

## Information Sheet #1

### Grant Writing Basics

As you search out potential funders, you will sometimes encounter that tricky situation - a funder who specifies: "No application form is required, submit proposal." What proposal!?! You scream (but only out of hearing of the funder!)

Well, a complete proposal has basic and time honoured elements, whether there is a detailed application form or whether you have to start from scratch - and here they are!

Note that when a brief proposal or letter is specified, you want to try to hit most of these points as well - only in an abbreviated way.

#### 1. Cover Page or Cover Letter

- No more than one page.
- Organisation ( who you are and your background briefly), purpose of funding , and the amount of your request should appear in the first paragraph.
- Include a contact name, phone number and address.

#### 2. Proposal Summary

- Limit to one page.
- State the organisation making the request and link organisational background to the proposal purpose.
- State your project purpose.
- Briefly state how your project will be implemented.
- State the results you expect from your project.
- Include your total budget amount, other funds that are committed and the amount of your request.

(90% of funding decisions by private donors and foundations will be made by the time the funder finishes reading this page. It must be concise, compelling and clear!)

#### 3. Introduction to the Organisation

- History
- General Purpose
- Goals and objectives as they relate to this project, and in overview, as they provide a context for the work you want to undertake.
- Accomplishments, especially as they relate to this project or to your capacity to provide this project
- Service areas and population served

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#### 4. Statement of Problem or Need

- Use a funnel approach
- Start with the generalised problems it occurs in your community
- Move to the conditions which make this a problem.
- Outline current resources that address this problem and identify gaps in those resources
- Identify how your proposal will fill these gaps.

#### 5. Project Goals and Objectives

- What specific goals are you trying to achieve?
- What measurable milestones will you reach in meeting those goals?
- How will you and the funder know that you are making progress towards your goals?

#### 6. Methods and Schedule

- What actions will you take to achieve your goals ?
- What steps must you take to achieve success?
- Who will do what? (Include here job description and background statements of staff or the qualifications you will seek in staff for the project. This is true even if "staff" will actually be volunteers.
- Are there other partners? Who are they and what is the relationship between you?
- When will these actions take place?

#### 7. Evaluation Criteria and Process

- How will you know whether you are achieving your goals?
- What will you measure to evaluate your progress?
- What records and information will you keep to allow you to measure your progress?

#### 8. Budget

- More detail is better than less.
- Don't round out if possible. Use bids and estimates whenever you can get them - even if they are informal quotes.
- Don't pad your budget. Competent reviewers will know the cost of goods and services, and will understand prevailing wages. If they know you are trying to deceive them on budget, what else will they suspect you of trying to deceive them about?
- Do include all sources of support - including volunteer time, donated space and borrowed equipment. Don't shortchange the contribution your community is making to your project.

Adapted from Sylvie McGee/All For A Good Cause  
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