

**CALIFORNIA INTEGRATED WASTE
MANAGEMENT BOARD**

GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP



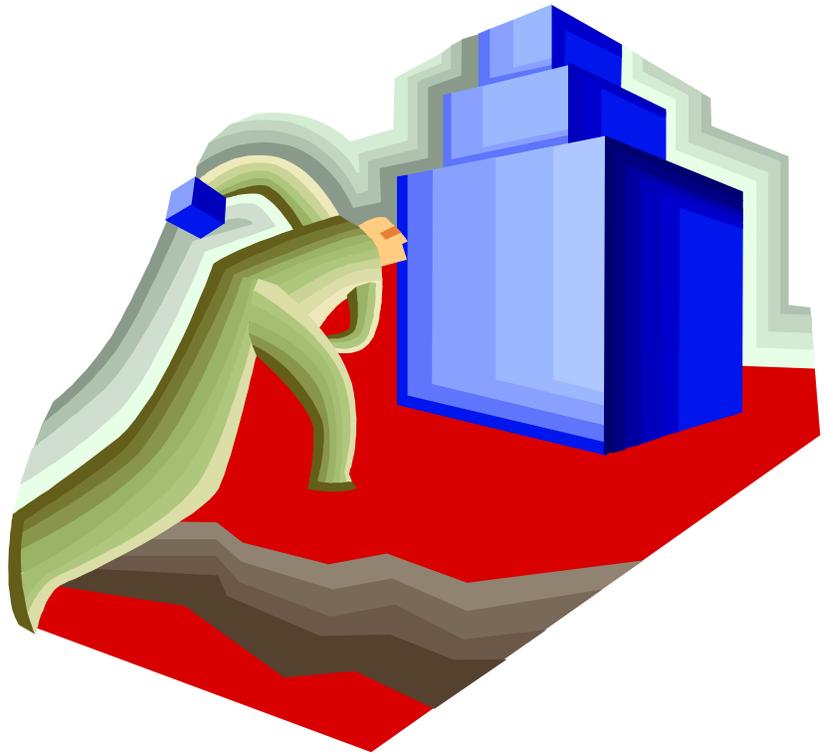
**How to Write Effective and
Competitive Proposals**

Regardless of the type of grants you are seeking, e.g.:

- TIRE GRANTS
- FARM AND RANCH CLEAN-UP
- USED OIL OR HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE
- SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

Regardless of the type of Funder's Announcement you are responding to, e.g.:

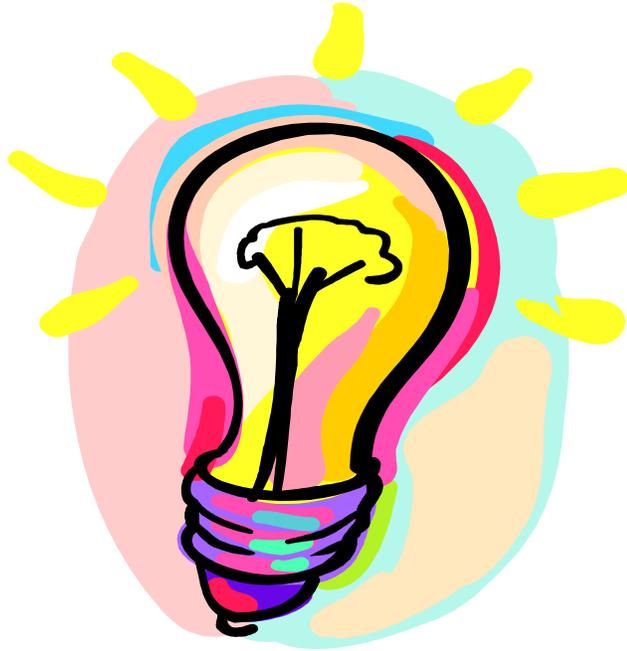
- NOFA
- RFP
- IFB



WELCOME!

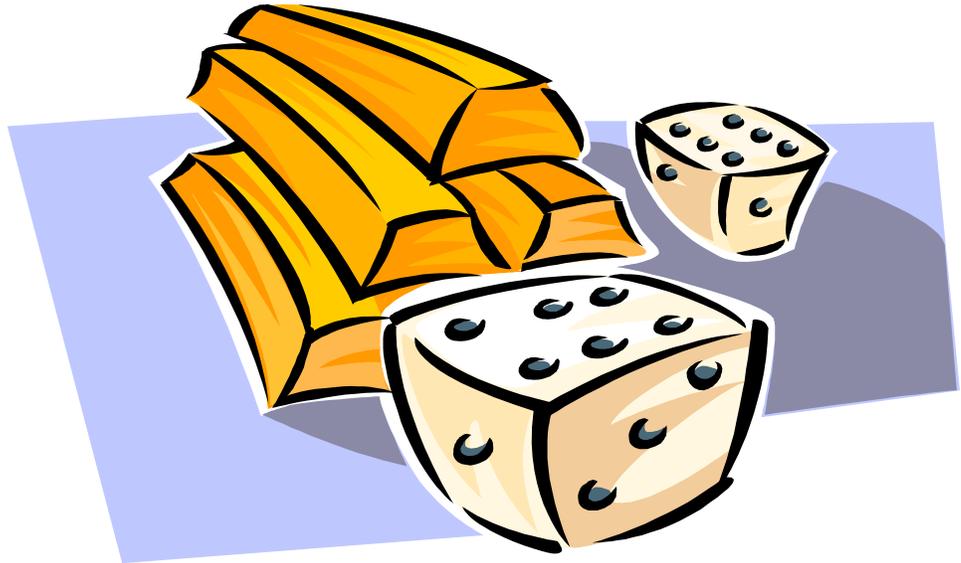
- Barbara M. Aved, Ph.D., M.B.A.
BARBARA AVED ASSOCIATES
- CIWMB Members
- CIWMB Staff

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT



- Different factors play a part in funders' decisions, no matter how well-written your proposal is.
- There are basic elements, but no “model” proposal for patterning.
- *Organizing and communicating* are more important than form.
- Planning is key ➡ “A grant proposal is the written version of your planning process.”

SOME CRITERIA FOR GOING AFTER A GRANT



- Project is consistent with your organization's mission and business objectives.
- Better than average chance for funding (e.g., we have a + trackrecord, we know a contact, funder expresses interest in us, we are well positioned).
- Program is under-subscribed (i.e., competitive opportunity).
- Cost/benefit is favorable (i.e., amount of grant award justifies cost of pursuing it).

Common Pitfalls in Seeking Funding & Writing Grant Applications



1. **Chasing the money.** Don't write a grant to start a new project you don't really need or want just to bring \$\$ into your agency!
2. **Requesting money to offset a deficit.** No one wants to fund your poor planning or agency shortfall.
3. **Going to Macy's to buy groceries.** Do your research first—make sure you're going to the right funder for the right project. Match-up is important!

4. **Failing to understand it's competitive process.** Unless funding is a sure bet (e.g., based on formula/ entitlement), always assume demand is higher than supply!

5. **Downloading the wrong RFP.** Similar-sounding RFPs could be issued simultaneously by the same funder. Or, out-of-date RFPs might also still be on the website!

6. **Not reading the RFP *thoroughly*.** Highlight the most important parts (like due dates and bidders' conferences!). Mark anything you don't understand or where you need to find answers.

7. **Not reading the RFP (or RFA) *early enough*.** Don't delay—leaving yourself too little time to make important contacts, gather important data, calculate costs accurately, find a grantwriter can be disastrous.

8. **Assuming the funder knows you/your agency.** Even if you're the grant-award poster child, don't assume proposal readers will mentally fill in the missing information! Don't depend on prior knowledge, past relationships.

9. **Disregarding the funder's questions.** If it's important to the funder, it's important to you.

10. **Philosophizing.** Don't argue with the funder's assumptions. If you don't agree with what they're interested in (or your ideas don't match their requirements), you should probably find another funder.

11. **Being redundant.** Saying it once is usually enough. Don't add unnecessary "fill" or "fluff."

12. **Re-organizing the proposal.** Follow the format instructions and place items where the *funder* has requested them—this is not the time to get creative with your presentation.

13. **Being incomplete (including signatures).** This could cost you points in scoring—Or, it could mean being considered non-responsive and disqualified.

14. **Assuming it's a one-person job.** In most cases, no matter who writes the proposal or fills out the application, collaboration or consultation with others will be required.

15. **Losing the Q & A window.** Start reviewing the RFP requirements and writing early enough to not let the time pass for asking questions and getting answers—and, don't be afraid to ask!

16. **Using a former proposal without updating it.** If you're going to use it, at least shake off all the dust! Use current dates, current numbers, current staff.

17. **Using a proposal previously submitted to another funder.** This is fair game, just be sure to change the names to protect the innocent!

18. **Not doing the math correctly.** Use a calculator, use Excel, but make sure the numbers add up! Funders lose confidence when budgets or estimates aren't accurate.

19. **Poorly estimating real costs.** Although budget line item transfers may be possible post grant award, think through ahead of time what labor, materials, overhead costs are expected to be.

20. **Backing into the budget.** Be realistic about what you need. Don't create a budget that reflects the maximum allowed just because the money's there. Also, don't expect staff to make any cuts that may be needed.

21. **Requesting non-qualifying expenses.**

Don't sneak it in and hope no one notices!

(Hint: even if funded for it, auditors can catch these items post grant award.)

22. **Budget surprises.** Don't ask for items not described or mentioned in the narrative.

23. **“Going political.”** Even with friends in high places, lobbying for points could back-fire or blow up in your face.

24. **Starting your project before getting the grant.** “If the ink isn't dry on the contract, don't assume it's a done deal.....”



HINTS FOR SUCCESS (DO'S)

- **Write clearly and concisely** ➡ Succinct is more important than volume
- **Be thorough** (what have you forgotten?)
- **Be specific** (are the deliverables clear? can the funder easily understand what they are "buying?")

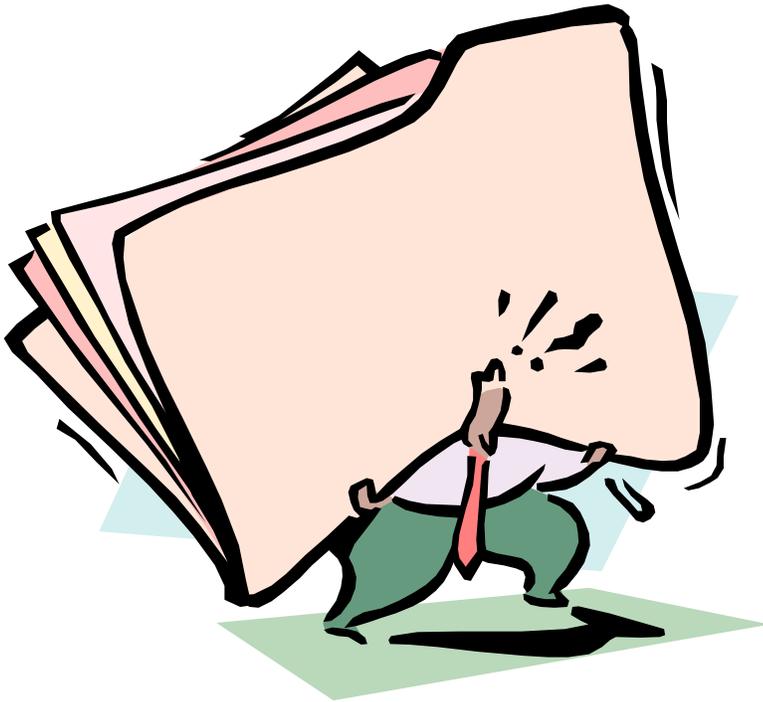
HINTS FOR SUCCESS (cont.)

- **Follow the format** (be a “responsive” applicant)
- **Use/create local data when possible** (define “data” as information)
- **Address anticipated challenges** (don’t try to minimize them; describe how you will overcome them)
- **Identify others necessary to your success** (who are the stakeholders? how will you involve them?)
- **Use reader-friendly formats** (grid display vs. narrative may say it best)

HINTS FOR SUCCESS (cont.)

- **Use good grammar/Use spell-check!**
- **Bring something to the table** (fundors view themselves as partners or investors)
- **Write the Exec. Summary after writing the proposal** (it's easier to put together)
- **Make sure letters of support/letters of authorization mean something** (i.e., they should state exactly what collaborators will do and how their expertise will contribute to the project).
- **Put yourself in the reader's place** (would *you* know what the proposal was saying if you didn't write it? would *you* want to fund this proposal)

CIWMB GRANT SCORING CRITERIA



BASIC ELEMENTS OF A PROPOSAL

- Need (or Problem) and Justification
- Goals and Objectives
- Work Plan (i.e., Project Description)
- Evaluation
- Budget
- Application Completeness
- Evidence of a Recycled-Content Purchasing Policy or Directive

NEED AND JUSTIFICATION

- What exactly is the need or problem you're addressing?

- Why is the project needed—locally, regionally, statewide?
 - Clean-up of environmental hazards
 - Decrease risk to PH and safety
 - Conservation of natural resources

- What factors contribute to the problem? What are the health and safety threats, or environmental concerns?

“Local surveys show....”

“National data indicate...”

Justify the need with data! Don't assume “everyone knows....” “It's perfectly clear....”

NEED AND JUSTIFICATION (cont.)

- What are the current unmet needs/gaps in services? What are the inadequacies of the current program (if one exists?)
- What is the demand for services? (Don't confuse *demand* with *need*)
- How will California (or your community) benefit?
- Are there any groups to be targeted or who might especially benefit (e.g., limited or non-English speaking, children....)?
- What would happen (or not happen!) if you don't get this grant?

NEED AND JUSTIFICATION (cont.)

- Why do *you* need the grant? How will it benefit *your* organization?
- Provide examples of current or previous related experience (grant funded or not) that a) supports the project, b) justifies the approach.

“We’ve chosen this strategy based on....”

- Identify relevant community assets. (What currently exists that serve as strengths?)
- Explain any unique opportunity.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



What do you hope to accomplish?

“Freddie’s Tire Company hopes to establish a new....” “hopes to expand our existing.....”

- State your Goal as an outcome or result.

(Make sure it relates to the problem you’ve described/need you’ve identified!)

- Write specific, measurable objectives

“Increase public awareness of....”

“50% of participants will adopt new guidelines for....”

Can the objectives be met within the grant term??

Work Plan (Methodology)



- **What are the major activities/tasks?**
- **Who will do them?**
- **When is the timeframe for accomplishing them?**
- **Who needs to be involved (cooperate) for project success?**
- **How much/what will be delivered or produced?**

Work Plan (Methodology), cont.



- **Why is this the best approach?**
- **What is the plan for sustaining the project after the grant period (if applicable)?**

Tasks	Staff	Timeframe	Units of Service/ Deliverables
1.			
2.			
3.			

EVALUATION



What are the success indicators—how will you measure the degree to which you’ve achieved your objectives?

- Describe both *process* (units of service) and *outcome* (effectiveness) indicators, where possible:

Process ➔ “Six training workshops will be delivered in the rural portions of the county.”

“A technical manual for implementing a waste reduction program will be produced.”

Outcome ➔ Change in number of workplace injuries (fewer incidents)

Change in customer satisfaction (fewer complaints)

EVALUATION (cont.)



- Identify the data to be collected and the method for collecting it (surveys, questionnaires, observations, focus groups)
- Identify *which position* will be responsible for collecting data, measuring progress, and reporting?
- How will you apply evaluation findings to program modification/improvement?



Don't forget to include the cost of evaluation when developing the budget!

BUDGET



What resources are needed to successfully carry out and manage the program? What other resources are available from the organization to support the program?

- When developing a budget, think about things such as:
 - Will there be extra costs associated with recruiting new staff?
 - Will outside consultants be required?
 - Are fees and rates expected to increase significantly during the grant period?
 - Will any program incentives be required to encourage participation?

BUDGET (cont.)



- Prepare budget on required form, if supplied. Use the Board's budget categories, if provided.
- Show *total cost* as well as amount requested from funder.
- Provide itemized breakdown assoc'd with major activities, if required by funder.
- Attach estimates or quotes, where applicable. Check math in all calculations!

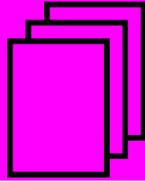
BUDGET (cont.)



- Identify any discounts or cost savings:
 - Recycling options
 - In-kind services
 - Volunteer labor
 - Per-unit efficiencies (e.g., reduced cost per tire)

***Make sure there's a close match-up
between the scope of work and budget
request!***

APPLICATION COMPLETENESS



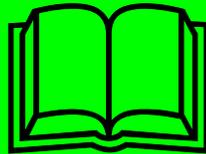
- Include any required Attachments:
 - Letters of Commitment/MOUs
 - Copies of business permits or licenses
 - Resumes of key project personnel and any contractors
 - Certification forms
 - Checklist forms

- Number pages sequentially.

- Check that all pages have been included and copied.

- Check mailing address or acceptable method of delivery.

EVIDENCE OF RECYCLED-CONTENT PURCHASING POLICY OR DIRECTIVE



- Describe the recycle-content purchasing policy that's in place.
- Document appropriate practices.
- Briefly explain how you will evaluate and modify any applicable policies.

Working with a Grant Writer

When to Use:

- ★ You don't have in-house expertise
- ★ No one has dedicated time
- ★ Particular person has unique entrée to funder/special insight to what they require

Issues to Consider When Selecting and Using:

- ★ Number and type of proposals
- ★ Reputation
- ★ Experience with/as a funder
- ★ Ask for a sample proposal they've written
- ★ Ask about success rate

Working with a Grant Writer (cont.)

- ★ Ask if they're also writing for other applicants (you may or may not care)
- ★ Don't make price the selection criterion
- ★ Always check the writer's work—read the application before submitting it!