



Taking the Mystery Out of Grant Writing

Building Confidence, Acquiring Skills

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Key Grant Writing Skills

Ø Ability to:

1. Follow instructions
2. Understand what funder wants

Grant Review Panel

- Almost all grants are reviewed and ranked by a panel of non-agency individuals who are recruited for that particular grant program – **they have other full time jobs!!!**
- They are instructed to evaluate the applications using the RFA and the evaluation criteria published in that RFA!!!!!!

More Key Grant Writing Skills

When you write your grant application, make it easy for the grant review panel....

3. Identify and articulate program outcomes
4. Write to RFA's criteria
 - a) Try to organize your application so that it matches the RFA's organization.

Key Grant Writing Skills

Ø Ability to: Cont.

5. Communicate a complete picture that leads to outcomes you have identified
6. Write clearly and concisely
7. Write in Active Voice
8. Write a Concise Introductory statement
9. Create effective teams, collaborations, and partnerships

#3 – Identifying and Articulating Program Outcomes

Outcomes

A Necessary Condition for Applicants

- the grant applicant must be able to identify what outcomes will be accomplished by the project participants and/or the target audience being served.

A difficult task for applicants is often the identification of what the outcomes will be

Producer Results

“Begin with the end in mind”

Or

“plan backward, implement forward”

Jon Newkirk, Director, WSU Western Center
Beverly Anderson Parsons, WKKF Cluster Evaluator

An Outcome Defined....

- Change in:
 - Knowledge
 - Actions or
 - Conditions

Outcomes Defined....

■ Changes in knowledge...

■ When project participants

1. Learn or become aware of new fundamental or applied knowledge which could include:
 - a) Methods and techniques
 - b) Policy Knowledge
 - c) Improved skills such as decision making, life skills or quality of life choices

Outcomes Defined....

■ Change in Actions...

■ When project participants

1. Act upon what they have learned such as:
 - a) Adopting methods and techniques
 - b) Changing a practice
 - c) Adoption of improved skills such as decision making, life skills or quality of life choices
 - d) Direct application of knowledge gained

Outcomes Defined....

■ Change in Conditions...

- A socio/economic condition is positively changed because of participant actions
 1. Information resources that improve infrastructure
 2. Technology transfer
 3. Improved wages in the ag work force
 4. Safer food supply, reduced obesity rates and/or improved nutrition

A Logic Model can help you if you begin with the end in mind....

A Logic Model can help to identify your outcomes (changes in knowledge, actions or conditions) and the activities and partners that will support the accomplishment of outcomes for project participants

Logic Model as a Tool to Construct Realistic Outcomes

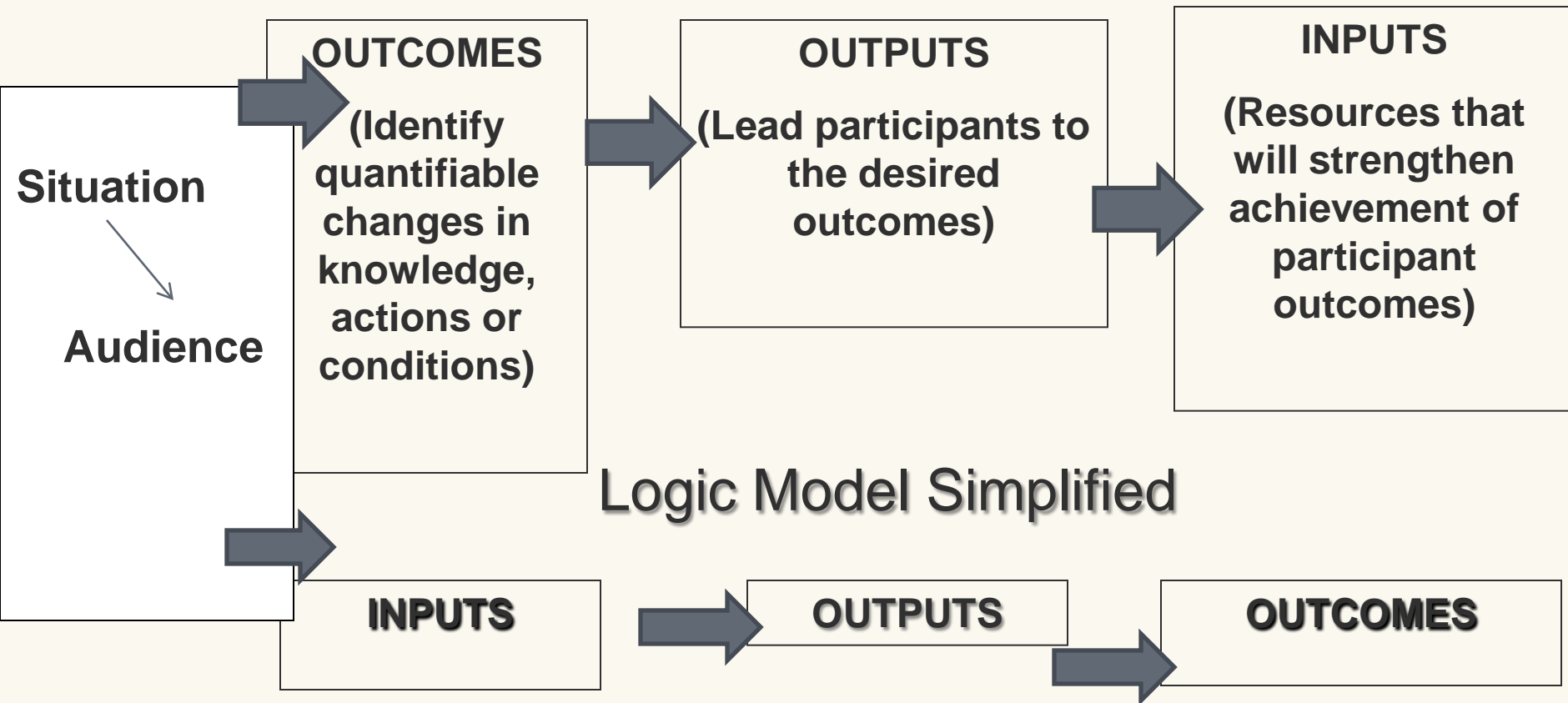
- ⊗ Identify the situation(s) that your project will help to address (market volatility, high price of inputs, lack of record keeping etc.)

- 1. Outcomes – The identification of changes in knowledge, actions, or conditions for program participants

- 1. Outputs – (activities – curriculum development, workshops, trainings etc.) that will support and lead to the achievement of participant outcomes

- 2. Inputs – Resources that go into your program in the way of project team, partners, collaborators, who provide expertise, research, money etc.

Logic model modified to begin with the end in mind



When implementing the program, keep focused on the “end”; i.e. measurable changes in knowledge, actions or conditions for participants. It is easy to let the materials, presentations, and other team activities (outputs) become indicators of a program’s success.

Participant Outcomes

(Learning – Action – Condition or
Short – Medium – Long Term Goals)

- a) Gains understanding of baseline records and budgets to link production and market decisions
(Learning or short term goal)
- b) Uses financial information to determine profitable marketing options. (Action or medium term goal)
- c) Business has improved profitability and stability (Improved condition or long term goal)

As a result of the project . . .

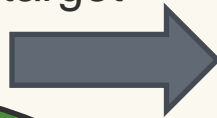
- Community members identify a set of community improvement goals and individuals commit to working on committees to pursue those goals
- Internal and external assets are garnered and applied towards the actions required.
- The improved community infrastructure results in new job creation.

Target Audience

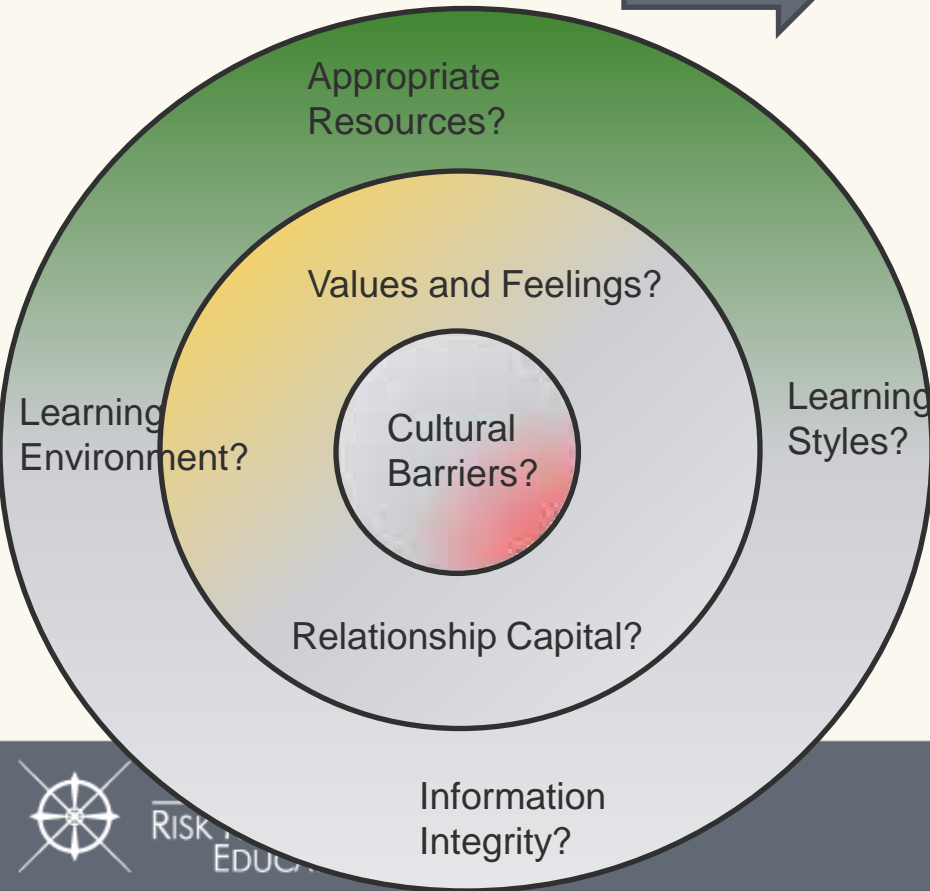
Audience



How well do you know your target audience(s)?



Participant Outcomes – Tailored to meet each producer's specific needs so that changes can occur?



Target Audience

Ø What kind of prior interactions have you had with your target audience?

- ü Direct relationship or via collaborators?
- ü Through survey responses?
- ü Via listening or focus group sessions?
- ü Other?

Ø How confident are you that producer participants will want the training or education that you are offering?

#4 – Writing to RFA’s Evaluation Criteria

Why Criteria are Addressed First

1. Review panel will score/evaluate the proposal relative to each criteria.
2. Criteria identify program priorities and goals.
 - a) Criteria may or may not be weighted

(Pages 28-30 BFRDP RFA)

Where are Criteria Addressed?

- **In the Project Narrative:**
 - **List your strengths in relationship to the criteria**

(Pages 17-19 BFRDP RFA)

Program Goals/Objectives

- **In the Project Narrative:**
 - **Clearly state your goals and objectives as they relate to the established program priorities**
 - **Use the Criteria as an outline**

(Pages 5-9 BFRDP RFA)

Program Goals/Objectives

- **In the Project Narrative:**
 - Draw a conclusion that the approach(es) used to achieve each objective will lead to long range outcomes and meet the priorities established in the RFA. (Pages 17-18)

#5 – Communicating a Complete Picture

From Beginning to End...

- Ø Have you communicated clearly what you propose to do with grantor's money?
- Ø Is what you have written consistent throughout the application?

From Beginning to End...

- Ø Does your plan of work lead to the outcomes you have identified?
- Ø Does your team have the expertise to deliver what you have promised?

#6 – Writing in Active Voice

Using Active Voice

Why is writing in the active voice so important?

“Training will be conducted over several months ...” (Passive) or

“A team of NRSC, BIA, RMA and FSA professionals will conduct training in each of the six states....” (Active)

Using Active Voice

⊘ Writing in the **passive** voice

- Gives the impression that something is missing
- Can be confusing to the reader
- Is not as interesting

*****The subject is acted upon by the verb in passive voice***

Using Active Voice

⊘ Writing in the **active** voice

- Possesses energy and directness
- Will keep your reader turning the pages
- Eliminates unnecessary words

*****The subject acts upon the verb in passive voice***

Using Active Voice Exercise

The Indian Nations Conservation Alliance in concert with a six state consortium of Tribal Conservation Districts, CBO partners and a team of NRSC, BIA, RMA and FSA professionals will develop a training program specific to the tribal ag practices in each of their districts. Project team and partners will develop curriculum focusing on the core topics of business planning, business development, market planning and regionally direct marketing strategies.

Beginning farmers and ranchers participating in each district will develop the tools and knowledge necessary to secure land, equipment and livestock, and skills for building and maintaining economically viable operations. Our program will increase the business planning capacity of beginning farmers through structured classroom training as well as provide experiential learning opportunities and on farm mentorships.

#7 – Writing Clearly and Concisely

Writing with Clarity

- ⊗ **Communicate clearly and concisely**
 - 📌 **What you want to do?**
 - 📌 **How you hope to accomplish it?**

Write with one “voice”

Writing with Clarity

- Ø **Be specific**
- Ø **Do not make assumptions that the reviewers know what you mean.**
- Ø **Provide clear evidence that supports the accomplishment of your stated outcomes**
- Ø **Provide adequate information that supports the program goals and objectives**
- Ø **Avoid rhetoric**

#8 – Writing a Concise Introductory Statement

Does Your Introductory Statement...

- Ø Clearly communicate your project's outcomes?
- Ø Communicate how your project will address the grantors goals and objectives
- Ø Include an action statement that addresses each criteria?

Does Your Introductory Statement...

⊗ Identify your organization's qualifications and capacity to accomplish the goals and objectives stated in the RFA?

🌸 *Provide bold statements for each of the above and avoid rhetoric ~*

#9 – Creating Effective Teams, Collaborations & Partnerships

Teams, Collaborators and Partners

Ø Utilizing your organization's resources

1. People
2. Partners
3. Materials

Project Team

Ø Expertise:

- Education,
- Outreach
- Mentoring
- Training

Ø Track Record

- Multi year experience
- Success Rate

Partners and Collaborators

Ø Should play an important role in project design and development

Ø Be involved in decision making

Ø Established relationships with target audience

***Choose diverse partners with expertise needed to meet grantors goals and objectives*

Partners and Collaborators

Ø Have you worked with them before?

Ø Will they have time to collaborate on the project?

Ø How will you communicate with them?

***Building a good team is critical to a successful project.*

Appropriate Materials

Ø Suitable for audience being served?

- Learning Styles?
- Cultural Barriers?
- Learning Environment?

Ø Information Integrity

- What's the foundation?
- Appropriate for outcomes being proposed?

Check List for Success

1. Find the grant program that fits your project/idea.
2. Become a student of the the RFA
3. Develop a calendar of key proposal preparation and submission events
4. Fully understand the criteria used to evaluate your proposal – proposal must be written to ensure the criteria are addressed.
5. Write the proposal logically and clearly, following the format prescribed either directly or indirectly in the RFA.
6. Develop a plan on HOW you will evaluate your project against projected outcomes

Check List for Success

7. Prepare a budget with strong justification...you will receive only what has been appropriately justified.
8. Know about the review process – this is a good discussion to have with the program director – to find out who will be reviewing your proposal (expertise of the reviewers).
9. Fill out all forms completely and correctly.
10. Set aside adequate time for outside review and critique and for completing all the administrative requirements established by your organization. Send the proposal to arrive by the required submission date/time as specified in the RFA.

What Happens If My Proposal Is Not Funded?

Proposal as a Learning Tool

- Ø Step back from process
- Ø Read the Review comments provided
 - critical for a resubmission
- Ø Take objective note of the criticisms raised.
- Ø Devise an approach for re-submission.
- Ø Ask program contact person for help.
 - Take advantage of their knowledge and experience.

Overview

Extension Risk Management Education Program

- Ø One of four regional Extension risk management education centers in the U. S.
- Ø Administer a competitive grants program in the 13 western states and U.S. affiliated Pacific Islands
- Ø Supported by funding from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

Regional Centers



- **North Central Center**
University of Nebraska
- **Northeast Center**
University of Delaware
Cooperative Extension
- **Southern Center**
University of Arkansas
Division of Agriculture
- **Western Center**
Washington State
University Extension

Extension Risk Management Education

“Extension RME”

- Risk Management Education:
 - “Education and training that improves the ability of agricultural producers and their families to effectively manage the complex and growing financial risks associated with their farming or ranching operations.”

Our Mission

- **To help Farm and Ranch Families Succeed through Targeted Risk Management Education**

Producer Focused, Results Based

- A program that seeks a “Return On the Investment” of each dollar awarded.
 - The return on investment of Extension RME grant dollars are the *risk management improvements* that agricultural producers make because they participated in a project funded through one of the regional Risk Management Education Centers.

Application Process

- Ø Request for Applications, (RFA), published on or around November 1 of each year.
- Ø Short Pre-Proposal submission process:
 - √ The application period closes in mid-December.
 - √ Advisory Council reviews pre-proposals and chooses finalists who will be asked to complete a Full Proposal.
 - √ Finalists notified on or around February 1.

Application Process

- Ø Full Proposal submission process:
 - ✓ Finalists submit a full application with supporting documents on or around March 1.
 - ✓ Review Panel chooses 18 to 24 project applications for funding in April.
 - ✓ Finalists are notified in May.
 - ✓ Projects begin on July 1.

Who Is Eligible To Apply?

- Ø Public, tribal, not-for-profit, or private organizations with a demonstrated capacity to develop and deliver educational programs for agricultural producers and their families
- Ø Organizations must have the capacity to manage federal funds

Staying Focused on Producer Results

- Ø Competitive funding is for projects that improve the risk management capacity of agricultural producers.
- Ø Grants awards up to \$50,000
- Ø 12 Month Period of Performance
 - √ 6 month extension of time if needed

Thank you!

Questions?

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