

**Grant  
Writing  
101**

**An Introduction  
to Grant Writing  
for Librarians  
and Educators**

# Librarian to Librarian Networking Summit

**East Carolina University**

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# So you wanna be a grant writer?

Librarians make the best grant writers!

- We are great at research
- We are proficient readers and writers
- We understand the big picture

A grant proposal is a complete and unified piece of writing that presents a logical, top-down argument beginning with the problem and ending with the solution.

It relies upon the skillful use of language and graphic design to communicate accurately and effectively to the reader.

An effective proposal requires the use of factual data obtained from valid sources to substantiate need and report results.

A winning proposal convinces readers that everything else is in place to make the idea work if they buy the idea.



# **PRINCIPLE #1**

**“Begin at the  
beginning, go on to  
the end, and then  
stop.”**

**The Mad Hatter**

# **ANATOMY OF A PROPOSAL**

# Part 1: Needs Assessment, Need for Project, Community Assessment

- Introduce readers to the community
- Describe existing conditions, needs and resources
- Define problem to be solved by project

## Part 2: Project Description, Project Design, Goals and Objectives

- Describe actual operation of project
- Explain what program will accomplish
- Link all program activities to needs established in Part 1

## Part 3: Evaluation

- Describe how progress toward goals will be measured and documented
- Link evaluation to project design and needs assessment
- Seek both formative and summative data
- Consider employing a professional evaluator

## Part 4: Management

- Outline how project will be administered if funds are awarded
- Describe structure and capacity of applicant organization
- Address fiscal accountability

## Part 5: Budget

- Outline how funds will be used
- Explain usage of funds in budget narrative
- Use realistic numbers for expenses and in-kind contributions

## Other miscellaneous parts may include:

- *Abstract*
- *Table of Contents*
- *Letters of Support*
- *Assurances and Certifications*
- *Memoranda of Understanding*
- *Organizational charts*
- *Resumes*



# **PRINCIPLE #2**

**Write for the reader**

**(who may know little  
about your cause and  
may care less.)**

**Readers do not know you.**

**Readers do not care about you,  
your students, or your school.**

**Readers do not trust you with  
their money.**

**Your job is to make readers  
know you,  
care about you, your students,  
and your school,  
and trust you with their money.**

They will never see your  
face, meet your students,  
or shake your hand

**The only tool you've  
got is your words.**

- Leave nothing to the readers' imagination. Write with precision and clarity, plainly describing your needs and objectives.
- Avoid fuzzy language. Quantify anything and everything you can. Don't use words like "many," "few," "some," "most." Learn to use data sources like the U.S. Census, ABC tools, DPI website, etc. Make objectives measurable whenever possible.
- Avoid jargon; spell out all acronyms the first time you use them; assume readers are not educators or don't understand how we do business in North Carolina.

# **PRINCIPLE #3**

**The devil is in the  
details.**

**Read and re-read proposal  
guidelines and follow all  
instructions precisely or  
your application may be  
DISQUALIFIED.**

Note essential details like number of pages allowed, margins, font size and style, line spacing, number of copies to send, and *COLOR OF INK* used for signatures.

# *Seek and rectify all:*

- Spelling and grammar errors (Do not trust "Spell Check" or "Grammar Check")
- Typos
- Inconsistencies (factual, stylistic, graphic)
  - Printing problems
- Omissions/oversights



Your trustworthiness and capacity to implement the project you have proposed will be judged not only by the words you write but by the care you demonstrate in the writing and submission of your proposal

Contact the grantor if you still have questions, even if your questions seem picky.

Grantors will be reluctant to trust you with their money if you appear careless in your proposal.

*Would you give  
a million  
bucks to a guy  
who looked  
like a bum?*

# CAUTION

**Before proceeding with any grantseeking efforts, discuss your idea with your principal or supervisor. Your school or district may have administrative procedures and policies that must be followed regarding grants. Be especially wary of grants that require matching funds or obligate you, your students, your school, or your district to ANYTHING, whether monetary or non-monetary, which you may be unable or unwilling to fulfill.**

**Also be aware that the school or district authorizing the project is the recipient of the award, not the teacher who writes the proposal. Grant funds are deposited in the school or district account and materials and/or equipment purchased with grant funds are owned by the school in which a teacher works and not by the individual teacher.**

*In other words...*

*Be careful what you wish for,*

**as the person authorizing submission of a grant proposal is legally obligated to do everything proposed and/or required if funds are awarded. Seeking forgiveness instead of gaining permission is not a good choice when money and contracts are involved.**