



Grant Writing Manual Key Steps to Successful Grant Proposals

The Guiding Principles

Honesty
Inspire confidence
Be trustworthy
Show integrity
Clarity
Be complete
Be organized
Be consistent
Establish Relationships (with funders)
Be courteous
Follow-up (be persistent but not annoying!)

Components to a Solid Proposal

Study funder's website/literature and follow specific and rigid guidelines.

Copy the guidelines into a document for reading and to refer to it often.
If funder does not present clear guidelines, follow the order in this manual.

- Present information in the order presented in grant givers guidelines (same headings used).
- Address every bullet or criterion in the grant giver's guidelines.
- Write clearly and concisely with proper punctuation.
- Keep it simple and well organized.
- Keep it within designated number of pages per section.
- Be specific about timeframes and how you will adhere to them.

Writing the Grant Proposal (Unless a specific outline is preferred by your funder)

1. Cover Letter
2. Project Summary (2-3 paragraphs; should be written last)
3. Introduction of Organization

4. Problem Statement (or Needs Assessment)
5. Project Objectives
6. Project Methods or Design
7. Project Evaluation
8. Personnel
9. Project Budget
10. Future Funding/ Other Funding Received
11. Conclusion paragraph

1. Cover Letter (less than a page)

Defines the following:

- WHO is applying for the grant?
- WHERE is the proposing organization located?
- WHO is being requested to fund the grant?
- WHY is the grant needed?
- WHAT will be the grant money be used for?
- WHEN is the funding requested?
- HOW much money is being requested?
- Signed by the director

2. Project Summary (2-3 paragraphs)

- Outlines the proposed project and appears at the beginning of proposal
- Highlights intended results of the project
- This is a separate page from the cover letter
- This is the initial impression of the proposal, be sure to include all important points

3. Introduction of Organization

Present key data about your Organization that establishes credibility such as:

- The Organization's past and present operations and partnerships with similar organizations
- Discuss your organization's experience in working with the target population as it relates to the current proposal.
- Describe the types of services you want to make available. List the activities and materials your organization has to meet these needs
- The leadership: Biography of board members and key staff members
- Goals, philosophy, and mission of your Organization
- Track record with other grantors and success stories

4. Problem Statement / Needs Assessment

This is the key section that offers a clear and well-supported statement of the problem that will be addressed.

- Present a well-documented statement about the scope (local, national, global, etc.) of overall problem
 - Use data that includes: historical, geographic, statistical, philosophical information and other credible studies. Focus on the need of the geographic area you serve through formal and informal needs assessments.
- The information provided should be factual and directly related to the problem being addressed
 - Areas to include are:
 - Purpose of proposal
 - Expected beneficiaries of project/program
 - Social and economic benefits
 - How the organization came to acknowledge the problem
 - Other available funding alternatives when prospective grant is exhausted
- State how the problem will be solved, what resources are needed and how funds will be used

5. Project Objectives

- Lists specific activities your project/program will undertake to achieve realistic goals that tie directly to the needs statement.
- Include all relevant parties in the target population
- Discuss who will be served and how they will be chosen
- Objectives describe the desired results, not the methods used to obtain results.
- The objectives may be bulleted and start with “to”.
 - For example: To provide healthcare for the rural poor in Kenya

6. Projects Methods and Design

- How project/program is expected to solve stated problem
- Describe the program:
 - Step by step list the activities to occur with related resources and staff needed for each activity
 - A one page flow chart to illustrate project scope and organizational structure (This should show how parts logically interrelate, input through output, where personnel are needed and facilities; transportation and support services are required.)
 - Highlights of unique aspects of this proposal that separates it from other proposals submitted by similar groups
 - Appendices used to provide additional information: This includes supplementary data, timetables, legal papers

showing non-profit status, and letters of support and endorsements

7. Project Evaluation

- Address the stated plan of action and the effectiveness of various activities within the plan
- Demonstrate how you will achieve success in the project/program
- State the estimated amount of time needed for the evaluation and how results will be communicated
- Determine how you will measure change or benchmark objectives
- Allow plenty of time to accomplish objectives
- Make sure that methods are congruent with resources requested in the budget
- Evaluation timeline should show when you will start collecting information and how often program staff review the information to make the necessary operational changes
- Be specific and don't assume the reader knows more than s/he does

8. Personnel

- Describe the leaders and administrators who will be managing the program, their skills and experience
- Explain your criteria for hiring personnel

9. Project Budget

- Funding levels in assistance programs change yearly. Review appropriations over past several years to try to project future funding levels
- Never anticipate that this grant will be the sole financial support for the project.
- Realistically estimate possible future inflationary cost increases
 - Some budget areas to account for are: utilities, rent for buildings and equipment, salary increases, telephones and insurance costs. Depending on the type of project some of these costs may not be included.
- Consider costs associated with leases, evaluation systems, audits, implementation and maintenance of accounting systems and other long-term financial commitments.
- Justify all expenses and be consistent and realistic.

10. Future Funding/ Other Funding Received

- Describe a plan for continuing the project beyond grant period and availability of other resources necessary to implement project

- Discuss maintenance and future program funding (distinguish between “operational funds” and new project funds)
- Account for other needed expenditures if purchasing equipment: Include funding from any other sources or have a pledge of support if applicable.

11. Conclusion Paragraph

- Concludes with a paragraph thanking the reader, and briefly restating amount of request, problem, solution, impact, and benefits.

Final Touches

- Proposals should be typed, collated, copied and packaged neatly and all copies should be uniformed (same font, format on all pages).
- When mailing, ensure enough time for proposal to reach destination before deadline.
- Can send a self addressed postcard with proposal so that the funder can mail it back to guarantee the proposal was received.

Preparing the Proposal Package

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Organization certification letter (NGO or CBO) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Cover letter | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Title page | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Table of contents | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Project Summary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Introduction of organization | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Project Statement | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Project Objectives | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Project Methods or Design | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Project Evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Project Budget | <input type="checkbox"/> |

13. Future Funding/Other funding received and conclusion paragraph
14. Independent audit statements (if applicable)

Additional documentation that is wise to include and often required:

1. A list of board members and their work affiliations
2. Organization budget for the last fiscal year
3. An organization brochure
4. The most current newsletter
5. The annual report
6. The organizations long-term plan
7. Letters of support

Top Tips for Writing Successful Proposals

- Do Your Homework
 - Understand the grant maker's basic mission and projects/programs funded
 - Make sure program concept advances grant maker's mission and use some of the same language (tone, key words, purpose, etc.) in proposal
- Always cater your proposal to the specific funder, do not make the funder feel like you give the same proposal to all organizations.
- Clarity Counts
 - Avoid difficult language and concepts.
 - Watch out for sections that lack continuity (avoid the effect that sections have been pieced together)
- Demonstrate collaborative efforts. Grant makers view collaboration as a chance to reach more people and reduce their risk in funding success
- Practice "truth in asking". Never tell a budgetary lie
- Think "blueprint"
 - Communicate program goals, a strategy for implementation, and benchmarks for success
- Show sustainability:
 - Portray your organization as a model for sustainability
 - Make it known that your long-range goals are for self-sufficiency rather than needing ongoing support and finances

What funders look for in program proposals

1. *What makes this program/non-profit an outstanding project?*
One way to make the proposal meaningful is to tell your story with an emotional hook emphasizing the outcome as being sustainable.

2. *What is your non-profits sustainable strategy?*
It's not enough to demonstrate that there's a need for your project but you must persuade funders that you know how to *get the job done* and *generate* a sustainable program.
3. *How does your NGO create value for its program?*
The value proposition for your recipients determines what makes your Organization a stand-out against competitors. Make sure it is strong and compelling, and focused on *results*.
4. *What is the basic strategy for meeting objectives?*
The leadership and the strategy of your Organization as a model, is a make-it-or-break-it question for funders. You must convince them that you have the knowledge, and resolute determination for a well run program.
5. *Who will manage the Program?*
Funders need to know that your team has the knowledge and leadership to manage the program. Keep each bio short—no longer than a paragraph of about five to six sentences.
6. *How much funding is sought and what is the programmed use of these funds?*
This should include the financial requirements over the next three years. The use of proceeds should be broken down as specifically and clearly as possible. Remember, this is your opportunity to tell funders how you're planning to spend *the money* so you need to convince them that it will be well managed and not squandered.

Top Pet Peeves

- Do not send proposal via overnight mail – it is a waste of money
- Do not claim to be the “only ones who do this.” It sounds arrogant and is hard to verify; instead, focus on what makes your project/program unique within a broader issue area that many groups are working on
- Do not use tiny fonts. 12-point font is the standard
- Do not use jargon that may be confusing and make sure acronyms are defined.
- Don't strive for artificial connection with the foundation

Whether the project receives money or not, thank the grantor and ask for any comments their review committee may have on how your proposal could be strengthened

SEEKING GRANTS CAN BE VERY DISAPPOINTING BUT DON'T GIVE UP IF YOUR APPLICATION WAS NOT CHOSEN. DO THE BEST YOU CAN, KEEP IMPROVING, HAVE FAITH, AND YOUR DAY WILL COME.

Third Party Grant Proposal Assessment and Checklist

This Grant Proposal Assessment is designed to give you a formula to receive funding through methods that are used by Grant Review Committees. These Grant Review Committees will be judging your proposal along side of all the other worthy projects hoping for consideration. By not following a format for success, your grant reviewers may never get past the cover letter.

Most importantly, you need to be clear, state your objectives, and provide measurement for a successful outcome. Read through the tips below, and check them off in the box provided as you feel you have succeeded in accomplishing the task. Once you have given each point consideration, and have modified or edited your proposal, you have all the characteristics of a winning grant proposal.

Village Volunteers will be with you every step of the way. If you have any questions, please feel free to write me at shana@villagevolunteers.

General Style / Content

Proposal and project is compatible with the mission of <i>grant giver</i> .	
Proposal is aimed at the grant giver; addresses grant giver's interests, needs and even use their language. It should not be generic or canned.	
Is it short and concise? Don't create a lengthy, rambling explanation with anything and everything thrown in that might be of interest.	
Are there page numbers	
Communicates energy and enthusiasm for the project.	
Written only in third person.	
Short, clear, crisp, vivid sentences.	
Is factual and doesn't make any assumptions	
Statistics and statements are documented; references and sources are cited.	
Key elements are highlighted with bullets, italics, headings, subheadings, boldface type, borders, charts (contains clear <i>road map</i> for reader).	
Provides evidence that preliminary work is being/has been done.	
Written in active, positive voice. (We will; We are...)	
Document is neatly typed, readable, professional looking.	
Contains good grammar and spelling; no typos.	
Has plenty of white space in layout.	

Jargon free.	
Contains concrete, specific language (end instead of <i>terminate</i> ; begin instead of <i>institute</i>).	
Acronyms are defined.	
Presents key elements in clear manner.	
Does not contain needless arguments.	
Assumes that evaluator may not be familiar with the subject/field.	
Include graphs/charts that depict key information.	
The graphs/charts are easy to interpret within 5 seconds.	
All required information and forms are fully completed.	
Benefits are quantified to recipients.	
Portrays how your project supports grant giver's mission. Your proposal quantifies payback to grant giver.	
How will the program be sustained?	
Are the guidelines followed?: (margins, spacing, type size, paper size, proposal length).	
Presents information in the order presented in grant giver's guidelines (same headings used) or follows the one that we supplied.	
Addresses every bullet or criterion in the grant giver's guidelines.	
Presents financial information in a columnar format (in accordance with general accounting/ bookkeeping principles).	
Required resumes, curricula vitae, biographies are up to date.	
Interesting, exciting to read.	
Unique, innovative, improvement over existing programs.	
Conveys action orientation and enthusiasm for project.	
Title states a benefit (Funding for support of a self-sustaining, multigenerational, Eco-Village for orphans and the elderly)	
Cover Letter	
One page or less	
Defines: WHO is applying for the grant? WHERE is the proposing organization located? WHO is being requested to fund the grant? WHY is the grant needed? WHAT will be the grant money be used for? WHEN is the funding requested? HOW much money is being requested? Signed by the director	
Project Summary	
2 to 3 paragraphs	
Does it outline the proposed project?	
Highlights intended results of the project	
Problem Statement/Needs Assessment	
Contains project objectives, project statement and needs assessment.	
Contains realistic objectives	

Contains a statement of desired outcomes, success indicators	
Establishes how grant will help the grant giver	
Project could be helpful to many organizations; easy to replicate model (possible national or international impact)	
Contains a qualifications statement: clearly demonstrates that your organization has skills, knowledge, and ability to make project a success	
Makes a case for why your organization is the best one to perform the project without being boastful	
Clearly defines each partner's project roles and responsibilities	
Contains a solutions section: methodology, scope, activities clearly described; creates a vivid mental picture	
Project will employ new technologies	
Proposes that your organization will partner with other organizations	
Contains a realistic schedule (timeline)	
Has a detailed budget	
Budget numbers add up	
Budget contains realistic prices for materials and services	
Budget contains local matching money, in-kind contributions	
Budget asks only for what your organization needs (proposed budget is lean)	
Identifies concrete benchmarks to monitor progress and maintain focus	
Clearly tells how your organization will let the grant giver know the results	
Concludes with a paragraph restating amount of request, problem, solution, impact, and benefits	
Contains letters of commitment, support from all partners identified in the proposal	
Attachments clearly labeled	
Final Thoughts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sure to submit the requested number of copies of your grant proposal. • <u>Submit proposal on time.</u> All of this is for naught if you submit your proposal after the deadline. • <i>If you win, use your proposal as a reference for future proposals.</i> Learn from your successes. Develop and continue to refine a template from your winning grant proposals but always take individual funders unique criteria into consideration. 	

While doing your research, look for the following information from the funder. Make sure that they fund international projects and in your country.

Name of Funder	
Deadlines	
Range of Grants	
Application Requirements (i.e. letter of inquiry, cover sheet, proposal)	
Subject Focus	
Website	
Any Additional Info.	

Village Volunteers

5100 S Dawson St, Suite 105 • Seattle, WA 98118

206.709.1404 • info@villagevolunteers.org

www.villagevolunteers.org