

Hints for first-time applicants

1. Include experienced individuals in your proposal
2. Apply to sponsors that you have connections with.
3. Concentrate on funders that take risks on first-time applicants.
4. Demonstrate other experiences with similar programs.
5. Provide independent documentation of your expertise.
6. Invite sponsors for a pre-site visit or to offer to visit with them to describe your program.
7. Begin by requesting nonfiscal support.
8. Piggyback on the coattails of another organization or consortium that has successful grant experience.

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- # 1 & 8: If you don't have the credibility—borrow it: e.g., consultants, subcontracts, co-directors of the program, etc.
2. In other words, start close to home, and take advantage of personal relationships or other connections
 3. These are often indicated in the guidelines; e.g., they might give preference to new applicants, or vice versa. If you notice that the same names crop up each year in their funding awards, you have a clue. This is another reason to spend the time to do the prospect research.
 4. This will help show your credibility; E.g., you may never have worked with preschool children, but your organization has had a successful after-school program with younger school-aged children.
 5. Letters of recommendation or support, cooperating agencies
 6. & 7. Sponsors often give technical assistance, equipment donations, or other assistance—usually, people are more than willing to give advice!

Proposal review items—letter proposal

- Does the opening paragraph catch your attention?
- Is the purpose of the project clearly articulated?
- Does the organization make a case for why their project should be funded?
- What is the relationship of the project to our goals and guidelines?
- Is the method of implementing the project clearly specified?
- What is the relationship of the goals of the project to the grant amount requested?
- What is the capability of the organization to carry out the proposed project?
- Is the letter well-written, with no mistakes or poor grammar?

REVIEW CRITERIA FROM THE GUIDELINES OF THE M.J. MURDOCK FOUNDATION

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT A PROPOSAL

1. SIGNIFICANCE/WORTHINESS

- a. How important to society is the problem?
- b. Is the proposal consonant with the objectives of the funding organization?
- c. Does it get at root causes of the problem rather than deal with symptoms?
- d. Are there elements of creativity and innovation, or will it merely continue or extend what is already well-known or established?
- e. Are the goals well-defined and will achievement be measurable?
- f. Will the proposed effort toward solution make a significant difference?
- g. Will the solution benefit many or few? To what extent?
- h. Will the solution produce impact or multiplier effect? Will it arouse to action?
- i. Will the benefit be long-term or short-term?
- j. Is the anticipated benefit commensurate with the cost?
- k. Will successful completion lead to a generally useful model?
1. What is the potential for increased self-sufficiency?
- m. How is the proposal rated by those qualified to judge?

2. PEOPLE

- a. Are they qualified for and capable of accomplishing what is proposed? What is their track record or potential?
- b. Is there a critical mass of persons for getting the job done?
- c. How are they regarded by those best able to judge?
- d. What is the availability of other needed persons with requisite skills?

3. ORGANIZATION

- a. Does it have a clear and important mission?
- b. What are its distinctive features or outstanding characteristics?
- c. Is the leadership able, sincere, dedicated, energetic?
- d. Is it well supported, administered and operated?
- e. How is it regarded by those best able to judge?

4. PLAN

- a. Is the plan carefully thought out and organized?
- b. Is it presented clearly?
- c. Is it sensible and realistic?
- d. Does it proceed directly to the heart of the matter?
- e. If a departure from orthodoxy, is it well-reasoned?
- f. Have ways around possible obstacles been foreseen?
- g. Does it make use of resources effectively and efficiently?
- h. What is the opinion of those best able to judge?

5. RESULTS-EVALUATION

- a. How will accomplishments be evaluated qualitatively and/or quantitatively?
- b. What use will be made of results?
- c. Will results be disseminated? How?
- d. What effects might be anticipated from the results?

6. FINANCING

- a. Is the budget appropriate, cost-effective and commensurate with needs?
- b. What in-house support is being offered?
- c. What other support is available, has been and is being sought?
- d. Are other sources of funds more appropriately or readily available?
- e. Is the request for picking up support which has been lost or for filling a gap between other funding?

7. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- a. Have other grants been made to this organization? If so, what were the results?
- b. Must other proposals be denied if this one is approved? If so, how do they compare as to worthiness?
- c. Is this such a special situation as to call for suspension of the usual funding organization guidelines?

Eye halve a spelling chequer;
It came with my pea sea.
It plainly marques four my revue;
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.
Eye strike a key and type a word;
And weight four it two say.
Weather eye am wrong oar write,
It shows me strait a weigh.
As soon as a mist ache is maid,
It nose bee fore two long.
And eye can put the error rite,
Its rare lea ever wrong.
Eye have run this poem threw it;
I am shore your pleased two no.
Its letter perfect awl the weigh;
My chequer tolled me sew.

Sauce Unknown