

Writing a Letter of Intent (LOI)

Your LOI allows the foundation to quickly assess if there is a good match between the foundation's interests and your project. If it appears to be a good fit, they will request a full proposal.

Technique

Your LOI should be a brief, 1-3 page informative letter that is a condensed version of your ultimate full proposal.

It should be in a business letter format. Therefore, it should be written on business letterhead. Be sure that LU's address appears on the letterhead. The recipient's address should also be included on the left hand side of the letter.

Components of an LOI

Unless otherwise instructed by the foundation, this is the basic format for an LOI:

1. Opening Paragraph: Your summary statement.

- If the reviewer reads nothing else, they should understand what you want to do just from reading this paragraph
- Answer the following: Who wants to do what? How much is being requested? Is this a portion of a larger project cost? Over what period of time is money being requested?
 - **Example:** *"The School of Nursing at Liberty University is submitting a letter of intent to seek support for developing an innovative undergraduate and graduate curriculum in psychiatric mental health nursing that will prepare expert nurse clinicians in the delivery of mental health services to at-risk adolescents in the community setting. We are requesting \$70,000 over a two-year period"*
- Keep this paragraph short. The rest of the LOI is formatted for explaining your rationale

2. Statement of Need: The "why" of the project. (1–2 paragraphs)

- Explain the issue you are addressing and why you have chosen to respond to this issue in the way that you have
- State briefly why this matters in the area in which you will be working
- Note who benefits; it helps when the public/community benefits from your project

3. Project Activity: The "what" and "how" of the project. (The bulk of your LOI)

- Give an overview of the activities involved. Give details to the degree that space allows
- Highlight why your approach is unique and deserving of the funding opportunity you're applying for
- Indicate if there will be collaboration with other organizations and what each of their roles will be

4. Outcomes (1–2 paragraphs)

- State the specific outcomes you hope to achieve
- Indicate how evaluation is part of the project. How will you know you've achieved these outcomes?

5. Credentials (1–2 paragraphs)

- Demonstrate why your institution or your staff is best equipped to carry out this activity
- Put any historic background about the institution here
- Indicate awards, rankings, and tangible measures that set you apart from your peers

6. Budget (1–2 paragraphs)

- Give a general description of the funding needs and total amount of request

7. Closing (1 paragraph)

- Offer to give any additional information the foundation might need; include contact information
- Express appreciation for the reader's attention
- Use proper business salutations such as "sincerely" or "respectfully." It is best to avoid an overly friendly closing

Review the given guidelines for the LOI to assure that you have met all of the funder's requirements. Failing to include all requested information can cause your LOI to be disregarded.