

# *Tricks to Writing a Solid Grants Proposal*

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# Workshop Goals



- Understand and define the problem, significance and related causes
- Develop a problem statement working “backwards”
- Write your own summary statement with feedback

# Share Your Strengths



- Interview your neighbor
- “Evidence of Accomplishment”
- Listen for “Wows”
- Share

# It's What Makes You Amazing!

- How will you “sell” your organization.
- Instill confidence that the organization can do what it says it can!





# Grant Application Components:

1. Summary
2. Organizational Information
3. *Problem Statement or Needs*
4. Program Outcomes
5. Methods (activities)
6. Evaluation
7. Sustainability or Future Support
8. Budget



# *Your Proposal is More Likely to be Funded If:*

- The problem is significant
- It aligns with the funders
- Your organization is credible
- You are well prepared!



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# The Problem (aka: Needs Statement)

Describes and documents the situation that's driving your organization to take action.

**The reason you need \$\$\$\$!**

- May be a situation that causes harm, threatens or is less than ideal
- Matches the purpose of your organization
- Matches the interest of the funder



# A good problem statement explains:

## Problem – Outcomes – Methods

Specific difficulties or challenges faced by your beneficiaries



How your beneficiaries will be better after they have received your services



What you will do to help your beneficiaries achieve the outcomes.  
(aka: Activities)



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# Elements of the Problem



- Description and Documentation of concern
- Explain the Significance
- Explain the Causes

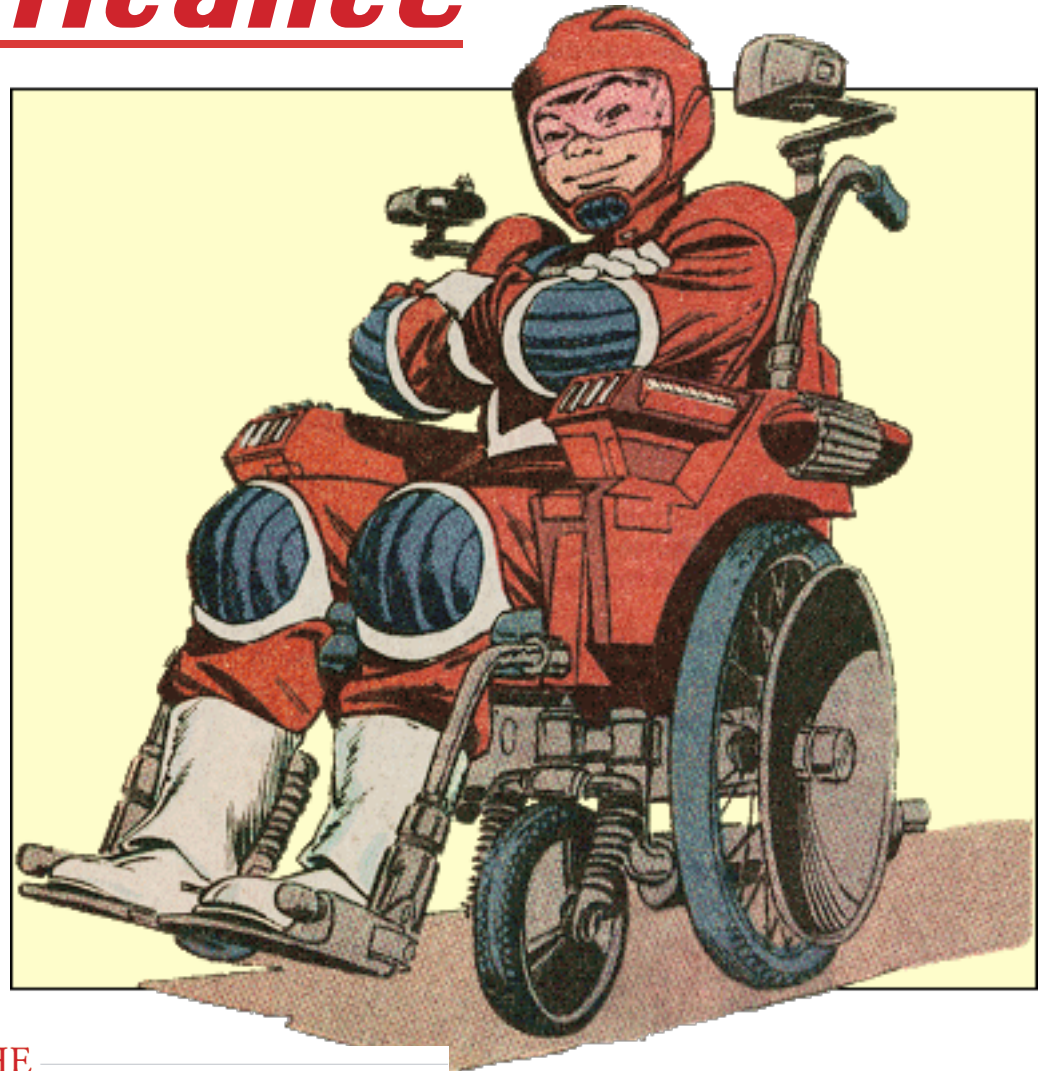
# **Document the Problem**



- Who or what is affected?
- What is the magnitude and urgency?
- Quantify your concern?

# *Significance*

- Why should people care?
- Implications may be good or bad?
- What will happen if we do nothing?



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# *Causes*

- Identify as many causes as possible
- Focus on the causes that fit your mission and capacity
- Causes shape the method



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# Example: Children reading below grade level



## Documentation:

**1. Significance?**

**2. Causes?**

# High rate of unemployment

- Impact: How do you document this?
- Causes (barriers to change)



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# Do you know your population

Is your population the same or different from the local averages or state? How about national?



Sometimes you  
have to fly  
backwards...



We want to offer an after-school program (method)  
that will lead to better academic performance  
(outcome) for students on the verge of  
dropping out (problem)



# May be more than one approach...

We want to buy a new van to transport low-income rural veterans, to medical facilities (method) leading to increased numbers of veterans receiving medical care (outcome) and better quality of life outcomes (outcome.)

Low-income veterans living in rural areas fail to get the healthcare they need because of the geographic distance to the nearest VA facility (problem)

Some rural veterans face poverty, homelessness, and substance abuse which further exacerbate their health issues (problem)



# Major Superhero Mistakes!

- Focus on your beneficiaries, not your organization
- The cause is not the problem
- The problem is not the lack of your method



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A Problem IS a current condition:

- Teens are committing crimes
- Families are without safe shelter
- Children have poor reading skills

NOT the lack of a specific method or activity:

- There are not enough after school programs
- There is not enough affordable housing
- More tutoring is needed



# The problem with problem statements



**A “LACK OF” your method is not the problem.**

**The problem is the reason your method is needed.**





Write your  
own grant  
summary  
sentences...

Method – Outcome – Problem

Write your  
own grant  
summary  
paragraph...  
now add



Documentation – Impact – Causes



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