Secrets of Grant Writing

CONNECTICUT
SERC MEETING

Frederick J. Cowie, Ph.D.
Consultant/Trainer/Keynote Speaker
fredcowie@aol.com
Fredcowie.com
Myspace.com/fredcowie
406-431-3531

BUSINESS CARDS UP FRONT!

This is a talk about the
SECRETS of
WRITING GRANTS
that
I learned over a
FIFTEEN YEAR PERIOD
GRANTS

--Allow you to:
  --Effect change
  --Get the help you need
  --Go where you need to go
  --Do what you need to do
  --MONEY, POWER, FRIENDS

Grantwriting:

--Learn the Game
--Be in for Long Haul
--Well Done, Professional
--Part of Agency Strategic Plan
--Be Tight with Finance/Admin
--Learn From Doing Grants
--Look at a Hundred Sites
Grantwriting cannot be:
--Hobby
--Once in a While Job
--One-Time Only
--“Set it and forget it”
--“Get the money and run”

PROPER PERSPECTIVE

--PROGRAMS (Federal, Tribal, State, County)
   --Personnel, Space, Equipment, Budget
   --Permanance, Respect, Sense of Role

--PROJECTS (Federal, Tribal, State, County)
   --Cobbled together, temp jobs, etc.
   --Short Term with start/end dates
   --Deliverables, then done
PROPER PERSPECTIVE

--PROGRAMS
  --CHRISTMAS TREE

--PROJECTS
  --ORNAMENT

PROPER PERSPECTIVE

--PROGRAMS
  --PERMANENT FUNDING PROCESS

--PROJECTS
  --GRANTS
Need & Fill the Need
Or
“You Don’t Need My Money”

Statement of Work
Goals
Objectives
Tasks
Task: Skill Person, Hours, Equipment, Supplies, Travel (miles), Room Needs, etc.
Budget

Goals

Objectives

Tasks
Task: Skill Person, Hours, Equipment, Supplies, Travel (miles), Room Needs, etc.
Costs: as estimated by the skill person or someone with knowledge

“Standard Accounting Principles”

Meet Goals of Grant-Giving Agency

or

“You Don’t Get My Money”
The Goals of Your Agency, Program and Grant Project Should Parallel Those of the Grant-Giving Agency

CONTRACTS vs. GRANTS

- Recent consulting job with CEO of large private, non-profit corporation
- She had been the “Contracts Officer”
- Her Question: “What is the difference between CONTRACTS and GRANTS? I am not getting it and this causing me so much trouble?”
CONTRACTS

– Federal government, grantor, defines project, writes the specifications

– You, grantee, propose way to fulfill their design, their project, their specifications.

GRANTS

-- Federal government, grantor, defines their goals, type of project, but with few specifics

-- You, grantee, design your project to your specifications
Make Room For More
“Bang for Buck”

--Began grant writing 1992
--Hazmat Program Manager
--Program had 1990, 1991, 1992 funds
--Shoveling snow in Montana
--“Best bang for the buck”
--“Bull, your bucks are in the bank”

Make Room For More (cont’d)

--Get rid of most of the money in the grant as quickly as you can
--Never return money, unless you can do it by half-time
--Early on, make sure subgrantees are going to use all of their allotments
--Have legal way to spend leftovers. If change from original grant, get permission
Tree vs. Ornament

-- Programs: like Christmas Trees
  -- Budget, space, personnel, equipment
  -- They are there, funded every year and NEVER END
-- Projects: like Ornaments
  -- Beginning date and END DATE
  -- Specific goal, deliverables, self-contained
-- People don’t like to give ornaments (project grants) to people who don’t have a good Christmas Trees (programs)

No Shotgun Approach

-- Do not submit grant applications haphazardly
-- Recipients should be glad they got your application, not ask why they got it
-- Massage your application to fit the granting agency’s needs
-- Don’t say “I’ve got nothing to lose” because you have your good name to lose as well as the respect of the granting agency
Know Who You’re Talking To!

--Grants Manager: runs a grant program, knows federal grant program and laws
--Projects Manager: knows about projects, but not about grant laws and programs
--Financial Section: gets you the money, knows nothing about grant programs or projects
--Meebee, Weebee, Deebee or some such thing: who knows nuttin’ about nuttin’ but one form

Recycling Applications

--If a project was worth an application in the first place, it’s worth reworking
--If an application was worth submitting in the first place, it’s worth resubmitting
--If you recycle an application, it only takes about 5% of the original work
--You should have learned from the rejecting agency why it was rejected and you fix it up
Waiting for the Target

--Sometimes as a “grant sniper” you have a great project, complete with goals, objectives, tasks, budget—but no grant program that looks good

--Hang it on the wall within sight of desk

--Wait long enough and a program will come along

--Have small grants ready for use of end-of-year monies (often returned by inefficient grant recipients who couldn’t spend their money)

Make bosses look good!

--Grant program managers have to justify their grants to their bosses

--Their bosses probably helped design the grant project parameters

--Think of yourself as on a mission to make their bosses look good to their bosses

--Think of yourself as on a mission to make your boss look good to her/his boss
They have to give it away

--The grant managers are under the gun to give away their grant monies

--You are doing them a favor by giving them a great project to fund

--Your goal should be to get reputation for your program as a great place to dump money

--They will, sooner or later, come to you and ask you to apply for their grants

Keeping Score

--The people who give grants away have a scoring system

--They have a scoring system and would be happy to share it with you

--They will use the system so you should

--You can ask for your score if you want to know why you didn’t get the grant
I used to have a friend that always said: “Same String, Different Yoyo”

What he meant was:

“Try the same thing somewhere else.”

or

“Try something else with the same agency.”

Different String, Same Yoyo
(Different Agency, Same Project)

--You have a good need, project and grant application
--One agency has turned you down
--Next year, find another agency
--Change the sales pitch a bit
--Try the same project, since it was good!
Different Yoyo, Same String
(Different Project, Same Agency)

--You were told by a granting agency that they like the application, your agency, etc., but the project did not fit their programs

--Use that good will and respect

--Talk to them about types of projects they like and develop a project (with a real need)

--Submit it the next year

Just a Part of the Pie

--Break project down into “severable” parts

--Get first portion of funds from known, friendly supporter

--Show prior support to others

--Don’t forget in-kind, they are easy and several of these could be your first supporters

--Get a local group to sponsor part of project

--Perhaps have multi-year, multi-part project
Similar Projects

--Show how your application projects fits with other work currently going on in your agency

--Show how if fits with other grant projects submitted to other agencies

Model or Replicable

--Show that you are developing a model project that can be used in many jurisdictions in U.S.

--Show that the deliverable is easily and cheaply reproduced

--Offer technical help on model replication to other jurisdictions at end of grant period

--Offer to present findings at sponsoring agency’s future conferences
**Project Manager**

--Make sure Project Manager has the skills, education, experience, time and will to carry the project to completion

--Make sure Project Manager is right person in the organization to be the Project Manager

--Make sure Project Manager is available to talk to personnel from grant giving agency

--Make sure the resume/bio of the Project Manager reflects everything above

---

**Charts and Graphs**

--More charts and graphs rather than more narrative

--PERT charts work the best for projecting out the work

--Organizational chart allows grantor to find program in agency and project in program

--Baseline data would best be collected prior to project and used a basis of project
Never Kid a Kidder

Figure that the grant giving agency
--Knows more about these types of grants
--Knows more about these types of projects
--Knows more about money management
--Knows more about running a scam

Banker

--Could you get a bank loan for this project?
--Does your application look professional?
--Would you stake your personal reputation and credit on a project like this with your bank?
--Would you drag in your boss and your boss’s boss with you to the bank for this application?
Occam and Einstein and KISS-KISS

--Occam’s Razor: Cut off all unnecessary stuff!

--Einstein: Keep it as simple as possible, but no simpler!

--Keep it Simple, Stupid!

--Keep it Short, Stupid!

EDITS

--Negativity

--Fluff

--Acronyms

--Redundancy
The Foundation Center
foundationcenter.org

--They were founded by grant givers to help grant writers

--Online mini-grantwriting course
--Check your knowledge and capabilities
--They have links to private foundations
--They have some search capabilities

Frederick J. (Fred) Cowie, Ph.D.

The End
Fred’s Secrets of Winning Grant Writing