

Writing Grant Proposals That Win



FOURTH EDITION

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Introduction

I tend to view proposal writing as both an art and a science. I believe that everyone can learn the “science” of proposal writing. At times, it’s the “art” part that seems a bit difficult. However, over the years, I have also learned that the more you write grants, the better you can become at getting them funded if you follow the rules set by the funder and if you can write about a project in a manner that makes sense to the reviewers.

This book is designed to provide you with the fundamental basics of proposal writing: how to understand a request for proposal (RFP), how reviewers function, and what reviewers look for in proposal sections, as well as tips to help you create winning sections, how technology is now an integral part of the grantsmanship process, and resources for you to use to find out about the vast number of funding opportunities that exist.

This edition goes through the most common proposal sections step-by-step, starting with the executive summary, followed by needs statement, goals and objectives, activities, personnel, and budget. Then, additional sections that are sometimes required are discussed. It is important to keep in mind that a standard grant form still does not exist. You will have to carefully read each and every RFP for public funders, and all giving guidelines for private funders, to make sure that your proposal responds appropriately. The sample grants in the last chapter illustrate the differences in several grant programs while providing you with genuine proposals that resulted in grant awards.

This edition has been updated to reflect the changes in the grant process since 2005. The grant process has become more sophisticated and now relies almost entirely on technology. Both private and public funders are using online applications and eliminating paper proposals. The Internet is a tool that today’s grant seeker cannot do without. Even the economic downturn in the 2000s has had an impact on grantsmanship. All of these topics are covered in this new edition.

In the appendices you will find a number of helpful grant-seeking resources—websites and information about books, guides, directories, newsletters, and online databases. Also, I’ve included an updated list of Single Points of Contact, current federal forms, and some sample budgets and budget narratives for you to use as templates if the funder you are applying to does not provide a sample format to use.

My hope is that this book will provide you with the tools that you need to make the “science” part of the grants process easier. Combine this with your own “art,” or creativity, and you will craft proposals that win!

Deborah Ward, MA, CFRE



About the Author

Deborah Ward, MA, CFRE is a nationally recognized and highly accredited grant writer for education and nonprofit clients and has her own business, Ward and Associates, based in Winona, Minnesota. She provides grant development services, which include project development; prospect research (federal, state, corporate, and foundation funding sources); RFP analysis; writing and editing of proposals; proposal submission; and evaluation of grants programs. Her clients have included school districts, education service agencies, foundations, higher education institutions, education vendors, local governments, and nonprofit organizations including a museum, an EMS organization, a hospital, arts organizations, and a leadership program. In addition, she is a grantwriter for Gundersen Lutheran Medical Foundation in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Ms. Ward provides grant seeking and proposal writing workshops across the United States and has presented at local, state, national, and international conferences. She has presented two workshops for government employees in Guam, taught a “Grantwriting for Teachers” course at Trinity College in Washington, DC, and teaches grantsmanship to students in an arts administration course at Winona State University.

Ms. Ward is a contributing monthly columnist for *eSchool News* and a former columnist for *Education Grants Alert*. Her articles have appeared in *Pro Principal*, *Board and Administrator*, *School Planning and Management*, *Technology and Learning*, *T.H.E. Funding Source*, and *Principal*. She has been interviewed for several publications including *Education Week* and *Advancing Philanthropy*. In 2005, her book, *Writing Grant Proposals that Win*, 3rd edition, was published by Jones and Bartlett Publishers. Her second book, *Effective Grants Management*, was published by Jones and Bartlett Publishers in September 2009.

Ward has over 25 years of experience in the development field in the areas of grantsmanship, individual donor and corporate solicitations, direct mail appeals, special events, and annual funds. In 1999, she received her Master of Arts degree in Philanthropy and Development from Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota. She has the Certified Fund Raising Executive designation from the Association of Fund Raising Professionals and participated in their Executive Leadership Institute.