

Tips for Writing Grants

You have researched and can demonstrate a real need for the program you have conceptualized. You have an idea of what you want the project or program to look like and you believe that the proposal will show that by investing in this type of work you can achieve some very real and tangible results. There are many resources available that can help you in the preparation of a grant proposal. Preparing a grant proposal is hard work, but here are a few tips for writing a successful grant.

- Determine if you meet the criteria for eligibility. Read very carefully the guidance that is provided in the grant proposal. Does your project have a clear fit with the funder's priorities? Remember, you are reading to see if your organization or the ideas you have crafted meet the eligibility criteria. For instance some granters may require that an organization be in operation for 2 years before an application can be submitted.
 - Follow the required format exactly. First of all, read very carefully the issues you are to address in each section of the RFP (Request for Proposals) and carefully address these issues while writing your proposal. Next, make sure that you follow other format requirements such as font size, the number of pages, whether to single or double space, and where the margins are to be set.
 - Use clear, direct language. Be accurate about the history of your organization. Highlight your mission, strengths, and established credibility in performing this type of work.
 - Explain clearly what you are going to do, who is going to do it, when it will get done, and what are the intended outcomes for providing the program or project. It is very important that the outcomes presented are concise, tangible, and measurable.
 - Demonstrate the value of diversity and the use of multicultural and intergenerational approaches. Foster and support new leadership.
 - Keep your budget simple and clearly describe how the money will be spent.
- Round your budget numbers to the nearest hundred or thousand dollars depending on the size of your project. Make sure your budget matches your activities. For example if you put in money for travel to a state meeting, make sure that you have referenced this as one of the activities in the proposal.
- Follow the categories or sections provided in the RFP in the order in which they are requested. If you believe you have covered some of the points previously that is okay. You can always cross reference pages in the proposal that relate to more than one section
 - Use graphs, tables, charts, and marketing materials if allowed. Graphs and charts can help reviewers see and understand a lot of information in a quick and easy format.
 - Label all materials carefully and clearly. Make it easy for reviewers to find your information.
 - Review and carefully check for grammar, numerical mistakes, and spelling errors. Don't depend solely on spell check. Don't assume that granters will understand your jargon. Spell out all initials you are using in your proposal.
 - Use the appendices to provide additional documentation and evidence if this is allowed.
 - Check carefully to make sure that all necessary signatures are provided. Most funders require the signature of the board president on applications. Remember to enclose signature pages with the proposal packet before it is submitted.
 - Ask someone not involved in your organization to read a draft of your proposal. An outsider will often see important details that may be missing or not described well in the writing of the proposal.
 - If you are sending "snail mail" make sure the proposal will arrive by the deadline date. Know whether the proposal must be postmarked by or arrive by the due date.



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Additional Resources

Barrett, Sharman: *Developing Parent Leadership: A Grantwriting Manual for Community Parent Resource Centers*. 2005 Revised. PACER Center. Minneapolis, MN.
www.taalliance.org

Golden, Susan: *Secrets of Successful Grantsmanship, A Guerrilla Guide to Raising Money*. 1997. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco, CA.

Robinson, Andy: *Grassroots Grants: An Activist's Guide to Proposal Writing*, Second Edition. 2004. Chardon Press. Berkeley, CA.

U.S. Department of Education: *Grantmaking at ED*. Revised 2004. <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/about/grant-making/index.html>