

Grant Writing 101:

Ask and ye ~~shall~~ might receive

This breakout opportunity will consider basic grant writing tips including some dos and don'ts.

Please share your concerns about starting, grant application experiences, insights, and/or general questions during this cooperative learning discussion.

This PowerPoint is available upon request from marysimonsonclark@gmail.com

Briefly, who has done what?

Agenda

Tips, Dos, and Don'ts

- Plan Your Project
- Consider With Caution
- Gather Your Information
- Find a Grant
- Answer the Questions
- Develop a Budget
- Plan the Evaluation
- Assemble the Information

Share and Discuss

Contact Information and an Additional Resource



Plan Your Project

Tip: *Prayerfully* plan your project—perhaps with a logic model, which is a visual tool that shows relationships between investments and results as well as whether your plan is *logical, complete, and accomplishes your vision.*

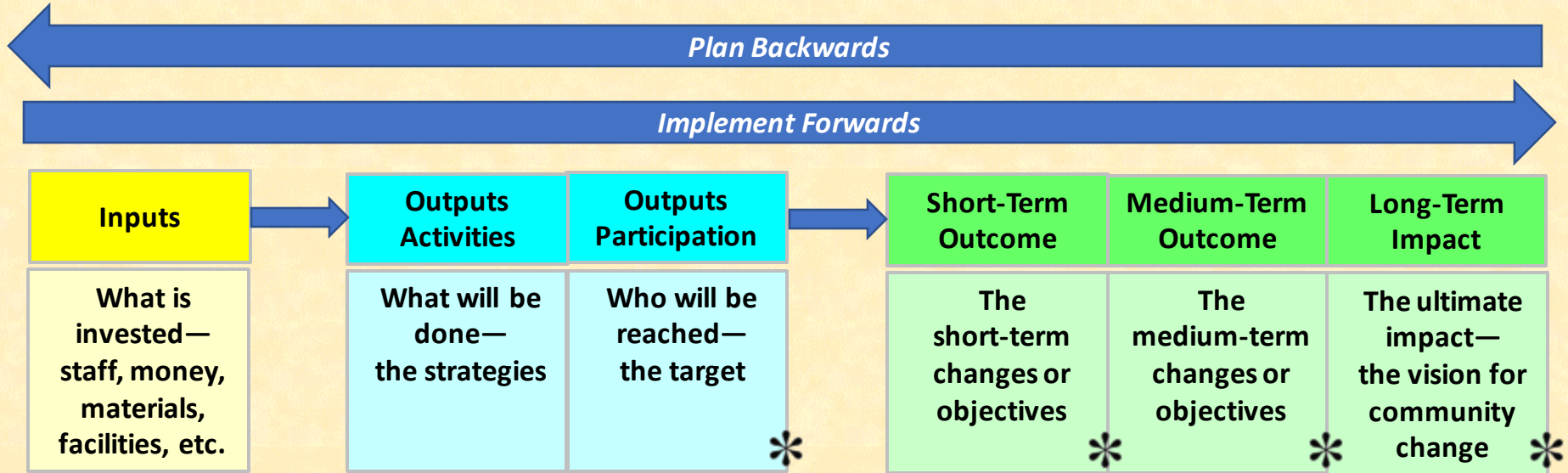
Do . . .

- **include all of the following:**
 - **Inputs:** resources including staff, funds, supplies, facilities, volunteers, etc.
 - **Outputs:** activities, products, and participation generated from input use
 - **Outcomes:** short- and mid-term results or changes from the program
 - **Impacts:** long-term program consequences or results
- **connect the steps using “if-then” statements**

Don't . . .

- **plan forwards; plan *backwards* and implement *forwards***
- **make plans without input from all impacted stakeholders**

Developing a Logic Model



*Evaluation point—include the types of evaluation as you plan your project or program

- *IF* we invest [staff, money, etc.] , *THEN* we can do [activities] with [participants] .
- *IF* participants complete the activities, *THEN* the [short-term change] will be achieved.
- *IF* the activities/short-term change continues, *THEN* the [medium-term change] will be achieved.
- *IF* the activities/short-term change continues, *THEN* the [impact] will occur in society.

For a simple logic model template, see UW-Madison:

https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/programdevelopment/files/2016/03/LM_WorksheetTableformat.doc

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has a logic model training manual available at:

<https://wkkf.issuelab.org/resource/logic-model-development-guide.html>

Consider With Caution

Tip: Look for grants that are the best fit with God's call to your congregation and could support your proposed project.

Do . . .

- your research to find grants with which the funder's foci are compatible with your project's emphases
- be realistic about the likelihood you will receive the grant
- determine if you can meet all the reporting requirements

Don't . . .

- apply for grants for which you can't meet their requirements
- stray into mission or funding "drift" that pulls you away from your current call ... *unless you discern the Spirit is leading you*

Consider With Caution cont'd

Tip: “RFP” stands for “request for proposal”

(i.e., a grant application for the plan you developed).

“LOI” stands for “letter of intent/interest,” which will determine if the funder is interested in funding your plan.

Do . . .

- review the application requirements—is the time and effort to complete the application worth the potential funding?
- ensure you have matching funds if they are required

Don't . . .

- assume grant funding will cover all salaries or general operating expenses—sometimes they do not
- hire people based on grant funding without indicating if the position will continue without and/or after the grant ends

Gather Your Information

Tip: Set up an accessible electronic (or paper) file of your basic or “boilerplate” information that will be needed for many or most grant applications.

Do . . .

- **begin to gather information about your congregation (or organization) such as the following:**
 - your congregation’s official name, contact information, website, etc.
 - location of legal documentation (e.g., 501(c)3 status, tax number, founding year, year of incorporation, etc.)
 - mission statement, vision statement, goals, objectives, etc.
 - number, composition, and demographics of the governing board
 - full- and part-time staff, including demographics and biographies
 - information about volunteers

Don’t . . .

- **forget to update this information on a regular basis**

Gather Your Information cont'd

Tip: Gather both quantitative (numerical data, measurements, amounts, etc.) and qualitative (stories, examples, etc.) types of information. Both types of information can influence funders and often are required for reports.

Do . . .

- gather demographic information about your community
- identify partner organizations and relationships with them
- use data verifiable with a variety of information sources

Don't . . .

- only note the community's/group's needs; note their assets
- use names, identifying information, or pictures of people without their permission
 - be particularly cautious using information or pictures about children/minors and people who are in vulnerable circumstances

Sources for Community Information

- **United States Census Bureau:** <https://data.census.gov/>
- **Minnesota State Demographic Center:**
<https://mn.gov/admin/demography/data-by-topic/>
- **Minnesota Department of Education:**
<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/Data/>
- **Kids Count Data Center—Minnesota Data:**
<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data?location=MN#MN/2/0/char/0>
- **Minnesota Compass:** <https://www.mncompass.org/>
and **Amherst H. Wilder Foundation:**
<https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research/wilder-research-topics>
- **Neighborhood or city websites**
- **Local libraries**
- **University, college, and local school websites**
- **Social service agencies, food shelves, and community groups**
- **Local bulletin boards, newspapers, radio, television, etc.**
- ***Use your congregation's annual reports to the ELCA***

Find a Grant

Tip: Let people know about your plan and ask them to tell you if they learn of a grant opportunity that might fund it.

Do . . .

- form a team of folks with varied expertise, including financial, who will commit to work together to find and write grants
- look locally and regionally for grants for relationship potential
- use a funder's preferred contact method for an initial contact
- utilize in-person, online, or recorded information sessions
- consider whether you can meet the application deadline

Don't . . .

- forget to only seek grants that are a good fit for your plan
- look once and quit—funders have cycles and may change foci

Sources for Finding Grants

- **Federal and State Registers:**

- **Federal:** <https://www.grants.gov/> [use the Mobile App or use the “Search Grants” tab at: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html>]
- **State:** <https://mn.gov/grants/>

- **Foundation Directories:**

- These can be found in some libraries
- You can purchase subscriptions for finding grants, such as from Foundation Center and GuideStar, which are now known as Candid.: <https://candid.org/?fceref=lr> [click on “Find funding information”]

- **GrantAdviser:** Use this site to check funders’ profiles:

<https://grantadvisor.org/funders.php>

- **Minnesota Council on Foundations with Candid.:**

For grantmaking in Minnesota annual reports: <https://mcf.org/grantmaking-data>

- **FundsNet:** Find Minnesota funders as of Feb. 23, 2021 for your proposal at:

<https://fundsnetervices.com/minnesota-grants-and-foundations>

Sources for Finding Grants cont'd

- **GrantWatch:**

<https://www.grantwatch.com/grants-for-nonprofits>

[In the “Location” drop-down menu, choose “Minnesota (USA)”]

- **Otto Bremer Trust:** <https://ottobremer.org/grantmaking/for-grantseekers/>

- **Blandin Foundation:** Funding for Minnesota rural communities at:

<https://blandinfoundation.org/programs/grants/>

- **ELCA GrantMaker:** <https://elca.org/grants>

- **ELCA Domestic Hunger Grants:** <https://elca.org/domestichungergrants>

- **Southwestern Minnesota Synod:** <https://swmnelca.org/grants/>

- **Local organizations and foundations:** These allow you to develop relationships with funders that can provide guidance and ongoing connections.

- **Word of mouth**

- *What sources for finding grants have you used . . . and found to be effective?*

Answer the Questions

Tip: Answer the questions and prompts in the *exact order* they are asked with the *exact information* that is requested.

Do . . .

- use in your responses the same words found in the question
- respond in a narrative format—not bullet points or lists
- follow character, word, or page counts *exactly*
- check spelling, grammar, clarity, understandability, etc.
- back up your work often including with a Word or paper copy

Don't . . .

- divide up the application sections for team members to complete without *first* discussing the entire project together
- skip questions without providing a brief response
- use jargon or abbreviations without definitions

Answer the Questions cont'd

Tip: Indicate successes that you and your collaborative partners have had in similar programs, projects, work, etc.

Do . . .

- describe your organization in ways that relate to your plan
- offer evidence of successes you have had in similar projects
- identify groups who will collaborate and/or partner with you in this work and state how their expertise will be beneficial

Don't . . .

- include collaborators without first discussing the plan with them, getting their input, and ensuring their participation
- develop a plan without intentionally seeking input from *all* the stakeholders—*including people whose needs you hope to address*—and incorporating their goals, assets/resources, abilities, and lived experiences into the plan fully

Answer the Questions cont'd

Tip: Explain how your project will meet the funder's priorities, which may be collaboration, inclusion, diversity, asset-building, sustainability, accompaniment, justice, advocacy, addressing insecurities or root causes, environmental, etc.

Do . . .

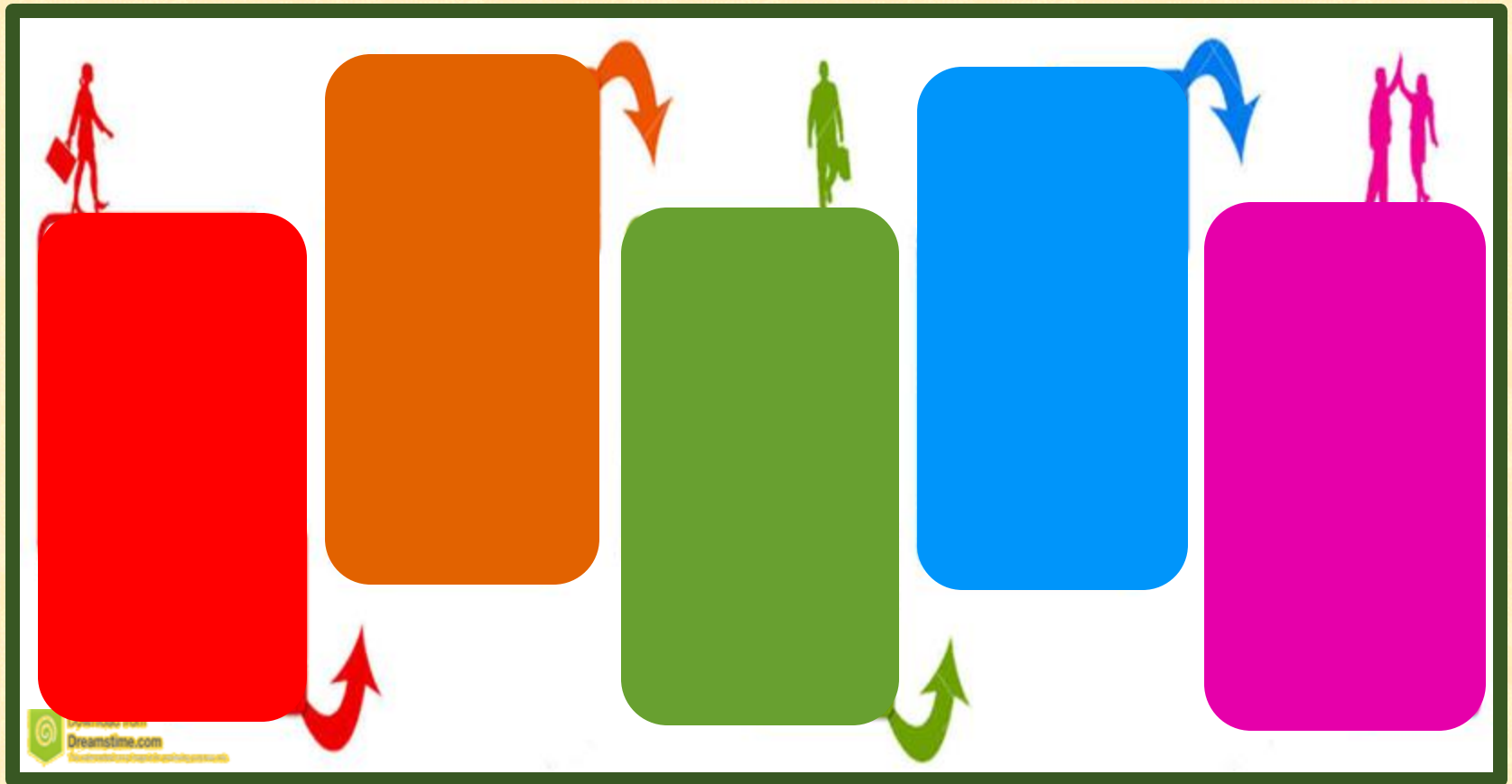
- give quantitative (measurable) information to show the need
- give qualitative (narrative) information to persuade funders
- double-check that your information is current and accurate

Don't . . .

- continue to apply if you realize your project is not a good fit
- sacrifice clarity and a compelling description for brevity's sake
- fail to continuously re-read previous responses to ensure your procedures and purposes or goals are consistent from one response to the next

Answer the Questions about Goals

Tip: Consider developing both short-term and long-term **SMART** goals that relate to your and the funder's mission.



Do include your and the funder's approach and focus priorities

Don't develop more goals than you can manage

Develop a Budget: General

Tip: Verify who will be the fiscal agent, especially in a collaborative effort; involve them and treasurers, financial officers, or finance committees in the project planning.

Do . . .

- use whatever budget format the funder requests
- use a budget narrative, if allowed, to explain the line items
- begin with expenses and then, look at income sources
- use outside resources to help calculate costs such as rent, etc.
- indicate if the budget or explanation is a separate attachment
- balance the project expenses with related income for clarity

Don't . . .

- delete line items from the funder's budget form; use \$0,000
- use your organization's budget for the project's budget
- submit a budget without at least *double-checking your math*

Develop a Budget: Expenses

Tip: Analyze in detail the many costs—some of which are not obvious—involved in successfully achieving your goals.

Do . . .

- include all expenses, such as salaries, equipment, etc.
- provide estimated costs for supplies, rent, utilities, etc.
- include special/event expenses and transportation
- include mileage and the anticipated number of miles traveled
- in-kind expenses (e.g., items used for the project that would otherwise be used to generate income)

Don't . . .

- forget “hidden costs” that will be incurred due to the project
- fail to double-check that the expense line items relate to the in-kind donations items that you list in the project's income

Develop a Budget: Income

Tip: Develop a budget that shows how your organization will have an identified investment in the project.

Do . . .

- include financial income from individual or group donors, grants, fundraising, fees, etc.
- include in-kind donations of goods, services, facilities, etc.
- include as in-kind donations the portion of your staff members' salaries and benefits that are used in the project
- include as in-kind income the value of all volunteers' time
 - This is \$31.80/hr. for the U.S. and \$34.47/hr. for Minnesota
- include the amount you are requesting from the funder

Don't . . .

- fail to subtract other financial and in-kind income sources from the requested amount

Develop a Budget: Future Focus

Tip: Plan for the future in terms of costs, the number of people involved, sustaining the work beyond grant funding, etc.

Do . . .

- consider the current rate of inflation for future expenses
- Indicate if you think the project will expand in the future
- indicate if this is a one-time or time-limited project
- consider first-time pilot projects to evaluate their efficacy
- include a plan for how you will sustain the work after funding

Don't . . .

- assume the funder will cover salaries and/or general operating expenses
- fail to note the limited number of times you can consecutively apply for this specific grant

Plan the Evaluation

Tip: Find out what information the funder requires in their reports and what is important to the various stakeholders so you can plan an evaluation that will gather this data.

Do . . .

- evaluation for transparency, ethical funding use, fundraising, accountability, improving the plan, communication, etc.
- include quantitative (measurable and/or scaled) data
- include qualitative (reflection and/or story) information
- share your findings with the funder and all stakeholders

Don't . . .

- leave doing evaluation until the end of the program or later
- use just one tool or way to gather information
- fail to get feedback from volunteers, staff, stakeholders, etc.

Assemble the Information

Tip: Use the funder's checklist for what to include in the application or develop your own checklist from the guidelines and review the list in advance of the deadline.

Do . . .

- know if you are to submit online and/or provide paper copies
- have several people carefully proofread the application
- ensure that the plan's details are consistent throughout
- determine if there are additional required items
- indicate locations of attachments, appendices, uploads, etc.

Don't . . .

- include extraneous information that isn't requested
- wait until the last minute to apply, especially if online
- fail to keep a paper copy for many important future uses

Possible Required Information

Project Name for use throughout the application

Executive Summary

- **Briefly summarize your responses to the application's sections if and however the funder requests**

Cover Letter

- **Address the letter to whomever or whatever group that is to receive the application as noted in the instructions or online**
- **Indicate that you are applying for a specific [name] grant**
- **Briefly introduce your organization and its mission**
- **Name and briefly introduce your project**
- **State how your project's goals could help the funder achieve their mission and goals (i.e., compatibility with their work)**
- **Indicate the exact amount you are seeking from the funder**
- **Provide the contact information for the person who can provide clarification or additional information**
- **Use an enthusiastic, hopeful/optimistic, and gracious tone**

Possible Required Information cont'd

Budget Forms

- **Use the forms or format requested by the funder**
 - Expenses: goods, services, utilities, etc.
 - Income: financial and in-kind donations of goods and services
 - Show how in-kind donations offset the related expenses
 - Indicate the specific amount requested from the donor
 - Round all amounts to the nearest dollar
 - Align the digits in columns to lessen potential math errors
- **Include your organization's budget, if it is required**

Letter(s) of Support from collaborative partners

- **Make contacts for letters well in advance of the deadline**
- **Often, it's helpful to provide draft letters that can be edited**

Logic Model

- **Use the funder's format if one is provided**

Share and Discuss



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What procedure should you follow if you find you cannot complete your plan as proposed and funded?

Contact Information

Mary Simonson Clark, BS-OT, MA/MSW, LGSW*

- ***Theology/Social Work—**
Program Development, Policy, and Administration
- Diversity and Inclusion Maintained Advanced Standing
- Human Services Management Certificate
- Faith-based Consultant, Writer, Speaker, Facilitator, Researcher, and Social Work Instructor
- **612-636-5104; marysimonsonclark@gmail.com**
- Personal pronouns: she, her, hers

Additional Resource

How to Write a Grant Proposal: Step by Step

written and produced by W. F. Goldsmith on YouTube at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ByQRri_LTUE