

A Guide For Writing Funding



Grants/Proposals

Introduction

The Consumer Initiative Centre (CIC) has been designed to enhance the leadership, capacity, advocacy, and entrepreneurial skills of consumer/survivors. The CIC began as a joint initiative of the Self-Help Connection (SHC) and the National Network for Mental Health and is currently sponsored by the Self-Help Connection.

The Self-Help Connection is a provincial non-profit organization that has promoted self-help/mutual aid development throughout Nova Scotia since 1987. Our purpose is: *to enable Nova Scotians to improve control over their health by increasing their knowledge, skills and resources for individual and collective action.*

CIC is funded by the Nova Scotia Departments of Health and Community Services.

The Self-Help Connection

63 King St.
Dartmouth, NS B2Y 2R7
Tel (902) 466-2011
Fax (902) 466-3300

Consumer Initiative Centre

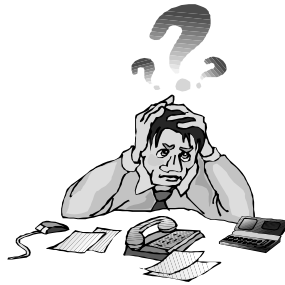
63 King St.
Dartmouth, NS B2Y 2R7
Tel (902) 466-6001
Fax (902) 466-3300

This guide has been prepared by Francine Vezina, Health Educator for the CIC program.

April, 2003

Table of Contents

A Guide For Writing Funding Grants/Proposals



Before you Begin	1
Cover Letter	2
Project Overview/Executive Summary	3
Qualifications of the Organization	4
Background Information/Statement of Need	6
Project Description	8
Budget	13
Conclusion	15
Appendices	16
References	17
Sample Time Line	18

Before You Begin

The general purpose of any funding proposal is to convince a prospective funding agency that a problem or need exists and that your group or organization has the means and ability to solve the problem or meet the need.

Some background work should be done before you begin the grant/proposal writing process. Make sure you gather information and documentation that supports:

- Your ability to complete the proposed project.
- The connection between the goals/mission of your organization/group and the theme of the proposed project.
- The existence of the problem or need that you are planning to address.



Cover Letter

A cover letter should always accompany your proposal and is used to introduce yourself/organization to the funding agency (do not exceed 2 pages). Your cover letter should be professional, clear, and free from typos or grammatical errors. Here is a checklist to help you complete your cover letter:

- Address the letter to the person responsible for the funding program (do not use general salutations such as 'dear sir' or 'to whom it may concern').
- Provide a brief overview of your group/organization, i.e., purpose and goals of your group/organization.
- Include the title of your project. Keep the title clear, it should reflect the focus of your project, and should not be longer than one sentence.
- Provide the reason you are requesting funding. Give just a brief overview of the proposed project.
- Include the amount you are requesting.
- Include the name, address, and contact information for your organization and the key people who will be involved in the project. The letter should be signed by someone who can speak on behalf of the organization and act as the key contact person.

Project Overview/Executive Summary

Your project overview or executive summary should be limited to about $\frac{1}{2}$ page. Keep it clear and specific, do not go into detail about your proposal. The overview should give the funder a "picture" of your proposal, the rest of the proposal will then expand on and clarify the details of your proposed project. The following is a set of criteria to help guide in writing your project overview:

- Should identify your organization/group.
- Should show your familiarity with the funding agency. Point out how the goals of your program match the interest of the funding agency.
- Should include a sentence or two on the ability of your group/organization to complete the proposed project.
- Should include a sentence or two on the problem you are proposing to address.
- Include a sentence or two on how you plan to address or solve the stated problem.
- Include an explanation of the amount of money required to complete the project, any other money you have received for the project, and how much money you are requesting.

Qualifications of the Organization

Use this section to establish your organization/group's ability to complete the proposed project. Describe other programs and accomplishments of your organization and how the proposed program will expand on or add to those accomplishments. You must demonstrate that yours is the appropriate organization to conduct the project, that you have the knowledge and qualifications to solve the stated problem or meet the stated need. Keep this section interesting, clear, and brief (1-2 pages long).

When completing the section on qualifications, you should include the following information:

- Clearly state who is applying for the funding.
- Describe briefly the history of your organization.
- Describe your organizations purpose and goals.
- Describe your organization's current programs and activities.
- Describe the population that your organization works with.
- Include evidence of the organization's accomplishments (e.g., recognition for best practices, awards, activities, etc...).
- Include endorsements or letters of support for your organization and its' accomplishments.

- Describe any accomplishments and qualifications related to the area of activity of the proposed project.
- Describe the skills and qualifications of staff and/or those who will be directly involved in completing the project.



Background Information/Statement of Need

In this very important section you to need provide facts and sufficient evidence to demonstrate that:

1. The need or problem you've proposed to address exists.
2. Your organization thoroughly understands the stated problem(s) and therefore is best able to address them.

You want this section to be clear and persuasive. Present your ideas and build your argument in a logical sequence. You are essentially trying to build a rationale for the proposed project and convince the funder of its' importance. The following checklist will help guide you through the process of writing your statement of need:

- Conduct a review of related literature and previous projects and demonstrate that you are familiar with the issues and projects that have preceded yours. This will also help you to develop a well documented statement of the need/problem.
- Describe how your project builds on existing programs or addresses the problem differently than others have in the past. You should highlight how you will avoid mistakes previously made, how your project is unique, and how your work compliments previous work, but does not duplicate it.

- Describe the target population to be served. Include specific information about the population your project will focus on. Who are they? Do they support the project? How have you involved members of the target population in the preparation of the proposal?
- Describe the problem to be addressed and the geographical area where the organization will conduct the project.
- Describe how the project is related to the goals and objectives of your organization, as well as how the project will help the funding agency in fulfilling their own goals and objectives.
- Support your rationale for the project with relevant statistical facts, real stories/experiences, statements from various authorities/stakeholders, and evidence that the target population agrees that the need exists and should be addressed.
- Keep your problem statement in terms of the target population's needs and problems, not your organization's.
- Involve the target population in the development of your problem statement.
- Keep it brief, 3-4 pages, interesting, clear, and in plain language.

Project Description

This section of your proposal should contain your goals and objectives, methods, staffing/administration, and your evaluation plan.

Goals and Objectives

This section of the proposal describes the outcomes or results of the grant in measurable terms. It is a clear description of what your organization hopes to accomplish. Goals and objectives form the basis of the activities of your project and form the basis of your evaluation. There should also be considerable overlap between your goals and objectives and they should describe how the target population will benefit from the project.

Goals are conceptual larger statements about what you hope to accomplish. They create the setting for what you are proposing to do, however, they are usually not very measurable. An example may be:

Goal: Our project will enhance the leadership skills of mental health consumers in our community.

Objectives are more specific and measurable. Objectives provide more specific things you will be accomplishing in your project and are measurable. Objectives are outcomes or products, they are not methods. Keep your objectives clear and realistic, don't promise what you can't carry out.

There are four types of objectives. You may use one or more of these types in your proposal depending on the nature of your project.

1. Behavioural objectives - a human action is expected.

Example: 5 of the 10 participants will learn to facilitate a meeting.

2. Performance objectives - a specific time frame within which a behaviour will occur, and at an expected level of improvement, skill, or proficiency is expected.

Example: 5 of the 10 participants will learn to facilitate a meeting within 2 months and will facilitate a one hour self-help or other group meeting as a practicum.

3. Process objectives - how something is done is an activity in itself.

Example: We will document the training materials and teaching methods used and identify those with the greatest success.

4. Product objectives - a tangible item is the result.

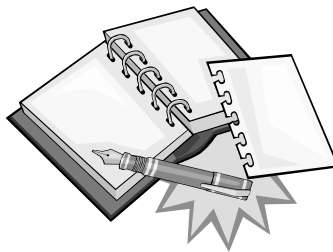
Example: A manual will be created to be used to teach mental health consumers how to facilitate groups.



Methods

Now that you have explained what will be accomplished by the project, you will use the methods section to describe the specific activities that will take place to achieve your objectives. You should also include your reasoning for choosing a particular approach. This section will be about 5-6 pages and should:

- Provide a detailed description of what will occur from the start of the project to when it is completed.
- Flow clearly from problems and objectives.
- Describe project activities and your reason(s) for choosing the selected activity.
- Establish a timetable or describe the sequence of activities and when they will be completed.
- Describe how you plan to develop partnerships with other groups or organizations to join together in dealing with the problems/issues your project plans to address.



Staffing/Administration

In this section you will describe the staff who will be associated with the project, their qualifications, specific duties, and the importance of each. Use the following checklist to help guide you:

- Describe the roles of the different people involved in the project and the importance of each.
- Describe how each role contributes to the organizations' ability to complete the activities as outlined in your method section.
- Include the names, titles, qualifications, and experience of project staff.
- If you plan to assemble a steering committee for the project, this is a good place to describe how it will be organized and who will be included on the steering committee.



Evaluation

Your proposal must include an evaluation plan that determines the degree to which your objectives have been met and your project has been successful. You will need to describe the method that will be used to collect and analyse information. It is a good idea to develop an evaluation plan that looks at how the project was carried out (process evaluation), as well as if the objectives were met (product evaluation). This section should be 1-2 pages. Here are some criteria for the evaluation section of your proposal:

- Describe how you will evaluate the completion of the objectives. Make direct reference to your objectives in your evaluation plan.
- Describe how you will evaluate and modify methods over the course of the project.
- State who will be conducting the evaluation.
- Describe how data will be collected.
- Explain any tools or instruments that will be used to collect information.
- Describe how the information collected will be analysed.
- Describe how the evaluation results will be used to improve the project/program.

Budget

This section should be as simple as a one-page statement of projected expenses. Make sure you check with the funding agency to see if they have suggested/required budget categories that they want you to use. If the funding agency does not have any suggested/required budget categories, the following is a list of categories and format you may consider for itemizing and presenting your budget:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
PERSONNEL	.	.	.
Person #1	.	.	.
Person #1	.	.	.
Person #3	.	.	.
<i>Sub-Total</i>	.	.	.
FACILITIES (list)	.	.	.
<i>Sub-Total</i>	.	.	.
EQUIPMENT (list)	.	.	.
<i>Sub-Total</i>	.	.	.
SUPPLIES (list)	.	.	.
<i>Sub-Total</i>	.	.	.
COMMUNICATION (list)	.	.	.
Telephone	.	.	.
Postage	.	.	.

<i>Sub-Total</i>	.	.	.
TRAVEL (list)	.	.	.
Fuel	.	.	.
Vehicle Rental	.	.	.
Rail Tickets	.	.	.
<i>Sub-Total</i>	.	.	.
.	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
TOTAL	.	.	.
SUM TOTAL	.	.	.

Your budget should:

- Be detailed.
- Contain no unexplained amounts (e.g. miscellaneous).
- Include all items asked of the funding agency.
- Include items paid for by other sources.
- Include all staff and volunteers.
- Be realistic, funding agencies can easily tell if a budget has been inflated.



Conclusion

Your proposal should have a concluding paragraph or two. This section is a good place to make a final appeal for your project. Briefly restate what your organization/group wants to do and why it is important and emphasize why you need the funding to accomplish it. You may also want to outline some follow-up activities that will take place following the project. For example, describe how you plan to distribute any reports, materials or information about your project upon completion, state any recommendations you have as a result of the work you have completed, outline suggestions for future related work that will build on what you have accomplished.



Appendices

The Appendices should include those items/aspects of your project that are of secondary importance to the reader. Assume that the reader will only have a short time to read your proposal, and that once you've caught their attention with the main body of your proposal, the appendices will provide some additional information.

Here are some items commonly included in appendices:

- A time line for the project. A table is a clear and easy-to-read way of presenting project activities and times when each activity will be completed.
- Letters of support. Funders like to know that others feel strongly enough about your project to write a letter of support.
- Biographies and/or job descriptions for key staff.
- Evaluation tools/instruments.
- Descriptions of partnering organizations/groups.

References

Levine, S., J. *Guide for Writing a Funding Proposal*. Michigan State University, Michigan.

[Http://learnerassociates.net/proposal/](http://learnerassociates.net/proposal/)

The Paladin Group - Grant Mentors. *Elements of a Grant Proposal*. [Http://www.silcom.com/~paladin/promaster.html](http://www.silcom.com/~paladin/promaster.html)

The Foundation Centre - Learning Lab. *Proposal Writing Short Course*. [Http://fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop1.html](http://fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop1.html)

Sample Table for Project Activity Time Lines

Activities (list):	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J
	✓	✓								
			✓	✓						
				✓	✓					
						✓	✓			
							✓	✓	✓	
								✓	✓	✓
										✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓