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
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
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
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.
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
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