Take Your Grantwriting to the Next Level!

April 25, 2012

Session I: 9:30 - 10:45

1. Introductions
2. Grant Proposal Process at a Glance
3. Planning: The 2P2R System™

Session II: 11 - 12:15

1. Role-Play: Grantseeker/Grantmaker Pairs
2. Getting the Words Right
3. Some Style Pointers
4. Sample Grant Format
5. Review of Sample LOI

Session III: 1:15 - 2:45

1. Your “Cheat Sheet”
2. Giving and Getting Feedback
3. Editing Pointers
4. Review of Sample Budget
5. Extra Tips
6. Recommended Resources for the Next Steps
7. Sample Cover Letter and Proposal
8. Evaluations
Learning Objectives

- Use an effective system for planning your grant proposal before you write (2P2R)
- Engage your readers with a variety of professional techniques
- Provide and receive crucial feedback on your work
- Get resources for the next steps

1. Introductions

- Your name
- Your org
- 1 sentence: What do you do?
- 1 sentence: Why do you do it?
- 1 sentence: How do you benefit the community?
2. THE GRANT PROPOSAL PROCESS AT A GLANCE
(usually 6-12 months)

Notice how the proposal is only a piece of this entire process.

1. You research interested funders
There are literally tens of thousands of grantmakers in the U.S. As a grantseeker, you could waste a lot of time and money unless you zero in on the select group most interested in your work. It takes a lot of research to find the right match! Make absolutely certain that you’ve found a great role that your organization can play in the funder’s world. Get the most up-to-date info.

2. You begin to cultivate relationships (schmooze)
Grantseeking and grantmaking are all about relationships: it’s not just what you know but who you know. What makes relationships work? Two of the biggies are trust and communication.

3. You submit your LOI (Letter of Intent/ Inquiry/ Interest) or full proposal
O.k. You’ve done your research and struck up some contacts (even if they’re minimal). NOW is the right time to submit something in writing.

4. Program Officer reviews your information
Your Program Officer is the “gatekeeper” to first review your documents. You want to be sure to pass this first test, which could take a while.

5. You answer any outstanding funder questions
If the Program Officer has any questions, be prepared to answer them right away! Remember: questions usually indicate interest (but are, of course, not a promise of funding by a long shot).

6. Program Officer advocates for your project
If you’ve arrived at this stage, your Program Officer believes in your project so much that he/she is ready to advocate for you to the Board of Directors. That entity is comprised of the ultimate decision-makers on who gets the grants.

7. Foundation board votes on your proposal
Cross your fingers! Let’s hope that you’ve provided enough information, in the right format, at the right time. Factors beyond your control can sometime derail the process.

8. You rejoice OR learn why your proposal lost
If you win the grant, congratulations! Now the REAL work begins: delivering what you promised in your proposal! If you don’t win the grant this time, try to get some feedback on how you can be more successful next time. Your Program Officer may have some insight for you.
Did You Know?

Let’s talk a bit about what you’re trying to fund. All organizations would love to find funding that has no strings attached, can be used for anything and everything, and has no time limit. Dream on! The sad truth is that grants almost never work that way. Three things you should know:

1) **Every grant has a grant period:** a beginning and ending. The vast majority of them run for relatively short periods – usually 1 year – and a precious few are made over two or more years (fewer in this down economy). Although many may be renewable at the end of each year, it’s common for funders to have a maximum number of consecutive years during which they can fund the same organization.

   With that in mind, you must think about your work in single-year units.

2) **Far more grants are given for discreet “projects” than for overall organizations.** The latter, more open-ended, grants are usually called “general operating support,” “general support,” “core support,” “seed grants” or “capacity-building support”. You might think of your work as one large entity, but can you think of ways to divide it into separate (but related) chunks (“projects”)? Keep in mind that new organizations often are involved in only one project, so in that case the organization and the project may be synonymous.

   In terms of project grants, funders these days want to help sustain programs that do two big things:

   - They deliver services that are core to the mission of the grantee organization, and
   - They address the funder’s own mission and strategic direction.

   Propose programs that are centered on your strengths or core competencies, so the funder will see you as the most capable organization to carry out the work of highest interest to both you and them. Show how your work will be coordinated with the efforts of their other grantees in your topic area.

3) **BUT…in this economy**, some foundations have gotten the hint that giving project-specific support is **not the best way** to keep a nonprofit afloat during hard times. So they’ve started giving more of those precious core operating grants. They want to support their grantees in weathering this storm, and they know that only the organizations themselves know what they need to do that. They want to ensure that the best organizations survive over the long-term, so some of them are providing the general operating support to make that happen.
3. PLANNING: The 2P2R System™

[TIP: Planning is essential for crafting great grant proposals.]

A. Determine your Purposes

B. Define your information Priorities

C. Know your Readers

D. Refine your messages

1) 1st P: Determine your specific writing PURPOSES

Of course, you’re writing your grant proposal to win the funds you need. But you can break that big idea down into several specific PURPOSES. Grant proposals must be very competitive to get funded, so you must STAND OUT. Here are the most common ones:

- Encourage the foundation to view your organization as a good investment;
- Explain the pressing issue you’re addressing and why you’re the best one to address it;
- Show that you share goals, values and concerns with the funder;
- Instill trust in your or your organization’s capacity, effectiveness, and professionalism.

2) 2nd P: Define your information PRIORITIES

What information do you want the funder to take away? Consider the following 5 points. They cover the basic information you will need to convey, so it’s a good idea to have this stuff down pat!

[Hint: They spell out the acronym FIRST. It might help you to remember them that way. It works for me!]

- **Facts & Figures**: Answer the basic questions: who, what, when, where. Here you are describing the context you’re working in and the problem you’re addressing. This is a great place to look at both overall numbers and statistics, as well as details or profiles of representative clients in your community (create a picture in your reader’s mind).
EXAMPLE

While demand for salon services has grown, little attention has been paid to health impacts associated with the occupational exposures of low-wage workers in this sector. On a daily basis, for long hours, salon workers handle solvents, glues, polishes, dyes and other beauty care products containing a multitude of chemicals known or suspected to cause cancer, allergies, respiratory, neurological and reproductive harm.

Women working in salons are increasingly reporting acute health concerns such as headaches, dizziness, rashes and breathing difficulties in addition to more serious/chronic problems such as miscarriages, birth defects, cancers and respiratory illnesses. Evidence is mounting that links exposure to specific chemicals (or combination of chemicals) found in salon products to poor health outcomes. Despite such occupational exposures, there is very limited and ineffective state and federal regulatory oversight of chemical used in salons...

Of the more than 10,000 chemicals used in beauty products, 89% have not been tested independently for their safety or impacts on human health. This vacuum in regulatory protection creates a context where manufacturers are not taking upstream responsibility for the safety of chemical used in salon products.

- **Importance of the issue**: To be blunt, why should the funder care about your work? Another way to think about it is: what would happen if you DIDN’T do your work? If you can relate what you’re doing to current news or cutting-edge research, all the better! This is the part where we continually ask ourselves, “So what? Why is this problem so important that we need to address it right now?

So often we forget to go back to this starting point. Of course, we already know why we do what we do. We live and breathe it every day and we never need to stop and question it. But the funders don’t necessary do the same! They often need a little reminder or even a refresher course on the importance of your issue!

EXAMPLE

The consumption of fish is an important part of a healthy and balanced diet. Fish contain polyunsaturated omega-3 fatty acids that help reduce chronic diseases and aid in brain development. Mercury and PCBs are found in certain fish caught in San Francisco Bay and Bay Delta.¹ These toxins affect the immune, reproductive, nervous, and endocrine systems. Those exposed in utero, while breastfeeding or while young children are particularly at risk and effects can be lifelong. .. Without proper education on making healthy choices eating fish poses a threat to cognitive development and health of children in our county.

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benefit the funder and the field in general. You also increase the likelihood that your organization will be funded!

- **Results you envision**: What will your success look like (in both the short- and long-term)? This impact needs to be very measurable, both quantitatively (in numbers) and qualitatively (how will people’s lives be improved)? If you need help here, go back to your mission statement and cut it down to size to fit into the grant period. How will the community benefit? What are the ultimate outcomes you’re aiming for?

So yes, count the number of:

- clients you serve
- the percent change in attitude or knowledge or behavior you’re striving for
- your ripple effects throughout your community
- and the size of the holes that would be left if your work suddenly stopped.

**But you’ll also want to measure how beneficial your work has been in your clients’ eyes. Find out the quality of their experiences with you. What changes did they see happen, and why are those changes so important to them?**

**EXAMPLE**

Anticipated outcomes of our work include: At least 60-85% of 150-250 nail salon workers and owners will demonstrate, through assessment, participation, and observation, increased understanding of best health and safety practices, increased advocacy and leadership skills, and increased utilization of safer/green product alternatives in order to create a greater momentum towards healthy/green salon models.

**EXAMPLE**

Our evaluation tools will demonstrate that the affected community understands the educational information presented, that they plan to make healthy changes, and will share this information with other family members.

While statistical data plays a vital role in your proposals, it needs to always be reinforced by stories. Why? Stories are crucial to human understanding. Stories carry the emotional content behind the informational content of your statistics. In fact, studies have shown that your readers will remember how your piece makes them **feel** more than anything else.

**But...** You don’t actually have to be 100% successful in producing your projected results, 100% of the time! Yes, we all want to succeed, but sometimes what we learn from “mistakes” can be even more valuable! Sometimes the results we actually get teach us much more than the results we initially sought.

Funders know that, and they are interested in organizations that are constantly learning. They rely on us to tell them what we have found that works and that doesn’t work. They especially like to fund organizations that are actively addressing their weaknesses and finding new and better pathways to success. They also want to see you
share those pathways to success with your colleagues. Funders absolutely LOVE replicable projects!

- **Solution you are proposing:** There are many ways to tackle the same problem. But which specific services, programs, and processes did you choose to pursue? This is what you will do to achieve your results. We need details here, but not so many that you overwhelm your reader (esp. in the LOI). Be sure to talk about your overall vision first, and then the specifics.

**EXAMPLE**

Our vision is guided by our profound commitment to youth as the future; to the rights of youth to safe, healthy, diverse and rewarding environments; and to the capacities of young people to achieve these conditions themselves when given the chance.

If your solution includes collaborating with any other organizations, groups or agencies be sure to include how each will contribute something unique that is more than the sum of the parts.

**CAUTION!** Make sure that the solution you propose solves more than the problem of the lack of your solution.

**Example:** The problem is that our neighborhood lacks a health clinic. Our solution is to build one.

But is that really the problem? Lots of neighborhoods have health clinics and still experience seriously poor health among residents. The problem you’re trying to address is actually poor health. While a new health clinic might be a significant part of the solution to that real problem, it is still only a part.

In addition to describing “what” you choose to do, you need to explain “why” you think that particular project will solve the problem. Why wouldn’t your community choose an alternative solution? How realistic is your plan, given what you know about your community?

The research process or working theory that led you to design your project needs to appear in the proposal. For example, did you hold a series of meetings with community members, teachers, grassroots leaders, or others to envision and plan the project? Are they helping to drive the program via the board or staff?

- **Track record:** How has your organization and/or project already made a positive difference in your community? That is, what results have you already successfully accomplished? This is another great place for client stories and testimonials. If you’re a brand new organization, then describe the track record of your staff/board/affiliates.

**EXAMPLE**
Metro has assisted in the development of leaders in many low-income and ethnic communities who have gone on to continue the work as advocates for their neighborhoods and their communities.

**EXERCISE #1** Write down your brainstorm about the above 5 FIRST items, keeping in mind your writing PURPOSES.

3) **1st R: Know your READERS**

- Who are your readers?
  - Program Officers usually are your first readers – foundation gatekeepers
  - They have significant background and concern about your issue but may be unfamiliar with your organization’s particular slant or niche.
  - They are time-pressed, and want direct and succinct answers to their questions.
  - They want to be *inspired* by your vision.
  - They’ve been around the block and frequently talk to each other (so always be honest and upfront with them).
  - They are people too, with hearts, minds and concerns.

- What is their relationship to you? Think about if they know your organization or anyone connected to it. If not, start developing a relationship through the mail, email or phone. You want to create a partnership with them to achieve a community goal together.

- What information is of most interest to them?
  - Your goals, objectives and priorities match theirs

**EXAMPLES**

As an effective and emerging coalition committed to grassroots base-building and leadership development, and working strategically at the intersections of toxics, worker health and safety, chemical policy, environmental and reproductive justice and health, the Collaborative is a good fit for support from the Foundation’s Grassroots Fund.

OFC’s work addresses three of this funding initiative’s target outcomes: the creation of health hubs to support health-promoting behaviors, the development of communities with health-promoting land uses, and the linking of community health improvements to economic development

- Local funders want to fund local projects; national funders want to fund broader projects.
- They want to be reasonably sure that their grantees will succeed.
They want to fund programs that:

a) Have a realistic plan for a new/innovative solution to a community problem

**EXAMPLE**

We work with the mainstream media and Spanish-language media to ensure broad public awareness of the issues and inclusion of those who often are left out of the process.

b) Involve the beneficiaries in the planning and/or implementation

**EXAMPLE**

The organization was founded and is led by East Oakland natives, and its programs directly address issues of importance to its constituents.

c) Have a clear, direct, measurable impact on a vital community need in both the short- and long-term

d) Are the best choice to address an expressed community need

e) Seem prepared to deal with the unexpected

f) Can deliver what they promise

g) Will evaluate their success and act on any suggested improvements

h) Have community support (financial, volunteer and in-kind)

i) Have a clear/unique role to play in collaboration with others in the field: esp. important in this economy (maximize pooled resources, understand relationships of issues, learn from each other’s experiences, reap the benefits of economies of scale)

j) Share their experiences with others (i.e., planned to be replicable)

**EXAMPLE**

Establishing an innovative model of how to work in partnership with public agencies, CBO’s, and local businesses to develop sustainable, local food production/distribution systems with education/marketing/training components that are linked to low-income urban communities...This project with EBMUD, a large public land management agency, will create opportunities for similar public-private farming partnerships to take place in the future. Developing groundbreaking techniques for carrying out sustainable agriculture in conjunction with ecosystem restoration, which can be then shared with other land-managing agencies.

k) Are funded by other foundations (bandwagon effect)
Note: During this recession, many funders have found ways to cut their operational costs, so they can continue to provide as much grant funding as possible. Naturally, they also want to know how your organization has done more with less money. While funders may or may not specifically ask about ways you have adjusted, you can be proactive and demonstrate any streamlining you have done at your organization. Show them that you are agile and can tweak as necessary!

Some ways to find out more about them:

- Read their publications, websites and grant guidelines
- Research what they have previously supported
  (Is there enough similarity with your project, yet uniqueness in your specific approach?)
- Call or email to clarify their guidelines

4) **2nd R**: Refine your messages by matching your READERS’ needs with your writing PRIORITIES, keeping in mind your PURPOSES.

Make your best effort to step out of your own shoes and into theirs. Then you’ll be ready to speak their language and become reader-centered, NOT writer-centered.

**Example of what NOT to do…**

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Note: This cartoon shows how folks often try to shoehorn their programs into a funder’s priorities, interests or guidelines. But program officers can see right through this game! They’re looking for a GENUINE match — not a manufactured one. They want to be sure that the program you’re proposing is really a high priority for you and not just an attempt to get funds.

EXAMPLE

This funding will allow us to sustainably expand our programs and services to reach our goals while honoring our commitment to the broader EOBHC mission.

------------------------------------BREAK------------------------------------

Session II

EXERCISE #2: Role Play

Take a few minutes to review your FIRST notes. Write down any additional refined messages (“talking points”), considering your readers’ needs.

Then….practice using your messages by talking about your work to a “program officer” (your neighbor) and receiving feedback. Each conversation will last about 3-5 minutes.

If you already have a specific funder in mind, brief your partner on the “role” to play representing that specific funder. If you have not yet identified any potentially interested funders, it’s fine to just have a generic conversation.

Question: What did you learn from doing this role play?

[Next step: Test your messages on others who are not involved in your work. Are your messages compelling to them?]
2. GETTING THE WORDS RIGHT

[TIP: Think “skim”!]

A. Focus on clarity: write to avoid misinterpretation

You know all about your program, but your reader doesn’t. Clearly explain everything!

- Avoid vagueness. Provide specific information whenever possible.

  **Original:** The tutoring program was very successful last year.

  **Suggested Revision:** Last year, the program’s 20 volunteer tutors boosted the performance of 60 young readers. [go on to explain how you did this....]

- Use anecdotes and examples. Telling a brief account of a client’s story can crystallize your work in your reader’s mind.

  **Example:** Beth’s Story

  Beth came to Organization V in fear of her child’s abusive father, who had tried repeatedly to gain visitation rights regarding their young daughter. Beth had previously obtained a three-year Domestic Violence Restraining Order against him. She had no income.

  The challenge was daunting: Beth had been born deaf and could communicate only in nonverbal Relay. Because of the complexity of the communication system, a translator had to be found that knew both Relay and American Sign Language to facilitate communication between the Organization V attorney and Beth. Such translators are extremely difficult to find.

  Numerous phone calls later, we located a translator who -- after hearing about Organization V’s work -- agreed to assist us at a reduced public interest fee ($25 per hour, instead of the market rate of $70).

  Because of Organization V, Beth was able to understand, participate and have a voice in decisions regarding her daughter.

  **Example:** Walls of Hope Art School and Open Studio

  Walls of Hope recently packed the house when we screened the riveting documentary, “Artist of Resistance,” about our founder, artist Claudia Bernardi, and her experience of the exhumation of El Mozote, El Salvador. A huge massacre in 1981 had destroyed this rural Salvadoran town during that country’s civil war. The film screening became a major healing event.
In the audience sat Rufina Amaya, the sole survivor of the massacre. Rufina wept throughout the film. At the end, she spoke to thank the filmmakers and artists for being the carriers of the story of El Mozote. Many others also rose to speak—some for the first time in years—of the families, relatives, and friends they had lost. People cried and thanked the “internacionales”, the people from outside, for remembering the tragedy and establishing an art school that helps heal the psychological wounds of war.

As a member of a local religious and social base community has said, “Art has accomplished what politics was never able to do.”

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B. Cultivate conciseness: less is more

- Short, simple words, sentences and paragraphs are better than longer, more complicated ones. Avoid run-on sentences. Try using words with three syllables or fewer. [TIP: 70% of the words Lincoln used in his famous Gettysberg address had only one syllable.]

- Try to keep your sentences to 14-20 words or fewer.

- Eliminate “in order to,” “the fact that,” and similar prepositional phrases.

- Challenge yourself to see how short you can make your sentences or paragraphs without compromising meaning.

- Every word should work; delete freeloaders. All sentences and paragraphs should pass the “so what” test (if they don’t, then delete them). Also, watch out for redundancies!

Original:
This important planning meeting led to a refined vision for effective collaboration amongst civil rights organizations. The meeting propelled the coalition to improve its structure in order to fulfill its vision of being an agile, learning and advocacy alliance.

Suggested Revision:
This important planning meeting led to a refined vision for effective collaboration, and a stronger commitment to becoming an agile learning and advocacy alliance.

Original: We had the opportunity to interact with the youth and understand different issues they were facing within their lives as well as to observe different aspects of the facility and how that environment affected them.

Suggested Revision:
C. Choose active (not passive) verbs

Passive verbs are just that: they indicate a passive state of affairs, with not much action. They forget about the subject (who or what is performing the action) and only focus on the object (the recipient of the action).

On the other hand, active verbs indicate what is happening and WHO or WHAT is doing the action. They create a stronger sentence and allow you to describe the situation more powerfully. They help you engage your readers, as well as pinpoint causes of problems or hold appropriate parties responsible.

Passive verbs often precede the word “by” and/or use forms of “to be.”

**Original:** There are trees in the vacant lot that were destroyed.

**Suggested Revision:** A fire destroyed the trees that used to live in the vacant lot.

**Original:** Hundreds of women are abused every minute.

**Suggested Revision:** Romantic partners, friends, relatives, and even strangers are responsible for the abuse of hundreds of women every minute.

**Original:** Jobs were lost by many members of working families.

**Suggested Revision:** The economic slump has translated into unemployment for thousands of working families in our community.

**Original:** A major challenge faced by the Collaborative is the counter-mobilization of nail product and cosmetics manufacturers in opposition to the Collaborative’s efforts to organize against environmental hazards and toxic chemicals in nail products.

D. Use vivid verbs

- Replace adverbs with stronger verbs that convey your exact meaning. Try to create a picture in the reader’s mind. [Feel free to use a thesaurus!]

**Original:** The income of people of color in our city has gone down a lot during the past three decades.

**Suggested Revision:**
• Eliminate weak forms of the verb “to be” (e.g., is, are, were). One way to do that is to focus on a few specific, outstanding details.

*Original:* The organization’s events are very popular.

*Suggested Revision:* In the past two years alone, the organization’s 20 educational panels and 30 training sessions have attracted over 3,000 enthusiastic participants.

**E. Avoid jargon and unexplained acronyms: always use user-friendly, specific language**

• Ask yourself, “Would my readers use this term themselves?” If not, use words they would use. Their published materials will give you a hint about their “language.”

• Don’t “dumb down” your message – just “break it down” into manageable bites.

• If you must use technical terms, explain them the first time you use them. Repeating new terms throughout your piece will help them become more comfortable to your readers.

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3. SOME STYLE POINTERS

[Quote: “A simple style is the result of hard work and hard thinking; a muddy style reflects a muddy thinker or a person too lazy to organize his/her thoughts.” – William K. Zinsser in On Writing Well]

A. In the FIRST two paragraphs (your proposal summary) answer the big questions: Who, What, When, Where and Why/How. Clearly state your key messages. The rest of the piece should elaborate.

B. Give each category of info a heading that corresponds to the funder’s specific questions. The info should be accessible at a glance. Try bullets, numbering, and chunking to make it easy to skim.

C. Keep your piece flowing smoothly.

   Good writers act as guides for their readers as they travel together along the journey of the piece. Try the following:

   • Use transition words such as: initially, however, in addition, although, indeed, consequently, thus, therefore, furthermore, for example, nevertheless, on the other hand, finally, in conclusion.

   • Use words and phrases such as “especially,” “particularly,” “most importantly,” and “above all” to signal to readers that what follows is important. Underlines, italics and bold characters can also help make this point.

   • Keep your readers interested! Vary the pace of your piece by using different sentence and paragraph lengths.

D. People want to hear from or about other people, so use quotes as much as possible. Strive to create a human, emotional connection with your reader.

E. Your piece should have a positive, inclusive orientation. Stress what something IS rather than what it IS NOT. Emphasize what you CAN and WILL DO rather than what you CANNOT. Orient the piece toward problem-solving.

F. Appeal to your readers’ five senses to help them experience your words. Can you draw any analogies to common sights, sounds, smells, tastes or textures? SHOW the reader what’s happening -- don’t simply tell.

G. Make your proposal pleasing to the eye. Use white space, numbering, charts, simple graphics, and bullets as much as possible.
H. Use a simple, direct tone. Use your passionate voice, but don’t go overboard. Balance approachability with formality. Avoid sounding academic or “wonk-ish.”

**EXAMPLE**

The prevalence of vacant/underutilized and abandoned land can act as an indicator of the decline in public health and economic growth of a city. Given this fact, and combined with the residents' perception of "food deserts" in Oakland's flatlands, a significantly unhealthy food environment is revealed. Food deserts are commonly characterized by small corner stores, fast food, and food insecurity. Food deserts may be classified as obesogenic environments, meaning, these areas may encourage more weight gain while hindering weight loss.
4. SAMPLE GRANT PROPOSAL FORMAT

(Note: This is only a sample; always go by the funder’s requested format. Letters of Inquiry are proposal summaries of approximately 3 pages.)

A. Cover Letter (1 page): Should summarize the proposal’s basics: who you are, how you qualify, what your project does and why, how your project fits into one of their priority areas, how much money you’re seeking, and why you need it. Mention any other funders on board.
(Note: The cover letter is a truncated version of the LOI.)

B. Narrative (5-10 pages) (Note: for longer proposals include a 1-page Executive Summary)

1. About Your Organization
   - Mission
   - History and Accomplishments
   - Your organization’s unique capacity or skills (i.e., those needed to do your proposed project)

2. Your Clients
   - Demographic data with examples/profiles/stories/quotes
   - How are they involved in the project’s design and implementation?

3. The Need
   - Background info: historical context and current trends
   - Facts, figures, statistics (who, what, when, where)
   - Importance of the issue—what’s at stake?

4. Project Plan for Addressing the Need
   - Overall Goals (long-term)
   - Specific objectives (short-term, feasible, measurable) tied to specific outcomes
   - Timeline: put objectives into 1-6 month blocks
   - How is this project a priority for you in working toward your organization’s overall mission?

5. Evaluation Criteria
   - How will the outcomes of each objective be measured?
   - What will success/intended results look like?

6. Staff and Volunteers
   - Number
   - Qualifications/bios

7. Financial Plan (also: refer to organizational and/or project budget)
   - Resources available from other sources (including in-kind)
   - Funds needed (applied to specific line items)
   - Plan for future sustainability (with a diversity of sources)

8. Conclusion: brief summary of the need, the proposed solution, and the request

C. Budget (1-2 pages): must be realistic and closely tied to narrative

D. Any required attachments: does not include unrequested material
SAMPLE LETTER OF INQUIRY

Program Officer
XYZ Foundation

Dear Mr. Grantor:

ORGANIZATION A requests the opportunity to submit a full proposal to the XYZ Foundation to support our Affordable, Safe, and Habitable Housing Project ("Affordable Housing Project"). The Project is a multi-faceted and comprehensive program that will dramatically improve the housing conditions for low-income residents, increase the affordable housing stock, and strengthen low-income neighborhoods and communities in Our County.

Our Affordable Housing Project will provide much-needed legal advocacy, including potential litigation, to already existing organizing efforts of community agencies. It will bring together legal advocates, the community, government agencies, and nonprofit housing providers to address the housing crisis that currently exists. The Affordable Housing Project addresses several of the XYZ Foundation’s Community Outcomes, most notably “Individuals and families live in housing that is safe, supportive, and affordable.” We request a grant of $40,000 in support of the project’s $95,000 budget.

Organization Description: ORGANIZATION A\(^2\) has long been committed to improving the quality of life, enhancing economic opportunity, protecting the social safety net, and alleviating economic inequality through the provision of legal services and advocacy to low-income residents in Our County. We provide a broad range of legal services through a combination of systemic advocacy, community education, direct representation and advice. Our systemic advocacy, including impact litigation, often benefits all Californians. ORGANIZATION A’s core programs are: housing, family and consumer law, language access and self-sufficiency/economic support/public benefits.

Our staff and board reflect the diverse communities that we serve, including Whites (40.9%), Latinos (19%), African Americans (14.6%), Asian/Pacific Islanders (20.9%), and other people of color. Some of our recent accomplishments include: 1) getting the City code enforcement agency to begin to translate notices into languages other than English, 2) devising a plan for meeting the needs of non-English speakers, and 3) obtaining agreements regarding training of inspectors and other agency changes that will help improve how the City Agency serves tenants. We were the driving force behind the City Equal Access Ordinance that requires agencies to provide their services in a language-accessible manner.

The Opportunities/Need the Project Addresses: Healthy and sustainable communities, neighborhoods, and individuals require habitable and affordable housing. But, as documented by Barbara Ehrenreich (Nickeled and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America, 2000), “when the rich and poor compete for housing on the open market, the poor don’t stand a chance...the poor have necessarily been forced into housing that is more expensive, dilapidated, or more distant from their places of work.” This housing crisis has been well documented in Our County, as newspapers are replete with stories of families who have been forced to leave the Bay Area in search of housing. Others have no choice but to live in substandard and overcrowded conditions in a desperate attempt to avoid becoming homeless. The working poor and minorities are particularly affected.

Housing Element

\(^2\) ORGANIZATION A was created in 1999 by the merger of two leading legal providers: ABC and DEF.
California’s Housing Element law provides the opportunity to encourage or force localities to meet their obligations to ensure that affordable and healthy housing is developed and maintained in their communities. The law requires each community to submit a 5-year plan that identifies housing needs in that community, including affordable housing needs, and to adopt goals and action plans for creating affordable housing. In addition, localities must assess how local laws encourage or discourage affordability and assess the conditions of their housing stock. They must also act to address identified barriers to affordability. The Housing Element planning process must include community group participation.

The cities of Fremont, Hayward, Alameda and Oakland are all at different stages of the Housing Element process and will require the development of about 5,891 units of affordable housing in the next five years. This creates an opportunity for community input and the development of housing elements that meet the communities’ needs. If any locality fails to adopt a housing element or adopts an inadequate housing element, a court can order the local government to halt all development, including commercial development, until an adequate element is adopted. This provides significant legal leverage in obtaining localities’ compliance with the housing element laws and in obtaining policies that ensure that necessary affordable housing will be developed and maintained.

We have a formidable team of legal and community advocates that will ensure compliance with the Housing Element law. The team includes ORGANIZATION A, B, C, D, Jane Important (an experienced disability rights advocate), and local advocates in each community.

B and C have organized community members to advocate for adoption of adequate housing elements in all four localities. ORGANIZATION A will join their advocacy efforts and provide the legal enforcement mechanism that should encourage the localities to adopt adequate elements. If the cities fail to adopt adequate housing elements, ORGANIZATION A and D will litigate against any non-complying city to force compliance. ORGANIZATION A’s participation is required since D is a state support center that does not become involved unless local legal advocates are involved. Jane Important will provide the needed technical assistance on issues affecting housing for people with disabilities.

**Enforcing Local Ordinances that Protect Tenants**

While Berkeley continues to be the only East Bay city that has a “good cause” eviction requirement, cities such as Oakland and Hayward have local ordinances that protect tenants and to some extent are intended to protect maintenance of affordable housing stock. These ordinances either limit rent increases, impose reporting, and/or other requirements. ORGANIZATION A will target enforcement of the Hayward and Oakland ordinances and will work together with community groups (e.g., Y and Z) who have long been organizing around these issues.

**Code Enforcement**

Our County has a serious and growing slum-housing problem that produces serious consequences not only for those who live in the slum housing, but for all residents of Our County. The link between physical and mental health problems and uninhabitable housing conditions is well documented. The broader community is threatened by contagious diseases, bred in uninhabitable conditions, and transmitted in schools, restaurants and other public places. Slum housing also seriously compromises the sustainability and liveability of neighborhoods and communities.

ORGANIZATION A will augment current community resources by enforcing code enforcement laws through litigation. Such litigation will improve housing conditions by acting as a deterrent for landlords.

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3 In 2000 the ABC Government Agency estimated the number of slum housing units to be 46,230.
who do not wish to take their obligations seriously. We will address potential displacement of tenants (caused by code enforcement) by creatively using community resources to rehabilitate affordable, uninhabitable, and unsafe housing. This will include working with community-based housing providers and government agencies that provide rehabilitation services or that would be interested in taking over slum properties. We will also work to enforce relocation ordinances and encourage cities to adopt relocation ordinances that will help address potential displacement problems.

ORGANIZATION A has been advocating for institutional policy changes with the Oakland code enforcement agency and would expand these efforts to other agencies to lead to a zero-tolerance stance for unhealthy and uninhabitable housing. Out of the 12,800 complaints it received last year, the City of Oakland processed only 55 of these cases as serious. This statistic, coupled with stories from other agencies and clients, point to the problem that code enforcement agencies are not doing their jobs. ORGANIZATION A’s advocacy will force these agencies to effectively address slum housing.

**Tenant Education and Outreach**

Tenant education and outreach are key to accomplishing our goals, as we must educate tenants about their rights and give them the means to enforce the law. While this would not be the primary focus of our work, ORGANIZATION A would play an important role in this area. This is particularly true as it relates to outlying areas such as Hayward, Fremont and Livermore and immigrant communities where ORGANIZATION A has both a presence and contacts that other legal services lack.

The XYZ Foundation’s grant would allow ORGANIZATION A and our partners to meet the goal of making Our County a community that provides affordable and habitable housing for all of its residents, including its most susceptible members — low-income and minority residents. The grant would partially pay for the attorney and be used to cover some expenses for our some of our housing element partners. Please contact me at 510-123-4567 if you have questions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Executive Director
**EXERCISE #3: SPOT THE WEAKNESSES**

*Can you identify the problems in this piece?*

Our organization started up a few years ago because we wanted to improve the dismal quality of life and alleviate economic inequality for other women in our community. These problems do not actually affect our lives, but we wanted to appear charitable.

We propose the “Get A Life Project,” which will have a tiny effect on housing conditions for low-income women and will probably do nothing to change their economic status. We don’t have an innovative bone in our bodies, so we’re just doing the same old project that we’ve always done. Actually, there’s no urgency to the project, and it’s not part of any larger plan. In fact, we think there are already many organizations doing this work in our town.

We think that our Get A Life Project will provide much-needed assistance. Although no low-income women have asked us to help them, or have joined our organization, we think the project is a great idea. It’s not clear how we will do this work, but we are sure that we’ll come up with something. We will have to figure out how to serve people in unfamiliar languages, but we don’t think you want to know any details of how we actually will implement the project, and we definitely will not be evaluating it.

Our project does not address any of your Foundation’s priority areas, but we believe you will make an exception for us because of our good intentions. We will have to indefinitely rely on your foundation to sustain our work. We’re pretty desperate so if you don’t fund us we will have to close our doors.

-------------------BREAK-------------------
Session III

Your “Cheat Sheet”

PLANNING: The 2P2R System™
A. Determine your specific writing PURPOSE(S)
B. Define your information PRIORITIES.
C. Know your READERS:

- Program Officers usually are your first readers
  - They have significant background and concern about your issue but may be unfamiliar with your organization’s particular slant or niche
  - They are time-pressed, and want direct and succinct answers to their questions (not padded answers)
  - They want to be inspired by your vision

What information is of most interest to them?
- Your goals, objectives and priorities match theirs
- Local funders want to invest in local projects; national funders want to invest in broader projects
- They want to be reasonably sure that their grantees will succeed (your success is THEIR success)
- They want to invest in programs that:
  1. Have a realistic plan for success
  2. Involve the beneficiaries in the planning and/or implementation
  3. Have a clear, measurable impact on a vital community need in both the short- and long-term
  4. Are the best choice to address an expressed community need
  5. Seem prepared to deal with the unexpected
  6. Can deliver what they promise
  7. Will evaluate their success and act on any suggested improvements
  8. Have community support (financial, volunteer and in-kind)
  9. Have a clear/unique role to play in collaboration with others in the field
  10. Share their experiences with others

D. REFINE your messages to fit with what your readers are seeking.

GETTING THE WORDS RIGHT
A. Focus on clarity: write to avoid misinterpretation
B. Cultivate conciseness: when writing, less is more
C. Choose active (not passive), vivid verbs
E. Avoid jargon: always use user-friendly, specific language
F. Get to the point quickly
GIVING AND GETTING FEEDBACK

We all have a lot of expertise; let’s share it! Even if you are new to grantwriting, your “fresh perspective” can question our assumptions.

Take 10 minutes to read sample #1 for your group, as if you were a program officer. Mark down your comments:

- What worked well?
- What areas could use improvement?
- How do you feel after reading the piece?
- Other suggestions for improving it in a broad sense?

EDITING POINTERS

A. Let ideas germinate

Wait at least 24 hours before starting to revise (minimum: a few hours or overnight). You will be amazed at the things you can fix, after you unconscious mind has had time to undergo the creative process!

I recommend keeping a notepad and pen on your nightstand or with your things as you go about your day. This invites creative ideas to visit you.

B. Review the Editing Checklist (Appendix I)
# SAMPLE ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGET

*July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013*

## EXPENSES

### Personnel Costs
- Salary: Project Director (1.0 FTE)  
  Proposed Budget: $50,000
- Salary: Project Assistant (0.5 FTE)  
  Proposed Budget: $15,000
- Payroll Taxes & Benefits (11.15%)  
  Proposed Budget: $7,248
- Employee Benefits (8.85%) (note 1)  
  Proposed Budget: $5,753
- Temporary Help (seasonal)  
  Proposed Budget: $1,500

**SUBTOTAL**  
Proposed Budget: $78,001

### Nonpersonnel Costs
- Professional Dues and Subscriptions  
  Proposed Budget: $500
- Insurance (Note 2)  
  Proposed Budget: $1,500
- Advertisement Placement (note 3)  
  Proposed Budget: $2,000
- Office Rent  
  Proposed Budget: $6,000
- Office Supplies  
  Proposed Budget: $1,000
- Postage and Delivery  
  Proposed Budget: $700
- Printing/Copying  
  Proposed Budget: $1,500
- Professional Fees (Note 4)  
  Proposed Budget: $5,000
- Small Equipment (Note 5)  
  Proposed Budget: $4,000
- Staff Development (Note 6)  
  Proposed Budget: $3,000
- Telecommunications (Note 7)  
  Proposed Budget: $2,500
- Training & Workshops-Sponsored (Note 8)  
  Proposed Budget: $5,000
- Travel (Note 9)  
  Proposed Budget: $3,000
- Utilities  
  Proposed Budget: $700
- Celebrity Event  
  Proposed Budget: $22,000
- Misc.  
  Proposed Budget: $1,500
- 10% of gross receipts for fiscal sponsor  
  Proposed Budget: $15,700

**SUBTOTAL**  
Proposed Budget: $75,600

### TOTAL EXPENSES

Proposed Budget: $153,601

### Notes
1. Health Insurance, Vacation, Retirement
2. Building & Equipment, D & O Liabilities, Liability Insurance, Worker's Compensation
3. Print, Radio, Other
4. Audit, Legal, Payroll, Media/Fundraising Consultant
5. Lease, Maintenance, Purchase
6. Conferences, Trainings-Attended
7. Conference Calls, Internet, Website, Telephone
8. Childcare, Food, Beverages, Materials, Venue, Other
9. Lodging, Meals, Transportation for Off-Site Meetings, Client Sites
10. Annual Report, Brochures
## INCOME

### Earned income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honoraria</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrity Event (gross)</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees For Service</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest &amp; Dividends</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUBTOTAL: Earned Income**

### Contributed Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundation A - committed</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation B - pending (at 50% likelihood)</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation A - committed</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation B - pending (at 50% likelihood)</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals - Major Donors</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals - Small Donations</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Current Request**

**$30,000**

**SUBTOTAL: Contributed Income**

**$100,000**

### TOTAL EARNED & CONTRIBUTED INCOME

**$157,000**

### In-Kind Donations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office Volunteers/Interns (200 hrs at $15/hr)</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Volunteers</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Space</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshments</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer equipment</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL IN-KIND DONATIONS**

**$17,300**
GLOSSARY OF GRANTWRITING TERMS

**Deadline:** The final date for proposal submission or reports, either by hand delivery to the funding agency or to the post office for mailing sometimes called a “target” date (if the date has to be established by postmark, send your proposal or report Certified and get a dated receipt or use a service that will give you a receipt!). In the process of seeking grants, deadlines are almost always set in concrete; as always read the RFP carefully and fully. In the process for reports there may be room for extension, but discuss the need with the funder before the deadline.

**Demonstration Grant:** A grant made to establish an innovative project or program which, if successful, will serve as a model and may be duplicated by others.

**Family Foundation:** An independent private foundation whose funds are derived from members of a single family. Family members often serve as officers or board members of family foundations and have a significant role in their grantmaking decisions.

**Form 990:** The information return that public charities file with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); required for all nonprofit organizations that have been recognized by the IRS as a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt and have annual income of $25,000.00 or more. The information includes financial information, the names of the officers and highest paid employees and their salaries. Some states require that this form be filed with the Attorney General or other state agency. These forms as filed are available on the Internet at [http://www.guidestar.com](http://www.guidestar.com). The 990 is a public document and must be shared with the public when requested, along with other documents. This document is under scrutiny by the IRS and Congress for changes.

**Form 990-PF:** The public record information returns that all private foundations are required by law to submit annually to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This form provides financial information, names of officers, trustees or directors, and a list of grant recipients and amounts contributed during the year. These forms as filed are available on the Internet at [http://www.guidestar.com](http://www.guidestar.com).

**Boiler-Plate:** Pre-written blocks of generic material which, with slight modification, can be used in a variety of proposals, templates. (marketing plan, organization description, community profile, staff and board qualifications, etc.)

**Bricks and Mortar:** An informal term for capital funds generally used for building renovation or construction.

**Case Statement:** A summation of all the reasons (including accomplishments, current activities and future plans) that would encourage support (economic, personal and public) for the organization.

**Challenge Grant:** A grant that must be matched with money raised by the recipient.

**Community Foundation:** A 501 (c) (3) organization that makes grants for charitable purposes in a specific community, region or affinity. The funds available to a community foundation are usually derived from many donors and held in an endowment that is independently administered. Income earned by the endowment is then used to make grants. Although a community foundation may be classified by the IRS as a private foundation, most are classified as public charities and are thus eligible for maximum tax-deductible contributions from the general public.
**Company-Sponsored Foundation:** (Also referred to as a corporate foundation): A private foundation whose assets are derived primarily from the contributions of a for-profit business. While a company-sponsored foundation may maintain close ties with its parent company, it is an independent organization with its own endowment and as such is subject to the same rules and regulations as other private foundations.

**LOI:** Acronym for Letter of Intent, Letter of Inquiry, or Letter of Interest. These are introductory letters (usually 1-3 pages) often requested by foundations before inviting a full proposal. The Request for Proposal (RFP) will let you know if and LOI is required.

**Prospecting:** The term used for researching potential grants. This includes reviewing databases of funders, IRS forms, funder websites, etc.

*Adapted from:* www.CharityChannel.com
FAQs ABOUT GRANT PROPOSALS

1) **Question**
As a rule of thumb, how detailed should one be (without being too wordy) about each topic? Should I keep the proposal focused on just what purpose I would be using the money, and not the rest of the program ideas?

**Answer**
This is going to depend on the questions asked in the RFP, as well as the page length you are allowed. Make sure you give an overview of the entire project, but most of your detail will be on how you will use the money you are requesting. You want to give enough detail that will answer the questions we went over in class, but you don’t need to go into minutia -- if they want it they will ask. Remember, you want to sound like you know what you’re doing, but you don’t need to share all details of your business plan upfront. Your reader probably doesn’t need to know it all to get a picture of what you’re up to. This is *especially* true in a Letter of Intent (usually 1-3 pages).

2) **Question**
Do I need to spell out exactly who will do what? How in-depth should I get?

**Answer**
Feel free to include the number of employees, volunteers and collaborators and give a general sense of what they will be doing and how they will work together. But you generally don’t need to give a complete flow-chart. Again, this will depend on the RFP requirements. For example, sometimes the funder will request full resumes of everyone involved or specific job descriptions. Often, though, this is not the case.

3. **Question**
I want to expand on the evaluation component of my proposal. Should I pair the objectives to the evaluation points, and leave out the other evaluation points? Or should I write about all of the objectives and evaluation points of my entire program, but specify which will be covered in the money I am seeking?

**Answer**
Definitely talk about any and all evaluation points you are planning. Objectives that will not be covered by the money you are seeking should be mentioned in your program overview, but usually not in detail.
4. **Question**
   I often get confused between the "results" of my work and the "solution" I'm advocating. Can you clarify?

**Answer**

"Results" are things you envision as the outcomes of your work. What do you plan to achieve at the end of the grant period? What changes or community benefits will be the end results? What will success look like? For example, your organization may seek to fight AIDS/HIV in your community by educating folks. This education is a short-term result, and the long-term result is that this education leads to a decrease in the spread of the disease.

The "solution" is the specific way you are working to achieve these results (i.e., solve the problem you are addressing). What program or project are you advocating? Your plan should be specific enough that it can be measured and tied to specific outcomes. For example, the AIDS/HIV education group cited above may be holding an educational event. How many people will attend, and who will they be? How will the event be educational? How will you know that your solution (i.e., the event) has brought about the intended results?
PREPARE FOR YOUR GRANT REPORT…
STARTING NOW!

The grant report you have to submit is very important! Not only do you want to show what you've done and what difference that has made, but you also want to position yourself as a strong candidate for a possible grant renewal. While each funder has a specific format in mind, here's a handy list of the things you will probably want to include:

**Accomplishments:** Of course, you will want to recount all of the relevant results you achieved during the funding period. Look back at the measurable objectives you listed in your proposal. How many of them did you meet or exceed? Maybe you even accomplished some unanticipated things! If so, describe, explain and highlight.

**Client profiles/success stories/testimonials:** Tell a couple of stories of people who benefited from your work. Show how their lives were improved because of your project. Use their words as much as possible.

**Lessons learned:** What did you learn from doing the project? Funders are not only interested in your successes, but also how you will modify your work in the future to address any challenges you encountered along the way. By showing that you’re a learning organization, you demonstrate that you are dynamic and interested in maximizing your effectiveness.

**Your partnership:** Think back to the foundation’s goals, objectives and priorities (which you found in their RFP or other documents). Write about how your work addressed those things. Demonstrate how your partnership with the funder made that possible.

**Plans for the future:** Unless your project was a one-shot deal that is now finished forever, tell the funder how you intend to build on it. This will help show that the funded project was part of a sustained effort.
RESOURCES FOR THE NEXT STEPS

YOU GET UP TO 4 HOURS OF COACHING OVER THE PHONE!

WHY: To help you revise your proposals, research prospective funders, create a fundraising plan, etc. You set the agenda for YOUR most urgent/important grant-related need.

WHAT TO EXPECT:
1. Dalya uses your submitted writing sample as a starting point.
2. You fill out a brief assessment on what you want to work on.
3. You turn in any work to be reviewed 48 hours before your appointment time.
4. If you don't use your 4 hours of coaching, the unused time will be made available to other GLI organizations.
5. If you need to reschedule, please give 24 hours’ notice. If you miss a scheduled appointment, you will lose that time.

WHEN:
• Appointments are for 1-4 hours each, for up to a grand total of 4 hours.
• We will arrive at appointment times that work for both of us, at whatever interval feels right.
• You must contact Dalya by May 15th to schedule the initial consulting session. If you miss the deadline, you lose your time and it will be offered to other groups.
• All 4 hours must be completed by August 31.
FOR FURTHER LEARNING
(these are only some of the great resources out there)

BOOKS

- Massachi, Dalya. Writing to Make a Difference: 25 Powerful Techniques to Boost Your Community Impact, 2011. See the Table of Contents and a sample chapter at: www.WritingToMakeADifference.com YOU GET 20% OFF!


- Foundation Center. The Grantseeker's Guide to Winning Proposal. Includes dozens of actual, funded proposals reprinted in their entirety. Featured examples cover a wide variety of projects, from start-up costs to a major medical center. Each proposal includes remarks by the program officer who approved the grant.

- Garron, Dynell A. Funder's Checklist, 2003, available from www.funderschecklist.com (website also has interesting resources)

- Strunk and White. Elements of Style (a classic on writing well)

WEBSITES

Grant Advice

- NonprofitWebinars, esp. mine on collaborative grantwriting: http://bit.ly/IaUQ8q


- Non-profit Guides: free web-based grant-writing tools, including samples of private and public RFP’s and proposals, and links to other resources: www.npguides.org

- Cleveland Foundation: good sample budget form, other budgeting info: www.clevelandfoundation.org/Grantmaking/GranteeToolkit.html

- GrantProposal.com: many online resources and good advice: www.grantproposal.com

- Grant readiness checklists: http://www.grantwriters.org/faq/18

- Foundation Center: lots of online resource and useful e-newsletters: www.fdncenter.org (Also has many prospecting databases, publications and seminars available at its San Francisco library, on topics such as prospecting and budgeting.)

- CharityChannel: lots of great newsletters and discussion forums about grants and fundraising (I recommend “Grants & Foundations Review” and “Don Griesmann's Grant Opportunities”): http://www.charitychannel.com
Other Prospecting Resources

- Foundation Center: lots of free RFP listings and paid Foundation Directory Online (also available for free at cooperating libraries): [www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org)


- Foundations Online: list of foundations’ websites (you need to know the name before searching there): [http://wwwFOUNDATIONS.ORG/grantmakers.html](http://wwwFOUNDATIONS.ORG/grantmakers.html)


- Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees: searchable directory: [http://www.gcir.org/resources/funding_directory/index.htm](http://www.gcir.org/resources/funding_directory/index.htm)


- Guidestar: find foundations’ 990 tax forms: [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)

FUNDRAISING BEYOND PROPOSALS

- NetworkForGood’s Online Fundraising Learning Center (includes all kinds of information and webinars): [http://www.groundspring.org/learningcenter/index.cfm](http://www.groundspring.org/learningcenter/index.cfm)

- Mal Warwick’s tips on direct mail (has also written many well-known books on direct mail appeals): [http://www.malwarwick.com/learning-resources/articles.html](http://www.malwarwick.com/learning-resources/articles.html)
SAMPLE COVER LETTER (to introduce a full proposal)

May 1, 2012

Patricia Funder
Y Foundation
Oakland, CA 94618

Dear Pat,

Thank you for speaking with our Development Director about submitting a proposal for a $15,000 grant to support ABC Organization’s School-Based Services. I am pleased to enclose a brief proposal, which focuses on our Parent Partnership Program in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

We appreciate your commitment to education, and are pleased to introduce you to our work to ensure the academic success of youth with emotional disturbances and developmental disabilities—students at high risk of failing, dropping out of school, or being expelled. Our School-Based Services provide comprehensive support for youth, educators and parents to ensure that these young people will receive the help they need.

We recognize that educators often are overburdened and unable to provide needed support for some of their special-needs students. We also know that parents often need support in helping their children realize their academic potential. To address these realities, ABC Organization has formed strategic alliances with administrators, teachers, parents and students to act as critical partners in the ongoing educator-parent-student team. When we support each other we can achieve our mutual goal: student success in the classroom!

A grant from the Y Foundation will enable the ABC Organization to work closely with parents of children in the Oakland and Contra Costa County public schools who suffer from emotional disturbances and developmental disabilities. By establishing our Parent Partnership Program, we will ensure that parents have the professional guidance they need as they work to help their children succeed in school.

I sincerely hope that the Y Foundation will look favorably upon this request. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (510) 123-4567 ext. 10.

Sincerely yours,

Joe Grantseeker
President & CEO
SAMPLE GRANT PROPOSAL

Proposal to Foundation X: Organization Z’s Assistance for Entrepreneurs Project

Organization and Project Descriptions

Founded in 1960, Organization Z uses a broad range of legal techniques including litigation, preventive counseling, and administrative advocacy and oversight to represent the interests of the poor and people of color. Our priority areas of race, poverty, and immigration were developed in response to needs identified by community organizations, coalitions, and other service providers. Organization Z’s work covers employment discrimination, welfare advocacy, voting rights, housing and community development, immigrant and refugee rights, and the promotion and defense of affirmative action programs.

Assistance for Entrepreneurs (AFE) is an economic justice project of Organization Z, and has operated since 1997. AFE provides free legal assistance to:

- Low-income individuals, especially women and persons of color, who want to start or develop for-profit businesses; and
- For-profit business people expanding operations into economically distressed neighborhoods.

AFE matches pro bono business attorneys with the above-mentioned individuals who traditionally do not have access to the specialized legal services they need. These individuals are often also inexperienced in starting or running a venture, and have limited access to capital.

In the long-term, AFE aims to contribute to 1) clients’ economic self-sufficiency, and 2) improved economic well-being of the communities we serve.

Since its founding, AFE has served 310 entrepreneurs. Currently, there are 170 attorneys and 27 paralegals from 22 Bay Area law firms and corporate legal departments participating in AFE. They donated over 3,000 hours of pro bono services in 2002.

Population Served

In 2002, 77% of AFE’s 72 clients qualified as low-income. Determination was based on the current IOLTA (Interest On Lawyers’ Trust Accounts) Income Guidelines for projects that provide pro bono legal services to the poor. The average adjusted gross income of clients who were not low-income was only slightly above this poverty level. Nearly 75% of AFE clients were persons of color (43% identified as African/Caribbean American, 22% Latina/Latino/Hispanic, 8% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% Other). 56% of AFE clients were women.

AFE serves low-income entrepreneurs throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. We conduct extensive outreach to nearly 60 community development organizations (cdo’s) in low-income communities in seven Bay Area counties (San Francisco, Our, Contra Costa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Marin).

Addressing a Critical Need
Numerous studies nationwide demonstrate that low-income individuals and families, even those with full-time jobs, are struggling to survive in today’s economy. Clearly, a new poverty alleviation solution is sorely needed. Micro-enterprises play an important role in this solution.

Micro-enterprises are businesses owned by one household, having less than five employees, and low start-up costs. Researchers estimate that there are at least two million low-income micro-entrepreneurs in the United States.4 Many of these individuals use micro-enterprise income as a means to supplement income from a low-wage job and aim to eventually replace low-paid wage employment with full-time self-employment. In fact, self-employment as a micro-entrepreneur is often perceived as the best route to economic self-sufficiency and the only viable alternative to low-wage jobs, unemployment, and dependence on welfare and other forms of public assistance.

One of the primary recommendations of a five-year study of micro-enterprises is that “low-income micro-entrepreneurs need ongoing technical assistance and specialized consulting to help them implement and grow their businesses.”5 But a 2002 report by the California Commission on Access to Justice concluded that 72% of low-income Californians – 1.5 million families – do not have access to a lawyer when facing serious legal issues.6

Clearly, low-income micro-entrepreneurs are unlikely to be able to access the legal services they need.

The most obvious reason for unmet legal needs of the low-income population is the high cost of legal services. Law firms determine their fees based on what corporations are willing to pay resulting in an average hourly billable rate for attorneys of $200. Low-income individuals, including micro-entrepreneurs, are priced out of the legal services market, creating unequal access to a crucial component of the United States justice system. Without these services available to all who need them, “the market for lawyers distorts the justice system.”7

A full 87% of respondents to AFE’s Spring 2003 client survey reported that they could not have gone elsewhere to receive legal help for their businesses. A few representative comments from our clients provide a concise summary of how AFE addresses this unmet need:

“AFE gives people an opportunity to compete when they would otherwise be unable to do so.”

“Legal issues [are] a barrier to entry into the market. Having a way in, the resources, is invaluable.”

“AFE is one of the best things [new entrepreneurs] can get. If you’re going to take all the steps to start a business, you have to know the legal steps as well.”

The legal needs of start-up businesses are complex and varied, as they are often related to different stages of business development. In 2002, the vast majority of AFE clients contacted us for assistance with more than one of the following legal issues: entity formation, contract drafting/review, intellectual property advice, lease review, and employment law concerns.

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4 Peggy Clark and Amy Kays, Microenterprise and the Poor: Findings from the Self-Employment Learning Project Five Year Study of Microentrepreneurs (Aspen Institute, 1999) 4.

5 Clark and Kays viii.


In addition, most of our clients have little experience or background concerning the legal needs of their new businesses. A few clients explained:

“[Receiving AFE’s] legal services was the difference between succeeding and not...my business is further along in the process of success because of the legal services.”

“Without AFE services, I would have had my hands tied and not known which was the best path for my business.”

We know that AFE is contributing to positive results for our client micro-entrepreneurs. 68% of respondents to AFE’s Spring 2003 client study reported business improvements since working with us.

Pathway Out of Poverty

AFE builds the leadership skills of low-income entrepreneurs, many of whom use our help to end their dependence on public assistance, and go on to employ others in their communities. The program effectively promotes self-directed economic development and provides a route out of poverty or, in some instances, a way to avoid it altogether. Thus, AFE is a key player in the matrix of services that empower communities to address economic justice issues.

In addition to providing a job and income for the micro-entrepreneur client, AFE businesses have also contributed to job creation for others (largely in low-income communities). Between the time of AFE application and our survey interviews, 18% of active AFE businesses had hired additional full-time employees, while 23% had hired part-time employees. These hiring increases resulted in a total of 16 new full-time jobs and 182 new part-time jobs.

AFE’s Services

AFE offers the following services to our clients:

- **Consultations:** AFE offers general advice to entrepreneurs on legal issues that arise in the formation or operation of their businesses.

- **Direct Legal Representation:** AFE matches applicants who have been approved for services by AFE’s Screening Committee with business attorneys who provide one-on-one representation on a *pro bono* basis.

- **Legal Workshops:** AFE offers legal workshops to groups of entrepreneurs at community organizations. These workshops cover a wide range of business legal topics and are conducted by both AFE and participating law firms.
Community development organizations, micro-lenders, and government programs that provide business technical assistance refer the majority of AFE’s clients. AFE is able to provide pro bono legal services to so many entrepreneurs because of the relationships it has established with a network of law firms, corporate legal departments, and solo practitioners.

In addition, AFE clients frequently express the need for financial resources and professional services such as accounting and insurance advice. AFE provides a comprehensive approach to economic development, by not only providing high-quality legal assistance and follow-up, but also offering referrals to a network of other service providers. We work to ensure that economic development means stable jobs and opportunity for low-income communities.

Beyond Technical Assistance

But AFE offers much more to clients than the technical assistance they need. Often, clients lack the confidence to press on with their business plans. Guidance and moral support from AFE attorneys can play a crucial role in preparing clients for success. Approximately 75% of client respondents in AFE’s Spring 2003 evaluation survey said they felt more confident in running their businesses because of receiving AFE services. Approximately half of the respondents (53%) who were still in business at the time of the survey reported expanding their businesses since working with AFE – an outcome likely to be related to their increased level of confidence.

Some representative examples of client statements tell the story:

“[AFE] brought [my business] to a professional, real level, and made my company real to clients, so they would have the confidence to do business with me. In turn, I had more confidence.”

“[AFE assistance] made me feel more official, like I really was in business. It made me feel important and that my business was important, and that people cared about it and wanted to help me make it successful.”

AFE’s Strategic Position

The AFE program has developed extensive relationships with other organizations in the Bay Area working with low-income entrepreneurs, and we have become an important and highly respected resource for this community.

AFE is the only project in the San Francisco Bay Area to match practicing attorneys (not law students) with low-income entrepreneurs anywhere in the region who are interested in forming for-profit businesses. Our work fits into the matrix of services to entrepreneurs, as we work with agencies serving similar clientele but who often cannot provide the services we offer. In addition, we share materials such as strategic plans, evaluation reports, and survey instruments.

Collaborating agencies include Organizations A, B, C, D, E and F.

2012-2013 Expected Outcomes

At the end of the 12-month period covered by this grant proposal, we anticipate the following outcomes. These are estimates based on past performance and requests from clients and partner organizations.
• 10-12 business law workshops to groups of low-income entrepreneurs at community organizations (several of which will be in Spanish, Chinese and/or other languages)
• 150 new potential AFE cases screened, with 80-100 placed with volunteer attorneys
• 20 consultations with entrepreneurs not yet ready for full legal representation
• Over 3,000 new AFE brochures distributed to approximately 60 Bay Area partner organizations in seven Bay Area counties
• 20-30 referrals to other providers of services to entrepreneurs (including accountants)
• 5 business law training sessions for staff members at collaborating organizations

Two well-researched capacity-building projects that are contingent on funding include:

1) Upgrade of AFE Marketing Materials: AFE is in its sixth year of operation with a proven track record, and our materials should reflect this maturity. Our current materials are in need of an overhaul, as they were developed during the project’s start-up phases.

2) Creation of Dynamic, Integrated Database: AFE’s current database was designed and built by a volunteer and is now outdated. FOR AFE to prepare for future growth, we need a more sophisticated database that will not only store client and volunteer data, but also be integrated with our online application, client and volunteer surveys, and evaluation system. Also, in an attempt to offer more resources to our volunteer attorneys, we aim to match new volunteers with veteran volunteers who have worked on similar AFE projects (a capacity we do not currently have).

Evaluation

AFE is committed to developing reliable tools to evaluate our performance in the community: tools that will tell us how we are doing and if we are fulfilling our mission. In Spring 2003, AFE completed an extensive pilot evaluation study of our program that 1) collected baseline data to use in analyzing progress toward the AFE goals and mission, and 2) made extensive recommendations for future programmatic improvements.

Examples of results (not mentioned in the text above) include:

• 100% of clients believe AFE should continue offering its services
• 93% rated their satisfaction with AFE services as excellent or good
• 93% rated their lawyers’ help as useful
• 84% reported satisfaction with the result of their legal problem after working with an AFE attorney.

AFE staff and volunteers are currently in the process of implementing several recommendations of the evaluation report, and will use it to aid in long-range planning for the project.
Sustainability

2003-2004 funders for AFE include the X Foundation and the Y Foundation. To ensure the financial sustainability of the AFE program, we will continue to submit grant proposals to foundations and corporations, as well as approach individual donors. Organization Z will also contribute funds as needed to continue the AFE program.

In addition, the in-kind contributions of AFE’s pro bono attorneys are crucial to our success, and we are pleased with their high level of satisfaction with the program. 82% of attorney respondents rated their experience with AFE as excellent or good. 86% would like to continue working with AFE clients, while the remainder (14%) would consider it.

Conclusion

To have a real, significant impact on neighborhoods like East Palo Alto, West Oakland, Richmond, Bayview-Hunters Point, and the Tenderloin, the Assistance for Entrepreneurs program must continue providing the expertise of skilled, professional attorneys to new low-income business owners. Because these communities lack access to so many fundamental levels of education and expertise, AFE is committed to developing its position as a crucial resource that can be shared by disadvantaged communities throughout the Bay Area.