

# Proposal Writing – **Do's** and **Don't's** of Writing a Proposal

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# Challenges in Proposal Development:

- ▶ **Pre-proposal work**
- ▶ **Needs Statement**
- ▶ **Writing Goals and SMART Objectives**
- ▶ **Project Description/Detail of Activities**
- ▶ **Budget**
- ▶ **Outcomes/Deliverables/Reporting**
- ▶ **Sources of funding**

# DO....

- ▶ Do think like a funder. Imagine committee members reviewing a stack of proposals. How does your application stand out?
- ▶ Do read the funding criteria thoroughly.
  - ▶ Such as the deadline
  - ▶ Maximum amount of funding available
  - ▶ Attachments that are required with the application.
- ▶ Do take advantage of any information sessions that the funders provide
- ▶ Involve others in developing and editing the proposal
- ▶ Pitch the tone correctly- be human rather than academic, let the human story come through, but don't go overboard with emotion



## DO.....

- ▶ Do keep a copy of your entire application. In the case of staff turnover, new staff will have access to the application.
- ▶ Do use your copy of a successful grant application to create your work plan and keep your project on track and on budget. This will also help you to create a final report



# What NOT to do....

- ▶ Don't write lengthy, vague, general statements about your proposed project, as this can make it confusing or difficult for the proposal to be assessed. Be concise and stick to the point of your program or project.
- ▶ Cut your deadline too close
- ▶ Take a "one proposal" fits all approach
- ▶ Don't assume that the funder or the grant review committee will 'read between the lines' or guess at what you're trying to say. If you don't state it, they won't assume it.

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# Elements of a good proposal

- ▶ Clear linkage between activities and outcomes/benefit to community
- ▶ Need for funding/project is clearly communicated, links to planning processes
- ▶ Budget is reasonable, clear
- ▶ SMART Objectives



# SMART Objectives

Specific/Measurable/Attainable/Realistic/Time-bound

- ▶ To make your objectives time bound, consider starting with: “By the end of the 6-month project...”, or for subcomponents of a project: “At the end of the 1-day workshop...”
- ▶ Try not to fit it all into one objective! Since objectives should be specific, you’ll probably need to create a few for your project.
- ▶ Use appropriate verbs to ensure your objectives are targeted toward specific outcomes

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# Best practices in writing a proposal

- ▶ Look at previously funded projects
- ▶ Contact funder before starting proposal
- ▶ Know your audience (level of detail/technical information etc)
- ▶ Start with an outline, slowly expand to more details



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# Common weaknesses in proposals

- ▶ Not enough detail
- ▶ Too much detail
- ▶ No Clear deliverables
- ▶ Not realistic/too ambitious
- ▶ Costs unreasonable
- ▶ Duplicates work already done



*“Gitxaala Nation hosted a community gathering “Standing Strong for a Healthier Community” initiated by the youth being impacted by substance abuse on reserve. This 3-day event was a result of the Comprehensive Community Planning which identified a commitment to wellness, community healing and reconciliation as a priority.”*