Simplified Proposal Development Process

Although the requirements for proposal submission vary greatly among funding sources, certain information is needed by all grantors. Below is an outline that can be used as a basic guideline to developing any type of proposal. You can, and often should, develop all of this BEFORE you figure out who exactly to go to for funds.

Drafting the Overall Proposal Idea and Budget

Consider your project concept as a central circle. (Go ahead, get out a piece of paper and draw a circle with the project name and mission on it!) Next think of all the components of this project concept that will be part of it such as curriculum, community aspects, staff, academic department involvement. Draw a circle for each item and label it. Connect a line from each of the outer circles to the central one. That is roughly what your proposal will include.

Next, repeat this illustration only inside the outer circles (and now you may need more of these) write in all the things you need that will cost you to get this project accomplished----everything. Consider: publicity costs, telephone costs, evaluation costs, performance costs, snacks, meals, transportation, salaries, supplies, postage, equipment, and so on. Now you have drafted out your budget.

Drafting the Proposal Narrative

Once you have developed the basic outline of your project (mission, parts, expenses), you will be able to start actually writing the proposal. This consists of fleshing out your plan and contains several sections. The narrative is where you "sell" your project to the grantor.

INTRODUCTION
- ❖ Introduce the "need" addressed by the remainder of the proposal
- ❖ Must be attention getting. (Write last)

PROBLEM or NEED STATEMENT
- ❖ Define the condition or situation you want to change
- ❖ Relates needs to people/programs
- ❖ Proves the problem really exists by giving quantitative evidence and making citing literature (if possible)
  - o Examples: % minority students on small college campuses compared to yours, % students using learning skills centers, xyz (1999) reported that binge drinking has increased 25% in the last 15 years on small college campuses in the US

GOALS/OBJECTIVES
- ❖ Itemized definition of what an award will produce---what you will have left after the money is spent
  - o Example: "As a result of this award, the following objectives will have been attained. . ."
- ❖ **Objectives** should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely
- ❖ **Goals** are overall initiatives and not necessarily measurable

PROPOSED SOLUTION, METHOD, OR PROCEDURE
- ❖ Describe your activities
- ❖ State what you are going to do during the life of the award

TIMELINE
- ❖ Outline the benchmarks the project will achieve during the grant period
- ❖ Benchmarks refer to, and are congruent with, the goals and objectives. (Remember, objectives are measurable.)

IMPACT OF GRANT
- ❖ List the additional population groups that will benefit because of what is accomplished
- ❖ Impact is especially important in view of how this project can be replicated elsewhere or expanded

EVALUATION
- ❖ Be prepared to prove that the projected objectives were actually produced
- ❖ Define a plan, be explicit, include a description of intended evaluation techniques
- ❖ Make this airtight and provide appendices showing evaluation forms if appropriate/possible

BUDGET
- ❖ A spreadsheet that:
  - o Assigns dollar value to your project
  - o Uses categories and gives dollar value to each
  - o Includes who you are going to for funding such as foundations, individual donors, corporations, and in-kind gifts
  - o At a minimum, shows a column
    - ▪ with each category of budgeted items (e.g. guest speaker fees)
    - ▪ for each potential donor to the program which will offset the cost of the various categories (e.g. Coca-Cola Foundation)
    - ▪ showing the total cost of the program by item
  - o Budget bottom line: total cost of the entire program (far right column) should match the amounts from all the preceding columns, across and down.
- ❖ Often supported by a "budget narrative" wherein explanations are given concerning the major categories shown in the spreadsheet. For example, you might explain that the salaries are for five caregivers working 20hrs/wk@ $15/hr and five nurses working 20hrs/wk@$30/hr.

FUTURE
- ❖ Discusses how the project will be continued after the life of the grant
- ❖ Sustainability is important to grantors!