



Steps for Writing a Successful Grant Proposal

PE4life believes that it is not possible to write a successful grant proposal overnight. It takes planning, research, and careful writing to produce such an effective proposal. The key is in the **pre-work**. Even though these steps may be time consuming, the end result makes it worthwhile.

Three phases to writing a successful proposal:

- Preparing
- Writing
- Following-up

The Preparation Phase:

This phase of the grant writing process involves **10 easy steps**:

1. Answering the Who, What, When, Where, How

Before you can write a grant proposal, you must decide:

- Who will benefit from the grant (Mission)
 - What is it that you are asking (Goals)
 - When will you plan to use the funds requested (Timeline)
 - Where will you plan to use the funds (Be Specific)
 - How do you plan to use the funds (Vision)
2. Answer these questions and **make a list** with a brief description of each goal.
 3. Choose an objective person to read each goal to double check language – it is important that your language be clear and concise, and easy for a non-physical education-minded person to understand.
 4. From this descriptive list, **write a grant mission statement** that describes your PE program goals and your purposes for pursuing the grant.

Grant mission statement example:

The mission of St. Mary's Elementary is to provide each student with a quality physical education experience three days per week. This experience will not only teach specific skills, but will educate each child as to the true meaning of being completely healthy:

physically, mentally and socially. To accomplish this mission, St. Mary's vision is to (train 24 educators in PE4life principals, assess and fulfill equipment needs, and develop a fitness center for students; add fitness gram data collection software, add nutritional education curriculum...) fill in your vision and how to accomplish this vision...All of us at St. Mary's believe that this commitment will positively enhance the health and wellness of each student for a lifetime.

5. Once you have formulated a **Grant Mission Statement**, assess what you need to accomplish your goals. This is the place where you will list and explain the need for:
 - PE4life program training
 - Basic start up equipment needs
 - Follow up support
 - Data Collection software
 - Additional personnel

IMPORTANT NOTE: Be realistic about what you actually need. Downsizing your needs may keep you from achieving your goals; over-asking may prevent funding.

6. Decide on the amount of funding needed – Research all costs – **BE SPECIFIC**
7. Gain support from stakeholders – visit and present your proposal to those who you think can help you attain your goals once funding is received.
8. Search for funding sources - look for support within your district and community (Make sure these prospective funding sources align with your mission and can help you reach your goals-don't chase rabbits!)
 - Be specific in your search
 - Non-profit organizations
 - Corporations with a health and wellness focus
 - Government grants
 - Foundations within your community
 - Internet research
 - Medical Community
9. Contact each one on your list and ask for proposal guidelines. If possible, make arrangements to meet with someone either by phone or in person to discuss the grant process and confirm that your initiatives align.
10. Print out proposal guidelines – read them over carefully for submission requirements, submission dates and decision dates. Organization is the key. **Make a calendar** outlining grant deadlines.

The Writing Phase:

Writing the perfect proposal is as **easy** as making a ***P & B sandwich***.

It contains four things:

- Introduction (Top piece of bread)
- The main body of the proposal (Peanut butter)
- Research/support material & budget (Thin layer of jelly)
- Conclusion with authorized signature (Bottom piece of bread)

Before writing any proposal, it is important to read the guidelines of what should be included in the proposal. Look for any formatting requirements; it helps to make an outline before writing. Rely heavily on your list of goals and outcomes when making your outline.

Introduction:

An introduction paragraph is a brief description of who you are and your purpose for writing the grant.

Start with a topic sentence:

- a. It should be clear and direct
- b. Don't write in first person, speak from an organizational standpoint or group viewpoint

The Main Body:

The body is where you will state your mission, outline your goals and targeted outcomes. You will list the method(s) that you plan to use to reach these outcomes, which will include certain materials, equipment, resources and/or personnel.

When developing the body of the proposal, always keep in mind your target audience. Ask yourself, "How does this project and your goals directly relate to the mission and goals of the funding organization?" This can be the key to the success of the grant proposal, and cannot be overstated.

Writing is actually talking on paper. It is important not to ramble when writing a proposal. Be careful not to write conversationally.

Here are questions to prevent rambling:

1. Can this be stated more simply?
2. Can this be stated more aptly?
3. Does this have to be stated at all?

NOTE: Keep sentences short; 12-15 words. A good paragraph is about 8 lines. Use simple words and know your audience. Save technical words for the reader who understands those words.

Research/Support Material/Budget:

Research

Do your homework before writing a grant proposal. Find out everything you can about the funding organization; their health initiatives; gift history. Make sure your goals and theirs align before taking the time to write and submit a proposal. There are some great resources available at your fingertips on the internet for researching grant opportunities. Also use "Google Alert" to send yourself 'alerts' of opportunities that arise.

Supported Materials

An appendix of support materials will add weight and credibility to your proposal. This is the place to show any backing letters, resumes of key personnel, and exhibits related to proposed purchases of materials.

Before fashioning the appendix, however, heed these cautions:

1. Read your proposal guidelines before including any appendix materials. The funding organization may have limits on what you include or it may have requirements on "must-have" materials.
2. Be careful of the length of your appendix. Make sure the materials are pertinent. If the people reading the proposal have to sift through *too much* support, they may miss the most important pieces.

Budget

Funders know that submitted budgets are merely cost projections, but they certainly look to see if those projections are realistic. Do your homework. Make sure the numbers you submit reflect real data and are not based on guesses. Include as much detail as you can to back up your figures. For example, if you want to purchase a certain piece of

equipment, contact the manufacturer and get the specs, performance details along with any discounts that apply.

NOTE: Make sure you are not overstating your needs. Funding organizations will be judging your figures against what they know to be realistic and manageable.

Last, check and double-check your figures. Don't submit a proposal with math errors.

Conclusion/Signatures

Your conclusion should restate your reason for applying. Be brief, but concise. Funding agencies usually require at least one authorized signature on a proposal. This signature might be that of a school board member or an administrator. Find out who needs to sign the proposal well in advance of the deadline. Arrange in advance to have the proposal signed in time to submit it.

Following Up Phase:

Once the proposal is complete and sent off to the funder, it is important to mark your calendar to follow up with an email or phone call to check the status. Be sure to ask for any feedback that may be available. This will help you when tackling future grant proposals.

GOOD LUCK!

The PE4life staff