

ALTMAN FOUNDATION

GUIDANCE FOR DIRECT SERVICE APPLICATION

Please note that we only provide guidance for selected questions, believing the others to be self-explanatory.

The narrative section of this application, parts A-F, should be no more than seven pages. Feel free to use bullet points where appropriate.

If you are applying for capacity building support as well as direct service support, you should fill out the Direct Service Application fully and also complete part B (questions 7-13) of the Capacity Building Application.

A. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

1. What is your **mission and vision**?
2. What are your organization's **core competencies**? What does your organization do especially well?

Guidance:

Please describe the factors that make you particularly good at serving and creating value for the constituents you serve. Where relevant, you may include factors such as special skills, in-depth knowledge, access to specific resources or data, influence, staffing, cost structure, customer service strategy, geographic focus, scale, delivery models, performance management, key partnerships, evidence-based practice, etc.

3. What **relevant achievements** can you highlight in the last three years in the program area for which you seek our support? Please focus on the tangible results you have helped create for those you serve.
4. Please comment on your **organization's financial health**, including trends, challenges, or unusual developments, over the last three years. Please be sure to address your sustainability in the current economic climate.
5. How does your **Board of Directors** ensure the financial health and viability of the organization, set strategic direction in accordance with mission, and evaluate organizational effectiveness, particularly in this economic climate? Please also include the number of board meetings per year and the average attendance at board meetings.

The following questions pertain to the program/project/initiative for which you are requesting funding.

B. NEED AND TARGET POPULATION

6. What problem or **need** are you addressing?
7. Describe your program's **participants or target population** (e.g., age, ethnicity, education level, economic status, etc.).
8. What current evidence do you have that there is **demand for your services**?
For example, are you fully subscribed? Is there a waiting list?

C. YOUR PROJECT

9. Please briefly **describe your project/program** model and how you would characterize this model or approach.
10. What **research/evidence** suggests that your approach will work? (Please note that you do not need to reiterate in full published information but can provide web links, citations or copies of published material to support your assertions.) If you believe your approach is new and, therefore, untested or unproven, what assumptions are you making about why it will work?
11. What do you consider to be the **needed frequency and duration** of your services to insure strong and sustainable results for participants and why?

D. YOUR RESULTS & TRACKING TO SUCCESS

12. What **results are you committed to achieving** and for how many participants during the time period for which you are requesting support? Please specify the number of people/clients/organizations to be served and the number that will improve their condition or behavior, and to what degree.

Guidance:

Program results are those specific changes in participant behavior or condition that define success for a program or project. We understand that you have long-term goals for the people and communities you serve. This question is designed to capture the specific results you hope to achieve during the grant period. When applicants seek investment, program results are what they commit to achieve in order to justify the investment. They must be tangible, verifiable, and a reasonable outcome of your program or project. (When considering whether it is appropriate to take credit for a given result, one question to ask is: would the result have been likely to occur without the influence of your program or project?)

We urge you to establish clear results. Please focus on changes in the behavior or condition of the people you serve—not on their activities in your program or their level of satisfaction. In most cases, programs succeed because people change their behavior (e.g., they stop smoking, begin to exercise, or wear a seat belt). If you are a technical assistance provider or a federation and your clients are organizations rather than individuals, then program success may mean that the organizations you serve behave differently (e.g., all programs begin tracking participant progress using a new database system). In other cases, your work will address a condition rather than a

behavior, for example, the availability of affordable housing or the quality and condition of public parks and open spaces. In any case, the more specific you are about the results you seek, the better.

In simple form, an effective program result answers two questions:

- A. What do our core participants "look like" when we consider them a success? and*
- B. How many of them will "look like" that when our interaction with them is complete?*

Building a program result - a four-step process

These four steps followed in sequence will help you define program results:

- 1. Identify the changes in behavior or condition you seek;*
- 2. Specify the degree of change you consider a success;*
- 3. Estimate how many participants will change, in what ways, and by when; and*
- 4. Express your program result in a structured and time-bound way.*

Step 1. Identify the kind of change you seek for your core participants.

Identifying the change or result you seek implies some comparison to the current or expected behavior or condition of your participants. In human services programs, reducing negative or destructive behaviors is sometimes the result sought (e.g., reduction of drug use, teen pregnancy, delinquency, etc.) Other results can be stated in terms of increasing positive behavior or conditions. For example, getting and keeping a living-wage job, improving overall school attendance and grades earned, or consistently attending prenatal appointments during pregnancy.

Step 2. Specify how much change is required for you to consider it a success.

The result you set should also address the question of degree: how much change do you anticipate and for how long? When you can clearly articulate this you have developed the content language of your program result. Please note that the examples that follow are hypothetical and should not be taken as targets for an actual application. We do not expect these examples to capture the depth and breadth of your work, but we offer them as a way to spur your thinking about how to determine project results aligned with your organization's objectives and capacity.

Examples:

- Getting a job that pays at least \$10/hr and keeping it for at least six months*
- Improving grades in two subjects by at least 8 percentage points during the course of the school year*
- Attending at least six out of seven monthly appointments with an OB/GYN during pregnancy and at least one post-partum appointment within three months of delivery*

Or for a technical assistance provider...

- Institutionalizing palliative care programs at nursing homes, which will include palliative care training for all staff and have the capacity to serve at least 90 percent of residents in need of palliative care.*

Step 3. Using the core participant group(s) you identified in the previous steps, estimate how many of your participants will change and by when.

To be effective, your program results must have a number attached. The question is: how many participants do you think will succeed in your program? Consider your past experience

with other participants and the characteristics of the participants you believe you will serve during the grant period. Then make a projection:

Of the _____ participants we will serve, we anticipate succeeding with _____ by __/__/__

Step 4 – Express your project result in a structured and time-bound way.

The “content portions” of your results have all been identified and can now be summarized in a result statement. Note that the results can vary in form. Three approaches you can use are:

Single Focus: By December 31, 2010, twenty-five of the thirty nursing homes in our technical assistance program will institutionalize palliative care programs, which will include palliative care training for all staff and have the capacity to serve at least 90 percent of residents in need of palliative care.

The Menu: Of the 140 teenagers enrolled in our middle school academic enrichment program, 110 will show improvement in at least two of the following areas by June 1, 2009:

- Improving attendance at school to at least 95%;
- Improving their overall grade point average by at least 5 percentage points;
- Improving their reading comprehension score on the state exam by at least 10 percentage points.

Individualized: 90 of the 125 families enrolled in our program this year will reduce two or more barriers to keeping their housing, identified in their individual case plans, by September 30, 2009.

13. How will you know when the results you have outlined above have been achieved? What information or evidence will you use to **verify success**?

Guidance:

Methods that might be used to verify success include but are not limited to: standardized measuring instruments considered valid in your field; observations and reports by others; and/or self-reported behaviors.

14. Halfway through the period for which you are requesting support, how will you know you are making sufficient progress toward achieving your anticipated results? What specific **benchmarks** will your organization track to tell you that you are on course or need to make course corrections?

Guidance:

We are interested in how you will gauge participant progress. What will you be looking for and measuring during the program that says participants are “getting it” or are in other ways on track to achieve the desired results? Halfway through a program or project, these interim points of success, or benchmarks, might well include: 1) how many people have already achieved the result; and 2) the number who are reflecting changes that typically predict later success.

15. What is the **cost per result** of your project? By this we mean the **total cost** of the project/program, including overhead, **divided by the number of participants projected to achieve the desired result(s)**. (*Please show how you arrived at your final number.*)
16. How do the results you anticipate for participants compare to **what would happen without your program** or intervention—that is, what is your estimate of how many participants would achieve the result(s) you seek without your services?

Guidance:

We recognize that many organizations have not had the opportunity to test the effectiveness of their program(s) using a control group for comparison. If that is the case, we would still like to know how the outcomes for your program participants compare to what would typically be the case for the population you serve absent your intervention. You can rely on whatever information exists about outcomes at the most specific level available to you. Past rates of achievement in a school or neighborhood are more relevant than district or city figures, and city or state figures are more relevant than national figures. If no information exists, use the most educated guesses you can find. Guidance counselors, for example, can often look at a description of your participants and tell you with reasonable accuracy about how many are likely to graduate within a certain period, drop out of school, go on to college, or experience another outcome.

17. Are there **broader gains and benefits stemming from your work** (beyond the target results) that we should take into account in determining our return on investment (i.e., additional benefits to your clients, contributions to the field in which you work, or social and policy implications)? If so, please be specific about what they are.

E. KEY PEOPLE AND GROUPS

18. Please specify the names and qualifications of the **key people** who will be responsible for achieving the anticipated results. What special skills and/or experience does each of them bring to the endeavor?
19. Please list any **partners or intermediaries** important to your success and describe the role they will play and the evidence you have of their commitment. Please tell us if you have successfully collaborated with any of the listed partners and/or intermediaries in the past, or if you are presently working with them on other projects.

Guidance:

An intermediary is a group or person (often a gatekeeper) whose behavior you do not control and who must do something (or allow you to do something) in order for you to succeed. Examples include but are not limited to: school districts, regulatory bodies, health care agencies, etc.

A partner is a group whose skills or talents augment or counterbalance your own as a part of program delivery.