

Grant Writing Guidelines and Tips

Grant writing is a skill which can be developed. There are a few basic ideas that will help you as you prepare your proposal and any future grant proposals you may write. There are also some things you should not do, which will be mentioned below.

The Do's

1. Read the directions on the RFP (request for proposal) carefully. Not following directions is one of the major reasons many proposals are not funded. Make sure you include everything mentioned and make sure your idea falls under the broad umbrella of request.
2. If you have questions about the proposal or what you plan to do, call your Affiliate Services Representative and ask her/him for guidance.
3. Do your homework! Get estimates about the costs to be incurred and the length of time needed to complete the project. Being unrealistic about the budget or the resources, including time, needed to do the project don't give credence to your ability to complete the project.
4. Write clearly and succinctly. Proposal readers don't want to have to figure out what you are going to do, they want you to tell them what you are going to do. Using a lot of excess verbiage or language that is unnecessary deters from your proposal.
5. A goal is a very broad statement about what you hope to accomplish. It usually is not measurable. An objective is a specific statement about what you will do and is measurable. So, state your goals (usually one or two) and your objectives clearly. Be sure to refer back to your objectives when discussing the evaluation of the project.
6. State what you are going to do in a positive fashion. Saying things like "We will . . ." versus "We hope . . ." says a lot about your project. Proposal readers want winners not wishers.
7. Have a sound budget. Don't exaggerate what you need and the cost of it. Also, don't short change yourself. Make sure your numbers are fairly accurate.
8. Be specific about what it is you will do and when you will do it. A timeline helps bring life to the proposal and shows good planning.
9. Be realistic about what you will accomplish. Don't aim for "pie in the sky."
10. Show a need for the project and have a creative solution to the problem. Proposal readers have seen most common projects and are looking for new and innovative ideas or solutions to problems.

11. Have someone not connected to your project read it and see if it makes sense to them. A new pair of eyes can be very helpful.
12. Be sure to have the evaluation plan measure the objectives you have laid out. Describe how the information for the evaluation will be collected and used.

The Don'ts

1. Don't philosophize in the proposal. NCTM knows that we need to improve mathematics education.
2. Don't assume the readers are familiar with a particular program you want to use or the problem you are addressing.
3. Don't exceed the page limit, font size, or budget limits.
4. Don't promise more than you can deliver.