

Proposal Writing Tips and Tricks

Many people believe that applying for NN/LM SCR funding is a scary endeavor. The below tips and tricks are designed to ease your anxiety and provide practical information on writing a successful proposal.

General Tips:

- Start early. Application deadlines approach quickly.
- 80% of your time spent on preparing your application should be dedicated to planning your project, not actually writing the proposal. Before you begin writing, have a clear idea of exactly how you are going to accomplish the project and the resources you will need.
- Read the instructions carefully before, during and after you write the proposal. The Request for Proposals (RFPs) and Call for Applications (CFA) provide details on what is required in each section. Ensure you provide the requested information.
- RFPs and CFAs have a section entitled *Evaluation Criteria*. Read this section carefully because it is what reviewers use to score your proposal.
- After you have completed the proposal, have someone read it, preferably someone not in your office. If that individual can understand what you are planning to do, it is likely your reviewer will as well.
- Do not be afraid to contact the NN/LM SCR office at 1-800-338-7657 if you have any questions. We want to help.

Tips on the Sections of the Proposal:

- Summary Statement:
 - Your summary is one of the most important sections of the proposal. It should briefly describe the project in a nutshell.
 - The purpose of the summary is similar to the back of a fiction or non-fiction book. You want to engage your proposal reviewers so they have a quick idea what you plan to accomplish with your project.
- Target Population:
 - Briefly provide information on the people you anticipate reaching with the project. Who are they? Where do they reside?
 - If you are going to be conducting training, provide estimates of the number of people you anticipate will attend each session.
- Need Statement
 - Describe the need for your project. How do you know there is a need for the proposed activities?
 - Describe how your project will address the need.
- Goals and Objectives
 - Provide a succinct goal statement. This can best be accomplished by including a sentence such as “The goal of this project is to x”

- Objectives should briefly (often a sentence or two) describe how you would accomplish your goal. For example, if your goal is to increase awareness of the NIH Senior Health database, one objective could be “Conduct three training sessions at [NAME] senior center”
- Project Plan
 - Provide additional information on how you will accomplish the project activities. In our example above, describe the length of the training session and you will cover.
 - Include information on when the activities will occur.
- Evaluation
 - Describe your plan for evaluating all activities.
 - The Outreach and Evaluation Resource Center <http://nnlm.gov/evaluation> has excellent resources and examples of how to evaluate various activities.
- Budget (may be referred to as the Cost Proposal)
 - Include everything you will need to accomplish your project. Do not cut yourself short.
 - Provide information on how you determined the price of items included in your budget. If you are requesting computer equipment, include quotes or a link to pricing information.

Questions?

Contact the NN/LM SCR office at 1-800-338-7657