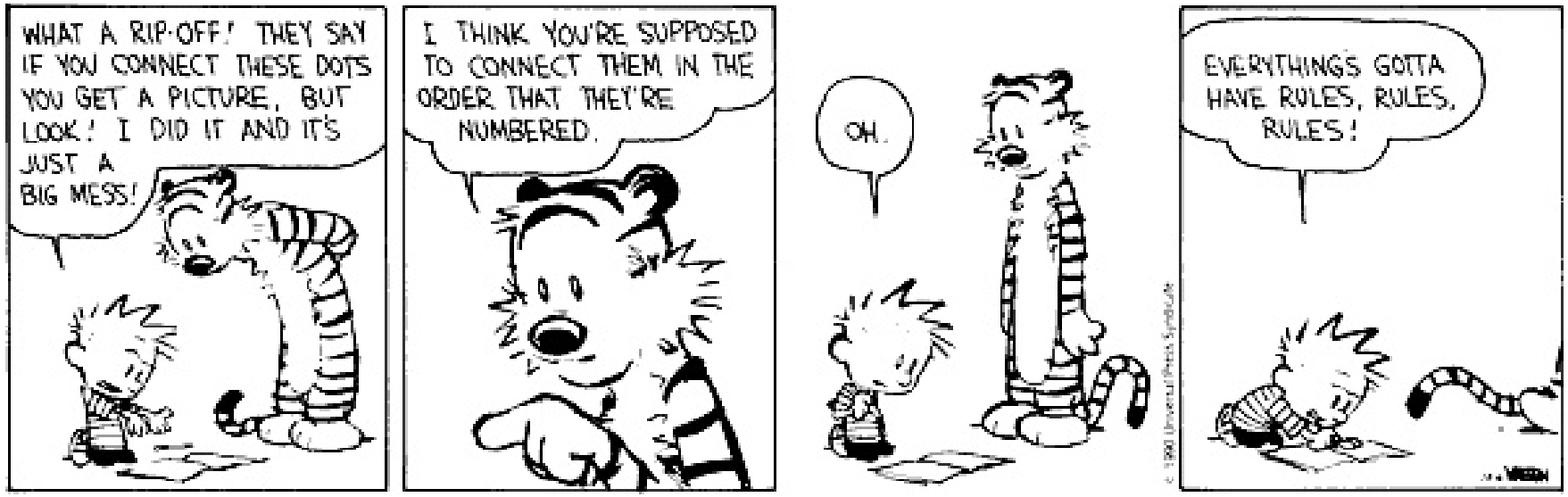
California Department of Food and Agriculture:

General Grant Writing Tips

Most Important Rule…

Follow the Directions!



RFP and NOFA

RFP: Request for Proposals

NOFA: Notice of Funding Availability

Example…

“The California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funds projects that ***solely*** enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops.”

Free Money!

Emphasize the Public Benefit

"This grant would allow our organization to expand our training program and become the leading provider of training for socially disadvantaged farmers in Stanislaus County."

vs.

"This grant would enable our organization to triple the number of socially disadvantaged farmers served by our training program, thus countering the current deficit of professionally trained farmers in Stanislaus County."

Funding Cycle

- Announcement of Funds Available
- Invitation to Submit Proposals with Deadlines
- Timeframe for Awarding Funds

Funding Cycle

Phase I: Concept Proposal	
Release Request for Concept Proposals (RFCP)	October 5, 2016
Workshops and webinars	October 17–28, 2016
Concept proposals due	November 15, 2016, 5:00 pm PST
Phase II: Grant Proposal *(by invitation only)*	
Invitation to submit grant proposals	January 2017
Grant proposals due	February 28, 2017, 5:00 pm PST
Grant proposals to USDA for approval	June 2017
Award	
Announce and award funding	September 2017

Technical Requirements

RFP: Read (the whole thing!) immediately

Highlight all technical requirements, such as…

- Who can Apply (Eligibility)
- Submission Deadline(s)
- Funding Request Amount
- Proposal Formatting and Submission
- Required Attachments

Core Components

- Abstract
- Statement of Need or Problem
- Objectives/Measurable Outcomes
- Methods/Activities
- Evaluation plan
- Budget

Abstract

Describe:

- The problem
- How you will address the problem
- The expected outcomes
- How you will evaluate success

Abstract

Establish Credibility…

"Through its 25 years of training beginning farmers, the California Growers Academy has recognized the need for increased food safety instruction. In fact, data from US Agriculture indicate that 39 percent of specialty crop growers in the San Joaquin Valley lack access to food safety instruction…."

Statement of the Problem

~~Internal needs of your organization?~~

External problem your organization will solve

- Support the problem with data (don't overwhelm)
- Establish clear link between organization and problem

Statement of the Problem

"A 2016 survey conducted by the Department of Health found that fruit and vegetable consumption among adolescents between 12 and 18 years in Sacramento County was 2.3 cups per day, far below the recommended 3.5 to 6.5 cups....

However, teens who were taught how to cook healthy food reported eating 1.4 servings more than peers who had not been taught....

For the past 10 years, our district has increased interest in and consumption of fruits and vegetables among students in Sacramento County through school gardens and nutrition education....

We propose to increase consumption levels by implementing cooking classes for students that pair lesson plans about the benefits of healthy eating with cooking demonstrations and hands-on preparation of fruits and vegetables."

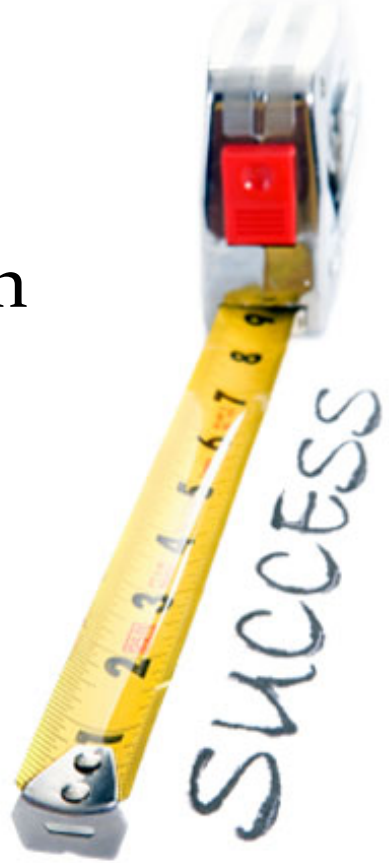
Objectives/Measurable Outcomes

Must be Specific and Measurable

Weak: "Provide cooking classes to teens between the ages of 14 and 18 one day a week."

vs.

Strong: "250 teens between the ages of 14 and 18 will increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables by 1 serving per day by the end of the 2019 academic year as measured by pre- and post-program surveys."



Methods/Activities

- Tell the reviewer what you will do
- Identify who will complete each task
- Explain why you believe the approach is valid
- Include a timeframe for each activity

Evaluation Plan

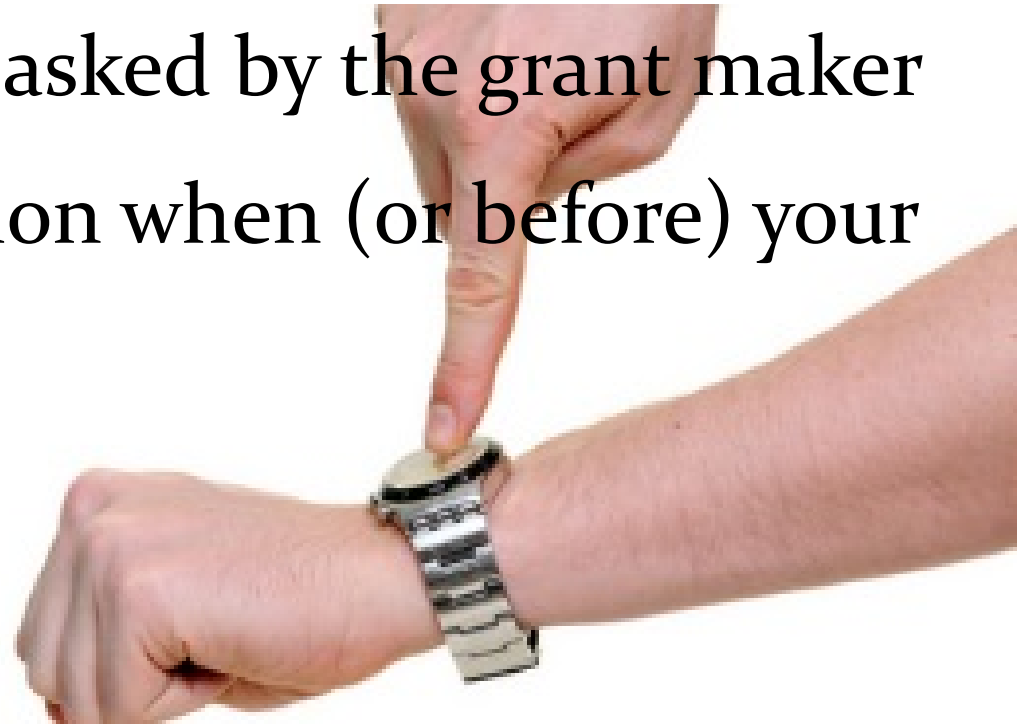
How will you measure success?

Measurable Outcome 1: “250 teens between the ages of 14 and 18 will increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables by 1 serving per day as measured by pre- and post-program surveys.”

- Evaluation Method 1: “Students will be surveyed at the beginning and end of the program to determine servings of fruits and vegetables consumed daily.”

Evaluation Plan

- Always do what is asked by the grant maker
- Start your evaluation when (or before) your project starts



Budget

Direct vs. Indirect Costs

- Direct costs: Costs that can be identified specifically with a particular project or activity or directly assigned to a project or activity relatively easy with a high degree of accuracy.
- Indirect costs: Costs incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be identified specifically with a particular project or activity.

Budget: Core Components

Personnel

- Salaries/wages for employees whose time and effort can be directly attributed to project activities (e.g., faculty, technicians, research associates, other professionals, etc.)

Fringe Benefits

- Fringe benefits for each employee that will be paid with grant funds, typically calculated as a percentage of an individual's salary or wages (e.g., workers compensation, retirement, unemployment, etc.)

Budget: Core Components

Travel

- Costs for travel in support of project activities (e.g., airfare, mileage, lodging, meals, ground transportation, etc.)

Special Purpose Equipment

- Costs for project related equipment used for research, medical, or scientific activities greater than $5,000 (e.g., microscopes, spectrometers, etc.)

Supplies

- Costs for project related supplies less than $5,000 per unit (e.g., laboratory supplies, workshop materials, project specific computer costs, etc.)

Budget: Core Components

Contractual

- Expenses associated with purchasing goods or procuring services performed by an organization other than the applicant

Other

- Expenses not covered in the previous budget categories (e.g., conference registration, communications, rental expenses, advertisements, publication costs, data collection, etc.)

Budget Tips

- Justify your costs
- Estimate, estimate, estimate
- Budgets can be modified

Final Rule

Don't be afraid to ask!

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Thank You!