
non-profit guides

grant-writing tools for
non-profit organizations

Guidelines

Successful grant-writing involves solid advance planning and preparation. It takes time to coordinate your planning and research, organize, write and package your proposal, submit your proposal to the funder, and follow-up.

Preparation (planning and research) is vital to the grant-writing process. Solid preliminary work will simplify the writing stage. A well-written proposal follows the basic steps outlined below.

Organize your proposal, pay attention to detail and specifications, use concise, persuasive writing, and request reasonable funding. Make sure the grantmaker's goals and objectives match your grantseeking purposes.

Clearly understand the grantmaker's guidelines before you write your proposal. Always follow the exact specifications of the grantmakers in their applications, Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and guidelines.

Use these basic steps to guide you:

1. Prove that you have a significant need or problem in your proposal.
2. Deliver an answer to the need, or solution to the problem, based on experience, ability, logic, and imagination throughout your proposal.
3. Reflect planning, research and vision throughout your proposal.
4. Research grantmakers, including funding purposes and priorities, and applicant eligibility.
5. Determine whether the grantmakers' goals and objectives match your grantseeking purposes.
6. Target your proposal to grantmakers appropriate to your field and project, but do not limit your funding request to one source.
7. Contact the grantmaker, before you write your proposal, to be sure you clearly understand the grantmaker's guidelines.
8. Present your proposal in the appropriate and complete format, and include all required attachments.
9. State clearly and concisely your organization's needs and objectives. Write well; use proper grammar and correct spelling. Prepare an interesting, unique proposal.
10. Always cover the following important criteria: project purpose, feasibility, community need, funds needed, applicant accountability and competence.
11. Answer these questions: Who are you? How do you qualify? What do you want? What problem 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?
12. Demonstrate project logic and outcome, impact of funds, and community support.
13. Always follow the exact specifications of the grantmakers in their applications, Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and guidelines.
14. Contact the grantmaker about the status, evaluation, and outcome of your proposal, after it is submitted. Request feedback about your proposal's strengths and weaknesses.