



## **Successful Grant Applications**

Grant writing can be high pressure and overwhelming. Although seemingly mysterious, applications succeed or fail for reasons clear to funders who are focused on the key characteristics of a winning application. The characteristics are numerous but focus on three main themes:

- knowledge of your audience,
- thorough understanding of the guidelines and
  - a strategic approach to the process.

### **Helpful Hints**

#### **1. Design your program or project**

- Programs should develop from your group's mission, not the mission of the funder.
- Fundraising is about finding support for your project, not developing projects to suit funding applications.

#### **2. Research**

- Read program requirements thoroughly. Make sure your organization and project qualify and meet the specific criteria.
- Speak with the program officer responsible for the grant to clearly identify their criteria and eligibility. Get the applications and deadlines.

#### **3. Preparation – Before Completing the Application**

- Start early.
- Write the required information in the most clear, concise and persuasive way.
- Write a one-paragraph description of your project answering: Who are you? What do you want to do? What are your goals? How do you plan to do it? Who will be involved? How much will it cost? What is the timeline?
- Keep it simple.

#### **4. Complete the Application – Describe your Project in Detail**

- Why is the project needed?
- What is unique about your organization and your approach?
- What will you accomplish?
- What will be the outcomes?
- Who will benefit?
- How will you carry out the specific tasks involved?
- How will you measure the impact and results of your project?
- Provide a timetable for reaching your objectives?
- Define a clear and realistic budget. Make sure all budget items are reflected in the project description.



- Remember, your job is to ‘paint a picture’ for the funder. Assume s/he knows nothing about your project.
- Funders read a lot of applications, so yours should be clear, well organized and stand out!
- Make sure your facts and information are correct. Expect a funder to check your references.

#### **5. Be Confident**

- Use positive statements, such as “We will...” rather than, “We hope to. . .”
- Don’t appear desperate. “If you don’t fund us, the project won’t happen” is not a persuasive argument.

#### **6. Attachments**

- Include items that demonstrate your groups’ overall credentials and specific ability to carry out the proposed project.
- Don’t overdo it! Choose a few pieces that reflect best on your work.
- If the funder says, “No attachments”, don’t include them.

#### **7. Pay Attention to Detail!**

- Answer each and every question asked.
- Follow instructions carefully. Don’t be disqualified for a technicality.
- Neatness counts.
- Proofread your application. Better yet get fresh eyes to read it.
- Don’t wait until the last minute.
- Always keep a copy of the applications for your records.

#### **8. After Submitting the Application**

- Some funders are willing to provide feedback on submitted grant applications. You may find it useful to ask the funders for their thoughts to help strengthen your application for the next time.
- Be polite. The person you talk to might be the person who reviews your application in the future.

“When developing a budget, think project budget first. List every penny it will take to run the entire project. Don’t forget support staff, copying charges, postage, memberships, telephone charges, meeting costs and all the “hidden’ expenses. Then think, what part of this budget is appropriate to request from the funder. No funder will fund every cent of a project. They want to see your investment. Then put together an itemized list for the part of the overall budget you’re requesting from the funder – the request budget. Use this request budget to fill out the grant maker’s summary forms. Remember the forms you see are just summaries of line items, not the budget itself – the budget itself are those line items you used to complete the summary. *Source: Grant Writing- Grant Writing Tips and Hints, Highline Community College. [www.highline.edu/ia/grantwrite/tips.htm](http://www.highline.edu/ia/grantwrite/tips.htm)*”



### Writing Winning Grant Proposals:

- Never write a proposal if you have not first fully developed the project. Otherwise, you have nothing to write about.
- There is no such thing as a fill-in-the-blank proposal that can be just mailed to a list of potential funders. Don't write one proposal and then mail it out to a bunch of potential funders.
- Each funder should receive a different, highly personalized proposal, fitting 'to the letter' whatever guidelines s/he requires.
- Write persuasively – you're selling a concept. You're not writing a term paper.
- Remember the reader. Write so the reader, any reader from any profession, can read your proposal.
- No jargon or flowery language. Simple, clear, concise sentences.
- Writing is easy. It's about 20% of the issue in grants acquisition. It's only hard if you have nothing to say.
- Funders want good proposals. They will help you. Call them and ask questions – but be sure you've done your homework first and that you're not asking questions already answered in their literature.
- There's no trick to grant seeking. It's not a game. It requires good planning and hard work. Planning the project out thoroughly is the single best thing you can do to insure a good proposal.
- Be careful not to write sentences that sound pretty but don't say anything.

#### Did you know?

The True Sport Community Fund applications are due: May 31 & October 31

If you are not successful, examine your feedback, consider what held you back and plan to improve in those areas. Ask where you fell short and what you need to do to make next year's application successful. It's never too soon to start thinking about the next deadline.

#### Sources:

Grant Writing- Grant Writing Tips and Hints, Highline Community College.

[www.highline.edu/ia/grantwrite/tips.htm](http://www.highline.edu/ia/grantwrite/tips.htm)

The Peer Review – The Secrets of Successful Grant Applications.

[www.thepeerreview.ca](http://www.thepeerreview.ca)

Citizens for NTC – Applying for Grants

[www.citizensnyc.org](http://www.citizensnyc.org)

Older, Smarter, Fitter - Ideas for Funding Sources and Grants Applications

[www.dva.gov.au/media/publicat/2002/oldersmarter/p5funds.htm](http://www.dva.gov.au/media/publicat/2002/oldersmarter/p5funds.htm)

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