

# INTRODUCTION TO PROPOSAL WRITING

## The Proposal Writing Process

**PLANNING** *What do you need the money for?*

**RESEARCH** *Who will you approach?*

**WRITING** *How to put it all together?*

**FOLLOW UP** *What to do once the decision has been made?*

## Key Takeaways

- ◆ Start with an outline
- ◆ Keep the language clear and concise
- ◆ Focus on the funders' interests
- ◆ Follow the funders' guidelines
- ◆ Revise and edit before submitting

## Research

### Finding the Right Fit with *Foundation Directory Online*

- ◆ Many proposals focus on what's in it for them (the organization), few pay enough attention to what's in it for the funder.
- ◆ A grant proposal should be viewed as a win/win proposition.

### Typical Proposal Elements: The Blueprint

- ◆ Executive Summary
- ◆ Narrative
  - Statement of need
  - Project description
  - Organization information
  - Conclusion
- ◆ Budget
- ◆ Supporting Materials

How does what you do fit with the funder's interests?



Use *Foundation Directory Online!*  
Learn more at [foundationcenter.org/fdo](http://foundationcenter.org/fdo)

## Executive Summary: What To Include

The executive summary is one of the most important parts of the proposal. The reviewer will often read it first to determine if they want to continue reading the rest of the proposal.

- ◆ Statement of need
- ◆ Goals and objectives
- ◆ Background on your organization
- ◆ Costs of the project and amount requested

Even though the executive summary comes first, you should write it last.

## What Do Funders Really Want To Know?

- ◆ **What specific need are you addressing?**
  - What audience and community are you serving?
  - What evidence do you have to support your need?
- ◆ **What are you trying to achieve?**
  - What are your goals and objectives? (think S.M.A.R.T.)
- ◆ **What is your strategy for making this happen?**
  - What is your specific plan of action?
- ◆ **How will you know if you are successful?**
  - Specify program objectives in measurable terms
  - Identify key indicators of success
  - Outline data collection and analysis activities
  - Develop a timeline to monitor the success of the program on an ongoing basis
- ◆ **Why are you the best organization to do this work?**
  - Mission and History
  - Programs
  - Leadership
  - Accomplishments
- ◆ **How will this project sustain itself in the long run?**
  - How will your project move toward self-sufficiency in the future?
  - How will this project sustain itself without foundation support?



## Conclusion: The Final Appeal For Your Project

- ◆ Make it compelling
- ◆ Tailor it to speak to THIS particular funder's guidelines and interests

### Follow Up

#### THE ANSWER IS YES

- ◆ Send a thank you letter
- ◆ Keep the funder informed
- ◆ Be responsive
- ◆ Do what you said you were going to do

#### THE ANSWER IS NO

- ◆ It's not personal
- ◆ Find out why
- ◆ Ask about future funding
- ◆ Move on; seek other prospects

#### NEXT STEPS

### Check Out These Classes:

- ◆ Introduction to Fundraising Planning
- ◆ Introduction to Finding Grants
- ◆ Introduction to Project Budgets
- ◆ Proposal Writing Workshop
- ◆ Proposal Writing Boot Camp

Visit us at [foundationcenter.org](http://foundationcenter.org) and [grantspace.org](http://grantspace.org) for more information.

