



# Guide to a Winning Grant Proposal Format

**1) Executive Summary (.5-1 page):** Introduce and outline the problem, the solution, the organization's role in meeting the solution, and what the organization intends to accomplish.

**2) Introduction to Project and Proposal (1-2 pages):** Succinctly state why this problem and this project are important. Approach this introduction as if it is your proposal's movie trailer and focus on "the hook" that will get the reader to think, "this might be worth funding." Provide enough of the storyline, or plot, to make the reader want to settle into her/his seat and read on. This is a good time to introduce the organization, its history, philosophies and strategies, and why the organization is designing and pursuing this program or project.

**3) Problem Statement (.5-1 page):** Further introduce the problem. Provide context on how the problem developed to where it now needs to be addressed. Explain how your organization knows the situation well, and understands the associated attitudes, behaviors, policies and/or management practices that need to be improved, enhanced or otherwise changed. This last part will allow you to connect your problem statement to the solution and your organization's role in securing that solution (see #4 and #5 below).

**4) Solution to Problem (.5-1 page):** Detail what changes need to occur, focusing on outcomes versus outputs (changes secured versus actions taken to make those changes). Explain these needed changes at as many of the following levels as possible: individual or family, community, government agencies (local, district and federal), nonprofits and community groups, between nonprofits/community groups and government agencies, and applicable management practices and policies.

**5) Organization's Role in Meeting the Solution (.5-1 page):** What role will your organization play both in terms of its actual program work, and as a leader, mentor or coordinator supporting the work of others. Discuss how your organization will fulfill its role(s): by leading out front or from behind the scenes; as an active participant in the work or as a facilitator, organizer, mentor or funder.

**6) Program Details (2-6 pages):** Get specific about the project work plan, expected outputs (activities) and outcomes (changes), delivery timelines and benchmarks. You can later use all of this to assess your progress and accomplishments, and lessons learned. Outputs and outcomes should be identified for at least the overall work plan, and at best for each component of the work plan. Also, it is good to provide start and finish timelines for each component, so the reader knows how all the work plan components fit together strategically and sequentially.

**7) Measure and Evaluate Work (1 page):** Explain how your organization will measure and evaluate the overall impact and success of its proposed work, using the criteria outlined in the *Solutions* and *Organization's Role* sections above. Also, introduce how you will measure and evaluate the specific outputs and outcomes outlined in the *Program Details* above. Finally, explain how you will assess the impact you had on any partners with whom you will work. This can include assessing how you supported these partners, whether they will want to continue working with your organization, and how your collective efforts may be a model or template for similar efforts. *[NOTE: the discussion about partners speaks to how your organization and work plan will further leverage the impact of the donor's investment.]*

**8) Organization's Capacities to Accomplish (1-2 pages):** Explain how your organization is capable of completing this work plan and accomplishing the stated objective(s). Tout the organization's capacities as an institution, as implementer of the proposal, and in having the necessary expertise and experience to take on this project. You should mention the expertise and experience of all involved staff, as well as any Board members, contractors, consultants and outside advocates who will support the project. Finally, discuss your organization's relationships, connections, track record and influence in [1] the region where it works, [2] the communities where it works, [3] the partners and partnerships with whom it works, and [4] the policies, politics and/or management practices it influences.