



## Grant Proposal/Request Outline

### COVER SHEET

#### PROJECT ABSTRACT/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project abstract, or executive summary, is a vital part of the grant proposal. It should be both succinct and complete and can be anywhere from several lines, to a full page in length. When writing the abstract/executive summary you are trying to accomplish two things:

1. Create curiosity for the reader.
2. Establish credibility for the organization.

Of course, the abstract/executive summary goes on to cover a number of other points, but in the opening paragraph, creating curiosity will get the readers' attention and establishing organizational credibility will make readers trust that yours is the right organization to address this particular problem.

The abstract/executive summary is often one of the first components of a grant proposal; however, it is often the last to be written. This is because it is developed by summarizing the main points of all the other sections. It may be helpful to begin by outlining each of the proposal sections and use that outline to develop a concise and compelling summary.

Many grantmakers provide forms with explicit directions for presenting the abstract/executive summary. These forms often limit the amount of space and number of words you can use. Always carefully follow the directions on these forms.

#### NARRATIVE (maximum five pages unless otherwise noted in grant directions)

##### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF ORGANIZATION

*The introduction should:*

- Communicate the context of your project or program.
- Give a brief description of your geographic and social situation.
- Be concise.
- Capture the readers' attention and interest.
- Introduce the subject matter.
- Introduce the setting and principal players.
- Provide some background to your issue.

*The organizational description should:*

- State the organization's mission, goals, history, current programs, activities.
- Define existing clients or population served.
- Support qualifications in the area of activity for which funds are sought (research, training, service delivery, experience, etc.).
- Include a brief overview of the board of directors and key staff. *For example:*  
"We have 17 board members and three full-time staff, including the Executive Director, Program Director, and the Administrative Assistant."

##### STATEMENT OF NEED OR PROBLEM

*The problem or need statement should:*

- Paint a picture of the overall issue, focusing on the global, national, regional, or local scale, as appropriate.
- Describe the problem in terms of clients or the community, using statistics or other documentation.
- Refer to the organization's internal needs if the request is for capacity building grants or operating support.
- Establish a clear link between the problem or need presented and the grantmaker's funding priorities.

## PROJECT OR PROGRAM NARRATIVE

The project or program narrative is a description of the approach you're taking to address the specific issue articulated in the problem or need statement.

*The project or program narrative should:*

- Describe both the vision and the practical approach of the project or program.
- Clearly connect the project or program to the mission and overall activities of your organization.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter.
- Summarize how the project or program will be implemented.
- Provide a profile of the clients you will serve (if applicable) and how you intend to connect with them.
- Summarize the plan of action and the timeline for the project or program.
- Articulate how you will staff the project, and who will be involved (including volunteers, consultants, and staff).

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### Goals are Visionary

Goals are the long-term vision for your project or program. They are your motivation, the part of your world view that applies to the subject area of your grant proposal. Goals define what will occur for the people you serve if the program is successful. You may have one, or several, goals. *Example of goal: Increase child care providers' knowledge of safe sleep.*

### Objectives are Measurable

Objectives are achievable and measurable within the scope of the proposed work.

When you're writing an objective, start with "To," followed by a verb and then give a short explanation of what you're trying to accomplish. If possible, add the time it will take to achieve the objective. Try to be realistic when establishing objectives for the grant request because the success of your project is often judged by referring to the stated objectives.

*Example of objective: To train 100% of Kansas child care providers on infant safe sleep by Fall 2013.*

*A checklist to help write clear objectives:*

- Always specify a result, not an activity.
- Describe just one result you want to accomplish.
- Tell when the result is to be accomplished.
- Emphasize what will be done and when, but don't tell why or how.
- Clearly relate each objective to one or more of the goals.
- Make sure the objectives are specific, measurable, and verifiable.
- Allow for flexibility on the part of those implementing the objective.

## PLAN OF ACTION

The plan of action, sometimes referred to as action steps or tasks, is a step-by-step description of what you will do to accomplish each objective you've defined in your grant request. It is important to tie every task to an objective, making sure that you've listed all the tasks needed to accomplish each objective. Be specific. Begin each task with a verb.

Here's a sample of a plan of action, tied directly to one objective:

**Objective #1:** To market a comprehensive and contemporary parent education program to 15% of the county population, or approximately 11,000 people, through a two-year outreach effort.

Action steps	Who's Responsible	When
Design contemporary outreach program	Community Educator	May-June
Expand community collaboration	Executive Director	March-on
Coordinate the new program w/ other agencies	Community Educator	May-June
Write and distribute monthly PSAs, ads and emails	Community Educator	May-on
Develop a monthly calendar of events and post on the website	Community Educator	May-on

## EVALUATION

Including an evaluation plan in a grant proposal provides the opportunity to discuss what the program should ultimately achieve. The evaluation is essentially a technical document used by staff and board members, as well as grantmakers, to evaluate the success of a program.

The evaluation design depends on what information you need to collect in order to make major decisions as the program matures and to write solid reports for the grantmaker, your board, and others involved in the program. To start writing the evaluation section, we suggest asking a few basic questions:

1. The evaluation results will be circulated to whom and for what purpose?
  - a) Does the grantmaker want the information in order to decide if they will provide future funding?
  - b) Will your board of directors refer to the evaluation to make program decisions?
  - c) Will you issue a press release or post the information on the web?
2. What kinds of information are needed to help someone decide how to proceed with this particular program?
3. What sources will provide the most credible information?
4. What is the best way to collect and document this information?
5. When do you need the information collected, and an analysis prepared to distribute?

*A checklist to ensure everything is covered in the evaluation section. Does it:*

- Describe specific, measurable criteria for success?
- Describe the process to be used to collect data and monitor progress?
- Provide detail about how you will keep records?
- Provide a short bio of each evaluator, including their relationships to the program or your organization?
- Outline your reporting procedure providing, specific due dates and the format and content of evaluation reports?
- Include the evaluation timeline in the overall program timeline?
- Include the costs to evaluate the program in the budget?

## PROJECT BUDGET

*The project budget should:*

- Tell the same story as the proposal narrative, but in numbers, not in language.
- Be detailed in all aspects.
- Contain no unexplained amounts for miscellaneous or contingency items.
- Include all items paid for by other sources.
- Reflect volunteers' contributions and in-kind gifts.
- Detail fringe benefits, separate from salaries.
- Include all consultants' fees.
- List all non-personnel costs separately.
- Include indirect or administrative fees when appropriate.
- Be sufficient to perform the tasks described in the narrative.
- Include any plans for sustaining the project (fundraising, seek additional funding, private donations, etc.).
- Note that a copy of the organization's current annual operating budget, audited financial statement, and IRS tax-exempt letter are included as attachments.

## ATTACHMENTS

*Attachments to include with the grant proposal:*

- Copy of evaluation tool
- Copy of the organization's audited financial statement
- Organization's current annual operating budget
- IRS tax-exempt letter

## SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Here is a list of suggested supporting materials to include with the grant proposal if appropriate:

- Letters of support/or commitment
- Latest annual report
- List of board of directors
- Any other supporting materials or documents (brochures, reports, etc.)