

# An Introduction to Grant Writing

A Knowledge to Practice Program



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# Learning Objectives

By the end of this tutorial, you will:

- Understand the importance of reading and closely following a Request for Proposal (RFP)
- Be able to identify the basic sections of a grant proposal and what they entail

# Outline

Throughout this tutorial, you will cover the following topics:

- Introduction to Request for Proposals
- Explanation of the sections of a grant proposal

**As you go through this tutorial, keep in mind that a good grant proposal begins with a thoroughly planned and well thought out project.**



# Before beginning, you might want to ask yourself:

- What is my project?
- Who will implement the project?
- Why do I need the money?
- Where will funds be directed?
- When do I need the money?
- What is my evaluation plan?

**You also need to be realistic about  
how long it takes to put a grant  
proposal together.**



# Here are some general tips:

Start planning as early as several months in advance

Give yourself and others enough time to edit thoroughly

- Make sure to look for neatness and consistency

Plan for unforeseen problems, such as:

- Technical problems with electronic submission
- Difficulty acquiring data or required documents

**When you do start writing a grant proposal, follow the instructions in the Request for Proposal (RFP) carefully.**





# What is a Request for Proposal (RFP)?

RFPs

- Are solicitations made by an organization to another organization for a grant proposal
- Include the instructions for completing a grant proposal

The specific RFP for the grant you are applying for should be read *thoroughly!*

**It may seem like common sense, but following instructions matters! Grants may not even be considered if the format is not correct.**



# For example, page limits matter!

Make it as long as necessary to answer each and every question in the RFP.

If the RFP includes a specific page limit, DO NOT go over that number.

**Every grant is different, but now we will go through some of the most common sections of a proposal.**



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A grant proposal usually includes the following:

1. Proposal summary
  2. Organization description
  3. Problem statement (or needs assessment)
  4. Project objectives
  5. Method or design
  6. Timeline
  7. Evaluation
  8. Budget and future funding
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**Make sure your proposal is organized  
and sections are clearly identified.  
Let's go through each section.**



## 1. The proposal summary:

- Is an outline of the proposed project
- Appears at the beginning of the proposal
- Is brief (no longer than 2 or 3 paragraphs)



**The summary is vital to the grant proposal. It will be the first part reviewed and often the only part reviewed before deciding whether to consider the project any further.**





## 2. The organizational description:

- Is an introduction to your organization
- Contains a brief biography of the board members and key staff members who will be working with the project
- Discusses the organization's goals
- Discusses the philosophy of the organization

# The organizational description can also include:

Track record with other grantors (if any)

Success stories

- Show yourself off!
- This is only place where successes and strengths of the organization will be described.
- The information you provide should be relevant to the goals of the granting agency.



### 3. The problem statement:

- Is a clear, concise, and self-supported statement of the problems your project or program will address
- Mentions the ways the problems might be resolved



This is more than just one sentence!  
You should:

Describe needs

Describe how those needs were  
identified

Define programs to meet the  
identified needs

# For example:

A problem statement might provide a detailed description using statistical and community data to show:

- The low rate of breastfeeding mothers in a given population
- The lack of educational resources available
- The lack of adequate breastfeeding support

To increase the breastfeeding rate, a program might be designed to:

- Increase the educational resources of breastfeeding in the area
- Create breastfeeding support in the local hospitals

**Good problem statements are several pages long and are very specific. Ensure that enough detail is given to thoroughly describe the problem and how you plan to address it.**



## 4. The project objectives:

- Include the goal, or purpose of the program
- Include the objectives, which are measurable results that will achieve the goal of the program

# Project objectives should be SMART!

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Time-bound



# When developing your project objectives:

Consider quantities or things that are measurable

Refer back to the problem statement and the outcome desired

- What is the purpose of your program?
- How will you achieve the purpose of your program?
- What will change?
- How will we know that important changes have taken place?

**There are two types of objectives,  
process and outcome.**

Process objectives:

- Relate to how well the program is implemented
- Can include the number of people reached, the number of classes taught, the amount of time spent with each person, etc.
- Example: *Provide individual counseling to a minimum of 90% of the participants in the breastfeeding program within two months of their beginning the program.*

Outcome objectives:

- Relate to the amount of change the program creates
- Can include increases in breastfeeding knowledge, increases in breastfeeding initiation, increases in breastfeeding intention, etc.
- Example: *Increase breastfeeding rates among African American mothers in the target population by at least 10% in the first 3 years.*



## 5. The program method and design:

- Fully describe how your project will work
- Discuss how will it solve the stated problem statement
- Highlight innovative features
- Include a description of activities, resources, and staff
- Use appendices to provide details, summary data, references, and information regarding in-depth analysis



# Make sure you include:

This is what I will do

This is how I will do it

This is what I have done

This is what is being done now (through other organizations/resources)

**To achieve the best understanding of  
your project, illustrate it!**



# You can:

Describe what will be done using a real life scenario

Use a flow chart to describe the organizational features of the project

Utilize a diagram to show the program design



## 6. The timeline:

- Describes how long you will need to achieve the program goals and why
- Goes over the timeline for spending funds
- Might be best described through graphics



## 7. The evaluation:

- Describes how the project will be measured and how the results will be given to donor
- Contains two types of evaluation - process and outcome



## Process Evaluation

- Measures whether the project has met the process objectives
- Looks at how the project was conducted
  - Is there consistency with the stated plan of action?
  - What was the effectiveness of the various activities within the plan?

## Outcome Evaluation

- Measures whether the project has met the outcome objectives
- Looks at the results due to the project

# Be sure to also address:

## When will the evaluation start?

- Ideally, the process evaluation should start early in the project whereas the outcome evaluation can begin at the end of the project

## How long will the evaluation take?



## 8. The budget:

- Includes an itemized budget that matches the proposed program
- Justifies all expenses
- Is consistent with the proposal narrative
- Is thorough (Look at utilities, building rental, equipment rental, salary increases, food, telephones, insurance, transportation, leases, evaluation systems, software, etc.)

**But what happens if your grant proposal does not get approved?**

# You can resubmit your proposal!

Few people get funded the first time

Persistence pays off

Carefully use reviews to revise submissions for next time

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To  
improve  
funding  
chances,  
remember  
to:

Pick a good topic -something both feasible  
and that you are passionate about

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Be clear in your program/ project design  
and focus on quality

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Speak directly to the issue of fit

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Describe how your objectives match the  
grant objectives

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Talk to the program officer in advance

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# Conclusion

- It is extremely important to read through the Request for Proposal carefully.
- Most grant proposals will include a proposal summary, an organization description, a problem statement (or needs assessment), the project objectives, the method or design, the timeline, the evaluation, and the budget and future funding.
- If you do not get approved the first time, revise your proposal and resubmit!



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