

EPA Region 5 Grant Writing Tips

General Suggestions

- Answer all the questions; if the question does not apply let the reviewer know that.
- Obey the page limits and use a reasonable text size.
- Point distribution changes are likely.

Community Needs

- If this is a coalition, provide information on all coalitions partners even those that do not have target sites identified and explain why the coalition fits. Provide a source for demographic information. A signed coalition agreement is an asset.
- Identify “target sites”. This strategy helps the applicant identify contaminants that impact (i.e., adversely affect) a specific population in a community. Do your homework, check with your state agency and be sure to mention this contact in community involvement section.
- Impacts to be described include health or “social” and economic. Connect health effect to chemicals/hazardous substances to be addressed at BF site or the challenges that these sites present. Demonstrating a relationship with the local health department is a good idea.
- Always provide comparative statistics for the demographic information provided. Explain or interpret the stats for the reviewer, that is, connect the dots.
- The lowest common denominator: assume the reviewer knows nothing and is reading quickly to complete the task in the timeframe allowed.

Project Descriptions

- Provide skin in the game. Quantify in-kind support for the work, even if it is not required.
- Document competence at leveraging resources and working together as a team or coalition. Generic info does not help, provide examples of projects with successful outcomes.
- The connection to jobs must be made.
- Beware of giving out too much information in the budget.
- If it says use the table, then use the table.
- Panel reviewers do not score programmatic capability questions in Project Description and Feasibility of Success.

Community Engagement

- What part of “community based organization” don’t we understand?
- Support letter should provide an outline of organization, identify specific activities the organization will perform to support the project. Check for discrepancies between the letters of support and the text of the proposal.
- Tell us about tried and true methods of connecting with your residents.
- Let the reviewers know how you’re currently using technology, or your plan to incorporate technology to engage the community, i.e., social media is the next big challenge.

Project Benefits

- Come full circle and identify the benefits that bf funding will bring about by linking this section with earlier sections (project description, health, welfare and the environment and community engagement).
- Reach back to the comprehensive plan for benefits; share your community goals and how you will define success.