

# The Proposal Writer's Guide to MSU

## GPA National Conference 2018

### The Proposal Writer's Guide to MSU

(Making Stuff Up)

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### Learning Objectives

- ❖ Learning the value of MSU to aid the proposal writing process
- ❖ Identify ways to reduce the need for MSU
- ❖ Develop strategies to guide others in developing fundable proposals



### MSU Defined

- ❖ "Creative" writing – making \$#! up
- ❖ Filling in blanks
- ❖ Coping strategy – moves writing process forward
- ❖ Pinpoints program weak areas



### Why Do We Sometimes Have to MSU?

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- ❖ Tight deadline and info source person is unavailable
- ❖ Program person has not provided enough content
- ❖ Lack of awareness/understanding of details needed
- ❖ Program direction still uncertain

### What Sorts of Stuff do We Make Up?

- ❖ Details about program delivery (content, frequency, where, how, etc.)
- ❖ Anticipated impacts and outcomes
- ❖ Budget details (what do we think is included in "supplies"?)
- ❖ Just about anything. . .

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## Basic Use.

Confirming facts

Made informed assumptions based on similar organizations

Made a clear query

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**Proposal Excerpt:**

"Patients must demonstrate their eligibility to receive care through proof of income  
What the client told us and proof that they have no insurance (SoonerCare, MediCare, etc.)."

What we thought might be true and added to the text

## Uses and Benefits of MSU

## New Ideas

Offered as options/suggestions

Based on similar organizations

Tied to RFA prompt

(See handout #2 for copy of excerpt)

**3 F! P 0 m 4 ^ m**  
 "Plan to work cooperatively with parents of high school students."

**C\* \* B \* 4 ) \* \***  
 "We're a college. We're not sure how to do that."

Some ideas we offered based on similar programs:  
↓

"Parental involvement is encouraged through multiple activities of the UB program including the parental interview, orientation sessions, evening events, workshops, and award ceremonies. Parents are also encouraged to chaperone field trips and participate in community service projects."

## Effective, Helpful MSU Must Be:

- ❖ Appropriate to the proposal requirements
- ❖ Reasonable and rational but creative
- ❖ Helpful and provide guidance
- ❖ Infrequent
- ❖ Clearly identified

## How to Present MSU

**A. Create Content**  
Write as much as possible. Insert questions

**B. Identify Clearly**  
Highlight text. Or use comment boxes.

**C. Offer as a Tool**  
Suggested only. Changes welcome.

**D. Leave Time**  
Leave time for responses. May take multiple tries.

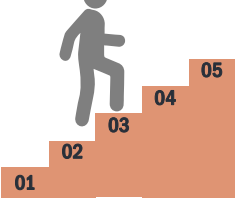
**E. Finalize**  
Clean up all comment boxes. Get final approval.

## Potential Downsides of MSU

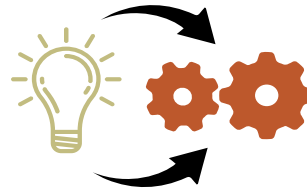
- ❖ Can allow others to become lazy
- ❖ May not be accurate
- ❖ Can rely on it too much
- ❖ May exclude others from program design

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## Reducing the Need for MSU

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- 01** Good project management skills
  - 02** Familiarity with guidelines
  - 03** Research or familiarity with similar programs
  - 04** Strong interview techniques
  - 05** Healthy relationships

## Getting the Info You Need



- 01** Prepare questions in advance. Be thorough.
- 02** Send questions in advance. Ask leading questions. "Tell me more about..."
- 03** Be persistent. Be creative. Show appreciation.

**TIP:** Interviews usually get you more detail

## Providing Excellent Customer Service

- 01** Provide clear, strong guidance. Be specific.
- 02** Learn others' work styles. Adapt when you can.
- 03** Exhibit enthusiasm and expertise. Set a positive tone.
- 04** Advocate "More detailed proposals lead to fundable programs."



## MSU – Bringing Grants Professionals and Program Staff Together Since . . .



**MSU as Translator**  
Can be helpful and sometimes necessary

**Building Your Skills**  
Can reduce the need for MSU

## Your Presenters



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