

## Helpful Hints for Proposal Writing

- Ask for the money—Ask in the first paragraph. The grant maker knows why you are contacting them, so come right out with it; they will appreciate knowing from the start.
- Address grantmaker priorities—Without overdoing so, use their own language to demonstrate your common priorities.
- Avoid jargon and the overuse of acronyms—Use language that conveys your program to a perceptive and well-educated audience who are usually not experts in your field.
- Use active and persuasive language—Make your case, positively demonstrating the work you will do. For instance, use “will” instead of “would.”
- Incorporate bullets, tables, and white space in your proposal when possible—Reviewers are often reading a sizable stack of proposals; highlight important points with bullets and offer visual breaks within your text.
- Tap into the grantmaker’s emotions—But don’t overdo it; it is okay to pull a heart string or two with private grantmakers. If available, use personal stories about the participants and/or beneficiaries of your program.
- Answer the grantmaker’s questions—Use data and best practice information to additionally address logic and intellect.
- Avoid involving institutional budget cuts in your need statement—Sell the grantmaker on the importance, innovation, and impact of your efforts. Winning proposals present strong programs with appropriate resources for success.
- Second Opinion—Always have a colleague or coworker review your proposal, preferably somebody not familiar with the project.