



Strengthen**ND**[®]

ND State Library Renewal & Development Conference

April 2nd, 2019

Megan Laudenschlager, Executive Director

2006



Story of Strengthen ND

Vision: Strengthen ND works across North Dakota to elevate nonprofits and rural communities to support a high quality of life and resources for vulnerable populations through community development.

Mission: Strengthen ND supports and accelerates community development in rural North Dakota. We do this by 1) building the capacity of nonprofits and rural community leaders, 2) advancing regional issues, and 3) facilitating community solutions.

Here's what we do: Board and Staff Development; Fundraising Planning; Grant Writing; Community Planning; Strategic Planning; Organizational Action Planning; Program Design and Evaluation; Succession Planning; Project Management; Meeting Facilitation; and Other kinds of customized counsel and services.





StrengthenND[®]

**Special
Accomplishment**

\$2.5 Million

**U.S. Dept. of Education
Perfect Score**

Grant sizes in 2018
ranged from \$500 to
\$200,000.

Strengthen ND by the Numbers: 2018



78 Emerging Leaders

In 2018, we were able to provide intensive small group and one-on-one skill building to individuals working in the nonprofit sector, undertaking systems change, and thinking bigger for their rural communities.

17,495 Miles



Being present and meeting nonprofit organizations and community members where they are is one of our organizational values. To provide support and services in 2018, we traveled 17,495 to communities near and far across our great state. That's as many miles as it would take to drive lengthwise across North Dakota over 51 times!

\$3,589,604.75

Through grant writing and technical assistance in 2018, we have been able to support nonprofits to capture nearly \$3.6M in program and capital funding.



99 Hours

Through workshops, webinars, and nonprofit convenings in 2018, we have hosted an abundance of quality professional development opportunities for nonprofit professionals and volunteers.



**Over 200
Hours**

Creating and facilitating a better North Dakota for all residents, regardless of their circumstances, is another of our organization's focus areas. To move this area forward, we spent over 200 hours in 2018 supporting resource development, skill building, and leadership in systems change across North Dakota.

10 Commandments of Grant Writing



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1. Thou shalt not use **jargon**.
2. Thou shalt not overuse **acronyms**.
3. Thou shalt not **forget your readers**.
 - a. Sixth-grade level!



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4. Thou shalt not write for a deadline that is **less than 3 weeks away**.
5. Thou shalt not underestimate the value of a **“cold reader”**.



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6. Read and remember the **grant guidelines** - and keep them holy!
 - a. copy/paste headings in draft proposal
7. Thou shalt not **reinvent the wheel**.
8. Thou shalt not write for more **grant dollars** than are available/than you need/less than you need....



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9. **Research and respect** your potential funder.
10. Thou shalt not submit a grant to a local or regional foundation **without talking to the program officer or representative FIRST!!**



StrengthenND[®]

Boot Camp



Five Mini-Sessions to Create
a Winning Grant Proposal

Boot Camp



Strengthen**ND**[®]

- Why You?
- Needs & Target Demographic
- Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes
- Budget & Budget Narrative
- Project Design

Why You?



Documenting Your Organization's
Strengths, Capacity, and
Achievements

Why You?

- Strengths
- Capacity
- Achievements



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Strengths



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- Nonprofit Status/Flexibility
- Vision
- Board Members/Officers
- Partners/Networks
- What is unique to you?

Capacity



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- Staffing
- Staffing Structure
- Efficiencies Generated
- Financial Oversight & Management
- Contractors/Consultants

Achievements



Strengthen**ND**[®]

- History
 - Why were you founded?
 - What impact do you have on the community?
- Other Grants Received
- Past Activities
- Awards Received

Achievements



Strengthen**ND**[®]

- SHOW vs. TELL
 - Strengthen ND is the most-effective organization for developing proposals in western ND.
 - Strengthen ND's proposal development efforts have generated over \$5 million in fundable projects in 18 months.

Why Strengthen ND?



ND CHANGE NETWORK

Why You?



YOUR TURN!

Boot Camp



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Needs & Target Demographic



Who Are You Hoping to
Impact & Why?

Needs & Target Demographic



This is the most important part of
your proposal!

Needs & Target Demographic



Strengthen**ND**[®]

- Identify the need or issues related to the problem to be addressed
 - Be specific
 - Be thoughtful
- Always think about the WHO and the WHY!
- Should spend more time thinking about the problem or the indicators than the solution.

Needs & Target Demographic



- Example: Aging Indicators
 - State can't afford the cost of seniors in nursing homes
 - Record number of seniors entering nursing homes
 - Outmigration of Seniors

Needs & Target Demographic



- What is the root cause of the indicators?
 - True need is to support seniors to age in place.
- WHO: seniors
- WHY: quality of life, burden on state, depopulation of rural ND, etc.

Needs & Target Demographic



- Stay Focused & Be Strategic with Data
- Stay Local with Data (www.ndcompass.org)
 - If data isn't available, gather your own!
 - APPLE Example
- Stay Positive & Show Opportunities
 - NAAF Feedback
- If necessary, connect the dots

Needs & Target Demographic



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- Example of Staying Focused & Being Strategic, Staying Local, and Connecting the Dots
 - ND Full Service Community Schools
 - Connecting shortage areas and weaknesses to pipeline services

Needs & Target Demographic



- DON'T Do This
 - Example of NOT Staying Positive & Showing Opportunities
 - Strengthening the StrikeZone

Needs & Target Demographic



- BONUS!
 - Illustrate North Dakota's rurality.

Needs & Target Demographic



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“Consider for a moment, a single institution with two staff entrusted to prepare paraprofessionals working with K-12 students in one of the most rural states in the nation; a state the geographical equivalent of the country of Syria.”

Needs & Target Demographic



YOUR TURN!

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Goals, Objectives, & Outcomes



Developing the “HOW” of Your Proposal

Goals, Objectives, & Outcomes



Need & Target Demo drive G, O, O

G, O, O drive budget

Goals



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- Your ultimate aim
 - Should be clear
- Ideally, it should be a flip-side of your need/problem statement.
- Avoid Generalities
 - *We are going to end hunger in Ward County.*

Goals



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- Example:

Goal: Through the AIP Project, Strengthen ND and Community of Care will facilitate the development of a community response to aging in rural North Dakota to support seniors to age in place with dignity and independence in four communities over three years.

Goals



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- Can have multiple goals OR just one goal
 - Recommend one goal

Objectives



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- If your goal is your overarching aim, the objectives should be the specific framework of what will be accomplished.
- This is your HOW!

Objectives



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S.M.A.R.T

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable/Achievable
- Realistic/Relevant
- Time-bound

BONUS: Activities



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- This is for the control freaks
 - LIKE ME!
- Further breaking objectives into activities allows for:
 - Time allocation
 - Resource allocation
 - Staff measurables
 - Progress monitoring

Outcomes



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- This is what specifically will be accomplished
- Supports driving ROI
- Supports creation of Logic Models
 - (handout, importance)
- Supports budget creation
- Supports documentation of impact
- Keeps mission-drift “in check”

Goals, Objectives, & Outcomes



YOUR TURN!

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Budget & Budget Narrative



Aligning Your Resources Accurately
& Responsibly

Budget & Budget Narrative



G, O, O drives your budget.

Budget & Budget Narrative



- Your budget can make or BREAK your proposal.
- Needs to be consistent with proposed work.
- DETAILS APPRECIATED!
- In-Kind should both be income AND expense.

Budget & Budget Narrative



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- Personnel
- Fringe Benefits
- Travel
- Contracts/Consultants
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Indirect/Overhead

Budget & Budget Narrative



Confession: *I am ridiculous with budgets.*

Budget & Budget Narrative



SIMPLE: MDU Resources Foundation

Budget & Budget Narrative



COMPLICATED: Budget Generator

Budget & Budget Narrative



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- Based on experience, most common oversights
 - Not enough FTE allowed
 - Forgetting overhead
 - Underestimating travel

Budget & Budget Narrative



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Project Design



Aligning the When & Where with
the “HOW”

Project Design



Finishing our blueprint

Project Design



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- We have our org capacity documented; need completed; G, O, O created; and budget finished - what's left?

Where



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- Where we are working, whether that be geographic area or sector, what partners do we need to pull in?
- What will their contributions be?
- Do we need to revise the budget?
- What weather-related considerations do we need to take into account?

When



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- When will this work be done?
 - Does it overlap with any other major events or initiatives of your organization?
 - Does it cross fiscal years?
 - Will the timeline dictate FTE?
 - Is enough time allowed for each G, O, O?

Combining When & Where



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- Assigning responsibility
 - Allows grantmakers to understand workload, FTE, budget request
 - Creates built-in accountability
 - With staff AND with partners

Project Design Considerations



- Just when you think you're done....
 - **Challenges:** What could go wrong?
 - **Contingency:** What will you put in place to mitigate challenges?
 - **Sustainability Plans:** Is this project able to be sustained long-term? Does it need to be sustained long-term?

Project Design



YOUR TURN!

Upcoming Grants



Strengthen**ND**[®]

- Western ND: Andrist Fund, Equinor, Rural Community Grant Fund (April 30)
- All: Robert Herman Charitable Trust (August 15)
- All: Event Sponsorship Grants from Bush Foundation (May 23)
- Select Areas: Otto Bremer Trust (various times)