

How to Write a Good Proposal

for

The Fisheries Restoration Grant Program

Outline *

- Local FRGP biologist
- Proposal Application Package
- Tools at your disposal
- Common errors
- How to fix common errors

*Assumes you have a good restoration project developed before submission window opens.

Local FRGP Biologist

- Contact correct FRGP Biologist
- Discuss project with them BEFORE PSN is released (summer/fall before submission)
- Get feedback on how to develop project
- Get recommendations to improve your proposed project
- Get results from previous proposal reviews

Once PSN is released these conversations cannot occur!

Proposal Application Package

- Use online application system.
 - This system prevents you from making common errors that could cause the application to be rejected in Admin Review.
- If using a paper application, use the **Current Application Form**.
 - Using an old application could cause your application to be rejected due to lack of required information.
- Include all supplemental information required for project type.

Tools at Your Disposal

- Grant Writing Workshop
- Public Solicitation Notice (PSN)
- PSN Workshops
- Regional FRGP staff

Common Errors

- Assumptions About Audience Incorrect
- Don't Read PSN
- Don't Follow Application Instructions
- Not complying with Focus Criteria
- Combined Background / Need / Description
- Project Description General / Incomplete
- Timeline Incorrect
- Project Budget General / Incomplete
- Cost Share Table Incomplete
- Incomplete Supplemental Information
- Don't Use Score Sheets

Error:

Assumptions about audience incorrect

- On average - 6 or more people review all proposals
- Fisheries Branch Staff, Technical Review Team Members, Local Staff, Peer Review Committee Members - STATEWIDE AUDIENCE
- Don't assume the reviewer is familiar with your project or the watershed

Error:

Don't read PSN

- Read PSN
 - A PSN is available all year
 - Minor changes in focus from year to year
 - Read entire document
 - Part I, II, IV (General info needed by all applicants)
 - Part III (Describes the focus of the PSN)
 - Part V (Definitions of required information)
 - Part VI (Description of project types)
 - Appendices (Additional information)
- Ask questions

Error:

Don't follow application instructions

- Read instructions carefully
 - If the PSN says “must”, it means you have to do it or the application will suffer
 - Your application will be rejected if it does not comply with the instructions
 - Even if your application isn't rejected, you could lose points for not following the instructions
- If unsure ask questions

Error:

Not complying with Focus Criteria

- Read the Criteria for each Focus
- Each Focus has 4 Criteria
 - Species Criteria
 - Geographic Criteria
 - Project Type Criteria
 - Recovery/Restoration Criteria
- Submit under correct Focus
- If unsure ask questions

Project type Criteria

- Make sure the project type is included in the focus
- Read the project type description
- Make sure to include all required supplemental information for that project type
- If unsure ask questions

Recovery/Restoration Criteria

- IF the Focus requires a task make sure the project actually accomplishes the task chosen (e.g., if task is for a fish passage design, cannot use task for building a fish passage project)
- Only chose one task!
- Best to START with the task then develop the project

Error:

Combined Background / Need / Description

- **Background** – historical land use, past practices, local conditions, watershed plans, studies, other sources
- **Need for Project** – Need for the project based on historic/existing conditions and limiting factors (WHY?)
- **Project Description** – WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and HOW? (Spell out acronyms the first time used.)
- **Don't mix these 3 categories!**
 - Include all necessary information but be concise and make it easy for the reviewer to find the information.

Error:

Project Description General/Incomplete

- New format in 2015 PSN but still need to know
 - WHAT exactly are you going to do?
 - HOW are you going to do it?
 - WHO is going to do it?
 - WHERE are you going to do it?
 - WHEN are you going to do it? (Tie tasks to timeline)

Lists, bullet points, one sentence description by themselves do not provide enough detail!

Error:

Timeline Incorrect

- Section 1: Time frame. This is how long it will take to complete entire project including the final report & invoice.
- Carefully consider time it will take to do project – allow for securing subcontractor contracts, securing permits, securing remaining landowner access, required pre-surveys, etc.
- A timeline is not the length of the project but the time it takes to complete various parts/tasks of the project.
- Tie timeline to discrete tasks in the project description (can tie deliverables to discrete tasks also).
- Timeline needs to be defensible.

You will be held to this timeframe, amendments are not guaranteed!

Error:

Project Budget General / Incomplete

- Put budget information in the right category
- Avoid lump sums (if necessary explain in Budget Justification or provide additional detail in a separate supplemental document)
- Don't double dip (Line item vs. Admin Overhead)
- Does the budget match the Project Description?
- Are all the positions defined in the Project Description included in the budget and vis versa?
- Check Calculations

Error:

Cost Share Table Incomplete

- Accurately report Source & Type of Funds
 - Indicate if the source is Federal, State, or private.
- CDFW & NOAA cannot be counted as cost share
- Report Status of Funding (Secured, pending, unknown)
 - This must be verified before any award (If funding from other sources are not secured by project approval, FRGP will not write grant)
- Report Anticipated Award Date
- Check Calculations

Error:

Incomplete Supplemental Information

- Carefully check Project Type for required information, if the PSN says “must”, it’s required
- Submit **ALL** information or an explanation of why it is not included
- Provisional Landowner Access Agreement is required for review of proposals
- Even if your proposal isn’t rejected it will have points deducted if information is missing or inadequate

Error:

Don't use score sheets

- Read applicable score sheets – Project type, Engineering, Species specialist, PRC
- Use score sheets to make sure proposal information is complete and detailed so points will not be deducted
- Have another person score your proposal
- The proposal is scored on what was submitted by the deadline

Grant Writing Process (if project is funded)

- Grant Managers cannot “fix” what’s wrong with a proposal when writing a grant
- Grant Managers use the timeframe in the proposal for the duration of the grant
- Optimal situation – Grant Managers take the text directly from proposal for grant

Ask Questions

IF UNSURE ASK QUESTIONS

See FRGP Website

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/fish/Administration/Grants/FRGP/Contact.asp>

for Local FRGP Contact Information

Thank You



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