

Ten Tips to Successful Grantwriting

1. Request guidelines, annual reports, and other pertinent information from the foundation before sending a grant proposal. You may be able to download most of this information from the organization's Web site.
2. Unless your organization is a national one, try to stay local when looking for funding sources, particularly for operating or program costs. National foundations are more likely to fund capital expenses of programs that can be replicated nationally.
3. Do you know the trustees? If the foundation is local, run the names of the trustees and foundation staff by your board. They often run in the same circles, and one phone call can help put your grant proposal on the top of the pile.
4. Work with your program staff to be sure your information is up to date and relevant. They can also provide you with anecdotes and client testimonies that you might not otherwise have.
5. Although it is often the nature of the beast, try not to wait until the last minute to prepare your grants. Do not use Express Mail to send your application. Using Express Mail can signal to the grantmaker that your organization is a poor steward of funds.
6. Don't send a lot of "fluff" attachments. Many grantmakers will specify what to send. Don't send more than they request.
7. If you are awarded a grant, be sure to send progress reports, whether they are requested or not. Keep in touch with your funding sources.
8. Some foundations can be very picky. They have their reasons. If they specify page length, page margins, typeface, etc., be sure to follow the specifications.
9. Before mailing out your grant proposal, call the foundation to be sure you have current contact information.
10. Many groups use a "Common Grant Application," developed by groups of grant makers to ensure that all applicants provide the same information. Be sure to check individual foundation guidelines to see if they use this tool.