

**Gearing Up for Grant Writing:  
How to PREPARE to Write a Successful  
Application**

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# Presenters

Linda Shiller, Director  
Career & Education Outreach  
Vermont Student Assistance Corporation

Wendy M. Stack, Ph.D., Director  
Chicago GEAR UP Alliance  
Northeastern Illinois University

# Presenters

Chrissy Tillery, Ed.D.

Director of Evaluation

National Council for Community and  
Education Partnerships

Purpose

# Basic Organizational Strategies

- Read the statute, the Federal Register, and the RFP — there are several significant changes
- Enlist the RIGHT people to:
  - Work on the logistics of the proposal submission and get them logged in ASAP
  - Work on the budget
  - Gather Partner Identification & Cost Share Worksheets
  - Lead the data analysis and evaluation of the strategies
- Plan on submitting 5 days before it is due

# Basic Grant Writing Strategies

- For previous grantees, identify those objectives and/or activities that worked and eliminate those that did not
- Establish appropriate number of pages based on the selection criteria but do not let page limits get in the way of your creativity as you begin the writing process
- Put on your readers hat and try to critique your proposal from the readers' perspective
- After your proposal is written, look for cohesion as you review it

## Basic Grant Writing Strategies *(continued)*

- Make sure that your budget tells the same story as your narrative
- Have external colleagues read the proposal prior to submission
- Enlist an external reader who is **NOT** familiar with the program
- When reviewing your proposal, take each objective, follow the identification of the problem through the objectives, services, resources and evaluation. Make sure it is realistic, connected at each section and can be evaluated with success.

# Making Your Case Compelling

How do you convince the reader that the problem that you are presenting deserves the funding over the other applications they will review? To achieve this you must convince the reader that :

- your case is compelling and stands out among the others
- this problem can be resolved with GEAR UP monies
- your strategies, which are research-based, will remedy the problem and show success



## Making Your Case Compelling *(continued)*

- you have enough resources, in the right places, to carry out the intervention
- you know the type of data you need to collect to prove that you are making a difference
- you have the right person(s) to analyze the data and be able to report on it

### KEEP IN MIND

Readers are asked to be thorough in their reading, discerning in their interpretation, and critical in their comments.

# 10 Performance Measures

Percent of GEAR UP students who:

- 1) Passed Pre-algebra by the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- 2) Passed Algebra 1 by the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- 3) Took two years of math beyond Algebra 1 by the 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- 4) Graduated from high school
- 5) Are enrolled in college (former GU students)
- 6) Placed into college-level Math and English

## 10 Performance Measures *(continued)*

### Percent of GEAR UP students who:

- 7) Are on-track to graduate college
- 8) With their parents, demonstrate knowledge of available financial aid and the costs/benefits of pursuing postsecondary education
- 9) Have knowledge of, and demonstrate, necessary academic preparation for college
- 10) % of GEAR UP parents who actively engage in activities associated with helping their students prepare for college

## Selection Criteria

Applicants **MUST** include the following:

Need for the Project.....	15
Quality of Project Design.....	15
Quality of Project Services.....	15
Quality of the Project Personnel.....	10

*(continued)*

## Selection Criteria *(continued)*

Quality of the Management Plan.....	15
Quality of Project Evaluation.....	20
Adequacy of Resources.....	<u>10</u>
	100

Only 45 pages to clearly describe all of the above.

# Key Questions

- What are the problems that your project is intending to solve? Can your project solve them?
- How are those problems experienced by your target population?
- How is your organization/program optimally suited to help overcome these problems?

# NEED Strategies

- Identify problems/gaps/weaknesses that specifically relate to the national objectives and performance measures
- Present specific data sources, not generalizations
- Keep it **CURRENT, SPECIFIC, RELEVANT and COMPELLING**

## NEED Strategies *(continued)*

- Avoid jargon and undocumented assertions
- Reference reputable/current research
- Focus on the target population and geographic area to be served
- Provide comparative data whenever possible (region, state, national)



## NEED Strategies *(continued)*

- Use comparative data and expert views to support your case
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the data you gather (stay away from self-reported data when possible)
- Align to the National GEAR UP Objectives and performance measures

# Use the Most Current, Accurate and Compelling Data To Make Your Case

- Demographics
- Diversity
- Second language and special population data for targeted schools
- State and local college going rate for students from low income families
- FRL state and local rates
- Academic Achievement data:
  - National test results: SAT, AP, ACT, IB, NAEP
  - State test results high school proficiency, criterion referenced tests
  - AYP status of targeted schools
  - Subpopulation data when appropriate
  - Numbers or percentages enrolled in AP and IB
- Unemployment rates
- Economic development data from local communities/state
- Percentage of population with a college degree
- High school graduation rate
- High school dropout rate
- Attendance rates of target schools
- FAFSA completion rates
- College application
- College continuation rates
- College completion rates
- Remedial course taking rates
- Literacy rates of target students and families
- Growth or declining enrollment

# Quality of Project Design

Begin this section with CLEAR and MEASURABLE (S.M.A.R.T.) objectives

- Specifies the intended outcome
- Should be achievable within a specified period of time
- Ambitious (as related to the NEED data)
- Attainable (given the project services, management plan, budget and resources)
- Linked to the National Goals and Performance Measures

## Quality of Project Design *(continued)*

- Write in quantifiable terms and in terms of **OUTCOMES** not **PROCESS**
- Tie them directly to your **NEED** and **EVALUATION** sections



**Tip:** Consider charts/matrixes linking objectives to services, need identified and national goals/performance measures.

# Quality of Project Services

- Services are driven by the **PROBLEMS/GAPS** identified in the **NEED** section and by the **National Goals** and the **Performance Measures**.



Tip: Be sure to include and identify **ALL REQUIRED** activities.

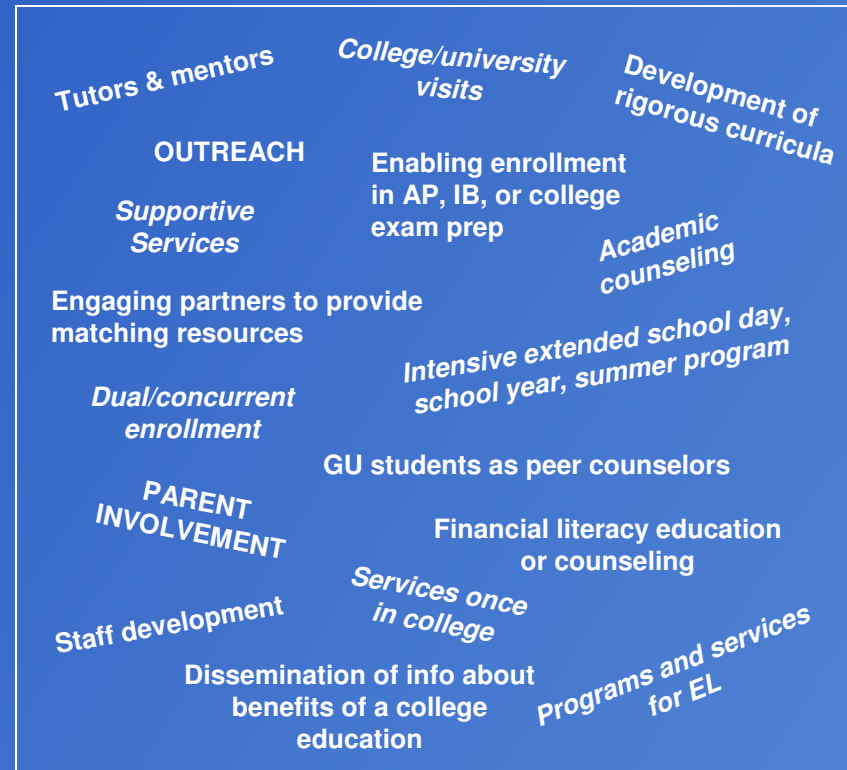
# Project Services

## REQUIRED:

Comprehensive mentoring, outreach and supportive services that include:

- Information regarding financial aid for postsecondary education
- Student enrollment in rigorous and challenging coursework
- Improving # of students who obtain a HS diploma
- Improving # of students who enroll in college

## PERMISSIBLE:



## The Optional “Seventh Year”

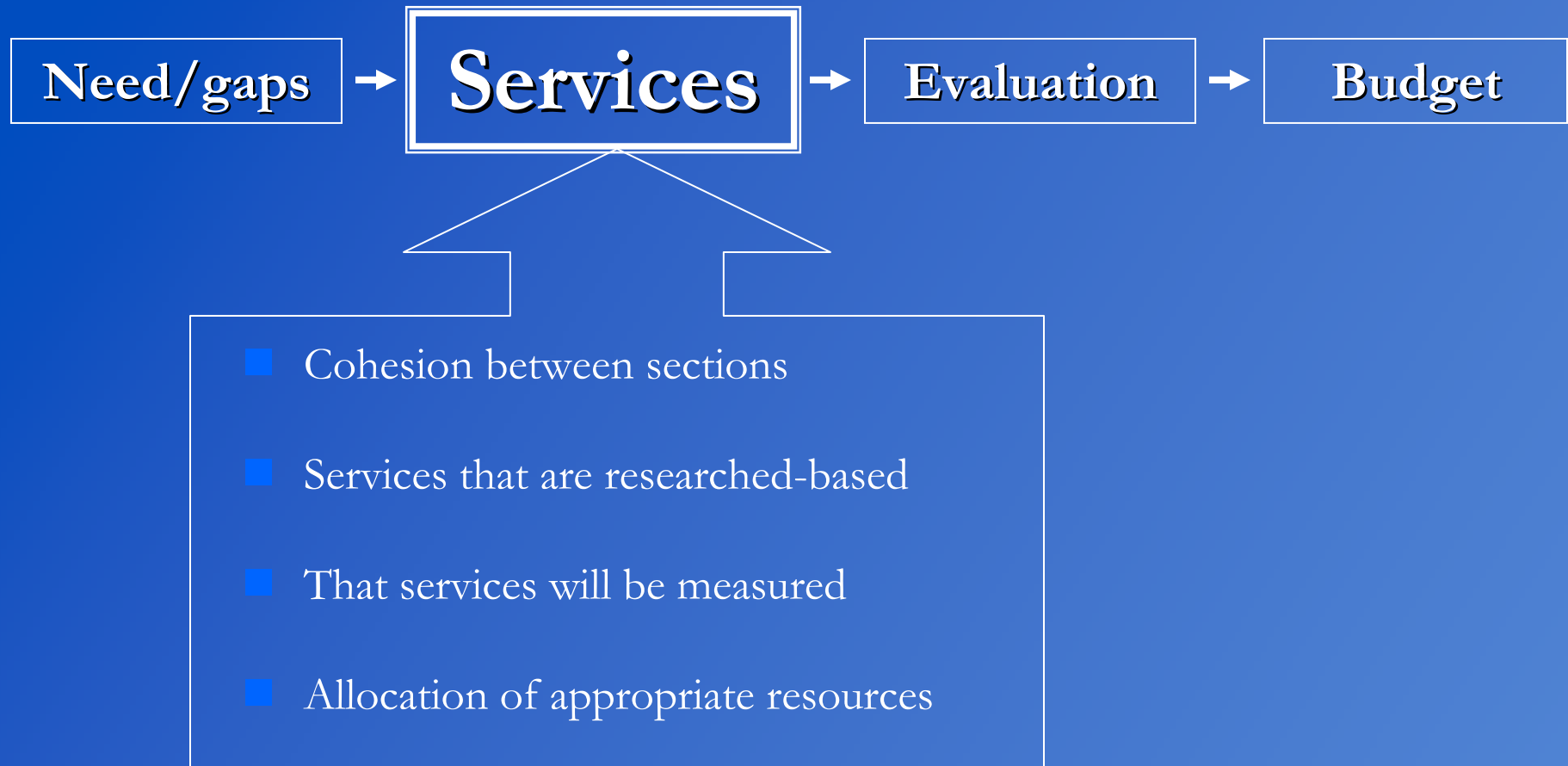
- You may propose to serve students for seven years if your cohort will be in the first year of college in the seventh year.
- You will receive funding during this seventh year, only if you plan on serving students during their first year of college.

## The Optional “Seventh Year” *(continued)*

- How are you planning to follow students to multiple campuses?
- What % do you project will enroll in postsecondary?
- How will you track student participation?  
What interventions will you use?
- What programming do you plan to include?
- How much will you budget?



# Readers Will Look for the Following:



## Readers Will Look for *(continued)*

- Logic between the services/interventions to be provided, the gaps/needs identified and the population to be served.
- Interventions reflect up to date knowledge and research with appropriate references.
- Professional Development and training activities with clear, concrete outcomes and measures.

## Readers Will Look for *(continued)*

- Resources are allocated in a sensible and appropriate manner to the services to be provided.
- Evidence of a plan to effect systemic reform, with documentation.
- How services will be measured.

# Quality of Project Personnel

- Demonstrate the extent to which you encourage applicants from persons who are members of unrepresented groups...based on race, color, origin, gender, age or disability
- Clearly list qualifications of Director and **KEY PERSONNEL ONLY** to show the quality of relevant training and experience
- Key personnel identified should include personnel responsible for data collection, tracking, analysis and reporting, and personnel responsible for evaluation

# Quality of Management Plan

- Convince the readers that you can achieve the objectives you propose on time and within budget
- Clearly list out who's responsible for what and include a timeline
- Convince the readers that you are structured in a way that encourages feedback and allows for continuous improvement

## Quality of Management Plan *(continued)*

- Time spent by the project director and other key personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives — are the time commitments feasible and appropriate?
- Ensure diversity of perspectives (from parents, teachers, business community, educators, etc.)

# Quality of Project Evaluation: Selection Criteria

Evaluation methods must be:

- Thorough
- Feasible
- Appropriate to the goals and in measuring progress towards outcomes

# Evaluation Plan

The Evaluation Plan should include the following:

- Types of data to be collected
- When the data will be collected
- For which students will data be collected  
(which cohort, caseload, participants,  
non participants, etc.)



## Evaluation Plan *(continued)*

- What data collection methods will be used
- Who is responsible
- How the data will be analyzed
- When reports and outcome data will be available

# Quality of Project Evaluation: Selection Criteria

Methods must also be able to:

- Produce quantitative and qualitative data related to the intended outcomes
- Provide performance feedback
- Provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication

## Readers Will Look For:

- Specific benchmarks, timelines and clear indicators for each objective and performance measure
- A description of the Summative evaluation methods/research-based design chosen (experimental study, quasi-experimental study, comparison group, etc.)
- Short-term and long-term outcome measures
- A feedback loop to monitor and improve delivery of services and outcomes of project objectives

# Adequacy of Resources

Applicants should demonstrate the following:

- Support from the applicant or lead organization
- Demonstrated commitment of each partner
- Cost must be reasonable to the number of students served and the objective to be achieved

## Adequacy of Resources *(continued)*

- Resources are allocated in a sensible and appropriate manner to the services to be provided
- Continued support after the federal funds end

# Questions

# Contact Information

Linda Shiller

Director, Career & Education Outreach  
Vermont Student Assistance Corporation  
10 East Allen Street  
Winooski, VT 05404

Email: [shiller@vsac.org](mailto:shiller@vsac.org)

Phone: 800.660.3561, ext. 234

Wendy M. Stack, Ph.D., Director  
Chicago GEAR UP Alliance  
Northeastern Illinois University  
770 N. Halsted Avenue 4th Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60642

E-mail: [w-stack@neiu.edu](mailto:w-stack@neiu.edu)

Phone: 312.563.7232

# Contact Information

Chrissy Tillery, Ed.D.

Director of Evaluation

National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

1400 20<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite G-1

Washington, DC 20036

202-330.1135, ext. 108

[www.edpartnerships.org](http://www.edpartnerships.org)