

# Grant Proposal Writing Checklist

By Neal Litherland

- Find a grant**
  - Research your options** Books are published every year with lists of grants. Go to the reference section at your library, or check a reliable website.
  - Contact the organization** Before you put all the time and work into a proposal, contact the grant giver to confirm the deadline and to find out whether the grant is still available.
  - Check the guidelines** Every grant will have a list of rules that your project has to fall inside if it's going to be eligible.
  - It's all in the details** Before applying for a grant, you need to know your project inside and out. If you can't quote figures and explain it in plain language, you need to do more research.
  - Set a monetary goal** It's important that you do the math and figure out exactly how much money you need to complete your project. If a grant is too big, you'll need to explain what you'll do with the rest of the money; if it's too small, you should explain where you plan on getting the rest of the cash you need.
  - Establish a timeline** Make sure you can offer a prediction as to how soon your project can be completed once you have the grant money.
- Research the project**
  - Determine what you are trying to fund** It doesn't matter if you're looking to finance your college education, get money to write a novel or to expand your business, but you need to have a clear goal in mind.
  - Do market research** Collect data about your project. Get the facts about similar endeavors and their chances for success.
  - Create or update your resume.**
  - Draft a proposal** It needs to include your mission statement, your goals, how many resources you need and the research to show you can get started.
- Write the grant**
  - Draft an outline** Every proposal begins with an introduction, moves to several paragraphs of body and ends with a closing. Assign the order and main topic of the paragraphs before you even think about opening your word processor.
  - Avoid jargon** No matter how technical your project, spell it out in plain, easy-to-understand language. If you absolutely must use technical terms, be sure they're defined.
  - Check grammar and spelling** There is no faster way to shoot yourself in the foot than to ignore your spell check on a grant proposal. Check the basics and make sure there aren't flaws that will get you denied.
  - Follow the rules** Read and re-read the guidelines. No matter how well-written or brilliant your proposal is, if it breaks the rules, you won't be eligible for the grant.
  - Consider including diagrams** Add pictures and schematics if they bring your point home.

- Edit the grant** Proofread your proposal at least twice, making sure you bring a fresh set of eyes to the document each time. Once you're sure it works, give the proposal to someone else to read it over and give you an outside perspective.
- Save it properly** Save your grant proposal as either a Microsoft Word document, or as a document in Rich Text Format. Other types of files may be hard to read, and if your proposal can't be read it will be rejected.