
non-profit guides

grant-writing tools for
non-profit organizations

Preliminary Proposal

Many grantmakers permit grant applications by invitation only, and require potential grant recipients to submit preliminary proposals in the form of inquiry letters in order to be invited to submit a [Full Proposal](#).

Inquiry letters are designed to convince the grantmaker to consider your request. They provide you the opportunity to give the grantmaker a snapshot of your proposed project/program. Be sure to establish a connection between your proposal's goals and the grantmaker's priorities, and focus on detail, clarity, and conciseness, while conveying the impact your proposal will make on the need or problem you are addressing.

Your [Inquiry Letter](#) should condense all of the key information into the following main elements:

1. Organization Overview/Purpose
2. State Reason for and Amount of Funding Request
3. Describe Needs or Problem (including target population, statistics, examples)
4. Describe Project or Program
5. List other Project Funders (prospective and committed)
6. Request Funding Application

Typical inquiry letters, usually a maximum of 2-3 pages, include the following components:

COVERSHEET: Organization Name, Address, City, State:, Zip Code, Country, Contact Name, Title, Telephone, Fax, E-mail Address

INTRODUCTION:

- The mission of your organization (one paragraph)
- The purpose of your request (one paragraph)
- How your request fits the grantmaker's funding priorities (one sentence)
- Total annual general operating budget
- Fiscal Year
- Total proposed project/program budget (if other than general support)
- Grant amount being requested
- Matching funds committed from other funding sources
- Proposed grant project/program time frame (beginning and ending dates)
- Tax exempt status

NARRATIVE (maximum of 1/2 page)

A concise narrative or a synopsis of the proposed project/program, that generally covers the following:

- The purpose of the request (project or program)
- The problem or need being addressed, and how you will address the identified problem or need
- The population or community served by your organization
- How your project or program will promote long-term change

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For project or program finding requests, you will usually need to submit both a project/program budget and a general operating budget. However, for general support requests, you will usually only need to submit a general operating budget.