



# VDC Grant Writing Guide

## *Resources, Links and Strategies*

### HHS Region 5

- A. **Foundations Online Directory:** <http://foundationcenter.org/find-funding/fdo-quick-start>
- Top Grantmaking Foundations in **IL:** <https://www.tgci.com/funding-sources/IL/top>
  - Top Grantmaking Foundations in **IN:** <https://www.tgci.com/funding-sources/IN/top>
  - Top Grantmaking Foundations in **MI:** <https://www.tgci.com/funding-sources/MI/top>
  - Top Grantmaking Foundations in **MN:** <https://www.tgci.com/funding-sources/MN/top>
  - Top Grantmaking Foundations in **OH:** <https://www.tgci.com/funding-sources/OH/top>
- B. **Grants.gov:** Portal to find out more about federal funding - <https://www.grants.gov/>
- C. **Grant Solutions:** Federal site for HHS that assists funders and grantees with their grants management questions - <https://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/>
- D. **Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Reviewers Page:**  
<https://www.hrsa.gov/grants/reviewers/index.html>  
<https://rrm.grantsolutions.gov/AgencyPortal/hrsa.aspx>
- E. **HRSA Grants Technical Assistance Page:** <https://www.hrsa.gov/grants/index.html>
- F. **Office of Minority Health (OMH):** Site takes participants to the OMH/Resource Center - <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/>
- G. **Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) Federal Reviewer Recruitment Page:** <https://rrm.grantsolutions.gov/AgencyPortal/oash.aspx>
- H. **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Grants:**



<https://www.samhsa.gov/grants>

- Forecast: [https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/grants/fy-2017-samhsa-foa\\_forecast.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/grants/fy-2017-samhsa-foa_forecast.pdf)

**I. The CommUnity Commitment (Micro-Grants Program):**

<http://www.thecommunitycommitment.org/>

**J. UnitedHealthcare Community Grants Program:**

<https://www.uhccommunityplan.com/uhc-grants.html>

**K. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Tracking Accountability in Government Grants System: Track grants awarded by the HHS -**

<https://taggs.hhs.gov/SearchAward>

*DATA SOURCES*

**A. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Data:** <https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems.html>

**B. Community Health Status Indicators:** <https://www.healthdata.gov/>

**C. County Health Rankings:** <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

**D. HealthLandscape:** Can be used to create maps from publicly available data sets including regional criminal justice, education, healthcare, and demographic data, allowing users to discover community characteristics and share information with health professionals, policy makers, and legislators - <http://www.healthlandscape.org/>

**E. Health Related Datasets:** <https://www.data.gov/health/>

**F. HRSA Data Warehouse:** <https://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/>



G. **Kaiser Family Foundation:** <http://www.kff.org/>

H. **National Association of Community Health Centers:** <http://www.nachc.org/>

I. **National Association of County & City Health Officials**

- *Organization Self-Assessment Guide:*

<http://www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/accreditation/upload/Organizational-Self-Assessment-Guide-FINAL-2.pdf>

- *Community Health Assessment & Improvement Planning:*

<http://www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/CHAIP/>

J. **Rural Health Information Hub:** <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/>

Grants Information, Data, Rural Health Models and Innovations, HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment Toolkit, Rural Community Health Gateway, Economic Impact Analysis, Planning for Sustainability

K. **SAMHSA Data:** <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/node/20>

L. **Talk Poverty Data:** <https://talkpoverty.org/poverty/>

M. **UDS Mapper:** Integrates HRSA data with external sources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau, enabling users to gather relevant and meaningful information about health care programs and the populations they serve - <https://www.udsmapper.org>

N. **US Census Bureau:** <https://www.census.gov/>

## *GUIDES & ADDITIONAL TOOLS*

A. **AHRQ Health Care Innovations Exchange:** <https://innovations.ahrq.gov/>



- B. **CMS Innovation Center:** <https://innovation.cms.gov/>
  
- C. **Community Tool Box:** <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/toolkits>
  
- D. **Management Help:** Website that assists managers & agency leaders find out more information addressing their infrastructure needs - <http://managementhelp.org/>
  
- E. **Resource Library:** <http://www.ruralhealthlink.org/Resources/ResourceLibrary.aspx#>  
Evaluation, Leadership, Strategic & Sustainability Planning
  
- F. **Rural Health Research Gateway:** <https://www.ruralhealthresearch.org>  
Evidence-based products focusing on policy-relevant subjects and issues in rural health
  
- G. **Telehealth Resource Centers:** Telehealth networks are funded to expand sites and services, contribute to the evidence base, and evaluate impact, as well as support technical assistance and research. <https://www.telehealthresourcecenter.org/>

## Logic Model Links

- A. University of Wisconsin Logic Model Website:  
<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/programdevelopment/logic-models/>
  
- B. The CDC:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/std/Program/pupestd/Components%20of%20a%20Logic%20Model.pdf>
  
- C. Another toolkit: <http://toolkit.pellinstitute.org/evaluation-guide/plan-budget/using-a-logic-model/>
  
- D. United Way Presentation: <http://www.yourunitedway.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/UWGRP-Guide-to-Outcomes-and-Logic-Models-6-8-15.pdf>



## Additional Links to Assist with the Planning Process

### **A. Addressing Priority Setting & Innovation in Programming**

- [http://app.ihl.org/FacultyDocuments/Events/Event-2491/Presentation-10066/Document-8848/Handouts\\_L21\\_Handout\\_Assess\\_Tool.pdf](http://app.ihl.org/FacultyDocuments/Events/Event-2491/Presentation-10066/Document-8848/Handouts_L21_Handout_Assess_Tool.pdf)
- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/priority-setting-process.pdf?la=en>

### **B. Public Health Competencies in Applications and Programs**

- <https://www.cdc.gov/minorityhealth/strategies2016/index.html>
- <https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/track/pdf/10.1186/1471-2458-14-55>
- [http://www.phf.org/programs/corecompetencies/Pages/Core\\_Public\\_Health\\_Competencies\\_Tools.aspx](http://www.phf.org/programs/corecompetencies/Pages/Core_Public_Health_Competencies_Tools.aspx)
- <https://www.naccho.org/programs/public-health-infrastructure/workforce-development/resources>

### **C. Evaluation and Budgeting Links**

- <https://www.cdc.gov/std/Program/pupestd/Types%20of%20Evaluation.pdf>
- <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=evaluation+basics&qpv=evaluation+basics&FORM=VDRE>
- <https://nff.org/blog/nonprofit-budgeting-basics>
- [https://www.compasspoint.org/sites/default/files/documents/PPT\\_Budgeting1\\_SE\\_Jan\\_2019.pdf](https://www.compasspoint.org/sites/default/files/documents/PPT_Budgeting1_SE_Jan_2019.pdf)
- **CDC's "Types of Evaluation"**, a quick guide to understanding terminology of program evaluation and measurements.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/std/Program/pupestd/Types%20of%20Evaluation.pdf>
- A Collection of **YouTube Videos addressing Evaluation Basics** =  
<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=evaluation+basics&qpv=evaluation+basics&FORM=VDRE>

# Grant Writing Basics for Urban Communities and Organizations

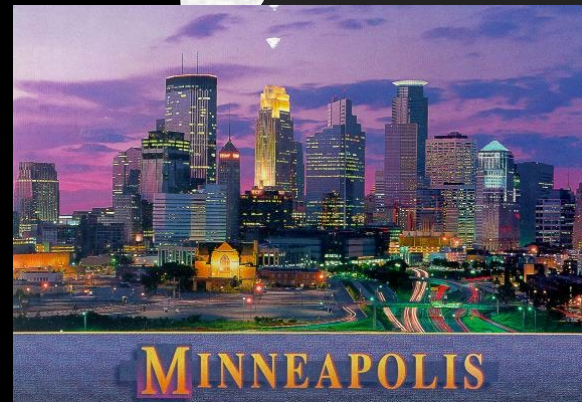


*Presented by*

Jay Blackwell, MA

Umoja Behavioral Health, PC

HRSA Office of Regional Operations,  
Region 5 // June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021



# Overview of This VDC Webinar

- Introducing the **VDC Approach** to Grant Writing and How It Assists Writers to Communicate Successfully to Funders
  - *Including acronyms, tools, and techniques that strengthen applications*
- Distinguishing the **difference** between **Grant Writing** and Resource Development
- Discussing **Priorities & Pitfalls** in Successful Applications
- Addressing **Expertise, Evaluation, and Change** in Proposals
- Supporting **Funders, Grant Reviewers, and Stakeholders** in Every Application

# the VDC Approach to Grant Writing

*and How It Assists Writers to Communicate Successfully  
to Funders*



# Description of the **VDC** Approach to Grant Writing

## **VISION, DESIGN, CAPACITY (VDC)**

- Communicating A Clear Vision for Change
- Designing Measurable Processes
- Demonstrating Capacity & Readiness to Perform

## **THE WRITER'S TAKEAWAY TOPICS**

- Intentional Change Over Time
- The Writer, the Reviewer and the Funder
- The Technical CACCCA
- Stress Priorities over Tasks
- Be Certain of Success



# VISION ELEMENTS

## in Grants and Proposals

*Requires Descriptive Details Focusing  
On*

**Specific changes** or results that will occur once resources are applied,

**Evidence of Expertise** by the applicant,

**Evidence-Based Interventions** ,

**Something New** and why it is important to clients, communities and populations being served,

**Successful Outcomes** and who will care,

**Inclusive Designs and Voices** from consumers, stakeholders and program partners,

**Systemic Accountability** that is timely, desired and necessary,

**Relationships** to outside Campaigns or Initiatives,

**Sustainability** possibilities, probabilities and indications.



# DESIGN ELEMENTS in Grants and Proposals

*Requires Descriptive Details Focusing On*

**Linking Agency Expertise** to the current application,  
**SMART Goals and Objectives**, concrete measures are mandatory,

**Timelines and Responsibilities** of staff to meet deadlines, complete reports and address program milestones,

**Cohesion** among the data, activities, products and outcomes,

**Successful Outcomes as a Priority.**

**Inclusive Designs and Voices** from consumers, stakeholders and/or program partners,

**Systemic Accountability** with timely indicators, checks and balances,

**Clearly Delineated Relationships** defining the distribution of tasks across the agency, partnerships, etc.

**Sustainability** possibilities, probabilities and indications.



# CAPACITY ELEMENTS in Grants and Proposals

*Requires Descriptive Details Focusing On*

**Linking Agency Expertise** to the current application,

**Authenticity** of connections between partners, communities, populations and/or issues being addressed,

**Realistic Timelines and Abilities** of staff to meet deadlines, complete reports and address program milestones,

**Evaluation Detail, Expertise** and flexibility utilizing data, records, and products,

**Recruiting for Successful Outcomes.**

**Inclusive Designs and Voices** from consumers, stakeholders and/or program partners,

**Clearly Delineated Relationships** defining the distribution of tasks across the agency, partnerships, etc.

**Papertrails, Copies and Permits** of everything needed to operate and receive public/private funding,

**Sustainability** possibilities, probabilities and indications.

# The 9 Parts of Most Grant Applications



**Letter of Intent (LOI)**



**Abstract**



**Program Narrative**



**Mission Statement**



**Organizational Summary**



**Program Description**



**Evaluation Methodology**



**Budgets & Fiscal Responses**



**Attachments**

**Vision Elements**

**Design  
Elements**

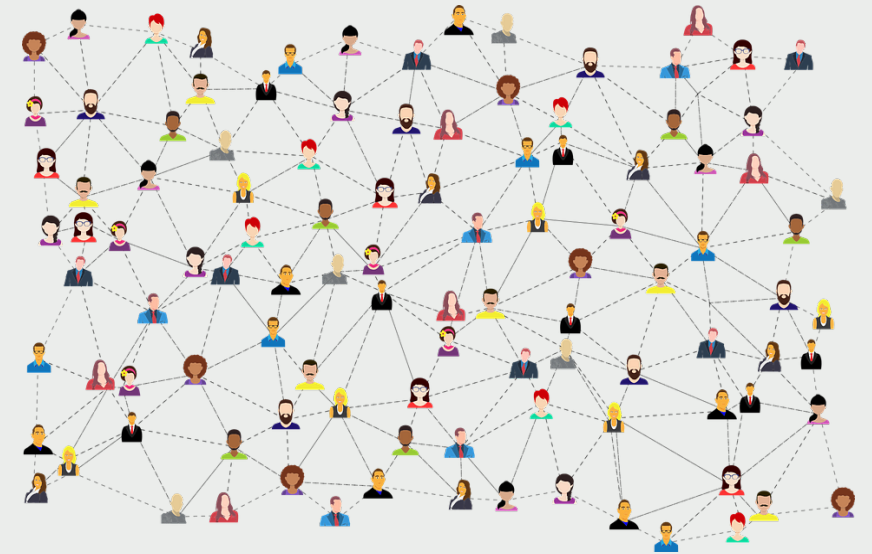
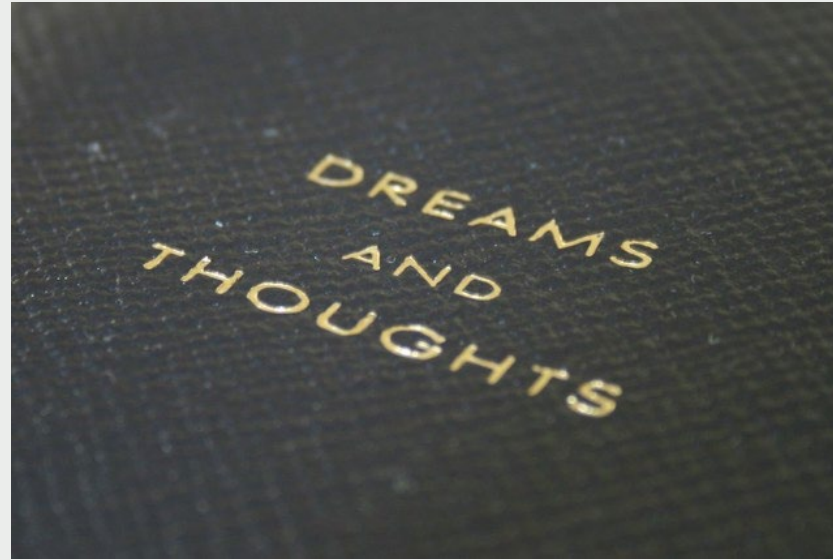
**Capacity Elements**

# VDC PROPOSAL CHECKLIST - Vision, Design, Capacity

	Vision	Design	Capacity
Parts of a Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cover Letter/Letter of Intent.</li> <li>Abstract.</li> <li>Mission Statement.</li> <li>Program Narrative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program Description.</li> <li>Organizational Summary.</li> <li>Evaluation Methodology.</li> <li>Goals &amp; Objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation Analysis.</li> <li>Budgets &amp; Fiscal Responses.</li> <li>Attachments.</li> </ul>
Traditional Logic Model	Outcomes, Impacts	Activities, Outputs	Inputs
Review Your Application	<p><b>Read Proposal Sections Aloud and Backwards</b></p> <p>Any time your text is awkward or confusing, or you constantly pause to reread the text, revise the section. If its awkward during your review, its likely to confuse Grant Reviewers and Funders.</p> <p>Backwards for missing words and grammar check.</p>	<p><b>Examine Individual Paragraphs</b></p> <p>Examine the overall construction of your paragraphs. Look at length, supporting sentence(s), and focus of each topic/beginning sentence.</p> <p>Edit paragraphs containing insufficient supporting data as well as sentences containing unproven or under-developed passages.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What does the AGENCY need to know, or understand, or provide, or decide?</li> <li>2. Do Program Managers need to develop new protocols?</li> <li>3. What will the evaluations, outcomes and measurements mean to anyone?</li> <li>4. Is your Virtual World prepared to support the application?</li> <li>5. Was a checklist constructed, followed, and completed?</li> </ol>

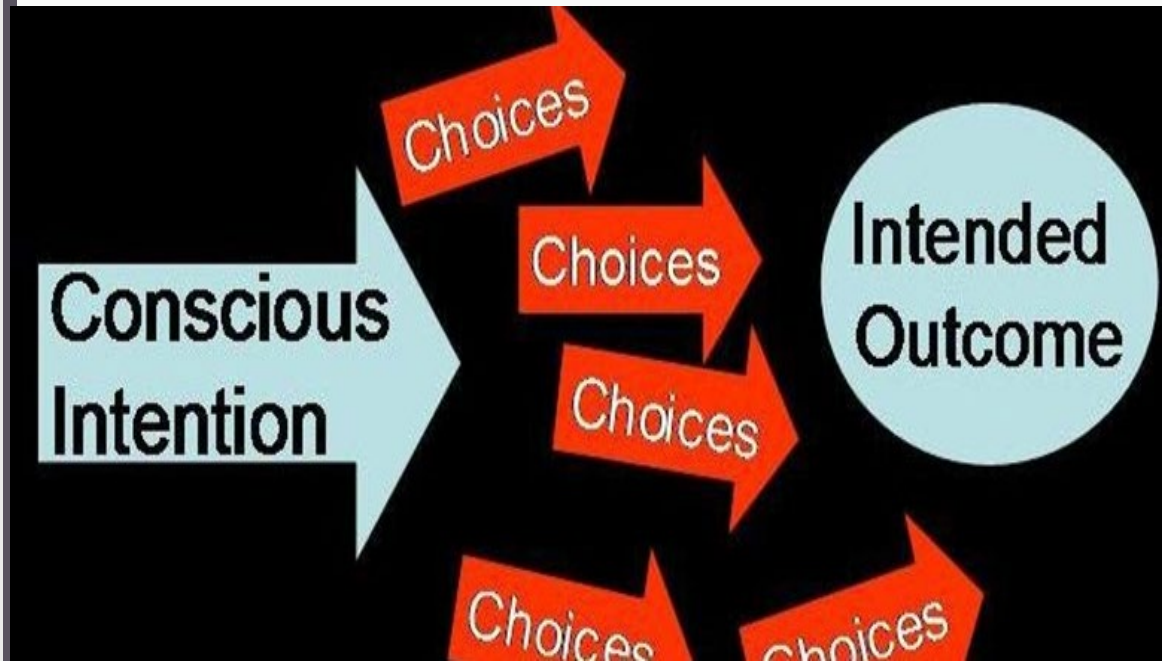
## Traditional Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
<p>Existing Resources</p> <p>Money. Staff. Volunteers. Supplies.</p>	<p>Proposed Services</p> <p>Training. Education. Counseling.</p>	<p>Products to be Counted</p> <p>Number of Classes. Hours of Service. Clients Served.</p>	<p>Intended Benefits</p> <p>New knowledge. Increased skills. Changed behaviors. New employment</p>	<p>That Which Happens Over Time</p> <p>Long Term. Short Term. Lasting Results.</p>



# Resource Development is...

*Different from Grant Writing*



# INTENTIONAL CHANGE OVER TIME



# Resource Development Options –

## *Common Funding Strategies*

### IN PROGRAMS & DEPARTMENTS

Government Grants

Fee for Service

Foundation Grants

Special Events

Online Contributions

Direct Mail Campaigns

### AGENCY LEADERSHIP IMPLEMENTS

Special Board Events

Direct Contributions

Planned Giving Program

Agency Loans

Workplace Giving Program Lending Institutions

Corporate Relations

# FUNDERS WANT M.O.R.E.

**M**ission Driven

**O**utcome Focused

**R**elevant Use of Data

**E**asy 2 Understand

Provide  
**CLARITY** on  
the **Priorities**  
Being  
Addressed  
and  
Supported



➤ *Internal Structures* Determining Program Priorities

- Agency Leadership
- Department Focused
- Population/Client Concerns
- Key Stakeholder Concerns
- Organizational Capacity

➤ *External Structures* Supporting Priority Concerns

- Private Foundations
- Governments (*local, state and federal*)
- Outside Data Sources
- Loan & Lending Institutions
- Environmental Concerns



**VIDEO TIME:**

**5 STEPS TO  
FUNDRAISING  
SUCCESS FOR  
SMALL AND  
GRASSROOTS  
NGOs**

# STRETCH BREAK

REGION 5  
IS HOME TO  
**MOTOWN.....**  
Detroit, Michigan



# Let's Review How Organizational Priorities & Funding Strategies are Connected

*Discussion of the Online Poll just conducted and how the answers highlight how participants are guided by external and internal pressures when defining funding priorities.*

# Resource Development Options –

## *Common Funding Strategies*

### **IN PROGRAMS & DEPARTMENTS**

Government Grants

Special Events

Foundation Grants

Direct Mail Campaigns

Online Contributions

Fee for Service

### **AGENCY LEADERSHIP IMPLEMENTS**

Special Board Events

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Planned Giving Program

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Workplace Giving Program

Lending Institutions

Corporate Relations



# Priorities & Pitfalls

*Here are the areas that always seem to trip-up writers... Solutions Included*



# Technical CACCCA

**Clear:** easily understood by the audience

**Accurate:** based on factual data

**Correct:** follows grammatical/technical rules

**Comprehensive:** contains all the requested info

**Concise:** brevity is a plus

**Accessible:** follow the technical rules as written



# Networks & Collaborations Supporting Change



- Increases Opportunities for Systemic Change
- Improves Data Collection & Access to Services
- Encourages Better Coordination between Communities
- Maximizes Outcomes and Impacts
- Expands Reach which Attracts Funding
- Inspires Enduring Communal Change
- Codifies the Reckoning Needs of Communities, Voices, and Environments

# Data is a Necessary Component of Technical Proposals

**Data Collection** occurs *Before, During & After* a proposal has been written.

These events, activities, and information comprise the **EVALUATION METHODOLOGY** and describes the situation (data), the projected successes (indicators) and any systemic benefits (impacts) that may be attributed to the proposed activities and interventions.

Before the grant is written; data that informs =

**FORMATIVE DATA**

During the proposed activities = **PROCESS MEASURES**

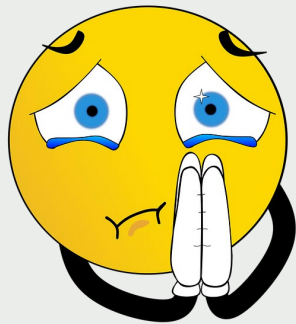
After proposed activities = **OUTCOME/IMPACT MEASURE**

# The 10 Great Grant Writing Pitfalls

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*Those Familiar Words So Many Seem Not to Hear*

# A Word from Our Sponsor



1. Start preparing the application early.
2. Follow the NOFO instructions carefully.
3. Keep your audience in mind.
4. Be brief and clear.
5. Be organized and logical.
6. Show evidence of solid fiscal management.
7. Attend to technical details.
8. Be careful when you use attachments.
9. Review your application to ensure accuracy and completion.
10. Submit all information at the same time.

<https://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply-for-a-grant/prepare-your-application>



**VIDEO TIME:**

**FUNDRAISING  
SUGGESTIONS FOR  
NGOs**

# Let's Review Some of the Funding Strategies Prevalent in Our Audience

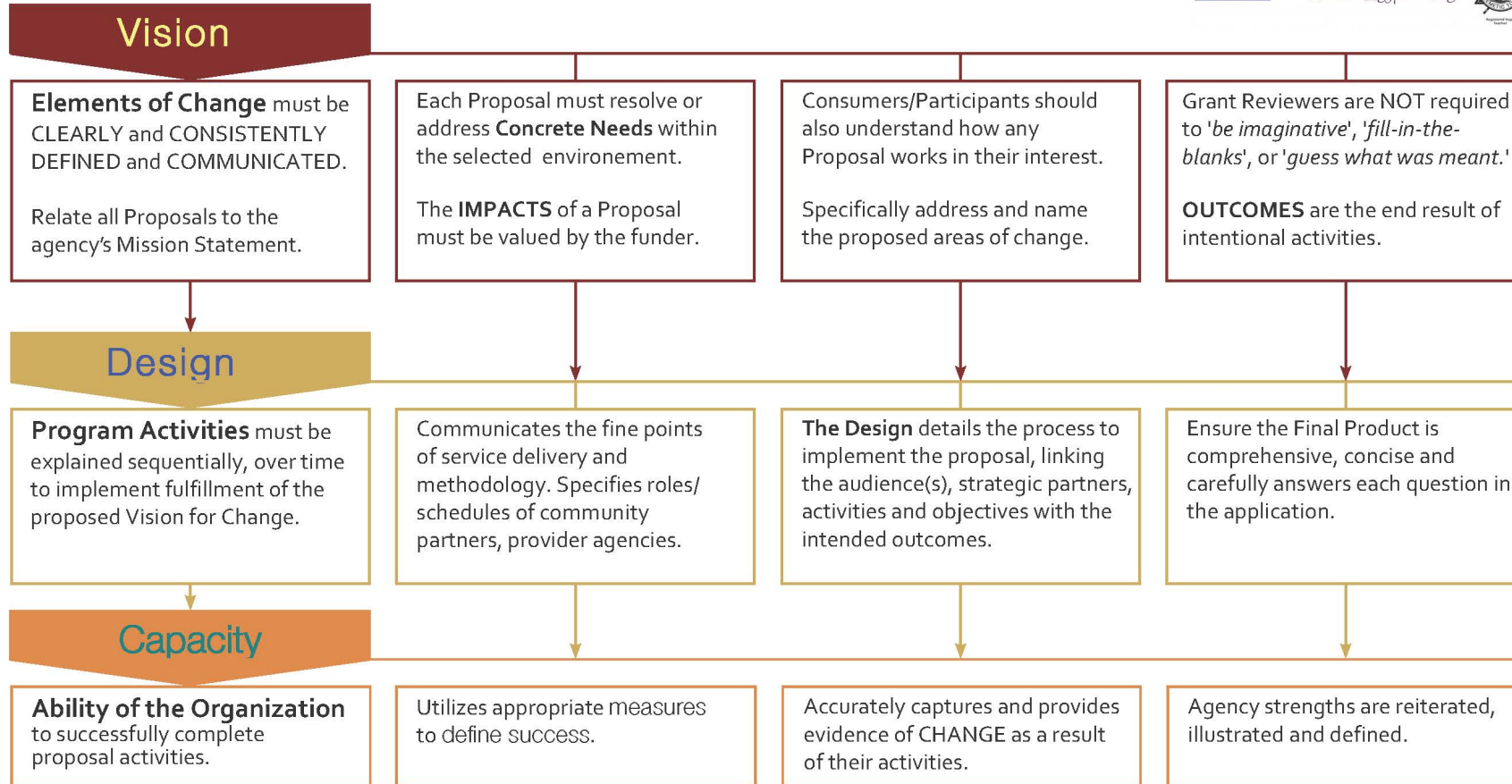
*This is a Discussion of the Online Poll just conducted and how the answers highlight participant familiarity of external and internal opportunities available when seeking funding solutions to resolve priorities.*

# Review of the VDC Approach to Grant Writing

*and How It Assists Writers to Communicate Successfully  
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# VDC PROPOSAL CHECKLIST - Vision, Design, Capacity



## Characteristics of Technical Writing... Proposals Need to be

**Clear** is easily understood by the intended audience without ambiguities.

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**Correct** follows both grammatical and technical conventions.

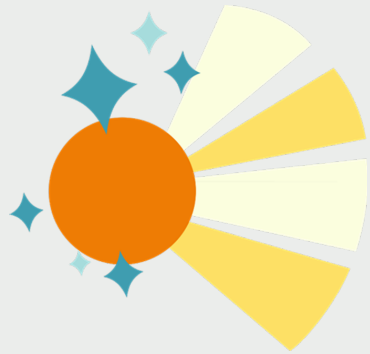
**Comprehensive** contains all necessary and requested information.

**Concise** is clear and complete without excess words or being redundant.

**Accessible** includes headings and subheads, indexes, and table of contents.

**Program Goal:** Overall aim or intended impact

# Stressing Priorities over Tasks



## **Resources**

The inputs dedicated to or consumed by the program

## **Activities**

The actions that the program takes to achieve desired outcomes

## **Outputs**

The measurable products of a program's activities

## **Outcomes**

The benefits to clients, communities, systems, or organizations

## **Impacts**

Projects the results of your program activities over TIME.

# The Logic Model

Accurately **defining** and **measuring** the **Change Indicators** is key to any successful grant application.

Grant Reviewers are NOT required to '**be imaginative**' or '**figure out**' what you meant to share.

Ensure your application is aligned with the Funder's Money.

Keep your sentences short by remembering **the period** is a writer's best friend.

Technical Writers work with words, thoughts and data.

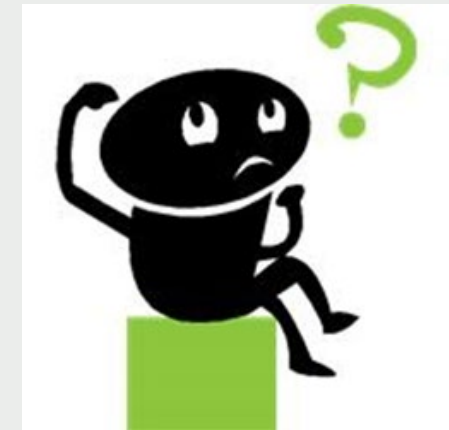
# The Writer

## The

## Reviewer

*and...*

## The Funder





**BE CERTAIN OF  
SUCCESS,**

***AND FOCUSED IN YOUR  
WRITING STYLE.***

THANKS FOR  
YOUR  
PARTICIPATION!

Jay Blackwell, MA

*Albuquerque, NM*

[jblackwell@umojawellness.co](mailto:jblackwell@umojawellness.co)

[m](#)

# VDC PROPOSAL CHECKLIST - Vision, Design, Capacity

## Vision

**Elements of Change** must be CLEARLY and CONSISTENTLY DEFINED and COMMUNICATED.

Relate all Proposals to the agency's Mission Statement.

Each Proposal must resolve or address **Concrete Needs** within the selected environment.

The **IMPACTS** of a Proposal must be valued by the funder.

Consumers/Participants should also understand how any Proposal works in their interest.

Specifically address and name the proposed areas of change.

Grant Reviewers are NOT required to 'be imaginative', 'fill-in-the-blanks', or 'guess what was meant.'

**OUTCOMES** are the end result of intentional activities.

## Design

**Program Activities** must be explained sequentially, over time to implement fulfillment of the proposed Vision for Change.

Communicates the fine points of service delivery and methodology. Specifies roles/schedules of community partners, provider agencies.

**The Design** details the process to implement the proposal, linking the audience(s), strategic partners, activities and objectives with the intended outcomes.

Ensure the Final Product is comprehensive, concise and carefully answers each question in the application.

## Capacity

**Ability of the Organization** to successfully complete proposal activities.

Utilizes appropriate measures to define success.

Accurately captures and provides evidence of CHANGE as a result of their activities.

Agency strengths are reiterated, illustrated and defined.

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## Top Ten Tips for Applicants

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### 1. Start preparing the application early.

- Time is needed to:
- Ensure registration
- Assemble team
- Review materials
- Outreach to funder
- Participate in Technical Assistance calls/webinars
- Respond to the NOFO
- Submit before the deadline

### 2. Follow the instructions in the NOFO carefully.

- All information should be placed in the order requested.
- A careful and ordered response is key because it:
  - Allows an applicant ease of review before submission; and
  - Eliminates the possibility of Reviewers having to look for information or possibly overlooking information.

### 3. Keep your audience in mind.

- Reviewers can not include outside information and will review what is in your proposal.
- Responses should speak to the program requirements.
- Assume nothing, and keep the review criteria in mind.

### 4. Be brief, concise, and clear.

### 5. Be organized and logical.

- Applications that fail to project a complete and thorough thought process, run the risk of receiving low scores during the review process.
- Completeness is key in thought as well as required attachments.

### 6. Show evidence of fiscal stability and sound fiscal management.

- Review your internal fiscal operations.
- Do you have the capacity to handle federal funds?
- Cite past experiences where and when possible.
- Where does your organization sit financially after the project is completed?
- What percentage of your annual operating revenue would be the potential award?

### 7. Attend to technical details.

Top Grants.gov Failures:

- Invalid DUNS Numbers
- SAM.gov Expirations
- File Type Associations



**8. Be careful in the use of attachments.**

- Do not use attachments for information required in the narrative.
- Cross-reference tables and attachments to the appropriate section of the application.
- Upload required forms in the proper order.

**9. Print out and carefully proofread and review your electronic application to ensure accuracy and completion.**

**10. Submit all information at the same time.**