



Criminal Justice Division
Office of the Governor

Developing a Good ~~Narrative~~ Project

*Guidance and information
for applicants*



October 2017

Why thoughtful applications are important

CJD has a growing focus are on quality and performance

- We have an obligation to fund projects that are **well thought out**, demonstrate **good practices**, and are **well-articulated**.
- We can only meet the trust of the people we serve if we seek to make sure that the projects we fund are **useful and successful**.
- CJD is placing a growing emphasis on the **quality** of application we receive, the **evidence or basis** for the approach proposed, and the demonstrated ability to assess and share performance.



Grant application writing tips

A few dos and don'ts of grant writing

Do This...

- Follow the instructions precisely
- Use data and research to back up what you say
- Know what the evidence says about your approach and share it
- Ask someone outside of your organization for feedback
- Submit your application on time
- Figure out your match in advance
- Tie your budget to your narrative

Not This...

- Gloss over the instructions and get straight to writing
- Copy and paste from last year
- Fail to draw a clear connection between the problem, the activities, and the goals
- Submit an application that contains easy-to-fix errors
- Confuse passionate for compelling



Storyboarding

Storyboarding helps you organize your thoughts, ideas, and messages

What is it?

Produces Structure and Organization: Forces you to get your thoughts down in summary form and to organize your thoughts

What does it do?

Establishes Flow: Enables the you to establish, up front, the general flow of the grant application before the writing begins

How does it help?

Makes the rest easier: Once you have a storyboard that makes sense, filling in details is easy.

What's
Your
Story



Storyboarding

A simple way to sketch out the application so that it flows and makes sense

WHAT?	HOW?
Problem? _____	What works? _____ _____
Who to help? _____	What should we do? _____ _____
Goal 1 _____ - Objectives _____ _____	What capabilities do we need? _____ _____
Goal 2 _____ - Objectives _____ _____	
How will we measure success? _____	



How to build a grant PROJECT

A good application must first be a well-thought-out project

WHAT?

Problem Statement

- What problem do we want to solve?

Target Population

- Who do we want to help?

Performance

- What specifically do we want to accomplish?
- How to measure it?

HOW?

Evidence

- What practices, or research tell us what is likely to work?

Approach

- What specifically are we going to do to solve the problem?

Capabilities

- What skills, expertise, and bandwidth do we need to succeed?

Success



How to build a grant APPLICATION

Each part of the planning process maps to the eGrants application

WHAT?

Problem

- What problem do we want to solve?

Problem Statement

Supporting Data

Target

- Who do we want to help?

Success

Target Group

Performance

- What specifically do we want to accomplish?
- How to measure it?

Performance Management

Data Management

HOW?

Evidence

- What practices, or research tell us what is likely to work?

Evidence-Based Practices

Approach

- What specifically are we going to do to solve the problem?

Project Approach & Activities

Capabilities

- What skills, expertise, and bandwidth do we need to succeed?

Capacity & Capabilities



The Problem Statement

What are you trying to solve?

The problem statement should:

- Clearly define the root problem and the need
- Be of reasonable dimensions and scale
- Be supportable by statistical and anecdotal evidence (supporting data section)
- Be stated in terms of the people to be served - not the applicant
- Not be a lack of something
- Make a compelling case

Application prompt for Problem Statement:

“Provide a description of the nature and scope of the problem in your service area that this proposed project will address. This must be a statement of the core, underlying problem. A lack of resources is not, in and of itself, a problem.”



Supporting Data

Can you prove that your problem is real?

The supporting data should:

- Use cited, verifiable, trustworthy sources
- Be right sized – Don't use national data for a state problem or state data for a local problem
- Clearly support the problem statement
- Only include information that is of value in verifying the problem statement

Application prompt for Supporting Data:

“Provide supporting data, including baseline statistics and the sources of your data, to provide evidence that the problem exists, its size and scope, and its effects on the target population. Do not use statewide data for a local problem or national data for a statewide problem.”



Target Group

Who are you trying to help or affect?

Target group should:

- Describe the population the project will include or focus on using clear descriptors such as total number, geographic boundaries, demographics.
- Define the target population to include any special characteristics. For example, “at-risk”, “former offenders”, “victims of domestic violence”.
- Clearly tie to the problem statement and the approach and activities.
- Use data to support the size and description of the target group
- Demonstrate the applicant’s knowledge of the target group and its needs

Application prompt for Target Group:

“Describe the population that this project plans to provide or support direct services to. Include the size and basic demographics for the people served, as well as the challenges they face, and any other information relevant to the project. Be specific and use supporting data. Applicants should demonstrate there that they understand their target group well enough to effectively carry out the project.”



Performance management

Supports the problem statement by explaining what success looks like

Performance management section should:

- Provide a clear understanding of how the project will measure success
- Clearly state the goals and measurable objectives of the project
- Explain how the goals and objectives tie to the problem statement
- Provide specific measures, including BOTH outcome and output measures
- Explain what the baseline, or current state is, and what progress in the measures we can expect to see during the performance/project period
- Explain the internal methods used reviewing performance information how the information is used to make project decisions



Measuring success

Supports the problem statement by explaining what success looks like

Goals are broad statements that indicate the general intentions of the project to achieve some outcome.

Objectives are clear, tangible, and specific. To [reduce/increase/enhance/etc.] [something], by [x amount], by [dd/mm/yy date]. A project can have multiple objectives.

Measures use data to provide verifiable, numeric information that indicate progress toward achievement of objectives.

Application prompt for Performance Management:

“Provide an understanding of how the applicant organization will measure success for this project. What are the project’s goals and objectives and what are the project’s performance measures, both output and outcome? How do these goals, objectives, and measures tie to the problem that the project seeks to solve? What is the current baseline information for these measures as well as the goals for the project period?”



Objectives

Objectives provide clear actions for what you are trying to achieve and allow you to measure your progress

Specific Identifies a specific action or event that will take place.

Measurable Is clear about what success looks like.

Achievable Is achievable after completing manageable steps.

Realistic Ambitious enough to challenge while still being achievable.

Time-Bound Related to a timeline.



Data management

To prove success, grantees must have adequate access to data and the ability to analyze it

Data management should:

- Provide an understanding of how the applicant collects, tracks, and maintains performance data
- Describe or name any IT tools used
- Explain the methods used to analyze performance-related data

Application prompt for Data Management:

“Provide an understanding of how the applicant organization plans to collect, track and maintain the data needed to determine whether the project is meeting the goals, objectives, and measures stated above. Describe any methods, mechanisms, or tools used to generate measures. Applicants should give confidence that the data they collect will be accurate, maintained, and analyzed in a manner that enables them to adapt to changing assessments of the problem or project performance, and to evaluate and document the effectiveness of the project.”



Evidence-Based Practices

Funded projects should be based on science and evidence

Evidence-based practices should:

- Provide the basis for the methods, approaches, and activities used
- Specifically cite the best practice guides, research studies, etc. being followed
- If not following existing best practice or research, then provide a full explanation of the basis for the belief that this approach is promising

Note: This section is less critical for equipment-only grants unless the equipment is cutting edge technology.

Application prompt for Evidence-Based Practices:

“Justify the selection of the methods, approach, and activities described above. Applicants should preferably be able to cite the research, evidence, or published best/promising-practices model used as the basis for the project’s design. In case of an equipment or technology grant, what evidence or best/promising-practices model is there to support the purchase? Wherever possible, provide at least one citation or link. If the project approach and activities described above are not based on existing evidence, the applicant must describe why they believe the method to be promising.”

FACTS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



McGruff County implements the best current evidence-based practices and uses the highest quality of services to best serve the children in our care. The program was designed to provide the best care available in our area and it is structured to keep the participant busy.



Teams completed the National Drug Court Planning Institutes' implementation training to incorporate the "Ten Key Components" of Drug Courts. Manualized cognitive behavioral treatment programs are utilized to help participants become honest, change criminal thinking, improve decision making and learn the importance of following rules. Evidenced-based curriculums used include: National Institute of Corrections "Thinking for a Change", Correctional Counseling's Moral Reconciliation Therapies, and Wanburg and Milkman's "Strategies for Self-Improvement and Change".



Approach

The approach is how the applicant plans to solve the problem and meet their objectives. It is the central core of the application.

The project approach and activities section should:

- Clearly describe, in detail, what the project does so that a lay person could understand
- Address how this project approach will affect the stated problem
- Provide enough context to understand how the approach ties to capabilities, evidence-based practices, and performance management
- Explain why the applicant has chosen the approach
- Include any relevant timelines

Application prompt for Project Approach & Activities:

“Provide the core information needed to understand the methodologies, approaches, and activities to be employed by the project. Provide a rationale for choosing this particular model. Any therapy or licensed counseling provided should include a description of the modality/framework used. A reader should also be able to understand how the approach and activities tie to solving the stated problem.”



Capabilities

What is needed for success?

Capacity and capabilities section should:

- Describe the organizational qualifications and performance history of the applicant in a way that explains why they are capable of the work
- Describe organization in a way that indicates that it has the capacity to handle the volume of work
- Describe special qualifications or experience of staff members, contractors, or partners who add value and increase the likelihood of success
- Tie to the project activities in way that allows the reader to see the connection between the qualifications and what the project will actually be doing

Application prompt for Capacity & Capabilities:

“Describe the applicant organization’s background as well as organizational and staff capabilities and qualifications to carry out this specific project using the approaches and activities provided above. Provide a brief summary of any collaborative partnerships created for the purpose of the proposed project. If the applicant indicates on the Activities tab that licensed or certified personnel will perform work, list each license or certification and upload a list of each person and their relevant corresponding license or certification. Empty positions requiring a license or certification should be noted.”



Final Checklist

Does the narrative meet these standards?

- Problem Statement:** Is our problem/need statement clear and backed up with trustworthy data?
- Target Population:** Does our target population make sense with our problem and is it as narrowly and clearly defined as possible?
- Performance Management:** Are our objectives specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound? Will the objectives, when met, address our problem statement? Do we have clear measures that show progress towards objectives?
- Data Management:** Do we show that the information needed to demonstrate performance can be tracked and how we will do that?
- Approach & Activities:** Is it clear that our activities will advance our objectives?
- Evidence-Based Practices:** Do we prove that our activities are based in available evidence?
- Capabilities & Capacity:** Do we demonstrate that our organization and our staff or contractors are qualified to do this work?

