

Much of the following information comes from an article: Taking it for Granted, April 13, 2001

<https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/taking-it-for-granted/>

Writing Proposals

A successful grant proposal is one that is well-prepared, thoughtfully planned and concisely packaged. Usually, the grantor or the organization supplying funds will provide a specific proposal format for you to follow.

The writer needs to be thinking like the evaluator while preparing the proposal.

“Every grant has a particular rubric you will be asked to follow in your proposal. You must follow it, or your proposal will be rejected,” he said. “Try to figure out ahead of time what the evaluator will be looking for.”

Although there is no such thing as a generic proposal, a number of major components do recur throughout most grant proposals.

Cover Page

The cover page summarizes the important identifying information: the proposal title; the name, address and telephone number of the project director; the agency and program name; the project’s beginning and ending dates; and the budget request.

Summary/Abstract

A well-written summary captures the entire proposal in a nutshell, and should be no longer than a few paragraphs that include the who, what, where, when, why and how much information on the proposed project.

Tip

You might use the following as a guide for the summary.

Problem

Briefly state the problem or need you have recognized and are prepared to address.

Solution

Briefly describe the proposed project, including what will take place, how many people will benefit, how and where it will operate, for how long, and (if applicable) who will staff it.

Funding Requirements

Explain the amount of grant money required for the project and what the plans are for funding it in the future.

Organization and Expertise

Briefly state the history, purpose and activities of your organization (or school, or yearbook program), emphasizing its capacity to carry out the proposal.

Problem Statement/Statement of Needs

This section gives a more detailed description of the need for the project, its goals and objectives, and your hypothesis or research questions. This is perhaps the most important section, as it presents your vision of the worth and overall contribution of the project.

Decide which facts or statistics best support the project. Be sure all data is accurate and specific. Also, give the funder a reason to want to invest in the program; be sure the solution appears feasible and worthwhile.

Tip

Avoid presenting the absence of a solution as the actual problem. For example: “The problem is we do not have enough computers in the yearbook staff room. Purchasing more computers will solve this problem.” The more persuasive case looks at what extra computers can do to enhance the yearbook itself, how it might save the school time and money, and how students will benefit from what they can learn with the opportunity to use the new computers.

Methodology

Describe what you will do to achieve the desired outcome. It is helpful and sometimes required to create a timeline for the activities which make up your approach in order to persuade the reader you are organized and prepared to meet the demands of the project.

Budget and Budget Narrative

Begin considering budget needs immediately after deciding on a project. Budgets should reflect all costs related to fundable activities in your project, including personnel and non-personnel items.

The budget narrative provides an explanation of how the figures cited in the budget were calculated.

Tip

If a grant calls for a line-item budget, know the prices (exactly). Do not round numbers or guess. It is important to show the evaluator or grantor you are serious and know what you are talking about.

Conclusion

A brief conclusion summarizes the proposal’s main points and reiterates the importance and purpose of the project. In the conclusion, invite the funder to join you in ensuring the project’s accomplishment.

Appendices

Each funder or sponsor will have their own preferences and will probably give specific guidelines on what they want attached to the application.

Typical attachments may include curriculum vitae, letters of support, statistical tables, cost documentation for equipment, and audited financial statements.

Tip

It never hurts to get as much support as possible from others. Once the proposal summary is developed, look for individuals or groups representing academic, political, professional and lay

organizations, and do not forget colleagues and parents, who will be willing to support the proposal in writing. Numerous letters of support can be persuasive to a grantor agency. Also consider support from local government agencies and public officials.

Evaluation

Most federal agencies require some form of program evaluation among grantees. Evaluations measure the project's stated objectives to determine its progress and success. Interim evaluations help to fine-tune the program as it moves along, and a summative evaluation at the end of the program assesses the final outcome.

Convincing evaluations require the collection of appropriate data before and during program operations. Tip

The grantor should be highlighted in the evaluation. Evaluations help the grantor see if (and how) their money was well spent.

Remember, a good proposal is concise, precise and shows you have done your homework and know what the evaluator or grantor is looking for.

It's Worth It

Although grant proposal writing may seem daunting to the novice, taking the time to explore the resources (both human and otherwise) available to you can make all the difference. The money is out there, if you are willing to go after it.