

Many people have a preconceived notion that grant writing is difficult and get intimidated at the thought of completing a grant application. With your busy life, who has time to figure it out? To save you time, here are the top ten tips for writing successful grant applications.

Tip 1: Creativity Counts

Ideas should be innovative and creative. Foundations are typically not interested in funding operating expenses. Their monies are usually set aside for supplemental programs or new ideas that can make a big impact. Funding organizations are motivated by creative solutions that address disparities in the categories of; Arts and Culture, Community Preservation & Revitalization, Emergency/Disaster Needs, Health & Human Services, and Science and Education. Does your program incorporate creativity?

Tip 2: Follow the Guidelines

Nothing kills a grant application faster than not following the posted guidelines. Most foundations that offer funding have spent a significant amount of time outlining their program guidelines. Thoroughly review the guidelines prior to submitting your application and make sure that your application addresses each of them. Plan, never wait until the last day to submit your application, give yourself plenty of time.

Tip 3: Summarize Effectively

The summary or project abstract is often the most important part of your entire application. Your summary should define your entire project, including needs, goals, outcomes and budget. Remember, foundations receive many applications. Often, reviewers never make it past the application's summary in their evaluation. Your summary needs to tell your story in a passionate way so your application is selected for a more thorough review.

Tip 4: Make Realistic Goals

It is important that you have reasonable goals and a good evaluation plan in place prior to beginning any program. This requires thought during the application process. Funding sources want to know that the programs they fund are successful. Having a realistic goal and evaluation plan in place will show the evaluator that you are prepared for success.

Tip 5: Budgeting Basics

A well thought out budget is important to any program and appreciated by anyone who is providing you with funding. Foundations want to know that their funds are being used in the best possible way. Additionally, a detailed budget demonstrates that you have thought through your program and are primed for success.

Tip 6: Research Is Key

People love research! The Internet is an unlimited source of research. Use it to locate studies or findings that support what you are trying to achieve. Always remember to cite the source of your research and include links whenever possible.

Tip 7: Clarity Counts

Clarity, in communicating your ideas, is the key to creating a successful application. Remember, it's easy for you to understand your idea, but can others understand it? One great way to test the clarity of your explanation is to have a friend read it. If they can understand the basis of your idea then it should be clear to those evaluating the funding applications.

Tip 8: Attention to Detail

Nothing is worse than receiving a grant application from an applicant and finding spelling or grammatical errors. These errors take away from your story and draw attention to the negative. Once you complete your application, ask a colleague to proof it for grammar and spelling prior to sending it out. This tip can help reviewers keep the focus on the positive aspects of your proposal.

Tip 9: Always Say Thank You

A thank you goes a long way in making a good impression. Remember to always send a short thank you note to your funding contact, even if you don't receive the funding. A thank you can go a long way to separate you from other applicants and will be remembered the next time you submit a funding application.

Tip 10: Feedback is Good

After every unsuccessful funding request, be sure to ask the reviewer for feedback on your application. Getting the perspective of a reviewer is key, as they are looking for things that you may not be aware of. This constructive input can be used to revise your application for the next submission.

**If you have any questions about the grant that you are writing through CKCF please contact Michelle Critchfield, Program Officer ~ Grants at michelle@centralkansascf.org.*