

Successful Grant-Writing: An Overview

How to obtain funding

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.

Organize your proposal, pay attention to detail and specifications, use concise, persuasive writing, and request reasonable funding. Clearly understand the grantmaker's guidelines before you write your proposal. Make sure the grantmaker's goals and objectives match your grant-seeking purposes.

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

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. Make sure your proposal describes a program/project for change.
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 grant-seeking 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 your organization's needs and objectives clearly and concisely. Write well. Do not waste words. Use active rather than passive verbs. Use proper grammar and correct spelling. Be clear, factual, supportable, and professional. A well-written proposal is a key factor in the grantmaker's decision-making process.
10. Be clear about why you are seeking a grant, what you plan to do with the money, and why you are a good fit with the grantmaker's priorities. Prepare an interesting, persuasive and unique proposal.

Always cover the following important criteria: project purpose, feasibility, community need, funds needed, applicant accountability and competence.

12. 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?
13. Demonstrate project logic and outcome, impact of funds, and community support. Be specific about broad goals, measurable objectives, and quantified outcomes.
14. Always follow the exact specifications of the grantmakers in their applications, Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and guidelines.
15. Follow-up with the grantmaker about the status, evaluation, and outcome of your proposal, after it is submitted. Request feedback about your proposal's strengths and weaknesses.

Source: Non-Profit Guides (<http://www.npguides.org/>). This information was reprinted in the Fall 2005 issue of IPMBA News.