

Problem Based Proposals

Identify a problem and frame the problem:

Who is affected? Describe the population that is experiencing the problem.

Where does the problem take place? Start with your community.

What is the magnitude of the problem? How does it compare to the county, state, US and world?

When does the problem occur? Are there trends? Need to understand these.

Why is this problem so important? Ask yourself so **what?** What are the long-term implications? Describe the long-term implications if not addressed.

Why is this happening? Describe the **causes** or contributing factors that led to the problem. You must be able to address the causes of the problem in the proposal.

When writing a problem statement:

- Avoid describing the problem as a “lack of” the service you want to provide. Instead consider why the services are being provided in the first place.
- Be reasonable in scope – don’t describe a problem your organization is not able to change.
- The problem is not your organization’s need for something. Your organization’s need for money, staff, or training is not the basis for a strong problem statement.

A problem is a current condition:

- Low student enrollment
- Drop out rates are increasing

A problem is not the lack of services your organization provides or wants to provide:

- We need to provide more tutoring services
- There are not enough lab hours we need to provide more

Remember the connections: Methods or activities relate to the causes of the problem. If your method is “to provide more tutoring services” then the shortage of appropriate programs might be the cause of something – but what? What is the real problem you are trying to address?

Call the Resource Development Office to facilitate the process for your team!

(Based on information from the Grantsmanship Center)

