

**Suggestions for Grant Writing Tips from the
WSO Action Grant Writing Handbook
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Introduce the Project

Example:

Historically, Richland County was populated mostly by dairy farmers, a rate that has plummeted in the past three decades especially, but beginning at least three decades earlier, while the number of dairy cows and their rate of production has increased significantly. Lambda Chapter's 2024 ACTION Proposal will focus on Literacy of immigrants who migrated from a state in the Northern part of Mexico to a fairly large five-generation dairy farm in Richland County. The immigrants no doubt came with different type of statuses in the U.S. The Literacy goal will focus on bilingual Spanish and English literacy as we create a program to encourage their Spanish literacy while increasing their English literacy, a pattern that has often been characteristic of first- and second-generation immigrants to the U.S. of our European ancestors. The goal is bilingual language literacy at this point. * Two members of the chapter speak Spanish, one a Spanish teacher. All members currently active, about 15 without health issues, will be involved in the project working with community partners, the local library and a local bookstore. The library will provide space for the immigrants to come and read aloud to family groups as well as a space for some instruction in the English language potentially by both chapter members and a member of the library staff. The chapter will work with the local book store to see if the project can provide a set amount books to the Latino families at a reasonable rate. Interviews with the participants and brief written and oral exercises will serve to identify the initial level of Spanish and English reading knowledge at the beginning point as well as at the end of the project to determine what level of learning has been accomplished.

*I currently live in a retirement community with a significant Latino staff that are bilingual. It seems important to see whether the farm worker immigrants retain this pattern or gradually change as did some of our European ancestors. As a professor at UWGB and in the UW Colleges, I taught undergraduate students U.S. ethnic group immigrants integration patterns into the U.S. over generations. One thing I discovered was it is an important issue on which not to make assumptions. Doing their multigenerational family history projects, it was not too surprising that some students found that their grandparents did not speak much English and that a parent or both had some degree of bilingual knowledge, ancestral as well as English. And that some students were eager to learn the language of their ancestors, to become more bilingual.

Identify the Literacy Element and the Action Plan.

Example:

From 1960 to 2020, Wisconsin lost 98,900 dairy farms (Wisconsin State Farmer, August, 2023). A closer look at the data by decade shows the nature of the decline as follows: 1960: 105,000; 1970: 64,000; 1980: 45,000; 1990: 34,000; 2000: 21,000; 2020: 6,533. Production and herd size had the opposite trend. For example, between 1935 and 2017, production per cow per day went from 1.2 gallons to 7.4 gallons of milk and the number of cows producing that milk went from 24.6 million milking cows on 5.2 million farms to 8.7 million cows in only the top 23 milk producing states produced 202.5 billion pounds of milk or 23.5 billion gallons (Research and Science, 2020). Not surprisingly, by the last decade of the 20th century, many families sought an alternative, “a day job”! Often the first member to have a day job was the female member of the farm team (Wilkening, UW-Madison sociologist, beginning in the 1960s). In addition, two changes were underway, small farms merged and those remaining used new technology. In California, Dutch dairymen built mega dairies, and today, we see the same pattern in Wisconsin. Mega dairies employ hired labor, often from other countries. And farm kids? A few stayed in farming and expanding their businesses, but as the numbers show, most left the business and began attending universities in large numbers and pursued non-farm careers.

Some general observations: It is important to provide data that set the stage for your project as it relates to a need in your community, providing reading materials to immigrant farm workers in the language of their homeland, Spanish, and of their country of temporary labor, English. Show how goal one is accomplished by providing children’s books in Spanish. For goal two, providing children’s books and meeting with Lambda chapter members for children’s reading sessions. For teens and adult instructional books in English, periodic instructional sessions with Lambda and collaborative partner members and arranging a social event or two for speaking English with those two groups. Of course, there is interaction in English with members of the farm family for which they work as immigrant farm workers taking on the role of those who leave the farm for other sectors of the labor market.

I emphasize the identification of types of interaction with the target group as I think of proposals, I have read that focused on immigrant groups in urban settings, without naming their country of origin and type of employment and how those factors might limit the type of interaction with the target group on the key issue, the literacy focus of their proposal. For example, what is the value of putting English language books in the hands of immigrant groups to which one can also offer English instruction and social interaction. That is the reason that the body of the proposal needs to include a contextual setting most of the time. Why do I say that? Because things like occupations may have a major role in how one can offer language services, in general, or by chapter members or members of collaborative organizations. One example that

has occurred to me is important to consider is whether there could be a standard time for any group training offered by ongoing programs or even convenient time for individualized training by older residents to fit with busy family's schedule to either read to groups of children or provide lessons for adults. Would seem to be important aspect of projects to consider that focus and how that might be accomplish, and if not, whether just providing books in English is a model that is likely to achieve the literacy goal.

Indicate an Appropriate and Well-designed Evaluation Method

Based on my reading of proposals over the past two years, my MAJOR CONCERN in the Evaluation area is the rule for what constitutes neutrally valid questions to properly access a project. In other words, not using what in research is called "a leading question" such as: **What are the reasons that we had such a successful project? Or some form of a leading question.**

Evaluation is to *determine whether the project was successful or not, or a bit of both*. Hence, we need evaluation questions that asks to what extent were there any successful elements, OR in what ways, if any, do you see the chapter ACTION Grant project successful and in what ways might it need some changes to address areas of weakness or elements that seemed best be eliminated or perhaps elements to be added.

Example:

For the immigrant farm workers, after the first month of readings at the library, read the following questions to parents that are on a sheet of paper where they can put answers OR try to hold a discussion OR perhaps might do a general one as below and then discover that enough variation that better to divide into two or three groups and perhaps in different locations and times, etc.

Sample questions:

1. How often did you read one of the Spanish books to your children? Daily, 2-3 times per week, 4-5 times per week?
2. Who read the stories? Mother, Father, took turns, both were involved at bedtime, none of the above, please write your pattern or tell it to us.
3. In this period, did you also read stories in English to your children? Yes, no, tried to read part of the story over a few nights, Other, please tell us the pattern.

4. In this period, how often did you spent time with the English materials provided for your self-study?

5. If infrequently or not at all, what was/were the major reason?

6. How might we be more helpful in your progress? Are there perhaps certain issues that are the most difficult that we should focus on in the next month?

It would be good to have an example of a project to discuss. For example, what are all the areas on which we need to focus the evaluation. In my farm case example, both the immigrant laborers and the farm owners who hired them need to participate in the evaluation on degree of bilingual knowledge and ability easily to handle English of the immigrant workers X months after the beginning of the Lambda project, shall we say 6 or better 9 months? Or should be do measurements every 2 months as it might be helpful to know and make changes along the way? Might it give both groups' ideas about changes that would be most helpful and lead to a better and quicker comfortable level? If chapters members work with the children, should the evaluation be based on a journal of time frame progress as well as a final oral or written assessment? The same if they worked with the adults. No doubt, the journal process might also be very informative for any group outside of the chapter that were involved in interaction and/or instruction, or even a periodic oral review with a chapter member. Again, not only the timing issue but critical attention to the nature and quality of the questions are key factors in an evaluation.

A final observation on literacy focused community projects.

Ideas that I have seen emerge in some proposals suggest collaborative projects that address issues of interest to the retirement community in small towns and surrounding rural areas as well as suburban and urban populations.

Namely, projects that might involve community members from a variety of groups that could support directly projects important to literacy. These include reading to various age groups on a regular basis in a manner that is accessible to a range of local residents. This is clearly the type of project that has been identified in several communities where retired women and men live and with community groups whose members are men and might also be tapped for participation.