



How to Write to Foundation Funders

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Outline

- An introduction to grant proposals
- How to get to know funders
- Elements of project planning

An Introduction To Grant Proposals (Foundations)

- What does a foundation fund?
 - Projects or programs
 - General operating support
 - One year vs. multi-year funding

An Introduction To Grant Proposals (Foundations)

- What does a foundation look for?
 - Alignment with eligibility criteria and funding priorities
 - Reputable organization
 - History of carefully stewarding funds and reporting on outcomes
 - Clear and realistic project/program plan
 - Ability to have an impact with relatively small investments
 - Meeting a local need (community foundations)
 - Adapting an innovative model at the regional level (regional/state level foundations)
 - Innovating and testing a new, replicable service model (national foundations)
 - Recognition opportunity

An Introduction To Grant Proposals (Foundations)

- Understanding the funding timeline
 - 6-12 months from initial contact to award
 - Not a “quick solution” for funding needs, but an important part of a diversified fundraising strategy
 - Strategic and proactive, rather than reactive, approach

An Introduction To Grant Proposals (Foundations)

- Grant writing is just one step in the process towards grant success
- Equally important are planning, research, and communication with funders

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How To Get to Know Funders (Foundations)

- Research first!
 - Carefully review guidelines on the website, if available
 - Cross-check with guidelines on 990s
 - Prepare your questions / Concept Paper in advance
- If necessary, contact to verify guidelines
- Follow-up communication
 - Call to confirm receipt and review process
 - Update communication if a significant event happens:
 - New financial information (i.e., grants for the project have been awarded)
 - Leadership changes in the organization
- Board communication
 - If you have a personal contact, it can help to use it
 - Be careful not to bypass paid foundation staff or established processes

How To Get to Know Funders (Foundations)

- If awarded: stewarding the partnership
 - Be sure to thank the foundation if a grant is awarded!
 - Meet all progress reports!
 - Invite to major events
 - Anticipate renewal opportunity
- If declined:
 - Most foundations fund only 5-10% of proposals received
 - Most foundations will be open to reviewing a resubmission in the future
 - Contact them to ask for feedback and next steps

Elements of Project Planning (Foundations)

- Incentives for foundations
 - Return on Investment (ROI)
 - Model replication
 - Opportunities for volunteer engagement and/or recognition
- Prepare a concept paper or outline
- Include a detailed project budget

Elements of Project Planning (Foundations)

- Preparing your project concept
 - Providing Context: What is your organization and why is it best suited to implement this project?
 - Demonstrating Need: Why does your project matter and whom will it serve?
 - Project Design: What will you do to meet the need?
 - How will the project/program be structured and implemented?
 - Have stakeholders been involved in planning the design?
 - How will it be staffed?
 - With whom will you collaborate? Do you have partners in the community? Will they offer concrete support (funds or in kind resources)
 - Demonstrating Impact: What will your project accomplish?
 - SMART goals
 - Diversified evaluation strategy

Elements of Project Planning (Foundations)

- Project budget
 - Prepare as detailed a budget as possible
 - Make sure you have included everything!
 - Consider staff time, marketing, materials, costs associated with evaluation and reporting, etc.
 - Include:
 - Direct costs (personnel and non-personnel)
 - Indirect costs (overhead)
 - Income
 - Consider fundraising phases
 - Consider current or pending funding
 - Consider ways to cut or share costs
 - Develop a diversified sustainability plan

Q&A



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