

# Grant Writing Tips for Nonprofits

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# Goals

- Review grant writing basics
- Share grant writing tips
- Offer suggestions for improvement
- Provide resources for grant writing

# Discussion

- Today's nonprofit arena and landscape
- Your organization's challenge
- Your grant writing expertise and resources



# Tips and Tricks

- Technical writer vs. creative writer (follow the recipe)
- Have a “bag of tricks” ready year round:
  - Law
  - Research, reports, studies
  - Data and needs
  - Reports and studies
  - Agreements and approvals
  - Organizational charts
  - Resumes, salaries, and benefits schedule
  - Organization budget ad forms
  - Organization description



# Acronyms and Terms

- RFP - Request for Proposal
- RFA - Request for Funding Assistance (same as RFP)
- FOA - Funding Opportunity Announcement (same as RFP)
- NOFA - Notice of Funding Availability (same as RFP)
- SGA - Solicitation for Grant Applications (same as RFP)
- SF - Standard Form (E.g. SF-424, basic cover form for most federal grant applications)
- LOI - Letter of Inquiry (to gauge interest before submitting a full proposal)
- AOR - Authorized Organizational Representative
- PI - Principal Investigator
- PD - Project Director (same as PI)



# What Type of Grant Are You Seeking?

- Government (federal, state, local)
- Foundations (national, local)
- Private (corporations)



# Federal Grants Requirements

- DUNS Number (Dun & Bradstreet)  
<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/>
- [SAM](#) Account - System for Award Management
- Separate [grants.gov](#) account for each new grant
- [eRA](#) Commons registration (NIH, SAMHSA mental health grants) - online grant interface
- Timeframe - 6 weeks



# Other Government, Foundations, or Private Grants - Requirements

- DUNS Number - required for most grants
- Partnership or commitment to collaborate
- Eligibility limits (LEAs, free and reduced lunch population, rural communities, historic sites, etc.)
- In-kind match





# Before You Start

- Establish a grant writing committee - don't tackle it alone
- One writer, several assistants
- Read the RFP several times with the team, know details, language, forms
- Review evaluation rubric (if available)
- Create a checklist to follow
- Research funding options in your area of interest - know current research, controversies, and priorities
- Review successful proposals
- Locate your organization's mission, vision, purpose, and description



# Structure of the Grant

- Most grants ask for same information
- Some RFPs require a template, others rely on the grantee to create one
- Components:
  - Summary of the proposal
  - Organization information
  - Problem/need
  - Goals and Objectives
  - Specific Activities (target group, activities, planning, timeline, location, etc.)
  - Outcomes and impact
  - Budget details and budget narrative (grant and in-kind) - personnel cap, indirect cost limits, direct cost)
  - Sustainability and future funding)
  - Evaluation
  - Support documents



# Needs Assessment

Provide research AND show a connection between the specific need and your project:

- What is currently occurring in the community to meet the need?  
Local funding?
- How will your proposed project fit in?
- Who is the target population?
- Ask “why” questions in a cycle to drill down to the core
- Assemble a focus group.
- Involve all pertinent stakeholders.
- Gather statistical data.
- Administer surveys and analyse responses.
- Build charts, graphs, visuals.



# As You Begin

- Start early and be thorough
- Meet with your financial officer
- Create detailed timeline and budget/budget narrative
- Specify all budgetary needs, including in-kind funds
- Follow the RFP guidelines religiously - remember your checklist
- Use references and citations
- Provide rationale and supporting details
- Discuss problems or challenges
- Remember sustainability
- Aim for high quality - ask for help with proofreading



# Things to Consider

- Target of the grant - population, subgroups
- Grant activities - specific action steps, don't ignore details
- Project narrative - planning and details
- Project director or principal investigator - who will oversee the grant?
  - Credentials, experience, capacity
- Communication plan, if grant is awarded
- Sustainability - partnerships, in-kind support
- Support documents (tax ID, financial statement, current and next year organizational budget, tax exempt letter, letters of support/letters of commitment)



# Writing the Proposal

- Create goals and objectives
  - Goals - big picture, conceptual purpose (E.g. Our after-school program will help children improve reading.)
  - Objectives - SMART/Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely (E.g. 75 % of the students who participated in the after-school program will show one-year growth as measured by the STAR reading test after participating in the program for 6 months.)
- Think through detailed activities for each goal and objective



# Writing the Proposal - Specific Details

General term	More specific term	Very specific term
Young students	Middle school students	Students aged twelve to fifteen
Night time	After 7 PM	Between 7PM and 10PM central time
Farmers	Corn farmers	Corn farmers with less than 50 square acres of farm land
Math teachers	Algebra teachers	High school algebra teachers with more than 15 years of teaching experience
Marital status	Single	Never been married

Source: Purdue OWL, 2018



# Writing the Proposal - Specific Details

- **Non-specific activity description:** Students will be tested every 10 lessons, and will score at least 80%.
- **More specific response:** After completing 10 lessons, students will take a timed 25-item multiple choice 20-item achievement test based on materials covered with additional 5 items to help identify areas for improvement in the next level of lessons. Successful students will answer 80% of the materials covered items correctly. Items scored incorrect will be “recycled” into the next testing session. Students who score less than 50% on the timed 25-item tests will complete 5 remedial lessons before retesting and proceeding to the next level of lessons.





# Writing the Proposal - Details

- Use resources to improve your writing
  - Example: Purdue OWL

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/981/1/>

- Use APA, MLA, or similar manual for citations and formatting support



Search the OWL

## Subject-Specific Writing

### Professional, Technical Writing

#### Workplace Writers

#### Effective Workplace Writing

#### Audience Analysis

#### Prioritizing Your Concerns for Effective Business Writing

#### Parallel Structure

#### Tone in Business Writing

#### HATS: A Design Procedure for Routine Business Documents

#### Basic Business Letters

#### Business Letters: Accentuating the Positives

#### Memos

#### Sales Letters: Four Point Action Closing

#### Grant Writing

##### Grant Writing

##### Grant Writing: Specificity in Writing

##### Grant Writing: Clarity in Writing

##### Making the Request

##### Grant Writing in the Sciences

##### Grant Writing in the Sciences: Planning

##### Grant Writing in the Sciences: Writing

#### Donation Request Letters

#### Technical Reports & Report Abstracts

#### White Papers

#### Activity and Postmortem Reports

## Coming Soon: A new look for our same great content!

We're working hard this summer on a redesign of the Purdue OWL. Worry not! Our navigation menu and content will remain largely the same.

## Introduction to Grant Writing

### Summary:

This resource provides general guidelines for grant writing in general and in the scientific disciplines. While grant proposals are almost always overseen by a faculty member serving as the primary investigator (PI), this resource is intended primarily for graduate students and junior faculty seeking to learn more about grant writing in their fields. It is organized according to the following stages of the writing process: I) project planning; II) researching funding opportunities; and III) writing and submitting the grant proposal. Note that the specific requirements of funding agencies vary significantly, and should always be consulted carefully before a grant proposal is begun. It also discusses a number of language considerations regarding grant writing.

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## Introduction

Professional grant writers use clear, specific language to focus the reader's attention, and to persuade the reader to fund their proposal. Learning to write successful grant proposals is no small task, but the writing process can become easier with practice and awareness of a few common missteps.

No doubt, the first step of successful grant writing is to plan the project, but the second step is following the directions of the granting organization (called, the grantmaker). In most cases, grantmakers require a(n): cover letter, executive summary, problem statements/need description, work schedule, budget, qualifications, conclusions, and appendices (or, supporting materials). Each section will have specific requirements and while keeping to a word limit is straightforward, being specific is less easy.

## A Note on Following the Grantmaker's Rules

Following directions helps the grantmaker read applications efficiently. Specificity of content will not only vary by grantmaker, but also by proposal sections. For example, a grantmaker may limit your application in general terms for background information on the contexts of your proposal:

"Please tell the grant committee in 2 to 3 pages about the support your institution or community will provide for your project if your proposal is granted the requested funds."

Likewise, a grantmaker may explicitly limit your response to a section on the grant applicant's qualifications by stating:

"In no more than 350 words, please summarize the grant applicant's specific qualifications to manage the finances of the proposal. Discuss any financial experience (for example, certifications in accounting services), or other relevant office managerial duties that will help the applicant distribute funds and write regular quarterly financial reports."



# Budget Categories

- Personnel
- Benefits
- Travel
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Indirect cost (administrative/rent/utilities)
- Contractual (services, consulting, etc.)

Note: budget forms and budget narrative are usually required.



# Improving Your Proposal

- Don't ignore the Help Line - it's your chance to make a connection
- Be persuasive and enthusiastic - market your proposal
- Use research-based and evidence-based strategies and tools
- Make sure you follow one format and be consistent
- Check for clarity and remember your audience (acronyms, jargon)
- Follow the rubric and make it clear for the reviewer
- Re-read your proposal after it's written - did you address every question?
- Have a "cold reader" read RFP and your proposal - makes sense?
- Proofread, proofread, proofread



# Proposal Rejection

- It happens to everyone!
- Call the funder for feedback (if possible)
- Research your competition and see how you can improve
- Reuse the information in your proposal for new grants
- Learn from your mistakes



# Where to Look for Grants?

## Government Grants:

- [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)
- [www.firstgov.gov](http://www.firstgov.gov)
- [www.cfda.gov](http://www.cfda.gov)
- [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu)
- [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

## Foundations and Private Grants:

- <http://www.grantstation.com>
- <http://www.foundationcenter.org>
- [PhilanthropyNewsDigest.org](http://PhilanthropyNewsDigest.org)
- <https://www.communityfoundationhsv.org>



# Sample Grant Proposals

- [https://www.kurzweiledu.com/files/proof\\_resources\\_grant1.pdf](https://www.kurzweiledu.com/files/proof_resources_grant1.pdf)
- <http://thegrantdoctor.com/sample-grant/Sample-grant-proposal-wind-energy-low-income.pdf>
- [https://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/ocjs\\_sample\\_grant.pdf](https://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/ocjs_sample_grant.pdf)
- [Madison City Schools DoDEA SAIL Grant](#)



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# Presentation Link and QR Code

[bit.ly/granttips2018](https://bit.ly/granttips2018)

