

WRITING A SUCCESSFUL GRANT PROPOSAL

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. Use the writing process to clarify your project's vision, methods of action, and expected impact.
2. Attempt to step away from your project while writing your grant proposal.
3. Make sure your project's vision and values match those of your potential donor organization.
4. Understand the guidelines of the grant and what your audience is looking for.
5. Consider whether others have sought funding for similar efforts in the past. Explain how your project is different and innovative.
6. Don't be afraid to admit that some of your goals are lofty. Divide your goals into ones that can be easily achieved and those that may make more time and resources.
7. Create a thorough budget that shows you have thought about your project realistically.
8. Write in a clear and concise manner that does not contain "insider" jargon.
9. Draw feedback from as many resources as possible.
10. Maintain your integrity in every aspect of writing your grant proposal.

Before You Start Writing...**Research all possible grants**

Explore available and applicable grants but be mindful of each grant's regulations. For example, students cannot apply for both a SURF Grants and a Burch Fellowship at UNC. See the [Relevant Grants DevDoc](#).

Research donor organizations

Discover what the organization cares about. What is the mission of the organization? Pay attention to an organization's specific funding focus. For example, the Center for Global Initiatives' Student Learning Circles seeks to fund student-led initiatives with a global focus.

Understand your audience

Understanding the audience who will read your proposal extends to more specific questions:

- How does your project interface with the audience's goals and values? What do the grant requirements tell you about what matters to the donor organization?
- How much time will the reader spend viewing your proposal?

Think about time and feasibility

Can you achieve your project in the timeframe you outline?

- Which objectives are more easily achieved and which are more difficult?
- Think about which objectives you know you can achieve then highlight those in your proposal.

Think about your project's sustainability

What is the scope of your project – is this a pilot project? A one-time event?

- If this is not a one-time event, think about how you will plan to continue your project post-funding. See the [Sustainable Funding DevDoc](#).



- If this is a pilot project, think about when the pilot phase will be over and how you will move beyond this phase. How will you define the beginning of your actual project and the end of your pilot project?
- Consider whether you might seek funding for the project again from this sponsor. You may want to consider developing a relationship with the funder.

Parts of a Grant Proposal:

Abstract a concise description of your project that answers the following questions.

- What is your project? What are your goals? Why are you doing this project? Who will benefit? What is your project's link to social justice?

Methods how you will create your impact.

- What tools will you use to accomplish your goals? Be specific!
- Have these methods been used before or are you creating an original approach?
- Think in terms of action verbs (e.g. Create, Discover, Implement, Advance, etc.)

Budget to demonstrate to your audience that you have a fully imagined, practical, and doable plan.

- Describe all of your anticipated expenses. Research what the costs would actually be.
- Indicate other sources of monetary support that you have already secured.
 - It's okay to say that you are seeking money from other organizations. Each organization could even be funding a different aspect of your project. Utilizing all you resources is a sign of your entrepreneurship and investment in your project.
- Show efforts to economize and cut costs from your anticipated budget.
- Include your observation on your project's feasibility and sustainability in this section.
- Contact someone from the Development Team if you need assistance in creating your budget.

Publicity how you will promote your project to a wider audience.

- The organizations want to see that your project has a far-reaching impact. See the [Publicity and Marketing DevDoc](#) for helpful strategies.
- Indicate an intention to mention donors in your marketing material.

Assessment how you will evaluate your project.

- Think about what exactly you want to report to your organization. How will you evaluate and measure the success of your project?

Title summarizing your project.

- Develop a clear title for your project after you have written your grant proposal.
- Does your title convey both the content and the spirit of your project? Can any reader easily understand it?
- An example of a good title is from CJAA's Y Fund grant application in which their title was: Distinguished Speaker Series: Race, Innocence, and the Decline of the Death Penalty

After You Finish Writing...

Check that your proposal meets the grant's requirements

- Does your proposal answer the grant's specific questions? Is it the required number of words?

Seek feedback from multiple readers

- Other readers' perspectives can tell you about how well organized your proposal is. Does the reader get lost? Does the reader not understand certain terms you have used?
- Contact a consultant from the Development Committee to read over your grant proposal.

Read final draft out loud

- Note any difficult passages in your proposal. You want your writing to be as coherent and fluid as possible.

Utilize UNC's resources

- Take your grant proposal to the Writing Center for further revision.

Special thanks to Kim Abels, Director of the Writing Center, whose lecture, "Grant Proposals: Developing a Good One," provided a bulk of the above information.

Contact DevCo for more help on grant-writing.
campus.development@gmail.com
<https://campusy.unc.edu/resources/funding/>