



Developing Grant Proposals:

A Guide for Tribal Emergency Preparedness Coordinators

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Transportation Emergency Preparedness Program

***Developing Grant Proposals: A Guide for Tribal
Emergency Preparedness Coordinators***

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Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory

Idaho Falls, Idaho 83415

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FOREWORD

The U. S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Transportation Emergency Preparedness Program (TEPP) in DOE Region 6 prepared this document for Tribal emergency preparedness coordinators. By so doing, the TEPP hopes to assist Tribes in gaining access to the appropriate agencies—particularly those with legally mandated emergency preparedness functions—for grant funding for emergency preparedness activities. This document is intended as an introductory guide for Tribal emergency preparedness coordinators interested in applying for grants. It should be noted that each individual agency usually has its own format and procedures as well as specific grant application instructions that should be used.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Seeking grants is one method of accessing resources to resolve or address financial problems.

Funding resources exist because individuals or organizations have created them (from various motivations and reasons) to address specific needs in your Tribe. Each funding resource has a unique perspective of what it wants for its money. The wants are usually based on the funding resource's values and how it sees its responsibility to your Tribe. Each funding resource has a need to apply the money entrusted to it in ways that reflect its goals.

As a grant seeker, you have a need for financial resources to support projects aimed at addressing certain issues and concerns within your Tribe. The key is to match your particular need for grant money with the need of the funding resource to invest its financial resources and produce the desired results. You should start writing only after you know what the funding resource has that might match your needs.

A list of grants and a template for expressing interest to the granting agency are included with this document. The list of grants gives you a place to begin to identify a wide range of financial and/or technical resources you can access to address some of the emergency preparedness needs in your Tribe.

This document is a suggested approach to preparing grant applications that can be adapted to fit your needs and the specifics of each situation.

2. BUILDING THE CAPACITY FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

It is important that you take the “long and broad” view of your Tribe’s needs for emergency preparedness. The term “capacity-building” means that you seek to acquire all of the equipment, personnel, training, policies and procedures, infrastructure, mutual aid agreements, funding, etc. to carry out a comprehensive, integrated, and self-sustaining public safety program—an important part of which is emergency preparedness. While all of these things are often scarce, it is prudent to use your limited resources to the fullest. Oftentimes, with creativity and foresight, you can make your limited resources—including the grant funding that you obtain—do double-duty to meet your public safety needs.

In that sense, for example, you would have an opportunity for “capacity-building” if you acquired grant funding for a housing project that included a component of crime prevention (several of the grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development listed in Appendix A have this characteristic). The crime prevention aspect of the new housing project would help to build your police capacity—possibly with new equipment, training, or personnel. The enhanced police capacity would be extremely important and beneficial to your overall emergency preparedness. Notice, however, that it came not from an emergency preparedness grant, but a housing grant.

The grants listed in Appendix A as well as many others available from other sources may help you to build your emergency preparedness capacity either directly or indirectly. It is important that you coordinate applying for grants with all of the Tribal agencies that may benefit from them. Which agencies may benefit may not be immediately evident on first reading of grant information. With some additional research and thought, however, you may be able to see a way to benefit multiple agencies and help them to build their capacities. Working through the Tribal Council and its committees would be a logical place to start in determining which grants the Tribe already has and which ones that it might be most beneficial to pursue.

3. GATHERING DATA FOR THE PROPOSAL

The initial step in applying for emergency preparedness funding for Tribal governments is to research potentially available grants. This is a study in itself because there are many public and private sources for grant money.

Research on grants can be carried out in the public library or on the Internet. In public libraries, there is usually a person who can help you to use the resources of the library. Many libraries also have computer equipment with Internet access. Key words may be used on the Internet in the search for grants. These words should relate to the purpose of the grant. For example, if funding is required for HIV-AIDS, it is proper to enter 'grants for HIV, AIDS' in any of the search engines. Once potential grants have been identified, it is wise to obtain a copy of the agency's annual report or guidelines. This will help to prepare the scope of the grant and what you will need to match your request with the agency's goals. It is also important to check with the agency to determine if the grant program is funded for the period for which you are applying.

You will generally need background documentation in three areas: *concept*, *program*, and *expenses*. If all of this information is not readily available to you, determine who will help you gather each type of information. Knowledgeable Tribal Council members can be contacted for some of the required information. Once you know with whom to talk, then identify the questions to ask.

The data-gathering process makes the actual writing much easier. By involving Tribal Council members in the process, it helps key people within the Tribe to seriously consider the project's value to Tribal members.

3.1 Concept

It is important that you have a good sense of how the project fits into the expectations of the Tribe. The need being addressed by the proposal must be documented. Goals and concepts must be well articulated in the proposal. Funders want to know what the project reinforces and the overall direction of the Tribe. They may need to be convinced that the case for the project is compelling. Background data on the Tribe's needs must be collected and addressed so that your arguments are well documented.

3.2 Program

Here is a list of the program information required:

- The nature of your project and how it will be conducted
- The timetable for your project
- The anticipated outcomes of your project
- How best to evaluate the results
- Staffing and volunteers needed (including deployment of existing staff and new hires).

NOTE:

- *Familiarize yourself with the agency's application process including the timetable and preferred method of initial contact. Some agencies accept proposals only after an initial phone call, query letter, or preapplication form. In general, it is never a good idea to send out mass mailings of proposals.*
- *Include a brief cover letter that outlines the link between your proposal and the funder's interests. One paragraph of the cover letter should provide a brief summary of your project.*
- *Follow the specific instructions from the foundation or grant maker. Because this is a broad attempt to meet the general requirements of a number of foundations, some might request additional information.*

3.3 Expenses

It is not possible to write down all the expenses associated with your project until the program details and timing have been worked out. Once the narrative part of the master proposal has been written, the main financial planning can take place. You need to sketch out the broad outlines of the budget to be sure that the costs are in reasonable proportion to the outcomes you anticipate. If it appears that the costs will be prohibitive, scale back your plans or adjust them to remove the least cost-effective expenditures.

4. GENERAL FORMAT OF A GRANT PROPOSAL

This section gives an overview of the general format for many grant proposals. Specific steps and sections in preparing a grant proposal are further described in Section 4, “Specific Steps for Writing a Grant Proposal.”

4.1 Cover Sheet

A cover sheet gives a brief summary of your proposal and what you want to achieve. The following information can be used to create a coversheet:

- Name of Tribe
- Tax-exempt status
- Date of application
- Address
- Telephone number
- Tribal leader
- Contact person and title
- Grant request
- Period grant will cover
- Type of request (e.g., general support, startup, technical assistance)
- Project title
- Total project budget (if request is for other than general support)
- Total Tribal budget (current year)
- Starting date of fiscal year
- Tribal mission statement
- Summary of project or grant request.

4.2 Narrative Historical Overview

The narrative historical overview generally describes the past and current activities of the Tribe and usually would contain the following:

- A brief history and major accomplishments of the Tribe
- Current programs and activities
- A description of your constituency (race, class, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and people with disabilities). How are they actively involved in your work and how do they benefit from this program?
- A description of your work with local groups, if applicable, and how other regional and national groups are involved.

4.3 Description of Your Request

The description of your request will generally include the following:

- The problem statement should answer “What problems, needs, or issues does your request address?”
- If other than general operating support, a description of the program for which you seek funding, why you decided to pursue this project, and whether it is a new or ongoing part of the Tribe’s activities
- The goals, objectives, activities, and strategies involved in this request
- A timeline for specific activities and strategies
- The ways your work promotes diversity and addresses inequality, oppression, and discrimination within the Tribe as well as the larger society
- The systemic or social change you are trying to achieve (i.e., how does your work address and change the underlying root causes of the problem?)

4.4 Attachments/Requirements of the Proposal

Most grant applications require several attachments or other requirements to be included in addition to the proposal. These attachments could include the following typical items:

- Evaluation: A brief description of your plan for evaluating the success of the project or for your Tribe’s work. What questions will be addressed? Who will be involved in evaluating the work-staff, board, constituents, community, and consultants? How will the evaluation results be used?
- Tribal structure/administration.
- Brief description of how your Tribe works. What are the responsibilities of board staff and volunteers?
- Who will be involved in carrying out the plans outlined in this request?
- Qualifications of key individuals.
- A list of Tribal Council members with related demographic information.
- How is the Tribal Council selected, who selects them, and how often?
- A Tribal Organization chart showing decision-making structure.
- Finances:
 - Most recent, completed full-year Tribal financial statement (expenses, revenue, and balance sheet) (audited, if available).
 - Tribal current annual operating budget.
 - Other funding resources for this request including amounts and whether received, committed, projected, or pending.
 - Description of your plans for future fund raising.

5. SPECIFIC STEPS FOR WRITING A GRANT PROPOSAL

Grant proposals generally include at least six sections. These sections are (1) an executive summary, (2) a statement of need, (3) a project description, (4) a budget, (5) organizational information, and (6) a conclusion. Often, proposals will contain other supporting material.

5.1 Executive Summary

The first page of the proposal is the most important. Here you provide the reader with a snapshot of what is to follow. It summarizes all of the key information and is a sales document designed to convince the reader that this project should be considered for support. Include the following:

- A brief statement of the problem or need your Tribe has recognized and is preparing to address
- A short description of the project including what will take place, how many people will benefit from the program, how and where it will operate, how long it will operate, and who will staff it
- An explanation of the amount of grant money required for the project and what the plans are for funding it in the future
- A brief statement of the name, history, purpose, and activities emphasizing your capacity to carry out the project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY—

Summarizes the entire proposal and serves as the umbrella statement for your case

Length: 1 page

5.2 Statement of Need

Your next task is to build on your executive summary by enabling the agency to understand the problem that your project will remedy. The statement of need will enable the reader to learn more about the issues. It presents the facts and evidence that support the need for the project and establishes that you understand the problems and, therefore, can reasonably address them.

STATEMENT OF NEED—

Answers the question of why this project is necessary

Length: 2 pages

The information used to support the case can come from Tribal leaders as well as from your Tribe's experience. You want the need section to be clear and persuasive. You must assemble all the arguments, then present them in a logical sequence that will readily convince the reader of the importance. Consider the following points:

- Decide which facts or statistics best support the project. Be sure the data you present are accurate. Information that is too broad will not help you develop a winning argument for your project. Information that does not relate to your Tribe or project will cause questions about the entire proposal. There should be a balance between the information presented and the scale of the program.

Give the reader hope. The picture you paint should not be so grim that the solution appears hopeless. The agency will want assurance that an investment in a solution will be worthwhile. Avoid overstatements and overly emotional appeals.

- Decide if you want to put your project forward as a model. This could expand the base of potential funding agencies, but serving as a model works only for certain types of projects. If the decision about a model is affirmative, you should document how the problem you are addressing occurs in other Tribes. Be sure to explain how your solution could be a solution for others as well.

- Determine whether it is reasonable to portray the need as acute. You are asking the agency to pay more attention to your proposal because either the needs you address are worse than others or the solution you propose makes more sense than others.
- Decide whether you can demonstrate that your program addresses the need differently or better than other projects that preceded it. If possible, you should make it clear that you are cognizant of, and on good terms with, others doing work in your field. Keep in mind that funding agencies are very interested in collaboration. They may even ask why you are not collaborating with those you view as key competitors. You need to describe how your work complements, but does not duplicate, the work of others.
- Avoid circular reasoning. In circular reasoning, you present the absence of your solutions as the actual problem. For example, the circular reasoning for building roads for your Tribe will be like this: “The problem is that no roads have been built for my Tribe. Building roads will solve the problem.” A more persuasive case would cite what roads mean to a Tribe—permitting access to homes, easy transportation of goods and services, and enhancement of development in the Tribe. The statement might refer to a survey that underscores the target audience’s usage of other facilities and conclude with the connection between the proposed usage and the potential benefits to enhance life in the community.

The statement of need does not have to be long and involved. Short, concise information captures the reader’s attention.

5.3 Project Description

This section usually has five subsections: (1) objectives, (2) methods, (3) staffing and administration, (4) evaluation, and (5) sustainability. Together, objectives and methods dictate staffing and administrative requirements. They then become the focus of the evaluation to assess the results of the project. The project sustainability, its ability to attract other support flows directly from its success.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION—

Describes the nuts and bolts of how the project will be implemented

Length: 3 pages

5.3.1 Objectives

Objectives are the measurable outcomes of the programs. They define your methods. Your objectives must be tangible, specific, concrete, measurable, and achievable in the specified time period. Objectives should not be confused with goals. Here is the goal of a project with a subsidiary objective:

Goal: Our after-school program will help children read better.

Objective: Our after-school remedial education program will assist 50 children in improving their reading scores by one grade level as demonstrated on standardized reading tests administered after participating in the program for six months.

The goal in this case is abstract—improving reading—while the objective is much more specific. It is achievable in the short term (six months) and measurable (improving 50 children’s reading scores by one grade level).

5.3.2 Methods

The methods section describes the specific activities that will take place to achieve the objectives. It might be helpful to divide your discussion of methods into how, when, and why.

How: This is the detailed description of what will occur from the time the project begins until it is completed. Your methods should match the previously stated objectives.

When: The methods section should present the order and timing for the tasks. It might make sense to provide a timetable so that the reader does not have to map out the sequencing on his or her own. The timetable tells the reader “when” and provides another summary of the project that supports the rest of the methods section.

Why: You may need to defend your chosen methods—especially if they are new. Why will the planned work lead to the outcomes you anticipate? You can use expert testimony and examples of other projects that work.

The methods section enables the reader to visualize the implementation of the project. It should convince the reader that your Tribe knows what it is doing.

5.3.3 Staffing/Administration

You need to devote a few sentences to discussing the number of staff, their qualifications, and specific assignments. Details about individual staff members involved in the project can be included as part of an attachment or appendix.

Staffing may refer to volunteers or to consultants as well as to paid staff. For projects with paid staff, be certain to describe which staff will work full-time and which will work part-time on the project. Identify staff already employed by your Tribe and those to be recruited specifically for the project.

Salary and project costs are affected by the qualifications of the staff. List the practical experience you require for key staff as well as level of expertise and educational background. If an individual has already been selected to direct the program, summarize his or her credentials and include a brief biographical sketch in the appendix. A strong project director can help influence a grant decision.

Describe for the reader your plans for administering the project. It needs to be crystal clear who is responsible for financial management, project outcomes, and reporting.

5.3.4 Evaluation

An evaluation plan should not be considered only after the project is over. It should be built into the project. Including an evaluation plan in your proposal indicates that you take your objectives seriously and want to know how well you have achieved them. Evaluation is also a sound management tool. An evaluation can often be the best means for others to learn from your experience in conducting the project.

5.3.5 Sustainability

A clear message from grant makers today is that grant seekers will be expected to demonstrate in very concrete ways the long-term financial viability of the project to be funded. You will want to demonstrate either that your project is finite (with start-up and ending dates) or that it is capacity-building. Capacity-building means that it will contribute to the future self-sufficiency of your agency, enable it to expand services that might be revenue generating, or that it will make your Tribe attractive to other funding agencies in the future.

5.4 Budget

The budget for your proposal may be as simple as a one-page statement of projected expenses, or it may need to contain additional information depending on the complexity of your project. As you prepare to assemble the budget, go back through the proposal narrative and make a list of all personnel and nonpersonnel items related to the operation of the project.

BUDGET—

Describes the finances of the project with explanatory notes

Length: 1 page

Your list of budget items and calculations, completed to arrive at a dollar figure for each item, should be summarized on worksheets. You should keep these to

remind yourself how the numbers were developed. These worksheets can be useful as you continue to develop the proposal and discuss it with funding agencies. Use the worksheet to prepare the expense budget. For most projects, costs should be grouped into subcategories that are selected to reflect the critical areas of expense.

A narrative portion of the budget is used to explain any unusual line items in the budget. If costs are straightforward and the numbers tell the story clearly, explanations are redundant. If you decide a budget narrative is needed, you can create “Notes to the Budget.”

5.5 Organizational Information

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION—

Contains the history and governing structure of the Tribe, its primary activities, its audiences, and its services

Length: 1-2 pages

Organizational information can be conveyed easily by attaching a brochure or other prepared statement. In two pages or less, tell the reader about your Tribe. Be ready to demonstrate how the subject of the proposal fits within or extends your project. Discuss the size of the Tribal Council, how it is elected, and the level of participation. Give the reader a feel for the makeup of the Tribal Council. Tying all the information together, cite the expertise of your Tribal Council members, especially as it relates to the subject of

your proposal.

5.6 Conclusion

The conclusion is a good place to call attention to the future after the project has been completed. If appropriate, you should outline some of the follow-up activities that might be undertaken to begin to prepare your funding agencies for your next request. Alternatively, you should

CONCLUSION—

Summarizes the main points of the proposal

Length: 2 paragraphs

state how the project should carry on without further grant support.

The conclusion is also the place to make a final appeal for your project. Briefly reiterate what you want to do and why it is important. Underscore why the Tribe needs funding to accomplish it. Do not be afraid at this stage to use a bit of emotion to solidify your case.

5.7 Other Supporting Material

Often it is helpful to include other supporting material to make your proposal more attractive. Such supporting material could include:

- Letters of support/commitment
- Recent newsletter articles, newspaper clippings, evaluations or reviews
- Recent annual report.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

One way of looking at the task of getting ready and applying for grants is taken from a book by Allen Lakein, entitled How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life. A mouse confronted with a large piece of cheese does not attempt to eat it or move it in one large piece. It will eat holes in the cheese or take it in pieces—a little at a time. The same applies to grant seeking: Take each part and approach it a little at a time.

Submitting your proposal is nowhere near the end of your involvement in the grant making process. Grant review procedures vary widely, and the decision-making process can take anywhere from a few weeks to six months or more. During the review process, the funding agency may ask for additional information either directly from you or from outside consultants. You need to be patient but persistent.

If your hard work results in a grant, take a few moments to acknowledge the funding agency's support with a letter of thanks. You also need to find out whether the agency has specific forms, procedures, and deadlines for reporting the progress of your project. Clarifying your responsibilities as a grantee at the outset, particularly with respect to financial reporting, will prevent misunderstandings and more serious problems later.

If the proposal is rejected, know that this is not necessarily the end of the process. If you are unsure why your proposal was rejected, ask. Did the funding agency need additional information? Would they be interested in considering the proposal at a future date? Put them on your mailing list so that they can become further acquainted with your Tribe. Remember, there's always next year.

7. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TEMPLATE

Before filing out an application form, note the following:

- Every funder has different guidelines and priorities.
- Every funder has different deadlines and timetables.
- Any funder that has agreed to accept your application may request additional information at any stage in their application process.
- It is important to research each funder's grant making philosophy, interests, and criteria.
- Be aware of each funder's application process, including timetable and preferred method of initial contact.
- Include a cover letter, introducing your organization and stating the dollar request.
- Use the funder's coversheet if they have any.
- Follow any specific instructions from the funder.

Date of Application: _____

Name of organization to which grant would be paid (list exact legal name).

Purpose of grant (one sentence): _____

Telephone Number _____ Fax _____ Email _____

Executive Director: _____

Contact person (if not executive director): _____

Is your organization an IRS 501(c) (3) not-for-profit? (yes or no): _____

If no, please explain: _____

Grant request: \$ _____

Check one:

General support _____

Project support _____

Total organization budget (for current year): \$ _____

Dates covered by this budget (mo/day/year): _____

Total Budget (if requesting project support): \$ _____

Dates covered by project budget (mo/day/year): _____

Project name (if applicable): _____

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND OTHER RESOURCES

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, <http://www.cfda.gov/>. This website also has an excellent short guide to developing and writing grant proposals.

United States Government Manual (available from: Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402)

OMB Circulars Nos. A-87, A-102, A-110, and A-133, and Executive Order 12372 (available from: Publications Office, Office of Administration, Room 2200, 725 Seventeenth Street NW, Washington, DC 20503)

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