

Grant Writing—the Basics

By the Bay and Saginaw Community Writing Centers

(<http://svsu.edu/ccw/communitywritingcenters>)

Tips for Planning to Write the Grant:

1. *Read the grant guidelines* – and read again. How does your project fit the goals of the grantee?
2. *Review the grant application*, noting any special requirements (501C3 status, letters of support, auxiliary signatures, etc.) and all deadlines.
3. If there is a phone number to call to discuss the grant, *call the grant agency*. Grant coordinators want to provide help and support. But create a script before you make the call, so you sound informed.
4. *Create a timeline for drafting grant*, and plan to have grant submitted at least five days before the deadline.
5. *Plan to get the grant reviewed by at least two people*, and double-check budget and timeline, along with grammar/spelling/punctuation.

Tips for Writing the Sections of the Grant:

1. *Summary*: This is the “elevator pitch” of your grant, brief and concise. Consider writing this last, allowing the entire project narrative to inform this section.
2. *Needs Statement*: This demonstrates the need for your project. Do some research and use hard data, as current as possible, addressing how this need ties into the grantee’s goals. Consider: before you can get money to fix a problem, you need to demonstrate there is a problem.
3. *Results or Outcomes*: This shows what the results will be when the project is finished, both quantitative (i.e., number of people participating), and qualitative (improved quality of life tied to the grantee’s overall mission). Be thoughtful and realistic here.
4. *Qualifications/Collaborations*: This explains why you or your organization are qualified to do this project, based on your mission, experience, and past work. It may also discuss the qualifications of other individuals or organizations you’ll be working with on this project.
5. *Assessment*: This explains how you will measure the effectiveness of the grant (i.e., participant surveys). Note that this is different than results—this section shows how you will prove that your anticipated results did, indeed, happen.

6. *Timeline:* This demonstrates how the various steps of the project, the “to-do list,” will occur, month by month, from start to finish. Again, be thoughtful and realistic here. Think about putting this information in a chart or table, for readability.
7. *Budget:* This lays out how all the money will be spent. Consider: some of your readers will be reading this section more closely than any other section. Check and double-check your numbers, and if you say that any money will be “matched” or “donated,” make sure that is true.
8. *Other tips:*
 - Use clear language and shorter sentences.
 - Consider your audience, who is not as familiar with the project or the ideas as you are, and explain terms and concepts which may be unfamiliar to your reader.
 - Use bullet points and numbered lists for readability.
 - Do not (really, do not) exceed the word count.
 - Use future tense, as if the money has already been granted (i.e., This project “will” vs. This project “plans to”)