

What is a Grant Proposal?

Proposal writing is just one step of many in the grant seeking process. For some of us it is the rock we most fear stubbing our toe on while seeking funds for our important projects. Let's put our boots on and wade in to take a look at the elements of a typical proposal:

There are generally eight sections in a proposal:

Title page and table of contents	
Executive Summary	1 page
Statement of Need	2 pages
Project Description	3 pages
Budget	1 page
Organizational Info	1 page
Conclusion	2 Paragraphs
Appendix & Supporting Materials	

The key elements of each section are listed below.

Executive Summary

State the problem and solution

Funding requirements

*Your organization and its expertise

The last bullet may be new to you. It is important to give the reader a sense of why your organization and the people working to solve the problem are qualified to do so. This section is a good place to list education, experience, and training of those key persons working the problem.

Statement of Need

The problem and issues the project addresses

*Supporting facts and statistics

Your organization may intuitively know that there is a lack of quality child care in it's neighborhood. In order to clarify the scope of this problem before you design a program and commit resources, you need hard data. Key tools in your search are the phone book, library and Internet. Key sources of data are the Census Bureau, local college and university program offices, social services, Community Service Board, elementary, middle and high schools, and city Neighborhood Offices, etc.

Project Description

Goals – broad, general statement of what your project will accomplish

Objectives – measurable outcomes in a specified period of time

Methods

Staffing and Administration

*Evaluation – measure the outcome or product; analyze the process

Program evaluation has become an important element in determining if the grant is fund-worthy or not. Local college public administration, business, or continuing education programs can provide guidance on designing an evaluation. Information is also available via the Internet. Best source: The Foundation Center, at <http://www.fdncenter.org>.

Budget

A recent Foundation Center survey of grant reviewers notes the majority read the executive summary and the budget first in order to decide if they wanted to review the grant. The budget is critical. Unfortunately it is the proposal section where many churches are the weakest. The following is taken from Nonprofit Guides (<http://www.npguides.org/grant/index.html>). This site has a sample proposal cover letter, letter of inquiry, proposal, and other items that may be of use to you.

This is a typical operating budget.

Budget Purpose: _____ General Operating Support _____ Project Support

Budget Period: _____ to _____

I. Income Sources

Revenue

- Government grants & contracts
- Banks & Foundations
- Earned Income
- Fundraising
- Donations
- In-kind support

I. TOTAL INCOME \$

Detail of Other Than Personnel Services (OTPS)

- Banks & Foundations
- Earned Income
- Earned Income
- Earned Income, Banks & Foundations
- Earned Income, Banks & Foundations
- Earned Income
- Other Income (specify)
- Other Income
- Other Income

I. TOTAL INCOME \$

II. Expense Amt Uses

Support

- Salaries & Fringe Benefits (for project budgets detail each position to be funded)
- Salaries, Fringe & OTPS
- Salaries, Fringe & OTPS
- Insurance & taxes
- Consultants & professional fees
- In-kind expenses

II. TOTAL EXPENSE \$

- Subtotal OTPS Expenses \$
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Printing & copying
- Telephone & fax
- Postage & delivery
- Rent & utilities
- Other Expense (specify)
- Other Expense (specify)
- Other Expense (specify)

II. TOTAL EXPENSE \$

Net Income (income less expense) \$

Information about Your Organization

- History and Mission
- Programs and Expertise
- Board and Staff

Conclusion

- Final appeal for your project, may use emotional language
- What you will accomplish
- Why it is important

Appendix & Supporting Materials

- List of board members and staff
- IRS 501 c (3) Letter of Determination
- Financial Documents
- Supporting Materials

A cover letter tops the proposal package. As you see, a proposal is not a lengthy document. Keep the narrative clear and simple; use action words and active and future tense to bring your project alive to the reader.