



# Statement of Need:

## Making the Case

The Magi Group, LLC

OPGS Grantwriting Class, Session 1

# Objectives



- Understand the component of an executive summary
- What foundations look for in a need statement
- How to recognize and describe a community need
- Common errors grant writers make when describing needs
- What to do if the need is hard to document
- Simple tips on how to make any need statement stronger

# Executive Summary



- If you think a proposal's executive summary is really a summary, you're missing the point. What you're really trying to do is lay out the case for your proposal.
- While the executive summary is usually the shortest part of a proposal, it's also the portion that your potential customer reads first. Thus, this section requires the most skillful writing. It generally should be written last.
- The executive summary balances an efficient delivery of key information with a persuasive, well-substantiated pitch. Above all, it must demonstrate a clear understanding of the funders needs.
- Indeed, some evaluators can be so put off by a executive summary . . . one that is confusing or difficult to understand that they fail to evaluate the rest of the proposal with an open mind.

# Executive Summary



- Be consistent. Don't introduce new information at this point. Only use information that has already appeared in some part of your proposal.
- Emphasize why should your organization do this program (as opposed to any other organization)
- Follow a similar format to the LOI, however it is generally not necessary to include a funding request amount.
- Be sure to pay attention to the page/section guidelines for the Executive Summary.

# The Statement of Need



- It is a component or document within a grant proposal that:
  1. Supplies an overview of an organization's recognition of a specific community-based issue, or problem.
  2. Supplies the research and statistics on this community issue to support the need for the project being proposed.
    1. Provides a strong rationale for why support should be provided.
    2. Establishes an organization and/or approach as the best candidate to address the need.

# Why a Statement of Need?



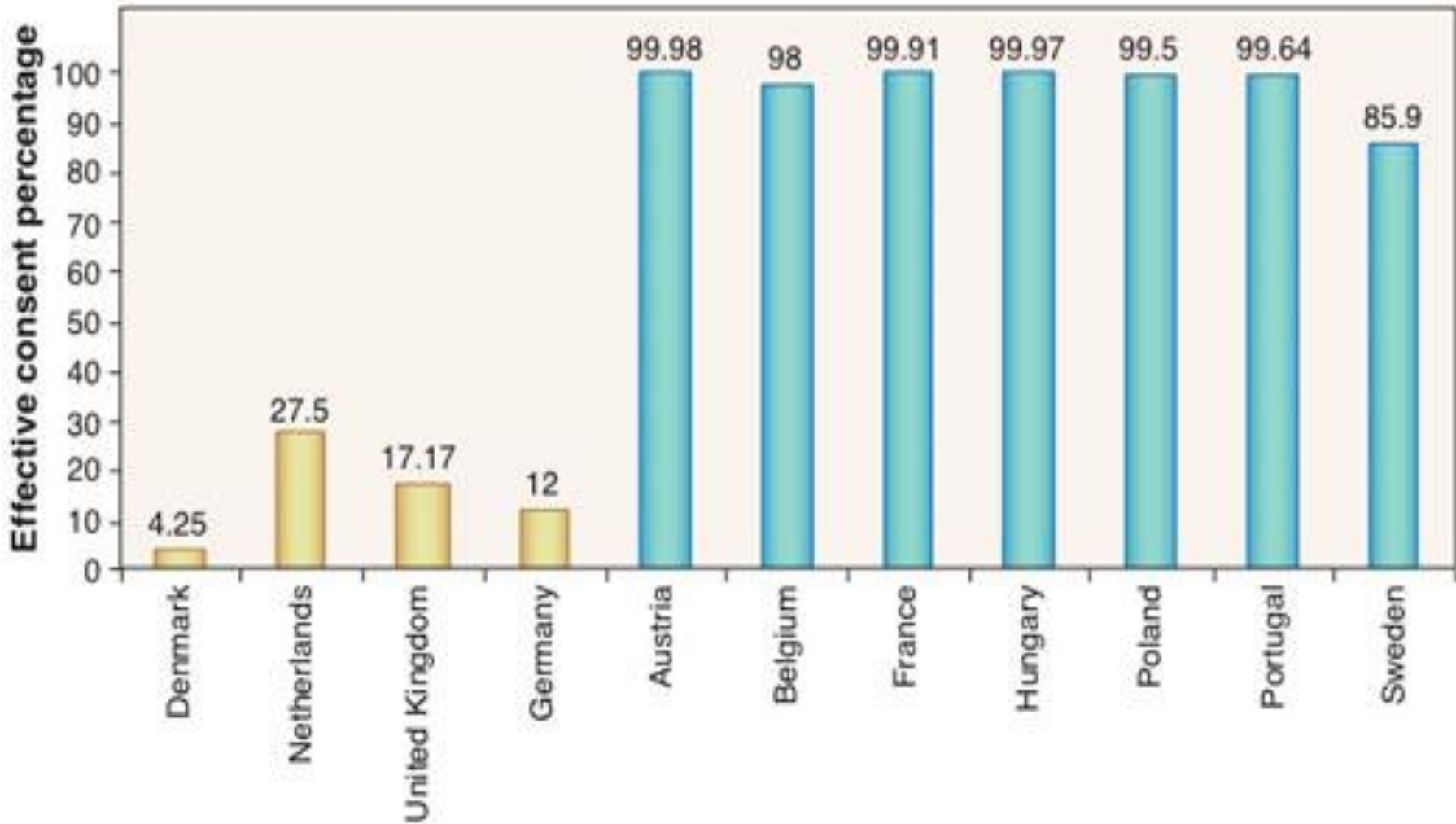
- The most important thing a Statement of Need answers for a funder is “Why”
  - Why this specific target?
  - Why this specific area?
  - Why does your organization care?
  - Why should I care?
  - Why your organization?
  - Why your approach?
  - Why should I believe you?
  - Why should I believe my resources make an impact?
  - Why now?
  - Why hasn't the been solved by somebody else?
  - Why is this a sufficient amount of money?

# Basic Truths About Statements of Need



1. If you do not have a compelling need, you do not have a compelling project.
2. Funders and reviewers are not required to care about your need or project until YOU compel them to care.
3. If you confuse your organization's needs with the needs of your target population, you have set yourself up for failure.
4. If the need is in your community, you must show the impact there.
5. No one is required to believe anything that you have not proven with accurate, credible data.
6. Your data is only as persuasive as the context you place it in.
7. If you raise an issue, you had better respond to it, given your size and resources.
8. A statement of need is comprehensive, but not boring.

# Why the Different Rates of Organ Donation?





Its Because of the Form they Filled Out at the DMV!



Opt-in

Check the box below if you **want** to participate in the organ donor program

*people don't check the box -- and don't join*

Opt-out

Check the box below if you **don't want** to participate in the organ donor program

# An Effective Statement of Need



1. Uses supportive evidence to clearly explain the nature and extent of the problem/need to be addressed.
2. Identifies the factors contributing to the problem or the circumstances creating the need.
3. Connects the need to the purposes and goals of your organization.
4. Includes quantitative and qualitative documentation and supporting information. (Rational, but has some emotion)
5. Identifies current gaps in services or programs.
6. Provides a rationale for the transferability of “promising approaches” or “best practices” to the population you seek to serve.
7. Describes the benefits to be gained. (And the cost of not responding)
8. Is compelling and clarifying. (Funder should feel an urgency)

# The Breakdown of a Statement of Need



1. Problem Description
2. Problem Recognition
3. Problem Implication
4. Problem Hurdles
5. Problem Urgency
6. Problem Interest
7. Problem Approaches

# Problem Description



- What is the need?
- Who is experiencing the need?
- When is the need occurring?
- Where is the need occurring?
- Why is the need occurring?
- How does the need impact the community and its people?

# Problem Recognition



- Why is it a problem?
- Why does the problem exist?
- Who else sees it as a problem?
- What are the community stakeholder views

# Problem Implication



- What will happen to the population if the problem is not resolved?
- What will happen to the community if the problem is not resolved?
- Is there a cost to society if the problem is not resolved?

# Problem Hurdles



- What are the challenges in addressing the problem? (Eliminate funding as a challenge)
- What is the gap between what exists now and what ought to be?
  - Knowledge?
  - Services?
  - Resource?
- What has prevented a resolution of the problem?

# Problem Urgency



- Why does the problem need to be addressed now? (Be clear about what can be accomplished within the time frame of the grant.)
- What is currently being done about the problem?
- Why should outside funding be used now to solve the problem or reduce the gap?



# Problem Interest



- Why should I care?
- Why should I identify with the community/people/issue you are addressing?
- Who else may benefit from the approach/project?
- How compelling and “real” can you make the need?
- What are the opportunities in addressing the need?

# Problem Approaches



- What is the rationale for the transferability of “promising approaches” or “best practices” to the population you seek to serve?
- Why should I reject alternative strategies?
- Why are you the best organization to address the issue/problem?
- What are the benefits to be derived through the intervention, treatment, or prevention of the problem?
- Do you have sufficient time to make an impact?

# Statement of Need “Don’ts”



- Not providing information requested in the RFP
- Proposing something outside the scope of the RFP
- Using outdated or suspect information
- Gathering insufficient data
- Statistical pile-up (Data dump)
- Unfamiliar concepts, jargon, or terms
- Emotional appeal only, instead of balanced rational/emotional appeal. (Editorializing)
- Providing circular reasoning as an argument.
- Lack of Citations.

# Data and Statistics



- Should back up/support the issue you want to address
- Needs a point of comparison
- Provides objective, outside information to substantiate the issue

Data and statistics should be:

- Timely: data needs to be as recent as possible
- Unbiased: Who did the research? Who funded the research?
- Reliable: it is considered reputable by other?

# Where to Find Data and Statistics

- Public Databases
- Foundation and Nonprofit Reports
- Qualitative/Quantitative Research
- Industry Publications
- Journal Articles



# Data and Statistics Sources

- U.S. Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
- Bureau of Labor Statistics – [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)
- National Technical Information Services (NTIS) – [www.ntis.gov](http://www.ntis.gov)
- USDA Economic Research Service - [www.ers.usda.gov](http://www.ers.usda.gov)
- FedStats – [www.fedstats.gov](http://www.fedstats.gov)
- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey – [www.cdc.gov/brfss/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/index.htm)
- DC BFRSS - <http://doh.dc.gov/doh/cwp/view,a,1374,q,602444.asp>
- Neighborhood Info DC - [www.neighborhoodinfodc.org](http://www.neighborhoodinfodc.org)
- Annie E. Casey Foundation – [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org)

# Data and Statistics “Do’s”



- Avoid using assumptions or undocumented assertions. Documented, factual statistics will bring fewer questions to your proposal
- Use clear statistics that support your argument. (Avoid emotional arguments)
- Make sure data collection is well documented.
- Emphasize the geographic area you are designated to serve.
- In any problem statement, include more than one data point.
- Include relevant history surrounding the problem.
- Provide a “Light at the End of the Tunnel”.

# Data and Statistics “Don’ts”



- Data that represents geographic areas larger than the area you are targeting.
- Data that is outdated and old.
- Raw numbers that describe the problem in your area.
- All the data you've ever found that relates somewhat to the problem. (Data dump)
- Data that is not immediately relevant to the problem.
- Data from newspapers, magazines, and TV news programs – sources that are not in the business of distributing reliable data.
- Exclusively including data about the number of people you serve, the number of people who are on your waiting list, and/or the number of activities you conduct each year.





QUESTIONS?