**WRITING THE PROBLEM STATEMENT/STATEMENT OF NEED**

The Problem Statement/Statement of Need helps the reader learn about the issue. It presents the facts and evidence that sup- port the need for the project. The Problem Statement/Statement of Need section of the proposal should be succinct, yet persuasive. Like a good debater, you must assemble all of the arguments, and then present them in a logical sequence that will convince the reader of their importance. As you marshal your arguments, consider the following points:

**1. “Decide which facts or statistics best support your program.”**

Be sure the data is current and accurate. Nothing is more embarrassing than to have the funder tell you that your information is out of date or incorrect! Information that is too generic, too broad or does not relate to your program will not help you develop a winning proposal. The Problem Statement/Statement of Need should include a mix of national and local data.

**2. “Decide if you want to put your program forward as a model”**

Programs that serve as a model can be replicated - the problem you are addressing occurs in other communities. Be careful making an argument that your program will serve as a model – funders may expect you to follow through with a replication plan. If you decide that the program can serve as a model, document how the problem impacts other communities and explain how your solution can be replicated.

**3. Portray the need as acute”**

You are asking the funder to pay attention to your proposal because either the problem you address is worse than others or the solution you propose makes more sense than others. Here is an example of a balanced but weighty statement: “Drug abuse is a national problem. Each day, teenagers all over the country die from drug overdose, and in Sunshine County, Georgia, the problem is epidemic. In 2012, the city of Pleasantville experienced the highest rate of teenage drug related deaths in the nation. Hence, Pleasantville University’s proposed community-based drug prevention and intervention program is needed more in Sun- shine County than in other parts of the county.”

**Note:** The solution to the problem should not be presented in the Problem Statement section. The concluding sentence, which is the solution, should lead the reader into the next section, your program.

**4. “Give the reader hope”**

The problem should not be presented as “so grim that the situation appears hopeless” – the funder will not want to make a financial investment. Here is an example of a solid problem statement: “Colon cancer kills. However, statistics prove that regular screenings catch most colon cancer in the early stages, reducing the likelihood of death. Hence, a program to increase the number of preventive checkups will reduce the rate of deaths due to colon cancer.”