

Tips for Writing a Grant

General tips

1. Begin early
2. Apply early and often
3. Don't forget to include a cover letter with your application
4. Answer all questions. (Pre-empt all unstated questions)
5. Follow the application guidelines exactly
6. If rejected, revise your proposal and apply again
7. Be explicit and specific
8. Be realistic in designing the project
9. Make a clear connection between your research questions and objectives, your objectives and methods, your methods and results, and your results and dissemination plan
10. Follow the application guidelines exactly. (*We have repeated this tip because it is very, very important*)

Mention unique qualities

Because grant makers receive so many applications, program evaluators often face the dilemma of having to choose from among several excellent proposals. This gives a distinct advantage to any proposal that has a unique (and memorable) feature. For example, you might know a distinguished expert whom you could use as a consultant to give your grant additional credibility, or your town might have some businesses, social institutions, or industries that would contribute to the effectiveness of your proposal; accentuate those assets

Remain flexible

Sometimes writers become so attached to their articles, books, or grant proposals that they are unwilling to alter their work, even when asked to do so by potential publishers or grant agencies. That can be a big mistake.

Grant agencies seldom award the full budget you request without asking for a few adjustments in the proposal. Perhaps a healthy outlook on this is, "If I was creative enough to produce something that a foundation wishes to support, I am creative enough to find ways to meet both its goals and mine"

Read and follow all application instructions

When it comes to federal funding, there are a lot of specific guidelines that you must follow when writing your proposal. Things as little as using the wrong font type or size could result in your application being rejected. While it's a wonderful feature that grants.gov will send your application back with your errors so that you can fix them and resubmit, it's a hassle to go through this process. It makes everyone's job easier if it is done right the first time

Submit your application early

In the event that there *is* an error in your application and it gets sent back, you sometimes have the option to fix it and resubmit. However, if you wait until the deadline to send in your application and it contains an error, you will have no time to make any adjustments. This is one of the many reasons our department has a policy where it is the PI's responsibility to hand in their application to us at least 10 business days before the actual deadline.

Don't waste any time starting your proposal

Begin your search for a grant with a project, a plan, and permission. As soon as you have a project in mind and permission to implement it, formulate your plan. Don't wait until you're faced with a grant application form before solidifying the details of your project! Begin right away with a written account of the project and have a clear plan. Know what you want to accomplish and the steps you will take to do it

Become a grant reviewer, if possible

This will allow you to see the kinds of projects that are funded, how the review process works, what types of projects people are writing, and how good or poor the writing is. Many federal funding agencies have an application to become a grant reviewer right on their website