

Turning Passion Into Performance

**Creating Excitement Among Current
And Potential Investors**



A Gleam in the Eye is a Good Start

Most of us engaged in community oral health share many common traits:

- Passion
- Commitment
- Resourcefulness
- Determination
- Persistence

Funders Like Passion But Need More

- **A**ssurance that you've done your homework
- **B**elief that the infrastructure for success exists
- **C**onviction that leadership for success is strong

ABCs of Success!

Green Lights for Funders

- ✿ Good case for support based on data and need
- ✿ Strong and effective partnerships to maximize spread and impact of project
- ✿ Project has been completely thought through from A to Z
- ✿ Specific plan for sustainability with realistic projections
- ✿ Presence of leveraged funds and community support

Green Lights for Funders (cont.)

- ✿ Project scope that is realistic and achievable
- ✿ If replicating an existing program, an explanation of lessons learned from others and how your project will improve on what has been done before
- ✿ Innovation interests funders, but the proposed project should be evidence-based and achievable

Red Lights for Funders

- ❖ Lack of clarity around the project
- ❖ Lack of alignment with funder's objectives and priorities
- ❖ Lack of experience in the project area
- ❖ Lack of meaningful partnerships
- ❖ Lack of a detailed and realistic business plan
- ❖ Lack of a concrete plan for sustainability
- ❖ Lack of responsiveness or follow-through to funder

Red Lights for Funders

- ✿ Lack of professionalism and sophistication of key program staff
- ✿ Inability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing

Not all Funders are Alike

- Some are highly involved with their grantees, while others are more hands-off
- Each has distinct funding priorities and objectives (which can and do change without warning)
- Some funders are strict about expecting you to do what you said you were going to do, while others are okay with mid-course corrections as long as the lessons learned inform the project
- How does the funder evaluate the success of their investment?
- One similarity of all funders today is enhanced focus on accountability and results

Get to Know Your Funders

- What are their funding priorities? What types of projects do they support?
- Who are the key program staff? Who are the senior leaders? Who sits on their Board?
- Take the time to fully understand each funder and take advantage of any opportunity to interact with them at community meetings, etc. so that they become familiar with who you are and the work that you are doing

Beware of Mission Drift

- Funders invest primarily in projects that align strongly with their priorities and objectives
- In identifying potential foundation support, seek out the funders whose objectives and funding priorities are in alignment with your project
- Fit the funder to the project, NOT the project to the funder—stay true to your vision for the project even if it means the fit is not quite there with the funder
- Don't chase grants to secure ongoing operating funds for your project—all grants come with strings attached, and pretty soon you could be strangled by all the strings!

Organizational Capacity

Be ready to shine the light on your overall organization, not just the proposed project

- Governance (make-up of Board, their backgrounds and expertise, by-laws, level of engagement)
- Accounting practices of the organization (Form 990 and audited financials)
- Evaluation/Improvement plan for the overall organization
- Strategic plan for the overall organization
- Organizational structure (org. charts, number and description of staff, roles and responsibilities)
- Fundraising experience, infrastructure and track record of success
- Organizational history of success

Funders want reassurance that you have the organizational capacity and infrastructure to manage this and other grants



Leadership

- Who will lead the dental project?
- What is their expertise?
- What is their track record of success?
- How will the project leader contribute to the initiative (be specific about his/her job description)?
- How many leadership hours per week will be allotted to this project?
- What else does the project leader currently have on his/her plate?

Funders want to be assured that the project leader will have enough time to devote specifically to this project



Experience

- Do key project staff have relevant experience in the core work to be done?
- What other projects have they worked on in the past? Currently involved in?
- Be prepared to talk about prior accomplishments of all key staff, as well as their credentials
- Have CVs and bios for all key staff
- This is not the time to be humble!

Funders want to feel confident that key staff and leadership have the knowledge and experience to carry out the proposed project

Capacity to Manage Data

- What data will the funder want from you?
- How will this data be generated?
- How can the funder be sure the data is accurate?
- Who will be responsible for managing data?
- How often will data be generated, by whom and how will the data be used to inform project leadership and key staff, as well as funders and other key stakeholders?

Funders want assurances that grantees can provide project data that is accurate, meaningful and timely



Partnerships

- Funders expect to see evidence of partnerships and collaborations
- They want to see projects that are integrated within the communities they intend to serve
- These partnerships should be real and meaningful
- Letters or Memorandums of Agreement should be executed defining each partner's roles and responsibilities in the initiative

Clarity of Vision

- Who do you intend to serve with this project?
- Why have you chosen this particular target audience?
- How have you determined that this audience needs the services you intend to provide? (be ready with an accurate, complete and up-to-date needs assessment)
- What services do you intend to provide to your target audience?
- How has the project been designed to meet the unique needs of the target audience?

Clarity of Vision (cont.)

- How will the lives of your target audience be better as a result of the services you will provide?
- How will you measure/determine that their lives are, in fact, better?
- What will it cost your organization to carry out this project (initially and on an ongoing basis after the start-up year?)
- How will you get the money needed to keep the project going after the initial start-up phase?
- Who will provide overall leadership, but more importantly, who will be the primary internal champion for this project?

Create a Detailed Work Plan

- Think through every aspect of the project—from the initial start-up phase to ongoing operations
- Is this a total start-up or expansion of an existing project?
- The staffing plan—new vs. existing staff, FTEs, roles and responsibilities, job descriptions, expected salary/fringe costs
- Infrastructure development—complete description of proposed location, square footage, detailed floor plans, construction/renovation estimates, timelines
- Equipment/supplies—what is needed and what will it cost? (get several bids from reputable suppliers)

Create a Detailed Work Plan (cont.)

- Service delivery model—describe it thoroughly. What is the rationale behind the selection of this particular strategy/model? (cite scientific evidence whenever possible)
- How will cultural competency be assured in project design? (this is important to most funders)
- Describe the underlying business operations, how they will be carried out and by whom
- What is the plan to market/outreach to the target population?

Create a Detailed Work Plan (cont.)

- Identify the potential barriers to client participation and what strategies you have developed to reduce/eliminate these barriers
- Describe the risks associated with this project—acknowledge them and explain what will be done to minimize these risks—the funder will appreciate that you have addressed this openly

Develop Accurate and Complete Projections

- For each phase of the project (eg, start-up year, year 2 and beyond), develop projections that are realistic, achievable and based on tangible experience
- What is the expected level of effort? (eg, number of visits, number of clinical hours of operation per week, number of visits per clinical hour, etc.)
- What are the outcomes? (eg, number of unduplicated patients whose treatment needs are met? Number of high-risk children who receive preventive care? Number of high-risk patients who are disease-free at subsequent recall visits)

Develop Accurate and Complete Projections (cont.)

- What are the costs of running the program (all direct plus any indirect, or allocated, expenses)?
- What are the sources of support for the program (patient revenue, grants, in-kind, fundraising, etc.)? How much is projected in each category? What is the expected payer mix? Projected revenue per payer type? Projected revenue per visit by payer type?

Assumptions

- Define the payer mix
- Estimate the net revenue per payer type
- Estimate the number of visits
- Determine the staffing pattern
- Estimate salary and fringe costs
- Estimate all direct expenses
- Identify all indirect expenses (administrative and/or agency allocations)
- Be as accurate and realistic as possible
- Plan for worst-case scenarios
- Goal is NO surprises down the road!!!

The Big “S” (Sustainability)

- What is the plan for sustainability after the initial start-up phase?
- Most funders expect programs to have a plan for sustainability that does not include ongoing grant support
- No funder is likely to provide ongoing operating support
- If your program can't exist solely on patient-generated revenue, what is your plan to bridge the gap?
 - Fundraising events
 - In-kind support
 - Community donations
 - Need to be concrete and specific



The Big “E” (Evaluation)

- Every time a foundation funds a project, they are taking a risk—will this grantee deliver on their promise or won't they?
- Funders need accurate data they can share with their Boards and other key stakeholders to demonstrate a meaningful return on investments made in grantees
- Boards want to know the impact of your project—the results of the effort, not the effort itself
- In addition to data, be prepared to provide narrative describing what you did, what you learned, challenges, responses to challenges and anecdotal success stories
- Be ready to answer the question, “so what?”

-
- Evaluation and reporting can be huge challenges for grantees



The Big “E” (Evaluation) cont.

- In developing your project plan, determine how you will define success
- Make sure your definition of success aligns with your funders’ definitions of success (eg, access, outcomes, quality, financial results)
- Create a template defining concrete and specific measures of success (again, make sure these measures will be acceptable to your funders)
- Obtain baseline measures of these key success measures
- Make sure you can track and report accurate data on these success measures before you commit to them

The Big “E” (Evaluation) cont.

- Whatever success measures were in your project plan, evaluation needs to answer the question—were those measures met?
- Evaluation and reporting can be huge challenges for grantees
- Regardless, don’t make funders chase you for evaluation data or reports or have to double back to you to validate questionable data
- The ability to provide accurate, meaningful and timely evaluation data can make the difference between being a one-time grantee and establishing yourself as a credible grantee worthy of future investments

20 Predictors of a Successful Project Courtesy of the Virginia Healthcare Foundation

1. Mission clearly defined and the purpose is reasonably limited in scope
2. Need for the program is well-documented and baseline indicators of health status have been collected
3. The local community is invested in the project, including pledges of cash and in-kind support
4. The proposed service appears cost-effective, even in the first few years of delivery
5. Protocols for quality assurance have been established
6. Community outreach activities have been identified to connect the target population with the new service(s)

20 Predictors of a Successful Project Courtesy of the Virginia Healthcare Foundation

7. Plan to communicate project highlights has been developed to keep community supporters invested and involved
8. Transportation to the new service is readily available to the target population
9. The proposed budget is comprehensive
10. The need to provide medications or referrals to patients who cannot afford them has been addressed and necessary funds have been allocated
11. Project management has a demonstrated record of success

20 Predictors of a Successful Project Courtesy of the Virginia Healthcare Foundation

12. Association with an umbrella agency, if it exists, is well defined, and all parties understand their respective roles
13. Collaboration with other community programs exists and a conscious effort has been made to avoid duplication of services
14. The value of data as a management tool and as a fundraising/public relations tool is recognized, and data collection systems are in place
15. The value of public relations as a means of generating financial support and attracting new patients is understood, and media events are regularly scheduled

20 Predictors of a Successful Project Courtesy of the Virginia Healthcare Foundation

16. Evaluation activities exist and are well-targeted to answer specific questions about the program. Evaluation measures quality and quantity of service provided as well as short- and long-term impacts of the program
17. The relevance of the proposed service in a managed care environment has been considered and addressed
18. A long-term plan to sustain the project has been developed and appears viable.
19. A strong and committed Board of Directors is in place and understands its role
20. Program continuation is not dependent on a single factor that could change (eg, a program leader who works non-stop to keep



20 Predictors of a Successful Project Courtesy of the Virginia Healthcare Foundation

20. Program continuation is not dependent on a single factor that could change (eg, a program leader who works non-stop to keep the project afloat, a limited pool of volunteers who cannot meet the demand for services, or a significant donor whose only connection to the project is financial)



*Partnering to Strengthen and Preserve
the Oral Health Safety Net*

A PROGRAM OF THE

DentaQuest[®]
INSTITUTE

