Grant Writing 101

Steps for Preparing a Proposal Worthy of Consideration

Grant Writing Steps

- Know Your Funding Priorities

- Draft the Basic or "Master" Proposal

- Package the Proposal

- Research Potential Funders

- Contact & Cultivate Potential Funders

- Respond to the Result

Know Your Funding Priorities

- Map out all of your community's priorities
- Include all priorities whether or not you'll seek funding for them
- Be sure priorities are included in an adopted plan and determined in a public planning session
- Decide which priorities align with funding opportunities offered
- Develop funding proposal for those that fit

Draft the Basic or "Master" Proposal

- Have at least a rough draft of the proposal in hand at all times

- Assemble detailed background information on the project

- Select proposal writer

Draft the Basic or "Master" Proposal

- Write the actual components of the document
  - executive summary,
  - statement of need,
  - project description,
  - Budget, and
  - Organizational information
- Prepare and rehearse "elevator speech"

Package the Proposal

- Groundwork is now in place for the application

- Projects have been selected that will further the goals of the community

- Master proposal is written

- Before assembling the document for distribution, need to tailor the "master" proposal to the specific funder's priorities

Package the Proposal

- Identify a team of at least three (3) individuals to review final product
  - Must have working knowledge of funder's requirements
  - Must have keen eye for details
- Reviewer #1 = experience with planning
- Reviewer #2 = experience with implementation
- Reviewer #3 = experience with grant administration
- Look for errors, omissions, etc.

Package the Proposal

- For certain projects, determine whether the project can be at least partially financed
  - If so, what's the gap that must be filled?
- Add cover letter, where appropriate
- Add an appendix
- Pay careful attention to the components of the package and how they are put together

Research Potential Match Funders/Donors

- Identify those sources that are most likely to support your proposal

- Use various criteria for developing this list
  - Funders geographic focus
  - Demonstrated interest in a project

- Prepare a finished proposal package based upon guidelines of specific funder(s)

Contacting & Cultivating Potential Funders/Donors

- This step is designed to save unnecessary or untimely submissions

- Take time to speak with funder about your community and planned proposal submission to set the tone for potentially supportive future relationships

Contacting & Cultivating Potential Funders/Donors

- Judicious use of phone and/or email communication, face-to-face meetings, board contacts and written updates & progress reports is important in this step.

- Each form of cultivation is extremely important & has its own place in the fundraising process

- Goal: Build a relationship with the potential donor. Be persistent. Help them to learn more about your community & its assets.

Respond to the Result

- Regardless of the decision, assume responsibility for taking the next step
- Positive response = good follow-up is critical to turning a mere grant into a true partnership
- Denial = follow up to find out if you might
  - Try again at another time; or
  - Try again with another proposal; or
  - Learn how to improve your chances of getting your proposal funded by others.

Public Funding Applications

COMPETING FOR OCRA &/OR IHCDA FUNDS

Application Preparation Phases

- **Project Development Phase**
- **Scanning Phase**
- **Application Preparation Phase**
- **Application Refinement Phase**
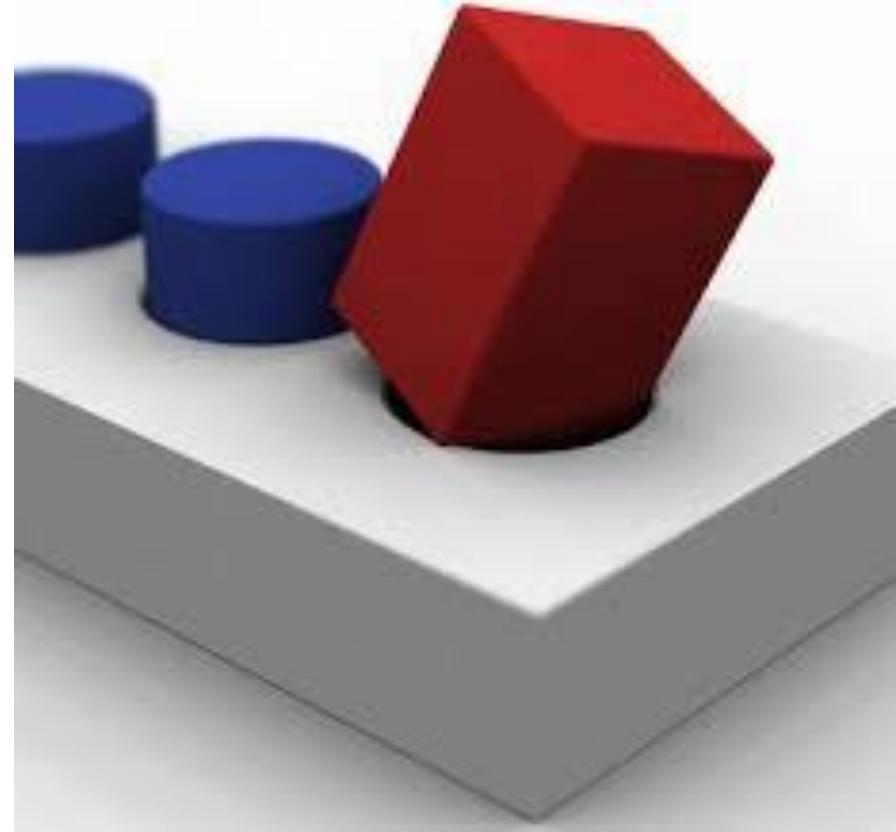- **Post Application Phase**

Define the gap.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PHASE

Project Development Phase Tips

- Remain true to your mission

- Know your project & what is required to make it happen

- Avoid chasing funds by redefining your project to make it fundable

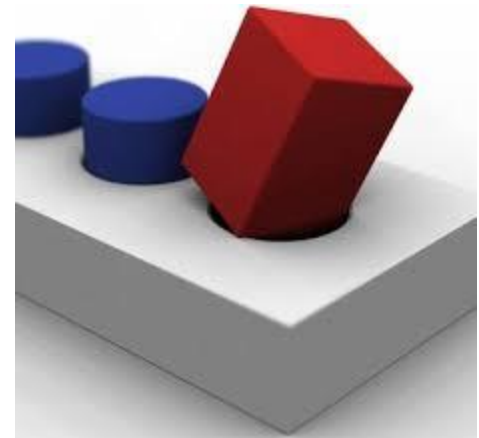- Use current data & maps that are clearly labeled & high quality

Define the size of the gap & what source(s) are available to fill it.

SCANNING PHASE

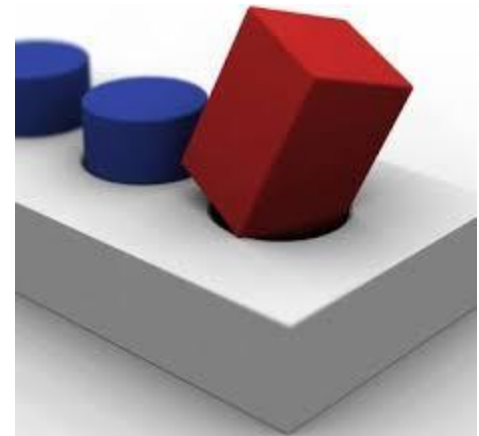# Scanning Phase Tips

- Consider which funding sources you think you'll need to apply for
- Choose funding sources that align with your project goals

Scanning Phase Tips

- Align timeline with the application deadline to ensure ample time for preparation of the application

- Attend any & all sessions offered by funder to better understand requirements
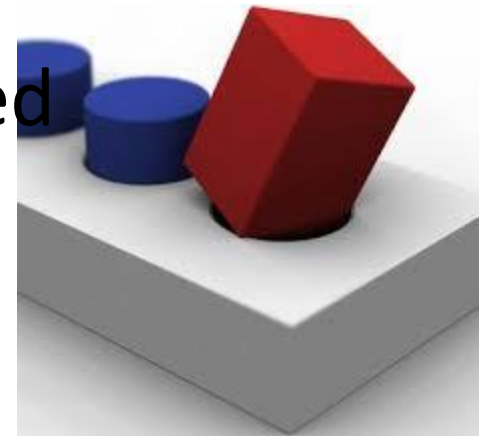
If application is submitted electronically, test the system in advance.

Don't wait!

Scanning Phase Tips

- Read the application policy & forms thoroughly

- Understand policies regarding budget limitations to be sure the source will work for your project

- Submit requests for public records information for previously submitted applications

Select which funding to pursue & establish framework for applying for funding.

APPLICATION PREPARATION PHASE

Application Preparation Phase Tips

- Start working on the application early
  - Rushed application look rushed
- Utilize site visits to obtain technical assistance
- Be sure to ask plenty of questions

Application Preparation Phase Tips

- Less is more
- Assume reviewers will NOT be familiar with your proposal
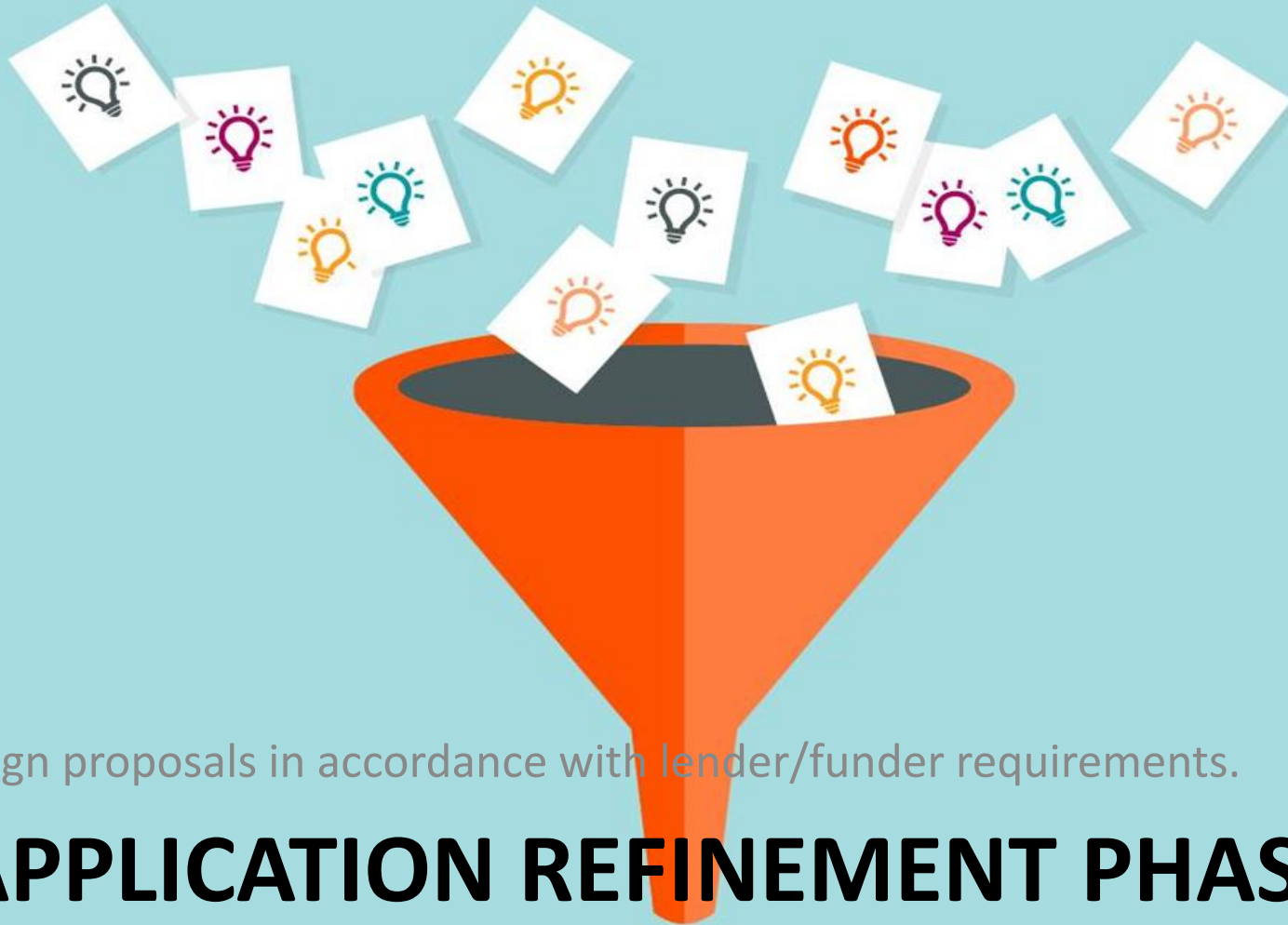
Application Preparation Phase Tips

- Answer all questions pertaining to the project
- Answer only the question being asked
  - Extra information only confuses an otherwise good answer

Application Preparation Phase Tips

- Avoid using "Not Applicable"
  - Explain why the question is unanswered
- Use "will" and "should" vs. "can" or "could"

Align proposals in accordance with lender/funder requirements.

APPLICATION REFINEMENT PHASE

Application Refinement Phase

- Spellcheck the document
- Make sure all numbers match & add up – budgets, support letters, etc.
- Make the information easy to find
  - Clearly label attachments, use searchable PDFs

Application Refinement Phase

- Have an extra set of eyes review the application
  - Reviewer should be someone unfamiliar with the project

Obtain feedback.

POST APPLICATION PHASE

Post Application Phase

- Prepare for the worst
- Stay persistent
- Ask for feedback
- Proceed with what can be done
- Track & measure your successes

Remaining Courses

➢ **Registration through IHCDA website**
➢ **Location: Indiana Government Center South from 10:00 ~ 3:00**
➢ **Cost: $20.00 per person**

- Course 110 – April 22

  Identifying Community Strengths and Weaknesses

- Course 120 – June 17

  Building Local Capacity for Planning and Action

- Course 130 – July 7

  Coalition Building / Building Partnerships

- Course 140 – August 5

  How to Seek and Implement Public Feedback

- Course 150 – September 6

  Strategies for Leveraging Public & Private Funds

- Course 160 – October 20

  Fundamentals of Project Management

Source: The Foundation Center's Guide to
Proposal Writing, 3rd Edition

Thank you for your time!

Any Questions?