Developing the Needs Statement

DEFINING THE PROBLEM - Make reviewers care

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

■ “The problem is…”
  – State the Problem

■ “The problem is caused by…”
  – State the cause of the problem

■ “Long-Term and without intervention…”
  – State the long-term consequences if no intervention/solution occurs

TOOLS TO ILLUSTRATE NEED
Developing the Needs Statement

Choose facts and statistics that best support the project.
- Should be clear and support your argument
- Don’t be generic or broad
- PRESENT DATA THAT IS ACCURATE
- Information should relate to your project
- Balance between information and scale of your project
- Use comparative statistics and research, when possible.

Give the reader hope.
- The picture you paint should not be so grim that the solution appears hopeless.
- Avoid overstatement and overly emotional appeals.
- Focus on you can help your geographic area.

Determine whether it is reasonable to portray the need as acute. Is the funder paying more attention to your proposal because either the problem you address is worse than others or the solution you propose makes more sense than others?
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- **Decide whether you can demonstrate that your program addresses the need differently or better than other projects that preceded it.** If possible, you should make it clear that you are cognizant of, and on good terms with, others doing work in your field. Keep in mind that today's funders are very interested in collaboration. They may even ask why you are not collaborating with those you view as key competitors.

- **Avoid circular reasoning.** In circular reasoning, you present the absence of your solution as the actual problem. Then your solution is offered as the way to solve the problem. For example, the circular reasoning for building a community swimming pool might go like this: "The problem is that we have no pool in our community. Building a pool will solve the problem." A more persuasive case would cite what a pool has meant to a neighboring community, permitting it to offer recreation, exercise, and physical therapy programs. The statement might refer to a survey that underscores the target audience's planned usage of the facility and conclude with the connection between the proposed usage and potential benefits to enhance life in the community.