

13 Ways to Write a Grant Proposal Efficiently Today

The grant proposal process is becoming increasingly competitive. For grant writers, as performance grows in importance, organizations can improve their chances of receiving funding by doing the proper research upfront, being transparent, showcasing historical results, and more.

As a leading provider of [grant management solutions](#), we understand how a well-written grant proposal can significantly impact the success of your organization and mission. Below we offer actionable tips on how to draft a grant proposal that has the best odds of getting funded.

Let's dive in.

1 Do the Proper Research

Writing a grant proposal starts with finding the right funders to partner with and support your organization's work.

Do your homework. Dig deep into learning about your Grant Maker's specific priorities. Nothing is more essential when applying for a grant than having the right information. To maximize your chance of winning the award, match your proposal to a problem or improve a situation that the Grant Maker feels is essential.

Jim Durkan, president of the Community Memorial Foundation, in Hinsdale, IL says,

"They don't spend the time upfront to research and see if there's a match," he says. "I always say that the time they spend researching will be returned tenfold."

SOURCE: GRANT MAKERS REVEAL THE MOST COMMON REASONS GRANT PROPOSALS GET REJECTED

2 Statement of Need – State Problem and Offer a Solution (The impact you hope it makes)

The statement of need should describe the problem that the project will attempt to address. Also, it should represent the population that will be served. Developing a compelling need statement is critical for your proposal to continue in the selection process.

The statement of need will illustrate a clear goal and the method that will be used to solve or improve the problem. While constructing the statement, keep in mind:

- Who the problem impacts
- Where the problem is located
- Why it is critical to improve or fix the problem

The statement must establish a clear connection between the need presented and the Grant Maker's funding priorities.

3 Give an Overview of Your Organization with an Executive Summary

When you write your proposal, you need to demonstrate how your team will work together towards the mission. You can indicate the skills and experience of each individual and identify how each team member will contribute to the project. An organizational chart will build credibility in the eyes of the Grant Maker. It can explain who you are as an organization and how you can improve or even solve the problem raised in the proposal.

Also, an executive summary will outline why the Grant Maker should choose your proposal over all the others. It should be specific and focus on results. The abstract helps the reviewers decide if they should read the rest of the proposal. A well-planned summary serves as a valuable tool and summarizes the main points of all the other sections.

[Project Manager](#) offers an executive summary template to help sum significant points. Executive summaries are critical for getting projects approved and funded.

4 Know Your Audience You are Pitching

The language used in writing your grant proposal should be appropriate for the target audience.

Try and predict the questions that the reviewer may have and answer them. Przeworski and Salomon, *On the Art of Writing Proposals*, note that reviewers read with three questions in mind:

What are we going to learn as a result of the proposed project that we do not know now? (goals, aims, and outcomes)

Why is it worth knowing? (significance)

How will we know that the conclusions are valid? (criteria for success)

Research every detail of your project to ensure it is feasible before applying for a grant.

5 Recognize Your Key Objectives with a Built out Project Description

In your proposal, describe the project and provide information on how implementation will occur. You must include information on what will be accomplished and the desired outcome.

The majority of grants are awarded to a particular cause as opposed to just general support. By focusing your grant application on a single project, you will increase your chances of getting funded. And be detailed, because this will show that you've thought through how the project will be executed.

6 Format the Proposal, so it's Easy to Read

Format the proposal so that it is *easy to read*. Use headings to break the project up into sections. If it is long, include a table of contents with page numbers.

Here are some sections to consider:

- Introduction (statement of the problem, the purpose of research or goals, and significance of research)

- Organizational description
- Project narrative (methods and procedures)
- Goal and objectives
- Personnel
- Timeline
- Budget summary
- Reporting

7 Evaluation: How You Will Measure the Degree of its Success

Grant reviewers are looking for your intent, but also the numbers and metrics that go along with it.

Provide information on the metrics that will be used to determine the effectiveness of the project. Two types of parameters to measure progress towards the goal are:

1. **Activity metrics** – used to track the actions getting you closer to the goal.
2. **Outcome metrics** – help you understand if you are getting the results you anticipated in a specific timeframe.

8 Budget: Understand What and How Much to Ask for

The budget is a critical piece of any grant proposal.

The necessary components of a project budget include income and expenses, estimating the cost of a project, and other financial documents you may need to submit with your proposal.

A budget proposal for a grant should align with the goals of your project and your existing reporting processes. There are different ways that you will communicate your budget in your proposal. The Grant Maker may provide a specific budget form for you to complete. You will most likely also need to write a budget narrative that is included in the text of the proposal. Keep the budget narrative to the point, providing enough information to build credibility.

Your budget is the financial description of your project. [GrantStation](#) believes, “Rule number one: don’t make up your budget figures! Always do the necessary research to get the cost of the project right.”

Sophisticated grant management [software](#) can provide different budget views to help you understand how your organization will be impacted if it receives the grant.

9 Use a Grant Proposal Template

Templates can ensure you cover all the bases. PandaDoc's [grant proposal](#) template simplifies the process by helping you create proposals. This grant proposal template is written to convince either a private foundation or a governmental entity to provide funding to a cause.

The video below shows how to use Proposal Kit to create a document to respond to any grant funding application or RFP. Using the Proposal Kit, you can select a design theme, select a set of chapters to match your RFP or grant submission guidelines, generate a document, fill in with your content then deliver as needed.



10

Be Human – Make Your Passion Apparent to Grant Makers

Remember, funders are people too.

Pick up the phone and call (when appropriate) instead of relying solely on email. Building relationships is important and could mean the difference in getting funded or not. A passion for results is what's behind every grant.

Learn to write a great story. Compelling storytelling can draw the reader into your proposal and get them cheering for you. Let your energy come through in your writing. You want your reader to feel inspired and excited by the plans.

Consistency and clarity are also a benchmark for excellent proposals. When the proposal shows passion, a clear indication of what the organization wants to do, why it is important, and how it will be carried out, it will help move the Grant Makers in your direction. It helps them make an informed decision.

Grant Makers want to hear the passion in your voice. Make your reader feel something.

11

Follow Directions on the Application

Grant departments receive more applications than they can fund. If an application doesn't meet the standard requirements, it will fall to the bottom of the stack.

Plan your application carefully and read the instructions. Complete all the forms and submit all the necessary documents promptly.

“Writers of successful grant applications typically report that they spent 50 percent of their time on writing and revising their abstract and aims. When you finally start drafting your proposal, the specific aims should be the first thing you write — well before the background or methods sections.”

SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.CHRONICLE.COM/ARTICLE/10-TIPS-FOR-SUCCESSFUL-GRANT-WRITING/](https://www.chronicle.com/article/10-tips-for-successful-grant-writing/)

Resources

[What is the percentage of grant proposals that foundations actually fund?](#)

[About grant writer success rates](#)

12 Match Your Methods and Aims

“An overly ambitious application is one of the most common fatal flaws of an early-career application.” [[source](#)]

A focused methodological plan directly tied to your specific aims will be the most impressive to reviewers. Include methods in the proposal that relate directly to each of your study’s objectives and avoid including additional methods that do not correspond to any aims.

13 Showcase Historical Results that Display Responsibility in Spending

As performance grows in importance, organizations can improve their chances of receiving funding by showcasing historical results. (if you have it)

Present concrete evidence to Grant Makers that your organization is capable of spending grant funding appropriately.

Here are three tips on how your organization can track and leverage grant performance data to win future funds.

Spend Effectively

Start with appropriate spending. If your current and past grants were not appropriately allocated toward goals, you wouldn't be able to demonstrate strong program performance in new grant proposals. Consistent and appropriate spending assures that your organization is using funds to further organizational goals and demonstrates your understanding of the Uniform Grant Guidance cost and compliance requirements.

Create Detailed and Accurate Reports

To correctly keep track of data every step of the way, develop grant management processes that comply with new requirements and regulations. Consider implementing grant management software to store data in a centralized system.

The software allows your organization to effectively track time and effort, validating the time workers spend on a program and directly correlating with their expensed wages from funding. Staff can enter time on a weekly or monthly basis, and supervisors can review and approve timesheets to ensure accuracy.

Grant management software also helps you easily create internal reports that identify:

- Activities to be undertaken
- Deliverable timelines
- Goals, indicators, and milestones
- Outputs and outcomes

Internal reports not only assure your organization is staying on track, but also provide in-depth data on what your organization is capable of accomplishing. Use these reports to leverage historical data for future grant proposals.

Showcase Past Performance Data

Having reliable performance data allows you to present concrete evidence to awarding agencies that your organization is capable of spending grant funding appropriately.

In addition to using past performance data to win new grants, encourage repeat funding from existing investors by providing accurate, ongoing reports on spend and performance. The more detailed these reports are, the better you'll be at demonstrating your grant-spending and program-performance competencies.

Is your organization prepared for performance-based grant distribution?

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AmpliFund is the leading purpose-built grant management platform designed for federal, state, local, and tribal governments to manage every phase of the grant management process. Our configurable solution provides a full suite of features needed by grant funders and recipients to maximize grant outcomes, meet performance standards, and increase compliance so they can achieve their missions.

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