

Grant Proposals



Grants help fund research and projects. Writing a grant proposal is typically part of the grant application process. Grant proposals vary, but common proposal elements include an executive summary, introduction, literature review, methods, and project outline. This handout provides general guidelines for creating a grant proposal; however, grant proposal and application requirements vary, so always tailor your work to your specific audience and application.

Executive Summary

Your executive summary (sometimes referred to as the project abstract) should be a concise overview of the full grant proposal. You may even reuse original language from your proposal as you write this section. It may be useful to write this section last, so you can look back and summarize other sections of your proposal. Remember, this brief section will provide a first impression of your project, so make sure it is clear, succinct, complete, and polished.

Introduction

The introduction gives the basic context for your proposed work. It defines the problem and purpose of your project and includes any guiding research questions. It will also introduce the other elements or sections of your proposal.

Literature Review

The literature review provides an overview and synthesis of research related to your proposed study or project. It identifies how your work will fit in or extend previous research. It may also include theoretical frameworks and landmark or guiding studies that will inform your research.

Methods

The methods section previews how you will conduct your research. It will typically include information about location, participants, sample size, research instruments, data collection, and data analysis. It may also include information about the research personnel such as the credentials and positioning of researchers.

Project Outline

This section provides an overview of the timeline and budget for your proposed research or project. Establish clear tasks and deadlines for your work as part of the timeline. The budget section outlines the expected costs of your proposed project. Remember to keep your proposed budget realistic and within the funder's proposed allotment.

Writing Tips

- Research and write to your audience. How will your proposed work support or connect to the values or goals of the funding agency? Anticipate potential questions about your work, and provide answers.
- Highlight the relevance and potential impact of your proposal, but be realistic about the possible limitations of your work. All your aims should be obtainable and within your skill level.
- Rather than relying solely on technical jargon, Use clear, concise language.
- Use headings, tables, short paragraphs, a standard font, line spacing, and other design elements to make the proposal easier to read.
- Present your research confidently and convincingly, but avoid an attitude of entitlement or desperation.
- Follow application guidelines precisely. Even if the content of your proposal is strong, you risk having your proposal rejected if you fail to follow the funding agency's specific application requirements.
- Seek feedback. Discuss and review your proposal with peers, friends, and mentors familiar with your field.