

Seven Things To Do Before Writing Your Grant Proposal

1) Identify the need

- You should prepare a statement that describes the need for your program or project. Include statistical data that supports your need (i.e.: needs assessment). Identify the programming needs of your community. (i.e.: grassroots programming).

2) Collect background information about your organization

- You should have readily available documentation about your organization. This collection of information should include your organization's mission statement, a list of accomplishments, a list of previous granting organizations and the programs funded, and the resumes of key staff members and financial statements.

3) Develop a grant writing team

- A grant writing team supports and assists the writer. Who will conduct the research and who will write? Assess the skills of each member to determine who will be responsible for each task. Who will compile the budget information, typing, make copies etc?

4) Research/Identify the funding sources

- Many organizations have websites on the Internet providing guidelines for funding programs and application information. As you identify potential funding organizations, ask yourself the following questions, does the organization's mission match our needs? Do we meet the funding organizations eligibility requirements and criteria for funding? Is there a good possibility of getting funding?

5) Contact potential granting organizations

- Contact granting organizations by phone, email, fax or mail. Grant programs usually have a website that lists the contact person. Mail a letter of intent, to see if your organization qualifies.

6) Contact previous grant recipients

- Ask awarded grant recipients questions regarding the funding organizations process. Why do you think your organization was successful? What process did you use in the proposal process?

7) Develop a plan

- This plan should include a list of your program/project goals and objectives. An outline of the elements of the proposal and who is responsible (ie: finance – follow-up). An activity schedule detailing who will do what and when. Proposal readiness, be aware of deadline dates and plan accordingly.

- * Adapted from “Organizing the Grant Writing Process: 7 Things to do Before Writing” by Michelle K. Carter



Sections Of The Grant

Cover Sheet

- Name of applicant.
- Contact person with address and phone number.
- Project title.
- Amount of the grant requested.
- Project start and completion dates.

Project Proposal

- **Project Summary – a concise summary of the project (maximum 5-8 lines)**
 - What is the purpose? Be specific.
 - Why this project is needed? Be specific.
 - What are the overall objectives?
 - What are the expected outcomes? Be specific.
 - Who are your partners in the project?
- **Detailed description of the project.**
 - Why is this project needed and how the need was determined?
 - Provide a description of the target population, existing services and the community need. (i.e.: how many youth and what need is required)
 - What concern will be addressed and why?
 - Who will benefit and how? (i.e.: will it be the community and the youth participating)
 - How will participants be selected?
 - How will the Aboriginal community be involved in the project?
 - How will the results be measured? Describe the anticipated result in concrete terms.
 - How does this funding request relate to the funding organizations purpose, objectives and priorities?
 - If this project is being considered for funding by another funding body, please provide details of that request and contact information of the granting agency.

Budget

- **Must Answer the following:**
 - Does the budget balance?
 - Can the project be accomplished with this budget?
 - Are the costs realistic and does it fit the criteria?
 - What is the total amount requested from the funding agency?
 - Is the budget consistent with the proposed activities?
 - What other funding is available?



Action plan and project timelines

- What are the proposed start and end dates.
- Schedule of activities (proposed tasks and key dates).
- Projected outcomes (experience gained, success, results, etc).
- Who is responsible for what (how is the community involved in the project and what is their involvement)?

Evaluation

- How will you determine if the goals will be met?
- What information will be required by the granting organization, for “follow-up” of the application?

Supporting Material

- Your organization profile (mandate, length of existence, Board of Directors, etc).
- Your organization’s information (non-profit status – Certificate, annual report, etc.).
- Letters of support from partnering organizations.
- Financial statements (overall operating budget for the upcoming year).
- Other information (make sure the application is signed and dated, provide original, document is formatted, etc).

Follow –up

- Maintain accurate financial records.
- State how the project how was beneficial and why?
- Who did the project impact and what was the outcome?
- How was success measured? Try to use statistical information or feedback forms from your evaluation material.

Source: Urban Multi-purpose Grant Helpsheets, Government of Canada



Do's and Don'ts of Proposal Writing

Do

- Make contact with a real person
- Plan ahead so that your proposal isn't rushed or crisis related
- Show that you know who else is working in the field and what they are doing
- Involve others in editing the proposal
- Explain acronyms
- Keep it short not more than 10 pages for the body of the proposal and less if possible
- Show that you care about the work- show some passion
- Pitch the tone correctly- be human rather than academic, let the human story come through, but don't go overboard with emotion.

Don't

- Take a "one proposal" fits all approach
- "Pad" your budget to include things that are not relevant to the project
- Hide information the funder needs to know
- Send so much documentation that the reader gives up before he/she begins
- Assume that the funder knows all about you so you don't need to bother to present yourself well
- Use unnecessary jargon
- Make the project fit the funding criteria at the expense of what you think needs to be done

Writing and Layout Tips

Writing Tips

- Write simply and avoid jargon;
- Use short sentences;
- Use the active rather than the passive voice when you can;
- Check for spelling and grammar mistakes- if necessary get someone else to read it through and make corrections;
- Revise and re-write if necessary;
- Don't exaggerate;
- Write for a non-technical writer.

Layout Tips

- Use headings and sub-headings, but do so consistently e.g. all headings in one lettering or size, all sub-headings in another;
- Number your pages;
- Bind or staple the document in the right order;
- Use white space- have wide margins;
- Don't crowd the text;
- Use a font that is easy to read.

Source: Writing a Funding Proposal Toolkit by Janet Shapiro (email: Nellshap@hixnet.co.za)



Sample Budget

Revenues	\$	Notes
Funding (examples)		
Provincial (Saskatchewan Lotteries, S.P.R.A.)	10,800	
Federal (Canadian Heritage)	0	
Self-generated revenues (rentals, etc.)	2,000	Indicate even if anticipated only
Donations – Individuals	3,000	Cash donations
Sponsorships – Corporations	0	Also cash; you can itemize the amount of each indicate
the total.		
Donations In Kind (examples)		These should be given a dollar value; a corresponding amount should be included under the expenditures.
Advertising	0	Free ad space from the newspaper
Refreshments	0	Food and drink donated by sponsors or by volunteers.
Transportation	0	Moving, hauling, and taxi service provided by volunteers.
Revenues - Total	15,800	
Expenditures		
	\$	Notes
Administration		Bookkeeping, grant applications, coordination.
Salaries/Benefits	11,100	10,000 Salaries & 1,100 Benefits
Bank Fees	100	
Membership Fees	200	
Insurance	400	
Rent	1000	
Office Supplies (includes postage/courier)	300	
Publicity/Marketing/Advertising	500	For example the value of advertising, including the dollar value of free advertising space that has been donated (volunteer time)
Operating Expenses		
Transportation	300	The dollar value of moving equipment and people.
Hall Rental	500	Volunteer time, possibly hall and PA system rental
Program Expenses		
Equipment	500	An Itemized breakdown is needed of the equipment needed.
Mail	50	
Telephone/Fax/Internet	750	Telephone -\$100 Fax - \$50 and Internet -100/month * 6 months
Publicity Materials	100	Posters, flyers, press releases.
Fundraising	0	Volunteer time, meeting costs.
Expenditures - Total	15,800	
Revenues/Expenditures- Surplus (Deficit)		

**General Note – Indicating the value of volunteer time and work is very important, because it reflects the real cost of presenting the project i.e., what it would cost if someone outside the organization were paid to do it.

Source: Sue Stewart, Grants Consultant, City of Saskatoon

