



## Grant Writing Do's and Don'ts

### The Do's:

1. Read the Request for Proposal. Read it again and highlight or make notes of key points.
2. Follow the required proposal format exactly. Usually points are given for each section requested and you should pay close attention to the distribution values. If you omit a section, you lose points and probably lose the opportunity to receive funding.
3. Plan carefully to meet deadlines. Grant deadlines are hard and fast — and if you miss it, usually it is a full year before you can submit again.
4. Present a compelling need for the project that is validated with current, relevant data (use statistical facts, expert testimony, current research studies, etc. to substantiate need).
5. Provide solid evidence that your strategies/solutions will address the identified need. Persuade the funding source that your project methods and activities are feasible and will result in the outcomes you anticipate.
6. Present a reasonable timeline for the program with milestones and dates from start to finish including a well-designed evaluation plan.
7. Establish the capability of the college/division/program/university to administer the project.
8. Ensure that your project goals and objectives match the priorities of the funding source. They should be clearly stated, concise, and measurable.
9. Collaborate and/or coordinate activities with other agencies/individuals that are working in the same or related field. Funders like to see evidence of collaboration and recognition for others working on the same problem.
10. Think carefully through your budget. Once you are funded, you are committed to do what you said you would with the funds requested and meet all matching requirements as stated in the proposal.
11. Describe how your project can be replicated and sustained. Funders like replicable projects that will have a long-term impact on the university and/or community. Show that the program will “live” beyond the funding.
12. Work closely with your Office of Sponsored Programs. They will provide valuable assistance to save you time. They are able to coordinate internal approvals and may help obtain required grant signatures. They can also provide guidance on any electronic registrations that may already be in place for submission.

## The Don'ts:

1. Avoid writing in jargon. Write for a well-educated person who may not be an expert in your field.
2. Do not include objectives that are too ambitious in scope and that do not match the objectives of the funding source.
3. Never pad your budget. Agencies will reject proposals with unrealistic budgets. Funders want to see a reasonable and well-explained budget request.
4. Be sure you are not requesting unallowable items. Read budget restrictions carefully!
5. Make your proposal reader friendly. Do not prepare a proposal with fifty pages of single-spaced text in courier font with no subheadings, bullets, or graphic elements that make a proposal look attractive. Use formatting tools to help break the monotony for the reader scoring your proposal.
6. Do not blindly pursue grant opportunities (i.e., I need money and that other college got a cool grant). Have a development plan based on your needs and priorities and allow the plan to guide which funding sources you will go after.
7. Do not submit proposals full of errors. Funders may think that your lack of care and attention to detail will also manifest itself in the implementation of the project. Always thoroughly proofread your proposal. Peer review panels are highly encouraged!
8. Never get discouraged if your proposal is not accepted by the funding source the first time. Reviewer's comments are often available to help you strengthen your proposal for resubmission. Often you can make some minor revisions and resubmit successfully the next time around.

