

Module 6.0 Grant Writing - Keep the funding pipeline active

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6.1 Where to find funding

- Federal Grants & Loans
 - Start by searching for federal opportunities, because many charitable grantmakers will want to know about your governmental funding. If there is a federal source for your project, this can impact your overall strategy
- State/Provincial Grants & Loans
 - Investigate the government opportunities within your own locality.
- Charitable Grantmakers
 - Conduct a comprehensive search of private grantmakers using the database for the U.S., Canada, or International grantmakers. This will help you find foundations, corporate giving programs, associations, and more.
- International Funders - There are many foundations which list disability as one of their funding objectives.

6.2 Elements of the Letter of Inquiry

- The letter of inquiry should be a short but thorough presentation of the need or problem you have identified, the proposed solution, and your organization's qualifications for implementing that solution. Each grantmaker will have writing guidelines and submissions requirements that must be followed.
- General Letter of Inquiry (LOI) Sections:
 - The Introduction serves as the executive summary and includes the name of your organization, the amount needed or requested, and a description of the project. The qualifications of project staff, a brief description of evaluative methodology, and a timetable are also included here.
 - The organization description should be short and focus on the ability of your organization to meet the stated need. Provide a very brief history and description of your current programs while demonstrating a direct connection between what you do now and what you want to do with the requested funding. You will expand on this in greater detail if you are invited to submit a full proposal.
 - The statement of need must convince the reader that there is an important need that can be met by your project. The statement of need includes: a description of the target population and geographical area, appropriate statistical data in abbreviated form, and several concrete examples.
 - The methodology should be appropriate to your statement of need and present a clear, logical, and achievable solution to the stated need. Describe the project

- briefly, including major activities, names and titles of key project staff, and your desired objectives. As with the organization description, this will be presented in far greater detail in a full proposal.
- Other funding sources being approached for support of this project should be listed in a brief sentence or paragraph.
 - The final summary restates the intent of the project, offers to answer further questions, and thanks the potential funder for its consideration. Note: Only include attachments if the funder asks for them and be sure to follow any guidelines for attachments.

6.3 Elements of a Proposal

- Preparing to Write
 - Most grantmakers have instructions on how you should develop your application for funding. You will want to follow these application guidelines very carefully, as they will tell you what elements to include, in what order, and what length each section should be.
 - Program developer should be involved in putting together the grant proposal, especially the objectives, plan of action, and budget. However, you want the grant request to be stylistically consistent, so limit the number of people involved in the actual writing. A basic grant writing rule of thumb is: do not write by committee.
 - Grant reviewers appreciate brevity and clarity. To achieve this, include section headings and sub-headings, leave space between sections, choose a readable typeface and font size, and use standard margins. Always use page numbers and identifying page headers or footers. Don't use your letterhead anywhere in the request except for the cover letter.
- Grant Proposal Elements
 - Executive Summary (Project Abstract)
 - When writing the executive summary you are trying to accomplish two things:
 - Create curiosity for the reader.
 - Establish credibility for the organization.
 - It can be anywhere from several lines, to a full page in length. This summary should be both succinct and complete.
 - Develop this component of the grant proposal by summarizing the main points of all the other sections. Begin by outlining each of the proposal sections and use that outline to develop a concise and compelling summary.
 - Follow any explicit directions for presenting the executive summary. These forms often limit the amount of space and number of words you can use.
 - Also summarize the campaign, the coalition that has come together to launch this program, the amount requested, and how much money has already been raised.
 - Introduction

- Communicates the social, economic, and environmental context of your organization. Provides a brief description of your geographic and social situation.
- Is concise and contains information that captures your reader's attention and interest. It introduces the subject matter, setting, and principal players, and provides some background to the issue you will present in your proposal's project narrative and need descriptions. Sometimes the introduction and the organizational description/history are combined.
- It's often beneficial to write the introduction after drafting the need statement and the goals and objectives.
- Organization History and Purpose (Capability)
 - Provides the grantmaker with the history of the organization applying for funding, as well as its current programs and structure.
 - The primary objective is to establish the organization's credibility and its qualifications for funding. You should include:
 - When and where you were founded.
 - Why you were founded
 - Initial need and geographic location
 - Mission
 - If services changed over time, why changed or grew
 - Summary of programs and services
 - How many people served
 - Summary of population description
- Statement of Need (Problem)
 - Describes specific, often negative conditions of a community or a situation. This statement leads into the project narrative, which lays out what the organization intends to do to address the identified problem or need.
 - The problem or need statement should:
 - paint a picture of the overall issue, focusing on the global, national, regional, or local scale, as appropriate;
 - describe the problem in terms of clients or the community, using statistics or other documentation;
 - refer to the organization's internal needs if the request is for capacity building grants or operating support; and,
 - establish a clear link between the problem or need presented and the grant maker's funding priorities.
 - Project or Program Narrative
 - Describe both the vision and the practical approach of the project or program.
 - Clearly connect the project or program to the mission and overall activities of your organization.
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter.

- Summarize how the project or program will be implemented.
- Provide a profile of the clients you will serve (if applicable) and how you intend to connect with them.
- Summarize the plan of action and the timeline for the project or program.
- Articulate how you will staff the project, and who will be involved (including volunteers, consultants, and staff).
- Goals and Objectives
 - Here's a checklist that will help you write clear objectives:
 - Always specify a result, not an activity.
 - Describe just one result you want to accomplish.
 - Tell when the result is to be accomplished.
 - Emphasize what will be done and when, but don't tell why or how it will be done.
 - Clearly relate each objective to one or more of the goals.
 - Make sure the objectives are specific, measurable, and verifiable.
 - Allow for flexibility on the part of those implementing the objective.
- Plan of Action or Work Plan
 - Is a step-by-step description of what you will do to accomplish each objective you've defined in your grant request.
 - It is important to tie every task to an objective, making sure that you've listed all the tasks needed to accomplish each objective. Be specific. Begin each task with a verb.
 - Assign a cost, time line, and responsible person for each task.
 - The step-by-step plan of action will generate the project timeline and guide budget development so it is important to make it detailed.
- Evaluation and Measurable Outcomes
 - A technical document used to evaluate the success of a program.
 - A few basic questions:
 - The evaluation results will be circulated to whom and for what purpose?
 - Does the grantmaker want the information in order to decide if they will provide future funding?
 - Will your board of directors refer to the evaluation to make program decisions?
 - Will you issue a press release, or post the information on the web?

- What kinds of information are needed to help someone decide how to proceed with this particular program?
 - What sources will provide the most credible information?
 - What is the best way to collect and document this information?
 - When do you need the information collected, and an analysis prepared to distribute?
- Select the people who will design and oversee the evaluation process. There are three possible approaches to consider:
 - In-house evaluation team - This could include the program director, staff, a board member, and an on-staff, designated evaluator. This approach is the most cost effective, but it is also least objective.
 - An outside evaluation team - This could include a board member, a community leader, and someone in your field of work who is not directly linked with the program. An outside evaluation team is more objective than an in-house team but there will be a small cost.
 - Professional evaluator - Some options include college or university evaluators in your field, freelance consultants and professional evaluator. Professional evaluators can provide a relatively objective evaluation, along with a professional report. Cost will vary.
- Timeline
 - Lays out the sequence of events in a timeline to provide visual cues to better understand the process necessary for your objectives to be met.
 - Shows the relationship between what needs to happen, when it needs to happen, why it has to happen in a particular sequence, and who needs to make it happen.
 - Summarize the action items and the time dedicated to each one.
 - You can develop the timeline in a very straightforward manner by listing deadline dates and tasks.
 - Visual presentation helps the reader understand how the tasks fit together over time
 - The timeline shouldn't be too long.
- Budget and Budget Narrative (Justification)
 - Should clearly indicate both expenses and revenue.
 - Make a list and don't forget to include salaries, consultant fees, office space, postage, travel, supplies, insurance, printing, and publicity. Include administrative fees (indirect rate), usually 10-18% of the project budget. Keep this list for reference as you build the budget.

- Add budget items to support the tasks. Almost every task has an associated cost.
- Include any potential evaluation costs like consultants' fees, testing, printing, attending a conference to disseminate results, or release time for staff to be trained or interviewed.
- Include all items paid for by other sources.
- Reflect volunteers' contributions and in-kind gifts.
- Detail fringe benefits, separate from salaries.
- List all non-personnel costs separately.
- Include indirect or administrative fees when appropriate.
- Be sufficient to perform the tasks described in the narrative.
- Attachments and Supplemental Materials
 - Read the application guidelines thoroughly to assess what attachments you are allowed to include. Do not ignore these directions.
 - When allowed include an attachment that enthusiastically supports your project, for example a support letter signed by a number of local organizations.
 - If there are more than five attachments, include a separate table of contents (on top of the attachments) so that they are easy to review.
 - Never include video or film, DVD, CD, books, or audio tapes unless requested to do so.
- The Cover Letter
 - Describe your project in one or two sentences, including the amount of money you are requesting.
 - Outline the need or define the problem as you see it and cite one or two supporting statistics.
 - Show how your problem or need complements the mission and/or goals of the funding source.
 - Briefly describe your solution to the problem or need.
 - Remind funders of previous contact with them (if applicable), and changes you have made based on their input.

6.4 Tips for a successful Grant submission

- 12 Tips for Submitting a Successful Grant
 - Spell out the need. To increase your chances of being accepted, clearly describe the need that your project will meet in the community and how it will make a significant impact for good.
 - Differentiate yourself. Tell how your organization's work is different from other nonprofits in order to set yourself apart.
 - Target a specific project for your proposal. And be detailed—this will show that you've clearly thought through how the project will be executed.

- Eliminate industry words and jargon. Tell your story from the heart, in words that everyone can understand.
- Lose the \$10 words. The best grant proposals are easy to read, concise and understandable. Always.
- Be a good storyteller. The key lies in the story you tell. If you can perfect the art of storytelling, your grant proposals will stand out.
- Focus more on solutions than problems. Talking too much about problems (as opposed to solutions) can give your proposal a negative vibe.
- Be sure your budget makes sense. Be sure your math adds up, your budget makes sense and it supports the objectives you're proposing to accomplish. If your grant proposal even hints at the possibility you're a bad steward of money, you'll be eliminated immediately.
- Recruit an objective reviewer. It's helpful to get an outsider's perspective before you submit the proposal.
- Don't procrastinate. If possible, never send your application via overnight or express mail. Rushing a proposal costs extra money and can signal to the grant maker that your organization is a poor steward of funds.
- Pay close attention to details. If they specify page length, page margins, typeface, etc., be sure to follow the specifications.
- Don't forget to send necessary attachments.