

# Introduction

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## **Purpose of This Book**

Human service professionals are dedicated people who want to serve the community and assist their clients in addressing various life challenges. They have been trained as social workers, public health educators, counselors, psychologists, nurses, teachers, community organizers, lawyers, and many other allied health and service workers. Alongside these professionals are the volunteers and grassroots individuals who understand and are concerned about their community and neighbors. These individuals are diverse in many aspects but are the same in that they engage themselves in services to improve the conditions that concern them. They understand that it takes resources to support the much-needed services they plan to deliver.

There are many needs in the community but very few resources. Jean, a youth counselor, is interested in bringing more resources to meet these needs and decides

to take on the challenge of writing a grant proposal. Jean is confident she will do a good job. After all, she has many great program ideas, and she enjoys writing. Her agency director is very impressed and decides to send her to a well-known, one-day grant-writing training program from the local nonprofit development center. The director shows her some previous grant proposals and Internet resources. A coworker also agrees to work with Jean and edits her draft proposal.

Jeff, a program coordinator, is busy managing several service programs, experiencing many successes as well as challenges. He wants to spend more time in one great program increasing his clinical work with his clients. However, there is the program report he needs to complete. To prepare for that, he needs to collect and organize all of the program data to tell his story. He has so much to tell but does not know where to start or what to tell. His old social research methods and statistics books provide some hints, but he is still not sure how best to proceed.

Many human service practitioners begin their involvement in grant writing and program evaluation, voluntarily or involuntarily, through their assignments in a service agency. Some of them learn how to complete the tasks by diving in with both feet and hoping for a safe landing. Some attend specific workshops and training to get a head start. A few of the lucky ones are mentored by experienced colleagues. No matter how one learns the crafts of grant writing and program evaluation, there is no replacement for hands-on learning, mentoring, and a few useful reference guides.

The purpose of this book is to provide human service professionals and students with the knowledge and skills they could use to advance quality and accountable services to serve their clients and the communities in need. This is both a user-friendly and practical book, as well as an academic text backed by current literature. Specifically, it aims to help readers acquire the advanced knowledge and skills of grant writing and program evaluation. In turn, this will enhance their ability to obtain the proper and much-needed funding to deliver quality services and to demonstrate service results and accountability.

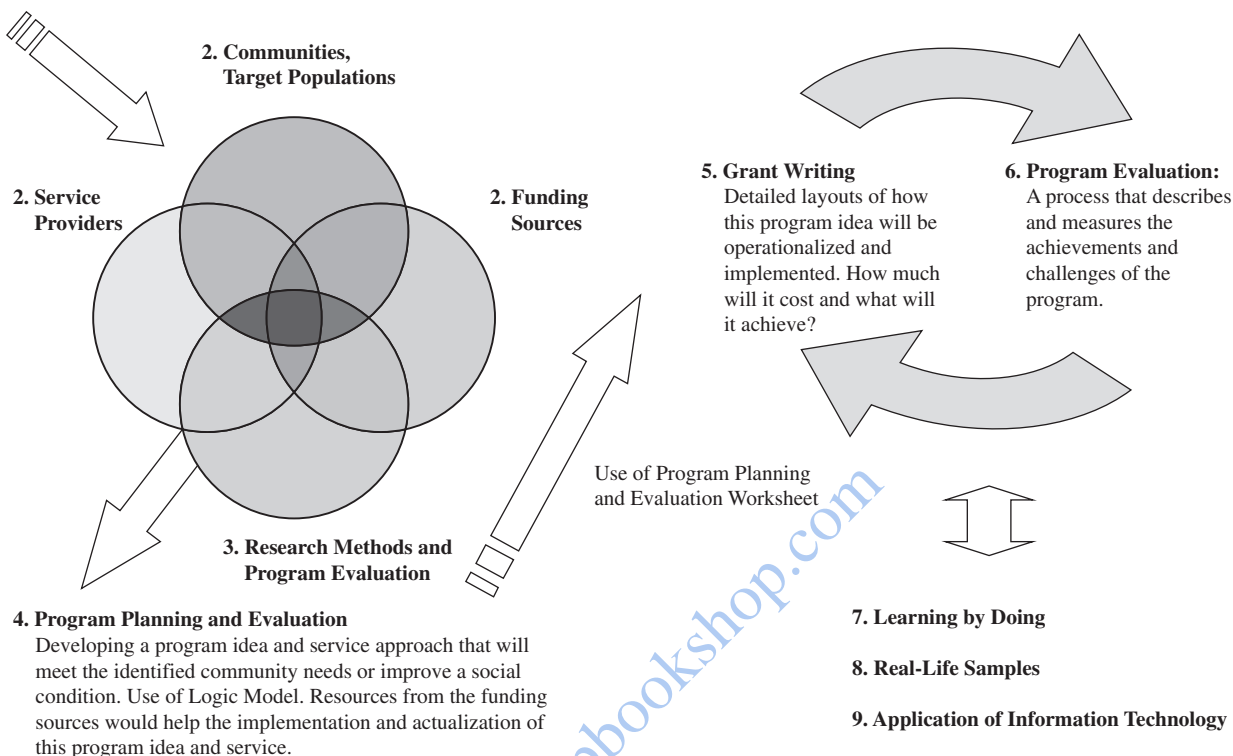
## The Organization and Approaches Used for This Book

This grant-writing and program evaluation book follows a needs-driven, evidence-based, results-oriented, and client-centered perspective. “Beginning with the end in mind,” “Keep it simple and sweet,” and “Tell the stories” are some of the main aphorisms that drove the writing of this book. The general scheme for the structure, logic, and development for this book is presented in the Scheme for Effective Grant Writing and Program Evaluation for Human Service Professionals (Figure 1.1). This book is organized into three main logically connected sections.

The first section is the Four Key Components: (1) community and target population, (2) service providers, (3) funding sources, and (4) the craft of research and management evaluation. This section lays out the foundation knowledge essential to the grant-writing and program evaluation activities. The second section is the Grant Writing and Program Evaluation section. This section provides the skills and knowledge on

**Figure 1.1 Scheme for Effective Grant Writing and Program Evaluation for Human Service Professionals**

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why and how to write grant proposals and conduct program evaluation. The final section is the Show and Tell: Learning by Doing and Real-Life Samples sections. Exercises and examples are included to facilitate more effective learning of grant proposal writing and program evaluation execution.

The authors view grant writing as a capacity-building macro practice in human services. It is not a stand-alone fund-seeking activity. The grant-writing effort should be driven by the needs of the community, guided by the mission of the service organization, and directed by the current research and literature. As to the program evaluation, it is an activity-driven and empowerment-oriented process. Grant writing and program evaluation are macro practice approaches for social change. This book targets practitioners who are program developers, program managers, program evaluators, and agency administrators. Graduate and undergraduate students in human services would also find this a very useful book for grant writing, program evaluation, data analysis, and social research methods.

Several special features are included to aid readers in getting hands-on experience and gaining insiders' insight into grant writing and program evaluation.

1. *Strength perspective and holistic orientation.* This book joins together grant writing and program evaluation. It integrates both professional practice and academic rigor. Readers will learn more than knowledge and skills in grant writing and program evaluation. They will learn the application of holistic and strength perspectives in the understanding, designing, implementing, and evaluating of human services. Service programs are client-centered and needs-driven, not agency-centered and funding-driven.
2. *Professional insights.* These are notes from practitioners who are grant writers, agency administrators, program managers from government agencies and foundations, as well as grant reviewers. These experienced practitioners offer their professional insights, insiders' look, and tips to the grant-writing and evaluation processes in short segments throughout the book. These straightforward practice wisdoms are survival guides for new and experienced practitioners alike.
3. *Samples, grant proposal, evaluation plan, and instruments.* These concrete examples give readers a sense of what the end products would be or should not be like. They serve as models for learning and practice. Guidelines and examples of instruments for data collection and analysis provide readers with a head start in setting their proposal and evaluation in place.
4. *Individual and group learning exercises.* Different learning exercises for developing and practicing grant-writing and evaluation skills are included in the appropriate sections of the book for hands-on learning. Most of these exercises have been developed and field-tested in training workshops conducted by the authors. Some of these exercises are organized to become a training module for a particular topic (e.g., writing effective objectives, identifying results, and developing appropriate data collection tools).
5. *Technology and other resources.* Internet and printed resources for grant writing and program evaluation are included throughout the book for quick reference and access to further studies.

## Grant Writing and Program Evaluation: Outcomes and Evidence

How are grant proposal writing and program evaluation—two different functions—related? Simply speaking, many grant proposals are not considered to be complete unless they have included a strong program evaluation component. Many federal grant proposals, such as those for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), would not be reviewed unless they had a clear program evaluation plan. For major funding sources, a grant proposal without a program evaluation piece is similar to a budget without the accounting.

### Grant Proposal and Performance Measures

Since the early 1990s, many federal service grant applications have been “demonstration projects” that are quality service project proposals with a strong evaluation

component. They are expected to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness, successes, and challenges of the projects. This emphasis on outcome-oriented programming and assessment put program evaluation and program planning together as two sides of a coin. Program evaluation is such an important element that some funding sources would set aside a certain percentage of the funded budget for program evaluation expenses.

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) was established as an independent federal agency when President Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. The CNCS “merged the work and staffs of two predecessor agencies, ACTION and the Commission on National and Community Service” ([www.nationalservice.org/about/role\\_impact/history.asp](http://www.nationalservice.org/about/role_impact/history.asp)). As the nation’s largest grant maker, CNCS serves more than 4 million Americans through its National Service programs, Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, VISTA, NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps), and Learn and Serve America, and it supports millions more through a variety of other initiatives. It aims to improve lives through direct service (education, health, environment, human services, public safety) and building organizational capacity. In this way, CNCS strengthens communities and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering ([www.nationalservice.org/pdf/factsheet\\_cncs.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.org/pdf/factsheet_cncs.pdf)).

The National Service programs are required to do annual internal evaluation (performance measurement) and, therefore, must create project capacity for program evaluation. Program evaluation is part of the grant application, indicating the importance of a strong performance measure plan in its funding decisions.

All three authors of this book have many years of experience in human services and working with SAMHSA and CNCS programs at the local, state, and federal levels. We have seen many outstanding programs so well planned and sufficiently evaluated that they continue to improve. We have also witnessed the politics of funding in that the least deserving programs are poorly planned and disappointingly evaluated, if at all, and received the much-sought-after funding. Politics and other concerns aside, programs that produce results are the ones that receive board support and serve the needs of the community.

## **Evidence-Based Practice**

Evidence-based medicine, or evidence-based practice (EBP) as it became known, offers a balance between professional judgment and current medical research. Scottish epidemiologist Archie Cochrane published his influential *Effectiveness and Efficiency: Random Reflections on Health Services* in 1972. Cochrane suggested the use of the most reliable information or the best evidence to guide health care services. He advocated the use of well-designed evaluations such as randomized controlled trials (RCT) to collect important evidences.

Gordon Guyatt and David Sackett of the McMaster University research group further developed the concepts and the practice of evidence-based medicine. They support the “conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in

making decisions about the care of individual patients” (Sackett, Rosenberg, Gray, Haynes, and Richardson, 1996, p. 72).

Established in 1993, the Cochrane Collaboration ([www.cochrane.org](http://www.cochrane.org)) “is an international not-for-profit organization, providing up-to-date information about the effects of health care.” It publishes its database of systematic reviews, clinical trials, and other high-quality studies in the Cochrane Library.

Different disciplines have also developed special studies and projects to explore how evidence-based practice could be applied to various disciplines. Johnson and Austin (2006) report that the “development of systematic reviews for the human services is still in its infancy but is growing largely due to the efforts of the Campbell Collaboration, a sibling of the Cochrane organization for research reviews in the social and behavioral sectors, criminology, and education” (p. 79).

Zlotnik (2007) reports that evidence-based practice is applicable both on an individual (micro) level as well as on the organizational and community (macro) levels. Although randomized controlled trials (RCT) is the ultimate standard for establishing evidence, social sciences and human services often find RCT not feasible. Zlotnik asserts that evidence from qualitative studies should also be considered. Many agencies find that it is difficult to fund basic program evaluation efforts; funding program evaluations that include RCT is certainly a stretch.

Without a program, there will be no evaluation. Without funding support and resources, there will be no program or service to meet community needs. Attaining and developing resources and funding are integral parts of human services. Evidence-based practice is more than direct service and evaluation; it is also about the use of the best evidence to advocate for funding and organizational support. Zlotnik (2007) further reflects that it is not enough to teach the evidence-based practice process, to undertake high-quality research, and to teach students to think critically. The human and social service communities should prepare students, faculty, and practitioners to be advocates for the funding, not just of the research, but of program funds as well so that services can be implemented in the way they were intended.

Grant writing and program evaluation are two interrelated parts of the whole. Their connection is illustrated in the scheme (see Figure 1.1). Understanding the needs of the service recipients, being informed by the best evidence collected, deciding on the appropriate interventions, focusing on the outcomes, and improving based on findings are all part of the process of ensuring that the best services are planned and delivered.

## Defining Program and Program Planning

### What Is a Program?

*Program*, in general, refers to a set of planned and purposive activities. Yuen and Terao (2003) define it as “a coordinated change effort that is theory based, goal-oriented, often time limited, target population-specific and activity driven” (p. 1).



Royse, Thyer, Padgett, and Logan (2006) view program as “an organized collection of activities designed to reach certain objectives . . . a series of planned actions designed to solve some problem . . . to have some kind of an impact on the program participants” (p. 5). Some have compared a program to a recipe. It has different ingredients with clear instructions or production procedures to bring about the end product. A service program has different components, interventions, or activities (ingredients); through a service delivery system or mechanism (instructions), particular end results (end products) are expected to be achieved.

There are different levels of program. At the organizational or community level, it may mean a set of coordinated service activities. At a more macro level, such as one at county, state, or federal government, it is used to refer to a social program that is the implementation of certain social or legislative policy.

### **What Is Program Planning?**

Program planning is a need-based and goal-oriented process. It is “an organized process through which a set of coordinated activities or interventions is developed to address and facilitate change in some or all of the identified problems” (Yuen and Terao, 2003, p. 2). Program planning is a dynamic process that lays out strategies to meet identified needs. It involves the identification of needs and the development of goals, objectives, activities, and evaluation. “The [program planning] process presents the logic and the argument that justify the need, the significance, and the relevance of the proposed plan” (Yuen and Terao, 2003, p. 10).

Program planning and grant proposal writing are two closely related processes. “Program planning provides the process and the framework for the development of a service grant proposal. Grant proposal is a specific type of product of program planning. Both of them involve logical thinking and are objective driven” (Yuen and Terao, 2003, p. 11).

## **The Ethics and Secret Handshake of Grant Writing and Program Evaluation**

Grant writing has evolved into an independent specialty and a specialized field of practice within established professions. The American Association of Grant Professionals (AAGP), “a nonprofit membership association, builds and supports an international community of grant professionals committed to serving the greater public good by practicing the highest ethical and professional standards” (<http://grantprofessionals.org>). AAGP is a national organization representing the needs and concerns of grant-writing professionals. It has an established code of ethics and organizes conferences and other events for its members. Grant writers from different disciplines, such as social work, sociology, psychology, public health, and public administration, participate in their own professional organizations and abide by the profession’s standards and codes

of ethics (e.g., National Association of Social Workers [NASW] Code of Ethics, [www.socialworkers.org/pubs/Code/code.asp](http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/Code/code.asp)).

In addition to membership in their own professional organizations, many program evaluators join the American Evaluation Association (AEA). It is a “professional association of evaluators devoted to the application and exploration of program evaluation, personnel evaluation, technology, and many other forms of evaluation. Evaluation involves assessing the strengths and weaknesses of programs, policies, personnel, products, and organizations to improve their effectiveness” ([www.eval.org/aboutus/organization/aboutus.asp](http://www.eval.org/aboutus/organization/aboutus.asp)). The evaluators are expected to follow the codes of ethics of their professional organizations, as well as those of the AEA.

Grant writing and program evaluation are not trivial tasks but professional activities that are altruistic, service-oriented, accountable, and ethical in practice. Also, they are not mysteries and full of secrets that only the fortunate few would know how to solve. The secret for grant writing and program evaluation is that there is no secret handshake or magic bullet. The only open secret is that applicants need to understand what the funding source wants and what the community needs are. They then develop a proposal that meets the needs of the community and matches the requirements of the funding organization. Innovativeness and creativity that bring about measurable results and accountable outcomes further distinguish an outstanding proposal from a good proposal.

Grant writing and program evaluation often differ for organizations of different sizes or with different capacities. Smaller or less established organizations may find that local or regional funding opportunities, such as local foundation, city, or county funding, are more appropriate for them. Larger or more established organizations may be more interested in seeking out major funding sources, such as state or federal multiyear funding. There is, however, no rule to say that smaller organizations should not seek out major grants from big funding sources. The simple factors for success in grant writing are knowing your organization, knowing your funding source, knowing your clients, and knowing your grant proposal. The only way to ensure getting funding support for your proposal is to submit one!

A good idea in your head is only a good idea; a good idea written in an organized and achievable format is a proposal; and an implemented good idea that meets the needs of clients is a successfully funded service program.

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