GRANT WRITING TIPS

Read guidelines and instructions carefully

Obtain as much information as possible about the grantor. Follow the directions. Carefully read the request for proposals to ensure that you include all of the required information and forms. Understand their mission, past-funded programs and be aware of any geographical preferences and/or limitations.

Do not try to make the grantor's program fit into what you want to do—your program must be in line with the grantor's priorities.

Sample proposals

Take time to review some successful proposals in order to learn what the grantor is likely to fund.

Keep the language simple

Think like the reviewer who will be examining your grant. Match headings and subheadings directly with the major and minor selection criteria in the request for proposals.

Try not to use jargon. For example:

"Using a group of school-age learners, we will endeavor to capitalize on NCLB-specific requirements and shift the paradigm for meeting tangible literary and technological benchmarks." Reviewers will be much happier to read: "We want to provide one class of third-graders the equipment needed to produce a book report podcast."

Project Abstracts

Most proposals require a short project abstract. If you haven't adequately described your project in the abstract, it may be the only part of the entire proposal that ever gets read. Consider writing the abstract last.

Project Narrative

Use the project narrative to describe your goals, objectives, strategies, budget and evaluation strategies. Detail the activities that will be implemented to accomplish the project's goals and objectives. Your budget and budget narrative must closely match the described activities. Your evaluation should carefully measure whether the stated project objectives will be met on a timely basis.

Cover Letter

Include a one-page cover letter if the grantor does not prohibit it. The cover letter should briefly introduce your organization and describe your project, including the funding request.

Identify measurable points and objectives.

Write concisely and in the active voice. Write to communicate, not to impress. Use action phrases such as, "students will demonstrate" or "they will complete a three-segment project" Terms such as "students will learn" or "my class will come to understand" are not specific enough.

Deadlines

Start early, plan ahead and allow plenty of time for writing, revising and editing. Have someone who is not involved in the project in any way read and proofread your draft application.

Always thank the funder for the opportunity to apply.

Even if your proposal is not funded, always send a thank you note to the grantor for the opportunity to submit your proposal. Ask if it is possible to receive reviewer comments so that you can see why your proposal was not funded. Use the reviewer comments to improve upon your proposal-writing techniques.