



Fundraising Resources

Grantwriting

Recent statistics reveal that approximately 13% of all giving in the United States is by Foundations. Competition for foundation funding is quite high, but sound research and solid preparation can help you develop winning proposals. You can google foundations in your local area and your state. Another good source of information is through The Foundation Center, www.foundationcenter.org

The first and most important step to take is to make absolutely certain that any foundation you plan to approach is a good match for your project and for the audience served by your project. Most will list on their website recent grants they have made as well as their current funding priorities. Check to see if they fund projects similar to yours.

Be sure that you understand exactly what is expected before you start preparing to approach any foundation. It is wise to first make a personal contact with the foundations you have targeted. Call them and ask to speak with the program person who deals with projects similar to yours. This personal contact can serve you well throughout the application process.

Foundations often have strict guidelines for how to submit your proposal to them. Some are as simple as filling out a form, and others may actually tell you just how to write for them. You should be prepared, in any event, to develop a short "preproposal." This gets you a much better chance of getting a thorough review in the first stages.

- Start your document with a one-sentence statement of the problem.
- Then explain in two or three paragraphs what your proposed project will do about the problem.
- Is this a new approach? Most foundations prefer unique and exciting projects, even if they are answers to time-worn problems.
- Demonstrate how you and your organization have the expertise to carry out the project.
- Is your approach to the problem comprehensive?
- Include a timeline for implementation of the project.
- Indicate a continuation plan. How will the project continue once the grant funding is depleted? Will it be self-sufficient? This can make a critical difference in your "fundability."
- How will you evaluate the results of the project?
- Complete your preproposal with a simple budget.

If your proposal is of interest to the foundation you have submitted it to, you will likely hear from the program manager who works with similar projects, and who you may have spoken with when you first contacted them. You should receive guidance as to how to proceed with your proposal. It is very likely that this person will help you along the way as you develop your finished product.

Should your proposal be accepted, the real work is about to begin! In the event that your proposal is rejected, just know that the competition for grant dollars is fierce. Don't get discouraged. You now have a fully developed preproposal and a final proposal. Find another foundation that would be a good fit and go for it!

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