

Step 5

Developing the Methods

It may not sound exciting, but a program which addresses a concrete community need, along with a solid implementation plan—goals, objectives and methods—is what we are looking for each and every time. Of course we are also looking for the inclusion of a realistic timeline as a part of that, which to us speaks directly to the ability of the organization to be successful.

—JULIE FARKAS

Senior Program Officer
Consumer Health Foundation

IN THIS STEP you will determine the methods your organization will use to reach its objectives. You will look at the elements of the methods component of a proposal and learn how to use a timeline so that you and your prospective funders can more easily see what will happen when. Using a worksheet and examples, you will write your methods for the objectives you developed in Step Four.

Purpose of the Methods Component

The need statement is clearly articulated, and the goals and objectives are set. The methods component of the proposal systematically walks grant-makers through the activities your organization proposes to carry out in order to accomplish its objectives.

Content of the Methods Component

Methods—also frequently referred to as activities or strategies—are detailed descriptions of the activities an organization will implement to achieve the ends specified in its objectives. Whatever you call them, this section of the proposal should clearly spell out the methods to be used and give the reasons for choosing them. Any research supporting the use of these methods—such as their previous success (either at your nonprofit or elsewhere) or, if the methods are untested, data that support your assertion that these methods

might prove successful—should be included. This section should also address whether the methods selected are already in place within your organization and simply being “redeployed” to the program, or whether they are new. Finally, this section should describe who will staff the program and their qualifications, and identify the client population to be served, along with a justification of why this population was selected.

To develop the methods component, answer the following questions:

1. What are the elements that are inflexible (such as date of completion, dollars available, staffing needed)?
2. What activities need to be carried out in order to meet the objectives?
3. What are the starting and ending dates of these activities?
4. Who has responsibility for completing each activity?
5. How will participants be selected? (This question is not applicable to all projects.)
6. How was this methodology determined to be the best one to solve the problem presented? Does it build on models already in existence, or is it a different approach? If it is different, why is it different? And why did your organization select it?

The methods section should be realistic—the organization should be able to complete the proposed activities within the time frame stated in the proposal using the available resources. For proposals with multiple objectives and methods, it is a good idea to include a timeline showing when each method will start and finish. The accompanying Sample Timeline for the Some City Senior Center’s Senior Latino Community Outreach Pilot Project shows one way to chart a nonprofit’s activities on a timeline.

Going back to the logic model example in Resource C, the methods for the Senior Latino Community Outreach Pilot Project would be called activities in this model.

Tips for Writing the Methods Component

- Sync your organization’s methods to the program’s objectives and need statement.
- Tie your methods to the resources you are requesting in the program budget. Each activity should match its corresponding cost exactly.
- Explain the rationale for choosing these methods; talk in terms of research findings, expert opinion, and the organization’s past experience with similar programs.
- Spell out the facilities and capital equipment that will be available for the project.

Sample Timeline (Abbreviated Version)

Activity	Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Hire the project assistant.			X										
2. Recruit members of the outreach committee.		X											
3. Identify and retain the cultural competency consultant.				X									
4. Organize and host the first collaborative meeting with the center's partners.					X								
5. Hire the bilingual nurse.					X								
6. Develop and finalize the outreach strategies for client recruitment.						X							
7. Finalize the evaluation tools for the project.						X							
8. Officially launch the project with a public event that will feature prominent Latino community members in addition to center leadership.						X							
9. Evaluate and document progress toward objectives.				X			X			X			X

- Build various activity phases on top of one another to move the effort toward the desired results. Include a timeline.
- Be sure to discuss who will be served and how they will be chosen.
- Do not assume the program officer knows more than any woman on the street is likely to know about your nonprofit or what you propose.

Look over the Sample Methods Component for the Some City Senior Center's project. Then develop your organization's methods by completing Worksheet 5.1A, which asks you to list the key elements of the organization's planned program. Consult Worksheet 5.1B, which contains an example of a completed list of methods, as necessary. Then use the Sample Methods Component as a guide as you write your own methods section for your proposal. (The sample shows the methods for one objective. Additional objectives would be handled the same way.) Finally, use the Methods Review Questions to review your organization's methods, just as you did for your organization's need statement and goals and objectives.

Sample Methods Component

In order to achieve the objectives for our Senior Latino Community Outreach Pilot Project, Some City Senior Center will employ the methods outlined below. We have confidence in these methods, as they have been tested and proven successful by two of our fellow nonprofit organizations whose client populations are Latino: Health Access Latinos in Some City and the XYZ Community Clinic in Valley Vista. Representatives of both organizations served as advisers to us as we developed this pilot project. We have also prepared a detailed timeline, which is included in the appendixes to this proposal.

Objective One

Ensure that a minimum of 75 Spanish-speaking seniors with Type II diabetes who complete our disease management classes maintain stabilized blood sugar levels for three consecutive months.

Methods

- Some City Senior Center will hire a program assistant and a full-time bilingual nurse who specializes in chronic disease management. Establish an outreach committee cochaired by two of our Latino and/or Spanish-speaking board members and including diverse community representation (geography, race, ethnicity, gender, and occupation).
- The bilingual nurse and program assistant will adapt the center's current diabetes self-management classes, including classroom tools and materials, to make them linguistically and culturally appropriate for Spanish-speaking seniors.
- The bilingual nurse and program assistant will develop the protocols for testing and tracking program participants for three consecutive months after completing the classes.
- Staff will develop a formal referral system and feedback mechanism between our center and all appropriate community agencies positioned to provide referrals to our Spanish-speaking diabetes management classes.
- Staff will hold weekly Spanish language diabetes self-management classes.
- Staff will track participants' progress on a weekly basis for three months following completion of the classes.
- The program assistant will formally chart the progress of each participant.

48 Winning Grants Step by Step**WORKSHEET 5.1A:
Methods Exercise**

Worksheet 5.1B illustrates how a completed methods exercise might look. Please use it as an example as you perform this exercise.

Task and Subtasks	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Start and Finish Dates

Winning Grants Step by Step, Third Edition. Copyright © 2008 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved.

WORKSHEET 5.1B: Methods Exercise Example

Task and Subtasks	Person(s) Responsible	Resources Needed	Start and Finish Dates
<i>Hire a program assistant and a full-time bilingual nurse.</i>	<i>Executive director</i>	<i>Funds for salaries and benefits; recruitment and hiring process; job descriptions</i>	<i>Within two months of project start-up for the PA; within four months of start-up for the nurse</i>
<i>Establish an outreach committee.</i>	<i>Executive director and program assistant</i>	<i>List of potential prospects; meeting space</i>	<i>Within one month of project start-up</i>
<i>Adapt the center's current diabetes self-management classes to ensure they are linguistically and culturally appropriate.</i>	<i>Bilingual nurse and program assistant</i>	<i>Language consultant specializing in translation; updated materials from current classes; funds for consultant</i>	<i>Within three months of start-up</i>
<i>Develop the protocols for testing and tracking program participants for three consecutive months after completing the classes.</i>	<i>Bilingual nurse and program assistant</i>	<i>Information on best practices for data tracking and collection; computer and software</i>	<i>Within four months of start-up</i>
<i>Develop a formal referral system and feedback mechanism.</i>	<i>Executive director, outreach committee cochair, and program assistant</i>	<i>Information on best practices for referral systems and feedback mechanisms</i>	<i>Within five months of start-up</i>
<i>Organize weekly Spanish language diabetes self-management classes.</i>	<i>Bilingual nurse and program assistant</i>	<i>Meeting space; self-management educational materials; refreshments</i>	<i>Within six months of start-up</i>
<i>Track participants' progress on a weekly basis for three months following completion of the classes.</i>	<i>Bilingual nurse and program assistant</i>	<i>Filing cabinet; file folders and office supplies; computer; private office for weekly screenings</i>	<i>Starting week nine of grant period</i>

Winning Grants Step by Step, Third Edition. Copyright © 2008 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved.

Methods Review Questions

1. Do the methods discussed in the proposal derive logically from the need statement and the goals and objectives?
2. Do the methods present the program activities to be undertaken?
3. Have you explained why you selected the specific methods or activities?
4. Have you explained the timing and order of the specific activities?
5. Is it clear who will perform specific activities?
6. Given the organization's projected resources, are the proposed activities feasible?

If you have been following along with each step, including testing each of your proposal components against the questions at the end of each, you are now in prime position to be successful in the next step: developing your evaluation component.