

Section 2.1

The Concept Paper

“I have a great idea for a grant proposal! How do I get started?” A concept paper is the suggested starting point for the development of any successful proposal. Generally three to five pages long, it outlines the project with enough detail to clearly demonstrate what is being proposed. Certain funding agencies require that a concept paper be submitted prior to submission of a full proposal. Therefore, you need to build a strong case for your project in a concise and persuasive manner. Suggested guidelines for constructing a concept paper are as follows:

- **TITLE** - The title should be as descriptive as possible.
- **INTRODUCTION** - This section may include:
 - What is to be done and the context of the project.
 - What is being done both generally and specifically in the same or related areas. (The reviewer should know that you know what is going on in the area in which you are proposing.)
 - An explanation and justification for unique or innovative approaches. (These are selling points about what makes your project special, unique and compelling and why it should be funded.)
- **NEED STATEMENT**
 - What needs to be done and why?
 - What significant needs are you trying to meet? Compared to other projects in the same area, what sets yours apart in terms of need?
 - What services are to be delivered? Why? Use specifics from preliminary studies, needs assessment, documentation, and data supporting your proposal.
 - What gaps that your work can fill exist in the knowledge base of your field?
 - Is the problem both significant and manageable? Do you have the resources to handle the problem?
- **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**
 - Goals statements identify the overall purpose of the project and a general indication of intent.
 - Objectives are action statements with measurable outcomes, to be completed by a specified time and under specified conditions.
- **APPROACH/METHODOLOGY**
 - How are you going to carry out your project?
 - What specific activities do you propose to meet the goals and objectives you have outlined, and how will those activities be carried out?
- **OUTCOMES, BENEFITS, RESULTS**
 - Outcomes - What are the products of your work?
 - Impact - What are the benefits and results of your work?
 - Measurement - Can your outcomes, benefits and results be measured?
 - Products - What does the funding agency get in return for supporting your proposal?
- **PROJECT DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR AND STAFF**
 - List the qualifications and experience of the proposed project director/principal investigator.
 - List the qualifications and experience of key project staff.