

GRANT WRITING

TOP TEN TIPS
FROM RON MILAM
CONSULTING

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BEFORE STARTING ON YOUR PROPOSAL:

1. **What's the problem?** What's the need in the community you are addressing? Have some facts to back it up.
2. **What's your overall goal?** Make sure your goals are desirable, achievable, reasonable, concrete and measurable.
3. **What methods will you use to accomplish your goal?** What actions will you take? Who will be responsible? When will they happen?
4. **How will you evaluate your work?** What benchmarks and indicators will you use to track your work?
5. **What's it going to cost?** You need to develop a basic budget with projected income and expenses. Be realistic.

SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISERS RECOMMEND:

1. **Research the funder before you apply!** Make sure your proposal is a good fit for each specific funder.
2. **Pitch the idea before you apply.** Call and ask to take five minutes of their time to run your proposal by them (unless they say don't call).
3. **Have someone proofread the proposal who isn't familiar with the work.** This can not only correct typos, but can also let you know if you are clear in what you are proposing.
4. **Allow extra time.** Don't wait until the last minute to finish up your proposal because there will likely be mistakes if you rush. Aim to finish the proposal a few days before the due date.
5. **Make grant writing one part of a larger fundraising strategy.** It's a super-competitive environment right now for raising funds from foundations. Develop a diversified fundraising strategy and consider raising money from individuals.

TO DO LIST

- Research a bunch of foundation funders using FC Search and create a list of your top prospects.
- For each prospect, note when their deadlines are and the way they prefer for you to reach out to them (usually a call, letter of inquiry, or full proposal).
- Call foundations and pitch your idea before you spend a lot of time writing your proposal.
- Write some grant templates that you can modify and customize for different funders (one for general operating support and a few to fund your specific programs).
- Spellcheck!
- Keep it short.
- Make sure you've reviewed requirements and included all attachments in your proposal.
- See if you can get one board member to help out with grant writing or making funder visits.
- Consider bringing on a consultant like Ron Milam if you need to.

Ron Milam has over 14 years of experience facilitating meetings and developing leadership for over 50 organizations.

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