5 Common Grant Writing Mistakes

Time, effort and skill are essential to writing grant applications and proposals. If you follow the RFP instructions and present a strong proposal, you might be on your way to funding. But watch out for these common grant writing mistakes that can trip you up and prevent you from winning grants.

**Not doing your research**
This means taking the time to read the instructions and complete the application as directed. It also means researching the funder and understanding their mission and goals. It’s a waste of time to apply to funders who don’t share your vision and objectives. Put in the time up front to thoroughly research the funder and make sure that your agency and program is the perfect fit with them.

**Not introducing yourself**
Don’t assume that the funder knows all about your organization and the work you do in the community. Write clearly about the aims and objectives of your organization, the needs of the community you serve, and how your program will further the funder’s own mission.

**Not crunching the numbers**
Numbers and data are an essential part of a strong grant proposal. While stories about your community’s need and your agency’s work add interest and important details, these anecdotes need to have hard data to back them up. Be sure to include data that demonstrates the need in your community. If your program has been in operation for a period of time, include data that shows the impact your initiative has already had. You’ll also want to provide numbers around the expected outcomes of your program if it receives the requested funding.

**Not focusing on the community**
A common mistake in writing grants is to focus on a problem or need in your organization rather than in the community you serve. Make sure your proposal details how your agency will deliver a new program, service or initiative that will change the status quo and improve the community in some way. Communicate that the successful delivery of your program will have demonstrable impact on people.

**Not connecting your budget to the need**
Every dollar you request should be tied directly to how it will further your proposed outcomes. Make sure that all the elements of your program are reflected in the budget. Conversely, make sure that there is nothing in the budget that isn’t also outlined in the description of your program. Funders want their money to be used wisely and for the greatest impact. Be transparent and accurate in showing how their money will be spent.

The best way to avoid mistakes in your grant proposals is to invest the time and energy to research, prepare, write, review, edit, and review again. If you can’t find the time to write a grant proposal, or would like a little outside guidance and expertise, the team at Resource Associates can help. Our team has written thousands of winning grant applications and knows exactly how to avoid all the common, and uncommon, mistakes that get made.

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**Resource Associates**
Winning grants to fund the greater good since 1995

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