

How to Evaluate a Proposal Through the Funder's Eyes



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(Taken from Winning Grants by Mim Carlson)

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Background on the We Care Foundation

The We Care Foundation is a nonprofit grantmaking corporation of a community of religious women in the United States that set aside an endowment to be used to fund projects assisting needy people anywhere in the world. The purpose of the We Care Foundation is to empower people in ministry with the need to carry on works that improve the quality of life, effect positive changes in attitudes, and change structures that perpetuate inhumane and unjust conditions.

Once a year, the board of directors awards grants to organizations for short-term projects and long-term programs that address:

- The food, clothing, and shelter needs of the poor
- The health care needs of the sick
- The education needs of the uneducated
- The survival needs of the displaced
- The advocacy needs of the oppressed
- The conversion needs of the oppressor
- The psychological needs of the suffering
- The spiritual needs of all people

Grants are only made to charitable, nonprofit, nongovernment organizations with proof of tax-exempt status as a 501 (c) (3) organization under the Internal Revenue Code.

Only one request each year from an organization will be accepted. Requests exceeding \$15,000 will not be accepted.

Grants are awarded for a one year period. Grantees may reapply, but the board will not fund the same project or program beyond two consecutive years.

Requests will not be accepted for capital expenditures, tuition, scholarships, fundraising drives, emergency relief, or endowments.

Proposals are limited to six pages (single-spaced), with no cover letter or attachments.

- **Critique Sheet Used by Board Members of the We Care Foundation**

Credibility Component

- _____ Establishes credibility of agency as a good investment
- _____ Establishes role of contact person
- _____ Establishes qualifications of agency and staff in areas of activities for which funds are requested

Need Component

- _____ States a problem of reasonable dimension
- _____ Supports a client need with relevant data
- _____ Establishes the project/program's current need for funds

Objectives Component

- _____ Describes measurable outcomes to be achieved
- _____ Appears feasible in light of agency resources
- _____ Is Achievable within time frame of grant

Methods Component

- _____ Describes how objectives will be achieved
- _____ Includes staffing, timelines, and client selection
- _____ Appears cost-effective

Evaluation Component

- _____ Tells process for evaluating accomplishment of objectives
- _____ Tells process for evaluating and modifying methods
- _____ Tells who will be doing the evaluation
- _____ Tells how data will be gathered, analyzed, and reported

Future Funding Component

- _____ Tell plan for solvency after grant
- _____ Seems probable work will continue beyond grand period

Budget Component

- _____ Is complete and accurate
- _____ Seems sufficient to cover cost of methods and achieve objectives
- _____ Indicates how our funds will be used
- _____ Provides information on other sources of income
- _____ Will be balanced with addition of our grant

Individual Response:

I support funding: _____ fully _____ partially _____ not at all _____ not sure _____

Group Response:

\$Requested _____ \$ Granted _____ Conditions: yes _____

No _____

Comments:

▪ **SAMPLE PROPOSAL**

This is an actual proposal submitted to the We Care Foundation. The only changes made were in the name of the funding source and the names of the agency and personnel submitting the proposal.

SUMMARY

The Cebola Early Childhood Center is a project that attempts to moderate the negative impact of isolation and poverty on a population of Hispanic preschool children in the mountain village of Cebola, in northern New Mexico. The project, implemented by a well-trained indigenous staff, provides a family-oriented child development program giving these children needed early intervention, supporting the development of self-confidence and high

self-esteem, and providing a basic, thorough foundation for future success in school.

Community empowerment and self-determination have always been strong components of this project. Initiated as a cooperative venture among the women in this village, the project was conceived and organized to address the educational needs and the futures of their children to counteract school failure, and to assist in the successful transition to life in the world outside their village.

The women in this village were instrumental in organizing, establishing, and staffing the center, and a local board of women is now directing the operations. The staff has been deeply committed to obtaining excellence in the early childhood curriculum. Ongoing evaluation assures the progress of the children. A close working relationship with the local school district also provides feedback regarding the adjustment and the performance of these children once they enter public schools.

The project is funded mainly through private monies. Fundraising is a continuous, ongoing effort. A grant from We Care will assist in the survival of this project. We are requesting \$5,000. This funding will be used for costs related to personnel, non-personnel, and further staff training.

INTRODUCTION

This grass-roots program attempts to moderate the negative impact of combined isolation and poverty on rural Hispanic children of preschool age in the village of Cebola, New Mexico. The Cebola Early Childhood Center (CECC) is in its sixth year of operation. It began as a parent-organized cooperation to answer the educational needs of young children in this remote village. In 1984, (CECC) was given endorsement by the award of CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) monies, through which early

childhood facility was constructed and equipped and local women were employed and trained as early childhood workers. The project has survived on private funding since the termination of the (single year) CDBG grant. It has created services where there was none and provided training and employment to individuals (both women and the elderly) who would otherwise have remained unemployed.

CECC provides family-oriented educational services to preschool children and their parents. The program provides a stimulating environment for children that addresses their intellectual, physical, and social-emotional growth and assures the in-depth mastery of early development states. The goal of this project is to prepare these children for the future, fostering their self-confidence and high self-esteem as well as providing a basic, thorough foundation for future success in school.

The children who attend the center and participate in a child development program are supervised by trained paraprofessionals. Training for these women, who are indigenous to the village of Cebola, has been extensive. Recently they were awarded their CDA degrees. (The CDA is a nationally recognized credential in child development.) A foster grandparent program is also a thriving component of our project, with half of the teaching staff being senior citizens of the village who are available to the children. The program has been licensed and has been used as a model site, demonstrating excellence both in educational programming and as an early childhood facility. In addition to providing high-quality early childhood education services, the project has been accepted into the State of New Mexico's Child Care Food Program, which provides funding for daily nutritious lunches.

The project director, Becky Smith, is well qualified for her position. She is a lifelong resident of the Cebola community and related to every member of the CECC clientele both through familial and historical ties. She has been

trained extensively in child development and has recently earned her CDA degree. Throughout her life she has demonstrated community leadership as well as strong organizational and administrative skills. The contact person, Katherine Jones, is the chairperson of the CECC board of directors and is the key community person governing the project.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Cebola is a remote village located in Rio Arriba Country in northern New Mexico. High unemployment, substandard housing, and low per capita income are characteristic of this region. The population of the area is predominately Hispanic. Prior to implementation of the CECC program, the community had no educational resources for young children. Through the cooperative efforts of the mothers of this village, CECC emerged as an answer to these needs. It continues to be a grass-root venture--- that is, all staff are members of the community and a parent board is active in directing the center's operation.

The principal problem that this addresses is described best as a problem attendant to isolation and poverty. Isolation and poverty in this rural and predominantly Hispanic region combine to produce a situation for children that are exceedingly difficult to master. Because of the poverty, isolation, and other drawbacks associated with being of a minority group, speaking a different language, and growing up in a rural area, these children will continually face increasingly difficult obstacles through-out their development. School failure has often been the tragic result of this constellation. The CECC program provides a strong educational foundation for these children and an opportunity to deeply master their earliest

developmental stages. They are given an “early win,” thus setting the stage for self-confidence and future success in school.

CECC exists on a very small and efficient budget. As indicated in the budget, the anticipated financial need for each program year is estimated to be under \$25,000. However, because of this geographical isolation, there are few resources available to maintain a program such as this one. We Care finding is needed to assist in this project’s survival.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective is to continue to serve an estimated twenty-five children during the coming months with the same high quality we have provided in preceding years. As stated above, the goal of this project is to prepare these children for the future, fostering their self-confidence and high self-esteem as well as providing a basic, thorough foundation for future success in school.

The secondary objective is to continue to serve the parents and/or other family members most responsible for the care of these children with useful types of education, training, and related services that will best serve them in fulfilling their parenting roles.

METHODS

CECC serves a population of preschool Hispanic children who reside in the remote village of Cebola, in Northern New Mexico. These children begin attending the center very early in their lives, often visiting with their mothers when they are infants and toddlers. Parent involvement is an important

component of the program. As the parents attend the center with their child, observe the trained staff interacting with their children, and participate in the child development program, the parents absorb child development concepts in a natural way. An observation room is available for parent use. The staff is also available to consult with parents regarding educational and developmental issues pertaining to their children. An estimated twenty-five children and their families are served each year.

The objectives of this program are realized through the activities of the early childhood program. The center addresses the educational needs of the whole child: the emotional, social, intellectual, physical, and creative aspects of each child's development. The early childhood environment is organized into learning centers, which include (1) the gross motor (large muscle) center, (2) the dramatic play center, (3) the cognitive development center, (4) the constructive play center, (5) the art center, and (6) the book center. When a child arrives at the program he or she is encouraged to explore and use the different areas according to his or her individual interests. During the course of the day, children also participate in a routine that includes clean-up activities, group activities such as reading and singing together, a nourishing lunch, and outdoor play. Activities are selected to meet the full range of the child's educational needs. Providing a stimulating, well equipped setting complemented by the skills of a well-trained staff is the key to achieving the project's objectives.

The CECC program is staffed by two early-childhood workers. These paraprofessionals are trained in child development and are indigenous to the village of Cebola. They have both recently earned CDA degrees. (CDA is a nationally recognized credential in child development.) Additionally staff support is provided by the two senior citizens from the community who function as foster grandparents.

The strong Hispanic cultural elements of the program create an educational climate that enhances each child's self-worth. The indigenous staff is able to provide a program in which Spanish is spoken as the primary language (English is spoken also, but is secondary) and in which Hispanic traditions and cultural values are important components. The child's first school experience is, then, one in which his own culture is valued and functions as a prominent axis of the educational program.

The center operates on a school-year calendar, with one exception. During the coldest winter months, when roads are often impassable, the parents decided that the center would be closed. This means, essentially, that the center operates each fall from September 1 until Christmas, and each spring from March 1 through early June.

EVALUATION

Two forms of evaluation will be conducted for the program. The first form consists of an ongoing evaluation in which the staff meets on a regular basis with a supervisor. The supervisor observes the program and reviews the children's records. Progress notes, assessment forms, and skill charts are used to document and record the educational progress of each child. Meetings between supervisor and staff provide an opportunity for discussion and making decisions regarding needed method modifications. The supervisor is an individual who served as staff trainer during previous program years. Her selection for evaluation is based on her in-depth familiarity with the program and on her extensive training and experience in the fields of child development and education.

The second form of evaluation is an annual process of comparing accomplishments with stated objectives. The El Rito Mountain School District is asked to conduct the annual evaluation. A professional evaluator from the local school district is requested each year because of the school's interest in

the program and also because of the children attending CECC eventually become students in this district.

FUTURE FUNDING

As indicated in our budget, our anticipated financial need for each program year is estimated to be under \$25,000. Our project survives from year to year through our financial efficiency with the funding we are able to obtain. Each year local organizations within the northern New Mexico territory are approached for support, as are many out- of-state agencies. We plan to continue funding our organization in this manner as long as it is necessary. In the past we have brought our need to the attention of area legislators, and we will continue to do so in the future in hopes that eventually a permanent funding source for this type of activity will be established through state or country government.

Budget
CEBOLA EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER
JULY 1, 1990 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1991

Line Items	Budget	Revenue Secured	Other requests	Request from We Care
Personnel				
Salaries	\$9,072		\$6,572	\$2,500
Fringe benefits	\$1,882		\$1,582	\$300

Consultant	\$3,000		\$2,500	\$500
Contract services	\$900		\$900	
Non-personnel				
Telephone	\$720		\$620	\$100
Travel	\$1,347		\$1,047	\$300
Office supplies	\$90		\$90	
Xeroxing/duplicating	\$100		\$80	\$20
Postage	\$120		\$100	\$20
Maintenance supplies	\$90		\$90	
Consumable supplies	\$300		\$240	\$60
Educational equipment	\$520		\$420	\$100
Licensing fees	\$55		\$55	
Insurance	\$2,160		\$1,760	\$400
Utilities	\$1,200		\$1,000	\$200
Nutrition	\$1,400	\$1,400		
Training 3 Conf. & 1 class	\$1,946		\$1,446	\$500
Totals	\$24,902	\$1,400	\$18,502	\$5,000
Percentages	100 percent	6 percent	74 percent	20 percent
Pending Sources			Projected date of notification	
Public Welfare Foundation			2/90	
Sullivan Foundation			2/90	
Save the Children			8/90	
Rio Arriba County			6/90	

Now evaluate this proposal by completing the We Care Foundation critique sheet.

After completing your evaluation of the Cebola Early Childhood Center proposal, you may want to conduct the same kind of review of your own proposal. You should assume your proposal meets the basic guidelines of the funder.