

Grant Writing * Tips & Resources

Tips for Writing Proposals

A lot of time goes into writing a grant proposal. By following a few simple tips, you can ensure that you use your time effectively and increase your chances of grant proposal success. For example, unless otherwise specified by a grantmaker, be sure your proposal covers the following criteria: *Project purpose, feasibility, community need, applicant ability/competence to meet community need, funds needed, and project evaluation*. Here are some additional grant writing tips.

- Use data to show that there exists a significant need or problem that you're hoping to address with your work.
- Be clear about how you intend to use the requested funds to address community needs; describe a solution/program/project for positive community change.
- Be explicit about how your project fits with the funder's interests.
- Frame your requests as strategic and forward-thinking; not as an answer to fund deficits or financial emergencies.
- Tell funders who else you are applying to, or how you intend to secure other funding. Most do not want to be the sole source of funding and look for how you intend to diversify your funding streams.
- Think about budgets early; don't leave budget calculations until the end; you're more likely to rush and forget or underestimate some program expenses, which will shortchange the effort.
- Follow grant proposal directions. If the funder is explicit about margins, font, copies, attachments, etc., be sure to follow those instructions.
- Echo the foundation's language. Read through funder materials to learn preferred phrases and wording; this helps translate your work into phrases they easily understand and are drawn towards.
- Read proposals through one last time to ensure you've answered these questions: Who are you? Why do you qualify for funding? What is your funding request? What problems will you address and how? Who will benefit and how? What specific objectives will you accomplish and how? How will you measure your results? How does your funding request comply with the grantmaker's purpose, goals and objectives?
- If possible, have someone not involved with your work read the draft proposal to ensure it makes sense.

Tips for Finding Potential Funders

- Thoroughly research grantmakers and their funding opportunities to ensure that you fit within their funding priorities and applicant eligibility criteria.
- If possible, schedule a phone call or meeting with a funder to ask questions you may have. This also gives them a chance to get to you know you.

Where to Get More Information

Resources

- Non-Profit Guides: Grant-writing tools for nonprofit organizations: <http://www.npguides.org/>
- Nonprofit Resource Center: <http://www.nprcenter.org/>
- Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training: <http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/>
- Association of Fundraising Professionals: <http://www.afpnet.org/>
- CommpassPoint Nonprofit Services: <http://www.compasspoint.org/>
- National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy: <http://www.ncrp.org/>
- First Giving blog: <http://blog.firstgiving.com/>

Grant Databases

- The Foundation Center: <http://foundationcenter.org/>
- State Grants: <http://www.ca.gov/Grants.html>
- Federal Grants: <http://www.grants.gov/>
- Fundsnet Services Online: <http://www.fundsnet.com/>
- GrantStation: www.grantstation.com