How to Write A Winning Grant Proposal

PRESENTED BY:

THE SHARPEST GRANT WRITER

What Are Grants?

- *Grants are potentially a meaningful source of funds for many kinds of projects and groups, and applying for them can be a source of great hope and excitement.*

- Grants are donations of money given to charitable (501c3) nonprofit organizations and public agencies in order to meet specific, agreed upon goals.

Overview of the Grant Proposal Writing Process

▶ The first thing you need to realize about raising more money through grants is that writing and winning grants is a *process*.

▶ The art of grant writing combines intimate knowledge about both the applicant and the grant funder.

▶ Values should be shared, a vision agreed upon, priorities given and suggested strategies to achieve those priorities established.

Overview of the Grant Proposal Writing Process

▶ **1. The generation and development of an idea** – This is the major project or program that's agreed upon by key stakeholders such as staff and clients.

Overview of the Grant Proposal Writing Process

2. Identification of potential funding – Once a project for funding has been established, it's time to research grant funding possibilities.

The nonprofit searches for potential funders by identifying matching priorities, noting any restrictions and ensures that the foundation is accepting unsolicited or solicited applications.

Overview of the Grant Proposal Writing Process

3. Acquiring guidelines from grant funders – Grant guidelines are given to applicants to explain what information the funder requires to determine if funding will be awarded.

Guidelines can range from very informal, like a one-page letter request, to very structured with a specific format and lengthy assurances and certifications.

Overview of the Grant Proposal Writing Process

4. Writing the application in compliance with guidelines –The grant writer must ensure that the application reflects the organization's project focus and design.

Overview of the Grant Proposal Writing Process

5. Submitting the application – Once the application is completed, it must be submitted on time and in compliance with the grant requirements. Agencies requiring further information will contact the applicant.

Overview of the Grant Proposal Writing Process

6. Administering the program if funded – The work doesn't end just because the grant was won! The project has to be administered in accordance with what was proposed in the application and the terms of the grant contract.

If the project isn't funded – on to Plan B. Call the funder and ask why the application wasn't funded and what could be done the next time to improve the application. Then modify the application and resubmit. Perseverance is the name of the game in winning grants.

If it was your money, how would you decide?

Before you research foundations and write proposals, it's useful to consider the criteria that funders use when giving away money. Think about how you would respond to requests you receive requesting money. In other words, pretend it's your money. You wouldn't give it to just anybody. What would you look for?

Questions to Consider

▶ • Why are you writing a grant proposal?

▶ • Why are you interested in writing a grant proposal?

▶ • What plans or strategies have you considered for your grant proposal?

▶ • Who's going to benefit if you write a grant proposal?

▶ • Can you identify the problem or idea that you want to address?

▶ • What is your idea (problem)? What are some of the issues surrounding your idea?

▶ • What do others think about this idea?

▶ • Will this idea assist an agency, a school, a church or a non-profit organization?

More Information Regarding A Grant Proposal

There are generally 4 writing formats for grant proposals.

1. A letter of intent, which is usually a two-page summary to brief the funding agency about the idea (usually used with independent foundations).

2. A two-page letter proposal (used for corporate, independent, and family foundations).

3. Long-proposal format is rather detailed, structured, and has a page limitation. It generally follows the **9 steps** outlined below. These are usually for state and federal grants.

4. The grant agency provides an application form.

Grant Sources

- Federal Funds
- State Funds
- Community Funds
- Foundation/Corporate foundations
- Independent Foundations

Group Activity

Preparation

► **Write an idea you have in mind for research you wish to develop into a grant proposal.**

Group Activity

▶ **Goal for this session:**

▶ **By the end of this exercise each participant should have a set of clear expressions of their research that they can build upon for developing a thesis statement for a grant proposal.**

(2 minutes).

Group Activity

- 2. Begin with 3 minutes of quiet reflection

- Focus on your research idea.

- After a few moments into the reflection, visualize yourselves conducting research and imagine the kinds of problems that the research would help to solve.

Group Activity

- **3. Group into pairs.**

- **Briefly explain to each other what your general research idea is?**
(3 minutes).

Group Activity

▶ **4. Have each participant write a title or a list of key words for that topic in general terms in less than seven words** (2 minutes):

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Group Activity

- **5. Describe the apparent *problem* or unresolved issue around your topic by filling in the following sentence**
(5 minutes):

- **The main problem this research seeks to address is . . .**

_____

Group Activity

▶ **6.   Return to pairs and read each other's problem statement. After reading, indicate to your partner what you understand to be an unsatisfactory situation the research would encounter (i.e., problem)**

(5 minutes).

Group Activity

▶ 7. Taking their own problem statement, have each participant rephrase it into one to three *questions**, creating a sentence that begins with a question word (5 minutes):

▶ Who_____?
▶ What_____?
▶ Where_____?
▶ When_____?
▶ Why_____?
▶ How_____?
▶ To what extent_____?
▶ What is the relationship between_____?
▶ Which is the (quickest/shortest/optimal/etc.) way to_____?
▶ What would happen if_____?
▶ What is the perspective of_____?

Group Activity

▶ **8. Develop a *purpose* statement that describes your intention to answer the question or questions in part (7) by filling in the following sentence** (5 minutes):

▶ **The purpose of this research is to (examine/study/understand/determine/answer/ etc.)**

▶ _____.

Group Activity

- **9. Return to pairs and read each other's questions and purpose statements. After reading, indicate to your partner what you understand to be the intention of the research in your own words (i.e., purpose)**

(3 minutes).

Writing a Concise Proposal

1. **Cover Letter.**

Some grants request a cover letter, while others do not. It depends on the granting agency. However, many state and federal grants do not request a cover letter but provide a required cover page. This cover needs special attention since this is the first item viewed by a reviewer.

Writing A Concise Proposal

2. **Proposal Summary.** This is written when you have completed the proposal. A summary should include purpose, plan, and evaluation in 3-5 sentences or 150-200 words.

Writing A Concise Proposal

3. Introduction. Sometimes a grant proposal requires a brief introduction, while other grants provide guidelines. It is good to explain who you are, what the organization is and how many years in existence. The introduction should include:

- The mission of the organization

- The organizations' goals

- When and how the organization was started

- Significant events for the organization

- Program accomplishments

- General information about the proposed project request

Writing A Concise Proposal

4. Developing a NEED or Problem Statement. A need statement is a key element for all grant proposals. It should be clear, concise, and well-supported statement of the problem that will be overcome should grant funds be awarded. It is the explanation for the granting agency to award funds. A need statement describes a critical condition or set of conditions. A strong word of caution, write a need and NOT a want or a solution!!!

Writing A Concise Proposal

4. Developing a NEED or Problem Statement.

Items to think about for the need or problem statement:

- Fine tune the specific problem that you want to solve or address

- Be clear for the reviewers

- Use data or statistics to support the existence of the problem or issue

- Make the connection between the issue and your institution

Writing A Concise Proposal

5. Defining Clear GOALS and OBJECTIVES. The goals and objectives should clearly describe what changes will result if funds are provided.

Remember the goals and objectives need to be connected to the need/problem statement!! A *goal* is a broad-based statement with the ultimate result that change occurs.

Writing A Concise Proposal

- An *objective* is a <u>measurable,</u> time-specific result that the organization expects to accomplish as part of the grant. It is much more narrowly defined than a goal. Objectives are considered the actions taken to support the goal.

Writing A Concise Proposal

6. Developing Program Activities or Methods. This section is a detailed explanation of the activities to be accomplished in order to conduct the grant.

Writing A Concise Proposal

Key Personnel.

Often the proposal guidelines request information on who will be involved with the grant. In other words, are you the expert on this topic or will you enlist the assistance of someone with this expertise.

Often grant reviewers examine in detail the expertise of individuals and the involvement of the institution with the grant.

Writing A Concise Proposal

7. Program Evaluation. Program evaluation is very important. In the grant proposal, the writer is now describing to the funding agency how the program measures the program activities that are addressed in the proposal.

Writing A Concise Proposal

<u>Does it clearly include the following?</u>

• 	Presents a clear plan for evaluating achievement of outcome objectives.

• 	States what will be measured

• 	States method of collecting data

• 	Shows how evaluation will be used for program improvements

Writing A Concise Proposal

8. Future Funding. Sometimes the grant requests you to discuss future funding---how is this program going to proceed after the grant is over!!!

Some grant agencies may request that the proposal provide a plan or list expected sources of continuing the program after the grant concludes.

Writing A Concise Proposal

9. Preparing the Program Budget. The budget is the plan for the project, and it is expressed in the language of dollars.

Budget Line items or categories includes: Personnel (salaries and benefits), Operating Expenses (equipment, supplies, printing, phone, facilities), and Travel. Always check the proposal guidelines, sometimes certain items are not allowed, like food.

Writing A Concise Proposal

Does your budget reflect?
- Consistency with narrative
- Explain items that may not be immediately clear
- Include sufficient funds to conduct the project
- Matching items???

Other budget terms:
- Indirect costs (Ex. Tax)
- In-kind or matched funds

Other Useful Information

Once You Have a Proposal Draft

Watch your submission deadline. Allow enough time to review your proposal.

- Leave some time to look at it refreshed.

- Allow a colleague to review it.

- Read what you've written out loud to yourself.

- Once it is done, have a tough critic review it. Afterwards, consider incorporating the suggestions.

Other Useful Information

The Phone Call

When you receive a phone call to discuss/negotiate the grant proposal, here are some suggestions:

- Re-read the proposal, and be very familiar with it.

- Take your time, think about what can be adjusted without sacrificing the grant.

- Be prepared to discuss the rationale for keeping certain items

- Maintain integrity

Other Useful Information

The Role of a Grant Reviewer

- There are several ways that grants are awarded. For local, state, and federal grants that are competitive, there are points applied to each guideline section. A reviewer is trained to examine if the guidelines were followed and provide a "grade" (points) for each section.

- For foundations, the director/staff reviews the grant proposal based on the foundations interests as described by the board members.

Thank you!!!

Questions?
(559)492-9554

www.TheSharpestGrantWriter.com