

How to Establish a Clear Topic and Approach

- Review the FOA (i.e. Funding Opportunity Announcement)
 - Isolate the key phrases that describe the main emphases of the federal program
 - Text search the FOA for the word “eligible.” Find the list of Eligible Activities, the list of funded Outputs and the funded Outcomes.
 - As you design your project, make sure do not deviate from the Eligible Activities, the list of funded Outputs and the funded Outcomes.
- Review the underlying legislation (does your topic address the core emphasis of this legislation?)
- Review the agency that is offering the FOA (does your topic align with the mission of these agencies?)
- Identify your current or past programs, strategies, and/or activities that you and partners can draw on to address the main emphases you’ve identified for the relevant federal program
- Brainstorm a set of possible focus areas and approaches that will produce a lasting impact
- Ensure that your project focus and approach is viable by considering the following concerns:
 - Will it produce a sustainable long term impact? Suggestions for giving your project “teeth”:
 - Create an accountability board (a community council, an advisory board, a task force)
 - Establish routine reporting
 - Publicize findings (press release to email list; press conference; include /coordinate with key players)
 - Engage key players in ongoing substantial ways
 - Impact /improve existing data sets / data regimes