

## Guidance for How to Write a Proposal

### **Proposal Type**

There are two types of proposals: those that address *policies and guidelines* or those that are *funding requests for projects*.

### **Proposal**

- One to two sentences that summarize the proposal and state the question to the Council.
- Please include the desired goal.
- How do the results of achieving this goal mesh with the Lincoln Options philosophy?

### **Brief History**

If needed, a description of why and how this proposal came about.

- Has the Community Council or Lincoln Staff tried to address the issue before? What kind of history is involved? What was the outcome? Why is this the time to address/re-address this issue?

### **Proposal Details**

Organize your ideas for resolving the issue that you have described. Think about all of variables and potential impacts and try to determine whether your solutions address all aspects of the issue.

Try to be open to ideas that you may not have thought of yourself, and don't get too attached to any specific solution just yet. It is helpful to remain as unattached as possible. Sometimes your original idea will evolve into something that looks very different from what it started as. This can be a good thing, as it reflects good consensus process.

- Describe your solution to the issue at hand.
- Seek out realistic solutions.
- Try to address all aspects of the issue.
- Be open.

### **Key elements**

- Who will be impacted by this decision? What will that potential impact be?
- Is there any element of urgency involved? If so describe.
- Try asking others how they would describe the problem. Who else may be impacted by the problem?
- Is this an ongoing project or a one-time deal?

### **Options and Costs**

Describe each of the potential solutions. It can be helpful to organize these in the form of separate options. Try to briefly describe the pros and cons of each option. Include the associated costs of each option if needed.

- Build a financial picture for your proposal
- Present a number of options and include any associated costs

## **Recommendation**

State which one of the options you think would be the best, and describe why you are picking it instead of the others.

Remember that your recommendation needs to be consented upon, so it can be helpful to try to anticipate issues that people may have and make modifications and compromises up front. You will save time and energy if you modify your recommended option and proposal to address what you know the group will probably ask you to change anyway. The goal of consensus is not to get your way, but to get everyone to agree to the way that is best for the group and the organization.

- This is a re-statement of your proposal.
- Give other options that may cover areas of potential concern for Council.

Presenting a number of options gives Council a variety of pathways toward reaching consensus, especially if the original proposal is met with resistance.

## **Implementation**

A description of how the recommended solution will be carried out. To be included: who will do the work, a timeline for completion/implementation, assessment of the need for a review period, as well as any pertinent follow-through information. If there is to be funding involved, identify whether it will come from the Options budget or external sources. If it is to be funded from the Options budget, where from within the budget will it come?

- Timeline
- Who will do the work? Point Person?
- Period of Review?
- Funding. From where and recurring?

## **Presentation of the proposal to the Council**

When you have your proposal as ready as you believe possible, have someone else review it for you. It is often the case that a clean eye will see things you may have missed. Upon completion, the proposal will need to be emailed to the Council President to be placed onto a meeting agenda. It is also essential that the sponsor of the proposal be at the meeting to present it to the Council. The Council President will be able to help guide you through the presentation process.

- Review your proposal with someone else
- Email your proposal to the Council President.
- Set up a date and time with Council President to present your proposal at a Council meeting.
- Prepare for your presentation.
- Present at a Council meeting. Be organized, open-minded and do not take Council feedback personally.

We all come to this from different walks of life and often see things very differently. Be patient and open to other ideas and differing opinions. The bottom line will always be what is best for the kids.

Do not expect an immediate decision, as it often takes multiple meetings for the council to build consensus around your proposal. Proposals, generally will be discussed and dissected at the first meeting, then a series of edits or revisions will be recommended be made to the proposal, which will then be brought back to another meeting to test for consensus. This process will continue until consensus is achieved or the proposal is dropped. It is the goal of the Council to objectively hear all proposals and build toward consensus in good faith.

Good luck, and thank you for participating in making Lincoln Options the unique program that it is.