



# Writing Winning Grant Proposals



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Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)  
Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)  
Grants Management Conference

Tuesday, September 17, 2013  
Marriott Wardman Park

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# Writing Winning Grant Proposals



## GRANTS

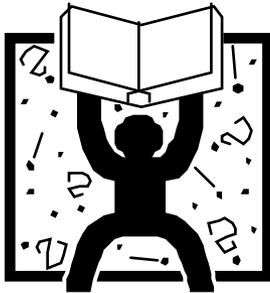
- Allow you to:
  - Affect change
  - Get the help you need
  - Go where you need to go
  - Do what you need to do



# The Great Idea



Is it original?



Does it meet  
today's needs?



Does it solve a significant problem?



## GRANT WRITING:

- Learn the Game
- Be in for the Long Haul
- Well Done, Professional
- Make it Part of your Strategic Plan
- Be Tight with Finance/Admin
- Learn from Doing Grants



## GRANT WRITING CANNOT BE:

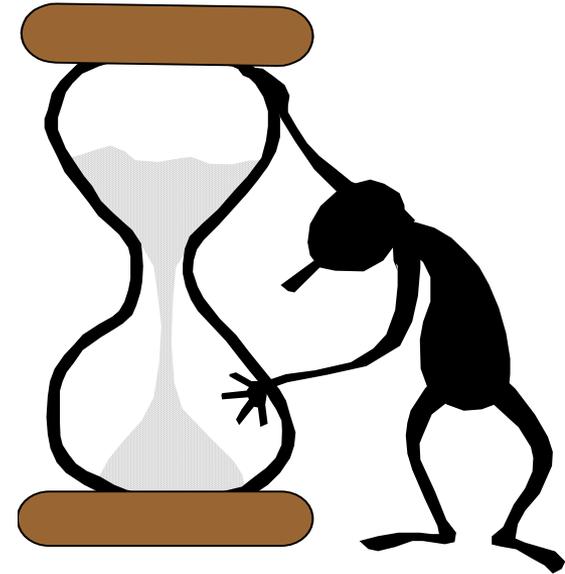
- A hobby
- Once in a While Job
- One-Time Only
- "Get the money and run"



# Not Enough Time



- Writing is like an Olympic event
  - needs constant practice.
- Write everyday at a regular time in the same place. 20 minutes
- If you don't sit there every day, the day that it would have come well - you won't be there.



# Just Do It!



# The grant process is never wasted



- Can't get a grant unless you write one
- Professionally fulfilling
- Requires you to focus your thoughts
- Armed with reviewers comments, the second proposal is always stronger

# Qualities of Effective Grant Writing



- Quality of the idea and its appeal to the funding source
- The ability to communicate clearly and concisely

# Idea



- An idea is something that only exists in your mind.
- Your task is to present the idea in a fundable proposal.
- Take a vague idea and identify a specific problem or need associated with it.



# Writing a Grant is Like Playing a Game



# You have to Play by the Rules



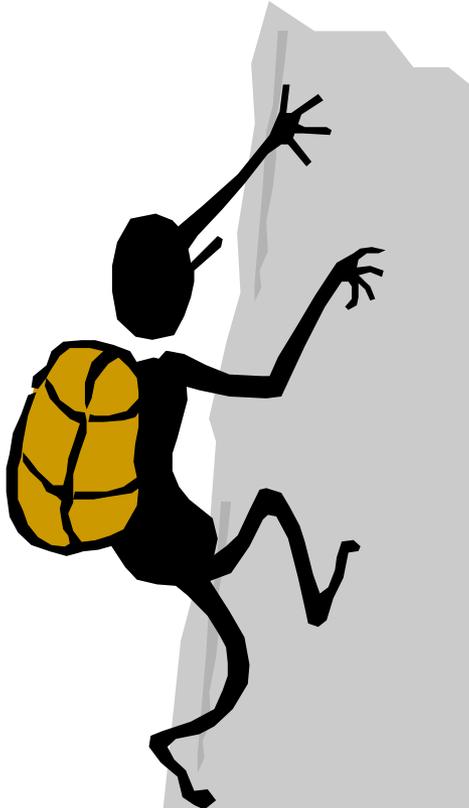
- **GET** the guidelines
- **READ** the guidelines
- **FOLLOW** the guidelines

# Following the Guidelines



- You must follow the guidelines **exactly**.
- Respond to all sections.
- Adhere to any format restrictions.
- Topics must be covered in order presented in guidelines.
- Use headings that correspond to the guidelines.

# The Next Step after Reading the Guidelines



# Appropriate Writing Style 5 W's

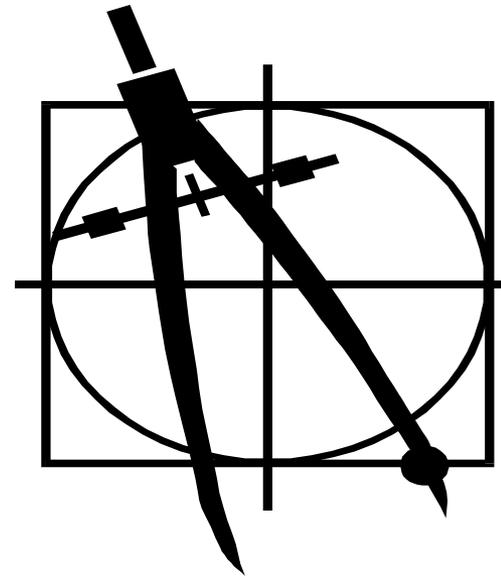


- Write to the funding source
- Write in the correct language of the field - but no jargon
- **Never** write in 1st person
- Write to inform
  - don't use language that is biased
- Write to persuade
  - data from reputable source
  - use current data
  - establish credibility
  - No unsubstantiated opinions

A Grant is not an Idea



It is a Plan

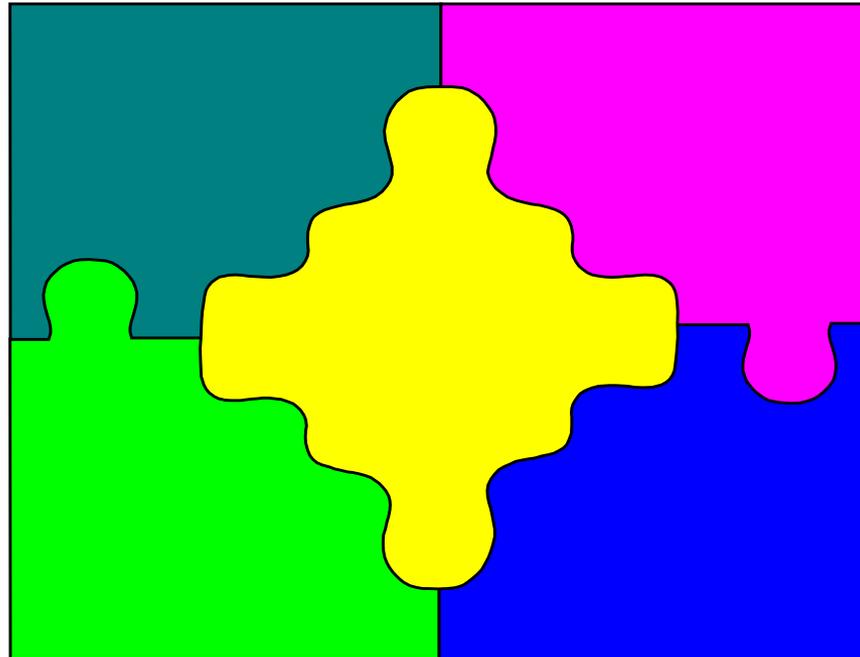




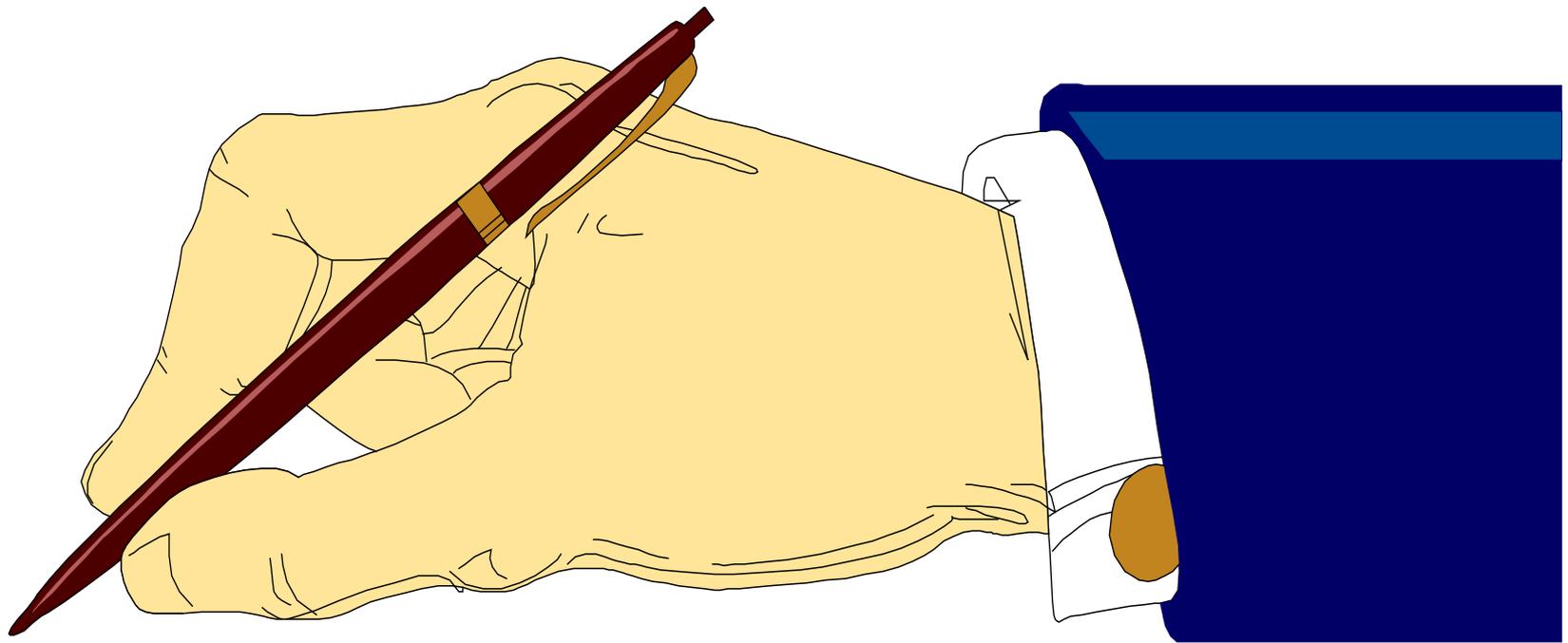
# Parts of a Grant Application

- **Cover Page**
- **Table of Contents**
- Abstract
- Problem or Needs Statement
- Goals and Objectives
- Methodology
- Quality of Key Personnel
- Evaluation
- References Cited
- **Budget & Narrative**
- Vitae
- Appendices
- **Forms, Certifications and Assurances**

# Parts of a Grant



# Develop a Title for your Grant



# Abstract



- Should be able to stand alone
  - it may be all that the reviewers read
- Clear, concise, one page, single space
- Avoid 1st person
- Do not refer to proposal in the abstract
- Cover all key elements in order

# The Task You Face



- Critically important but often poorly written
- Convince the funder that you understand the need and can help them solve the problem
  - Prove the need
    - cite evidence
    - illustrate with graphs and charts
  - Demonstrate that the need is pressing
  - That the problem is an important problem to be solved
  - How your project will address the problem and what gaps will it fill

# The Problem Statement: Framing the Need



- Don't assume that no one else has ever thought of your idea.
- The **Problem Statement** establishes a framework for the project's goals, objectives, methods, and evaluation
- Provide a thorough explanation of your need
  - test assumptions
  - anticipate questions of others
  - incorporate proposal guidelines
- Begin with a framing statement then provide documentation

# A Good Problem Statement Should:



- Show that you understand the problem
- Demonstrate that this is an important problem to solve,
- Clearly describe the aspects of the problem that your project will address, and what gaps this will fill
- Describe the theoretical or conceptual basis for your project and your knowledge of the issues surrounding your proposed project
- Include statistical data, if appropriate
- Demonstrate that your approach is creative or innovative
- Describe how this project fits into the already existing goals of the organization



# Questions to Ask, Things to Know

- What significant needs are you trying to meet?
- What is the current status of the needs?
- Will this project help meet the need?
- What really needs to be done?
- What services will be delivered? To whom? By whom?
- Is it possible to make some impact on the problem?
- What gaps exist in the knowledge base?
- What does the literature say about the significance of the problem, at a local, state, regional, national level?
- Is there evidence that this project will lead to other significant studies?
- What previous work has been done to meet this need? Was it effective?
- What will be the impact of this study?

# Documenting the Problem Statement



- Rooted in factual information
  - must document that your initial statement is correct.
- Show you know what's going on in the field, and what the basic issues are
- Use national and local information
  - show that the local problem is also a national one/

# Organizing and Writing the Needs Statement



- Go from the foundational statement
- Build your case with the data
- Follow the guidelines
- Be succinct and persuasive
- Tell your story and build your case drawing to a logical conclusion that leads into the project goals and objectives

# Ending a Needs Statement



- Emphasize the significance of the project
  - what will be the result
  - what impact will it have
  - will the impact continue
- You might present your project as a model
- Always address the priorities of the funding agency  
**Remember-** You don't ask for money because you want it or because you need it, you ask for money because you want to help the funder solve their problem.
- Forecast the usefulness and importance of the results

# The Goal



- Both the goals and objectives should flow logically from the statement of need.
- Goals convey the ultimate intent of the proposed project, the overarching philosophy, **A CONCISE STATEMENT OF THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT.**
- The opening statement of this section should begin with **“the goal of this project is to...”**

# A Well Thought-Out Project:



- Will have
  - one or two goals
  - several objectives related to the goals
  - many methodological steps to achieve each objective.

# Objectives



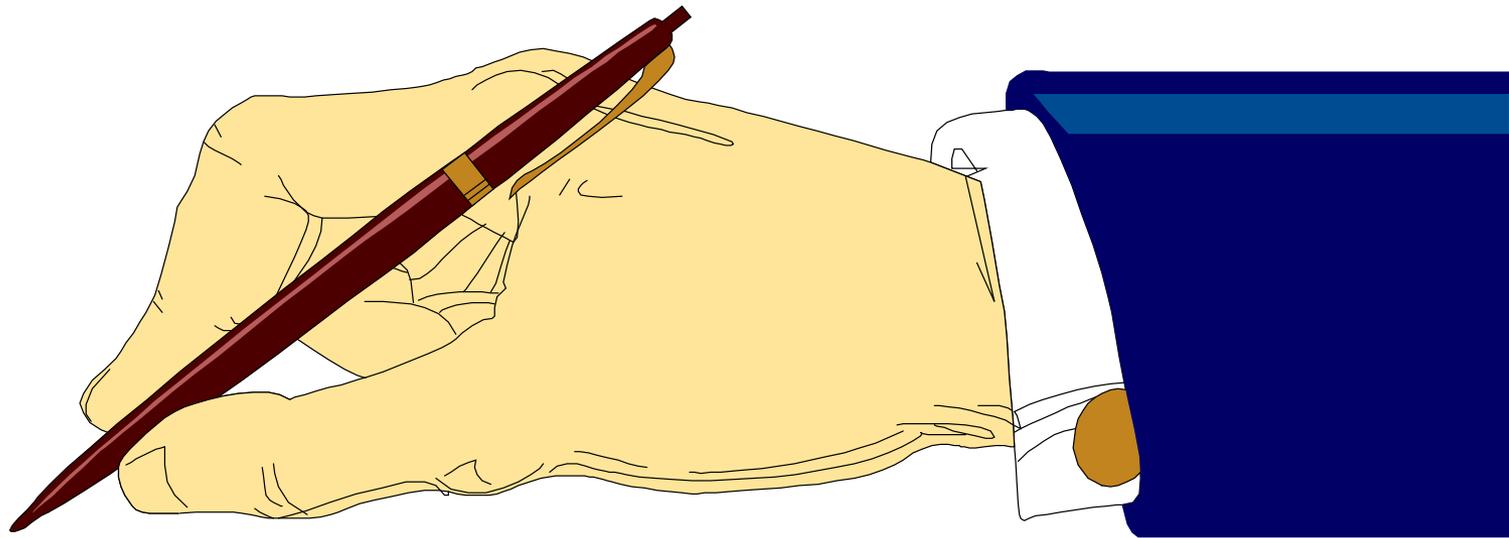
- The objectives state the essence of the proposed work in terms of **what** will be accomplished.
- Break the goal down to specific measurable pieces, the outcomes of which can be measured to determine actual accomplishments.

# Objectives



- Objectives discuss **who** is going to do **what**, **when** they will do it, and **how** it will be measured.
- Discuss desired end results of the project.
- But not how those results will be accomplished.
- They are action oriented and often begin with a verb.
- Arrange them in priority order.
- In a research proposal the objectives are the hypotheses, they are less specific, but reinforce that the project is conceptually sound.

# Writing Goals and Objectives



# Plan of Action, Project Design, or Methodology



- Usually, this is the area allotted the most points.
- Often poorly written or missing altogether.
- 2:5 proposals are turned down because the methodology is unsound.



# Methodology, Project Design, Plan of Action



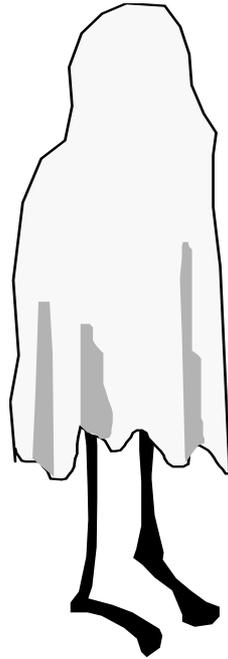
- Often the most detailed and lengthy section
- What specific activities will allow you to meet your objectives
- Task oriented, specific, detailed
- Essential that you demonstrate all the steps necessary to complete project with each flowing logically from the previous to the next.

# Questions for Methodology



- Walk the reader through your project
- Describe the activities as they relate to the objectives
- Develop a time line and/or and organizational chart
- How will the activities be conducted?
- When?
- How long?
- Who?
- Where?
- What facilities?

# Quality of Key Personnel



# Who Are these People, and Why Should we Give them our Money?



- This is where you demonstrate that you are the right person to do this project.
- Do not simply say “See resume.”
- Convince the funder that you are capable of accomplishing what you say you can accomplish
- Highlight the expertise of all key personnel
- Include experience you have had managing other projects
- Weak qualifications or inexperience in some cases can be compensated for by adding appropriate consultants. Include why you need consultants and how you chose them.
- If you don’t identify a person, summarize the job description or qualifications required and how you will find that person
- Indicate responsibilities and level of effort (%).

- Formative evaluation of objectives
  - how the project will be evaluated as it progresses
- Summative evaluation of objectives
  - how the project will be evaluated when it is finished

# Evaluation design



- Explanation of the methods.
- What was the impact?
- Descriptions of record keeping, surveys, and assessment instruments.
- Consider what would count as evidence that your project succeeded or failed?
- If you were someone else who wanted to replicate the project what would you need to know to determine if you would benefit
- What form should that information take to be sufficiently credible or useful?

# Outside Evaluation



- Hire a third party.
- Someone well known in the field.
- Someone you quoted in the needs section.
- Identify evaluators before submitting proposal and include their resume and a letter of commitment.
- They may often contribute to the writing of the evaluation section.

# A Good Evaluation Plan:

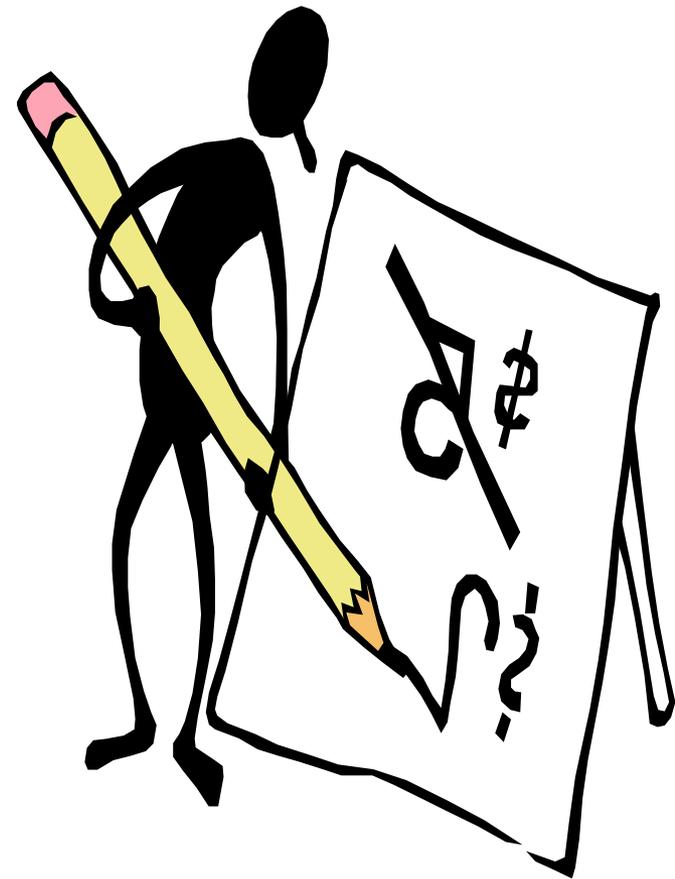


- Covers both process and product
- Tells who will perform the evaluation and how they were chosen
- Defines the criteria by which the program will be evaluated
- Evaluates the achievement of each objective
- Describes data gathering methods
- Explains assessment instruments, questionnaires, and other materials
- Describes data analysis procedures
- Relates evaluation findings to a plan for program improvement
- Describes evaluation reports to be produced

# The Budget



Do the Math!



# Developing Your Budget



- The Grants Office must be involved in this portion of proposal development.
- A restatement in dollar terms of the methods section - no surprises
- Realistic, don't inflate
- Two parts to a budget
  - the budget form which breaks the budget into specific categories
  - a budget narrative that explains how you arrived at these figures and why you need the money

# Two Types of Costs



Direct and Indirect

# Direct Costs



- Costs that can be identified specifically with a particular sponsored project, an instructional activity, or any other institutional activity; or that can be directly assigned to such activities relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy.

# Indirect or Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs



- Costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives, and, therefore, cannot be identified readily and specifically with a particular sponsored project, an instructional activity, or any other institutional activity.
- Indirect Rate is negotiated with the Grantee

# How Do we Determine if a Cost is Allowable?



- Only required for federal, but most institutions apply to all sponsored projects.
- **REASONABLE:** A prudent business person would have purchased this item and paid this price
- **ALLOCABLE:** Assigned to the activity on a reasonable basis
- **CONSISTENTLY TREATED:** like costs must be treated or cost the same in like circumstances

# Categories of a Budget



- Salaries
- Fringe Benefits
- Travel
- Materials & Supplies
- Equipment
- Contractual
- Other

# Adequacy of Resources



- Review your budget objectively
- Have you requested enough funding to complete the project professionally
- Target your budget to the “average” award range indicated by the agency
- You may need to demonstrate that the institution has adequate facilities to do the project as well.

# Appendix



- What additional information will be helpful to the reader?
- Curriculum Vitae
- Letters of Support/Commitment (Grants Office will obtain any institutional letters)
- Sample questionnaires, syllabi
- Some sponsors either do not allow appendix material or do not require reviewers to read anything that appears in an appendix
- Don't waste trees

# ITEMS IN ADVANCE



What items can you have prepared prior to writing a winning proposal (keep these ready):

- Mission Statement
- Board of Directors/Organization Chart
- Demographics of your Ward
- Tax Exempt Letter (501-C)
- Audited Financial Statement/A-133 Audit
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Separation of Duties Policy
- Certificate of Clean Hands– Updated
- Key Staff Vitas/Resumes

# A Readable Style



- Make sure that all pages are not just solid text
- Use bulleted items
- Use graphics in methodology and needs sections
- Use headings and subheadings, bold and underline, no italics
- Look at each introductory sentence of a paragraph, it is the most important part, it is all they may read
- Use type faces with serifs, like Times, they are easier to read
- Do not justify

The fine balance  
between wordiness  
and brevity that equals  
clarity



# Editing your Grant



- After you have finished your draft:
  - set it aside for a day
  - revise
- Have someone else read it without taking notes
- Have them tell you what your project is about
- Edit for clarity and conciseness
- No jargon
- No first person

# Formatting and Typing Checklist



- Use margins, type size and spacing as requested
- white paper
- Adhere to page limits
- Address all sections of guidelines and review criteria
- Address review criteria
- Make sure the budget balances
- Standard bibliography format
- Complete all forms
- Proofread/spell check
- Check duplication process

# 14 Reasons Why Proposals Fail

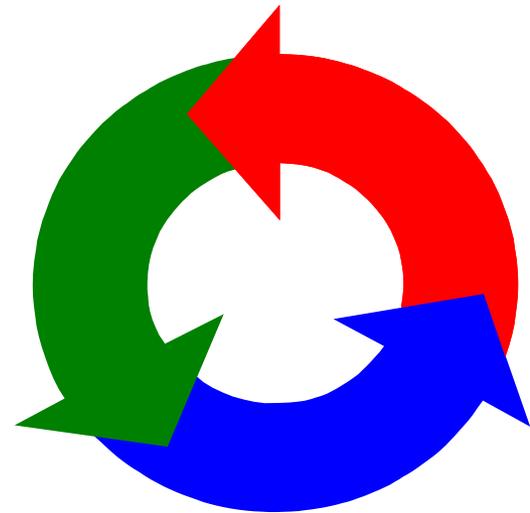


- Deadline not met
- Guidelines not followed
- Nothing intriguing
- Did not meet priorities
- Not complete
- Poor literature review
- Appeared beyond capacity of PI
- Methodology weak
- Unrealistic budget
- Cost greater than benefit
- Highly partisan
- Poorly written
- Mechanical defects

# Recycle your Rejected Proposal



- Success means having one in three grants funded
- A rejected proposal does not always mean the idea was rejected
- Obtain reviewer comments
- Call the program officer
- Rewrite, revise, resubmit





## **QUESTIONS/CONCERNS**

**THANK YOU!**

