Goals for this session

Understand the purpose of progress reports—why a funder wants them

Learn the components of a progress report to a funder

Things that should not go in a progress report
Funders ask for progress reports for several reasons

To ensure communication between the grantee and the funding agency
To monitor the progress of a project; is all going according to plan?
To obtain information that is required for its own reporting
To justify its own budget requests

A progress report should contain at least the following elements:
People who worked on the project
Activities undertaken since the last report
Results obtained since the last report and their significance
Obstacles encountered and how they were (or will be) overcome
Any material changes in the project’s scope, direction, or personnel
Any “products” produced
Analysis of how expenditures compare to the original budget
Provide a list of all the people who were paid with project funds
Give full names and the sum of money that each was paid
Indicate each person’s title and what he or she did on the project
Identify special people that the funder would want to know about, e.g. former weapons scientists, young scientists, students, women
If someone was paid previously but not on this report, indicate why
If someone has been added to the project, identify him and explain why

Indicate all activities that have taken place since the last report
Experiments, data analysis
Collaborative activities—communications, visits, exchange of data
Purchase/installation of any new equipment
Travel—purpose, duration, and outcome of any trips
Results of any subcontracts
Dissemination of results—articles being prepared or submitted
Summarize any results obtained since the last report
Describe the results and how they were obtained
Give your interpretation of the results and indicate their significance
Describe how your approach or methods may have to be expanded or changed as a result of these new results
If the results were not what you expected, explain what they mean for the project; will you have to abandon a dead-end or move your research in new, promising directions?

Provide details of any obstacles you encountered and how you overcame them
If you have not yet overcome the obstacles, report in detail what you have tried and what you’re going to do next
Indicate if the work has been delayed (by how much) and how you have adjusted the work plan
If the delay affects other institutions involved in the project, describe how they have adjusted their work plans
Report any significant changes in the project’s scope, methods, or personnel
If you’ve abandoned a line of investigation, explain why, and tell what you are going to do instead
If you’ve expanded the project beyond the bounds of the initial proposal, explain why and how you are going to pay for it with the funds you have

Describe any “products” the project has produced since the last report
Publications
New methods
Diagnostics
Treatments
Prototype devices
Training of young scientists and students
List expenditures for the current period and any budgetary implications

Provide a summary of expenditures in each budget category for the period
If you are over- or underbudget in any category, explain why, and what adjustments will be made in future periods
Explain any changes in the work plan that have budgetary implications

Give the funder “good news” that it can use to justify its own budget

Emphasize the significance of new results
Relate your achievements to the overall agency mission and goals
Include interesting, memorable figures that can be used to illustrate your work
Things *not* to include in a progress report

Don’t put bad news or unpleasant surprises in a progress report; that information should not be delayed but reported to the program officer directly and immediately.

Don’t put confidential information in a progress report; some agencies make them public.

Don’t put requests in a progress report; the program officer may not read the report immediately.

Let’s review what we’ve learned…

✓ Understand why a funder requests progress reports and what information it is looking for.

✓ Learn what information to include in a progress report.

✓ Learn what information *not* to include in a progress report.

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