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# RAIL-Commons

## Grant Writing Workshop

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# Why Am I Qualified To Do This?

1. Experience – ind., org. and team-based
2. Success – 75+ since 1999  
(\$12,000,000+)
3. Failure – part of the reality
  1. Tri-Council: 3-15% success rate
4. Implementation: You learn a lot by spending and being accountable for money...some good, some bad...

# Different types of grants...

1. Academic grants (Tri-Council, etc)
  1. Research
  2. KSTE
  3. Infrastructure/Programming/Evaluation/Interventions
2. Provincial grants
  1. Service delivery/policy implementation
  2. Support (infrastructure, etc.)
  3. Collaboration/Planning
3. Programmatic grants
  1. Govt., Foundation, NGO, etc.



# Why Do I Need To/Should I Write A Grant?

## 1. Benefits (Money = Capital)

Capital = Capacity (to do):

- Research
- Training
- Publications
- Service via Participatory Action Research
- More Money
- Infrastructure & Technology
- Knowledge Mobilization (travel + events + synthesis)
- **What does your organization NEED?**
- **Why do they need it (Do you have a theory of change?)**



# Why Do I Need To/Should I Write A Grant

## 2. Dangers:

- Grant Writing and Funding Cycle/Treadmill
- Overheads/IDC – can be significant
- Student/Staffing Challenges (HR)
- Capacity Issues: Grant Administration, Financial Tracking, Compliance and Project Implementation
- Evaluation/Reporting
  - Output-based: eg. RMAF
  - Outcome-based: Intervention/pilot projects
  - Compliance-based: Milestones



# So You Want To Write A Grant...

## Necessary Conditions:

1. Desire: Individual or organizational
2. Funder
3. Project – (But: at what stage?)
4. Capacity – space, tech, people, connections, time, etc. (Possibly biggest challenge)
5. Value-added? (Can exist in lots of ways)
6. Endorsement – approval processes w/in institution/organization



# So You Want To Write A Grant...

## Sufficient Conditions:

1. Partners - maybe
2. Additional resources
  - Cash
  - In-kind
3. History/track record (links back to capacity)
4. Ethics considerations – human, animals, environment, etc.
5. “Big Picture” plan or strategy
  - Fit into a strategic or operational plan?
  - Do you have a “progressive” model (incremental)
  - **Is there a logic model/theory of change that is applicable?**
  - **Do you know what the grant will “do”?**





# So You've Decided To Write A Grant

## Demand Driven:

- I have a project I want to do/complete/expand...

## Supply Side:

- There is a funding opportunity I am interested in...

## Equilibrium:

- Supply and demand intersect - how do we make that happen?



# So You've Decided To Write A Grant

## Typical Processes

1. Request For Proposals
2. Notice of Intent
3. Letter of Intent (funded?)
4. Full proposal

Know the lay of the land – connections count! BUT..

Know what you are getting into...path dependency can be a problem!



# So You've Decided To Write A Grant

## 1. Key Questions

- Who → Partners, collaborators and subjects (individual and organizational)
  - What → General intervention and rationale
  - When →
  - Where →
  - How →
  - **Why** → Significance/Relevance/Fit
- Research method/project method

## How much? Budget Request

- Eligible expenses
- Total Project Cash
- Budget request + In-kind + Other + IDC (?) + DC

Hint: Develop an abstract and/or executive summary need to relay all of this information in plain language (the elevator speech)

# So You've Decided To Write A Grant

## 2. General Perspective

1. Grant Writing (grantmanship) is a learned skill and language:
  - rarely intuitive
  - economies of scale: you learn/improve by doing

### SECRET #1: Process matters

1. Details Matter:
  - funders increasingly want to deny (↓ success rates)
  - any mistake or omission (real or perceived) can be grounds for denial
  - evaluation criteria are changing
  - political context matters – what does the funder REALLY want?
  - Perception matters...

SECRET #2: Answer all the questions – explicit and otherwise

SECRET#3: Let reviewers see their own “potential” in a grant or program

1. Track Record Matters: Capacity is predictor of success

# So You've Decided To Write A Grant

## 4. Process Matters:

- Triangulate
- Build a review team and process

## 5. Preparation Matters:

- A good grant proposal takes time
  - Time is often “against you”
- Things need to align/make sense
  - Project fits budget fits funder requirements fits method fits organizational goals
- Design and planning matters; and it takes time

Consider:

- Process
- Goals
- Tools
- Structure: Project/Program  
timeline/milestones/outputs/outcome

- Evaluation/Reporting

Method

+KM

Budget

Value, and values, also need to be presented in some way...



# How Do I Write A Grant Proposal?

## 1. Know thine subject

- Know thine enemies
- a) Read all guidelines, regulations, etc. - know it! Know it! Know it!!
- b) Key points:
  - Know what the proposal requires
  - Know what the funder allows
  - Know what your institution/organization can support
    - Not just a question of approval - also of completion
- c) Engage your RSO/admin/leadership (If applicable) early
  - Why?
  - How?
  - Don't they just try to make my life harder?
- d) Know the appropriate process
  - Format
  - Submission method
  - Attachments
  - Supporting documents
  - Limits
  - Supports?
  - Signatures?
  - Variations



# How Do I Write A Grant Proposal

## 1. Have a plan... budget time

- Backcast from internal deadline
- Develop an Action – Priority Matrix
  - Where do I start?
- Think/plan in a linear way...spot the gaps early

## 2. Know the Assessment criteria:

- How are you being judged?

## 3. Know the Secondary criteria:

- What is the logic driving the program funding?
- Is your proposal a good fit?
- Do you “have the horses”?



# How Do I Write A Grant Proposal

## Common Shortcomings:

1. Clarity and operationalization – “What is the question?” “What’s the problem” “What’s the solution?”
2. “Bad” Questions Do Exist
  - Formulation
  - Method
  - Significance
3. Lack of Innovation or Design
4. Lack of Evidence = No Demand
  - Literature review & background work
  - Related work
5. Comprehensive AND comprehensible
6. Scope= budget (realism)





# Writing The Grant: Common Elements

1. Title (Does it matter?)
2. Summary/Overview
  - You need “The Hook”
  - Plain Language vs. Academic vs. Jargon
  - WWWWH+W
3. Background/Context/Rationale
  1. Remember, you are asking for \$\$\$, and a grant is not a contract

# Writing The Grant: Common Elements

## 4. Project

- 1) Goals and objectives – “hypothesis testing” model isn’t always appropriate but it’s a start
  - 1) Ties your theory of change into operations
  - 2) IF we had X, then we could...X, Y, Z...
- 2) Theses etc.
- 3) Methods
  - 1) Research/Intervention/Action (and why – you must be able to justify your choices)
  - 2) Partnerships?
  - 3) Knowledge Mobilization/Other required goals?
- 4) Evaluation - 20%?
  - 1) Pre-post test?
  - 2) Logic model?
    - 1) SR/MR/LR



# Resources

## 1. Budget: What do I/we (really) need money for?

- Funds Requested (including direct costs)
- Indirect Costs
- Other Funds: Cash and In-Kind
- Ineligible costs ?
- SUM: Total Project Costs

Is it the right amount?

Is it worth it?

Will it BE worth it (How do we scale up?)

What doesn't this pay for? Who does pay? (IDC, etc) What happens if we actually get the \$\$? Can we afford to GET this grant?



# Resources

2. Budget Justification - Tell reviewers what they need to know:
  - Answer all the questions
  - Parsimony helps
  - Be explicit/specific and policy consistent
    - » Know salary rates to the penny
    - » Factor in inflation/COLA
    - » Know refresh/other cycles
  - Be reasonable
  - Be structured – understand cost-sharing ratios
  - Be purposeful – help the reviewer make a good decision!

# Resources

## 3. Letters, signatures, contributions etc.

- Plan Ahead
- Acknowledge attachments, CVs, etc.

Can take up significant time and resources

### Why is applying to CIHR, etc. so hard?

- » Programmatic barrier?
- » Fund the best of the best
- » Competition is fierce – margins for error are VERY small

# Common Elements

Summary

Introduction

Needs assessment

Objectives/Goals

Methods/Design

Evaluation (Logic model?)

Sustainability

Budget

Management plan/staffing/governance

Attachments – support

Attachments - administrative



# Resources

- 1) University websites (yes – even for community/not-for-profit grants)
- 2) F/P/T Governments

<http://eae.alberta.ca/media/324115/funding-programs-community-regional-economic-development.pdf/>

- 3) Foundations, etc.

eg. PFR.ca, Imagine Canada (Grant connect)



# Questions?





# Grant Writing Exercise (partner up!)

- 1) What do you need?
- 2) How do you know you need it?
- 3) Why haven't you got it already?
- 4) If you got "it" - what will it do/mean for your organization?
- 5) How will you use "it"?
- 6) What do you need to get "it" ?



# Grant Writing Exercise (partner up!)

- 1) Who needs to be involved?
- 2) Do you have a potential funder?
- 3) What can you bring “to the table”?
- 4) What are your timelines?
- 5) What next?



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