

## **Template for Writing a Grant to a Private Funder for a Project Adventure Behavior Management Through Adventure Program**

*The following is intended to be used with the funder's guidelines. You will also find the information in the 'Finding a Funder' document on PA's website helpful.*

Some general tips...

- Follow the funder's guidelines!!!! This seems simple, but if you don't, your hard work may end up in the trash can, unread. This means every detail—page limits, required appendixes, what not to include, margins, font size, etc.
- Write well!!! No matter how great your program plan is, if it is not clearly and concisely communicated, it is not likely to get funded. So, make sure your proposal is thoroughly edited before you send it. It is a good idea to have someone unfamiliar with your proposed plan read your proposal. This person can help to insure that the proposal makes sense and is readable to someone who doesn't know your organization.
- Match your goals to the funder's and make the connection crystal clear!!! If you are preparing a grant for at risk youth and your potential funder is interested, for instance, in cancer research, it isn't a good fit. Essentially, grant monies are given so that organizations can pursue the goals of the funder.
- Your proposal is your contract with the funder. If the funder agrees to give you money, you agree to do what you've proposed. Consequently propose only to do what you can reasonably accomplish. If, for some reason, you can't accomplish what you propose, you are obligated to let the funder know. Expect to be held accountable. After all, they want to know what you did with their money.
- Unless the funder's guidelines and/or your contact with the funder have told you otherwise, training, equipment and/or a challenge course are generally not fundable in and of themselves. However, they are highly fundable as important elements of a program. That is, for example, your substance abuse treatment program staff need training and equipment so the young people you serve can receive the impactful therapeutic Adventure programming you propose. You need training and equipment to DO something.

The following template has been developed using the common proposal format of the Associated Grantmakers of Massachusetts. These are offered as support and do not replace the guidelines of your potential funder. The samples should give you a feel for what happens in each section. Feel free to use items that are applicable, but make sure your proposal fits your program.

### **1. Brief summary of organization's history, goals, and key achievements.**

So here you would briefly state:

- Your organization's mission
- Do you have a strategic plan? If so, state the goal that is related to this proposal. An example of a fitting strategic goal would be: to reduce the incidence of students sent to the Vice Principal's office by 80% by 2007.
- How long you've been in operation
- Who you serve—age, race, ethnicity, income level, etc
- How many people you serve

- Some of your organization's key achievements. If your organization has been around for a while, choose achievements related to the Project Adventure Behavior Management activities you propose. Are you a residential treatment program that has been providing care for 15 years? Are you a CBO that has been providing behavioral and homework programs to middle schoolers for 12 years?

Essentially, this is the place to make your organization look good without making it look like it has fixed all the community's problems.

## **2. Overview of organization's structure and programs, including board, staff, and volunteer involvement.**

This is fairly self-explanatory. If your organization uses many volunteers, let them know. This is a good section for an organizational chart or some kind of visual.

If you're preparing this grant so you can get training, equipment and/or a challenge course from PA, you should describe PA here. Although they're giving you the funds, your budget will likely propose that you spend a fair portion of those funds with PA. Consequently, you'll need to tell them who PA is. This could look something like...

*Project Adventure (PA) has been providing residential programs for adjudicated youth since 1981 and Adventure Based Counseling for at-risk youth since 1974. They have trained and consulted with agencies across the nation to provide their Behavior Management Through Adventure system (BMTA) to at-risk youth served by these programs. Their own Georgia based programs that employ BMTA have been highly successful, consistently producing recidivism rates lower than that of state facilities for incarcerated youth, whose last published rate (1995) was 73.9%.*

*Data collected by the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice on graduates of PA's residential programs for adjudicated youth released for one or more years indicate:*

- *From 1991 to 2001, Choices (a program for adjudicated youth involved with substance abuse) graduates were returned to detention at a rate of 15.53%*
- *From 1991 to 2001, Challenge (a program for adjudicated youth) graduates were returned at a rate of 29.06% (Challenge data were derived from a time period during which PA was permitted, under contract, to keep youth for only six weeks. They recently successfully petitioned to increase the length of program time to up to twelve weeks depending on need. Additional time has significantly improved program effectiveness)*
- *From 1996 to 2001, Legacy (a program for adjudicated youth convicted of sexual abuse) graduates were returned at a rate of 6.75% (Legacy graduated its first client in 1996)*
- *From 1998 to 2001, Independent Living graduates were returned at an 8% rate (ILP graduated its first client in 1998)*

Your PA Consultant will help with a description of a different tenor should you need it.

## **3. Describe your organization's constituents for the project.**

For example, total number and breakdown by age, gender, race/ethnicity, income levels, disabilities, geography, language spoken, or other criteria relevant to your organization or project. It is important to describe your project's potential constituents as relates to behavioral problems.

Part of this section could be something like...

*We will serve approximately 30 young men in year one. Participants will be ages 16-19 and reflect the Department of Juvenile Justice's FY 2003 rate of ethnicity for juvenile males committed to the state, (68% African American, 28% white and 4% other races). The National Justice Statistic Clearinghouse reports that in 2000, while African Americans were 17% of the US juvenile population, they were 42% of juveniles arrested in the US.*

Further...

*We anticipate that many will be habitual or violent offenders and come from dysfunctional family backgrounds. Their offenses will include property and violent offenses including violent sex offenses, violations of probation or placement and public order offenses, drug related, weapons or other offenses.*

*Most will exhibit low self-esteem, socially inappropriate value systems, school difficulties, negative peer influences and substance abuse. Some may exhibit mental health and/or medical problems or have histories of physical and/or sexual abuse.*

#### **4. Describe the community or regional need(s) and/or challenges that this effort will address.**

It is important not to repeat what you said above. If you have found that you've done this, it is probably just a matter of moving what you've written into the right category. This is the place to describe the problems you will address as relates specifically to your community. The section above will describe who you'll serve and what problems they are likely to have (related to your proposed project, of course). This section will state what problems you do have.

Things to address here...

- Rate of incarceration among adults and juveniles
- Rate of behavioral incidences in your school
- Suspension rate
- Rate of on time high school completion
- Rate of at risk youth in your community, as defined by Kids Count, for example (use someone else's data if it is available)
- Results of drug and alcohol surveys of use (usually school based)
- Education levels attained in your community
- Etc

Potential sources for this information...

- The US Census <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>
- Your state Department of Education's website – look for accountability data by school district
- Your school system's website
- Your state/county or local Department of Health and, if they have it, their website
- Your state Department of Juvenile Justice
- Kids Count, <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/databook/>

- Your local paper – they may have written about the problem you seek to address and have some of this research done

This section might include something like...

*In the district we propose to serve, Houston County arrested 19.9% of its juveniles. (Kids Count) Of the remaining counties, 4 rank among the top 50 (of 141 reporting counties), with the least arrests, 2 are in the middle ranking 71 and 95 and the remaining 3 join Houston among the worst 50, ranking between 121 and 124. District 6 has a comparatively high arrest and commitment rate. Committed youth in this district are often, because of the lack of local residential care, transported out of district at large expense. Additionally, distance prohibits the provision of services supporting their transition back into the community.*

*The child abuse and neglect rate for the eleven counties in District 6 in 2001 ranged from 27 per 1,000 to 8.8 per 1,000, 5 of the counties exceeded the statewide rate of 17.8 per 1,000. (Kids Count) The high rates of abuse and neglect in these counties indicate a need to improve family functioning and help young people overcome intractable family situations.*

*Further, Kids Count's analysis of 2002 on time high school completion shows a range of 50.2% (Peach County, ranking 147 among 152 reporting) to 77.9% with 5 of the Counties below the 72.7% statewide average. Seven of the Counties report that in 2000 over 10.9% (the statewide average) of their young people, ages 16 to 19 are neither in school nor employed. (Kids Count) A full 21% of the young people in Twiggs County in 2000 were neither. An important function of our proposed program will be career education, preparing participants to be productive.*

In this section you are painting a picture of your school/community that shows the reader you have real and pressing needs to address. In this case, it is good to look bad. Think of it this way, funders like to give their money where it will have the biggest impact/address the most need.

### **5. Description of the specific request that includes goals and objectives.**

This should flow from the needs you've expressed in the previous section. If, for example, you've spent a lot of time in the needs section talking about the needs of young people with substance abuse problems then your goals should be about treatment and prevention of such, not about treating sexual offenders.

Explain clearly and concisely what you'll do...

*We will provide Adventure-based treatment services to a caseload of approximately 140 adjudicated youth. The services provided will meet individual needs and support each young person's successful completion of their aftercare treatment plan. Services will be comprehensive, covering everything from educational and vocational competency development to treatment, character development, promotion of pro-social behaviors, and prevention of further negative outcomes.*

*Counselors will focus on accountability and competency development while assuring community safety. This will include, but not be limited to: making appointments for clients; insuring clients have adequate shelter, food and clothing; driving clients to appointments; facilitating group counseling sessions; having substantial individual contact with each client; having substantial contact with each client's family; facilitating Adventure-based counseling programs; performing unannounced site visits to client's school or work; obtaining progress reports from each client's counselor, supervisor and/or teacher. Each youth will be supported in their progress towards and achievement of successful reintegration into the community.*

Remember your potential funder is probably not familiar with Adventure, so it is up to you to describe it in a way that demonstrates its meaningfulness along with its ability to engage. You'll probably want to explain BMTA...

*There are six variables critical to Behavior Management Through Adventure*

### *1. Holistic approach*

*Project Adventure's programs address each client's presenting and underlying issues: delinquency, social and academic skill development, psychological issues, substance abuse, and family issues. It is a group process model that uses activities as a primary vehicle for learning. BMTA relies on the group process to manage behavior. Young people work together to monitor, confront and deliver appropriate consequences to one another.*

### *2. Full Value Contract*

*The BMTA process begins with the Full Value Contract (a formalized and intentional set of group norms). Each group creates its own Full Value Contract around the following core components:*

*Be Here (be fully present)*

*Be Safe (physically and emotionally)*

*Commit to Goals (attainable and positive)*

*Be Honest (giving and receiving feedback)*

*Let Go and Move On (using feedback for growth)*

*Care for Self and Others (being a responsible member of the community)*

*The whole group needs to agree on growth-oriented norms that they and the counselors define, the latter being those that are critical to program operation but which may be omitted by the clients.*

### *3. Challenge of Choice*

*Everyone (staff and clients) participates in challenges, emotional and physical. With challenge of choice, BMTA insists that group members challenge themselves in some way. The way is their choice.*

### *4. Adventure*

*At the core of BMTA programs is an activity-based curriculum that is engaging. Participants achieve goals, gain confidence, develop pro-social behaviors, push their limits and have fun. Activities are sequenced to present greater and greater challenges and, hence, promote increasing levels of responsibility for self and community as well as behavior change.*

#### *5. Control to empowerment*

*The BMTA model insists on clients taking responsibility. BMTA groups move from strong facilitator control to the empowerment of the participants. The leader is always in charge, but the leader creates opportunities for clients to be responsible. Without this process, clients remain heavily dependent on external controls. Control to empowerment enables young people to make good pro-social decisions when no one is there to guide them.*

#### *6. Minimal use of restraints*

*BMTA works to help develop programs in which youth create and are responsible to and for their community. The use of restraints sends the wrong message in two ways: 1) it presumes that the client can't manage his/her own anger without being physically controlled and 2) the staff are not role modeling appropriate anger management. The potential for negative consequences is great when staff, even well trained staff, are involved in a physical confrontation with a client.*

If you keep your goals, specific, measurable, attainable but challenging and realistic, you'll be in good shape. Your goals should address the needs you've described.

**S**—specific, you should say you'll decrease the rate of suspension in your high school by 20% over the next three years. Saying you'll decrease suspension with no parameters is too vague and will not allow funders to hold you accountable. Funders want to be able to hold you accountable and they should. It is their money.

**M**—measurable, both you and the funder need to be able to determine if your goals have been attained. An example of a measurable goal is...After graduation, 40% or fewer participants will relapse within one year. A goal without a time demarcation is not measurable.

**A**—achievable, don't set your organization up for failure, but do challenge it. You can best determine what your organization can achieve given its resources. *It is critical that the goals are challenging and truly address the needs you've described.*

**R**—realistic, this is close to achievable, but don't say, for example, you'll provide out of school programming if your organization is not capable of it. Know your resources: financial, human and material/in kind. *It is important to match the goals to what you can achieve if you receive this grant, not this grant and the other(s) you applied for.*

Examples of some goals Project Adventure has used in a BMTA grant are (keep in mind that these are big goals because this funder offered and PA sought a large amount of financial support)...

1. *To successfully integrate graduates into the community as demonstrated by a significantly lower rate of recidivism than those released from incarceration in a state juvenile institution, each year of program operation*
2. *To successfully integrate 85% of graduates into the community each year as measured by attainment of employment and/or attendance in an appropriate educational setting*
3. *To reduce the number of youth remanded to state custody in our service area by 114, assuming a steady arrest and commitment rate, over a two year period*
4. *To significantly increase program participants' psychological well being after program participation*

**6. Specific activities and timetable for meeting your stated objectives.**

This is the nuts and bolts. The details of what you'll do and when.

Project Adventure frequently uses a table that looks like...

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
Sample... 7/15/05-8/21/05 Tip—although this may only be a 5 day program, give yourself a window for scheduling, etc.	Sample... Provide 10 after school staff with Project Adventure training in BMTA	Sample... To enable staff to provide students with the impactful and engaging programming that will develop community and pro-social behaviors as described here	Sample... Director ABC After School

**7. Future plan for sustaining this effort and strategy for building your funding base.**

Essentially, you'll need to describe how the program you propose will carry on beyond the funding period. Being able to sustain a program is a bonus of and a good rationale for getting training and equipment as a core element for implementing a program. The expense of keeping training current, challenge courses safe and inspected and equipment intact is considerably smaller than the initial expense. (Talk to your PA consultant for an estimate.)

So is it reasonable for you to propose that, for example...

- Your school system will absorb the future costs
- Your students will raise the needed funds
- Your local Kiwanis club will fund future costs
- The state per diem (provided for adjudicated youth—you'll know about it if it fits) will fund future costs
- Medicaid reimbursements will fund future costs
- Etc

**8. Who are your staff and volunteers and what are their qualifications?**

This is self-explanatory. Degrees, publications, training and experience are important here. If you feel it is needed, talk to your PA consultant about the qualifications of the trainer they *propose*—*not guarantee*.

**9. If applicable, identify organizations that you collaborate with to address the issue(s) in this proposal.**

This depends on what you're proposing. Just be sure your collaborators fit the proposed program. It would be appropriate to describe PA here, as detailed in section 2. However, don't describe us in both places.

**10. Define your criteria for success for the project. State how you will measure your success in the short-term and in the long-term. What tool(s) will be used to evaluate your program? What is your strategy for implementing the evaluation process?**

This is important, it is the information your funder will use to hold you accountable. What you'll measure is your stated goals. If your organization has an evaluator, have him or her help you plan and write this section. Remember – don't propose an evaluation plan that you won't have the resources to implement.

As an example, PA proposed to measure the above goals in the following ways...

*Goal 1) To successfully integrate graduates into the community as demonstrated by a significantly lower rate of recidivism than those released from incarceration in a state juvenile institution, each year of program operation as measured by a comparison of:*

- 1.1 State records of recidivism rate for all committed youth in the district we'll serve and recidivism rate for participants at standard intervals, but for at least one year following graduation*
- 1.2 State records of the recidivism rate for our service district's youth committed to community placements and the recidivism rate for participants as measured at standard intervals, but for at least one year following graduation*
- 1.3 State records of recidivism for youth across the state in all settings and the recidivism rate for participants as measured at standard intervals, but for at least one year following graduation*

*Goal 2) To successfully integrate 85% of graduates into the community each year as measured by attainment of employment and/or attendance in an appropriate educational setting:*

- 2.1 Accounting of graduate's placement and sustenance in educational programming measured at graduation, six months after graduation and one year after graduation collected by program staff from the graduate, his family and his Juvenile Probation Parole Specialist (JPPS) or social worker*
- 2.2 Accounting of graduate's placement in and sustenance of employment measured at graduation, six months after graduation and one year after graduation collected by program staff from the graduate, his family and his JPPS or social worker*

*Goal 3) To reduce the number of youth remanded to state custody in our service area by 114, assuming a steady arrest and commitment rate, over a two year period as measured by:*

*3.1 A comparison of the commitment rate to a state institution for juvenile incarceration in the district we'll serve for the years of 2003 to 2005 as compared to that of the year prior to program implementation*

*Goal 4) To significantly increase program participants' psychological well-being after program participation as measured by:*

*4.1 A comparison of participant mental health assessment upon entry to and graduation from the program from ongoing assessment performed by the staff and the program's clinical psychologist*

*4.2 An assessment of graduate well-being collected by program staff from the graduate, his family and/or his JPPS or social worker at 6 months and 1 year following graduation*

## **11. Budget**

This is key. The budget needs to...

- Reflect what you've proposed. If you've talked about it, how will you pay for it? If you haven't talked about it and you need it, go back and do so.
- Fit the funder's guidelines for what they'll fund and how much they'll fund.
- Show any and all matches, even if they are in-kind and the funder doesn't require a match. A big match demonstrates your organization's commitment.

Talk to your PA Consultant to get a training, equipment and/or challenge course budget that meets your goals and the funder's guidelines.