

HANDOUT #15

How To Write a Grant Proposal (Source: About.com:nonprofit charitable orgs)

Grant proposals are a part of any fundraiser's portfolio. Although grants can be from a variety of sources (such as foundations or a government entity), most require the same basic information in the grant proposal.

Most grantmaking organizations have their own proposal/application forms although a few may only give you some basic guidelines. In any case, here are the most common sections of a grant proposal and the information you should include.

Here's How:

1. Summary:

The summary actually comes first and helps the grantor to understand at a glance what you are seeking. At the beginning of your proposal, or on a cover sheet, write a short (two or three-sentence) summary of your proposal. An example is:

"The Battered Women's Relief Society requests \$10,000 for a three-year training program for battered women. Training modules will cover basic financial skills, job-hunting skills, and interviewing techniques."

2. Organizational Information:

In a few paragraphs explain what your organization does and why the funder can trust it to use the requested funds responsibly and effectively.

Give a short history of your organization, state its mission, the population it serves, and an overview of its track record in achieving its mission. Describe or list your programs.

Be complete in this part of your proposal even if you know the funder or have gotten grants from this grantmaker before.

3. Problem/Need/Situation Description:

This is the meat of your proposal and where you must convince the funder that what you propose to do is important and that your organization is the right one to do it.

Assume that the reader of your proposal does not know much about the issue or subject. Explain why the issue is important and what research you did to learn about possible solutions.

4. Work Plan/Specific Activities:

What does your organization plan to do about the problem? List details including:

- Target audience.
- What you will do. Describe the activities.
- What planning has taken place? Have you done research? Let the funder know that you are well-prepared.
- Who will do the work and why are they qualified?
- When will the project take place? Do you have a project start date and end date?
- Where will the project take place?

5. Outcomes/Impact of Activities:

Tell the funder how you expect the project to affect the targeted population. How will the situation change as a result?

6. Other Funding:

Have you gotten committed funds from other sources? Or have you asked other sources? Most funders do not wish to be the sole source of support for a project. Be sure to mention in-kind contributions you expect such as meeting space or equipment.

7. Future Funding

Is this a pilot project with a limited time-line? Or will it go into the future? If so, how do you plan to fund it? Is it sustainable over the long haul?

8. Evaluation

Funders want to know that their dollars actually did some good. So decide now how you will evaluate the impact of your project. Include what records you will keep or data you will collect and how you will use that data. If the data collection costs money, be sure to include that cost in your budget.

9. Budget:

How much will your project cost? Attach a short budget showing expected expenses and income. The expenses portion should include personnel expenses, direct project expenses, and administrative or overhead expenses. Income should include earned income and contributed income.

10. Additional Materials:

Funders are likely to want the following:

- IRS letter proving that your organization is tax-exempt.
- List of your board of directors and their affiliations.
- Financial statement from your last fiscal year.
- Budget for your current fiscal year.
- Budget for your next fiscal year if you are within a few months of that new year.\

11. Putting it all together:

Put everything together with a cover sheet and a cover letter if you desire. You may need to have your CEO and/or the Board President sign the cover sheet or letter. You do not need a fancy binder but it should all be neatly typed and free of errors.