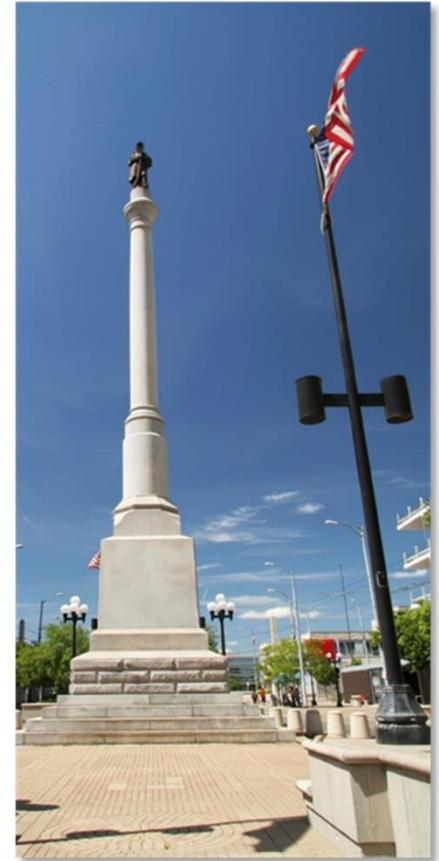# School-based health care support toolkit: Best practices for grant writing

Ohio | Governor's Office of Health Transformation

Common sections of grant proposals (1/2)

Cover letter
- The cover letter should include your organization's name, the funder's name, the program name, and contact information
- The letter should be succinct and captivating – briefly highlight your strengths and accomplishments but don't exaggerate or make sweeping statements that you cannot back up

Statement of need

Capture the problem and how your model addresses the issue, including information like:
- Start with a hook – e.g. "Less than half of the students attending Blank Middle School have access to mental health services, and last year over 60% identified pervasive feelings of helplessness and depression."
- Demographics and relevant health statistics (e.g., number of schools, number of health care providers, socioeconomic indicators, community health statistics, etc.)
- Information about your school-based health model (e.g., what percentage of your school population is enrolled; what services you provide; client demographics such as age, gender and race; family involvement; use of volunteers; and the number of clients and visits provided each year)
- Information about your school(s) (e.g., dropout rates, suspension numbers, retention rates, percent of students who receive free and reduced lunch, etc.)
- NOTE: Only mention needs that you want your school-based health care model to address (e.g. do not mention mental health support if you are looking for funding for a dental clinic)

Goals and objectives
- Goals are general statements of what you want to accomplish, they are typically broad and focused on the long-term
  - E.g. School X will improve access to needed health resources for its students and surrounding community
- Objectives are specific, measurable statements that support a goal
  - E.g. By next fall, School X will have converted two classrooms into a health clinic
  - E.g. By next winter, School X will have formalized a partnership with an external mental health provider

Common sections of grant proposals (2/2)

Activities

- The grant activities section should indicate the following:
  - What is being done - the activities planned to meet the stated objectives
  - When objectives will be complete - the projected timeline
  - By whom – the key personnel and their role(s) in these activities
- A key pitfall in grant proposals is not providing a clear picture of the activities you will undertake - the funder should be able to envision exactly what you will do based on what you write
- Also make sure you describe what metrics you will measure to gauge your program's success and how you will go about collecting and measuring those data points

Budget

- Many grants request two budgets: a request budget, indicating how you will spend this particular funder's money, and program budget, showing the cost of the whole program - typical categories include:
  - Personnel—salaries and benefits
  - Consultants and contract services
  - Space costs—office rent, utilities, maintenance
  - Medical and office supplies
  - Miscellaneous—printing, postage, travel, etc.
  - Indirect costs or overhead – typically a fixed percentage of the budget charged by the lead agency to cover general costs such as liability insurance, accounting and legal services (many funders place a limit on indirect costs at 15%)
- Your budget should be clearly linked to your activities and objectives
- If the funder requests a sustainability plan, be sure to include interest from other funders, information about your fund development plan, and your ability to generate third-party reimbursement.

Executive summary

- This should stand alone at the end and summarize the proposal, conveying the passion of your request
- It should include your key objectives in undertaking a school-based health initiative, a brief description of why the program is important, and how much money you are requesting

General guidance on applying for a grant

Writing the proposal

- Overall, try to write in an active voice using varied devices to hold the reader's attention - lists, numbered items, boldface and italic type

- Use headings and subheadings to differentiate between sections

- Write simply and in short sentences

- Ask someone not familiar with your work to read the proposal and explain back to you what they think you are saying

Sending the proposal

- Send your proposal flat - folded packets of paper are difficult to copy for review purposes

- Call the agency when applying for a federal grant and ask the preferred method of delivery - mail screening to federal agencies may cause delays