



## Tips On Writing Grant Proposals

### Procedure

1. Personalize and tailor your proposals to individual funders. This means ... know as much as you can about your funder before starting to write your proposal. Know what type of projects they have funded in the past.
2. Locate and talk to other grantees about their proposals to a funder before writing yours. Ask about the funder's preferences in:
  - Length
  - Complexity
  - Budget detail
  - Statistical support
  - Personal contact before proposal submission

Write your proposal accordingly.

3. Get your project idea critiqued by a number of associates before writing a full-scale proposal.
4. Don't use a committee.
  - The fewer writers involved, the better the proposal.
  - Preferably, the project innovator should be the author, with editorial assistance by a grants coordinator.
5. Don't finalize your budget until you discuss it with the funder. (Ask "We are thinking of requesting \$\_\_\_\_. Is that appropriate?")
6. Write your budget first. Then make sure your proposal supports each item in that budget.
7. Write your summary last, after you have finished the major parts of your application.
8. Don't try for perfection on your first draft. Get down your ideas, then edit and rewrite.
9. Use a proposal review committee to give you input on strengths and

weaknesses of your proposal.

10. Have an associate or friend not directly involved in your project proofread your proposal, looking for:

- Grammatical mistakes
- Logical inconsistencies
- Unjustified budget items
- Undefined or confusing terms
- Unsupported arguments, unfounded assumptions, weak documentation
- Ways to improve overall proposal impact

## Content

1. If the proposal is a long one (10 pages or more), prepare a table of contents.
2. Don't make a mystery out of your proposal. Start right in with the most important point.
3. All proposals should have out puts as well as outcomes. Make sure you know the difference and include both.

4. Have a solid plan to evaluate and report the progress of your project. This includes:
  - A process to capture and document outcomes/outputs;
  - A system to review evaluative data;
  - Process to modify the projects based upon evaluative finding to insure the most effective and efficient project;
  - A system to notify stakeholders and the funder.
  
5. Use models (a model for a three-step program could be a triangle, each corner representing a step, each side representing the relationship between the steps.)
  
6. Use graphs, charts, and maps to illustrate your points whenever possible.
  
7. Use captioned photographs. (If applicable)
  
8. Use one or two clear statistics rather than a number of ineffective ones. Make sure the data is current, relevant, and documentable.
  
9. Fill in all blanks on federal applications completely. Write N/A (Not Applicable) if appropriate.
  
10. When responding to a specific request for a proposal (RFP), follow the

suggested format as closely as possible. Most RFPs have evaluative criteria, based your responses on this criteria.

11. Always include “donated” and “requested” columns in your budget.
12. If appropriate, quote enabling legislation, or foundation founder’s words, or a foundation’s or corporation’s annual report, to show how your project fits the intent of the grant making organization.
13. Let a client or expert state your need through a quotation. This lends more credibility than if you state it yourself.
14. When possible, state the need in terms of one person.
15. Move from a specific case to a general problem.
  - Accentuate the positive.
  - Emphasize “opportunities,” rather than “needs.”
  - Funders would rather know “where it’s at” than “where it isn’t.”
  - Mention the amount of money you’re requesting at the beginning of your proposal.

Have a strong ending.

