

GUIDE TO SUBMISSION WRITING

Suggestions and tips to assist you in the submission writing process.

PLANNING

Planning and pre-writing preparation are essential for a good submission. Once you have done your homework, gathered your information and have it organised in an easily accessible format you will be able to use this material for various proposals and applications.

Know Your Organisation

Know how your school/P & F operates, why they exist.

Develop an operational statement (one concise page) to include:

- The vision and mission/purpose
- The school's history
- What are its present educational priorities
- Where it is going in the future.

Also include brief descriptions of the school's:

- Structure
- Administrative procedures
- Financial processes
- Services provided
- Beneficiaries.

Background Submission Information

Using the criteria set out in the grant conditions, consider background information you might use to support your application. This may include:

- Articles or speeches related to the issue
- 'Expert' opinions related to the issue
- Surveys
- Case studies.

This information can be put in a proposal development file, and will provide you with facts to support your application when you write it.

Identify Your Needs

The need for funding may be, for an example, to establish a new facility or to extend a service to the community. Substantiate your need for funding. This could include:

- Reports
- Survey results
- Examples of deficiencies in the resources required by the school community.

Other people and organisations may be able to assist in the identification of a need for funding. These may include:

- Local government
- Local businesses
- Parish and Community groups
- Individuals.

Advocates

Advocates are people who support you, and who are willing to express their support in either a written or oral form. Brief letters of support may assist your submission.

- Develop a contact list of possible advocates
- Write letters to relevant contacts
- Share expertise to develop contacts
- Meet with representatives of a variety of funding sources
- Start an advisory committee as a ‘sounding board’ for ideas and to gain community support for the project.

Know The Marketplace

There are two different marketplaces for funding: government (including local, State and Federal) and private sources.

Government

When applying for government funding be aware of the following:

- Meeting the published guidelines
- Using standard application formats
- Raising matched funding (if this is a requirement)
- Keeping to the deadline for the closing date for submissions – one minute late may be too late
- There may be a requirement to submit frequent and specific project reports
- Submitting to a review process (if required).

The contact person can clarify the application process.

Private Marketplace

Private grants are often much smaller than those made by governments. The language used in instructions and on application forms often can be difficult to understand. If you are not sure of the meaning of something, ring the funding body and ask for clarification.

DEVELOPING YOUR SUBMISSION

Needs Statement

Demonstrate why the project is important to the community.

- Document the problem as it is now
- Indicate how the situation could be improved
- Use the information from your Proposal Development File
- The Statement should be motivating to convince the potential source of funds that the project is important
- Include your credentials and state why yours is the most appropriate organisation to receive the funding.

Aims and Objectives

Aims

General statements of what you want to accomplish. Evaluate the aim - does it reflect what you want to promote/change, and to the right degree?

Objectives

The standard format for an objective is: “To (action verb and statement reflecting your measurement indicator) by (performance standard) by (deadline) at a cost of no more than (cost frame).”

“To increase the parenting skills of the school community through a training course over 12 months at a cost of \$7,000.”

Outcomes

An outcome is the result of your objective – its success. In the above example this could be:

- Percentage of parents evaluating the course as worthwhile
- Number of parents successfully implementing the training in the next year
- The need to extend the training in the community in the next year

Identify how you will determine the outcomes of your project:

- Determine measurement indicators
- Determine performance success standards - at what point can you consider the project to have been successful?
- Determine the timeframe - the amount of time you need in order to reach your performance standards
- Determine the cost - the amount needed to implement the objectives through the activities you have selected.

Develop a Project Timeline/Schedule

Timelines are useful planning tools. There are a number of specially designed computer packages to do this, but essentially it is listing all the outcomes you aim to achieve. Each outcome can include:

- Start and finish dates for each activity required to achieve the outcome
- The number of hours needed to complete the activity(ies)
- Key personnel
- Personnel costs
- Consultants and contract services
- Non-personnel resources
- Subtotal cost for the activity(ies)
- Milestones or performance indicators
- Dates on which the funding body will receive milestone reports

Develop a Program Outline

A program outline is another design tool, which help plan a project in detail.

- Describe program activities in detail - how do they fulfil the objectives?
- Describe the sequence, flow and interrelationship of activities.
- Describe the planned staffing – assign responsibility to individuals.
- Describe the targeted population and method of selection.
- Present a reasonable scope of activities that can be accomplished with the funding within the timeframe using the available resources.
- Outline the cost/benefit ratio of your project.
- Give specific time frames.
- Discuss costs/risks and ways to minimise these.
- Describe your unique methods and project design.

Budget

A budget should include costs of:

- people – director/staff/consultants
- capital items/equipment
- office space/equipment

- supplies
- travel
- technology/telephone
- printing
- postage
- insurance

Outcomes

What is it that people will do differently after the grant that they don't do now? How will that difference be measured?

- Include a plan to assess the project.
- Describe who will evaluate the project.
- Say what records will be kept.
- Indicate how success will be measured.

Future Funding

Most funding sources want the project to live past the funding date. State how you might get future funding through fees, other grants, fundraising campaigns, direct mail.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Language and Usage

Your style should be simple and concise.

- Emphasise end results, not tasks or methods
- Emphasise the ultimate benefit of your program's work
- Use the language of a reader.

Writing Style

Your style must reflect what the funding source wants and what the reviewers will be looking for.

- Be concise and clear
- Use short sentences and short paragraphs
- Avoid overdone formatting and mixing too many font sizes or styles
- Use bullets
- Use bold headings
- Use charts and graphs where appropriate.

Your submission should include:

- A covering letter
- A title page
- A summary
- A needs assessment/statement
- Response to all selection criteria
- Articles, attachments and statistics
- Budget.

Covering Letter

The covering letter should be short (half a page), motivating, say something different, and stress need or unique application for funding.

Title Page

The title is very important. It should:

- Be creative but not misleading
- Be designed to catch the reader's attention without misleading him/her.
- Describe the project
- Express the end result of the project not the methods
- Describe the benefits to the community
- Be short and easy to remember.

For example, *"Parenting skills development to improve school performance"*.

Look to newspaper headlines for ideas on how to do this.

Summary

The summary is the most important part of the proposal, because it is the part of the proposal that is most frequently read. If it is not succinct and motivating, you have lost the reader. Written after the proposal is completed but placed before the main body of text. The summary describes:

- The objectives
- The approach
- The evaluation.

It should not be a list, repeating the various steps, but a concise outline of the proposal.

Attachments

Most decisions on grant applications are made by a committee, or a Minister, who want to read only the major details of your concept. However, this committee will probably receive recommendations from a secretariat or public servants who will read the detail of your project

and advise the decision makers. Appendices and back-up information are written for those who advise the decision makers.

The following are possible attachments:

- Studies/research and tables or graphs that support your case
- Information on key personnel
- Minutes of advisory committee meetings
- List of committee members
- Auditor's report/statement
- Letters of recommendation and endorsement
- Pictures, architect drawings
- Copies of your organisation's publications; and
- List of other organisations you are approaching for funding.

Allocation of Grant and Follow-Up

Often you may need to sign some form of contract with the funding body before receiving the grant. Once you have received the funds, acknowledge the grant by letter. If you are not successful in an application, try to find out why by asking for feedback from the funding body.

LET PEOPLE KNOW – CELEBRATE

Spread the good word about the work you've done and the funding you've received. Options include local media stories, radio interview, newsletter, producing training materials, or all of the above.

Keep copies of written material in your development file to support future grant submissions.