



THE ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION
LA FONDATION TRILLIUM DE L'ONTARIO

Writing Strong Grant Proposals

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Session Outline



- ⌘ Funding Climate
- ⌘ It starts with an Idea
- ⌘ Making sure there's a fit with the funder
- ⌘ Proposal Writing basics
- ⌘ Ways to make your application stand out

Funding Environments Change



4 periods of granting

⌘ 1970's Money looking for a good idea

⌘ 1980's Funding for Service

⌘ Early- Not much money for anything
mid 90's

The 4th Era: Civic Investment



⌘ **2000's** civic investment - more money
but within a new context of value

⌘ **OLD** Granting provides \$'s for activities

⌘ **NEW** Civic investment seeks a social
capital return on investment

Old Frame – New Frame

Granting	Civic Investment
Government policy agenda based on needs assessment	Local community agenda
Designated program \$s	Community level planning & decision
Grants to implement	Investment sought – proposal/ partnership development
Program Contract: \$s for service delivery	Investment Contract: \$s for outcome measures
Monitoring of numbers served to program targets	Flexible monitoring to support changes in outcomes & process-oriented outcomes

development and proposal writing!



Project Development Phase



- ⌘ begins with intention - What is it that you want to achieve?
- ⌘ develops a concept - What are the activities that will achieve your intention?
- ⌘ researches potential partners - Who else will contribute to this work?
- ⌘ designs a project - Who will do what, for what cost, and to what results?

Proposal Development Phase



- ⌘ explains who you are and why your org. should do the work
- ⌘ provides a rationale for the work
- ⌘ provides a succinct version of the project activities & cost
- ⌘ shows how your project meets funder objectives
- ⌘ demonstrates concrete and measurable results

Linear Project Planning or the Logic Model



- ⌘ Your intention /issue
- ⌘ Possible activities
- ⌘ Selected project activities - the “project”
- ⌘ The cost of the activities
- ⌘ The results & the impact on your intention or issue
- ⌘ The measures of results

Getting to Know the Funder



- ⌘ the round peg in the round hole rule
- ⌘ building relationships with funders - to call or not to call isn't really the question
- ⌘ research the funder's interests
- ⌘ test your concept for "match" with funder interest
- ⌘ research the funder's "funding context"

Funders



- ⌘ Local Foundations
- ⌘ Ministry funders (provincial)
- ⌘ Ontario Trillium Foundation
- ⌘ United Ways
- ⌘ Federal funders
- ⌘ Municipal funders

Finding Funders



- ⌘ Local foundations (eg. The Niagara Community Foundation; Casino Cares Foundation; Branscombe Foundation)
- ⌘ Other local funding sources (eg. Meridian, CTFS)
- ⌘ Provincial grants (eg. Trillium; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Tourism and Recreation; Ontario Arts Council)
- ⌘ Federal grants (eg. Heritage Canada; Canada Council for Arts)

Finding Funders: Helpful Websites



⌘ Big Online: www.bigdatabase.ca

⌘ Charity Village: www.charityvillage.com

⌘ Canadian Centre for Philanthropy:
www.imaginecanada.ca

Is this the right funder for your idea?



- ⌘ Proposal writing takes time - make sure you are targeting the right funder
- ⌘ Check published info
- ⌘ Talk to the funder
- ⌘ Check info on other grants this funder has made (amount; duration; focus)
- ⌘ Talk to local groups who have received a grant already
- ⌘ Pitch to the funder's priorities

Consider your capacity



- ⌘ Do you have the staff and / or volunteer resources to carry out your idea?
- ⌘ Do you have a history that will convince the funder?
- ⌘ Do you need to partner with some other group to make the best case?

Finding a fit



- ⌘ Think about what parts of your idea you can sell to this funder - be strategic
- ⌘ Stay true to your idea but think about how to position it to catch the funder's attention
- ⌘ Take the time you need to have a convincing plan

Finding a fit:

Understanding the process



- ⌘ Ask who makes the funding decisions
- ⌘ Ascertain what role the funder's staff will play
- ⌘ Should you expect follow-up
- ⌘ Get a sense of how long it will take to hear back
- ⌘ Find out about funder's track record

Finding a fit: Will the timing work?



- ⌘ Funder deadlines
- ⌘ Time to plan with others
- ⌘ Time to pull together materials funders may need (eg. proof of incorp; letters of support)
- ⌘ Speed (or lack thereof) with which funder will respond

Proposal Writing Basics



- ⌘ 1. **NEED**: Show there is a need for the work you want to do
- ⌘ 2. **RESULTS**: Tell us clearly what difference your project will make
- ⌘ 3. **PLAN**: Have a concrete plan for how you will do your project
- ⌘ 4. **EVALUATION**: Have a plan for measuring the impact of your project
- ⌘ 5. **COMMUNITY SUPPORT**: Show that others support your project
- ⌘ 6. **BUDGET**: Cost out your project or idea

Proposal Writing Basics

1. Establishing Need



- ⌘ Why is it important to do this work and why now?
- ⌘ How do you know? (waiting lists; surveys; unserved group; published reports; requests from community, etc.)
- ⌘ Provide supporting evidence for your idea (eg. Has it worked elsewhere? Is there a demand? How do you know it will work here?)

Establishing Need: Example



- ⌘ **OK:** Playground equipment is needed in this community since there is currently nowhere safe for young children to play
- ⌘ **Better:** Playground equipment for children under 6 is a need in our community because:
 - ☑ There are over 2000 children in this age group in our community
 - ☑ The nearest age appropriate play equipment is 4 km away
 - ☑ The recent Recreation Master Plan identified play opportunities for children 0-6 as a high priority and noted that play structures need to be within walking distance of families to get maximum use
 - ☑ Our community has a high concentration of low income families who may not be able to provide play equipment at home
 - ☑ The Early Years research has noted the importance of quality play equipment in developing children's gross motor skills

Proposal Writing Basics

2. Results



⌘ Tell us exactly what difference your work will make - to the community and to your group

- ☑ At least 50 additional families will receive volunteer support to assist their family member with Alzheimer disease
- ☑ Lights on the sports field will increase playing time by 25% and allow tournaments to be played. Registration will increase by at least 20%
- ☑ Residents of at least 4 communities will be involved in collecting seed and growing native species of trees for community re-forestation projects in their towns and villages
- ☑ Murals in the downtown area will provide employment for local students, beautify the downtown and ultimately attract tourists to the community

Proposal Writing Basics

3. Plan



⌘ Provide a clear workplan, with timelines, for exactly how you'll do your project

- ☑ May 2009: Steering committee advertises and hires co-ordinator
- ☑ June 2009: Co-ordinator oriented to project; surveys families of kids with disabilities
- ☑ July 2009: Survey results used to estimate number of assistants needed; assistants hired and trained by Co-ordinator
- ☑ August 2009 - July 2010: Assistants help kids with disabilities to take part in the regular recreational programming available in the community; Co-ordinator promotes program, fundraises and collects evaluation data
- ☑ August 2010: Co-ordinator completes evaluation of project; Corporate sponsors fund continuation of Co-ordinator position

Proposal Writing Basics:

4. Evaluation



- ⌘ Have a clear plan for how you will measure whether your project worked or not
- ⌘ Link your evaluation to the activities in your workplan - Did it happen? What impact did it have?
- ⌘ Keep it simple e.g. Lights on soccer fields - measure registration before and after using regular records

Proposal Writing Basics:

5. Community Support



- ⌘ Show that others support the need for your project or idea
- ⌘ \$, Volunteer time, in kind donations letters of support, partnering on the project
- ⌘ Grantmaking is usually competitive - show that your project is broadly supported by the community

Proposal Writing Basics

6. Budget

⌘ Be realistic in your budget and timelines

⌘ Link your workplan with your budget

☒ Trail Creation: Contractors to clear trail surface: \$1,500

☒ Gravel for trail surface: \$1,000

☒ Education: Interpretative signs: \$500

☒ TOTAL= \$3,000

☒ Volunteer contributions = 20 volunteers x 8 hours x \$10 per hour = \$1,600

☒ Plantings donated by horticultural society- approximate value \$800

⌘ Back up your numbers with quotes

Making your application stand out: Hook the funder



- ⌘ Partnering
- ⌘ Volunteer and \$ contributions from other groups
- ⌘ Leverage
- ⌘ Value for \$
- ⌘ Broad impact - show how the community will benefit

More Funder Hooks



⌘ Innovation

⌘ Accountability

⌘ Outcomes - Frame your project in terms of the positive difference it will make

⌘ Sustainability - How will the work be continued after a grant?

Format Tips



- ⌘ Follow requested format
- ⌘ Try to keep to page limits
- ⌘ Answer all the questions
- ⌘ Include all the requested attachments
- ⌘ Follow-up to make sure your application arrived and is complete

Content tips



⌘ **Be concrete**

- ⌘ Be honest but don't feel compelled to dwell on past mistakes
- ⌘ Be realistic in your budget and timelines
- ⌘ Don't assume the funder knows your specific sector in detail
- ⌘ Tell your story in your own words

Budget tips



- ⌘ Don't pad the budget
- ⌘ Match salaries to comparable positions in the community
- ⌘ Get quotes - build credibility by showing you have shopped around for the best price
- ⌘ Explain your budget items

General tips



- ⌘ Do ensure that your references are able to speak in an informed manner about your group and your application
- ⌘ Don't get discouraged!