING

Always…

❑ **Read the proposal instructions first**. Never begin your proposal without knowing exactly what is required.

❑ Prepare a checklist of things you need to do to appropriately complete the grant.

❑ Outline your proposal before you begin writing it.

❑ Build evaluation criteria into your proposal (process measures and outcome measures).

❑ Use the format suggested.

❑ Prepare yourself mentally before you begin writing your proposal.

❑ Write clearly, concisely, and professionally (don't use acronyms or other jargon without first providing an explanation of its meaning).

❑ Make your proposals upbeat, positive, and interesting.

❑ Write as if you have already been funded for the grant and are explaining what you will be doing (We will implement…).

❑ Include everything you are asked to include.

❑ Say it succinctly but don't make assumptions.

❑ Commit only to activities you can fulfill.

❑ Make your work neat. Leave enough white space (don't clutter up your pages with too many words, small margins, or small font sizes).

❑ Use visuals when possible.

❑ Time your work so you are finished at least 3 days before the proposal is due.

❑ Stay within the page, margin, and font size limit stated.

❑ Read and edit your proposal in its entirety.

❑ Have someone not familiar with your program read the proposal for clarity.

WRITING THE PROPOSAL

Proposals should answer the following questions:
Who, what, where, why, when (and how long), how, and how much?

Every component of a program proposal is interconnected to every other component. Be sure all proposal components are linked with one another.

Abstract
Write your abstract last. It should be a synopsis of your program. Include:
❑ Your organization's history, credibility, mission, overall agency goals, and size.
❑ Tell why you are asking for this grant money and what it will do. State the overall goals and objectives of the program.
❑ Report your successes (track record) of similar endeavors.

State the Problem and Need for the Proposed Program
❑ Currently, what does the program do?
❑ What is the problem? Use relevant data, statistics, and anecdotal information.
❑ How can this program help solve the problem? Be realistic.
❑ Be candid about potential problems and your strategy for addressing them.

Goals, Objectives, Activities, Timeline, and Evaluation
❑ **Goals:** What do you hope to accomplish with this specific program?
   (Reduce the number of children injured or killed in motor-vehicle crashes.)
❑ **Objectives:** What specifically do you want to change?
   (Reduce motor vehicle occupant-related injuries among Latino children ages 0-8 from 65% to 50% by April 2004.)
❑ **Activities:** What activities will you conduct to meet your objectives and ultimately, your goal(s)?
❑ **Timeline:** How long will each activity take and who will conduct each activity?
❑ **Evaluations:** How will you measure whether each activity has been accomplished (process evaluation), how you will measure whether the objectives have successfully been met (outcome evaluation)?

Budget
❑ Make your budget realistic (don't pare it down or include in-kind costs if this is not realistic).
❑ Include only those items that are allowed. If a funder doesn't pay for equipment costing more than $500, don't include it in your budget.
❑ Make your budget specific and appropriate. Include all of the relevant costs for the program.
❑ Include enough information so the reviewer knows who is being budgeted, for how much, and the % of FTE of each person budgeted. For supplies include how many, how much per unit, etc.
❑ Include all required costs, i.e., mandated meetings, etc.
❑ Don't make assumptions. Always include a justification for every line in the budget.

Sustainability
❑ How you will sustain this program once funding from this grant is over?

10 REASONS PROPOSALS GET REJECTED

1. Program activities are not based on best practices.

2. Proposals are unclear or missing required information.

3. Need has not be adequately identified in the proposal.

4. Programs are not well thought out. Portions are inconsistent with one another.

5. Proposals are too ambitious for the amount of time and/or money requested _or_ proposals are not ambitious enough for the amount of time and/or money requested.

6. Budget is vague, inconsistent, or unrealistic.

7. Staff expertise is not conducive to program activities.

8. Program has a bad track record for completing activities.

9. Proposals are submitted after the due date (a deadline is a deadline).

10. Proposal submitter has good ideas but the proposal is written poorly. *This is the number one reason program proposals for Kids' Plates funds are rejected.*