

From Planning to Performance

Writing a Persuasive Concept Paper



Why prepare a concept paper?

- ***Share your exciting story!!***
- Organize your team's thoughts in writing
- A way to obtain informal feed back on ideas and projects prior to preparing a proposal.
- Capture the interest of stakeholders
- Demonstrate the idea is worthy of further consideration



Introduction

- Identify your team and how your project supports the goals of the audience
- Describe any partnering departments involved and their interest in the project



Statement of Need and Purpose

- Identify and describe the unmet need in your community
- State the impact of the problem on the Tribe
- If the problem is too broad, choose to address only certain aspects of the problem (be concise and focused)
- State the purpose of the project; for example:
 - “The purpose of this project is to increase access to fresh produce for our Elders, and to provide an opportunity for youth to engage in and become educated in sustainable food systems. ”



Statement of Need and Purpose (cont)

- Briefly provide supporting documentation for the importance of addressing the need – statement of the problem
 - Statistical information is convincing
- Why should the council care? Not everyone understands the situation as well as you.
 - Define major issues related to problem
 - Identify possible or probable causes
- What have others accomplished and what more needs to be done



Project Description

- Briefly describe basic goals and objectives
- Includes a statement describing your intent
- Includes a statement of measurable outcomes related to your goal
 - Expected results
 - Who, What, When, (NOT how)



Methodology

- How the project will be carried out
- Innovative approaches, techniques or processes
- Include general timelines; e.g. Within two weeks, by the end of December, in time for the next funding application this spring...
- Describe benefits of the project and who will benefit



Support Needed

- What will the project activities cost – broad, don't travel into the weeds
- Which funding sources are being considered
- Cost sharing contributions
- Staff time
- Supplies
- Community engagement events
- Generally describe the types of support you need; e.g. personnel, travel, equipment, etc.



Suggested Format

- **Introduction** – *Grab Interest*
- **Statement of the Problem and Purpose** – *Create Urgency*
- **Project Description** - *Provide Confidence*
 - Goals and Objectives – *Develop Curiosity*
 - Methodology and Timelines – *Validate Approach*
 - Benefits/Anticipated Outcomes – *Substantiate Interest*
- **Support Needed** - *Cultivate Backing*
- **Contact Information**



Consider this...

- Is there a need?
- Is there a clear beneficiary? How will you identify?
- Why can't someone else do this?
- Is there buy-in from the community?
- Is the solution realistic?
- Is the project well thought-out?
- Is there team expertise and involvement?
- Is the project sustainable?



In General...

- Be brief, concise and clear – no longer than three to five pages
- Don't overwhelm with detail – be clear and compelling
- Use visuals “eye-candy”
- Avoid sounding vague or unsure about what you want to accomplish
- Consider your audience
- Highlight your team's strengths!

