**Project Development Form**

Foundation Relations welcomes interest from faculty and staff in securing external funding for specific projects. The goal of this document is to serve as a guide when developing any project which may seek external funding. Please complete the project development form to the best of your ability and return to the Foundation Relations staff. For more detailed information regarding the different sections of this form, please see the guidelines at the end of this document.

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| **Contact Name:** |
| **Department:** |
| **Email:** |
| **Phone:** |
| **Statement of Problem or Need:**  Purpose of Problem Statement. Your statement of the problem--your need--represents the reason behind your project. |
| **Objectives:**  Purpose of Objectives Statement. Your objectives specify the outcome of your project, the end product(s). |
| **Methods:**  The methods section describes your project activities in detail, indicating how your objectives will be accomplished. |
| **Stakeholders:**  Please describe the people (by name – e.g. Mary Smith or by group – e.g. Commerce students) affected by the problem/opportunity and/or the solution. Information provided under Impact should give the reader an understanding of how the project affects the stakeholder. List key project personnel and their related responsibilities.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Stakeholder** | **Area/Department** | **Impact** | |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |
| **Timeframe:**  Indicate the timeframe during which the project will be conducted. Please let us know if there are any constraints on the delivery time for this project. |
| **Evaluation:**  Evaluations pinpoint what is really happening in your project so you can improve your project efficiency. |
| **Dissemination:**  Dissemination is the means by which you let others know about your project: its purpose, methods, and accomplishments. |
| **Budget:**  A project budget is more than just a statement of proposed expenditures; it is an alternate way of expressing your project. |

**Project Development Guidelines**

**Statement of Problem or Need:**

Purpose of Problem Statement. Your statement of the problem--your need--represents the reason behind your project. The problem statement specifies the conditions you wish to change. It should be supported by evidence drawn from your experience, from statistics provided by authoritative sources, and from appropriate literature reviews. Your need statement should quickly summarize the problem, show your familiarity with prior research or work on the topic, reinforce your credibility for investigating the problem, and justify why this problem should be investigated. Do not assume that everyone sees the problem as clearly as you do. Even if the problem is obvious, your reviewers want to know how clearly you can state it.

Key Questions to Answer. As you write your statement of problem or need, answer these questions. Does your problem statement:

1. Demonstrate a precise understanding of the problem or need that you are attempting to solve?

2. Clearly convey the focus of your project early in the narrative?

3. Indicate the relationship of your project to a larger set of problems or issues and justify why your particular focus has been chosen?

4. Establish the importance and significance of the problem?

5. Demonstrate that your problem is feasible to solve?

6. Make the reviewer want to read further?

7. Indicate how the problem relates to your organizational goals?

8. State the problem and outputs in terms of human needs and societal benefits?

**Objectives:**

Purpose of Objectives Statement. Your objectives specify the outcome of your project, the end product(s). When sponsors fund your projects, they are literally "buying" your objectives. That's why it is extremely important to state your objectives clearly. When you write your objectives, follow the acronymic advice: "Keep them S-I-M-P-L-E." Your objectives should be:

**S**pecific--indicate precisely what you intend to change through your project.

**I**mmediate--indicate the time frame during which a current problem will be addressed.

**M**easurable--indicate what you would accept as proof of project success.

**P**ractical--indicate how each objective is a real solution to a real problem.

**L**ogical--indicate how each objective systematically contributes to achieving your overall goal(s).

**E**valuable--indicate how much change has to occur for the project to be effective.

Although these categories are not mutually exclusive, each of your objectives should meet at least two or three of these six criteria.

Key Questions to Answer. As you write the objectives section, answer these questions. Does the section:

1. Clearly describe your project's objectives, hypotheses, and/or research questions?

2. Signal the project's objectives without burying them in a morass of narrative?

3. Demonstrate that your objectives are important, significant, and timely?

4. Include objectives that comprehensively describe the intended outcomes of the project?

5. State your objectives, hypotheses, or questions in a way that they can be evaluated or tested later?

6. Demonstrate why your project's outcome is appropriate and important to the sponsor?

**Methods:**

Purpose of Methods Section. The methods section describes your project activities in detail, indicating how your objectives will be accomplished. The description should include the sequence, flow, and interrelationship of activities as well as planned staffing for the project. It should present a clear picture of the client population, if any. It should discuss the risks of your method, and indicate why your success is probable. Finally, tell what is unique about your approach.

Key Questions to Answer. Here are some key questions to answer. Does your proposal:

1. Explain why you chose one methodological approach and not another?

2. Describe major activities for reaching each objective?

3. Indicate the key project personnel who will carry out each activity?

4. Show the interrelationship among project activities?

5. Identify all project data that will be collected for use in evaluating proposal outcomes?

Data Collection. You will probably need to collect some data as a part of your project. Common data collection methods include achievement tests; psychological tests; role-playing exercises; clinical examinations; personal diaries; ratings by program staff, management participants, or experts; interviews; observations by program staff or evaluators; daily program records (telephone logs, tracking slips, referral forms); historical program records and archives; government records; searches of news media; questionnaires; and surveys.

**Stakeholders:**

Please describe the people (by name – e.g. Mary Smith or by group – e.g. Commerce students) affected by the problem/opportunity and/or the solution. Information provided under Impact should give the reader an understanding of how the project affects the stakeholder. List key project personnel and their related responsibilities.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stakeholder** | **Area/Department** | **Impact** |
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**Timeframe:**

Indicate the timeframe during which the project will be conducted. Please let us know if there are any constraints on the delivery time for this project. (Namely, if it supports a new regulation, it needs to be implemented at the beginning of the academic year, etc.)

**Evaluation:**

Purpose of Evaluation. Evaluations pinpoint what is really happening in your project so you can improve your project efficiency. Based on evaluation information, you can better allocate resources, improve your services, and strengthen your overall project performance. Beyond these immediate benefits, a project evaluation can uncover needs to be served in your next proposal and make it easier to get and sustain funding.

Key Questions to Answer. As you write the evaluation section, answer these questions. Does your evaluation section:

1. Describe why evaluation is needed in the project?

2. Provide a definition of what is meant by evaluation?

3. Clearly identify the purpose of your evaluation and the audiences to be served by its results?

4. Demonstrate that an appropriate evaluation procedure is included for every project objective?

5. Provide a general organizational plan or model for your evaluation?

6. Demonstrate that the scope of the evaluation is appropriate to the project? Demonstrate the extent to which the project is practical, relevant, and generalizable?

7. Describe what information will be needed to complete the evaluation, the potential sources for this information, and the instruments that will be used for its collection?

8. Clearly summarize any reports to be provided to the funding source based on the evaluation, and generally describe their content and timing?

**Dissemination:**

Purpose of Dissemination. Dissemination is the means by which you let others know about your project: its purpose, methods, and accomplishments. Among other things, it generates publicity for your sponsor and you. As grants become more competitive, dissemination of results is increasingly important. No longer is it sufficient to say you will submit a journal article or present a paper at a professional society meeting. Instead, specify the tentative titles, target journals, and submission dates. Likewise, indicate which meetings will be attended, including dates and locations for presenting papers.

Key Questions to Answer. As you write the dissemination section, answer these questions.

Does your dissemination section:

1. Indicate why dissemination activities are important to your project?

2. Clearly identify the intended outcome of the dissemination effort?

3. Include a feasible and appropriate plan for dissemination?

4. Succinctly describe any products resulting from the dissemination effort?

5. Demonstrate that you are well grounded in theory and research on the dissemination and utilization of knowledge?

6. Provide sufficient detail on proposed dissemination procedures to justify the budget request?

7. Specify clearly who will be responsible for dissemination and why they are capable?

8. Indicate why the dissemination will get the necessary information to the appropriate audiences in a form they can use when needed?

**Budget:**

Purpose of the Budget. A project budget is more than just a statement of proposed expenditures; it is an alternate way of expressing your project. Programs officers will look at your budget to see how well it fits your proposed activities. Incomplete budgets are examples of sloppy preparation. Inflated budgets are signals of waste. Budgets that are too low cast doubt on your planning ability. In essence, your budget is as much a credibility statement as your project narrative.

Key Questions to Answer. As you prepare your budget, answer these questions. Does your

Budget:

1. Provide sufficient resources to carry out your project?

2. Include a budget narrative that justifies major budget categories?

3. Present the budget in the format desired by the sponsor?

4. Provide sufficient detail so the reviewer can understand how various budget items were calculated?

5. Separate direct costs from indirect costs and describe what is covered in the latter?

6. Relate budget items to project objectives?

7. Include any attachments or special appendixes to justify unusual requests?

8. Identify evaluation and dissemination costs?

Allowable Budget Categories. Unless the sponsor guidelines dictate otherwise, you can include in your budget request such things as accounting, advertising, animals, audiovisual instruction, auditing, binding, books, computer time, consultants, dues, equipment, fringe benefits, indirect costs, instruments, insurance, legal services, maintenance, periodicals, postage, publication, recruitment, registration fees, relocation, renovation, rent, repairs, salaries and wages, security, subcontracts, supplies, telephone, travel, and tuition.

Direct Costs. Those costs that are line items listed in the budget as an explicit project expenditure are called direct costs. The direct costs are usually categorized into personnel (people) and nonpersonnel (things) components. Personnel costs include such items as salaries, wages, consultant fees, and fringe benefits. Nonpersonnel costs include such items as equipment, supplies, travel, and publication charges. Space and utilities may be reflected as direct costs or included as a part of your indirect cost rate.

Indirect Costs. Those costs that are not directly listed in the budget and yet are costs incurred in the project are called indirect costs. Indirect costs are real costs that are hard to pin down, such as payroll and accounting, library usage, space and equipment, and general project administration. Do you include in your proposal budget the costs associated with preparing payrolls or the time your boss spends talking with you about the project? While you could cost out those factors, and others, they become more difficult to quantify. At the same time, they are real project costs-- someone has to write your payroll checks. Rather than calculating a strict cost accounting of these nebulous factors, many sponsors allow you to calculate a percentage of your direct costs and add it to your budget request.

Semantically, the federal government uses the term indirect costs to refer to these extra project operating costs. These costs are usually figured as a percentage of the grant, either of the total direct costs or the total project salaries and wages. Organizations regularly receiving federal grants have an approved federal indirect cost rate that is included in the budgets of federal proposals. If you plan to submit federal proposals periodically but do not have a federal indirect cost rate, ask your federal program officer to refer you to the appropriate federal agency so you can negotiate a federal indirect cost rate for your organization. Foundations usually use the term administrative costs rather than indirect costs when referring to extra project operating costs, though the terms are interchangeable. Foundations vary considerably in their policies regarding the allowability of administrative costs. Some will pay administrative costs on grants, and their application guidelines specify the allowable percentage of total direct costs. Others say explicitly in their application materials that they do not allow administrative costs.