

RECOMMENDATIONS From GRANTEES In RECOMPETITION

Since the inception of recompetition, Heartland has helped over 70 grantees prepare winning applications for their Head Start and Early Head Start programs. After each round, we collected feedback from Head Start directors, staff, and those assisting in the grant writing process. They offered the following tips and tools for you and wish you success in your grant writing endeavor!



Getting Started

On the proposal

- ✓ Clear your calendar! You will need the full application period to prepare a strong proposal.
- ✓ If you are hiring a grant writer make sure they have experience writing DRS proposals.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to make changes to your program design, but make sure you still serve the same number of children.
- ✓ Use the application from the prior round and start early.
- ✓ Check your grants.gov and SAM registration and compile all submission passwords early in the process.
- ✓ Read the criterion and the grant application instructions from the prior round.
- ✓ Create a team of content experts and experienced staff that also have strong writing and editing skills.
- ✓ Work out the format ahead of time. Make sure to follow the instructions in the grant.

Developing

The narrative

- ✓ Avoid having a "franken-proposal". Don't delegate sections to team members without assigning someone to coordinate and streamline all sections.
- ✓ Watch page limits from the very beginning. Spend the most time on sections with the most points.
- ✓ Read each section of the proposal independently and together to discern a vision of your program.
- ✓ Set a timeline for proposal development.
- ✓ Create a chart with suggested page lengths for each section.
- ✓ Do not include any information that is not requested in the criteria or you will go over the page limit and you risk leaving out something that is required.
- ✓ Use dropbox, google docs or other technology to edit and track the process.

Reviewing

The proposal

- ✓ Enlist an external team member to also review the proposal.
- ✓ Consider suggestions and edits carefully in alignment with the grant criteria. Make sure to separate stylistic recommendations from critical analysis of proposal content.
- ✓ Begin collecting the appendix documents early. Update your organizational chart and all other documents and use a similar formatting for a streamlined package.
- ✓ Include one page resumes for all key staff. Do not take up extra space in your appendix by including unnecessary information in resumes.
- ✓ Include a list of your partnership agreements rather than the actual agreements.
- ✓ Submit at least 4 days ahead of the deadline.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to hire help. Your program is at risk!



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