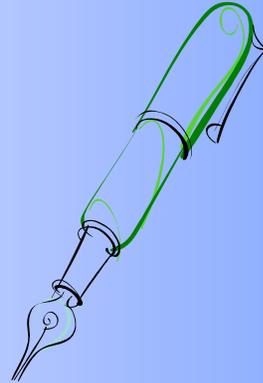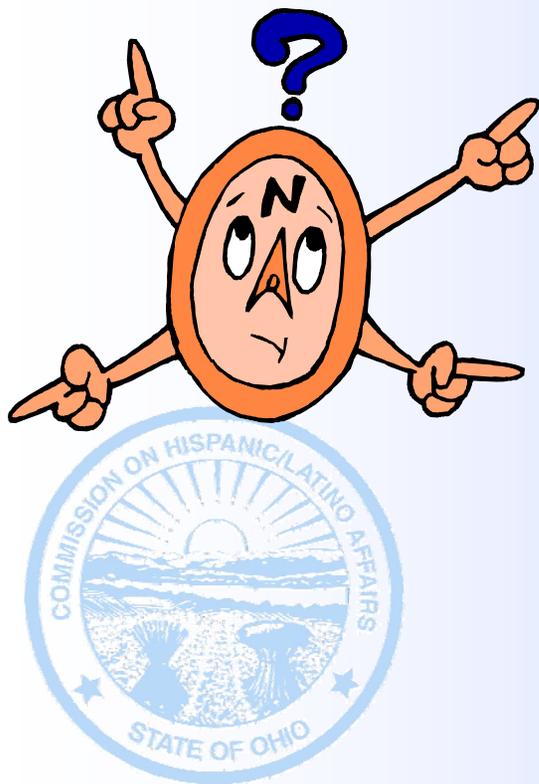# *Writing Promising Grant Proposals*

Ohio Latino Affairs
Advise. Connect. Build.

Where to start?

- Do not limit yourself and your organization by only applying for one grant or from one source of funding. However, make sure applications are sincere and projects are feasible!

- Both the funding source and the type of proposal are very important to how you should approach the proposal

Types of Funding & Sources

- **Federal Formula Grant Funding**

  - Federal agency administers funding to state agencies which pass it to local providers

- **Federal Discretionary Grant Programs**

  - Funds distributed by federal agencies who award them on a competitive basis

  - Wide range in amounts and the types of organizations that receive them

Federal

Types of Funding & Sources

State

- State legislatures allot money to solve a defined problem and is specific to that State

Foundations

- Usually dedicated to very specific interests, communities, focus, and usually only fund 501(3)(c)

- May be managed by a third party of some kind

- Large funding base

Types of Funding & Sources

In-kind

Local

Corporations

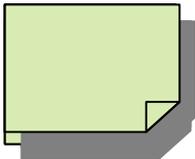**Volunteers**

Investments/ Endowments

Private Donors

Other

CHLA

What goes into a proposal?

- Cover Letter

- Introduction

- Problem Statement

- Goals/Objectives

- Approach

- Evaluation Plan

- Organizational Capacity

- Future/Other Funding

- Budget & Narrative

- Abstract/Summary

Proposals 101: Do's and Don'ts

• **Don't** assume your target audience knows your profession or specialty as well as you do. **Don't** use terminology or language that will be confusing or hard to understand. Instead, use the grantor agency/foundation's language to describe needs and objectives! (PowerPoint on writing objective statements coming soon)

• **DO** meet the criteria of the RFP (Request for Funding Proposals). Make sure you qualify for the funding and you pay attention to the criteria they will be grading your proposal on.

• **DO** assure that your proposal is fluid, well thought-out, and resembles a plan more than a request.

Proposals 101: Rules

- No overly descriptive phrases. Show the ability of your organization, not your thesaurus.

- Be honest, but not brutally. Do not lie or self indict, just depict yourself in a good light.

- Reality Check: Remember who you will be reading this and their knowledge base. Stick to your point.

- Positivity is very important.

- Focus on your clients or constituents and share your experience while demonstrating your abilities and those of your organization.

- PROOFREAD * PROOFREAD * PROOFREAD!!!
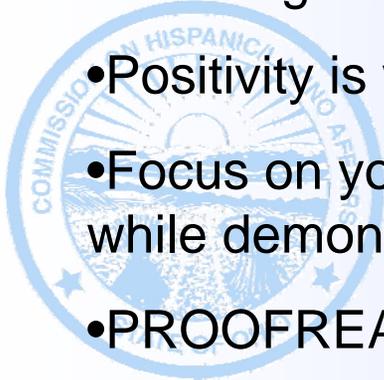
Problem Statement/Needs Assessment:
The Backbone of the Proposal

- Focus on solvable problems within your reach.

- What caused the problem?

- What will happen if this problem isn't solved? Use sources, cite valid data.

- Who benefits from your program? Think big, not just clients.

- Match the plan with your organization's goals and grantor goals.

- How does this help your clients? Include evidenced based information from past projects/services.

Problem Statement/Needs Assessment:
The Backbone of the Proposal

- Why is this important? Why is it important to YOU?

- Be Clear, Concise, and Compelling!

- Cite projects that have had success in other areas that are similar to what you are proposing

Organizational Capacity

• Describe your organization's mission and history. Who do you serve? How do you do it?

• Brag about your accomplishments, credibility, staff, volunteers, other funders involvement in the community and big projects, etc. The best predictor of success with new projects is what you have done in the past.

Goals / Objectives

• What do you want to accomplish and what is the long-term impact that you hope to make?

• Be SMART when it comes to your goals.

   • Specific

   • Measurable: Think about measurement from the beginning! More on evaluation methods in future PowerPoints

   • Attainable

   • Relevant

   • Time-based
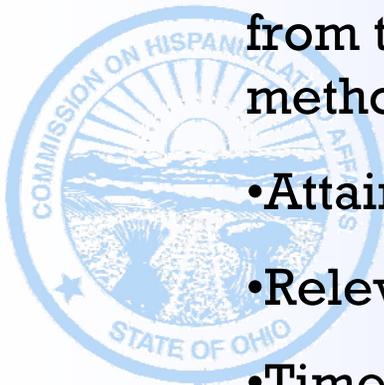
Methodology Approach

- Who, What, When, Where, and How?

- Very detailed and specific

- Includes a time-line

- Refers to the Problem Statement

- Outlines all the steps of your project

- Create a picture of your activity in their head

- Connect activities with objectives/outcomes

Evaluation

• A way to measure the effectiveness of your program and whether it met stated objectives

• Provides feedback about what works and what has failed in order to improve for the future

• Measures long-term impact

• Doesn't need to be expensive or highly expansive regarding time or money

• You need a qualified, external Evaluator sometimes

• Should be a sincere plan to evaluate and better your organization in relation to your goals and mission

• Ongoing. Not a separate task at the end.
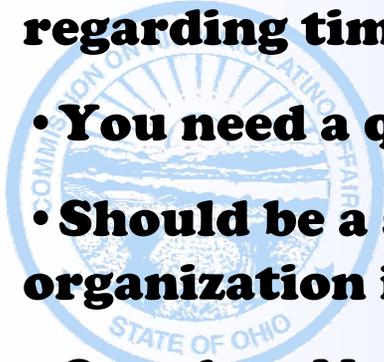
Budget

- Justify your need

- Show your contributions too

- Identify costs and why they are essential

- Show calculations

- Explain everything! Link your budget to your approach

- Total costs

- Other funders

Summary/Abstract

- No more than a page long

- Summarizes everything so far including

  - Identifying your organization & cre

  - Problem statement

  - Goals & Objectives

  - Approach

  - Evaluation

  - Budget
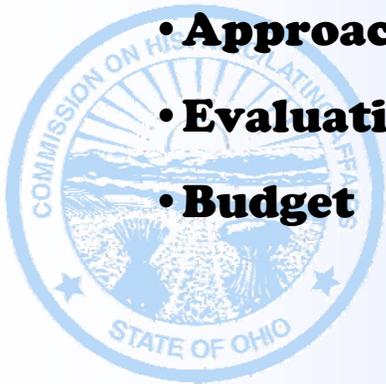
Letters of Participation/Support

- Get letters from agencies/organizations/individuals that will be involved and have them explain to what extent

- Don't allow all the letters the say the same thing, complementary letters only

- Signed and Dated

- Get them early

- Identify roles and responsibilities, and how their expertise/experience improves your capacity toward reaching states objectives.

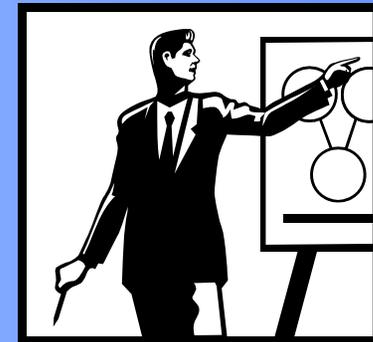# Final Words of Wisdom

- Make a strong argument

- Follow the funder's directions

- The entire proposal should be neat and attached correctly

- Do not focus only on money

- Do not use filler, meaningless material

- Don't pad your budget or use arbitrary numbers.

- Plan for delays and setbacks to get the proposal in on time

- Use all the resources available to you

Resources

- **www.tgci.com** The Grantmanship Center

- **www.fdncenter.org** The Foundation Center

- **www.guidestar.org**

- http:/www.os.dhhs.gov/grants/index/shtml GrantsNet

- http:/www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html The Federal Register

- Grants.gov/Index

- **www.ohiograntmakers.org**

- **http://philanthropy.com**

- **www.ouw.org/ouwpublic/Publication.htm**

- Also try your local library and seminars