

CHECKLIST

Grant Writing Process

Step #1 – Develop Your Idea

- Dream BIG
- Tap into your passion
- Complete worksheet on how to make your idea more attractive to funders
- Find solutions to ensure your idea does not turn off funders
- Activate your dream BIG cells using a variety of activities
- Assess the needs of your agency, population to be served and community
- Write a fundable plan (use Kiritz's template if needed)

Step #2 – Research Potential Funders

- Complete a key word worksheet
- Identify which of four primary funders would be the best match for your idea
 - Government s
 - Foundations
 - Corporations
 - Individuals
- Select aspects of the linear and non-linear approaches that might work best
- Make a pre-proposal contact with a potential funder
- Get application forms and guidelines
- Decide – Is there strong idea match between your idea and the funders?
- Collect information about funders and how they evaluate proposals

Step #3 – Customize Your Proposal

- Create a time line for completing your proposal
- Apply a winning attitude
- Assemble support data
- Use winning writing tips
- Improve the appearance of your proposal
- Write a first draft
- Conduct a mock review of first draft
- Edit first draft
- Submit proposal ideally 10 days before deadline

Step #4 – Respond to the Decision

- Thank funder, regardless of result
- Ask for feedback to improve future proposals
- Re-apply, if your idea matches the funder's, using feedback
- Use a 3-submission approach, if necessary
- Congratulate yourself on a job well done

Worksheet – How to Make Your Ideas More Attractive

Just as certain ideas attract funders, each idea can be dressed up to be more attractive. Consider the kinds of project ideas that attract funders—original, problem solving, timely, compelling, impactful, sustainable, and duplicatable. Then, find ways to enhance your idea by answering the questions below.

Idea _____ Date _____

Originality

1. Has your idea been tried elsewhere? Yes No
2. If yes, what about your idea stands out? How can you build on the results of what has been tried elsewhere?
3. If no, what about your idea is unique?

Problem-Solving

1. What BIG problems does your idea attempt to address?
2. What fresh solutions to the problems does your idea propose?

Timeliness

1. What is timely about your idea? What is particularly timely in the social, political, educational, science, arts, humanities or other areas?
2. What is NOT particularly timely about your idea?

Compelling

1. What are some of the broader social concerns that your idea addresses?
2. What special population groups—like Native Americans, at-risk youth, economically disadvantaged—might you be able to address with your idea?

Impactful

1. How many people will you be able to serve?
2. If the number you will serve is small, how do you justify asking for the funding?
3. How might you be able to reach even more people or have a greater impact?

Sustainable

1. What kind of assurance can you give that the idea or project you're thinking about will endure over time?
2. What strategies can you implement that will increase the chances that what you start will be sustained and maintained over time?

Duplicatable

1. How could your successes be duplicated elsewhere?
2. How could you easily disseminate key aspects of your project to others to duplicate or replicate what worked for you?

Checklist: Proposal Evaluation
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	Yes	No	Score
1 - Summary – Summarizes request clearly and concisely			
1. Includes agency credibility			
2. Includes problem			
3. Includes measurable outcome			
4. Includes solution or method			
5. Includes cost			
2 - Agency Introduction – Describes applicant’s qualifications & credibility	Yes	No	
1. Describes applying agency’s mission and goals			10 points
2. Describes applying agency’s clients, programs and activities			
3. Provides applying agency’s accomplishments and qualifications			
3 - Problem or Needs Statement – Shows need or problem to be solved	Yes	No	
1. Includes statistical support – national & local			25 points
2. Is original			
3. Is timely			
4. Is compelling			
5. Makes “no” unsupported assumptions			
4 - Measurable Outcomes – Establishes benefits in measurable terms	Yes	No	
1. Describes the client/population that will benefit			15 points
2. Is written in measurable terms			
3. Includes by when and how outcome will be measured			
5 - Solution or Method – Describes activities that will constitute a solution	Yes	No	
1. Includes list of activities that constitute the solution			10 points
2. Includes reasons for selecting these activities			
3. Includes activity time line			
4. Provides list of staff and brief staff job descriptions			
6 - Evaluation – Provides plan to measure outcomes & method followed	Yes	No	
1. <i>Process</i> evaluation – Shows how activities/timeline will be evaluated			10 points
2. <i>Product</i> evaluation – Shows how outcomes will be measured/reported			
7 - Future funding – Describes sustainability plan beyond grant period	Yes	No	
1. Includes a Sustainability Plan			10 points
2. Includes letters of support or commitments			
8 - Budget – Provides detailed breakdown of costs requested & donated	Yes	No	
1. Includes a budget narrative – describes each expense			20 points
2. Is detailed			
3. Includes requested, donated and total columns			
4. Is free of potential red flag expenses			
5. Includes indirect costs, if applicable			

 Signature _____ Date Total Points _____
100 points

11 Grant Writing Tips From The Experts

A clear, concise style of writing can go a long way in making your proposal stand out. Here are 11 world-class writing tips from the experts that are reprinted with permission from *The Fastest Way To Get Grants* (2011):

1. **Shorter words** are better than long, complex ones.
2. Separate paragraphs with a **space**. Putting in paragraphs breaks up the body copy and helps the eyes flow down the page.
3. Use simple sentences of **no more than 2 commas**.
4. Use short paragraphs of no more than **5 to 7 lines per paragraph**.
5. Use your computer's **spell checker, grammar checker, and thesaurus**.
6. **Define all acronyms the first time** you show them. For example, for College of Southern Nevada (CSN), put (CSN) in parenthesis.
7. Avoid first-person writing. Use **'they' or 'them'** instead of "she/he" or 'his' or 'her'.
8. Support all your assumptions with **statistics or statements from authorities**.
9. Watch out for tentative and iffy statements, like 'may' and 'might'. Be as positive and confident as you can be. Use **'can' and 'will'** instead.
10. Use **transitional phrases**. These are words that signal connection and coherence between paragraphs. These signal to the reader how one idea is connected to another. Here are 12 examples: to illustrate, to contrast, to add, to relate in time, to related in space, to create a similarity, to show emphasis, to provide details, to include an example, to show a consequence or result, to make a suggestion, and to summarize.

Checklist - Transitional Phrases

- To *illustrate*, use ... thus, for example, for instance, namely, to illustrate, in other words, in particular, specifically, such as
- To *contrast*, use ... on the contrary, contrarily, notwithstanding, but, however, nevertheless, in spite of, in contrast, yet, on one hand, on the other hand, rather, or, nor, conversely, at the same time, while this may be true
- To *add*, use ... and, in addition to, furthermore, moreover, besides, than, too, also, both-and, another, equally important, first, second, etc., again, further, last, finally, not only-but also, as well as, in the second place, next, likewise, similarly, in fact, as a result, consequently, in the same way, for example, for instance, however, thus, therefore, otherwise
- To relate in *time*, use ... after, afterward, before, then, once, next, last, at last, at length, first, second, etc., at first, formerly, rarely, usually, another, finally, soon, meanwhile, at the same time, for a minute, hour, day, etc., during the morning, day, week, etc., most important, later, ordinarily, to begin with, afterwards, generally, in order to, subsequently, previously, in the meantime, immediately, eventually, concurrently, simultaneously
- To relate in *space*, use ... at the left, at the right, in the center, on the side, along the edge, on top, below, beneath, under, around, above, over, straight ahead, at the top, at the bottom, surrounding, opposite, at the rear, at the front, in front of, beside, behind, next to, nearby, in the distance, beyond, in the forefront, in the foreground, within sight, out of sight, across, under, nearer, adjacent, in the background
- To create a *similarity*, use ... similarly, likewise, in like fashion, in like manner, analogous to
- To show *emphasis*, use ... above all, indeed, truly, of course, certainly, surely, in fact, really, in truth, again, besides, also, furthermore, in addition

Checklist - More Transitional Phrases

- To provide *details*, use ... specifically, especially, in particular, to explain, to list, to enumerate, in detail, namely, including
- To include an *example*, use ... for example, for instance, to illustrate, thus, in other words, as an illustration, in particular
- To show a *consequence* or *result*, use ... so that, with the result that, thus, consequently, hence, accordingly, for this reason, therefore, so, because, since, due to, as a result, in other words, then
- To make a *suggestion*, use ... for this purpose, to this end, with this in mind, with this purpose in mind, therefore
- To *summarize*, use ... therefore, finally, consequently, thus, in short, in conclusion, in brief, as a result, accordingly

11. Instead of writing long paragraphs of narrative, **use “bulleted or numbered lists.”** Cluster your lists into groups of **3-7 items**. The best uses of lists are to indicate:

- A sequence
- **Steps in a process**
- Parts or materials needed
- **Important items to remember**
- Specific criteria
- **Key recommendations**
- Conclusions

9 Ways to Dress Up Your Proposal

The layout of your proposal - how it appears on the page - contributes a lot to its **readability**. When yours is among many proposals that a reviewer must read, a good-looking, clear, yet simple layout and presentation will **make a good impression** and **help the reviewer access the information quickly**.

Grant writing is a **competitive process**. Sponsors receive many ideas. You could have a very good idea, but so will others. When many good proposals are submitted, often **it's the secondary factors that influence the final decision**. One such factor is your **proposal's appearance**.

Here are 9 suggestions from the experts reprinted with permission from *The Fastest Way To Get Grants* (2011) on how to improve the appearance of your proposal:

1. **Use headings and subheadings used by the funder** in the guidelines and evaluation form. Use headings and subheadings **even in letter proposals**. Headlines spaced within the body copy can make the document more readable.
2. **Use specific numbers in titles and headings**. For example, “9 Ways to Dress Up Your Proposal” is more specific than “Ways to Dress Up Your Proposal.” For some reason, **readers are intrigued by numbers in titles**.
3. **Use the font style used by funders** in their publications whenever possible. If you cannot find a funder font, consider using what's called a **serif** font – I'll explain that in a moment - for the **text** because it is easier for the eyes to follow for long narratives. Use the type called **sans serif** for **titles and headings**. Let me explain ...
 - a. For **text** ... **Serif** fonts are those with little strokes on the end, like:

Times Roman
Courier
Garamond

- b. For **titles and headings** ... **San serif** fonts are the ones without the small finishing strokes at the end, like:

Arial
Tahoma
Verdana

4. **Leave ample white space.** Using white space can break up long text. Some top experts suggest that you dedicate about 50 percent of each page to white space. One way to add space is to double-space between minor sections and triple-space between major sections. Also, keep your paragraphs short - to 5-7 lines.
5. **Justify** the left margin. But, leave the right margin '**unjustified**'.
6. Use **blue ink** when signing all original forms, unless otherwise directed. In this way, the **originals will stand out** from the photocopies.
7. **Put short illustrations, charts and other tables** into your narrative so the reader doesn't have to go back-and-forth between the narrative and appendix to find them.
8. **Include an activity timeline.** Most grant proposals are written primarily in narrative form. An occasional table and chart can break up long text and provide a visual method for delivering information. Grant activities, designed to reach your program goals and objectives, can be presented in a table format with the activities in the left-most column. Months or dates for completion can be included as additional columns to the right. Then, for each activity a check mark can be made in the column of the months in which the activity will be completed. See your sample activity timeline table (*below*).

ACTIVITY TIMELINE

ACTIVITY	11/	12/	1/	2/	3/	4/	5/	6/	7/	8/	9/	10/	11/	12/
	98	98	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
Secure a web address and link current web-page	X													
Secure electronic mailing list and regular mailing list for individuals and agencies	X	X												
Design and print flyers	X	X												
E-mail electronic flyer			X											
Mail three-fold flyer			X											
Purchase equipment for interviews/audio clips	X													
Conduct, record, and edit interviews/audio clips		X	X	X	X	X	X							
Hire web consultant to put audio clips and transcribed versions on the website							X	X						
Evaluate outcomes and processes														X

9. **Include a budget narrative.** Most budgets are written in spreadsheet format. However, many items in a budget are often left out of the proposal's main narrative. The problem and the methods of addressing it are usually explained clearly in the narrative, but a detailed explanation of **which funds will be used for what** is usually lacking. Therefore, I find it helpful to include a brief explanation of 1-2 sentences for each budgeted expense and then relate it to the overall grant.

Worksheet - Mock Review

Name of potential funder _____

Name of grant writer _____

Describe potential funder _____

Funder preferences and requirements (bring copies of application/guidelines)

Profile your reviewer(s) in as much detail as possible

Describe rating criteria (Bring copies of funder form or design and bring your own. If funder has rating form, use it. If not, create your own.)

Describe how proposals will be selected for approval and who will make final decision

Describe review process:

How much time does each reviewer have with each proposal? _____

Describe the location where the review will take place _____

Other _____