

Economic Development Proposal Overview

Goal: For students to students to apply strategic thinking toward improving the local community

Objectives: Students will...

- Articulate development goals and a compelling rationale for the project
- Demonstrate an understanding of the economic trajectory of La Plata County
- Position their project relative to different theories and approaches to development
- Describe similar or related projects from other communities around the world
- Articulate how the project will lead to larger economic development goals
- Provide an accurate budget of expenses and financial plan for the project

What: The economic development proposal is a simplified version of a grant proposal that organizations working in the field submit to private foundations or government agencies. A selection committee routinely decides which proposals receive money. For your proposal, the audience will be the panel of judges present at our exhibition. Your goal is to convince others not only that your plan has potential but that it has **more** potential than the other proposals during our exhibition. Note that quality work could result in the incorporation of your idea into an actual grant proposal by Local First or one of the other organizations attending the exhibition.

The proposal must have the following:

1. Executive Summary - The summary should answer all the basic questions: what problem or issue are you trying to address, what is your project, why it will work, why it's timely and important, and what you need to implement your vision. Your summary should state clearly how your project contributes to a strong, resilient economy in La Plata County (5 points).

2. Community Description - This section will provide community context for your project. It will discuss the relevant demographics, geography, history, and social, political, cultural, and economic dynamics of the issue you trying to address. This section needs to convince the reader that the particular issue is pressing, that your research has discovered a compelling solution, and that there are important consequences for inaction (10 points).

3. Project Description - This section will describe in detail what your development project intends to accomplish. You should have 1 to 3 primary goals for the project. You want to describe in detail how the project will work: who will do what with whom over what period of time resulting in what outcomes. (10 points).

4. Rationale and Logic Model - This section will explain to the reader why your proposal will address the issue you have highlighted in your community description. This rationale should explain the larger strategy of economic development that supporting your project. You will want to explain how you've considered other approaches to problem and convince

the reader your solution is not only the best available option but innovative and something that holds potential for other communities. You will include a logic model or visual diagram of how the activities of the project will achieve your goals. (20 points).

5. Similar solutions elsewhere - Part of convincing the reader to fund your proposal is demonstrating that your approach has a track record of success. You want to identify similar projects in other communities that have been successful. At the same time, you ideally want to show how your solution improves upon what these other communities have done, extends their solution in some way, and solves inherent problems in this type of project. If you feel simply replicating a successful project from another community is called for, you should use this space to describe particular benefits or challenges of implementing the solution in La Plata County (10 points)

6. Institutional Plan for Implementation - In this section you will describe how you will implement your plan. You should include a **timeline** for implementation with bullet points and benchmarks for progress. Your narrative in this section should include the Five Ms:

- **Materials** - What materials (e.g. equipment, building materials, infrastructure) will you need for the project?
- **(Hu)manpower** - How many people with what type of skills will you need? You should describe specific jobs or roles within the project
- **Management** - How will you make decisions and who are the people in leadership roles? Name potential organizations or government agencies involved in the project and what their roles would be.
- **Markets** - How will the project sustain itself over time? If the project will rely upon ongoing government support, describe how you will supplement this subsidy with earned income.
- **Money** - How much do you need to complete the project and how much are you asking from various sources (e.g. local government, private foundations, earned income)? (10 points for the entire section)

7. Evaluation - How will you measure the success of your project. What indicators will you use to demonstrate economic development? Who will track these indicators and how often will you track them? (5 points)

8. Budget - Your proposal must include a budget for major expenses such as personnel, materials, overhead. Your budget should have at least 15 items in the expense column. The revenue column should show estimated support from grants, earned income, government support, and/or in-kind donations. (10 points)

Length: 7 to 15 pages single-spaced (including budget)

Exhibition (20 points) - You must have the following:

- a concise explanation and justification of your economic development proposal
- your proposal in a three-hole folder or binder for attendees to look through
- a visual aid to support your proposal. Visual aids can include posters, videos, slide shows, brochures, model, or demonstration of your product or service.

How: You can start on the proposal as we move through our unit on economic development, using the exercises in class to start to work things out. After February 17th, you will have approximately three weeks of project work time to finish your research and write the proposal. During this time, I will gather everyone writing a development proposal together to answer questions and offer coaching. I will also be teaching additional classes on related topics, such as gentrification and project planning, that you can participate in. You will need to do outside research to complete the proposal. You can do much of this online, but you can also do interviews in the community of organizations and agencies both in Durango and elsewhere that have experience with the issues you are trying to address.

When: Final proposals are due by the end of class on March 6th; exhibition date TBD.

Evaluation

Each of the sections listed above will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Accuracy - Are the facts and numbers you are providing correct? Do you provide citations?
- Level of detail - Do you provide enough detail to overcome skepticism?
- Language - Is the proposal convincing, compelling, and easy to understand? Is it free of spelling and grammatical errors?
- Creativity - Is your development innovative? Have you overcome obstacles and problems in creative ways?
- Logical - Do the different parts of proposal hold together? Are the assumptions valid? Do you acknowledge uncertainty? Will your proposal contribute to long-term health and resilience of La Plata County's economy?

Section/Component	Pay particular attention to:	Possible	Score
Executive Summary	Accuracy, language, and logic	5	
Community background	Accuracy and detail	10	
Project description	Accuracy, detail, and creativity	10	
Rationale & Logic Model	Detail, creativity, and logic	20	
Similar solutions	Accuracy and detail	10	
Implementation Plan	Detail, creativity, and logic	10	
Evaluation	Detail and logic	5	
Budget	Accuracy and detail	10	
Exhibition	Accuracy, language, creativity, and logic	20	
Total		100	

