



***Neighborhood Networks 2008  
Regional Technical Assistance Workshops (RTAWs)***

***Providing Resources,  
Producing Results***

***Delivering Technology Access to America's Communities***

# Fundamentals of Funding Proposals

If you need the money now, you have started too late.

Before You Begin Writing the Grant Proposal:

- Rule #1: Believe that someone wants to give you the money!
- Project your organization into the future.
- Start with the end in mind...looks at your organization's big picture. Who are you? What are your strengths and priorities?
- Create a plan not just a proposal.
- Do your homework: Research prospective funders. Try and search locally first. Target funding source that has interest in your organization and program.

# Fundamentals of Funding Proposals

Program planning and grant planning are intimately linked. Ideally, grant planning should be only one phase in the whole program development, program implementation, and evaluation cycle. Too often, it is treated as something separate and foreign. The best results in fund development will come when your grant and solicitation strategies are closely intertwined with your goals and program strategies. Build partners - not donors!

# The HOOK:

There are many ways to represent the same idea. However, the HOOK tailors the description of the idea to the interest of a particular funder. The HOOK aligns the project with the purpose, and goals of the funding source. This is a critical aspect of any proposal narrative because it determines how compelling reviewers will perceive your proposal to be.

# Fundamentals of Funding Proposals

Funders use these factors to assess budgets:

*Can the job be accomplished with this budget?*

*Are costs reasonable for the market - or too high or low?*

*Is the budget consistent with proposed activities?*

*Is there sufficient budget detail and explanation?*

# Fundamentals of Funding Proposals

What's the problem we are addressing?

Remember - the problem is not your need - it's the community's need!

Who else is addressing, and what are the gaps in how it is being addressed?

Gaps can be programmatic, population, time/seasonal, or material. Gaps are the reason that you have a need!

How are we proposing to address the problem?

Paint a clear and specific picture of your program! Can your prospect see it in action in their mind?

# Fundamentals of Funding Proposals

How will things be different/will the problem be solved or improved, when you are done?

How will you know that you are succeeding? What will you measure in order to understand how you are doing and what needs to change or be adjusted?

What do you need in order to try to solve the problem?

This must tie to the approach you have described above. It's an opportunity to once again paint a picture of what you will be doing!

# Fundamentals of Funding Proposals

What resources do you already have? From whom?

Don't forget volunteers, donations and in kind services. Show the community participation in your project. Project the image that the funder is joining a winning team, not boarding a sinking boat!

What are the qualifications and experience that make your program the right one to take on this work? History, key accomplishments, qualifications of staff and volunteers, relationships in the community....as they relate to this project.

# Fundamentals of Funding Proposals

Are there problems or barriers that you can foresee? How will you overcome them?

We all run into roadblocks when we try something new. Think through what you are going to do carefully. What's likely to trip you up? How can you anticipate these problems? Who will you turn to for help? Recognizing the possibility of problems is the sign of a sophisticated and professional program!

# Fundamentals of Funding Proposals

Do not make your grant tech heavy. Everyone wants equipment. Make the equipment a byproduct of the project: “it just so happens” that a few laptops are needed to improve students’ ability to meet the desired goal. Don't ignore the amount that will be spent on technology, but it should not be the main emphasis of the narrative. Student or staff achievement should be the focus of your proposal.

# Proposal Basics

As you research potential funders, you will sometimes encounter that tricky situation - a donor who specifies: "No application form is required, submit proposal." What proposal!?! you scream (but only out of hearing of the donor!) Well, a complete proposal has basic and time-honored elements - 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 a more abbreviated way.

# Proposal Basics

## Cover Letter

*No more than one page.*

*Organization (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.*

# Proposal Basics

## Proposal Summary

*Limit to one page.*

*State the organization making the request and link organizational 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.*

# Proposal Basics

## Introduction to the Organization

*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.*

# Proposal Basics

## Statement of Problem or Need

*Use a funnel approach.*

*Start with the generalized problem as 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.*

# Proposal Basics

## 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?*

# Proposal Basics

## 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 descriptions 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.)*

*When will these actions take place?*

# Proposal Basics

## 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?*

# Proposal Basics

## 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.*

# Appendices

## Resumes:

*Shows qualifications*

*Shows work ethic and commitment*

*Sometime can be a few paragraphs*

*List other grants you have managed*

# Appendices

## Letters of Support or Endorsement:

*They are DIFFERENT*

*Support implies partners*

*Keep endorsement to a minimum*

*Should be sent to you, the applicant. Do not send separately to the funder.*

## Other attachments:

*Do not include unless they are requested*

# Follow-up

Contact the funding source about the status, evaluation, and outcome of your proposal. It is important to request feedback about a proposal's strengths and weaknesses, although this information is sometimes unavailable, especially with a large volume of submissions.

# Resources

## Grant Alert

<http://www.grantsalert.com/education.cfm?id=7&m=1>

## Non-profits guides

<http://www.npguides.org/faqs.htm>

Non-profit guides are free Web-based grant-writing tools for non-profit organizations, charitable, educational, public organizations, and other community-minded groups.

## Society for Nonprofit Organizations

<http://www.snpo.org/index.php>

With a 25 year history and over 6,000 members, the Society for Nonprofit Organizations is one of the oldest and largest nonprofit management support organizations in the country.

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the Society provides its members with products and services that help them to accomplish their missions more effectively.

# Resources

## Foundation Center

<http://foundationcenter.org/>

*The Foundation Center's mission is to strengthen the nonprofit sector by advancing knowledge about U.S. philanthropy.*

## Thinkfinity Resource

<http://foundation.verizon.com/resourcecenter/index.shtml>

Through the Verizon Foundation Resource Center, we are pleased to offer a unique suite of online tools that give nonprofit managers access to best-in-class national training partners and business resources. Our mission is to leverage the power of network technology to help local and national nonprofit organizations enhance their management capabilities in order to increase their capacity to create sustainable positive change.