

# 3 Steps to Grant Writing

Outlines grant writing in three steps: 1) needs assessment, 2) targeting a funding source, 3) writing the proposal.

## Step 1: Perform a Needs Assessment

A Needs Assessment is a perfect way to figure out that real needs of your organization. Discuss the pressing needs of your organization with your project planning/development team. After you have decided what need external funding could address, then gather the data you need to make a compelling grant proposal.

The following questions can be helpful in this process:

- What is your purpose?
  - Determine what you are trying to measure
- Who is your audience?
  - Determine a set of people that you will survey to obtain your answers.
- How will you get your information?
  - Determine which method(s) you will use to gather your information. Interviews and surveys are the most common methods.
- What questions will you ask to reach a decision about how your audience feels regarding the issues your team has selected?
  - Create 10 questions that will help you determine which issue your audience feels strongly about.
- Collect your data.
  - Summarize your responses
- What does your data reveal?
  - Analyze your data and determine which issue provides you with the strongest argument for pursuing your grant proposal.

## Step 2 : Identify Your Financial Source

The next step in developing and writing a grant proposal is to identify your funder. You must answer the questions, "How much money do we need?" and "Where will I get the money from?" There are many databases available online to help the business management team with your search. Once you have identified your potential financial source(s), note that there will be guidelines and specific requirements for a written proposal.

The best way to increase your funding opportunities is to submit your proposal to more than one funding agency, provided that you attach a simple summary listing other funding sources that are receiving the proposal request. Conduct three funding searches:

1. Federal Funding (Government) Search
2. Corporate or Foundation Funding Search
3. International Funding Search

Each funding agency will have specific guidelines telling you what they expect to see in a grant proposal and provide you with a pattern to follow. Some funders will also require that you fill out an application form as well as write a proposal.

For record keeping purposes, it is recommended that you create and maintain a funding tracker log that contains the following items:

- Funding entity name
- Initial Requirement
- Number of Copies
- Submission Deadlines
- Range of Funding Amounts
- Status

Have your tracking log available for distribution at your next project meeting and be prepared for a discussion of matching the source or sources of money, once the financial management team has identified a range of funding needed for the project.

## **Step 3: The Grant Proposal**

When writing a grant proposal you should have six parts to your manuscript: the executive summary, and statement of need, project description, budget, organizational information, and conclusion.

### **1. Executive Summary**

This first section is your sales pitch. This is where you will hook your audience or lose them. Give a very brief statement of your project and what you hope to address. Summarize some key points about how the project will be run. State the amount of money you will need and what your plans are for future funding. Briefly describe your organization and its qualifications for handling this project.

## **2. Statement of Need.**

Identify the purpose of your project and why it should be supported. Try to convince the funding institution that your project is important and that you are experts in this field. Give supporting evidence for your project from other experts showing that a problem exists and needs to be dealt with. This must be the persuasive section of your document. If your reader has come this far then you have their interest now you must sway them to support you.

## **3. Project Description**

In this section paint a picture of your entire project. State your goals for this project. What do you plan to do with this project? State the methods and processes you plan to use in this project. State your expected outcomes. What impact will your research have, what will it mean to people. Describe the project staffing. Who will work on this project and what are their qualifications. Describe the assignments that they will be called upon to do. Describe your evaluation plan. State how you plan to keep track of your results. What system will you use? What system will be used to measure your results?

## **4. Budget**

In this section you will be showing the funding agency how your project will actually be managed. Show how you intend to use and distribute the funding that you are getting. Show the expected expenses that the project will incur, and if the project is expected to earn an income list what that may be. A comprehensive budget summary will include all or part of the following line items:

- personnel
- travel
- equipment (computers)
- supplies (materials)
- professional services (hired specialists)
- capital improvement (construction)
- miscellaneous

## **5. Organizational Information.**

This section should be like a resume for your organization. State your organization's mission statement, how the project fits into that mission, and when the organization came into existence. Describe the organization's structure, programs and expertise.

## **6. Conclusion**

Conclude your proposal with a view of the future, once the grant is completed. Outline follow up activities to the project if there will be any. Restate your needs and what the project plans to achieve. State why you need funding to achieve your goals. This is your last chance to ask for money to support your project.

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