

Guidelines for Writing a Strong Proposal

Funders receive dozens of grant proposals, some hundreds of pages in length. This means proposals must be read and evaluated quickly to get through them all. Also, funders never have enough money to fund all the worthy projects proposed. Consequently, reader-friendly proposals – proposals that are easy-to-read and concise – will improve your organization’s chances of getting funded.

Think of your grant proposal as your project’s story: The overarching purpose of your project should be integrated throughout the proposal; however, your project’s story does not need to be dull: While information should always be clearly stated and have sections similar to the sections outlined below, the wording should be compelling and interesting.

Sections of a proposal

1. **Project title:** The project title should be brief, yet explicit. Creating a title that is interesting or memorable is even better.
2. **Problem statement:**
 - a. Identify the problem your project will solve or the need it will satisfy.
 - b. What makes your problem a problem? Why is solving it important?
 - c. What at-risk groups are affected by this problem?
 - d. Where possible, use credible sources to reinforce your project’s importance.
3. **Project goals:**
 - a. Write a simple statement that explains what your project will achieve or how your problem will be solved.
 - b. Goals listed should always reflect the problem statement.
4. **Approach:**
 - a. Lay out the individual steps you will take to achieve your project goal(s).
 - b. Present information logically, so funders can see how the project will progress and achieve its purpose.
5. **Budget/Cost:** Prepare a reasonably detailed budget similar to the example table below, so reviewers can see where the funds are going and that you can accomplish your goals with your proposed budget.
 - a. Across each row, list each budgeting **item**, **describe** the item, and list the **total cost of the item**.
 - b. At the bottom of the right column, include a **total cost for all the items**.

Item	Description	Cost
Publicity	Brochures: 100 @ \$20; newspaper ad: 3 @ \$30 each	\$110.00
Course materials	100 20-page handouts @ \$2 each	\$200.00
Honorarium	4 @ \$300 each	\$1,200.00
	Total	\$1,510.00

6. **Impact statement:** Give a very brief, final statement that indicates who will benefit and to what extent.

Sample Grant Proposal: [Operation HEAD-ON \(Helmet Education and Distribution Outreach Network\)](#).