

# Introduction to Proposal Writing for Faith-Based Organizations

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**IN THE BEGINNING HERE WAS...**  
**A NEED**

**Constructing a Program**

Need	
Vision	
Mission	
Goals	
Objectives	
Methodologies	
Evaluation	

**PROPOSAL PROCESS**  
**OVERVIEW**

- I. DEVELOP A CLEAR PROGRAM PLAN
- II. RESEARCH FUNDERS THOROUGHLY, TARGETING YOUR PROPOSALS CAREFULLY
- III. WRITE A CLEAR, CONCISE PROPOSAL BASED ON FUNDER GUIDELINES
- IV. SUBMIT TO FUNDER

## **I. DEVELOP A CLEAR PROGRAM PLAN**

### **HOW TO SPOT “CLEAR” PROGRAMS**

They Are:

- Solid, unduplicated programs that address pressing community needs
- Demonstrate that the program is well-designed and well-managed
- Collaborate with other organizations to achieve efficiencies whenever possible
- Base success on realistic goals measured by strong evaluation methods that can stand up to scrutiny
- Make requests for funds to funding organizations that share your interests
- Make personal contact with program officers or other humans throughout the funding process whenever possible
- Build relationships with key funders over time.
- Don't establish programs to make money or based on where the money is. Rather, they establish programs based on community needs and their capacity/expertise to meet those needs.

## **II. RESEARCH FUNDERS THOROUGHLY, TARGETING CAREFULLY**

### **CONDUCTING FUNDING RESEARCH**

#### **TYPES OF GRANTMAKERS**

PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS  
CORPORATIONS  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

#### **THE SEARCH**

- UNDERSTAND THE TERMINOLOGY
- DEFINE WHAT YOU DO IN THEIR TERMINOLOGY
- PREPARE A LIST OF GOOD PROSPECTS
- NARROW THE LIST OF PROSPECTS TO THE ONES THAT GIVE THE BEST MATCH FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

## FINDING A FUNDING PROSPECT MATCH

There are three key areas:

- BY SUBJECT (Terminology)
- BY GEOGRAPHY
- BY TYPES OF SUPPORT (Terminology)

### **TYPES OF SUPPORT**

- Operating (General Support) - *Covers the cost of running the organization to meet community needs.*
- Project Support - *Used to fund a project for a limited time frame.*
- Start up or Seed money - *Used to start up a new program.*
- Capital/Equipment - *Used to build or renovate a physical plant, purchase land, or purchase major equipment.*
- Endowment - *Principal held as long-term investment while income is used for operations.*

## **III. WRITE A CLEAR CONCISE PROPOSAL BASED ON FUNDER GUIDELINES**

### **TYPES OF PROPOSALS**

- LETTER OF INTENT
- 2-3 PAGE LETTER
- FULL PROPOSAL
- ONLINE/FORM

### **PROPOSAL COMPONENTS**

#### **1. COVER LETTER**

- explains why the organization selected the foundation
- explains the proposal highlights which match the foundation's priorities
- gives the specific financial request being made

#### **2. SUMMARY** - (Sometimes called The Executive Summary) a one-page or less summary of the proposal

- identifies the applicant and briefly mentions credibility
- gives the specific purpose of the grant
- gives the anticipated result
- gives the specific financial request being made

- gives the total project budget amount

**3. INTRODUCTION** - (tells the reviewer the organization is financially secure, well-managed and provides important community services)

- describes the mission and purpose of the organization
- tells when and how the organization started
- tells the organization's goals
- describes significant events in the organization's history
- describes significant events in the organization's history
- describes current programs (and past, if significant)
- tells program accomplishments and impact
- tells staff qualifications
- describes size and characteristics of the target population
- describes collaborations formed with other organizations

**4. THE NEED/PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In developing the problem statement, an organization should respond to the following questions:

- What specific problem or need does this project address?  
*Example: African American youth in xyz City do not have the job skills needed to obtain satisfactory employment.*
- How was this need or problems identified?  
What are the causes of the problem? What evidence do you have?  
(statistics, research, etc.)  
*Example: Recent findings by the xyz Chamber of Commerce and 2010 Census data indicate that among African American youth living in this area, there is a 70% unemployment rate.*
- Who is affected by this problem? (target population for the project)  
*Example: African American youth and their families; xyz City population*
- What are the benefits to the community if the need is met (problem is solved)? Why is this important? What are the consequences of not addressing the problem?

**TIP:** An impactful problem statement will:

- have well-documented statistics – Census info/anecdotal/focus groups/other
- relate to the mission and goals of the organization
- have client and community input and be well written from their viewpoint
- state the need within reasonable geographic dimensions
- be written clearly and concisely.

## 5. THE GOALS/OBJECTIVES – THE OUTCOMES

### **GOAL DEFINITION:**

Goals are outcomes which state the end result of a project in **broad** terms.

*Example: The goal of the Women Offenders' Service Center is to ensure women recently released from prison are well educated and have jobs.*

### **OBJECTIVE DEFINITION:**

Objectives are outcomes which are measurable and time-specific. They are usually accomplished during the timeframe of the project and are more narrowly defined than goals.

*Example: The project objective is to eliminate unemployment among 75% of the pilot group of 20 inmates within six months of release from prison.*

Well-formulated goals and objectives will:

- Be stated in quantifiable terms which can be measured
- Describe outcomes
- Identify the group benefiting from the planned project
- Be realistic

#### **Tips**

- Goals and Objectives should tie directly to the problem statement
- They should include all relevant parties in the target population
- Allow plenty of time for objectives to be accomplished
- Objectives do not describe methods
- Objectives should be measurable in order to determine if any change occurred during the life of the project.

## 6. DEVELOPING PROPOSAL METHODS

Methods Definition:

A method is a detailed description of the activities to be implemented to achieve the ends specific in the objectives. They are sometimes called activities or strategies.

A proposal's methods will:

- Tie directly to the proposal objectives component
- Describe activities, clients and client selection, staff responsibilities, facilities, start and finish dates
- Include a detailed timeline

*Example of Methods for the Women Offenders' Service Center:*

- *Select a pilot group of 20 inmates determined to –but lacking confidence– achieve economic independence upon release (first month of project)*
- *Survey local job market and determine which professions and which local businesses are potential employers for women released from prison. (first three months of project)*
- *Meet with local businesses to determine their needs for new employees (first three months of project)*

## **7. EVALUATION**

Organizations conduct evaluations to determine:

- If the program did what was expected
- If the method specified were used and the objective met
- If an impact was made on the need identified
- To obtain feedback from their target group
- To maintain control over the project throughout life

Data collection Systems generally:

- Identify subjects about whom the data is being collected
- Identify product required by the evaluation plan
- Identify the technologies required for the study
- Determine the sequence of tasks required for the study
- Outline the staffing requirements for the study
- Identify the audience for the evaluation

A Good Evaluation Component will:

- Indicate the objectives to be measured and how
- Indicate how the project's cost-effectiveness will be measured
- Describe the data collection methods and analysis process
- Indicate who will conduct the evaluation and how they will be selected
- Describe how and to whom evaluation results will be reported
- Describe how evaluation results will modify and improve programs

*Evaluation Example for the Women Offenders' Service Center*

Evaluation of the success of the project will be measured against the project's objective of eliminating unemployment among 75% of the pilot group. The Program Director will collect job training and employment data on each woman in the program through personal interviews; using such criteria as 1.) job training class attendance, 2.) job search process, 3.) job interviews, 4) current employment, and 5.) program participant and employer satisfaction. The Director will thus be reviewing the process being taken as well as the final outcome. Quarterly evaluative reports of the project's progress will be given to WOSC's Board of Directors and to funders of the project.

## **8. FUTURE FUNDING**

Future Funding is necessary because organizations must determine how a program or capital project will be funded after the proposed grant expires.

Program Proposals should answer the following questions in the Future Funding component:

- Will the program need to continue?
- Will the program be able to generate revenues for itself?
- Are there other organizations with which to collaborate and share expenses?

Capital Proposals should answer the following questions:

- Once equipment is acquired (building built) are other resources needed?
- What additional costs are incurred or maintenance?
- Will building expansion lead to program expansion? If so, where will the funds come from to increase services?

Other Sources of funding:

- Continuation grants
- Annual Campaigns
- Fee for Service
- Sales of items or activities

## **9. PROPOSAL BUDGET**

Budget Elements

- Income
- Expenses
- Personnel Costs
- Non-Personnel Costs
- Budget Summary

Budget Process

- Establish the budget period
- Review historical data related to proposal objectives
- Estimate expected expenses
- Prepare a narrative justifying major expenses



### Tips

- Follow the specific budget format dictated by the funding source.
- Develop a budget by analyzing the activities in the methods and evaluation components.
- Make sure the budget reflects expenses which have been carefully estimated.
- Know, and show, the requested, donated and total amounts for each line item.
- Estimated should be consistent with the size of the contemplated project.
- List all positions and the percentage of time each will devote to the project.
- Anticipate salary and other increases if the budget is a multi-year estimate.
- Be sure to include the cost of evaluating the project.

### **10. APPENDICES:**

- Letters of determination from the IRS and articles
- Organization Budgets
- Financial Statement (preferably audited)
- List of other funders receiving proposals for the project
- List of Board Members of the organization
- List Advisory Board members
- Job Descriptions for project staff
- Profiles of key staff for the project
- Letters of support and agreement
- Annual report or organizational brochure and current newsletter
- Current and relevant media articles about the organization
- Organization's long-range plan (or list of long-term goals if there is no plan)

## **IV. SUBMIT TO FUNDER**

### **FOLLOW UP:**

1. Call the contact person within two weeks after mailing the proposal
2. Prepare for site visit by potential funders, if required.
3. Keep potential funders informed of the proposal's status with other grantmakers.
4. Promptly acknowledge every grant received.
5. Determine appropriate recognition procedures for grants received (in addition to thank you letter.)

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## Elements of Proposal Writing 2019

### Post Test

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#### True or False?

1. It is always best to provide a funder with a long-format proposal with pictures of your clients to make sure they are impressed.
2. A goal must be measurable.
3. Goals and objectives are the same thing.
4. You don't need to worry about evaluation until the end of the program.
5. It's important to provide data to support your description of program needs.
6. A proposal summary should be written before the rest of the proposal.
7. The largest source of revenues for nonprofits is foundations.
8. Future Funding refers to an agency's strategies for developing additional funding to sustain the program.
9. The organization's mission is an important part of program planning.
10. A problem and a need are the same thing.

## From the Reader's Eye: Reviewing Proposals for "Fund-Ability"

- 1. Rationale and context: Reasons why the proposed work is a good fit**
  - a. How will the proposed work advance the funder's interests?
  - b. Why is the proposed project important or needed short or long-term?
  - c. How does the project fit into local issues, and what will be the impact?
  - d. What is the political, economic, social climate and context?
  
- 2. Objectives: Simply stated, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-specific**
  - a. What will the project accomplish, and by when?
  - b. What will the money buy?
  - c. What are the expectations and the outcomes for the project in 12-18 months?
  
- 3. Activities: Vehicles for Reaching Proposed Objectives**
  - a. What will be done during the funding period?
  - b. Specifically, how will activities be linked to objectives
  
- 4. Organization and Staffing: Strengths, Capacity, and challenges**
  - a. Why is the requesting organization the best one to do the work?
  - b. What are the challenges or considerations that must be addressed?
  - c. Is this proposal a departure from, or extension of previous work?
  - d. What is the organization's track record and success rate in projects?
  - e. Programmatically, how viable is the project?
  - f. Who will carry out the tasks, and why are they the best ones for the job?
  - g. Will consultants be used, and if so, for what?
  - h. How will the project help build staff and organizational capacity?
  
- 5. Resources and Partners**
  - a. Who and what can you count on for assistance and support?
  - b. What types of collaboration and "broad base" of support do you have?
  - c. Who (outside the project) can "tell the story" and be an advocate?
  
- 6. Budget**
  - a. How much money will be needed, for what, over what period of time?
  - b. Is the budget realistic?
  - c. Are there other committed funds or support, pending requests? Sources?
  
- 7. Monitoring and Reporting**
  - a. How will you track accomplishments and challenges?
  - b. How will you let the funder know about the progress?
  
- 8. Documentation and evaluation**
  - a. What tools will you use to learn about the level of success?
  - b. How will you know if you've been successful?
  - c. How "lessons learned" and "best practices" be applied in the future?

# WORKSHEET A

## Statement of Need Worksheet

*Use this worksheet to prepare an effective Statement of Need. Remember to base your need on clearly stated, hard-core statistics to support your argument. Make sure the data is well-documented. Use touching stories of people as examples of the need. Focus your explanation and statistics on the geographic area you can serve.*

<b>Who? Where? When?</b>	<b>What? Why?</b>	<b>Evidence of the Problem</b>	<b>So What?</b>
Who are the people with the need?	What is the need?	What evidence do you have to support your claim?	What will be the positive results of meeting the need?
Where are the people?	Why does this need occur?		How is the need linked to the organization?
When is the need evident?			

## WORKSHEET B: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Your Goal is a broad statement of the change you will see.

*"The homebound elderly in ABC County will live with dignity and independence."*

**HINT: Your Objective is a Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based result of the change you will see. If you can't measure it, it probably isn't a good objective. Start your OBJECTIVE with ACTION WORDS that suggest a purpose:**

*"There will be a 5% decrease in the number of frail older adults going into convalescent homes during the first year of the referral program."*

STATE A GOAL OF YOUR PROGRAM:




STATE OBJECTIVE 1.




STATE OBJECTIVE 2.


## Research Basics - Taxonomy – Foundation Classification System

Subjects	Populations	Organization Type	Transaction Types	Support Strategies	Geography
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture, fishing and forestry</li> <li>• Arts and culture</li> <li>• Community and economic development</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Human rights</li> <li>• Human rights</li> <li>• Human services</li> <li>• Information and communications</li> <li>• International relations</li> <li>• Philanthropy</li> <li>• Public affairs</li> <li>• Public safety</li> <li>• Religion</li> <li>• Science</li> <li>• Social sciences</li> <li>• Sports and recreation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age groups</li> <li>• Ethnic and racial groups</li> <li>• Family relationships</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Religious groups</li> <li>• Sexual identity</li> <li>• Social and econ status</li> <li>• Work status and occupations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses</li> <li>• Charitable gift funds</li> <li>• Corporate giving programs</li> <li>• Fiscally-sponsored organizations and programs</li> <li>• Giving circles</li> <li>• Governments and agencies</li> <li>• Individuals</li> <li>• Intergovernmental organizations</li> <li>• Multipurpose centers</li> <li>• Non-governmental organizations</li> <li>• Religious institutions</li> <li>• Schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash grants</li> <li>• Contracts</li> <li>• Employee matching gifts</li> <li>• Employee volunteer services</li> <li>• Employee-related scholarships</li> <li>• Foundation-administered program awards</li> <li>• Grants to individuals</li> <li>• In-kind gifts</li> <li>• Loans to individuals</li> <li>• Matching grants</li> <li>• Mission-related investments</li> <li>• Mission-related investments</li> <li>• Officers &amp; trustees discretionary grants</li> <li>• Pro bono services</li> <li>• Program-related investments</li> <li>• Promissory notes and certificates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity-building and technical assistance</li> <li>• Capital and infrastructure</li> <li>• Continuing support</li> <li>• Financial sustainability</li> <li>• General support</li> <li>• Individual development</li> <li>• Leadership and professional development</li> <li>• Network-building and collaboration</li> <li>• Outreach</li> <li>• Policy, advocacy and systems reform</li> <li>• Presentations and productions</li> <li>• Product and service development</li> <li>• Program development</li> <li>• Program development</li> <li>• Regranting</li> <li>• Research and evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country</li> <li>• State</li> <li>• Region</li> <li>• County</li> <li>• City</li> <li>• District</li> <li>• ETC</li> </ul>

### Explore the Facets:

**Subjects** Describes WHAT is being supported Example: Elementary education or Clean water supply.

**Populations** Describes WHO is being supported. Example: Girls or People with disabilities.

**Organization Type** Describes WHAT type of organization is providing or receiving support

**Transaction Type** Describes HOW support is being provided

**Support Strategies** Describes HOW activities are being implemented

**Geographic Area Served** (geotree.foundationcenter.org) Details WHERE the impact of funding is taking place.



# Prospect Worksheet— Institutional Funders

<b>Date:</b>		
<b><i>Basic Information</i></b>		
<b>Name</b>		
<b>Address</b>		
<b>Contact Person</b>		
<b><i>Financial Data</i></b>		
<b>Total Assets</b>		
<b>Total Grants Paid</b>		
<b>Grant Ranges/Amount Needed</b>		
<b>Period of Funding/Project</b>		
<b><i>Is Funder a Good Match?</i></b>	<b><i>Funder</i></b>	<b><i>Your Organization</i></b>
<b>Subject Focus</b> (list in order of importance)	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
<b>Geographic Limits</b>		
<b>Type(s) of Support</b>		
<b>Population(s) Served</b>		
<b>Type(s) of Recipients</b>		
<b>People</b> (Officers, Donors, Trustees, Staff)		

***Application Information***

**Does the funder have printed guidelines/application forms?**

**Initial Approach**  
(Letter of inquiry, formal proposal)

**Deadline(s)**

**Board Meeting Date(s)**

***Sources of Above Information***

**990-PF — Year**

**Annual Report — Year**  
**Requested      Received**

**Directories/Grant Indexes**

**Grantmaker Website**

**Foundation Directory Online**

**Notes:**

**Follow-up:**



**Area(s) of Commonality with the Prospect**

**Prior giving history:**

**Geography:**

**Subject field:**

**People:**

**Other:**

**Sources Consulted** (provide URLs, dates, and other details)

**Search engines** (terms used):

**Websites:**

**Databases:**

**Contribution lists:**

**Directories:**

**Newspapers:**

**Other:**

***History of Past Cultivation (if any)***

**Type (letter, call, invitation, meeting, etc., and dates):**

***Recommended Next Step(s)***

**(Indicate deadlines):**

# Sample Entry

Entry number		<b>25</b>	
Street address		<b>The Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham ▼</b> (formerly The Greater Birmingham Foundation) 2100 First Ave. N., Ste. 700 Birmingham, AL 35203 (205) 328-8641	
Person to whom inquiries should be addressed		<i>Contact:</i> Kate Nielsen, Pres. <i>FAX:</i> (205) 328-6576; <i>E-mail:</i> info@foundationbirmingham.org; <i>URL:</i> http://www.foundationbirmingham.org	E-mail and URL
Establishment data		Established in 1959 in AL by resolution and declaration of trust; corporate side established in 1997. <b>Foundation type:</b> Community <b>Financial data</b> (yr. ended 12/31/02): Assets, \$118,000,000 (M); gifts received, \$13,100,000; expenditures, \$12,500,000; giving activities include \$11,700,000 for 1,200 grants (high: \$125,000; low: \$75).	Year-end date of accounting period
Areas of foundation giving		<b>Purpose and activities:</b> To make life better in the greater Birmingham, Alabama, area, by connecting caring people and key resources with community needs, today and tomorrow. <b>Fields of interest:</b> Arts; Education; Environment; Health care; Human services; Neighborhood centers; Community development; Public affairs.	Assets at market value (M) or ledger value (L)
Types of grants and other types of support		<b>Types of support:</b> Capital campaigns; Building/renovation; Equipment; Program development; Publication; Seed money; Curriculum development; Matching/challenge support.	Total expenditures figure
Specific limitations on foundation giving by geographic area, subject focus, or types of support		<b>Limitations:</b> Giving from unrestricted and field-of-interest funds limited to Blount, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker counties of AL. No support for religious or political purposes from unrestricted and field-of-interest funds. No grants to individuals or for scholarships, endowment funds, operating budgets, deficit reduction, national fundraising drives, conference or seminar expenses, benefits tickets, or replacement of government funding cuts. <b>Publications:</b> Application guidelines, Annual report, Financial statement, Grants list, Informational brochure, Newsletter. <b>Application information:</b> Please see foundation's Web site for application instructions. Agencies new to the foundation must attend an overview session prior to submitting a grant proposal. Application form not required. <i>Initial approach:</i> Letter <i>Copies of proposal:</i> 3 <i>Deadline(s):</i> Check foundation's Web site; currently, Mar. 15 and Sept. 15 <i>Board meeting date(s):</i> Biannually (May and Nov.) for distribution of unrestricted funds; other meetings as needed <i>Final notification:</i> June and Dec.	Amount and number of grants paid
Application information		<b>Officers:</b> Cameron M. Vowell, Ph.D., Chair.; Jeffrey H. Cohn, M.D., Vice-Chair.; Kate Nielsen, Pres. <b>Directors:</b> Kirkwood R. Bolton; Ralph D. Cook; Edward M. Friend III; Susan N. Haskell; Ted C. Kennedy; Thomas H. Lowder; Margaret M. Porter; Van L. Richey; Carole W. Samuelson, M.D.; William E. Smith, Jr.; Odessa Woolfolk. <b>Number of staff:</b> 8 full-time professional; 3 part-time professional; 1 full-time support; 1 part-time support. <b>EIN:</b> 636019864	Separate information on amount and number of employee matching gifts, grants to individuals, or loans
Selected grants		<b>Selected grants:</b> The following grants were reported in 2002. \$1,000,000 to University of Alabama, Birmingham, AL, For construction of the Interdisciplinary Biomedical Research Building, payable over 5 years.	Printed material available from the foundation
			Officers and Trustees or other governing bodies
			IRS Identification Number

For a complete listing of data elements, see "How to Use *The Foundation Directory*" in the Introduction.  
Please refer to the actual entry to view the information for this foundation in its entirety.

## Symbols

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Identifies foundations for which in-depth descriptions have been prepared for inclusion in the Foundation Center's <i>Foundation 1000</i>.</li> <li>◇ Indicates entries prepared or updated by Center staff from public records.</li> <li>☆ Indicates foundations that did not appear in previous edition.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‡ Indicates individual is deceased.</li> <li>(L) Ledger value of assets.</li> <li>(M) Market value of assets.</li> <li>* Officer is also a trustee or director.</li> <li>+ indicates an unspecified number of grants.</li> </ul> |
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# WORKSHEET C

## Methods Worksheet

List the key program elements and tasks focusing on exactly what you will need to do/design to meet your goals and objectives. Focus your program on the geographic area you can serve.

<b>Program Element</b> <i>(What program component do you need to create or further develop?)</i>	<b>Tasks to implement</b>	<b>Resources needed</b>	<b>Start and Finish Dates</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			