PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT MANUAL

FOR MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Forward

The purpose of this proposal development manual is to introduce you to the components that make up a proposal, familiarizing you with terms of the trade, and preparing you to write or help develop your own grant. This manual is specific to the Maricopa County Community College District and includes relevant discussion of grant practices as well as links to more information. Though no manual can cover it all, it is hoped this guide will be a beneficial resource as you prepare to write grants.

Cover Sheet/Signature Page

This requests basic proposal information such as college, point of contact, address, amount requested, and other details about the applicant. These sheets are provided by the agency and may be completed easily by filling in the blanks. This is typically a SF 424 for government proposals.

Table of Contents

This simply lists what can be found on what page in the proposal. It is typically simple and no more than a page long. This will assist the reviewers as they review your proposal based on the selection criteria.

Abstract or Summary

Requirements on this vary widely between funding agencies. Typically this is a concise statement (usually about one page long) that says what the project proposes to do. The funding agency will give out specific instructions on how this should be written. Though it comes first in the proposal, it is usually best to write this part last.

Narrative

The narrative part of the grant contains several different sections. They can be found below more or less in chronological order.

I. Proposal Introduction

This is a short statement that briefly describes the applicant. It may include items such as mission, population and service area, programs and services, geographic location, and feeder schools.

II. Needs Assessment/Problem Statement

Introduction

The needs assessment section of the grant is perhaps the most crucial part of the entire proposal. This section is where you make your case to the funding agency, placing before them specifically what you wish to use the grant monies for. You start by explaining basic details about the college, the region, the program and so forth. After that, you should detail that there is a need. This is a problem (or problems) that you hope to alleviate by implementing the program backed by the agency's funding. It is essential that this part of the grant is **strong and convincing**. It also needs to be properly documented. Certain sources require different data. Also, different agencies require different lengths, details, and emphases of such data. What follows are sources you can use to make your case persuasive and sites to visit that will strengthen your needs assessment.

Purpose

The purpose of a needs assessment is to persuade the funding agency that yours is a cause worth funding. You are trying to address a very real problem through a program that can help fund the costs of such a venture. It is important to demonstrate that this need is worthy of being fulfilled through proper documentation. If you are able to present a well-made case, supported by facts and statistics, you will be rewarded with funding. With these means you can carry on with your mission.

Creating a Needs Assessment

In any needs assessment, a key feature will be <u>statistics</u>. In order to demonstrate your need(s) you must be able to back up your claims with specific data. Keep in mind as you detail the problem that though there may be many areas you could delve into (ex. poverty, background of geographical region, etc.) you only have so much space. Therefore, keep your statistics **clear but concise.** For example, if you are trying to obtain funds to help support an Indian tribe, it is not necessary to give a history lesson about the oppression of the people, their rich culture and heritage, and tribal government system, but merely to list statistics of how the region has been doing recently.

Quick Tips:

- Do not assume that the proposal reviewer knows anything about the region and/or population that you are writing about. Spell out even the most basic of facts about the region. It is your job to educate the reviewer about the need in clear terms.
- Break the block of the text with graphics, including charts, tables, etc. This will break up the readers' monotony of going over paragraph after paragraph.
- Needs may be a significant part of the grant, so it is important to grab the reader's attention and hold it.
- NEVER misrepresent or fudge facts EVER.
- Keep in mind length dictated by the funding source. You cannot exceed the page limit so be concise.
- Address the problem but do not mention a solution at this time.

What follows are a list of types of data to use and sources where such facts may be found.

Facts[1]

	WHAT	DESCRIPTION/EXAMPLES	WHY
Statistical Data	-Population -Trends in behavior over a period of time -Raw data	-Percentage of people in an area whose income is below poverty level -Births, deaths, incidences of disease	Serve as plain, straightforward facts that back up your argument.
Research Findings	-Articles	-Published in academic, scientific, and professional journals	Useful in documenting effectiveness of a particular approach to a problem.
Polls	-Opinion polls	-Document concerns, priorities, preferences, misunderstandings, misperceptions, or even ignorance about various phenomena	Useful in documenting the attitudes/practices of the population polled and in documenting the need for public education.
Surveys	-Questionnaires	-Ask individuals questions on all sorts of topics applying to daily life.	Helpful particularly when the need being described is very specific or applies to a very narrow population.
Other	-Published reports	Published by: -Professional or trade associations -Special committees or task forces Credible nonprofit organizations -Interest or advocacy groups -Civic organizations	Provide useful documentation.

[1] Kaderka, Susan Raleigh. Grant Writing for Governments: A Step-by-Step Guide to Finding and Winning Competitive Grants. Austin, Texas: Sheshunoff, 2005. 5.11-5.15.

Sources (with links)[2]

- Federal: The **U.S. Bureau of Census**, useful for describing populations by a wide range of criteria—race, ethnicity, age, gender, economic status, education level, household size, etc. at the national, regional, state or county level (www.census.gov); **Centers for Disease Control**, (CDC) includes statistics on births and deaths, incidences of various diseases, prevalence of lifestyle practices and incidence of behavioral risk factors among sectors of the population, and data on the use of various health care services and facilities (www.cdc.gov); **Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA), maintains databases on a variety of environmental factors—air quality, water quality, land use, and natural resource management, among others. (www.epa.gov);
- State: All **state health departments** compile birth and death records, and maintain records on the incidence of communicable diseases (ex. tuberculosis, hepatitis, etc.); **state commerce, economic development, or tourism agencies** may compile data by geographic area, on per capita income, employment levels, wage levels, and key industries; **state environmental or natural resource agencies**, they monitor key indicators of air, water, and land quality, collecting and analyzing volumes of data; **state report cards,** the U.S. Department of Education releases a report card for each state every few years, detailed information that is made available here includes: the score of 4th and 8th graders on assessment tests as compared to the national average, student characteristics, the racial/ethnic backgrounds of students, and school/district characteristics. (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/); Arizona also issues detailed report cards by individual school, including demographics, achievements, crime rate, and so on (http://www.ade.az.gov).
- Local: **Police departments**, keep statistics on complaints and arrests for various crimes, sometimes by geographic area within a city; **school districts**, typically have data on student performance, on socioeconomic status of students and their families (often by school), on dropout and absentee rates, and many other factors; **local health departments**, may collect data on the incidence of various diseases and on the utilization rates for various health services (ex. immunizations, or treatments for sexually transmitted diseases).
- Academic and professional journals: Journals reporting on developments in medicine, public health, criminal justice, environmental protection, education (all levels), economic development, agriculture, natural resource management, and other fields can be excellent sources of statistical data, research findings, and expert opinion.
- Professional organizations, and industry and trade associations: These frequently monitor both private sector (commercial) and public sector activities in an effort to promote or protect their own interests. Although they may not be neutral observers of problems or issues, they still may have unpublished data that could be useful to grant seekers.
- Special committees and task forces: Presidents, governors, and mayors often appoint special committees to study and make recommendations on particular problems or issues. Congressional and legislative may likewise direct a standing committee to examine an issue.
- Citizen organizations and advocacy groups: Groups like Public Citizen, the Children's Defense Fund, and others can be the source of useful information on specific topics. Although they may not be neutral observers of problems or issues, their credibility is often such that their findings or recommendations carry some weight.
- Campus Institutional Research Information: This will give you information on how the Maricopa Community Colleges and District College themselves are doing in terms of enrollment

[2] Kaderka 5.15-5.19.

by age, ethnicity, gender, as well as information on where the students are in their education. This is a useful tool for comparing colleges within the district and to statistics for nationwide results found elsewhere. The page may be found here: www.maricopa.edu/business/ir/trends/index.htm or go to: www.maricopa.edu/employees/ Under "Business Services", click "Institutional Effectiveness". On the left hand side click "Maricopa Data". Then click on "Maricopa Trends".

III. Goals and Objectives

Introduction

The Goals and Objectives section is included in the overall project description/narrative of the grant. It is very important to outline your objectives in a smart and efficient manner. Sometimes this is not a "defined" section but rather, information within the narrative. Objectives define, usually in quantitative terms, what the applicant expects to accomplish as a result of the project. Objectives speak to outcomes; they should address how the problem defined in the statement of need will be affected as a result of the project.[3] Objectives must be **ambitious but attainable**. They must include all relevant information, but should not be convoluted.

Purpose

The purpose of the Goals and Objectives section is to detail how you will make use of the requested grant funds, should you receive it. Specifically, you are detailing how these funds will directly mitigate the problem(s) you addressed in your needs assessment section. **It is absolutely necessary that the two sections match up.** In addition, objectives must anticipate an evaluation process, that is, they **must be measurable** in some way. Using these two methods, you will be able to demonstrate for the funding agency how well you'll be able to alleviate your need(s) and how you'll be able to prove that you did so.

Creating Objectives

As you begin to create objectives for your grant, keep in mind that you must **make it measurable**. More specifically, there are two types of objectives:

Performance objectives, unlike process objectives, rely more on quality information. They may use percentages more than numbers. Example: 40% of scholarship recipients will be from groups traditionally underrepresented in science (Hispanics, African-Americans, Native Americans, women, and/or persons with disabilities). It is very important to remember two points: 1) they must relate back to the problem statement and 2) they must anticipate an evaluation process.[4]

Process objectives measure what a project accomplishes during the implementation period, and often focus on the units of service delivery. They focus more on numbers in terms of outcomes. Example: Each semester 30 scholarships will be awarded to eligible students who are enrolled full-time at a

[3] Kaderka 5-20.
[4] Kaderka 5-21.

Maricopa Community College in courses leading to an AAS or AS degree in science. These types of activity-oriented objectives are used to help accomplish performance objectives.[5]
Often, a funding agency will require that the objectives be a nice mixture of the two categories above.

Quick Tips:

This acronym will help you to remember what an objective should look like:

SMART?

S= Specific
M= Measurable
A= Aggressive
R= Realistic
T= Time-bound
?= As measured by what?[6]

An example of an efficient objective may be demonstrated as follows:

Time Frame: After six months
Intervention: of one-on-one tutoring
What Portion: 75%
Of What Target Group: of the adult learners served by this project
Direction of Change: will have improved
Area of Impact: their reading and writing abilities
Degree of Impact: by at least two grade levels
As Measured by What Indicators: as measured by their scores
Using What Instrument: on the Lumbard Literacy Evaluation Scale
Administered When: administered at the beginning and the end of the six-month period.[7]

Of course, you are not required to follow this exact formula every time you outline an objective. These examples can serve as a guide and illustrate the fact that the objectives must be well thought out. Remember to try and make it concise. You don't want so many twists and turns that your readers can't follow you.

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[5] Kaderka 5-21.
[6] Boess, Maryn. The Ultimate Grants Toolkit: Essential Worksheets, Blueprints, and Step-by-Step Planning Guides to Help You Build Great Grant-Funded Projects! Glendale, Arizona: GrantsUSA, 2006. 61.
[7] Boess, Maryn 62.

IV. Methods/Plan of Operation

Introduction

This section of the grant is a narrative detailing how an applicant plans to fulfill the objectives described before. An example: "We will meet our objective of making sure 10% of program participants improve their reading skills by one reading level or more by introducing one-on-one tutoring and purchasing beginning reader books". No detail should be left out and of course, this section should coincide with the objectives.

Purpose

The purpose of the methods section is to show the reviewers exactly **"how"** you will fulfill the objectives of the project. **The "how" must match the objectives**. This is crucial. If the goal is to get more elementary school age kids reading, then mentioning that you will be using grant monies to buy playground equipment is not productive. The method must be sound in order to secure funding.

Creating Methods

In addition to explaining how the applicant will meet the objectives, it might be wise to outline the scope of the project. That is, provide information about where it takes place, how many people will be served, and what populations are targeted.

Also include:

- A list of tasks and deliverables: This breaks down the project into component tasks. In defining and listing the tasks, the applicant effectively walks the funder through the steps involved in project implementation. This demonstrates that the applicant has thought through the details of the project, which increases the funder's confidence that the applicant can deliver what is promised. Deliverables are the concrete evidence that tasks have been completed.[8]

- A timeline for project tasks: Even if the funding agency does not request one, it is a good idea to outline when things are going to get done. It serves as a temporal map of the project and helps project planners and project administrators stay on track with multiple tasks.[9]

- Description of key personnel: Key personnel should be described in terms of both their qualifications (i.e. degrees, training, etc.) and their experience. If they have other skills that will enhance the project (ex. the ability to speak Spanish) those should be mentioned as well. The definition of "key personnel" normally includes any management or administrative personnel and any professional personnel. The relationship between each person or position described and the project's tasks and activities should be clear to the reviewer: It should be obvious who will do what.[10]

[8] Kaderka 5-22.
[9] Kaderka 5-22.
[10] Kaderka 5-23.

V. Key Personnel

This section includes a description of key personnel and describes their qualifications and duties. There is generally an organization chart showing reporting lines of all program staff (you may need to create a new one for the purposes of the grant). Keep in mind that the agency may request that you include resumes for key positions and job descriptions in the appendices.

VI. Evaluation

Introduction

The evaluation section of the grant is an indispensable section for the funding agency, as they want to know exactly how you plan to keep track of the funds you've spent. This is the "how we're going to track and measure our success" part of the grant. Note that it is **not** the "here is how we've been successful" portion. Rather, it is a measuring tool to prove to the funding agency that the monies received have been well spent and make a positive impact towards addressing the need.

Purpose

The overall purpose of the evaluation section of the grant proposal is to answer the question "How do we know whether the project has had an effect on the problem identified in the need statement?" Evaluation is a process for measuring a project's impact; it is not the impact itself.[11]

Creating an Evaluation

An evaluation should include a few things:

- Performance standard—the applicant should state what it considers to be an acceptable result for its objectives. (ex. If an agency is doing job training it might state what level of successful job placement it expects to achieve. The applicant must ask him or herself, what is a reasonable outcome? Is the job-training program a success if 25% of graduates get a job? 50%?) This is somewhat like a passing grade, if you can reach it then you are reaching your goals. Note this is also a measurable standard (it is quantifiable).
- Evaluation tools—basically the applicant needs to outline what and how success is going to be measured. Will the evaluator be internal or external? Are you going to make use of a survey to obtain data? Will you use student records? Is there some sort of follow-up contact required with the program participants? Don't forget to address who is going to be gathering this evaluation data.
- Analysis—description of how the data will be analyzed, including if the results will be tabulated or if a composite score will be assigned and who will be completing the project reports.[12]

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[11] Kaderka 5-23.
[12] Kaderka 5.23-5.25.

Budget

I. Introduction

Grant applicants need to take the budget section of any grant as seriously as the rest of the grant's components. The budget is more than a sheet of various costs with a page of half-hearted explanation attached. Though composing a budget is basic enough, there are still details that need to be thoroughly examined as the grant is being composed. The following section includes some definitions for terms commonly used in budgets with steps to take when preparing a budget, sites that are helpful, and the purpose of the budget.

II. Purpose

The purpose of the budget of the grant is quite simple. A budget must **clearly and concisely** present the proposed grant's costs. Everything must be accounted for. A program officer should never be confused when reviewing a budget or reading its narrative. Keep this in mind when you are calculating, negotiating, and checking numbers. The budget is not hard, but it can be complicated, and it must be completed carefully. In this manner, you can ensure that your grant is a reasonable request and that you are making the most of available funds.

III. Terms and Tips

- Budget Form: The basic sheet where you will list the different costs, summarized by category (ex. personnel, travel, supplies, etc.). For government agencies this is typically the SF-524A. Sometimes funding agencies will request that costs be allocated by function. In theory, this allows the funding agency to judge the relative expense of each project component and to gain a better sense of what level of product or output the funding agency will receive for its money.
- Budget Narrative/Justification: An additional summarization that explains how the grant applicant arrived at the numbers in the budget and details how the expenses are linked to the project. Though a budget narrative is not always required, it is a good idea to try to include them in every proposal. The narrative should detail all costs accurately and shouldn't be hard to follow. Here is where you can break down costs and explain them. Be sure to use clear but concise terms.
- Matching Funds: Typically, this is a simple percentage of project costs that some funding agencies require on grants. It is a simple calculation, though it can be misconstrued. If there is a 25% match required on a $100,000 request, then the $100,000 represents 75% of the total program costs. With the addition of the 25% local match ($33,333), the overall cost would end up being $133,333. The applicant then need only supply the $33,333. (**Note**: Some funding agencies now specifically forbid matching funds, the National Science Foundation being one, so take care when compiling the budget.)
- Indirect Costs: In a nutshell, these are miscellaneous costs that cover a range of basic needs. They are the institutional costs borne by the agency for the duration of the grant. This may

include costs for the grants accounting department, who will not specifically work on the grant, but will deal with financial reporting and processing costs of the grant itself. The MCCCD's federally negotiated indirect cost rate is 48.4% of the sum of personnel's salary and wages (NOT including fringe benefits).

- Capital Expenses: Typically, *equipment*, are those items that are over $5,000 and/or have a shelf life that is as great as or greater than the life of the grant itself (i.e. a piece of science equipment for an NSF grant that will last for the entire project).
- Supplies: Items designated as *supplies* are less than $5,000 and typically have a shelf life of a year or less. Supply items include the traditional office supply costs as well as other menial expenses. If an item doesn't appear to fit into either of these categories, it may be categorized as *other*.
- Faculty release time: This refers to the number of hours that a faculty member may be released from his or her regular job duties in order to fulfill duties on a grant he or she is directing and/or working on. On the budget sheet, though it is listed under that faculty members' name, the cost actually indicates how much in salary that the adjunct (or "replacement") personnel will receive. For example, if a faculty member needs 5 hours of release time, under personnel there will be a line item that says "Faculty Release Time—a faculty member 5 hours release time" followed by the salary rate the adjunct faculty member who performs the faculty member's job in his or her absence will receive each year of the grant.
- Caps: This is a limit on the number of expenses one may have in a certain category (or more) of a grant as detailed in the grant guidelines. As you prepare the budget make sure that you are not going over these caps in areas where there are restrictions.

IV. Steps to Creating a Budget

Step 1: Review Guidelines

The first step is to familiarize yourself with the grant's guidelines. These include not only those of the specific grant for which you are applying, but the funder's general guidelines as well. For example, there may be restrictions on matching requirements (i.e. no federal monies may be used for match). It is always best to read over these guidelines and note such rules **before** preparing the budget. Without careful review, one might prepare the entire budget and later have to rework the entire grant in order to fit in with the guidelines. This is a hassle that no one wants to deal with, so make sure you know the guidelines before diving in.

Step 2: Review Proposal Narrative

Another crucial aspect you need to review is the narrative of the grant proposal itself. Though there may be instances when someone has prepared a preliminary budget ahead of time, it is still necessary to read the narrative. While you do so, make sure to mark down what you think would entail costs in the budget as well as any questions you may have about equipment or personnel for later review with the project director. There may be many hidden costs that are casually mentioned in a paragraph that are not noted in the preliminary budget, so make sure to read the entire narrative carefully.

Step 3: Add in Costs

Take the existing preliminary budget, if one has been provided, and start recording costs as appropriate.

A. For personnel, make use of the sites provided in order to figure out salary, wages, statutory benefits, and flex/medical benefits.

    For full time personnel, use the appropriate salary schedule, after determining the grade (by figuring out the job title of the personnel members listed on the "Maricopa County Community College District Job Titles By Grade" sheet) to figure out earnings. Step 3 on the salary scale assumes the personnel has a bachelor's degree, start here and then move one step up in anticipation of inflation for the next fiscal year (when the grant will take effect). Once you've figured out the salary and wages, add on the current percentage of this figure in statutory benefits. Last, add on medical/flex benefits, aiming for the highest number available. In short, salary times the statutory benefit percentage plus flex benefits. (For example, Project director salary: $54,483 Benefits: $20,065.82 (16.75% of salary ($9,125.90) + medical election coverage ($10,939.92)).

    For part time personnel, if they are adjunct faculty, use the "adjunct faculty rate" to determine salary and wages. For other part time positions, refer to the MCCCD Additional Pay Rates sheet. Part time personnel do not receive flex benefits however, merely statutory (in most cases).

B. For capital expenses, include information on capital equipment that you will need to fulfill the grant. For example: software.

C. For travel, put down your best estimates by calculating the number of trips, destinations, and number of people going on these trips. You will have to search around on various websites to get accurate quotes for these trips.

D. For consultants, detail travel, printing, hourly/daily rate, and miscellaneous costs.

E. For supplies, include information on the supplies and materials used to carry out the program.

F. For Miscellaneous or Other, include costs that apply to the project but don't fit under any of the preceding categories.

Step 4: Draft Budget Review

Once you have figured out costs as best you can, arrange a meeting with your project team. In this meeting present any questions about the budget that have developed from reading the narrative or looking at the guidelines. Present any possible budgetary problems in a tactful manner. Often a project team requests funds that exceed the budget amount the funding source is willing to give. It is important to cut costs carefully, if this is what is agreed on. **You must never cut indirect costs**, though on rare and unique occasions they can be reduced if absolutely necessary. If the project director needs to limit funding severely, the objectives of the grant need to be reshaped in order to accommodate its most important aspects. Work together to arrive at some sort of consensus.

Step 5: Adjust Costs as Necessary

After meeting, adjust the costs on the budget as needed. Add and/or delete personnel, equipment, or supplies. Be sure to include price quotes. **Make sure these are official quotes and not just estimates**. Also, do not forget that the grant is for future spending periods, so make sure to accommodate costs for inflation as well as salary and benefit increases.

Step 6: Submit Budget to Grants Accounting, Adjust, and Finalize

Once you've finalized the budget as best you can—after receiving the project team's approval and double checking the numbers—submit the budget to the Grants and Corporate Development and Grants Accounting Office for review. Preferably, give them one week lead time to check the calculations and soundness of the budget. When the Grants Offices finish their review and return the budget, adjust it for any recommendations they have made. If after you've made these adjustments everything appears fine, continue with the grant process until you've submitted it.

Site to Use

MCCCD Human Resources Wage and Salary Site: Provides information on wages and salaries for MCCCD personnel. www.maricopa.edu/hrweb/wagesal

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Conclusion

Hopefully by now you have enough tips, training, and resources at your fingertips to write a successfully funded and convincing grant for the Maricopa County Community College District. The resources footnoted may also be researched for further information as well as solid tips on good grant writing in general. Good luck and happy writing.