

Grant Writing

From the perspective of the applicant and the funder

Presenters:

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Session Objectives

Participants will gain a greater understanding of:

- How to approach writing a grant
- How to connect your organization's needs with what the funder wants
- How to maximize your grant application score



Session Approach

Hear from both sides

- Applicant
- Funder

Real world examples

- Application content vs. scoring rubric

Interactive

- Please make use of the Chat Box
- Please mute when not speaking

GRANT WRITING BASIC # 1:

Know thy audience!



BASIC #1: Know thy audience!

Grants ALWAYS follow the Golden Rule!

...no, the other one

Don't bother applying unless the funder:

- Funds who you are
- Funds where you are
- Funds what you do

Question: Where is the “sweet spot” between:

- What need your organization wants to tackle; and
- What the funder is passionate about.

OCFS:

**How do you determine what
a funder wants?**



How to get to know a funder

- Web site
- Application instructions
- Selection criteria or if you're lucky, the reviewer scoring rubric
- Past funded grants

Don't be shy! Reach out to the funder in advance of the application deadline, unless specifically directed otherwise.

Family Services Expansion Grant

Family Services Expansion Grant

FY 2021

Guidance Webinar July 9th 3-5pm:

https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwpd-igrT0vE9a3_LuWZgmABTjElwGrBrXs



Introduction

As the result of Preschool Development and AmeriCorps federal grant funds, South Carolina First Steps is pleased to announce a new grant opportunity for First Steps Local Partnerships interested in expanding existing services to families. Funding is available to establish or expand **high-intensity, evidence-based** parenting programs and/or implement a new parenting program, HIPPYUSA, with the support of AmeriCorps Members. Additionally, funds can

- Defined purpose
- Eligible uses of funding
- Bonus points
- Guidance webinar
- Scoring rubric

How can your application demonstrate support for what a funder cares about?

- Connect your project to the funder's mission and vision
- Reference the funder's work and investments
- Reference connections between your project and the work of other organizations the funder supports

Example: South Carolina First Steps



Let's play "Guess the Funder"!

Lead Sentence and Supporting Data Example #1:

"Too many children suffer maltreatment in the Carolinas, but South Carolina children fare worse than their northern neighbors. Kids Count ranks SC as among the worst states for child maltreatment prevalence (17 per 1,000 children) as compared to NC's rate of just 3 per 1,000."



Let's play "Guess the Funder"!

Lead Sentence and Supporting Data Example #2:

"The burden for paying for child care falls primarily on families, and that burden is high. The average cost for center-based care in SC is \$6,800/year for a preschool aged child and \$9,100/year for an infant. At those prices, a two-parent family with two young children living at the poverty line would have to spend 68.9% of their income on child care, far above the recommended limit of 10%."

GRANT WRITING BASIC # 2:

Reading and scoring your grant application should be a positive, informative, and easy experience for the funder.



OCFS:

**How do you “help” the funder award
you the maximum number of points
possible?**



How can you make the funder say, “Wow, I want to read that application AGAIN!”

1. Follow directions!

- Read the application instructions multiple times and take notes:
 - Content, formatting, deadlines
- You are not the exception!
- Contact the funder if you need clarification.

2. Follow the scoring criteria

- If you are provided the scoring rubric ... rejoice!
- Point out your responses to the reader: give them the roadmap
 - Headings, text formatting
- Portion your grant “real estate” based on point values

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Selection Criteria Excerpt

Criteria #2 Demographic Targeting : Justification of community need outlined in Statement of Need. Expansion or refocusing of program services to target underserved families with children ages 0-5 years with conditions most at risk for early school failure, including children experiencing homelessness, involved in the foster care system, dual language learners, and children with disabilities. **(10pts.)**

- Demonstrated need for program/services proposed
- Ratio of families on wait list(s) compared to families currently served
- Demonstrated ability to recruit and retain families
- Demonstrates an understanding of what similar services are available in the target area, and that current access is inadequate to address the need

Priority Points:

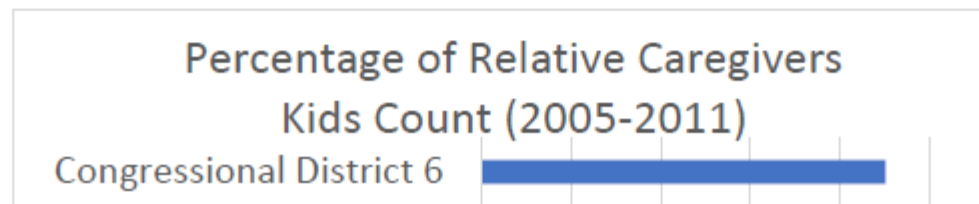
- **Underserved population(s)**
 - Provide a defined focus to offer services to homeless, foster care, dual language learners, and/or children with disabilities. **(3pts.)**

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OCFS Example 1: Responding to Selection Criteria

Criteria #2 Demographic Targeting

The Orangeburg County First Steps Early Steps to School Success Program will target relatives who live in Orangeburg County who are raising children who are not their own, prenatal parents and parents with children ages 0-3 years of age with a primary focus on relative caregivers. Data for relative caregivers is reported by congressional district. Orangeburg County is part of South Carolina Congressional District 6. In Congressional District 6, the percentage of children in the care of grandparents is at 9% which is higher than both the national and state averages of 4% and 6%, respectively. Relative caregiver data is often under-reported, so there are possibly many more children in the Orangeburg County area who are being cared for by their grandparents. Data for Congressional Districts 2 and 3 is unavailable.



- Road map
- Clear lead sentence that responds to the selection criteria
- Local, relevant data demonstrating the need

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OCFS Example 2: Responding to Selection Criteria

- Lead sentence summarizes response to selection criteria
- Demonstrates understanding of the problem and why it exists
- Demonstrates knowledge of available resources

Based on an environmental scan, research shows there are currently no such programs that specifically target relatives who are primary caregivers in Orangeburg County. The nearest kinship care service organization is at least 50 miles from the local target area. Other human service agencies that offer programs that target relatives as parents are also far away; at least 45 miles east of the local target area. Due to the great distance, members of this community may find it very difficult to access and maintain any kinship care services.

Being a relative as a parent is very challenging in the state of South Carolina as there are little to no services provided to those who are rearing children of family members. Unfortunately, these children are displaced and estranged from their biological parents but still are not considered foster children because they reside within a kinship care situation. In contrast to foster parents, social service benefits are only accessible through income eligibility; therefore, there are no financial resources and limited programmatic resources earmarked for the particular needs of those who participate in kinship care or relatives who are parenting children of family members.

Thankfully, there are local organizations in Orangeburg County that support maternal health for pregnant and parenting mothers; however, their mission is not focused on getting children ready for school which is where our services are needed. Orangeburg County First Steps' programs and services will fill the voids left by existing organizations that serve pregnant and parenting mothers and their children, ages 0-3, and meet the needs of providing resources to kinship caregivers which currently does not exist.

How can you make the funder say, “Wow, I want to read that application AGAIN!”

2. Write a good project plan.

A grant is similar to most planning documents. It needs to include:

- **Need**
 - What community problem are you trying to solve?
- **Goals and Objectives**
 - What are you trying to accomplish?
- **Project Description**
 - How will you get there?
- **Organizational Capacity**
 - Do you and your partners have what it takes to make this plan a reality?
- **Evaluation**
 - How will you know if you are on track?
- **Budget**
 - What are the resources you need to implement your project?



How can you make the funder say, “Wow, I want to read that application AGAIN!”

The art of grant writing:

Including all parts of a good project plan within the application format provided by the funder.

Aligning all sections of your grant, as if there is one continuous thread connecting each section.

Telling a story with who you are trying to serve at its center, not your organization.

BASIC # 3:

**Instill confidence in the funder –
given all the available choices - to
invest in your organization.**



How do you demonstrate organizational capacity to a funder?

1. Quality of your grant application

- Clear, concise, aligned
- Well-written
- Responsive to the funders' criteria
- Follows instructions
- Your goals and objectives are:
 - SMART
 - Connected to evaluation

How do you demonstrate organizational capacity to a funder?

2. Make your organization stand out from the crowd

- Your contribution to the project
 - “skin in the game”
- Your partnerships and collaborations
 - How other organizations in the community trust and rely on your organization
- Your access to resources for accountability, best practices, dissemination, sustainability
 - *SC First Steps?*
 - *Philanthropic trends: equity, client voice*

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OCFS Example 1: Clear goals and objectives

Criteria #6 Data Collection and Evaluation

Goal 1: Orangeburg County First Steps will expand home visitation and family strengthening services in Orangeburg County.

Objective A: The home visitor will recruit 20 families and maintain a caseload of 75% of 20 families throughout Orangeburg County who fit the targeted population and have at least two of the required risk factors as evaluated by the applications and the data entered into the **First Steps Data Collection System**.

- Formatting road map
- Good example of an “outputs” SMAR Objective (consider adding the “T”)
- Explicit connection to how the objective will be measured

Family Services Expansion Grant

OCFS Example 1: Clear goals and objectives

Objective B: 65% of 20 (or 13) families participating in the Early Steps to School Success Program will experience and improve KIPS scores as a result of their bi-monthly sessions with the home visitor as evaluated by pre and post KIPS test results and the data entered into the First Steps Data Collection System.

- Good example of an “outcome” SMAR Objective (consider adding the “T”)
- Explicit connection to how the objective will be measured

REACH and IMPACT

Include both output and outcome objectives in your grant applications

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OCFS Example: Cross-Section Alignment

Need Statement

Serves and remain in legal custody of the state”. While in the custody of the state, this group of parents/care-givers don’t receive services to assist them with parenting someone else’s child(ren). The Children’s Trust of South Carolina further shares that “when children are diverted by the Department of Social Services and kin caregivers do not become licensed foster parents, they do not receive the foster parents’ stipend, respite care, support workers or any other services that are available to foster parents.”

Objectives/ Evaluation

Objective A: 100% of 20 program participants will have access to the agency’s resource closet as documented by forms to receive tangible resources **as evaluated by log forms and connection/referral data entered into the First Steps Data Collection System.**

- Goals and Objectives address the identified Need(s)
- Each activity described within the Project Description supports one or more Goals/Objectives
- There should be no surprises in the Budget

Final DOs and DON'Ts

DO:

- Customize your application to each funder.
- Respond to what the funder cares about.
- Be specific. Be local. Tell a story.
- Provide a clear road map.
- Ask questions of the funder.
- Have someone proofread your application who doesn't know your work.

DON'T:

- Copy/paste (except as 1st step to writing a section).
- Use multiple writers without an editor to align content and style.
- Have inconsistencies within your grant application:
 - Content
 - Naming
 - Formatting
 - Grammar



Contact Information

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Infant Room at The
Franklin School, operated
by Spartanburg County
First Steps



First Steps 4K at
Precious One Learning
Center, Florence



First Steps 4K at
Hartman Hall Child
Development Center,
West Columbia



Riverbanks Zoo Field
Trip, sponsored by
Lexington County First
Steps

