

Missouri Common Grant Application User Guide

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Representatives from the St. Louis grantmaking community have come together with the Gateway Center for Giving to create a Missouri Common Grant Application (CGA).

Many major metropolitan cities use a Common Grant Application. This initiative has tremendous potential for our region. In the past few months, hastened by dwindling resources and increasing demand on people's time, the idea of creating a free CGA for grantmakers and nonprofits has gained some leverage.

The CGA was designed to help make the grantmaking process simpler and more efficient for nonprofits while at the same time encouraging dialogue between funders and nonprofit organizations.

The goals for the creation of this application are:

- Designing a standard, yet customizable, Common Grant Application (CGA) for Missouri Grantmakers
- Getting as many foundations as possible to accept this CGA
- Informing and educating nonprofits and funders about using this new tool

Why the User's Guide

The developers of the CGA created this User's Guide to help organizations write more effective grant applications. The User's Guide provides a greater understanding as to why each question is important to grantmakers and what grantmakers hope to learn about an organization from a particular question.

Each topic covered in the questions and attachments is an integral component of a well-run nonprofit. The User's Guide elaborates on each topic with the intention of reinforcing the fundamentals of solid nonprofit practices. If you find a question particularly difficult to answer, then recognize that this is probably a topic that needs to be discussed by the organization's leadership (staff and board). The User's Guide may provide helpful conversation starters for such discussions.

The User's Guide is also intended to alleviate some fears that organizations may have. While the questions are uniform, grantmakers expect wide variation in the answers based on an organization's budget size, years in existence, location, and mission. Again, there is no one "right" answer.

It is not essential for a grant writer to reference the User's Guide when completing the CGA. The CGA itself is designed to stand alone. However, for those new to grantwriting or for anyone who is not clear about the intent of a particular question, the User's Guide provides information that will hopefully alleviate confusion. It is also appropriate to contact a grantmaker directly if you have questions that are not answered on the grantmaker's website or in its grant guidelines.

User Guide Overview

The User's Guide covers each question and attachment of the CGA. It can be read start to finish or referred to for clarification related to a specific component, question, or attachment.

The user guide tries to give a brief explanation of why a particular question is being asked and provides additional insight into the intent of the question. The "Tips and Things to Consider" are suggestions, not necessarily requirements. As opposed to the items specified in the text of the questions or attachments, not everything mentioned in the tips section needs to be addressed.

Considering the extreme diversity of the types of organizations completing the CGA, some of the items listed may or may not apply to your organization. The tips section is offered to help stimulate your thinking if you are unsure about what information would be relevant to convey in response to a specific question.

Frequently Asked Questions

Please note the underlined sections are specific to Cardinals Care ONLY.

1. Is there a page or character limit for this application?

There is no set page or character limit for this application. We recommend that you answer each question as completely as possible. All fields in this application expand to fit whatever text you input into them.

2. May I use bullets to answer the questions in this application?

If the question lends itself to using bullets, then feel free to use bullets.

3. Do I need to submit a letter of inquiry before completing this application?

*Many foundations ask potential grant recipients to first submit a brief letter of inquiry before receiving an invitation to submit a full proposal. Check with each individual funder. **Cardinals Care does not require one as long as the stated guidelines are met.***

4. Can I use this form for capital campaign requests?

If the specific funder accepts capital campaign requests and they accept the common grant application, then yes this form may be used. Please note that there are addendum questions that are required for capital campaign requests and they are listed at the end of the narrative section. In general, include the same information as for a project proposal. Explain how this building project, or the creation or expansion of your endowment, will help you do a better job of serving your community. But also write about your long-term plans for financial health, especially if you want funds for a building. The funder doesn't want to help you buy a building if you can't afford to maintain and operate it.

5. Can I use this form for general operating requests?

*Yes, this form can be used for general operating requests. While we made attempts to modify each question in the application to make it applicable to both project requests and general operating requests here are some general tips: 1) Needs statement: What issues was your organization founded to address? Why is your organization needed?, 2) Project Description: Use this section to explain what your organization plans to accomplish during the year for which you seek operating funding and the intended impacts for that year's activities, 3) Sustainability: Who are the other funders providing operating support for this year and what is your long-term funding plan for the organization, especially if your operating budget is growing?, 5) Evaluation: In general, how do you evaluate your work? **In adherence with the grant guidelines of Cardinals Care, this form will not be accepted for general operating requests.***

6. Can I use this form for special event requests?

*No, this form will not be accepted for special event requests. Please check with the individual funder as to whether they accept special event requests and what form they would like you to use. **For Cardinals Care, this form can be used for special event requests.***

7. Do all funders accept the Common Grant Application?

*No, not all funders accept the Common Grant Application. Please check with each individual to funder to determine if they accept this application. **This application must be used to request funding from Cardinals Care.***

8. If a funder accepts the Common Grant Application, then can I still call with questions about program and mission fit?

Many funders recommend that you reach out to them when you are applying to ensure program and mission fit before taking the time to submit your application. Not all funders want you to contact them prior to application submission. Please check with each individual funder guidelines to better understand their policy with regards to contact.

9. Do all funders who accept the Common Grant Application accept all types of requests?

No, please check with the individual funder to determine what types of requests they accept. For example, even though a funder accepts this application for project requests, they may not accept this application for general operating support or capital requests.

Seven Tips for Writing Successful Proposals

- 1) Communicate with funders if their grant guidelines let you know that it okay. When in doubt, ask for clarification. (Don't be scared: Funders are people, too.) Make sure you understand what's expected. Even funders who accept the Common Grant Application format may require additional information.
 - 2) Follow the directions. Answer the questions in the order listed, submit the number of copies grantmakers request, and include only the materials specified.
 - 3) Be creative, clear, concise, and accurate. Make the case for your proposal in your own unique way, but include precise data. Avoid technical jargon.
 - 4) Emphasize what your organization will do. Spend more time describing your solution than the issue. Economize content and avoid repetition. Be clear and concise
 - 5) Evaluation counts. Keep what you want to learn and evaluate in mind, as well the assessment tools you will use to evaluate your project (e.g., records, surveys, interviews, pre- and post-tests).
 - 6) Proofread carefully. Make sure numbers add up and typos are removed. Double check the foundation name.
 - 7) Seriously, proofread! If your proposal has been adapted for multiple funders, then make sure you omit other funders' names, as well as references to previous requests.
 - 8) Ensure that your request for each funder is based on their mission, vision, and funding interest. This Common Grant Application is NOT meant to be completed once and then sent to every grantmaker in the community.
-

Glossary of Terms

Activity/Tactics: Actual events or actions that take place as part of the project to achieve goals and objectives.

Capacity Building: Supporting projects that strengthen the development of an organization's core skills and capabilities, such as leadership, management, finance and fund-raising, programs and evaluation, in order to build the organization's effectiveness and sustainability.

Capital Request: A planned undertaking to purchase, build or renovate a space or building or to acquire equipment.

Collaboration: Organizations often submit joint proposals for funding to address common issues of organizational capacity and program outreach where they have similar outcomes to accomplish.

Doing Business As (DBA): Name under which the business or operation is conducted and presented to the world but may not be the legal name.

Evaluation: The process of undertaking an analysis, at various degrees of formality, of the impact of a grant-funded project, usually communicated in the form of a report to the funder.

Fiscal Agent: A nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that acts as a sponsor for a project or group that may not have its own tax-exempt status. Grants or contributions are made to the fiscal agent who manages the funds.

General Operating Support: Grant funds to support the ongoing services, mission or goals of an organization.

Goal: What is the desired result of the project in general terms? The broad, overarching *purpose* served by your project or service -- for instance, "Our purpose [or goal] is to help women victimized by abuse recover their strength, stability and self-esteem."

In-Kind Support: A contribution of equipment/materials, time, non-cash item and/or services that the donor has placed a monetary value on.

Letter of Intent: also known as **concept paper**, **white paper** and **pre-proposal** is a brief, preliminary letter describing an organization and proposed grant request, usually sent prior to a full proposal.

Long-term Goal: Occurs after the funding period.

Method(s): Tools used to monitor activities and products to determine if objectives were achieved.

Needs Statement: Presents the facts and evidence that support the need for the project and establishes that your organization understands the problems and therefore can reasonably address them. The information used to support the case can come from authorities in the field, as well as from your agency's own experience.

Operational Support: A grant given to cover an organization's day-to-day expenses such as salaries, utilities, office supplies, etc.

Outcome/Objective: The changes in (or benefits achieved by) individuals or communities due to their participation in project activities. Time-specific, measurable statements describing the results to be achieved and the manner in which they will be achieved. This may include changes to participant's knowledge, skills, values, behavior, conditions, or status. For example, "30 of the 40 third grade students participating in the literacy program will increase their reading level by one grade level."

Output (Product): Direct product of project activities; immediate measures of what the project will do and/or has done in the past.

Program: An organized set of services designed to achieve specific outcomes for a specified population that will continue beyond the grant period.

Project: A planned undertaking or organized set of services designed to achieve specific outcomes that are time-limited. (Note: A successful project may become an ongoing program of the organization.)

Responsibility: Individual(s) responsible for the stated activity and measurements.

Short-term Goal: Occurs during the funding period.

Technical Assistance: Operational or managerial assistance given to a nonprofit organization. It may include fundraising assistance, budgeting, or financial planning, project planning, legal advice, marketing, or other aids to management. Assistance may be offered directly by a foundation or corporate staff member or in the form of a grant to pay for the services of a consultant.

Timeline: When is the activity taking place and/or duration?

PART I. COVER SHEET

Use two-page template provided.

Rationale

The Summary Sheet Form is intended to provide a “snapshot” of the organization. Often, this information is entered directly into a grantmaker’s grant management database.

Tips and Things to Consider:

- Be brief. Remember, this is a quick look at the organization. Detailed explanations should be reserved for the narrative portion of the application.
- Be sure that the information on the Summary Sheet Form (budget figures, requested amount, etc.) matches any reference made later in the application.
- Update the Summary Sheet Form anytime you update the Narrative or Attachments to ensure that the information is consistent throughout the application.
- Regarding specific items on the Summary Sheet Form:
 - **Legal Name of Organization** - This should be the exact wording from the IRS 501(c)(3) letter.
 - **Doing Business As** - The name that the organization is widely known by, if different from the legal name.
 - **Board President** - In the case of potential staff changes at the organization it is important to also list the Board President.
 - **Main Contact for this Proposal** - If this is different from the CEO or executive director. This could be the development director, program director, or other person who should be contacted for further information or questions regarding the application.
 - **Geographic Area Served** – The name of the city(ies), county(ies), region(s), neighborhood(s) or state(s) your organization serves. Be as accurate as possible within a short space.
 - **Tax Exemption Status**
 - If the organization applying is operating under the fiscal sponsorship of another organization, then provide the legal name of the fiscal agent. The Fiscal Agent/Fiscal Sponsor section outlines the information needed for the fiscal agent/fiscal sponsor. Everything else in the application should be completed with regard to the organization applying, not the fiscal agent.
 - Examples of “Other than 501(c)(3)” include municipalities, counties, schools, special tax-exempt districts, other governmental entities, and religious organizations.
 - **For requests other than general operating support, name the project, and describe what the grant will be used for** - Be brief and clear. Do not respond to this question if the request is for general operating support, unless there is something very specific that you want to identify. Typically, general operating support implies flexible overall support for the organization, and a description is not needed. For project, capital or other requests, a project name and one-sentence description will suffice.
 - **Financial Information** - Organization’s current budget. Ideally the budget will cover the year in which the grant will be used. (Note: the date should be formatted mm/dd/yy.) Be sure this number matches the information contained in the financial attachments.
 - **Member of a Giving Federation** - To be completed if you receive allocations (not one-time grants) from one of the listed federations.
 - **Executive Director Signature** - The signature should be that of the Executive Director or authorizing official on behalf of the organization.

PART II. NARRATIVE

SECTION A, QUESTION 1 –ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Discuss the founding and development of the organization and the organizations current mission statement. Explain the original issue and/or opportunity the organization was founded to address and how that may have changed over time.

Rationale

By offering a solid description of when, why, how, and if relevant, by whom the organization was founded, as well as how the organization may have changed over time, you provide context for understanding an organization’s current reality.

Tips and Things to Consider:

- **Founding:** This is asking for a brief history of the organization’s origins, not a detailed chronology of events. This is the place to convey the passion and commitment that led to the organization’s creation. Even if the organization is well-known in the community, it is still necessary to provide the brief history that is asked for in this question.
- **Development:** If the organization has evolved over time in response to internal or external factors, then briefly describe here.
- **The original issue and/or opportunity the organization was founded to address:** This is the place to describe the need for the organization. This version of the CGA moves away from the language of a “needs statement” in favor of language that has a more positive orientation (“issue and/or opportunity,” in place of “need”). However, it is still very important to explain what concern the organization was founded to address and – if it has changed – the concern that is currently being addressed.
- It is not necessary for organizations with long histories (more than 20 years) to cover all of the intervening years. Major milestones or significant changes in the organization’s approach to its mission should be included only if such information will add to an understanding of current circumstances.
- If the organization has had a rocky past, then describe how those difficulties were overcome or are currently being addressed. Candor is appreciated and respected. If you have already described the situation in the cover letter, then do not repeat it in the organizational background.

SECTION A, QUESTION 2- ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Provide a brief description of the organization’s current services. Include population and numbers served, as well as expected results. If this request is for a specific project, then describe that project in Question 4; describe the organization’s other projects here.

Rationale

By reading about the organization’s projects, the grantmaker will learn how the organization has chosen to deliver on its mission and goals.

Tips and Things to Consider:

- The size and complexity of the organization will determine how much information you are able to convey in your response to this question. Large organizations with many projects may need to describe project areas, rather than specific projects. Small organizations applying for a general operating support grant may decide to include more in-depth information about their projects.
- By including **information on the population served**, you provide a clear sense of the current beneficiaries of the organization’s projects and services. A description of the population served typically involves an explanation of the demographics of the population impacted by this grant. Be brief- only a limited amount of demographic information is needed.
- **Numbers served** offers a sense of scope and size of an organization. In describing numbers served, provide information on whether the numbers represent unduplicated individuals or total units of service delivery and provide both if possible.
- High or low numbers are not inherently good or bad. For example, an organization with one or two projects may be taking a very focused approach. In terms of numbers of individuals receiving services, serving 1,200 children vs. 15 children probably reflects a very different kind of project. It does not mean that one is more important or effective than the other.

SECTION B, QUESTION 3- NEEDS STATEMENT

The issue and/or opportunity addressed: identify what concern (or issue/opportunity) a project will address. This is the place to highlight the organization's understanding of the concern it is addressing through this specific project.

Tips and Things to Consider:

- This is where you convince the funder that the issue you want to tackle is important and show that your organization has expertise on the issue.
- Don't assume the funder knows much about your subject area. Most grantmaking staff people are generalists. They will probably know something about topics like Shakespeare, water pollution or HIV/AIDS, but you should not assume that they are familiar with Troilus and Cressida, taconite disposal methods or Kaposi's sarcoma. If your topic is complex, then you might add an informative article or suggest some background reading.
- Why is this situation important? To whom did your organization talk, or what research did you do, to learn about the issue and decide how to tackle it?
- Describe the situation in both factual and human interest terms, if possible. Providing good data/statistics demonstrates that your organization is expert in the field. If there are no good data on your issue, then consider doing your own research study, even if it is simple.
- Describe your issue in as local a context as possible. If you want to educate people in your county about HIV/AIDS, then tell the funder about the epidemic in your county — not in the United States as a whole unless national data would provide valuable context to the local information.
- Describe a problem that is about the same size as your solution. Don't draw a dark picture of nuclear war, teen suicide or lethal air pollution if you are planning a modest neighborhood arts project for children.
- Don't describe the problem as the absence of your project. "We don't have enough beds in our battered women's shelter" is not the problem. The problem is increased levels of domestic violence. More shelter beds is a solution.
- Don't use acronyms that haven't been clearly explained.

EXAMPLE

Issue: There is a high variability in education between students with disability and no disability in Rhode Island.

Disabled is defined as a long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition. This condition makes it difficult for a person to do activities such as walking, climbing stairs, dressing, bathing, learning, or remembering. It can also impede a person from being able to go outside the home alone or to work, to study, or to do business.

According to the 2000 Population Census, Rhode Island has the highest rate of disability in any state in New England. In Rhode Island, 195, 806 or more than 20% or one in five civilian non-institutionalized persons, 5 years and over, are categorized as disabled. Nationally that number is 19.3 percent.

SECTION C: PROJECT INFORMATION

This section provides the opportunity to present a thorough description of the specific project for which funding is being requested. Being able to answer all of the topics outlined in the questions demonstrates a well-conceived project that addresses a clearly defined issue(s). This section asks for the goals and objectives of the project for which funding is requested, as opposed to the organization's overall goals and objectives (unless it is an operating or capital request).

Rationale

Rather than provide an open ended narrative format, we chose to break the narrative down into specific questions.

SECTION C, QUESTION 4- POPULATION SERVED

Tips and Things to Consider:

- The target population and number to be served, if applicable.
- Only discuss the issues and/or opportunities (or concerns) that the target population faces, as opposed to the needs of the organization.

EXAMPLE

Giving Hope to the Disabled serves people with disabilities of all ages and backgrounds in the state of Rhode Island. According to the 2005 U.S. Census Rhode Island has a total population of 1,076,189. Of this, 20.2% or 195, 806 are disabled. This project will serve 100 people who are disabled.

SECTION C, QUESTION 5- GOALS

Tips and Things to Consider:

- It may be relevant to explain why now is the best time to address the issue and/or opportunity.
- Goals convey the general direction or overall purpose of the project for which funding is requested.
- Make sure that the goal says explicitly whom the project will impact. Make sure the goal describes the direction of the change that is expected (e.g. reduce, expand, increase, decrease). Be realistic.
- It is common to have several goals for a single project. If this is the case, group objectives beneath the appropriate goal.
- **In terms of goals for a capital campaign**, explain what will be different once the capital project is complete. For example, with facility expansion, explain if more people will be served, or how your agency will be able to better serve project participants.
- For expanded projects, differentiate between current and expanded activities.

EXAMPLE

There are two major goals for the "Healthy Moms for Healthy Kids" Project.

- *Goal #1 - To reduce the degree of malnutrition among young children.*
 - *Goal #2 - To effectively use volunteers as a major factor in helping people to learn.*
-

SECTION C, QUESTION 6- ACTIVITIES

Tips and Things to Consider:

- Activities refer to the essential tasks or projects that need to take place to accomplish the goals and objectives.
- Explain the project in such a way that a reader who knows nothing about how the project is implemented will be able to visualize it.
- There should be a very clear link between the activities you describe in this section, the goals and the outcomes/objectives you have previously defined. Be explicit in your writing and state exactly how the activities you have chosen will fulfill your project's goals and outcomes/objectives and help deal with the needs/problems on which your proposal is focused.
- Are the specific methods you are proposing for your project very important to your unique clientele? Make sure you clarify this for the funding organization.
- Answer what, how often, for how long.

EXAMPLE

The primary methods for achieving the goals and objectives of the Project will be:

- *the creation of a Center in the city that will become a focal point for providing information on food and nutrition for young children through workshops and one-on-one counseling of mothers, and*
 - *the development of a recruitment/training project and supervised practicum for student volunteers that is modeled after the SHAW project.*
 - *In addition, a Documentation/Dissemination Plan will be developed by staff to guarantee the systematic collection of information about the operation of the Project and provide the basis for sharing information with other similar projects.*
-

SECTION C, QUESTION 7- OUTCOMES/OBJECTIVES

The changes in (or benefits achieved by) individuals or communities due to their participation in project activities. This may include changes to participant's knowledge, skills, values, behavior, conditions, or status. In general outcomes are described in quantitative or qualitative terms.

TYPES OF OBJECTIVES

There are at least four types of objectives:

- **Behavioral** - A human action is anticipated.
Example: Fifty of the seventy children participating will learn to swim.
- **Performance** - A specific time-frame, within which a behavior will occur, at an expected proficiency level, is expected.
Example: Fifty of the seventy children will learn to swim within six months and will pass a basic swimming proficiency test administered by a Red Cross-certified lifeguard.
- **Process** - The manner in which something occurs is an end in itself.
Example: We will document the teaching methods utilized, identifying those with the greatest success.
- **Product** - A tangible item results.
Example: A manual will be created to be used in teaching swimming to this age and proficiency group in the future.

Tips and Things to Consider:

- Discuss short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes/objectives and be sure to differentiate from outputs.

EXAMPLE

Education for the Rhode Island Disabled Youth Project II has the following objectives:

- *To create a Project Committee that will handle the Full Scholarship for the Disabled.*
- *To provide full scholarships to 50 qualified disabled students: 25 individuals in high school and 25 more in college.*
- *To partner with different organizations such as government agencies, other non-profit organizations, and business establishments to ensure continuous assistance to the disabled.*
- *To develop a website that will help promote support for the disabled in Rhode Island.*
- *To lessen the number of disabled individuals who are not enrolled in schools*

SECTION C, QUESTION 8- TIMELINE

Tips and Things to Consider:

- **Timeline**- Explain any key dates or chronology associated with the project or capital campaign. This could include dates when enrollment is open; how many months out of the year the project is offered; the start and completion dates of a one-time project, a project design phase, or a pilot project, etc.
- For a capital campaign this could include dates for launching specific components of the fundraising campaign, achieving certain fundraising milestones, design phase, groundbreaking ceremony, project completion, etc.
- A clear indication of the time frame for the project and the times when each aspect of the project will be implemented.

EXAMPLE

1st Year Time Line

Month One

- *Advertising of Project staff positions*
- *Meetings with community leaders*
- *Meeting with university administrators*

Month Two

- *Interviewing of candidates for Project staff positions*
- *Finalizing location of Center*

Month Three

- *Selection/hiring of Project staff members*
- *Preparation for Center operation*

Month Four - Six

- *Preliminary advertising of Center operation*

- *Hosting community meetings at Center*
- *Collection of baseline data on mothers of young children*
- *Recruitment/selection/training of student volunteers*

Month Seven - Twelve

- *Conducting of regular formative evaluation*
- *Final summative evaluation at end of twelfth month*

SECTION C, QUESTION 9 - COLLABORATION

Describe the organization’s most significant interactions with other organizations and efforts. For project requests, address this question with respect to that project only.

Rationale

The effectiveness of nonprofit organizations often depends on successful relationships with others in the community. Regardless of form – partnership, collaboration, cooperation, or coordination – these relationships, or strategic alliances, can serve a variety of purposes, including resource sharing, policy influence, and improved operational efficiency.

Tips and Things to Consider:

- Do not create a simple list of key partners, as such a list does not convey very meaningful information. Instead, select the organization’s most significant interactions and explain the goals and/or outcomes of those relationships. Interactions run the gamut from simple awareness of other organizations to making referrals to other groups, attending networking meetings, sharing staff and volunteer trainings, strategic alliances, and formal partnerships and collaborations. Due to space limitations, describe the interactions that are most important to the organization in terms of helping it achieve its goals.
- Project requests should limit the response to interactions specifically related to that project. However, if space allows and there are other collaborations the organization is involved in that are important to convey, by all means do so.
- Can you show that you have the support of the clientele group to move ahead with the project? In what ways have members of the clientele group been involved in the preparation of the proposal?
- What other agencies are involved with this clientele group (and have these other agencies been included in your proposed project)?
- It's important for some funding agencies to see how much the clientele group has been involved with the project and the preparation of the proposal. (Sometimes a project is funded and then the director finds that the clientele group does not want to be involved!! Don't let that happen to you.)

EXAMPLE

- *Building - A small building for the Center will be provided by the community head.*
- *Volunteer Meeting/Training Room and Office - Space will be provided by the Department of Food and Nutrition and used for housing the Volunteer Coordinator and the training of volunteers.*
- *Volunteer Coordinator (50%) - A part time staff member, currently on the staff of the Department of Food and Nutrition, will be assigned as a part time staff member for the Center.*

SECTION C, QUESTION 10- DIFFERENTIATING FACTORS

Tips and Things to Consider:

- What makes this organization/project unique? Grantmakers do not expect that every organization/project is unique.
- Often, grantmakers want to be sure that an organization is not duplicating services that are already offered within a community. New organizations with very little history should explain the deliberate decision to launch a new organization in relation to:
 - the existence of other organizations with similar missions, and
 - assessing the issue and/or opportunity the organization plans to address.

SECTION C, QUESTION 11- KEY PLAYERS

Tips and Things to Consider:

- Use this section to describe the roles of the different people associated with your project and the importance of each.
- Make sure to clarify how each role is essential to the success of the project and how each role clearly relates to operationalizing the methods you have described.
- So what do you say about your key people? To start, make sure you include name, title, experience, and qualifications. Is this an existing position or a new position? Include other information if you feel it's important to the success of your project. This is a good place to use bullet points.
- The descriptions of your personnel should let the funding agency know that you have excellent people who are committed to the project. The validity for what you are proposing is directly related to the people who will work with the project.
- If you will be using a Steering Committee (Advisory Committee, Governing Board, etc.) to assist in your project, then this is a good place to describe how it will be organized and who will be included.

EXAMPLE

The Project will employ two full-time and two part time staff and engage a governing board.

- *Project Director (full time) - Responsible for hiring project staff, overseeing project development and operation, establishing and maintaining links with local government agencies, and budget. The Project Director will be Lucy Marcus (author of this proposal).*
- *Volunteer Coordinator (full time) - Responsible for recruiting university student volunteers, establishing and maintaining a working linkage with the Department of Food and Nutrition, developing and offering training projects for volunteers, scheduling volunteers for service at the Center. The Volunteer Coordinator will have a background in food and nutrition and will be housed in the Department of Food and Nutrition.*
- *Project Evaluator (part time) - Responsible for collecting entry level data regarding mother's health and nutrition information and conducting periodic assessment of changes in their level of knowledge, comprehension, and application of that information. Also responsible for developing and implementing a system for periodic formative evaluation of the work of the student volunteers.*
- *Center Assistant (part time) - Responsible for maintaining the structure and appearance of the Center, routine correspondence, and other forms of communication with mothers in the community.*

SECTION C, QUESTIONS 12 & 13- LONG-TERM GOALS AND FUNDING

Rationale

Strong organizations are proactive in preparing for their future. Nonprofits should engage in sound planning to define a clear vision for the future with specific strategies for reaching established goals.

Tips and Things to Consider:

- This question is asking for a broad overview of the organization's approach to planning for either the organization in general or this specific project.
 - Report if the organization has developed or is currently working on any variety of plans, including, but not limited to a strategic plan, a long-range operational plan, a fund development plan, a succession plan for board and key staff, a board development plan, a plan for providing ongoing professional development for staff, a disaster management plan, a risk management plan, etc.
 - Describe how the proposed project compliments the organization's long-term goals.
 - Describe the planning process used for the proposed project.
-

SECTION C, QUESTION 14- APPROACH

Tips and Things to Consider:

- Evidence based approaches - Many grantmakers want to know that an organization's projects reflect best practices or utilize evidence-based approaches. If the organization is using a specific model or evidence based approach, then provide that information.
- If the project is not based on a specific best-practice or model project, then explain why the organization chose to address the issue and/or opportunity in the way that it did. It may be appropriate to highlight the uniqueness of the organization's approach and, perhaps, why the approach appears promising.
- If the reason for the approach is based on evaluation results, then it may be appropriate to refer the reader to your response to the Evaluation section where you describe project results.

SECTION D, QUESTIONS 15 & 16- EVALUATION

Rationale

The strongest nonprofits evaluate their work, analyze and understand the results, and implement modifications to improve programming.

Tips and Things to Consider:

- Best practices in nonprofit operations encourage that organizations engage in some examination of their activities to help guide their work.
- Grantmakers realize that organizations in the startup phase (less than two years old) may not have a lot of outcome data to report.
- A complete answer to these questions requires you to provide information about your future plans for measuring impact, as well as reporting on previous evaluation results or findings.
- Describe the methods (e.g., client feedback, pre- and post-tests, focus groups, surveys, etc.) for measuring progress toward achieving established goals or desired outcomes and/or the names of specific tools that the organization uses to measure outcomes. Include what the organization is measuring, how often each tool is used, and, if appropriate, why a particular tool or method was selected.
- For project requests, limit the answer to how outcome is measured for that specific project.
- For startup organizations, describe how the organization is planning to measure outcomes.
- For general operating or capital requests: Summarize key evaluation results or findings that demonstrate the organization's outcomes. Indicate the time frame for the results or findings.
- For existing project requests: Summarize key evaluation results or findings that demonstrate the project's impact. Indicate the time frame for the results or findings.
 - Do not be afraid to share disappointing results. The key is what the organization learns from experience and how it adjusts its practices in light of the results. Many nonprofits are addressing very complex social issues, and therefore, it is a real sign of strength to have uncovered a flaw in the organization's approach. Deliberately working to address those flaws can lead to improved outcomes in the future.
 - Summarize what the organization learned from its most recent evaluation results that best reflect the organization's overall impact. Be sure to include the timeframe the evaluation results cover. It may also be relevant to include composite data (e.g., "Over the past 5 years, the graduation rate for our youth in mentoring relationships was 85 percent." or "Habitat enhancement and reintroduction of 10 river otter pairs yielded a net gain of 22 pups over the course of two years.").
- This section may include your organization's plan for disseminating information of/from the project to other audiences. Most funding agencies are interested in seeing how their financial support of your project will extend to other audiences. This may include newsletters, workshops, radio broadcasts, presentations, printed handouts, slide shows, training projects, etc. If you have an advisory group involved with your project they can be very helpful in disseminating project information to other audiences.

EXAMPLE

Project evaluation consists of two different evaluative strategies - formative and summative.

- *Formative Evaluation - Primarily qualitative in nature, the formative evaluation will be conducted through interviews and open-ended questionnaires. Mothers and student volunteers will be asked about the day-to-day operation of the Center, the topics covered in the volunteer training project, the attractiveness of the training materials, and other questions to provide feedback for the ongoing improvement of the operation of the Project. The Project Evaluator will meet regularly with project staff to share findings from the formative evaluation effort. Periodic reports will be prepared that identify the major findings of the formative evaluation and how they have been used to improve Project operation.*
- *Summative Evaluation - Primarily quantitative in nature, the summative evaluation will begin with the establishment of baseline data at the beginning of the Project (using a random sample of mothers of young children to assess their food and nutrition knowledge) and then be conducted at 6 month intervals (just prior to each group of volunteers completing their Project service). Data for the summative evaluation will focus on the two primary goals of the project and the objectives of each.*

Goal #1

- *Pre/post tests of knowledge gain on the part of the mothers in health and nutrition information (Objective 1.1).*
- *Selected interviews of mothers to assess their ability to effectively apply health and nutrition information (Objective 1.2).*
- *Selected interviews of mothers to evaluate changes in the health of their child (Objective 1.3).*

Goal #2

- *Records of number of students involved in the project (Objective 2.1).*
- *Documentation of agendas/attendance rosters from all training projects (Objective 2.1).*
- *Documentation of number of mothers served and number of volunteer hours recorded at the Center (Objective 2.3).*
- *Comparative analysis of Goal #2 data with similar data from SHAW (Objective 2.4)*

A yearly report will be issued that presents the formative and summative findings.

SECTION E, QUESTION 17-BUDGET NARRATIVE JUSTIFICATION

Rationale

The budget narrative justification serves two purposes: it explains how the costs were estimated and it justifies the need for each budget item.

Tips and Things to Consider:

- The narrative may include tables for clarification purposes.
- Be sure to provide details for what is included in the line labeled “other” on the line item budget section.
- Often times, percentages will be used in the budget narrative justification. If you are assuming that your project expenses will be x% of your total organization budget expenses you would explain that in the budget narrative.
- Funders like to know what % of an FTE the project involves.

EXAMPLES

Jane Smith, PI, will serve as project director and will oversee the entire project. Additionally she will do XYZ for the project. She is a 25% FTE. She will devote XX months effort and is requesting \$\$\$\$ salary. The fringe benefit rate is 32.3%. Salaries are increased 4% annually.

Local travel is calculated at 6 round trips from Capital City to Newtown to train outreach workers. Each trip is 120 miles round trip. (6x120=720 total miles) The mileage rate is \$.485. The total cost for local travel is 720x\$.485=\$349.20.

SECTION F- ADDENDUM FOR CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS

Sections F should only be completed if this request is for a capital campaign. This section addresses the below listed questions:

18. Discuss the feasibility and cost of the capital campaign and its implications in relation to the organization's ongoing operations expenses.
19. Specify support received to date and the number of prospects approached and/or identified.
20. Identify potential naming opportunities.
21. Indicate the board's financial participation in the campaign (percent participating and amount contributed).
22. Describe plans for funding the ongoing maintenance of the new capital project.
23. Detail financing that might be undertaken in addition to raising funds from the public.
24. Indicate whether the campaign is open or in its quiet phase and when the campaign began. Also indicate if timing is a factor or if a "window of opportunity" exists that could impact the success of the campaign.

PART III- REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1- A copy of the current IRS Letter of Determination indicating tax-exempt status

- A determination letter is the most important legal document your organization possesses. The IRS sends you this letter after you have successfully applied for the recognition of your organization's tax-exempt status. In this document the IRS indicates under which section of the Internal Revenue Code your organization is qualified.
- The determination letter is the only official document and proof that your organization is recognized as a tax-exempt organization. A state-issued tax exempt letter is not the same thing.

ATTACHMENT 2- List of current board of directors including their professional affiliations (name of organization of employment)

- Contact information for the board of directors is not required.
- The information should include name, title on board (if applicable), name of employer, and job title

EXAMPLE

*Jim Cohen, Board President
ABC Law Firm, Partner*

*Nancy Davis, Secretary
XYZ Manufacturing, CFO*

*Susan Michaels, Treasurer
LMN Energy, Vice President Administration*

ATTACHMENT 3- Letter of support from collaborating organizations that explains their role and is signed by the executive director(s) of that organization(s) (if applicable)

- Funding agencies would like to know that others feel strongly enough about your project that they are willing to write a letter in support of the project. Talk through with the potential letter writers the sort of focus that you think will be important for their letter. (Try to draw on the reputation of the letter writing group.)
- Do not get pushed into writing the letters for the agencies - they will all sound alike and will probably defeat your purpose of using them.
- The letters must be substantive. If not, then do not use them!
- Have the letters addressed directly to the funding agency. (Do not use a general "To Whom It May Concern" letter - it makes it appear that you are applying to many different potential funding agencies and are using the same letter for each. This may really be the case, so make sure you personalize each letter to the specific potential funding agency.)

ATTACHMENT 4- The memorandum of understanding or the contract between the organization and the fiscal agent/fiscal sponsor (if applicable)

- A memorandum of understanding is an agreement between two parties in the form of a legal document.
 - It describes a bilateral or multilateral agreement between parties. It expresses a convergence of will between the parties, indicating an intended common line of action. It is often used in cases where parties either do not imply a legal commitment or in situations where the parties cannot create a legally enforceable agreement.
-

ATTACHMENT 5- FINANCIALS

Part 1- Project Budget (must use excel template)

Please note that you can add in extra rows to the template as needed. Not every line item will be applicable. If not applicable, then leave it blank. The project budget must be explained in the budget justification narrative. If your request is for general operating support then the project budget is your organization budget.

Expenses

Expenses are broken down into total project expenses and the expenses that you are seeking from this funder.

1. Salary and Benefits

Include the expenses for all the people who will work on the project. **Break out the employee detail in the budget narrative justification.** Don't forget to add payroll taxes (FICA, Medicare, unemployment and workers' compensation) and fringe benefits such as health insurance. You can include a portion of these costs equal to the portion of the person's time dedicated to the project.

2. Contract Services (consulting, professional, fundraising)

Non-employees that are contracted to do work related to the project. Whenever grant funds are used to pay a third party (individual or organization) outside of the organization, these costs should be included in the grant budget under this category.

3. Occupancy (rent, utilities, maintenance)

Direct project expenses that would not occur if you did not do the project. Some organizations assign a % of these expenses to each project.

4. Training & Professional Development

Costs related to developing staff and preparing the organization to take on this project.

5. Insurance

Costs related to insuring this project that are above and beyond the regular insurance costs for the organization.

6. Travel

Travel related to the project project. Could be local or non-local. When budgeting for travel you may want to consider the following: airfare, ground transportation, per diem, lodging, mileage for personal vehicle usage, etc.

7. Equipment

Nonexpendable, tangible property. Typically thought of as items that are more costly and durable. When there is a need to rent or buy equipment for use on the project, provide information on the type of equipment to be rented/bought, the purpose or use on the project, the length of time needed, and the rental/purchase rate.

8. Supplies

Typically thought of as items that are less costly and get used up. In an office setting a computer would be equipment and the pencil would be supplies.

9. Printing, Copying & Postage

Photocopying, printing, mailings, postage, and express mail charges that are directly related to the project.

10. Evaluation

Costs related to doing project evaluation. May include hiring external evaluators.

11. Marketing

Costs related to the marketing, advertising, and the promotion of your project. Might include additional website costs that are above typical website costs related to your everyday business.

12. Conferences, Meetings, etc.

Costs of holding (or attending) a conference or meeting are included in this category. Some examples are the rental of

facilities and equipment for the meeting, honorariums or fees for trainers or guest speakers, travel, and per diem for speakers. Details of costs for each conference or meeting should be broken out and provided in the budget narrative.

13. Administration

Non-personnel expenses you will incur whether or not you do the project. Some organizations include as a % of management staff in this line item.

Revenues

Please specify whether the Contributions, Gifts, Grants, & Earned Revenue are committed or pending. Committed means there is a firm agreement with the donor to give a contribution. Pending means that a request has been made but not yet agreed to or granted. It would be helpful to explain some of the committed versus pending amounts in the budget narrative justification. For example, if you have a request that you plan to submit please explain it in the budget narrative.

1. Local Government

Group together all local government revenues (related to this project) and then break out the detail as necessary in the project budget justification.

2. State Government

Group together all state government revenues and then break out the detail as necessary in the project budget justification.

3. Federal Government

Group together all federal government revenues and then break out the detail as necessary in the project budget justification.

4. Individuals

Group together all individual donations and then break out the detail as necessary in the project budget justification.

5. Foundation

Group together foundation grants less than \$1,000. Break out foundation grants greater than \$1,000. Add rows as needed.

6. Corporation

Group together corporate grants less than \$1,000. Break out corporate grants greater than \$1,000. Add rows as needed.

7. Federation

Group together federated grants less than \$1,000. Break out federated grants greater than \$1,000. Add rows as needed.

8. Other

Other grants not covered by the above listed categories.

9. Membership Income

Revenues expected to be received from membership dues as related to this project. Explain how your dues work in the budget justification narrative.

10. Project Service Fees

Revenues expected to be received from project participation.

11. Products

What people give you in exchange for the service or product your project generates. Not all projects generate income, but many do. A play generates ticket income and maybe concession income. An education project may have income from publication sales or tuition.

12. Fundraising Events (net)

Revenue expected to be received related to this project for fundraising event. Please subtract out the cost of the event.

13. Investment Income

Income coming from interest payments, dividends, capital gains collected upon the sale of a security or other assets, and any other profit that is made through an investment vehicle of any kind.

14. In-Kind Support

Gifts of goods or services instead of cash. They can include donated space, materials or time. If you list in-kind contributions as income in your budget, then you must also show the corresponding expenses. If someone gives you something at a major discount, then you would show the whole expense and then list the portion being donated under in-kind contributions. This might include volunteer involvement- for example, a volunteer offered his marketing services to the firm and it would have cost \$xxx amount if you would have had to purchase those services.

Part 2- Income Statement

Internally prepared income statement (also known as budget) for current fiscal year (may use organizational budget included in this application).

Part 3- Audited Financial Statements OR 990's and Internally Prepared Financial Statements

1. **Complete copy of organization's audited/reviewed/compiled financial statements for the last fiscal year which includes two (2) years of financial information. Note: Some funders will only accept audited statements. Please check with individual funder.**

OR

2. **Organization's most recently filed Form 990 plus internally prepared financial statements for the past two (2) years. Must include:**

* Form 990

The IRS Form 990 is titled "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax." It is submitted by tax-exempt organizations and non-profit organizations (except congregations) to provide the Internal Revenue Service with annual financial information. A short version, Form 990-EZ, may be used by organizations with gross receipts of between \$25,000 and \$500,000 and total assets of less than \$2.5 million. (Organizations and congregations with gross receipts of under \$25,000 in a year are not required to file a form 990). Another variant, Form 990-PF, is available for private foundation organizations.

* Statement of activities (income statement)

Also known as profit and loss statement (P&L), statement of financial performance, earnings statement, operating statement or statement of operations. It indicates how the revenue is transformed into the net income (the result after all revenues and expenses have been accounted for, also known as the "bottom line"). It displays the revenues recognized for a specific period, and the cost and expenses charged against these revenues, including write-offs (e.g., depreciation and amortization of various assets) and taxes. The purpose of the income statement is to show whether the nonprofit made or lost money during the period being reported. It represents a period of time. This contrasts with the balance sheet, which represents a single moment in time. It is important to specify whether it is accrual (preferred) or cash accounting. Some funders require accrual.

* Statement of financial position (balance sheet)

A summary of the financial balances of your nonprofit. Assets and liabilities and fund balances are listed as of a specific date, such as the end of its financial year. A balance sheet is often described as a "snapshot of a nonprofit's financial condition". It applies to a single point in time of a business' calendar year.

* Statement of cash flow

Shows how changes in balance sheet accounts and income affects cash and cash equivalents, and breaks the analysis down to operating, investing, and financing activities. Essentially, the cash flow statement is

concerned with the flow of cash in and cash out of the nonprofit. The statement captures both the current operating results and the accompanying changes in the balance sheet. As an analytical tool, the statement of cash flow is useful in determining the short-term viability of a nonprofit, particularly its ability to pay bills.

NOTE- Financial statements are to be prepared according to Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures (GAAP).

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- *Gil Weyhaupt, Room at the Inn*

The following resources and reports were used to help compile the information found in this guide:

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