

Answers for Autism Guidance to Writing Grant Proposals,

(Adapted from 8 Grant Proposal Writing Tips: From Confused to Focused, Joanne Fritz);

<http://nonprofit.about.com/od/foundationfundinggrants/a/grantwritingtips.htm>

Any of us can be overwhelmed in writing grant proposals. The following **10 tips** will assist you in planning and writing a grant proposal.

1. **Read the grant application thoroughly.** Think about the mission of Answers for Autism and how your purpose and outcomes match the organization's priorities.
2. **Create and outline to organize your thoughts.** Gather information you think you will need, now go back and reread the grant application so that you are writing exactly as requested. Then develop some broad concepts for each category of Section III in the application: description, need, outcomes - impact of your proposal, design – action plan, evaluation, budget, dissemination and sustainability. Then write an outcome statement, this is the impact of your proposal. Outcomes are an extremely important part of the application process. Are they specific, measurable, realistic, results focused and have a defined timeline. Completing the remaining categories in section III will follow logically from your proposal outcome. It helps to write down those broad concepts first.
3. **Consider a grant application as a detailed outline.** For some writing projects, writing whatever comes to mind first works, but, for a grant proposals, you will save time by carefully outlining what you will write and in the order that you will write it. Then it is a matter of filling in that outline. The outline can change, but it is rewarding to check off sections of the outline as you finish them.
4. **When confused, revisit the application and your outline.** If you get stuck somewhere, just move on to another part of the outline. You can circle back and usually will find that what was confusing earlier now becomes clear. Having an outline can help re-focus your thoughts.
5. **Eliminate the jargon.** Use language that anyone can understand, not just specialists in your field or people who work at your agency. Don't assume the grant reviewers are experts in what you are wanting to do. Think of them as generalists, who will know something about proposal content, but are not expert. Educate in simple terms.
6. **Include human interest.** When you are describing the need, include data to reflect why your organization is an expert in the field. If you don't have data, do some research so you can include the data on best practices relating to your proposal. Facts combined with human interest content more strongly illustrates a proposal. Stories backed up with data are likely the best way to reach the hearts and the minds of your readers.
7. **Don't exaggerate.** Keep the problem and the solutions realistic. Describe the needs in your community, keep it local. Describe manageable problems and propose doable solutions. Pay particular attention to carefully match need and solution with plenty of programmatic specifics.
8. **Simplify.** The length and complexity of your proposal does not affect the amount of money you receive. Stick to the proposal application sections, main points, eliminate wordiness, and present

your ideas as concisely as possible. Short and succinct will win them over. Incomplete, missing or unclear sections in the application eliminate the proposal for consideration.

9. **Revise, edit and clarify.** After writing the best draft you can, put it aside and let it settle as long as possible. Then go back and reread the document. Does it make sense? Are there gaps? Are the word choices appropriate and the grammar pristine? Have one or two other people, who are willing to give you honest feedback, read the proposal. You may want to consider reading the proposal out loud to someone who is unfamiliar with the content, or who familiar with grant proposal writing. Sometimes reading aloud will tell us where the wording is awkward, and certainly if the listener says "huh?" a lot, you know you have work to do.

10. **Go back and read the funder's guidelines again.** Have you done what they asked?