Grant Proposal: A Written Program Plan

Through a step-by-step process with examples, and by following a logic model, this chapter will present a grant writing process that is also a program planning process. The end of the chapter includes a sample proposal review report, to illustrate the fact that there is always room for improvement for any proposals. This grant writing and program planning process will include: defining the purpose and the importance of the program, describing the service environment and needs addressed, identifying target populations, defining measurable and attainable goals and objectives, scheduling activities and time lines, detailing staffing and management issues, developing an appropriate budget, recognizing an agency’s capacity, and developing an evaluation plan.

Before we get into the “nuts and bolts” of grant writing, we would like to share with readers two practical observations.

The chance of whether a grant proposal is funded or not rests on 50% quality, 25% luck, and 25% connections. Quality proposal writing will put the proposal ahead of the crowd and make it competitive. However, the political and social status of both the organization and the grant writer, as well as the level of connection to the decision makers, amounts to a considerable portion of the funding determination. The sheer luck or being in the right place at the right time also makes the world of difference. Consequently, new grant writers should not be disappointed when they are not able to land a successful major grant in the first trial. It may need several trials to improve the writing skills, continued development of connections, and luck!

Writing is a passion that comes naturally for some. It is a drag and a cause for anxiety for others. Grant proposal writing requires a different kind of writing skill than that of writing novels. It is, however, learnable and requires practice. Even a good writer encounters writing block, or has trouble parsing what he or she wrote the day before. One of our colleagues, who is a scholar and a fine writer, declares that he routinely needs to write the same sentence seven times before it is to his liking and becomes understandable to others. In grant writing, it is not uncommon for writers to come across writing blocks, to not understand or like what they wrote. Some were surprised to learn that their readers failed to understand the meaning of a paragraph that is perfectly clear to the writers. We have found that it’s helpful when you: (a) organize materials, (b) show willingness to revise many times, and (c) keep someone who has no knowledge of your program close at hand to proofread and provide commentary of your draft proposal.

Request for Proposal

Funding agencies usually announce the availability of funding through the issuing of a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Applications (RFA). A notice to the public will generally be distributed and followed by the release and availability of the RFA. Applicant agencies usually have about 6 to 8 weeks to respond to the RFA. The RFA details the major and important information for the proposal application. Usually, it includes all the important dates and due dates. It also highlights the focus of the funding, eligibility of applicants, and what kind of program
that it is looking to fund. Some of the federal or major funding foundations will issue a batch of RFAs together as a booklet, while some will only issue individual RFAs. For funding sources that have more rigorous requirements, such as the federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention or the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, their RFAs can be quite lengthy and detailed. Some other RFAs for smaller funding are relatively shorter. No matter how long or short the RFA is, the applicant agency should dissect and study the document to gain a fine understanding of the requirements, expectations, and limitations of that particular RFA. Box 3.1 portrays a sample of a condensed RFA announcement.

**Logic Model for Program Development**

The logic model is a program design approach that emphasizes logical connections between causes or contributing factors to the program objectives, activities, and outcomes. For more than a decade, various federal offices adopted and used the logic model, including the former Office of Substance Abuse Prevention (OSAP), Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), and Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT). The logic model starts off by thoroughly reviewing the literature and identifying causes such as risk and protective factors. Next, the development of specific and measurable program objectives occurs, along with the design of coordinated intervention activities to fulfill the stated objectives. Finally, the model incorporates a detailed and rigorous evaluation component, in order to assess and document process and outcomes of the attainment of the specified objectives (OSAP, 1992).

Using logic model is a rational problem solving approach to program planning. The planning process is, however, not necessarily a linear sequential and rigid one. In an ever-changing environment, factors including the political economy, availability of resources, and timing make a step-by-step straight-line approach impossible and infeasible to map. Program planning process is more of a circular and spiral process; each step will be taken, evaluated, revisited, and refined. The logic model provides a framework to include all the necessary steps for a planning process that leads to the attainment of the desirable program results. Figure 3.1 provides a simple example of a logic model.

**Writing a Grant Proposal**

A grant proposal for human services is a written presentation of a program plan. This plan details how the applicant will approach the identified needs or problem with their proposed course of actions. Usually, the narrative portion of a grant proposal includes the following major sections:

- Abstract
- Table of contents
- Specific aims/background and significance/needs and problem statement
- Target populations
- Approaches and methods
- Long- and short-term goals
- Process, outcome, and impact objectives
- Activity plans and scheduling (timeline)
- Evaluation plan
- Agency capacity and project management
- Budget and budget justifications
Request for Proposal (RFP)

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announces the availability of support for new service projects that address the critical needs of the low-income, underserved or at-risk population in the United States. The funding is authorized under Section 123 of the 2002 Public Well-Being Act. A total of ten million dollars ($10,000,000.00) is earmarked for FY2003/2004.

The DHHS is interested in receiving applications for projects that are innovative and well developed in addressing critical needs of the targeted communities. All funded projects should begin no earlier than July 2003 and be completed no later than June 30, 2004. Both local government and private nonprofit human service agencies are eligible to apply for funding support. Applications under this announcement must be received at DHHS Grant Management Office no later than 4:00 p.m. on January 15, 2003. Absolutely no late applications will be accepted after the deadline.

All applications should include the following sections:

1. Abstract—45 lines max.
2. Table of Contents—2 pages max.
3. Specific Aims (Needs/Problems, Working Hypothesis, Objectives, Interventions, etc.)—3 pages max.
4. Target Populations—2 pages max.
5. Approaches and Methods (Project Goals and Objectives, Activities, Time Line, etc.)—6 pages max.
8. Budget and Budget Justification—3 pages max.
10. References and Appendices—no page limit.

Agencies that are interested in applying for the funding support must submit a letter of intent to DHHS no later than September 30, 2002. The letter should briefly describe the proposed project, including project goals, target population(s), proposed activities and location(s), and the name of a contact person. Only applicants who have submitted a letter of intent on time will be eligible to apply. Applicants are encouraged to attend the technical assistance workshop held in Washington, DC on November 20, 2002 and then in Sacramento, CA on November 22, 2002. Detailed instructions for preparing proposals for this announcement will be given in these technical assistance workshops. DHHS program staff will also be available to answer questions.

For further information, please write or call DHHS.

Abstract

An abstract is a summary of the proposal. About 45 single-spaced lines or one page is usually the recommended length. It is among the first few pages of a big proposal, as well as one of the last things—but not a last-minute task—that a grant writer will prepare before the proposal is sent out to the funding organization. An abstract may be the shortest section of a proposal; it is, however, the most read and most important section of a proposal. It is among the first few pages that the proposal readers would read and form the important first impression. For busy readers or readers who are not main reviewers for your proposal, this may be the only page they use to know your proposal. Their understanding of your proposal from this abstract may be the basis
they use for deciding their ranking of your proposal. It is important to make sure this is well written and that it represents your proposal effectively and succinctly.

An abstract is also used as the project’s summary for the various reports of the funding sources, such as the report to the community and to the board of directors. Internally, applicant agencies often use project abstracts for their own reporting and orientation for various constituencies. A proposal abstract (see Box 3.2 for a sample) is a short but important document with multiple functions. Typically, it includes the following information:

- Name of agency
- Type of organization
- Purpose and objectives of the project
- Specific interventions for the project
- Target population: demographic, age, race, gender, SES, special needs, etc.
- Location(s) and setting(s) of project
- Relevance of the proposed project to the funding intentions.

### Logic Model for an Alcohol and Drug Prevention Project for High Risk Youth

**Risk/Protective Factors**

- **Individual Domain**
  - Low self-image
  - Poor academic performance
  - Favorable attitude toward drug use
  - Lack of life skills
  - Ambition to become successful
  - Have interests in sport and leadership activities

- **Family Domain**
  - Poor family management skills
  - Lower family income
  - Single parenthood
  - Social isolation and lack of social activities
  - Strong family bonding

**Interventions**

- **Psychosocial Education and Community Involvement**
  - Individual tutoring program
  - Life skills development activities
  - Positive alternative activities
  - Community service opportunities

- **Family Life Education and Case Management**
  - Sister-to-Sister: Single moms club
  - Family Together: Ongoing organized parent-child activities
  - Clinical case management: family-centered clinical interventions and case management.

**Outcome Objectives**

- **Project Goal**
  - Improve self-image through performance and service.
  - Improve academic performance.
  - Increase community attachment through service.

- **Promote positive family management and interaction skills**
  - Provide peer support to female single parents
  - Develop family resiliency and opportunities to succeed through clinical and case management interventions.

**Promote protective factors and decrease risk factors for alcohol and drug abuse.**

**FIGURE 3.1** Sample logic model
Table of Contents

The table of contents provides the road map for your readers to understand the structure of the applicant proposal and assists them to find the information they want. It should be a clear and uncomplicated list that is simple to use, while detailed enough to refer to the right place for information. During the proposal writing process, the table of contents also serves as a checklist and framework to guide the development of the proposal. After the proposal is done, correct headings and page numbers will then be transferred to the working contents. It is one of the first sections to develop and the last section to complete.

For example, a Center for Substance Abuse Prevention demonstration project, which requires a detailed program plan, an evaluation, and proper government forms and documents, will have a table of contents as displayed in Box 3.3.

Specific Aims

This section presents the rationale and basis for the development, and possibly the approval for funding for this grant proposal. It also provides a brief overview of the proposed project.
Different funding announcements refer to this section with different names: needs and problem statement, the background and significance, or the literature review. In fact, this section often includes all of the aforementioned elements as subsections.

The main concern here is to present the case that you, the applicant agency, know what you are doing and why you are doing what you are proposing to do. It will also show your proposed interventions are guided by sound theoretical models and supported by all concerned constituencies. The applicant agency knows the theoretical models well, receives input from clients and community, and has developed a set of coordinated programs both theoretically sound and operationally feasible.
This section is like saying: “This is the current condition: We understand the dynamics of the situation in our target areas and how they affect our target populations. Based on the objective information, professional knowledge, practice experience, and support from the affected population, we propose the following promising interventions.” The writing of this section, like the rest of the proposal, has to be logical and succinct. Since detailed information on intervention is provided later on in the approaches and methods section, you only need a summary or preview of program objectives and interventions in this section.

Needs/Problem Statement

Many agencies spend tremendous amounts of time writing up the case justifying an urgent situation or problem that needs to be addressed. Meanwhile they are minimal in writing how they are going to address the problems they identified. Most of the time, the funding agency has a fairly good idea of the identified problem. Otherwise they would not allocate funding to support service projects that address the problem. If the funding source is already well aware of the situation, the applicant agencies may not need to spend too much time “preaching to the choir.” They should use this section to highlight the uniqueness of their situation, their unique insight of the situation, and their innovative approaches that address the problem. Instead of telling the funding source excessively where the agency is coming from (the known needs and problems), the agency may want to tell the funding source where it is going (objectives, interventions, and outcomes).

Coley and Scheinberg (1990) provide a useful outline for the write-up of a needs/problem statement: “The needs/problem statement examines what is happening that requires attention, attempts to explain why it is happening, and discusses what currently is being done to address it” (p. 40). The conceptual framework for development of a needs/problem statement (see Box 3.4 as well) can be described as:

Clients with “A” characteristics and background live in “B” conditions/environments and have “C” problems/needs that are caused by “D”. Clients are blocked from solving these problems because of “E”. This problem is related to other problems “F” and [have] “G” short- and long-term impact if not addressed. The impact of their needs/problems on the community is “H.” Others have addressed their needs/problems by doing “I”; the results of their interventions have been “J.” The most promising strategy for interventions is “K” (p. 41).

In this example, “A,” “B,” “C,” and “D” are the characteristics, risk/protective factors, and presenting problems. The “E,” “F,” “G,” and “H” are barriers, causes, consequences, and the working hypothesis. The “I” and “J” are the successful experience. This conceptual framework also forms the basic working hypothesis for the project and its interventions “K.”

Coley and Scheinberg (1990) assert that the applicant should attempt to show he or she has a complete understanding, and the best intervention model, of the problem that the funder seeks to address. Based on the guideline proposed by Coley and Scheinberg, Box 3.5 on page 26 shows a simplified outline for the write up of the needs and problem statement.

The needs/problem statement frames the working hypothesis that is the general belief that guides the development of a project proposal. This belief could be based on the applicants’ theoretical orientation, philosophical position, practice experience, agency mission, and other assumptions. It is not a research hypothesis, waiting to be validated. It is, however, a hunch or an educated speculation of what could be done to address the identified needs or problems. For example, most mentoring programs for at-risk children believe that positive role modeling and guidance from mature individuals (mentors) who care and maintain constant and purposive
contacts with their assigned children (mentees) will bring about desirable changes and benefits
to the children.

While writing the needs/problem statement, one should avoid the mistakes of circular rea-
soning or tautology. Circular reasoning is like a dog chasing its own tail: it will go round and
round in a circle. For example, one may argue the reason for having the proposed senior com-
munity center is because there is none in the target community. Conversely, one may also argue
that since there is not a senior center in the community, therefore it should develop one. The
argument has no end and no beginning. The best way to spot and to get out of a circular rea-
soning is to accept that the argument of “lacking what’s proposed” is not a good argument. Start
thinking about exactly why the community needs the proposed intervention. Without a senior
center, what would happen to the older adult population in the community? What can be
accomplished in the senior center, if it were established? A strong statement focuses on why the
intervention is needed, and what would happen if the implementation of the intervention goes
through or not—but not on the intervention itself. The intervention is proposed to meet clients’
or community needs; it is not proposed for its own existence.

In addressing the issues of barriers to service, particularly those related to cultural com-
petency, a proposal writer may wish to look into the five As: accessibility, availability, aware-
ness, appropriateness, and acculturation. The applicant agency should assess these five areas as
they relate to the proposed services. It is particularly important when the proposed services target a cultural or ethnic population. Cultural factors become both the barriers and the facilitators. The degree of acculturation of service recipients plays a vital role in the design of the services.

According to Yuen (1999), “accessibility refers to both geographical and cultural relevance as well as difficulties in service delivery. . . . Availability refers to the existence, recruitment, and retention of service, clients, and qualified service provider” (p. 109). Awareness refers to the target population’s knowledge about the identified issues and the available services. Appropriateness is about suitability and acceptability of the services that are developmentally and culturally competent. Finally, “[a]cculturation refers to the quality and extent of expose to the dominant American culture and the degree of functioning within the dominant culture” (p. 110). Ideally, culturally competent service programs are available to meet the identified needs in an appropriate manner. Target populations are aware of the service, and they can geographically and culturally access the services.

Coley and Scheinberg (1990) suggest some strategies that applicants can use to strengthen their rationales to support their proposed program:

- Clearly identifies the target group
- Meets a client/community needs
- Is cost effective
- Is a novel approach
- Builds upon the work of others
- Uses existing resources
- Promotes interagency cooperation
- Fits with the funder’s mandate/mission
- Has the potential of being replicated (p. 48)

**Literature Review**

The review of literature provides objective support data and rationales for the arguments in the proposal and the development of the interventions. It covers both professional, academic, as well as documentary materials. It reports both the historical account of the identified needs or problems, as well as the most current thinking on the issue. This is not a collection of cut-and-pasted...
information from unverified sources or personal beliefs. It is a well-developed review of relevant information from creditable sources to lean support to the approaches presented in the proposal. It helps establish and explain the theoretical foundation of the development of the proposal and its interventions. It should not be a “social problem” paper that explores the various aspects of an identified problem or provides a laundry list of needs and problems. It is a write-up that helps readers to have a better understanding and appreciation of the identified problems. It also validates the appropriateness and the quality of the proposal.

Box 3.6 provides a framework that a program planner or grant writer can use to develop the Specific Aims section of the proposal. The client systems can be the multiple target populations that the proposed intervention will affect. They may be the students who are substance abusers, their parents, their schools, and neighborhoods. The identified needs and problems for each of the target population should then be discussed with support data from professional literature, creditable reports from various sources, and experience from the very people who are affected. Based on this information, proper objectives will be developed with detailed intervention activities. The reasons and the appropriateness for the choices of intervention activities should also be considered. These reasons may include cultural, developmental, social, and other factors that make the interventions appropriate and effective in achieve the intended outcomes. Box 3.7 on page 29 provides an example of the specific Aim information.

Target Populations

The applicant needs to make a case here that the target population is especially at risk or in an urgent situation and needs to be served. Briefly, justify why this particular group and not the other groups who may be equally in need of services should be funded; for example, timing, recent successful experience, or recommendations according to local private and government reports. Write more than just plain statistical descriptions. Cite creditable sources of information to support the claims. Box 3.8 is a sample outline for describing target populations.

Approaches and Methods

Many years ago, in a hamburger chain commercial, an older lady asked a famous question: “Where’s the beef?” In proposal writing, approaches and methods section is the “beef” for the proposal. This section will lay out the proposed interventions or solutions that are intending to bring about changes on issues identified in the previous sections. Some funding sources refer to this section as goals and objectives, and activities and timelines.

Since this section can be rather extensive and detailed, it is a good idea to start it off with an introduction or summary of the proposed project goals and plan. To reiterate the appropriateness and the feasibility of the proposed intervention and activities, the applicant may wish to discuss its abilities to gain support and access to the target population. A well-designed intervention program is worthless if it fails to reach the intended population.

From Vision to Mission, Goals, Objectives, and Activities  Vision, mission, purpose, direction, goals, objectives, activities, and tasks are terms that proposal writers and program planners use. They are also terms that confuse the users and readers alike. Each organization, or its program, has an ultimate ideal state that it wishes to achieve. It is like the beautiful view that rests beyond the horizon, or a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. This view or “vision” is rather far away and out-of-reach, but is a fascinating and desirable state. When you put this
### BOX 3.5  
**Specific Aims Development Framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client systems</th>
<th>Needs or problems</th>
<th>Information sources: literature, key informants, etc.</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Interventions and activities</th>
<th>Why these interventions?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>C</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BOX 3.7  
**Sample Outline for Writing Specific Aims**

1. **Statement of Problems / Issues to be addressed by the project**
   - Identify only those problem areas, needs, risk/protective factors, or behavioral and social indicators that will be addressed by the project's interventions. There may be many important factors that are related to the identified problems and needs. However, the proposed project may not and should not be a for-all and cure-all program. It has a limited scope, focus, and boundary.
   - Indicate processes used to select these factors, such as (a) clients and community's input, (b) literature, and (c) agency experience.

2. **Working Hypothesis for the project**
   - Each program carries a particular belief or philosophy that motivates and guides the development of the program. This belief or hunch is the program philosophy that can be a statement in the form of a working hypothesis.
   - *e.g.*, Young students who attend supervised recreational activities after school are less likely to become school dropouts.
   - *e.g.*, Supervised after-school recreational activities will increase the target students' likelihood of doing well in school and staying in school.

3. **Briefly describe the expected outcomes, and interventions proposed to achieve these outcomes**
   - Briefly indicate the (a) outcome objectives and (b) intervention strategies used to address the problems/needs with a particular client system.
   - *e.g.*, To improve the parenting skills of teen fathers through an 8-week peer-training program in school.
   - Describe the theoretical basis, process, and rationale for selecting these interventions.
   - Discuss the effectiveness and relevance of interventions: (a) applicant’s experience, (b) relevant literature, and (c) community input.
This image contains a page of text discussing the process of converting a vision into words, which becomes a mission statement. The page explains that an agency’s mission statement describes the reasons and framework for being, and what the agency intends to achieve. Mission statements are relatively permanent expressions of existence and are not expected to change unless the fundamental reason for existence of the organization changes.

The document further explains that to bring this mission into a more manageable level, an agency will derive from the mission statement a list of major “goals” that are appropriate at that time for the agency. These goals are long-term destinations that are general. Although they are not necessarily measurable or achievable in the short run, they help limit the scope, operationalize the abstract mission statement, and set parameters for how interventions are to be provided.

Objectives are comparatively short term, measurable, and achievable. They spell out the details for each goal in measurable terms, including expected outcomes and the processes to achieve them. Objectives are defined as a statement of measurable and directional change for a specific population in a specific time period. They help in providing a logical and meaningful linkage between program goals and objectives.

Basically, there are three major types of objectives: process, outcome, and impact. Objectives are relatively permanent expressions of existence and are not expected to change unless the fundamental reason for existence of the organization changes. They are generally brief, e.g., to improve clients’ quality of life.

To bring this mission into a more manageable level, an agency will derive from the mission statement a list of major “goals” that are appropriate at that time for the agency. These goals are long-term destinations that are general. They are not necessarily measurable or achievable in the short run. They help limit the scope, however, and operationalize the abstract mission statement. Objectives are comparatively short term, measurable, and achievable. Objectives set the parameter and the mechanism of how and what interventions are to be provided.

As goals are not yet concrete and measurable, “objectives” are comparatively short term, measurable, and achievable. Objectives are defined as a statement of measurable and directional change for a specific population in a specific time period. They help in providing a logical and meaningful linkage between program goals and objectives.

The document includes a sample outline for writing target populations, which consists of:

1. Describe the target environment such as the community, neighborhood, city, district, etc.
   - Describe the socioeconomic status (SES), race and ethnicity distribution, and other urban/rural/suburban classification of the target environment.

2. Describe the population(s) to be served
   - Provide and describe the basic demographic data about the target population, such as race/ethnicity, age, gender, urban/rural/suburban, and SES.

3. Whether members of particular groups that have recognized great needs
   - Discuss whether the target population are from special high-risk groups such as latchkey children, abused youth, court referrals, homeless families, victims of violence, individuals with physical or mental disabilities, low-income families, and other disadvantaged groups.

4. Who and how many will participate or be served
   - Discuss the types and number of target clients, family members, and service providers involved. Who and how many will be served each year? How many will be served during the whole project period? Who and how many will be served in each of the proposed intervention or activity?
achieve the planned result. It answers the questions “Did we do what we set out to do?” and “What happens?” Outcome objectives focus the result of the interventions. For program evaluation, it answers the question of “How well did we do?” Impact objectives are the most abstract and difficult objectives. They identify the collective and accumulative results of the intervention. Impact objectives aim to answer the question of “So what?” Objective is linkage between the program mission and goals and its activities and task. Each goal can have several objectives and, conversely, each objective can have several activities and their associated tasks.

Objectives can be formulated and stated as process, outcome, and impact objectives. In many situations, an objective statement can include both process and outcome (e.g., “To provide 100 units of case management service to at least 20 welfare to work clients resulting in half of the them steadily employed in part-time or full-time positions at the end of the program year.”)

For programs that have many objectives, it is a good idea to have a good mix of process and outcome objectives. Certain programs may also require impact objectives. More detailed discussions on various types of objectives are included in the Evaluation section later in this chapter.

“Activities are lists of tasks that must be undertaken and completed in order to achieve each objective. . . . Activities specify precisely what to be done, by whom, and within what time frame” (Netting, et al., 1993, p. 240). Activities are the implementation and delivery of the actual intervention actions. Activities actualize the objectives and often are the only thing recognized by service recipients. As many activities lead to objectives, which in turn link to the goals and mission, they form a shape similar to that of a triangle. All activities, objectives, and goals point together toward the mission statement on the top of the triangle. This orientation toward the mission statement forms the “direction” or “purpose” of the organization. Figure 3.2 displays these linkages and relationships.

Box 3.9 and 3.10 beginning on page 32 provide two frameworks for writing the approaches and methods section, and one tool to help write better objectives, respectively. The first sample outline lists the basic components for this section. The second and more detailed example includes several objectives and their associated activities. In this example, main objectives are further broken down and organized into subobjectives. A numbering system is used to identify the linkages among objectives and activities.

As the program is writing its program objectives, it is also preparing for the evaluation strategies that go with each of the objectives. There are many ways to develop an evaluation plan. The following Objective and Evaluation Plan Development Form (see Box 3.11 on page 35) provides an example of using a structure to write objective as well as plan to evaluate the objective. This form is based on a worksheet used by Project STAR of Aguirre International, a technical assistance project for AmeriCorps Project of the Corporation for National Service. Program staff can use this form to refine each objective and develop its associated evaluation plan. By completing this form for each objective and attach each objective’s data collection instruments for its evaluation strategies, program staff will have an organized operating evaluation manual.

**Evaluation Plan**

Program evaluation is a type of evaluation research that systematically assesses the achievement of a specific program (Barker, 1999). It is an effort for practical purposes. It is not intended to generate scientific knowledge for theory building or academic accomplishments (Royse, Thyer, Padgett, & Logan, 2001). Program evaluation as an ongoing process is an integral part of the program and is detailed in the form of an evaluation plan.
An evaluation plan is like a design or a map that the program staffs and evaluators will follow to assess the progress and results of the program. It employs many of the basic social research methodologies, designs, and statistics, driven by the goals and objectives of the program that it intends to evaluate. Therefore, an evaluation plan should be developed, along with the formulation of program goals, objectivities, and activities at the beginning of the program. It is not a last-minute write-up or an afterthought at the end of the program year when reports are due. It is an ongoing process that is an integral part of the program.

Program managers should become knowledgeable about the evaluation process and the utilization of findings from program evaluation. Some human service agencies have internal program evaluators to assess the results of their programs. Certain program situations, however, may call for the use of outside evaluators. When the program managers are not familiar with the work of evaluation or fail to develop the working relations with the evaluators, the benefits of the cooperation between the program and the evaluation will not be maximized. In some situations, when the evaluators are academically more educated and have strong opinions, the evaluation tasks may end up driving the program. Consequently, program activities are done first to produce results for evaluation, but not to serve the clients that it intends to serve. It then is a case of “goal displacement.”

Program evaluation for a project intends to achieve three basic objectives and produce three basic types of data:

1. Documentation of program implementation strategies, intervention models, and other process information (process data)
2. Measurement of program outcomes and results (outcome data)
3. Assessment of overall impact and success of the program (impact data).
Sample Outline for Writing Approaches and Methods Section

1. Introduction/Summary and Goals
   - What do you try to achieve (goal), and why are your approaches so unique and appropriate?
   - e.g., The proposed new project aims to reduce violence and substance abuse related problems, and to promote positive functioning of families through educational, social, and recreational prevention and intervention activities, which are specific to the culture, gender, and age of the target population.
   - Present a simplified implementation plan or summary that includes: who (target population), whom (staff), what (programs/activities), where (sites/settings), when (time line) and how (intensity and frequency).

2. Recruitment, Retention, and Community Support
   - Detail procedures for identifying, gaining access to, recruiting, retaining, and following up the target groups, as well as other related people and organizations.
   - Discuss anticipated problems for recruitment and retention of clients.
   - Develop plans for culturally and developmentally appropriate interventions.
   - If multiple sites are used, describe and justify.
   - Present plans for coordination with other related programs in the organization and in the community. Indicate evidence of commitment or support from these organizations and individuals.

3. Objectives and Activities
   - Objective is defined as a measurable and directional change for a specific population in a specific time period.
   - e.g., To achieve a 10% (measurable) increase (directional) in grade averages (measurable) for targeted youth (specific population) after (specific time) their completion of the 6-month Dare To Study tutoring program (the intervention).
   - Interventions/Activities need to be (a) related to the project theoretical mode, (b) fulfill specified objectives, and (c) developmentally and culturally appropriate.

4. Time Line
   - Expected schedule for activities by each component. In addition to general narrative description, attach a graphic presentation such as Gantt Chart as an appendix to show activity schedules under each objectivity.
   - Time line also helps grant writer to realize the program’s time limitations and the need to plan well for the distribution and implementation of program activities.

Process data documents what happened for the program. They concern the question: “Did the program do what it set out to do?” Outcome data report the extent of which the program achieves or fail to achieve the intended to unintended results. They concern the question: “How well did the program do?” Impact data judge the long-term and sometime transcendental or philosophical consequences of the program. They concern the question: “So what?” Process objectives generate process data for evaluation. It is the same for outcome objectives to provide outcome data and impact objectives gather impact data.

To further illustrate these three types of objectives and data, consider Susan who grew tired and frustrated about her job as a child welfare social worker. She decided to take a weeklong getaway trip to the mountain, staying in a monastery. It was not a party and fun type pleasure trip; instead, it was more or less a personal retreat. Susan wanted to be in peaceful and serene environments to reflect and to think about life in general. She brought along a camera and a
GRANT PROPOSAL: A WRITTEN PROGRAM PLAN

BOX 3.10  DETAILED SAMPLE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIVITIES

Project Goal:
The goal of the Can Do project is to prevent the use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD)—and associated violence—among high-risk children and adolescents from low-income families in the Sunny City, by reducing associated high-risk factors and promoting positive protective factors. There are three main components of the project: 1. Youth Center, 2. School, and 3. Family.

Component 1—Youth Center

Objective 1
Provide ATOD intervention services to 400 adolescents through the Community Youth Center. Or:

In comparison to the adolescents of the control group in the same school, 25% more of the adolescents who regularly participate in Community Youth Center activities will have a negative attitude toward ATOD use (or will improve school performance by 10%, report a significant increase in their self-image, etc.). Or:

Develop a new community youth center (CYC) service in the Southside of the Sunny City to provide ATOD intervention services to 400 target children and adolescents annually to reduce risk factors that contribute to substance abuse and gang violence.

Objective 1.1
Develop year-round social, recreation, and educational alternative activities after school hours (3:00 PM to 6:00 PM) in CYC for 150 target children, adolescents, and their families beginning month 3 to promote protective factors.

Activities:

1.1.1 Organize one 15 boys soccer team and one 15 girls soccer team, recruit 10 parents and college youth as coaches, get sponsorship from local business, participate in at least one local tournament.

1.1.2 Organize 4 interest classes (skateboarding, arts and craft, music, and gardening) for 40 boys and girls. Each class will have 10–15 members and meet weekly for 2 hours on either Wednesday or Friday afternoon.

1.1.3 Organize a homework-tutoring program for 50 boys and girls. Eight (8) volunteer-tutors will staff the program. It operates daily during school year from 3–6 P.M. at the study hall.

Objective 1.2
Develop the community support network (community leaders, business, schools, and government) that includes at least 10 target organizations to provide support and advice to the project.

Activities:

1.2.1 Develop the project Advisory Board within the first 8 months of the project. The Board will meet bi-monthly and should have 6–8 members, including: parents, school representatives, law enforcement officials, and other community members.

1.2.2 A memorandum of agreement (MOU) will be developed between Ozark Health Awareness Council (OHAC), the Noo Mooney School Board, the XYZ agency, and other participating organizations to formalize the cooperative relationship.

Objective 1.3
Establish the CYC within the first 2 months of the project in the neighborhood of the target population to serve as the base for activities and gathering.

Activities:

1.3.1 Locate the facility, complete lease agreement and tenant improvement by the end of the first month.

1.3.2 Recruit Advisory Board members to assist the development of the program.

1.3.3 Recruit project staff; project director by the beginning of the project, administrative assistant and project coordinators by the second month, other project staff by the third month.

(continued)
Component 2—School

Objective 2
Implement a school based ATOD prevention curriculum (Careful Steps) (curriculum included as attachment) for 100 5th and 6th graders in two primary schools (Powell Rangers School and Pokemount School) of the Noo Mooney School District to facilitate the healthy development of their positive self-identity and social skills. Pre- and posttests with SSDI (the Self-Identity and Social Development Index, designed specifically for this project) and the State Children Self-Assessment Scale (SCAS) will measure the effectiveness of the program and children’s development in the areas of self-identity and social skills.

Objective 2.1
Revised the “Careful Steps” curriculum within the first 6 month of the project to make it more culturally appropriate to the local population, shortening it from a 24-week curriculum to a 12-week curriculum.

Activities:
2.1.1 Address copyright issues and secure proper approval from authors.
2.1.2 Revise the curriculum by the project evaluator and director, to be completed by the end of the fourth month.

Objective 2.2
Implement the curriculum to 100 5th and 6th graders in two partner schools to significantly improve their self-identity and social skills.

Activities:
2.2.1 Organize students who are referred to the program by teachers into groups of 10 to 15 students from the same grade in the same school. Annually, a total of 8 groups will be organized to meet weekly for 2 hours for 12 weeks during after-school hours.
2.2.2 Conduct baseline assessment using the SSDI and the SCAS upon referral and then outcome assessment at 3 months after the completion of the training.

Component 3—Family

Objective 3
Promote family functioning through the provision of outreach/home-based family intervention services to 100 high-risk children in two partner schools and their family members/parents annually, in the areas of substance abuse, family violence, mental health, and economic well-being.

Objective 3.1
Provide home-based case management and counseling to 75 families during the first year. Upon referral by teachers and identification of student with behavioral or emotional concerns, project social worker will contact and visit the family. Short-term counseling and case management services will be the main intervention modalities. To assess the quality and effectiveness of this service, 25% of all cases will be evaluated using single subject designs to evaluate clients’ progress.

Activities:
3.1.1 Identify and recruit 75 target families through referrals by teachers, school based groups, and other human service providers, as well as clients’ self-referrals.
3.1.2 Provide 400 hourly family intervention services, such as home visits, counseling, and case management during the first project year.

Objective 3.2
Increase 50 target families’ stress management and parenting skills through four 6-week Parents as Teachers training sessions, along with follow up activities, resulting in 60% or 30 families reporting an increase in family coping and family functioning capacities on the Training Evaluation Form.

Activities:
3.2.1 Implement the four Parents as Teacher trainings by two project social workers in two community facilities closer to the homes of the target families. Each training will include parents or caregivers from up to 14 families. Each training group will have the option of continuing as a parent support group after the six weeks of training is completed.
3.2.2 Advertise the training and recruit sufficient support from the appropriate partner agencies, such as county child welfare department, social service department, and other private human service providers in the service areas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>OBJECTIVE AND EVALUATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT FORM</strong></th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Program Name:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Start Date:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>End Date:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff by:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Needs Statement:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Activity**
   - Describe the service activity or the delivery structure that you will be providing and evaluating. (Describe the who, what, when, and where that you use to make your outcomes happen.)

2. **Beneficiaries**
   - Briefly describe the target groups (and the estimated number) your activity will serve.

3. **Desired Accomplishments and Results**
   - Describe service data or activities (process) that are to be accomplished. Explain what change (outcome) will occur because of the described activity or intervention.

4. **Indicators**
   - Describe the concrete, observable things you will look at to see whether you are making progress toward your desired result.

5. **Method/Title of Measure**
   - Describe the method and the instruments or tools you will use to determine if the described change occurs. (e.g., Teacher Opinion Survey)

6. **Standard of Success**
   - Define a level of success you hope to achieve.

7. **Respondents and Measurements Schedule**
   - Describe who will complete each instrument and frequency of measures to be taken.

8. **Data Collection, Aggregation, and Analysis**
   - Describe who will be collecting, aggregating, and analyzing the data and how often.

9. **Reporting and Dates**
   - Describe who will write the report and how often the report is due.

**Objective Statement:** Combine 1–6 into a single statement of objective.

*Example: Volunteer tutors will provide one-on-one tutoring to 50 4th grade students, weekly for 60 minutes for 4 months, resulting in 75% of those who participate regularly demonstrating improved reading ability, as measured by a diagnostic reading test administered prior to and following the program.*

Source: Created by Project STAR. Used with permission of Aguirre International.
notepad to record her journey and to write down her thoughts and feelings. A couple of days after her return, she was having lunch with her friends and showing them some of the photos that she took while she was on that trip, along with some souvenirs. Each of these photos provided a snapshot of her trip. Together, they became a record of this journey. Although the photos were beautiful and interesting, her friends were curious about her assessments of this trip. Her friends asked, “How did you like that trip?”, “Did you get what you expected? How did you do that?”, and “How was it?” Susan replied, “Very well, I had a wonderful time, I liked it a lot.” After lunch, she went back to her little office and sat in her almost broken office chair in front of a big stack of case files. She looked around, took a deep breath, and said to herself, “I am glad that I took that trip. I was able to do most of the things that I planned to do. It was a rather fun and enjoyable time-off from my hectic work and social life. Most importantly, the whole experience provided me an opportunity to reflect and to refresh. Now I am reenergized and have an renewed perspective toward my work and myself.”

Susan’s photos, souvenirs, and journey log represent the process data that she has to show and to record what she had done or what happen to her during that trip. But the physical evidence didn’t tell much about the outcomes or the extent of Susan’s satisfaction of the trip. Upon being questioned by her friends, Susan responded on the outcomes of how much she enjoyed the trip and to what extent she was able to have time for herself. Susan was able to satisfactorily achieve what she set out to accomplish. For Susan, a reflective person, this excursion represented more than a pleasant trip to the mountain. It produced an impact that brought her renewed perspectives toward herself and her work.

The intended results of the process evaluation task are to: (a) provide accurate description of the project’s development, (b) provide accurate quantitative data on interventions, and (c) prepare qualitative analyses of program activities. Whereas outcome evaluation tasks assess whether certain proposed interventions in fact have effects on the issues addressed by the project, such as the reduction of risk factors; the promotion of protective functioning, increase of leadership skills, development of self-identity, and so on.

The formats of evaluation plans (as shown in Box 3.11) vary according to the program that they intend to evaluate. However, they are likely to include the following components:

1. Process evaluation plan
2. Outcome and impact evaluation plan
3. Data collection and data analysis plan
4. Confidentiality and other ethical considerations
5. Data collection instruments
6. Implications and reporting plan, and others

Program evaluations often are objective-driven. The process and outcome evaluation plans could be developed and organized per each program individual objective. (Detailed discussions of program evaluation and examples are presented in the following chapters of this book.)

**Agency Capacity and Project Management**

The creditability of the agency is like the creditability of an individual. It is associated with how much confidence and trust others may have in the individual or the organization. The funding applicant needs to convince the funding sources that it is uniquely qualified and competent, and that they can entrust it with the funding and the attainment of the desirable program results. The agency is to show that it has the track records as well as the abilities to design and to carry
out the proposed project, if funded. These track records include both the agency’s program capacities and the fiscal abilities. Funding source and monitoring entities need to know how the agency plans to manage the project.

One can learn about the agency capacity through reviewing the agency’s mission statement, history, structure, programs, accomplishments, and other qualitative and quantitative information. With the increasing emphasis on collaboration and coordination, as well as the concerns over recruitment and retention of clients, agency often needs to show its capacities in community mobilization and connections. One way to show this capacity is to include support letters from relevant organizations and individuals. These may include relevant politicians, partner organizations, and clients or target population.

Management plan details the staffing and their responsibilities, the chain of command, and the project’s relations to the other programs within the organization. This management plan reflects the efforts that the agency is willing to commit, the qualifications of the staff, and the division of labors and the cooperation. Box 3.12 provides a sample outline for preparing the agency capacity and project management section. Resumes of current and proposed staff should also be included for review. Detailed job descriptions of each of the positions will help clarify the agency’s expectations of the project staff. Box 3.13 gives two examples of such job descriptions.

**Budget and Budget Justifications**

Budget has always been a great concern for many human service programs. Agencies turn to many types of fund-raising activities, ranging from major grants and contracts to small-scale bake sales to raise money for program expenses and agency operating costs. With the increased demand for accountability and the need to monitor how agencies spend their public money and donations, there is a greater need for a program to have a well-developed budget.

A budget is a financial plan that estimates the costs for implementing a program and the allocation of these costs. There are many formats of budget for programs. The line-item budget is a commonly used model. It details how money will be spent annually for items or categories such as personnel, equipment, and supplies.

Not only should funding applicants detail the dollar amounts for each of the categories, they should also be asked to justify the amount and the allocations. Some agencies prefer to list the budget and detail the justifications on separated pages. Others, however, incorporate the justifications into the budget layout.

The line-item budgetary model has several common categories. Personnel is the cost for hiring or salary for permanent staff. It is often a large expense item on the budget. Generally speaking, a program should not have a personnel cost that exceed 65% of the total budget (i.e., $65,000 for a $100,000 grant).

Salary is not the only cost for having a permanent staff. Each of the position carries a cost for paying the benefits for the employees. These include payroll tax, unemployment benefits, and other health and life insurance costs. Although it varies from agency to agency, generally it means approximately 20% of the employee’s salary cost (i.e., 20% of $65,000 is $13,000). The executive director, the fiscal director, the administrative director, the young man who answers the phone, and the nice lady who cleans the office are all part of the operations that make the program possible. They, too, have to be paid. And the cost is the so-called indirect cost. The calculations of indirect cost are again different from agency to agency, and from funding source to funding source. Some funding sources figure the costs in as part of the total project cost; some, however, treat it as a cost that is above and beyond the project cost.
Travel cost includes local and out-of-town costs. The federal and state reimbursement rates for mileage or use of personal automobiles changes from time to time. Per-diem rates are also different from city to city. Check the latest listings to ensure the usage of correct rates in the proposal.

Equipment, unlike supplies, refers to items that usually last for several years, and generally are more expensive: program and activity gears, computers, and office furniture. Supplies are items that are less expensive and are disposable after use, such as office supplies, postage, and program incentive materials.

Contractual or consultant costs are for support personnel who are not full-time or part-time employees of the agency. Therefore, they do not receive the aforementioned employee benefits. They may include the external evaluator, tutors, and instructors for the program.
Position Title: Project Director

Position Description: Project Director is responsible for the planning, development, and coordination of the ABC Project, a federally funded substance abuse prevention project. Working under the direction of the Executive Director, the Project Director will oversee the establishment of project services in various program sites.

The basic responsibilities are as follows:

1. Administrative: Ensure that guidelines, procedures and program goals, and objectives are met by components. Develop ongoing linkages with the community and the project. Meet and review programs with the ABC Project Advisory Board. Plan and develop programmatic strategies for review by Executive Director and Advisory Board, and implementation by staff.

2. Personnel: Establish administrative and personnel procedures for all managerial and line staff. Develop and implement recruitment and selection procedures for all staff. Assist all project staff in personnel development.

3. Training: Working with project staff to develop and implement a training strategy, curriculum, and program for initial training and ongoing in-service.

4. Management of Grant and Budget: Monitor and review budgetary and fiscal controls and limits. Preparation of monthly and quarterly reports. Ensure reports are submitted regularly by project staff.

5. Evaluation: Coordinate establishment of a management information system (MIS) and evaluate procedures with the evaluation team.

6. Public Relations: Publication and preparation of information to the community and organizations including local, state, and federal authorities; community agencies; and media.

7. Other duties as assigned by the Executive Director.

Minimum Qualifications

1. Graduate degree in health or human services or equivalent experience in nonprofit management.

2. Two or more years in administration of human services with experience in staff, training, program planning and development, budget planning, and report writing.

3. Experience and knowledge of the minority communities in Fine City.

4. Excellent verbal, conceptual, and grammatical skills.


Position Title: Project Counselor

Position Description: The counselor will be developing and providing prevention, education, information, and referral activities to Hispanic youth and their families on issues and problems related to substance abuse and other at-risk behaviors.

The basic responsibilities may include the following and are determined by the specific component of which the worker is assigned:

1. Education/Outreach: Assist with high-risk youths and their families through the Community as a Family Center (CFC), schools, community organizations, and activities. Coordinate and implement series of prevention to high-risk youth and their families. Works with media to publicize activities of ABC project.


3. Youth Center: Develop and lead CFC groups and programs. Coordinate tutoring classes and facilitate parents' participation in center activities.


(continued)
CHAPTER THREE

Office space rental could be a very expensive item on the budget, depending on the location of the project in the country. Office construction, including major remodeling, can be an even bigger budget item. Certain funding such as Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is designed to support construction, while some others may prohibit such expenses. Most funding sources for programming are not interested in construction expenses. Some of them may support leasehold improvement for minor refurbishing work that would make the facility appropriate for implementing the proposed program. Agencies that are interested in construction, equipment, or other major purchases should look to special funding opportunities, foundations, or major fund raising events to get the financial resources.

Items such as printing, staff development, and janitorial service, if not listed as separate items, would make up the catchall item of “Miscellaneous.” Applicants should remember that the funding sources are very likely interested in maximizing resources in direct services. It is a good practice to assess the agency’s assets and determine whether certain equipment, facilities, space, service capacities/volunteer output, or resources can be spared and be used as “matching funding” or an “in-kind contribution” for the proposed project.

See Box 3.14 for an example of a sample budget.

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**BOX 3.13 JO**

5. Counseling: Engage and provide individual and group counseling to high-risk youth and their families. Intake and assessment of new clients.

6. Cultural and school programs: Coordinate instructors for cultural activities, and provide support service to Hispanic student at targeted schools.

7. Administration: Ensure adequate record keeping and charting complying with CHAC and ABC policies and procedures. Assist evaluation component in establishing clinical and evaluation procedures. Assist Project Director in meeting goals and objectives. Provide reports as needed.

8. Training: Participate in substance abuse education/cross-cultural counseling training. Assist Project Director in developing training curriculum. Undergo orientation to evaluation procedures.

9. Other duties as assigned by the Executive Director.

**Minimum Qualifications**

1. BSW or BA in human service disciplines with experience in youth and family counseling or counseling experience.

2. Demonstrated experience in providing human and social services to Hispanic American community.

3. Substance abuse service experience and training preferred.

4. Health/mental health prevention skills in working with high-risk immigrant youth and their families.

5. Strong ability to establish network with community agencies and social systems.

6. Organizational, administrative, and supervisory skills preferred.

7. Bilingual and bicultural in Spanish or Vietnamese preferred.

8. Willingness to flexible hours.
## BOX 3.14 SAMPLE OF A FIRST YEAR BUDGET AND JUSTIFICATIONS

### A. Personnel

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<tr>
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<th>Months</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>$176,000</strong></td>
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</table>

### B. Benefits (20% of Personnel cost)

1. Payroll Taxes
2. Employee Benefits
   - Medical Benefits
   - Dental Benefits
   - Life Insurance
   - Worker’s Compensation Insurance
   - Others

**Twelve Month Total** $35,200

### C. Indirect Cost (15% of Personnel cost)

**$26,400**

### D. Travel

1. Take a Break National Conference (2 attendees)
   - Airfare and Transportation per Attendee ($500 × 2)
   - Hotel Accommodation ($110/night × 3 nights × 2)
   - Per Diem ($40/day × 4 days × 2)
   - **$1,980**

2. Local (Mileage)
   - FTE (Total 8, include 6.5 staff and 1.5 interns/volunteers)
   - Weekly Mileage/FTE (50 miles)
   - Number of Work Weeks (48 wks)
   - Reimbursement Rate ($0.325/mile)
   - **$6,240**

**Twelve Month Total** $8,220

### E. Equipment

1. Telephone
   - 8 Desk Sets: purchase, installation and wiring ($50 × 8 = $400)
   - Monthly operating cost ($30@ × 12 mo × 8 = $2880)
   - **$3,200**

2. Personal Computer and Printer
   - Number of Computer Sets (3 Sets × $1200)
   - Number of Printer (2 printers × $300)
   - Service Contract
   - **$4,200**

3. Copier Rental
   - Unit Cost ($200 × 12 mo = $2,400)
   - Operation Cost ($3,000 × 12 mo = $3,600)
   - **$6,000**

4. Office Furniture
   - Staff desks and chairs ($150 × 8 = $1,200)
   - Program tables and chairs, etc. ($2,000)
   - **$3,200**

**Twelve Month Total** $16,600

### F. Supplies

1. General Office Supplies ($350 × 12 months)
   - **$4,200**

2. XYZ Program/Activity Supplies
   - $1,200

3. Fax machine
   - $250

4. Postage ($50/month × 12 months)
   - $600

5. Program Incentive Materials
   - **$1,000**

**Twelve Month Total** $7,250

(continued)
G. Contractual/Consultants

1. Program Assistants
   a. Tutors ($10 \times 8 \text{ hrs/wk} \times 3 \text{ tutors} \times 40 \text{ weeks}) $9,600
   b. Interest Club Instructors ($10 \times 8 \text{ hrs/wk} \times 3 \text{ Ins.} \times 40 \text{ weeks}) $9,600

2. Program Development and Training Consultant $8,000
   ($60/\text{hr} \times 100 \text{ hrs plus $2,000 per diem and transportation})

Twelve Month Total $27,200

H. Construction
Non-Applicable

I. Office Space

1. Office Space Rental $72,000
   (3,000 sq. ft. @$2.00/month \times 12 \text{ months})

2. Leasehold Improvement $3,000

Twelve Month Total $75,000

J. Others

1. Local Conference and Training $1,000
2. Publications/Printing (3 Brochures and Curricular) $1,500
3. Janitorial Services $3,000

Twelve Month Total $5,500

Annual Total Budget $377,370

Proposal Reviews

After a program proposal is developed, it is sent to the funding source on or before the deadline for review. Depending on the degree of sophistication of the funding sources, and the size and the seriousness of the funding opportunity, proposals are to be reviewed with different degree of rigors and face different degree of competition.

For most major federal government human service grants, proposal review committees are formed to be responsible for reviews and recommendations regarding all the proposals submitted. These committees consist of experts in the field of practice and representatives from different constituencies. Members in each committee will be asked to review a set of proposals beforehand. Each one of them will be assigned as a primary reader for several proposals, secondary reader and tertiary reader for the other few. During the committee review meeting that may last four to five days, each primary reader will be responsible for presenting the summary of the proposal that he or she is assigned. The reviewer will also give his or her comments and critiques of the proposal. After that, the secondary reader will present his or her comments and highlight the agreements and disagreements with the primary reader. The tertiary reader will then add on his/her comments. Based on the comments from the three readers and each committee member’s own readings of the proposal prior to the meeting, the committee will vote and make recommendations to the funding decision makers.

As one can easily point out, this process is rather rigorous. Nevertheless, the effects of the luck of having difficult and detailed readers, or easy readers, are obvious. These assigned readers can...
be the advocates for the proposal. At the same time, their chosen focuses and comments can direct the discussions into highlighting the weakness and uncertainty of the proposal.

Program planners and proposal writers certainly can take advantage of these review comments to improve their program plans. If the program is not funded, the revised and improved version will be an improved and tested version that will have an increased chance for gaining funding support. Receiving rejection and resubmitting a program proposal is common practice in the human services. Through peer reviews and improvements, programs can become better designed to better serve the needs of clients and communities. Box 3.15 is a sample of a review for a multiyear demonstration grant.

**Summary**

Grant writing is not only about writing; it involves a lot of planning, organizing, integrating, evaluating, and most importantly critical thinking. The quality of the grant proposal certainly is among the most important factors in funding decisions. Political economy and sheer luck, however, also have their shares in the making of decisions.

This chapter presents a framework for developing a grant proposal, as well as examples. Although it is a labor intensive and challenging endeavor, it is also a most satisfactory undertaking that brings a vision to life and hopefully, when funded, services to the needy. Many years ago, the comic *The Far Side* depicted two little spiders waiting anxiously next to a big spider web at the end of a slide said to each other, “If we pull this off, we’ll eat like kings.” It is true that writing a good proposal and getting grant funding seems to be an enormous and formidable task. The fact is that many do so and get funded. The first step in getting any grant funding for a service proposal is to submit one. The big catch will eventually come and be caught, only if you have the big web ready to catch it.

To put in a reality check based on our experience, we want to inform you that even after the big grant comes, you—the little spiders—literally will not eat like kings. You will be busy implementing and evaluating what you proposed. At times, you also have doubts that you might have promised too much! However, the actualization of program ideas, and seeing important service providing taking place to meet community needs, are by themselves satisfactory feasts.

**References**

1. Identification
   A. Application Number: 123456789
   B. Project Director: Mr. F. Grant, Project Families First.
   C. Reviewer’s name: Dr. Brightside

2. Description
   The Greater Bull Medical Center (GBMC) through its Community and Family Health Center (CFHC) submits an application for a multifaceted project (Families First) for the prevention of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problems. Families First represents a strong collaboration between CFHC and City Springs School, both located in Bigtown, in east Bull. Anticipated outcomes of Families First include improvements in the physical and emotional health of City Springs’ students and their family members, personal skills of students, knowledge of ATOD health risks, family functioning, employability of family members, linkages and communication between families and school personnel, student management, community knowledge of positive health behaviors, and community inputting systems development.

   Families First interventions combine activities already in place at City Springs School and CFHC with an array of new activities specifically geared towards improvements in the family and community. Interventions include: Intensive Outreach, Preventive and Primary Health Care for children through the Wellness Center and for family members through CFHC, Peer Mediation, Academic Enrichment, Family/School/Community Events, Brown Bag Lunches and other In-Service Training for school personnel, Community Health Education, involvement in Empowerment Zone Planning, Brothers and Sisters, Family Resource Center, Warm Line, Family Program, Family Needs Assessment, referral to ATOD Treatment, Job Exploration and Job Search, and a Smoking Cessation Program.

3. Critique
   The Greater Bull Medical Center’s Community and Family Health Center is a well-recognized organization in the community. In cooperation with other health agencies, CFHC has been a provider for primary and preventive health care for the Bigtown community, an identified Empowerment Zone. CFHC has an established relationship with the City Springs School through its current programs on site at the school. The proposed Families First project is a coordinated and comprehensive project and its goals are consistent with identified funding goals. Letters of commitment and support from local organizations attest the resourcefulness of the applicant organization. However, there is no formal indication of support from the School’s Parent Teacher Association (volunteers for the Outreach).

   The theoretical support for the model of the project is well conceptualized and documented. Statistics cited in the application display the basic demographic information as well as a vivid picture of the depressed socioeconomic situation of the target community. Yet, there is no specific information on the project’s target population, e.g., students’ health status, school performance, drop-out rate, gang violence, students and family members’ involvement with ATOD use, and so on. No data on ATOD use and related issues such as violence and HIV/AIDS in the community are provided. The design of the project seems to rely frequently on the applicant organization’s service experience.

   Recruitment of participants is to take place on site in the school, in the CFHC, and through home-visits. These trust-building-focused outreach and word-of-mouth approaches are of merit in engaging a hard-to-reach target population. The uses of “Great Grannies” and “Brothers and Sisters” are also consistent with the family focus of the project as well as the community that it intends to serve. Since many of the activities will take place at the school, the Brown Bag Lunch program seems to be a good way to encourage teachers to stay involved in the project.

   The proposed project is a comprehensive project and has many project activities. For some of these activities, more details on contents and their implementation are needed. For example, the relationship between the “Wellness Center” and the “Family Resource Center” has not been well defined. Are they the same program? If not, what is the “Wellness Center”? Also, the application indicates that the “You’re Special Family Program” will take place twice a week for 1.5 hours each, but there is no discussion on the duration of this activity as well as the follow-up plan for participating parents after they complete the program.
Although the project intends to serve all students in City Springs School (approximately 560 students), the majority of the project activities are focused on students from the 2nd grade to the 4th grade (approximately 250). Since the school serves students from pre-kindergarten to 5th grade, it is not clear how the other students will be served by this project, except through their parents or possible enrollment in the primary and preventive health care program.

The ATOD prevention education program (Bull City Public Schools Health and Family Life Curriculum) includes age-appropriate content and is infused into 2nd to 4th grade curricular. It is, however, not clear whether this curriculum is currently used in the school already. If so, how is it different from the one that is proposed through the application? Also, information on assessing the impact of this curriculum and other Families First programs on the target population is lacking. Overall, there is not sufficient information in the application to indicate the current level of services, and that it is difficult to judge how this project will supplement the existing programs.

The proposed project has a rather comprehensive approach to attract and to serve its target population. This project also utilizes existing resources and links project participants to needed services, including job training, ATOD treatment, and smoking cessation programs. Collaboration and support from other service organizations and commitment from the organization's administration are evident.

The chief evaluator for the application is experienced in education and education technologies. The evaluation plan provides adequate information for both the outcome and process evaluation. No statement of commitment to the funding source’s cross-site evaluation is provided.

The proposed project is rather complex and comprehensive; students and their family members can access the program through different activities. While greater access is certainly a strength of the program, this situation also makes it difficult to determine the frequency of target population’s participation and the intensity and impact of the interventions. Furthermore, the application lacks measurable outcome objectives and most of the project activity objectives are process objectives. Consequently, the achievement of the funder’s goals and the extents of impact of project activities will be hard to assess.

Although students from the Thomas Elementary School will be used as the comparison group for this project and “will be matched with respect to demographics”; no detailed information for this selection and the plan to test the compatibility of the comparison group and the project participants are provided. Additionally, the evaluation plan indicates that the “cross-site analysis” (use of comparison group) will be focusing on “treatment” (p.16). A focus on treatment is inconsistent with the funding source’s focus on prevention.

4. Personnel and Management

The management plan for the project is sufficient and the personnel structure is reasonable. The project involves 8 salaried positions (total 6.1 FTE) and volunteers. There is confusion in Section F regarding whether the project director is also the Licensed Clinical Social Worker for the project.

Organizational charts are provided but they do not show how the proposed project will fit into the structure.

5. Budget and Resource

The applicant organization’s ability to use existing facilities both within GBMC and City Springs School is a strength of the project.

6. Confidentiality and Other Ethical Concerns

The evaluation plan seems to be in compliance with basic confidentiality and other ethical concerns.

7. Recommendation and Resume

Recommended. Good.

The proposed project is well developed and the application is well written. It has demonstrated the need for an ATOD prevention program in the community and the agency’s abilities to deliver such a service building upon its current programs and service network. The cultural competency of the proposed project and its staff are also noted. Unfortunately, the application fails to indicate the agency’s current level of services and how the proposed project will supplement its current services. Lack of measurable outcome objectives for activities and evaluation may affect its ability to demonstrate its achievements.