Ideas to Consider When Writing a Proposal

(From Perkins Basic Grant Guide)

These guidelines for writing a proposal are from the guide to the Perkins Basic Grant application. Some of the items are based on the specific requirements for that application and may not be relevant to your proposal. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of ideas; rather, it is hoped that these ideas will inspire other ideas that can be incorporated into the writing process.

General Guidelines for Writing a Quality Proposal

Use bulleted statements when appropriate. Their advantages include being:

* Easier to write than long narratives.
* Helpful in clarifying important points.
* Helpful in showing alignment with previous Plans.

Important functions of your proposal include the following:

* Demonstrate that the expenditure of funds is both reasonable, appropriate, and necessary to meet your goals.
* Provide enough detail about activities to clearly show how funds will be expended.
* Align activities with the budget.

Planning Process

*Partners and Roles* – List your partners and their roles and responsibilities in the planning process. Include anyone who has had direct input into your planning decisions.

List those people/groups that did not have direct input into your planning decisions but on whom you relied for information to assist you in making decisions, and explain how you worked with them.

Some questions you may wish to consider:

* How are your goals linked to each other, and to other plans, projects, and goals?
* How will you know if an activity is being implemented, is on time, and is within the budget?
* What data was most significant to your decisions about the project?
* What other factors and/or resources influenced your plans?
* What factors did you consider, and how might they support or impede your progress?
* What other influences did you consider?
* What other resources influenced your decision?
* What research influenced your decision?
* What resources were helpful?
* What timelines did you consider?
* Who made the final decisions about your plans?
* Whom did you consult?

Some other questions you may wish to consider include the following:

* Who will evaluate your performance?
* What criteria will be used?
* How will adjustments to your project be made?

You may wish to consider the following:

* How you will build collaboration using:
	+ Geography.
	+ Partnership history and relationships.
	+ Enrollment patterns of students.
	+ The goals that have been set for the partnership.
* How you will assure that all partners will collaborate in, contribute towards, and be accountable for, achieving student success.
* How your vision for CTE revitalization will be promoted.
* How relationships among partners will be supported and fostered.
* Practices and/or processes used to build and implement your project, identify and measure its impact, and address accountability.

SMART Goals

*SMART Goals* – Identify SMART Goals that you will address (SMART Goals are Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time bound). There may be multiple activities that address each goal. Remember that goals are bound by the timeframe of the grant, and must be completed and evaluated in time for the your final report.

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| For example, activities to improve student performance on high school completion may be designed for ninth graders, but the effect won’t be seen until after they complete high school. In cases such as this, interim measures of success need to be identified that may reasonably be assumed to predict an improvement in the performance of the students who participated in the activity. |

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| There are many resources for writing SMART Goals, including the following:* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMART_criteria>
	+ A good general overview, brief but thorough.
* <http://www.brocku.ca/webfm_send/1394>
	+ Includes some useful questions to evaluate your SMART Goal.
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*How Success in Achieving Goal Will Be Measured* – When describing how success in achieving the goal will be measured, include both the data you will examine and how you will collect that data. This is especially important for locally collected data.

Activities

When describing activities you might wish to consider the following:

* Why an activity was chosen.
* How the activity will impact student performance.
* Who is responsible for implementation and monitoring of the activity.
* Timeline for the activity.
* Identification of any non-grant funds to be used.

*How Success of Activities Will Be Measured* – Be clear, specific, and complete in your explanation of how you will measure the success of an activity. Include the objective measures and/or data that you will use. If appropriate, describe any processes you will use to collect the data.

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| Keep in mind that the activity may be successful, but it may not produce the expected progress toward meeting your goal. For instance, you may provide a professional development opportunity that is well attended, and all instructors learn a new strategy that they use in the classroom. However, you may find that the strategy did not positively affect performance toward achieving the goal.  |

*Deliverable Outcomes for Activities* – Describe the expected outcome for each activity. When the activities are successfully completed, what will be the deliverable outcome(s)? Examples of these include products, improved performance, results, and decisions; they may be in the form of reports, brochures, scores, behavior, etc.

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| The ultimate measure of the success of an activity may be student performance. However, you may wish to monitor interim results. For example, providing tutorial help may increase student performance; an interim result might be an increase in the number of students who use the service. |

Plan for Sustainability

Things to consider might include the following:

* What factors may influence your future performance?
* What will you need to monitor so you will be prepared to respond to changes in your performance?
* If you have met your desired performance, what will ensure that you maintain that performance?
* What conditions would merit a change of strategy?