

The Art Of Winning Grants



The Writing

Before you start writing

- You know “YOU”: your organization, its core purpose, why it exists, how is it different from other organizations (if you will write as an individual, same goes for you personally)
 - What is your “why”, your “how” and your “what”
- You have your mission, vision and values statement written and at hand
- You have the skill, craft, unique proposal, strengths needed
- Ideally you have a history providing the program or service which you will offer in the grant proposal
- You know the client, the future grant beneficiary, you know their needs and problems, you have come to contact with them before, you have experience

Before you start writing

- You have a clear understanding of the problem of the target audience and how it can be solved
- You know what activities and services you will provide to change their situation
- You have a sense of how much time you need to make a difference
- You have a sense of what it will cost to do that
- You have an idea of how you will implement and manage the project
- You have a plan for the project team
- You know what will be indicators of success and how to measure your results
- You have an idea about how you will publicise result of your work.

The writing style

- Use clean, clear and easy to read style
- Use simple language, grant is not a rhetorical exercise
- Avoid large generic words and word combinations - “saving humanity, “changing the world”, “making a difference”
- Avoid flowery language
- Be as specific and concrete as you can, the grant funder wants to know what concrete results you will achieve in exchange for their money
- Do not use abbreviations, jargon or too professional (nor personal) language
- Do not use verbs turned into nouns!
- Always phrase everything positively, you are offering solutions, not crying that someone has a problem

The writing style

- Be modest but confident, you are offering collaboration and solution to the issue the grant funder wants to resolve
- Describe a valuable worthwhile project
- Do not make general assumptions about things, always support your beliefs with concrete facts
- Always do a grammar check
- Always ask for a peer review, never submit before someone else reads it
- Have someone who knows nothing about your project read the proposal
- Ask them questions: Do you understand what we want to achieve? Does the proposal read well? Is the logic which ties the project together very clear?

The writing style

- Make sure all sections are connected and there is logic among all sections
- All activities must be tied to items in the budget
- Prove by the way you write that you spent a lot of time thinking about the target audience, that you researched and analyzed
- Use references to scientific data and articles
- If you have received other grants before link this grant proposal to other grants you won and implemented
- Provide more information than how much is asked of you
- Very gently insert a message that you care and it is personal for you

What makes a good grant writer

- Patience
- Structured thinking
- Analytical skills and ability to do research
- Attention to detail, meticulousness
- Creative and innovative thinking
- Endurance and willingness to fail and try again
- Ability to write with persuasion
- Self confidence
- Ability to follow instructions precisely and to the detail
- Neatness