



GRANT WRITING

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Notes from the presentation given at the ICCPO Workshops, Geneva, Sept 2006**

The Tips and the Checklist below should be useful to all people who have to write proposals for grants.

For a more detailed “Guide for Non-profit Organisations on Proposal Writing”, see the article on this web site (via the Articles / Running Parent Groups menus).

Val has various models for letters etc which can be used in writing grants. To obtain copies of these, please contact Val at: valf@kidswithcancer.ca.

VALUABLE TIPS FOR GRANT SEEKERS

- Allow enough time so others can critique your grant proposal and provide feedback. Modify your proposal as required.
- One person should have the responsibility of writing the proposal, to ensure consistency and continuity.
- Avoid abbreviations unless you have provided the reader with an explanation of what the abbreviation stands for.
- Because of the number of proposals received by funders, your proposal should be typed. In some cases, only typed proposals will be accepted.
- Focus on challenges and opportunities, not insurmountable problems and circumstances.
- Submit a complete application and avoid sending information “under separate cover,” with the exception of letters of support.
- If you are not able to provide something the funder has requested, explain why you are not able to submit it.
- Include appropriate and relevant supporting documentation only.
- Send receipts, contract agreements and funding agreements promptly.
- Ensure your proposal is in the hands of the funder on the due date. If the deadline is March 15 and it falls on a Sunday, your proposal needs to be their hands on Friday, March 13. Try to avoid the last minute dash to the funder’s office. Funders often cite missed deadlines as a major reason for declining a grant request.
- Advise your funder immediately of any significant change in your program or project. The reconciliation stage of your project is not the time to tell your funder that they are not getting what they paid for.
- If you receive funding, consider asking a Board member to phone the funder to express your organization’s appreciation (if it is permitted). This does wonders for relationship building.
- You can never say “thank you” too often to funders. Keep up the contact!
- If you did not receive funding, and it is permitted, follow up with the funder to determine why they declined to fund your project. Based on the information you receive, you may wish to resubmit.
- If a funder has declined to fund your project, ask for suggestions as to other funders you could approach. Funders have an extensive knowledge of what other funders are doing.
- Invite your funder to your next open house or special event. The more involved your funder is, the more likely you will be able to obtain funding in the future.
- Proofread your work thoroughly, use spell check and consult a thesaurus to avoid repetitious words. Choose words that are benefit-oriented and action-oriented.
- Follow suggested proposal formats. This is particularly crucial for individuals responding to a Request for Proposal.

GRANT PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

Your funder may provide you with a grant application checklist. In some cases, you may have to sign this checklist and submit it along with your grant proposal. Always abide by the grant guidelines. Here are some things to consider as you finalize your proposal, assuming they are applicable to your project and acceptable under the terms of the grant program:

Have you, as the proposal writer:

- Obtained a current grant application and related guidelines?
- Spoken to or contacted the designated program officer in connection with your proposed grant submission?
- Verified that you are an eligible organization under the program guidelines submitting a suitable proposal to an appropriate funder?
- Conducted the necessary project research to develop a complete, thorough and compelling proposal?
- Provided all documentation in accordance with the grant guidelines?
- Presented information in a logical and understandable manner?
- Clearly stated feasible goals, objectives and outcomes that respond to a genuine community need and are specific enough to be measured?
- Developed an evaluation plan to document project outcomes?
- Placed your project within the overall context of your organizations mission?
- Presented your organization's history and mission to demonstrate its overall qualifications and capacity to carry out the work?
- Provided a compelling cover letter that presents a clear overview of your organization and your project?
- Provided relevant background material in accordance with the guidelines?
- Tied the project objectives to the priorities and objectives of the funder?
- Provided plans to promote and publicize the project and the funder?
- Provided a detailed work plan that addresses issues of accountability, project activities, project timetable, partnerships and linkages in a logical and efficient manner to achieve the project's stated goals and objectives?
- Included job descriptions and statements of qualifications for staff if appropriate?
- Prepared a project budget that identifies the costs to be paid for by the funder?
- Provided a project budget that accounts for all expenditures contained in the project description?
- Included appropriate information on cost-sharing and matching fund requirements?
- Demonstrated knowledge of similar programs, projects and services being offered?
- Stressed the uniqueness of your organization and your project?
- Submitted a project budget that makes sense, adds up and fairly presents costs?
- Addressed deficits and surpluses in your organization's audited financial statement, as well as monies held in reserve funds?
- Discussed and addressed project sustainability issues?
- Provided relevant quotations, letters of support, questionnaires, surveys, etc.?

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