# Checklist: Grant Writing Formula

STEP 1 - Develop Your Idea

- ☐ Develop your idea into a fundable proposal, first.
- ☐ Assess the needs of your agency, population to be served and your community.
- ☐ Make your idea more attractive to funders by focusing on what is original, timely, compelling, impactful, sustainable, and problem-solving.
- ☐ Tap into your passion for your idea & dream BIG.
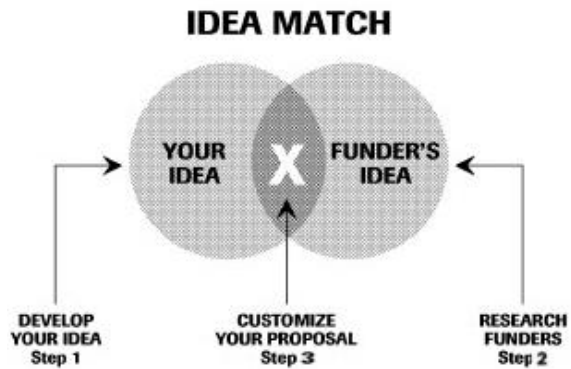
STEP 2 - Research Funders

- ☐ Identify keywords for funder research in commonly used categories, like field of interest, types of support, type of eligible recipient, geographic focus and special population terms.
- ☐ Become familiar with the four primary types of funders: foundations, corporations, government agencies (federal, state and local) and individual donors.
- ☐ Use both left-brain (linear) and right-brain (non-linear) approaches to finding and attracting funders.
- ☐ Conduct a pre-proposal contact with the potential funder and a past grantee.
- ☐ Get application forms and guidelines from the funder, often called a Request for Proposal (RFP).
- ☐ Make sure there is a strong "idea match" between your idea and the funder's. Otherwise, don't waste time.
- ☐ Collect information about funders. Discover, if possible, how they rate and select proposals to fund.

STEP 3 - Customize Your Proposal

- ☐ Create a timeline for completing your proposal.
- ☐ Apply approaches that have been proven successful. For example, apply approaches such as 1) develop partnerships within your community and 2) invite an investment of the funder.
- ☐ Assemble support data you need as you go, such as your IRS determination letter and support letters.
- ☐ Use winning writing tips, such as defining all acronyms and including a seldom-used "activity timeline."
- ☐ Improve appearance of your proposal using funder font style used in their publications whenever possible.
- ☐ Write a first draft. Then, use Peer Reviewers and Proposal Rating Scale to edit and increase your score.
- ☐ Submit your proposal (final draft) ideally 10 working days before the deadline to stand out from the crowd.

STEP 4 - Respond to the Funder's Decision

- ☐ Thank each funder, no matter if your grant application is funded or denied.
- ☐ Ask for feedback to improve future proposals. If not funded, ask if you may submit an improved proposal.
- ☐ Re-apply, if your idea matches funder priorities and they say, "OK". Use funder feedback to improve.
- ☐ Re-apply a 3rd time, if there is a match, it is OK, and you edit and improve your proposal significantly.
- ☐ Congratulate yourself on a job well done. Get a BIG check made, if funder approves.

Grant Rating Scale*

ONLINE GRANT WRITING BASICS CLASS

Grant Proposal Title_____

	Yes	No	Score
Summary – *Summarizes request clearly and concisely*	**Yes**	**No**	
1. Includes agency credibility			
2. Includes problem			
3. Includes measurable outcome			
4. Includes solution or method			
5. Includes cost			
I. Agency Introduction – *Describes applicant's qualifications & credibility*	**Yes**	**No**	
1. Describes applying agency's mission and goals			*10 points*
2. Describes applying agency's clients, programs and activities			
3. Provides applying agency's accomplishments (with evidence)			
4. Includes applying agency's qualifications in applying area			
II. Problem or Needs Statement – *Shows need or problem to be solved*	**Yes**	**No**	
1. Includes statistical support – national & local			*25 points*
2. Is reasonable and realistic			
3. Demonstrates a compelling need			
4. Comes from a client perspective, not the agency's			
5. Makes no unsupported assumptions			
III. Measurable Outcomes – *Establishes benefits in measurable terms*	**Yes**	**No**	
1. Includes one outcome per problem identified in #II			*10 points*
2. Describes the client/population that will benefit			
3. Is written in measurable terms			
4. Includes by when and how outcome will be measured			
IV. Solution or Method – *Describes activities that will constitute a solution*	**Yes**	**No**	
1. Includes list of activities that constitute the solution			*10 points*
2. Includes reasons for selecting these activities			
3. Includes activity time line			
4. Provides list of staff and brief staff job descriptions			
V. Evaluation – *Provides plan to measure outcomes & method followed*	**Yes**	**No**	
1. *Process* evaluation – Shows how activities/timeline will be evaluated			*5 points*
2. *Product* evaluation – Shows how outcomes will be measured/reported			
3. States who will be conducting the evaluation			
4. Describes any data analysis and performance reports that will be given			
VI. Future funding – *Describes sustainability plan beyond grant period*	**Yes**	**No**	
1. Is minimally reliant on future grant support			*10 points*
2. Includes plan to obtain future funding for sustainability			
3. Includes letters of support or commitments			
VII. Budget – *Provides detailed breakdown of costs requested & donated*	**Yes**	**No**	
1. Includes a budget narrative – describes each expense			*20 points*
2. Is detailed			
3. Includes requested, donated and total columns			
4. Is free of potential red flag expenses			
5. Includes matching, in-kind or donated amounts			
6. Includes indirect costs, if applicable			
Overall	**Yes**	**No**	
1. Proposal writing is clear and concise.			*10 points*
2. Proposal uses writing tips and ways to make the proposal stand out.			
3. Proposal includes no grammar or spelling errors.			

Total Points_____

_____   _____
                    Reviewer Name   Date

100 points

Important! – Use next page for your comments (*Include strengths, areas to improve & unclear sections*)

*NOTE: Used in Critiquing Sample Proposals & Peer Reviews (See "Apply & Practice With Peers" section)