

ABE Grant Writing: Basics and Beyond

*A First Literacy Professional Development
Workshop*

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Agenda

- 9:30 – 10:00** Coffee, Sign in
- 10:00 – 10:25** Discussion: “What are some keys to effective ABE Grant Writing?”
- 10:25 – 11:05** Presentation: Planning and Writing an Effective ABE Grant Proposal
- 11:05 – 11:40** Group Activity: Designing a Proposal Concept
- 11:40 – 11:50** Sharing, Discussion of Proposal Concepts
- 11:50 – 12:00** Feedback on Workshop

Planning Proposal Concepts

Where do ideas for your proposals come from?

- From you
- From staff
- From learners themselves

And these ideas are based primarily on ...

LEARNERS'

NEEDS,

GOALS!

How do you come to know your learners' needs and goals?

Ask and listen!

- Student surveys
- Focus groups
- Goal identification
- Student councils
- Communication with teachers and counselors
- Staff input
- Studies or reports

Designing a project to meet learner needs and goals

What does the program need *to do* to address these needs?

- Prioritize
- Establish new services
- Supplement or expand existing services

What resources are needed to adequately provide those services?

- Staffing
- Supervision
- Space
- Technology or other equipment
- Supplies

What is the cost of this project? Don't forget

- Staff development
- Administrative costs
- Indirect costs

What are the main elements of a fundable ABE grant proposal?

- A clear, compelling statement of need
- A project design with services that will address that need
- Proposed outcomes that *measure* project effectiveness
- Qualified program staff
- A budget that is clearly linked to the project

What makes a statement of need compelling?

- An explanation of *how* this need was identified.
 - Student surveys
 - Focus groups
 - Studies or reports
 - Combination
- Data, internal and external

Studies/Reports that may be Useful Resources

- *Breaking the Language Barrier, A Report on English Language Services in Greater Boston*, Commissioned by The Boston Foundation, March 2011
- *Facing the Future: Massachusetts Strategic Framework for Adult Basic Education 2010 – 2015*
- *Learning English, Talking Jobs: Lessons from ENB's 2011 ESOL Student Workplace Survey*, by English for New Bostonians
- *Building a Higher Skilled Workforce: Results and Implications from the Bridgeconnect National Survey*, by the Workforce Strategy Center, November 2010 (For Bridge/Transitions, Next Steps, Workplace Preparation)

How would I design project outcomes which measure project effectiveness?

Describing, Measuring Activities

- For a class, how many students will attend how many hours of class, per week and per year. And what is covered in the curriculum?
- For tutorials, how many tutors will be trained, how, and how many learners will they be meeting with, for approximately how many hours? And what will be the focus of the tutorials?
- For counseling, approximately how many learners will she/he be meeting with, for how many hours, and why?
- For childcare, how many children will be cared for and for how many hours. And how many learners will benefit?

Describing, Measuring Learner Outcomes

- For classes and tutorials, are learning gains measured by standardized or in-house assessments? Are there particular competencies that learners will acquire?
- What about alternative assessments, like portfolios?
- For counseling, learners' goal attainment may be estimated—like retention/persistence rates, completing the program's highest level; gaining employment.

Entering skills training, a transition/bridge program or college.

Be sure your proposed budget is clearly linked to the services provided and resources needed

Staffing

- Who will do what?
- How much time will it take?
(Be sure to allow for staffing adequate to provide the proposed services and meet your proposed outcomes.)

Resources Needed

- Be thorough, yet realistic.
- Be careful about “padding” this part of the budget.

Preparing to Write Your Proposal

- Create time line with deadlines.
- Start writing a little sooner than you think.
- If the grant writing is a team effort, be clear who's in charge and who's submitting which sections.
- Allow enough time for contributors to do their part.
- Do you have data to demonstrate the need? Consider what kinds of data to use and their sources.
- Draft a project budget.
- Have a list of all attachments needed and check them off as you collect each item.

Writing Tips

- Follow directions, including font size, number of pages.
- Allow for readers of varied backgrounds. Watch your use of ABE lingo.
- Use ABE and funders' terminology that is used in the RFP. Use full terms prior to using acronyms.
- Avoid falling into "grant speak."
- Make sure the proposal has "one voice".
- Cutting and pasting can be helpful, but be careful.
- Use the active voice, not passive.
- Allow for mutual editing, proof reading.

Writing the Proposal

- Write directly, clearly, simply.
- Go for a solid first draft, not perfection.
- Provide all information requested in the appropriate section as requested. Make sure the readers don't have to search for your answers.
- Answer *all* questions. If a particular question is not applicable, state that.

Additional Thoughts on Writing

- Is your stated need for funding clear? Is it compelling?
- Make sure the budget fits your project.
- What are the proposed outcomes of your project or service? Are they clear and measureable? Are your measurable outcomes realistic?
- All of the sections should fit together to make a clear and compelling whole. Look at the whole.
- Plan to finish your proposal a bit before the due date.

Resources

- *Associated Grantmakers of Massachusetts*, [agmconnect.org](http://www.agmconnect.org), membership levels from \$85-\$450 allowing access to grant resources <http://www.agmconnect.org>
- *Fundsnet Services*, a large collection of grant resources in multiple categories for the non-profit sector. <http://www.fundsnet services.com>
- *Guidestar*, information and tools for non-profits . There is a membership, but you can access some materials without the membership. <http://www2.guidestar.org/>
- *Technical Development Corporation*, <http://www.tdcorp.org>, a nonprofit consulting and research group that provides training.

Final Words of Advice

- Learn from proposals that are not funded.
- Talk to funders.
- Persist.
- Stay positive.