

Guide to Writing a Development Grant Proposal

Read this individually and then go through the discussion questions as a group.

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).

How do I do this? - You wait until everything else is done and then pick the most essential, specific facts about your project, why it's important, and why it will work. You will have everything you need in the rest of your paper. You just need to summarize in a compelling way. This will be your elevator pitch next time a city councilor or county commissioner sits down next you at Carvers. *(1/2 to a full page)*

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).

How do I do this? - You start with the specifics of the situation or problem you want to address. To really understand that issue, it's past, present, and future, what does the reader need to know about the community? Much of this will be specific to the issue. But you'll need to put this info in context by including more general info about our region as well. Start with the specifics and then zoom out to give us a wider view. This means looking more closely at our local history, the economic profile I provided, and additional reports or fact sheets from Region 9 and the FLC Economics Department. *(about 1 page)*

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).

How do I do this? - Use your imagination and map out how things will work. Be very clear on what you are trying to accomplish and how the different short-term outcomes will add up and result in these goals. This is creative work. Your research on other solutions and discussions with local organizations addressing your issue should come into play here. *(1-3 pages)*

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 supporting your project. You will want to explain how you've considered other approaches to the 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).

How do I do this? - This is all about logic. Use the logic model handout to get started on your visual diagram. If you can't explain your project with a visual diagram, something is off. Again, your research on similar solutions elsewhere will serve this section. Think about what makes your solution unique. (2 pages)

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)

How do I do this? - Research. Once you know your topic, search for organizations and professional organizations addressing the issue or problem you are concerned about. Once you have a sense of what solutions organizations are trying, look this solution up in the academic literature. What do researchers say about this solution? Can you find a reliable evaluation of the examples you've come up with? What allowed these projects to work? Think about how these communities are similar or different from our area. (1-3 pages)

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)

How do I do this? - Again, rely on what you've found out about similar solutions in other places. Run down the Five M's for these projects. What would need to change in our

community? Arrange a time to talk to the staff people involved with these projects over the phone. Ask them what lessons they've learned along the way. *(1-2 pages)*

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)

How do I do this? - First you need to define success. What does success look like? What will be happening on the ground? What will be different? Identify different types of data that you can combine. For example, you can compare census statistics with interviews of residents in a particular neighborhood. Think about unconventional indicators like counting incidents of graffiti in the neighborhood *(1/2 to 1 page)*

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)

How do I do this? You go shopping. Literally, you have to figure out how much it will cost to buy the materials you need. Some things will be estimates. This is expected. But your budget categories need to be in the ball park. Go back to your other examples: how did they fund their projects? Get creative with your financing and think about ways you can get earned income from your project. Look up foundations that support projects, see how much they give and slot them into your revenue categories. Unlike the federal government, your budget needs to balance. *(1 page)*