

## **Proposal Development Process > The Proposal**

If you are submitting a proposal to an agency with specific guidelines, follow those guidelines closely. Often applications that do not follow guidelines, organization, content, format, etc., exactly are returned to the Principal Investigator without being reviewed. When such guidelines are unavailable, use the following elements of a good proposal.

**NOTE:** The proposal must be well written, self-contained, and flawless. Have a competent and knowledgeable person review the proposal. The proposal should be explicit, clear, complete, impartial, orderly, accurate, and simple in language. Anticipate reviewer questions. Write for the reviewer. Do not force the reviewer to read between the lines.

### **Guidelines**

#### **Introduction**

##### **Title Page**

Title of project, name and address of applicant organization, name of agency to receive proposal, inclusive dates of project, total budget request, signatures of authorized personnel approving submission (from applicant agency), and date of submission. The title page may be followed by other pages giving assurances that the institution is complying with a variety of federal regulations.

##### **Table of Contents**

Usually this piece is not done for short proposals. Some agencies dictate the format of this page.

##### **Abstract**

Summary of the proposal with brief review of the major points in the statement of need, objectives, procedures, evaluation, and dissemination components; should stress the end product(s). Usually 250-500 words. Lay language.

##### **Introduction**

Background information on applicant organization and introduction to structure of the proposal. May highlight some particularly pertinent information, e.g., an unusually well-qualified staff or an exceptionally critical need.

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### **Project Description**

#### **Statement of Needs**

Clear and precise statement of the problem to be addressed and the need for solution. Should establish significance, relevance, timeliness, generalizability, and benefits of the project. Innovativeness of proposed methodology may also be substantiated. Usually includes references to previous research or earlier works. Statistical data describing the need is also cited.

#### **Goals**

General statement, described in qualitative terms, of what is to be accomplished at some future date.

## **Objectives**

A specific indication of the proposed outcomes of the project stated as objectives, hypotheses and/or questions. Should flow logically from the identified needs, problems, and goals.

## **Methodology**

Description of how the objectives will be met or the hypothesis or questions tested. In non-research projects, usually starts with descriptions of the overall approach and then gets into details about the methodology, participants, organization, and timeliness. In research projects, usually describes design, population and sample, data and instrumentation, analysis, and time schedule. The section should end with clear identification of both short-term and long-term products expected.

## **Evaluation (formative and summative evaluation)**

Statement of how the applicant organization and the funding agency will know the project has accomplished its purpose. States purpose of evaluation and type of information to be collected; describes instruments, data collection, analysis, and utilization; tells how results will be reported. Should provide evaluation criteria for each objective.

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## **Conclusion**

## **Future Funding**

Plans to provide future funding if program is to be continued; discusses both maintenance and future program funding if program is for construction; accounts for other needed expenditure if program includes purchase of equipment.

## **Dissemination of Results**

Summary of how the final product and findings will be shared with others. Details reports to be given to the funding agency.

## **Facilities and Equipment**

Description of facilities and equipment required and how these will be provided. Also describes any unique equipment or facilities available to applicant organization which will facilitate the project.

## **Personnel**

Survey of the personnel who will work on the project, their roles, backgrounds, and credentials. Includes vitae of key project personnel. If new staff are needed, details how many, what type, and how they will be selected. Includes a description of the project's administrative organization. Identifies individuals who will serve as consultants, describes their backgrounds, and justifies their use.

## **Budget**

Cost of the project. Usually divided into categories such as personnel, supplies and materials, travel, data processing, facilities or equipment, and indirect costs or administrative services.

### **Appendices**

Includes relevant materials too lengthy to include in the text, vitae for key project personnel on large projects, letters of endorsement or support, documentary material such as maps, graphs, charts, bibliographies, etc.