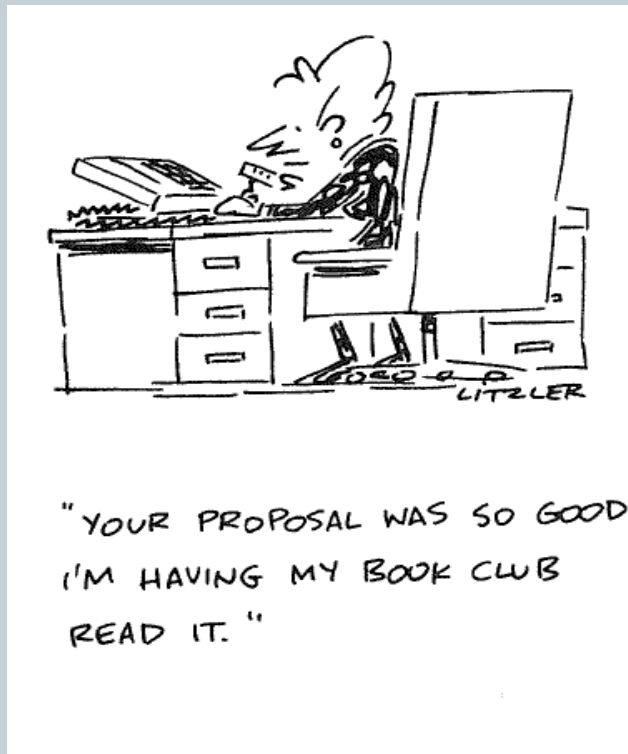


An Introduction to Proposal Writing



Learning Objectives



- ❖ Set realistic expectations
- ❖ Before you begin
- ❖ Common proposal elements
- ❖ Drafting proposal elements

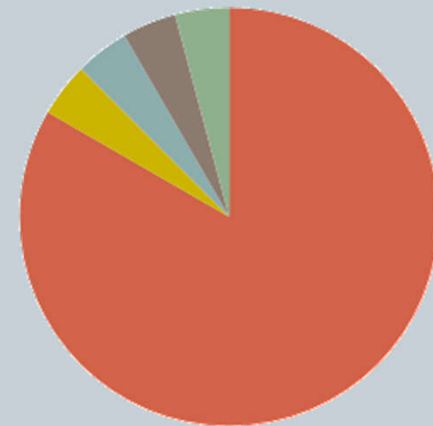
Grants and Your Organization



Grants are just one piece of the pie.

- ❖ Earned income
- ❖ Major gifts and endowments
- ❖ Annual campaigns and appeals
- ❖ Special events

**Organizational
Funding**



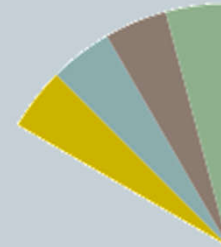
Grants and Your Organization



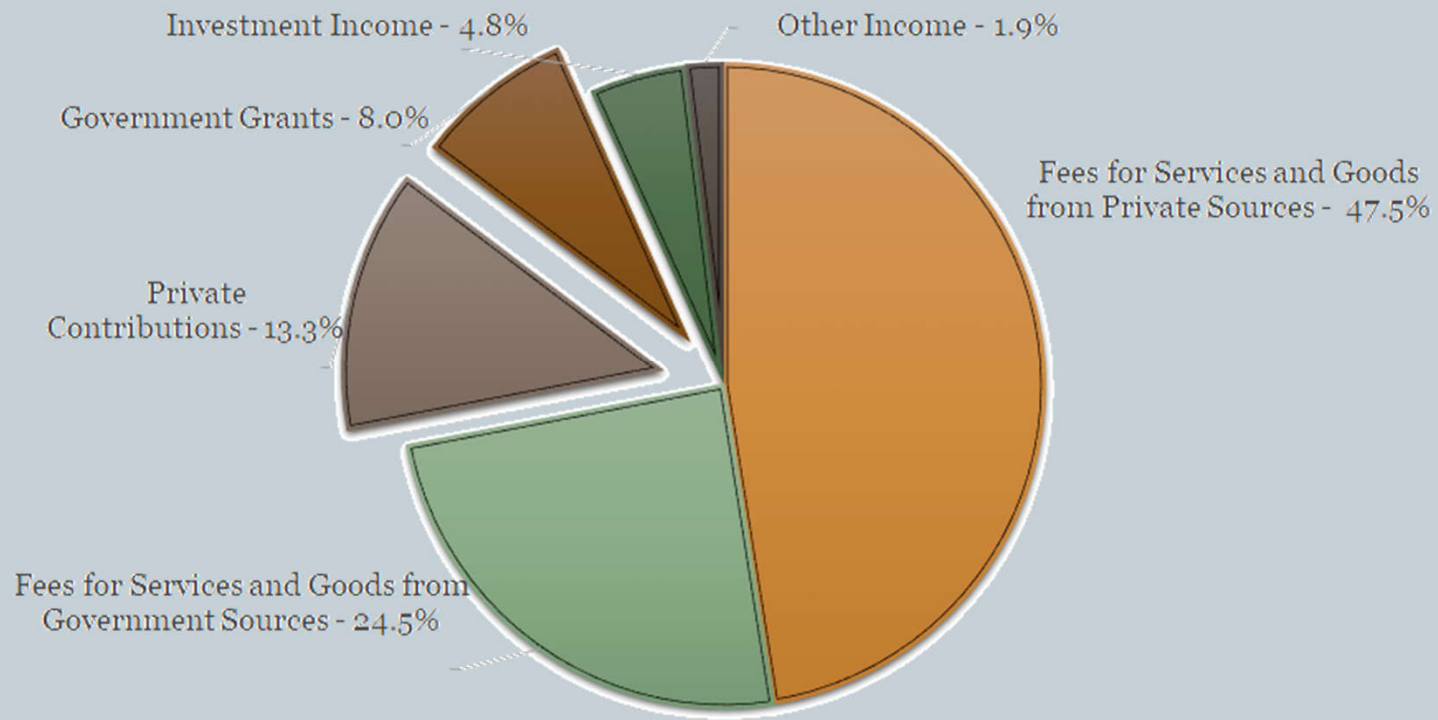
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Organizational Funding



Revenue Sources for Nonprofit Organizations, 2013



Source: *Nonprofit Sector in Brief 2015*, The Urban Institute

Getting Ready for Proposal Writing



Be sure you are familiar with:

- ❖ Organizational policies and procedures that impact grant and proposal writing
- ❖ Other staff that write proposals
- ❖ Previous proposal writing efforts
- ❖ Board member affiliations
- ❖ Up-to-date organizational information, including: mission statement, goals, programs, financials, etc.

Researching Grants and Grant Makers



Grant research should be an ongoing process. Over time, with consistent effort, you can:

- ❖ Establish a calendar of funding periods and proposal due dates
- ❖ Understand grant makers' trends
- ❖ Position yourself to be a more attractive grantee
- ❖ Ensure that you have the basic information and time to develop various types of proposals for varying amounts of funding

Why Your Proposal Will Get Funded



- ❖ You read the directions! You follow the directions!
- ❖ You're addressing an important issue
- ❖ You're highly qualified to do the work
- ❖ You have a thoughtful plan
- ❖ You've done your homework
- ❖ You have committed leadership
- ❖ Your proposal fits the funders objectives

Why Your Proposal Won't Get Funded



Common Proposal Elements



1. Cover Letter
2. Proposal Summary
3. Introduction
4. Problem Statement (Need)
5. Goals of the Project
6. Method(s)
7. Evaluation
8. Sustainability
9. Budget

Requirements vary by funder. Read directions carefully.

Cover Letter



- ❖ Includes project name
- ❖ Includes amount of money requested
- ❖ Explains why the project is a good fit
- ❖ Conveys your enthusiasm for the project
- ❖ Signed by Executive Director or Board Chairperson

Proposal Summary



It may go at the beginning of the proposal, but the Proposal Summary should be the last portion of the proposal that you write.

- ❖ A concise statement
- ❖ Addresses the who, what, when, and how much money

Introduction



The introduction typically includes:

- ❖ Information about the organization
- ❖ Organizational history
- ❖ Qualifications
- ❖ Staff



"COULD WE RENAME THAT SECTION 'ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND' INSTEAD OF 'EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES'."

Problem Statement



- ❖ Also known as a Statement of Need
- ❖ Defines: Who, What, When, Where, Why
- ❖ Fact-based
- ❖ Is a statement of current conditions

Goals of the Project



- ❖ Clearly state what you intend to accomplish
- ❖ Include quantitative improvements (that you can count)
- ❖ Address qualitative improvements
- ❖ Include reasonable 'trickle down' improvements
- ❖ Don't forget you will have to evaluate your impact

Methods



Explain what your organization will do to address the problem(s). Include a work plan, if appropriate, and detail the specific activities your organization will undertake. Details may include:

- ❖ A description of the target audience and how you involve them in the project
- ❖ Where the project will take place
- ❖ The activities you will undertake
- ❖ Your project planning to date
- ❖ Each person's role in the project execution
- ❖ A timeline of activities

Evaluation



Demonstrate that you have rigorous performance measures and goals and the ability to determine if they are met.

❖ Identify outputs and outcomes

- What you are going to measure?
- How you are going measure it?
- What steps do you have in place to make changes if you are not on time or within budget?

❖ Outputs – quantifiable results

❖ Outcomes – benefits to program participants or communities during/after program participation

Sustainability



Demonstrate that the project will not cease when the funding ends.

- ❖ Describe how you will replace the funds
 - ❖ Earned income
 - ❖ Third-party payment
 - ❖ Business ventures
 - ❖ Annual giving or special campaigns
- ❖ Include specific, realistic resources
- ❖ Include documentation, whenever possible
- ❖ Show that you have thought about the project on many levels

Budget



The budget clearly demonstrates how much the project will cost, what the specific expenses will be, and projected income.

Expense Categories

1. Personnel Expenses
2. Direct Project Expenses
3. Indirect Expenses

Income Categories

1. Earned Income
2. Contributed Income

Budget



Other aspects your budget must consider and address:

- ❖ Reasonableness
- ❖ Actual or estimated costs
- ❖ Justification of budget items that may raise questions
- ❖ The proposal narrative supports the line-item expenses
- ❖ Matching funds and in-kind contributions

Supplementary Materials



Funders may ask for a variety of materials to be submitted with the proposal. Examples include:

- ❖ IRS tax exempt letter
- ❖ List of board members and their affiliations
- ❖ Financial statement, audit, IRS Form 990
- ❖ Key staff resumes

Tips for Success



- ❖ Follow the directions
- ❖ Write clearly and concisely
- ❖ Avoid jargon
- ❖ Use facts
- ❖ Balance the proposal
- ❖ Proofread
- ❖ Mom approved?



"I'M REALLY NOT MUCH OF A
PROOF READER BUT I DID CATCH
MOST OF YOUR B.S."

Once You Hear the...



Good News:

- ❖ Sign and return documents promptly
- ❖ Send a thank you letter
- ❖ Begin communication with your funder
- ❖ Begin tracking your performance immediately

Not So Good News:

- ❖ Send a thank you letter
- ❖ Request a copy of the score sheet and/or reviewer's comments
- ❖ Nurture your relationship with the funder
- ❖ Don't give up

Wrap Up



**Materials from today's webinar
and the recording will be available
on HAC's website.**

www.ruralhome.org

