Reports and Proposals

If you've collected any data or analyzed secondary data, you might consider writing a **report**. If you've done reports along the way, it may be just a matter of pulling all the information together into a summary report. A report can be used as a forum for recommendations and as a basis for future planning and action. Consider writing a report that compares city-level data to the county-, regional-, and state-level data available on www.sumn.org.

The report could include:

- A definition of the target group, community, etc. to be served

- A table of actual or estimated health data by age, race, sex

- A description of the methods used to collect the data

- A description of the people/ groups interviewed, surveyed, etc.

- A description of your program or services

- Descriptions of available manpower, facilities, and other resources for use in program activities

- Interpretations of the results

- Suggestions for program actions—with pros and cons on feasibility

A report can be used as a method of informing influential leaders in the community of a health problem. It can also be used to describe progress or effectiveness of a program, policy or intervention. In addition, it can be used as background information for grant and other funding opportunities as they arise.

Adapted from the Minnesota Department of Health's Community Health Promotion Guide website at www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/ chp/hpkit/index.htm

A **proposal** is a written document used to apply for funding. Grants are typically made available through three types of funding sources: government agencies (local, state or federal), foundations, and corporations. The main components of a proposal are: a cover letter or abstract, a **needs statement**, a project or program description, an evaluation plan, a budget, a description of applicant capability, letters of support and appendices.

Needs Statements

The Needs Statement, also called a Problem Statement, is the part of a grant proposal where you convince the funder that the issue you want to tackle is important and show that your organization is an expert on the issue. Here are some tips:

- Don't assume the funder knows much about your subject area. Most grantmaking staff people are generalists. They will probably know something about topics like water pollution and HIV/AIDS, but you should not assume that they are familiar with taconite disposal methods or Kaposi's sarcoma. If your topic is complex, you might add an informative article or suggest some background reading.

- Why is this situation important? To whom did your organization talk, or what research did you do, to learn about the issue and decide how to tackle it?

- Describe the situation in both factual and human interest terms, if possible. Providing good data demonstrates that your organization is expert in the field. If there are no good data on your issue, consider doing your own research study, even if it is simple.

- Describe your issue in as local a context as possible. If you want to educate people in your county about HIV/AIDS, tell the funder about the epidemic in your county—not in the United States as a whole.

- Describe a problem that is about the same size as your solution. Don't draw a dark picture of nuclear war, teen suicide and lethal air pollution if you are planning a modest neighborhood arts program for children.

- Don't describe the problem as the absence of your project. "We don't have enough beds in our battered women's shelter" is not the problem. The problem is increased levels of domestic violence. More shelter beds is a solution.

- Avoid acronyms. If you do include acronyms, spell them out at the first use.

Source: Minnesota Council on Foundations, http://mcf.org/mcf/grant/writing.htm

"Hard Data/Soft Data: How they help you build strong proposals" by Norton Kiritz is an excellent resource on how to combine quantitative and qualitative data in a Needs Statement. It is available through The Grantsmanship Center at www.tgci.com/magazine/Hard%20Data.pdf

In Appendix C, at the end of this section, you can find a sample needs statement from the Minnesota Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF-SIG) Proposal.

On the following page is a basic outline for a Needs Statement:

I.   Need/Problem and Target Population

    i.   Percent of total population (or rate) of people experiencing need/problem

    ii.   Demographic breakdown of target population: gender, age, race/ethnicity, education level, income level

    iii. Local rates in comparison to county, regional, state, or national rates

II.   Causes of the Need/Problem

    i.   What are the risk factors involved for the target population?

    ii.   What percent of the target population is affected by each factor?

    iii. What service gaps exist in the community?

III. Health, Social, Emotional and Financial Costs of Need/Problem

    i.   Impacts on the target population

    ii.   Impacts on their families, friends, employers, etc.

    iii. Impacts on the greater community

IV.   Successful Approaches for Addressing the Need/Problem

    i.   Programs targeting this need/problem that have been successful

    ii.   Outcomes of successful programs

The first component of the Needs Statement, highlighted in orange above, is where tools like www.sumn.org can come in handy. For example, if you are writing a proposal that addresses prescription drug abuse in your county you can use SUMN to determine what percent of youth and what percent of adults in your county reported past-year use. You can also determine how many residents were admitted to treatment facilities for prescription drug abuse. SUMN provides detailed statistics on youth prescription drug abuse by grade-level and gender at the county level. Regional data on adult abuse of prescription drugs, by age and by race/ethnicity, can be used to estimate the extent of the problem in your county. Finally, you can compare youth use and treatment admissions for you county to the state average.

In addition, school-district level data on reported prescription drug abuse among students, and on disciplinary incidents involving prescription drugs, can be obtained through the Safe and Healthy Minnesota Students Portal at http://education.state.mn.us/mde/index.html. You might wish to check with area hospitals for data on emergency room visits involving prescription drug overdose.

Two tools that may be of help before you begin writing your Needs Statement are the **Needs Statement Worksheet** and the **Community-Level Prevention System Gaps Analysis Matrix**.

Needs Statement Worksheet

Describe the Current Situation	Describe the Desired Situation

Briefly identify any "gaps" that exist between the current and the desired situation.

_____
_____
_____
_____

List the cause(s) of the gaps:

_____
_____
_____
_____

List in order of priority *who* will benefit by addressing this issue and *how* they will benefit.
Who_____ How_____
Who_____ How_____
Who_____ How_____
Who_____ How_____

List the specific actions you anticipate will be required to address this issue.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Describe how addressing the issue will help to fulfill the funder's mission.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Community-Level Prevention System Gaps Analysis Matrix

A gaps analysis can be conducted to determine what's missing in your community, in terms of services, programs, policies, research and data. The matrix on the following page can serve as a general guide. Complete the matrix by filling in the cells with the appropriate local resources, policies, programs and interventions available through each organization, institution or county agency.

For example, if a university is conducting a study on second-hand smoke in your community, you could include that under 'Post-Secondary Programs & Research' and 'Research'. If your community receives alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention funding from a local foundation, include this under 'Foundations' and 'Funding'. If your sheriff's department monitors attempted sale to minors of tobacco and alcohol, this could fall under 'County-Wide Initiatives' and 'Compliance Checks' (or 'Limiting Access to Youth').

As you complete the matrix, also pay attention to the target audience. For example, maybe a particular youth-based community program offered by a local non-profit organization is tailored for Hmong youth or urban youth in particular. Are there any population groups not being served?

Infrastructure refers to a network of people, systems, and organizations. 'People' refers not only to number of staff, but also skills and competencies. 'Systems' can include data collection systems and communication systems. 'Organizational and systems capacity' incorporates facilities, plans and protocols, partnerships and funding. The Public Health Infrastructure Resource Center has more information on this topic: www.phf. org/infrastructure/.

A **Policy** is a formal plan of action. Policies can be set by governments, schools, worksites or businesses.

	Post-Secondary Programs and Research	Foundations	County-Wide Initiatives	K-12 Programs
Infrastructure				
Surveillance				
Evaluation				
Assessment				
Research				
Funding				
Program Development				
Community Readiness				
Technical Assistance				
Policy				
Product Regulation				
Compliance Checks				
Ordinances				
Limiting Access to Youth				
Economic Disincentives				
Restrict Ads/Promos				
Community Programs				
Worksites				
Websites				
Youth-based				
Diversion Programs				
Awareness Campaigns				
Coalitions				
Chronic Disease Programs				
School-Based Prevention Programs				

	Health Plan, Hospitals, Clinics	Faith Community	Non-profit Orgs. and Advocacy	Voluntary Health Orgs.
Infrastructure				
Surveillance				
Evaluation				
Assessment				
Research				
Funding				
Program Development				
Community Readiness				
Technical Assistance				
Policy				
Product Regulation				
Compliance Checks				
Ordinances				
Limiting Access to Youth				
Economic Disincentives				
Restrict Ads/Promos				
Community Programs				
Worksites				
Websites				
Youth-based				
Diversion Programs				
Awareness Campaigns				
Coalitions				
Chronic Disease Programs				
School-Based Prevention Programs				