How to Improve Your Grant Application

This document is a companion to the [How to Improve Your Grant Application Webinar presentation](#) and includes real examples of applicant responses in Round 1.

Each section from the application is represented in this document, in the order they appear. The corresponding presentation slide is also noted.

Administration

Example: *Organization is fully described* (Slide 18)

was **founded in March of 2021** as a Medicaid-enrolled Home and Community-Based Service (HCBS) provider. The ### **mission is: To provide a safe, supportive, and organized living environment for residents who are mentally, emotionally, and physically disabled while instilling independence within residents and allowing residents the opportunity to exercise their rights**. ### provides supportive care to four (4) private beds in a Home Healthcare setting with four (4) full-time professional caregivers. Staff serve on the front-line **providing Family Care** for older adults and adults with disabilities to get members the services they need. ### **Programs for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)** provides older adults with health care, long-term care and prescription drugs to help members live in a home setting for as long as they can. Assisting community members and local businesses is important in **serving urban Milwaukee**. For the past two (2) years, ### has been certified to train experienced workers and has provided hands-on Community-Based Residential Facilities (CBRF) training for over 100 residents and potential staff in Milwaukee and surrounding communities.

Example: *Project clearly describes how the organization promotes equity and inclusion with staff and the people they serve* (Slide 19)

is proud to provide staff and the people they serve a voice in the services offered. Over 70% of staff identifying as a minority, individual with disability, a caregiver, or other underrepresented groups that are seen are employed. We **actively recruit and provide employment opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds. Staff have strong community connections to organizations with a diverse array of causes in the community which in turn provides help to continue to build a strong and diverse workforce**.

The inclusivity and diversity values at ### also extend to the individuals we care for. A portion of them **represent the local community, a close-knit group that values family, community, and culture. We actively work to ensure inclusive environments for clients through our policies, best practices, and methods of obtaining feedback. Bylaws are written with a commitment to providing care to individuals of all backgrounds**. A diverse staff allows the organization to offer its clients strong compatibility matches between client and caregiver, further enhancing the incredible level of care provided.

is **continuously evaluating and adjusting processes to accommodate all individuals of diverse backgrounds**. These processes include a **care committee** comprised of staff, caregivers, and individuals we serve. This committee guides decision-making regarding how services are offered and continuous improvement efforts.

Project Overview

Example: *Project is fully described* (Slide 21)

is seeking financial support in the amount of $45,000 via the Wisconsin DHS ARPA Medicaid HCBS Grant for **assistance with the recruitment, hiring, and employment of a part-time staff member to expand health and fitness services to individuals with disabilities in Wisconsin**. More specifically, **### will emphasize and encourage applicants with a physical disability to apply for the part-time position to improve representation of individuals with physical disabilities in the health & fitness industry, reduce barriers to access for employment for individuals with disabilities, and expand overall HCBS services for individuals with disabilities seeking to improve their health & well-being**.

The early success and overwhelming demand for ### through the Children's Long Term Support waiver and IRIS Program is indicative of a **strong demand for community-based and home-based health & fitness programming for individuals with disabilities in Wisconsin**, particularly as we emerge from a COVID pandemic that has isolated and negatively affected the health of individuals with disabilities at a much higher rate. Thus, through part-time employment, ### can empower and engage with individuals with disabilities on a larger scale.

Key milestones and deliverables will be strategically monitored to assess, reflect, and strategize for attaining organizational success in improving health and fitness services for individuals with disabilities in Wisconsin. Key milestones and deliverables are proposed as follows:

- By January 15, 2023 – xxx
- By February 15, 2023 – xxx
- By March 21, 2023 – xxx
- By May 1, 2023 – xxx
- By August 1, 2024 – xxx
- By September 1, 2024 – xxx

Example: *Project is not fully described* (Slide 22)

Our project is **recovery and rebuilding staff education and ongoing training as we continue to make our way through the Covid-19 pandemic**. Recruiting and retaining staff has been very challenging these last two years. Our residents are impacted negatively when we have high turnover, or we are short-staffed. These are the milestones we hope to achieve if given the grant:

1. Maintain 100% staffing levels at all times.
2. Provide excellent training both initially and ongoing.
3. Reduce staff turnover to under 20% annually.
4. Create a referral bonus program to encourage existing staff to help bring in new people.
5. Create a longevity bonus program to lower turnover.
6. Create an attendance bonus program to decrease shift shortages and its impact on residents and fellow staff members.
7. Provide current and potential staff with competitive wages.

As mentioned in an earlier question, **our promise to the residents we care for is to provide them with the best care and to integrate them into the community they live in**. The greatest barrier to keeping this promise is staff shortages and or poorly trained staff due to shortages. This project would help us eliminate these barriers and allow us to provide the care and services the residents deserve.

Example: *Project strongly aligns with CMS requirements for how ARPA funds can be used* (Slide 23)

This project will serve as the example of **full community integration and participation**. The community is all around us and this project will provide access to participation, inclusion and fulfillment. Additionally, this project creates a path to unique service delivery and builds on what we've learned about the post-COVID workforce; embracing flexibility and creativity, and the importance of community connections to **reduce loneliness and isolation**.

This project will diversify **support to reduce social isolation and increase connections due to COVID**, increase access across the state, cutting across rural and urban areas, with providers of differing size.

Example: *Project does not align with CMS requirements for how ARPA funds can be used* (Slide 24)

Our goal with the shortage of family homes, we already have these, but we are still short. We intend to expand our service by adding to the services we already have and offer to the community-based residential facilities. We will partner with local health professionals for our services as we intend to kick off the project. This organizational strategy and vision will provide reliable and quality services that allows you the freedom to services.

Our strategy for delivery is: Quality Environment: Our services offer direct access to the enriching environment where they will have many opportunities to participate in the heart and soul of this vibrant community: **Our company will partner with health professionals on standby to offer home care services**. Quality Housing: Each apartment home is complete with built-in emergency communication systems, individually controlled air-conditioning, and heating units, as well as fully equipped kitchens, picturesque views, and more. For our patients, will achieve is: 1. Regular meals, proper nutrition Regular meals and proper nutrition are essential. 2. Secure Environment Our participants will no longer need to worry about your older family member's safety. Care homes offer a supervised and safe environment. The staff is trained and available around the clock to cater to the residents. 3. Supervised Medication Our participants will no longer need to worry about their older family members' safety. Care homes offer a supervised and safe environment. Our staff is trained and available around the clock to cater to the residents. 4. Comfort Older adults lack the physical strength and motivation to keep a clean and comfortable home stocked with all essential supplies. They also handle the housekeeping and logistics, providing the residents with all our services.

Example: *Project has a plan to address potential barriers* (Slide 25)

Achieving success in the implementation and facilitation of the proposed project is dependent on the development of strategic and achievable goals, monitoring key milestones, and partaking in continuous self-reflection to fine-tune business operations. **While barriers to success are a possibility for all business operations, #### minimizes risk of error or failure through enactment of a rigorous program sustainability plan**. The #### program sustainability plan includes five primary phases:

1. Mission & Strategic Goals Development
2. Staff Recruitment & Training
3. Funding & Community Engagement
4. Program Implementation
5. Feedback, Areas for Growth, & Restructuring

These five phases of sustainability allow for active and continuous reflection & monitoring of programmatic implementation, creating opportunity at each phase to reduce the impact of any potential barriers to success.

The two primary barriers to success that have been identified for the proposed project include:

1. Smaller labor market available for pursuing part-time employment

2. Extended timeline for providing sufficient onboarding education & certification training to part-time employee for provision of fitness services

plans to mitigate the above barriers for project success through implementation of the program sustainability plan as listed above, but more specifically through ***establishing strategic checkpoints and operations to optimize job applicant recruitment and training for maximizing HCBS recipient impact***.

To address the first barrier (i.e., smaller labor market available for pursuing part-time employment), ### proposes strategic marketing & advertisement of job postings to applicants pursuing higher-level education at a university campus, particularly through campus clubs & resource programs including adaptive fitness programs, adaptive physical education, recreation specialty degrees, kinesiology and exercise physiology programs, pre-physical therapy students, and more. Many of these applicants will have responsibilities for attending school but would benefit greatly from pursuing a job with mid-range pay to reduce financial burdens while also building strong experience, education, and knowledge in providing fitness programming for individuals with disabilities in a community-based setting. Additionally, job postings will be targeted and emphasized for applicants who identify as living with a disability, as many individuals with disabilities lack equal opportunity to employment in the fitness industry despite equal opportunity laws across the United States. Through these targeted marketing & recruitment strategies, it is projected the labor market will be sufficient for supporting a part-time employed position as proposed in this project.

To address the second barrier (i.e., extended timeline for providing sufficient onboarding education & certification training to part-time employee for provision of fitness services), ### proposes providing direct reimbursement and paid time for preparing and sitting for the Certified Inclusive Fitness Trainer exam, as well as supporting paid travel & time for attaining continuing education courses during the initial month of employment. It is the intention to hire an individual with strong experience in fitness training for individuals with disabilities, however, it is understood that additional training is important for provision of strong services for HCBS recipients in the community-setting.

Project Impact

Example: *Project provides strong benefit to HCBS participants or the overall system (participants, families, direct care workers, etc.)* (Slide 27)

By engaging workers in ADRCs, MCOs, and CLTSs, they will be better able to identify and refer targeted supports and services for this disability population. Parents and caregivers will gain more effective caregiving strategies and a better understanding of this specific disability. For Medicaid beneficiaries, our initiatives will improve circumstances by educating family members or professionals and increase the number of recipients. Our outcomes will improve identification techniques as well as the associated intervention strategies that aim to mitigate the disadvantages.

Approximately how many individual HCBS Medicaid participants will benefit?	Approximately how many families of individuals receiving HCBS will benefit?	Approximately how many other individuals, not receiving HCBS will benefit?
100	50	No answer
Approximately how many HCBS providers will benefit?	**Approximately how many direct care workers of HCBS providers will benefit?**	
100	50	

Example: *Project includes a complete plan to create awareness* (Slide 28)

Our project will be promoted via direct contact and advertising with community stakeholders, organizations such as CLTS case managers, Chambers of Commerce, and local related providers (speech therapists, schools, daycares, etc.) as well as marketing with organizations that offer local

advertising opportunities and social media ad campaigns. *We also plan to conduct an Open House evening* during which caregivers and community members can see the project and new location in person, ask questions of the staff members, and personally interact with and experience our space.

Based on previous experience, we found that direct face-to-face networking with community resources was an effective way to broadcast our mission and increase awareness of our services. By meeting case managers and other local providers in person or taking the time to personally make a phone call, we began to build relationships *that in turn supported their mission to serve children and special needs families. Importantly, a well-advertised Open House event is a great opportunity to demonstrate that ### is a community-organization that operates with integrity and values*. We want families to feel confident that sending their children to #### will not only be a safe, but also an enriching, part of their day. These values are best communicated through direct contact and opportunities for open dialogue with caregivers.

Project Impact Evaluation- Logic Model

Example: *Exemplary logic model and evaluation* (Slides 30-31)

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes		
What is invested	**Activities** *What is done*	**Participation** *Who is reached*	**Short-Term Outcomes** *What are the short-term results*	**Intermediate Outcomes** *What are the intermediate results*	**Long-Term Outcomes** *What are the long-term results*

Input	Outputs: Activities	Outputs: Participation
Staff Bonuses Grant funding through the ARPA HCBS Grant Staff Time Sanitizing Equipment	Facilitate 8 person-centered presentations Disseminate sign on and 6mo staff bonuses Develop 2 event marketing plans Conduct daily sanitation	10 Direct care workers and managers of direct care workers 4 individuals receiving HCBS
Short Term Outcomes	**Intermediate Outcomes**	**Long-Term Outcomes**
10 Direct care workers and managers will understand how to implement and support a person-centered plan	Updated Bonus Structured service plan policies, updated to reflect person-centered planning and processes Number of Direct care workers who implemented person-centered plans and processes	19 clients, members, and individuals who lead a meaningful and productive life Local jobs and care Trained and ready workforce

Assumptions	External Factors
Individuals with disabilities desire an increased opportunity of self-employment with the flexibility to work the hours they choose, be their own boss, etc. The project can support more individuals to achieve Competitive Integrated Employment. A new, more flexible DSP role may appeal to the new generation of the workforce and bring talent into long-term care as a profession.	Ability to hire self-employed staff. Individual interests in self-employment, education of guardians and family.

Evaluation
As a part of the project, we will evaluate: 1. The number of individuals who pursue/achieve self-employment 2. Success of partnership with Mid-State Technical College

Example: *Developing logic model* (Slide 32)

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes		
What is invested	**Activities** *What is done*	**Participation** *Who is reached*	**Short-Term Outcomes** *What are the short-term results*	**Intermediate Outcomes** *What are the intermediate results*	**Long-Term Outcomes** *What are the long-term results*

Input	Outputs: Activities	Outputs: Participation
Staff time, expertise, equipment	Training, quality care, development of quality services	Providers, expertise, decision making
Short Term Outcomes	**Intermediate Outcomes**	**Long-Term Outcomes**
Motivation, awareness, skills, aspirations	Making sure our residents have better quality of life	Environments and capacity of staff

Assumptions	External Factors
Better care for our residents/members	Understand and better knowledge
Evaluation	

Budget

Example: *Budget clearly defines and justifies costs* (Slide 35)

Milestone, Phase, or Deliverable 1: Create socially relevant community-based training presentations for the service region. The incoming CD shall collaborate with rural community organizations to design electronic and print-based training materials. Examples of community members expected to benefit from the training are Fire/police departments, emergency response agencies, school districts, and parents/caregivers. The key deliverable is a completed training package tailored to three community sectors.

Projected start date 1	Staff Hours	Material Costs 1	Administrative Costs 1	Notes (if applicable)
Mar. 1, 2023	173hrs	$2,500.00 USD	$1,376.00 USD	Administrative costs for 32 hours of oversights by the Regional Director

Actual or projected end date 1	Do you have an end date for project step 1?	Staff Costs 1	Other Costs 1	Total Costs 1
Apr. 30, 2023	Yes	$6,500.00 USD	No answer	$10,376.00 USD

Example: *Budget does not clearly define and justify costs* (Slide 36)

Project Step 1:

Milestone, Phase, or deliverable 1: Staffing

Projected start date 1	Staff Hours	Material Costs 1	Administrative Costs 1	Notes (if applicable)
Nov. 1, 2022	450hrs	$20,000.00 USD	$2,500.00 USD	No answer

Do you have an end date for project step 1?	Staff Costs 1	Other Costs 1	Total Costs 1
No	$20,00.00 USD	$0.00 USD	$42,500.00 USD

Project Step 2:

Milestone, Phase, or Deliverable 2*:* Equipment

Projected start date 2	Staff Hours	Material Costs 2	Administrative Costs 2	Notes (if applicable)
Nov. 1, 2022	450hrs	$60,000.00 USD	$2,500.00 USD	No answer

Do you have an end date for project step 1?	Staff Costs 2	Other Costs 2	Total Costs 2
No	$15,00.00 USD	No answer	$77,500.00 USD

*Project Step 3***:**

Milestone, Phase, or Deliverable 3: ADULT FAMILY HOME

Projected start date 3	Staff Hours	Material Costs 3	Administrative Costs 3	Notes (if applicable)
Dec. 1, 2022	No answer	No answer	No answer	No answer

Do you have an end date for project step 3?	Staff Costs 3	Other Costs 3	Total Costs 3
Yes	$20,00.00 USD	$18,000.00 USD	$38,000.00 USD

Actual or projected end date 1
Apr. 5, 2023

Extra Credit

Example: *Clearly describes that leadership and key personnel include individuals with diverse backgrounds* (Slide 38)

Our leadership board includes individuals that are Asian, African American, Latino and LGBTQ. Not all of the individuals are native English speakers, and they represent several different faith traditions. Our Bylaws require that a percentage of board members be parents or immediate family members of a person with a disability, which directly involves individuals receiving the services perspective. Senior leadership also represents a variety of professional disciplines, from engineering to hospitality, or law to marketing. We intentionally seek diverse backgrounds with the knowledge that, like Lincoln's "cabinet of rivals," different perspectives lead to a rich pool of ideas. (It is also notable that an 8-year effort to increase diversity in organization leadership has resulted in expansion of clients from different racial/ethnic/socioeconomic groups utilizing our services.)

Training in justice, equity, diversity and inclusion takes place year-round: our leadership team of youth volunteers provides this training in schools and workplaces, and they delve extensively into these topics. Summer camp staff receive a week of training which focuses on hands-on strategies to promote inclusivity among people of different backgrounds at camp. An annual joint retreat for staff and board members goes beyond operational issues to deeply discuss the work of other organizations.

Example: *Project has strong sustainability after the grant funding concludes* (Slide 39)

has *several ways to sustain the project* once the grant dollars are exhausted. With new revenue sources created through new hires by this project, the company will then be able to support additional clients. This then will generate a margin to sustain the additional hire project after grant funds are used. *Secondly, more staff means that our clients themselves will become more self-sustaining with improvement and coordination of care*. We would then be able to aid other individuals in the same amount of time, therefore, helping with revenue and a benefit to the individuals we assist. Lastly, we have a large fundraising event yearly that helps with unforeseen costs of the hiring project.

Example: *Diverse populations will benefit from this project* (Slide 40)

Community Development and Empowerment: Managing threatening confrontations is designed to provide a framework for conceptualizing and understanding behavior escalation. The training stages of escalation are described that feature professional actors with disabilities and are based on common scenarios experienced by caregivers. Guidance on the process of engaging in thoughtful support planning, but also offers a simple format how to document agreed-upon support strategies that are positive, pro-active, and based in positive, respectful relationships. The training also acknowledges and stresses that behavior support needs to be person-centered and individualized and does not claim to offer a simple answer to at times complex challenges. It does, however, empower caregivers and support teams to participate and engage in positive behavior support planning by providing a roadmap of how to do so.

Language Access: Training materials are available in Spanish and upon request can also be translated into other, common foreign languages spoken in Wisconsin and accessible, alternative formats. The Zoom platform used for the proposed trainings allows for live translation. If sufficient interest is expressed – live Spanish interpretation could be provided.

Cultural Sensitivity and Responsiveness: The presenter has more than 25 years of experience working directly with individuals with challenging behaviors including family members and paid caregivers from a wide range of diverse backgrounds. Positive behavior support as taught through managing threatening confrontations is a collaborative, relationship-based effort that needs to be sensitive to both the individual, his/her caregiver's needs, and their respective backgrounds and cultural sensitivities. The format of a large online training with a state-wide audience admittedly limits individualized interactions and makes it harder for participants. Offering the described consultation times after the trainings hopefully provides an opportunity and encourage participants to engage in Q&A or to share their unique perspective in a smaller setting.