



## Fundraising **Tips** From Funders

### **Do Your Homework:**

Pay close attention to guidelines, policies and procedures. Do not try to “fit” your organization or program into the guidelines simply to obtain funding. Don’t try to “Shoe Horn It”, typically this is very obvious and will result in an instant decline.

### **Keep It Simple:**

Be concise in all of your correspondence, particularly your cover letter. Make it a maximum of three pages and summarize the organization, the purpose of the request and other pertinent information critical to the decision. In the cover letter, please provide an “ask”. So many times organizations will send a request with no dollar ask.

### **Be Relevant:**

Demonstrate how your organization or project benefits the company’s service community or business. Do NOT approach simply on the basis that you are a customer of the company. Does the project or organization provide an opportunity for the company to brand its name, engage its employees as volunteers, or provide **positive** public exposure.

### **Be Accountable:**

Think scope and impact (be honest). Quantify where able and tie the project to specific targets and dates. Think like a business – if applicable and able, provide a cost-benefit analysis.

### **Writing Matters:**

Funders receive a significant number of requests – make it an easy read for them. Proposals should be organized, well-written and grammatically correct.

### **Be Complete:**

Does your application address all required items, and meet space limitations (if applicable).

### **Proof Read:**

Remember to proof read. Common errors include: sending it to the right person/address but with the wrong company name; company name is wrong throughout the letter/proposal; or the person receiving the proposal is no longer with the company.

### **Be Patient:**

Once the proposal is submitted, do not call the next day for an update. Give some grace to the individual responsible for managing the process. There can be a significant volume of requests to review and will require time to manage. This is particularly true for corporate foundations

### **Be Prepared:**

Think of alternate, non-financial ways that the company can support your organization such as donation of in-kind services (ex.: older computers), volunteers, board representation, or provision of training.

### **Trust the Application Process:**

The end-run’s to senior management – meaning going outside of the application process to get a proposal considered or circumvent the process - may work in the short term however over the long haul, it will come back to haunt your organization. Trust that we do our homework and involve all parties who have a vested interest.

### **Take Each Year As If It Is The First:**

Don’t assume past funding is a guarantee for future support. The competition for the limited resources is fierce and, while relationships are developed over the long term, funders must be open to new ideas and projects. This may mean what was supported in one year may not be supported the next.

### **Be a Friend to the Environment:**

Only send one copy of the proposal unless directed otherwise. Do not send bulky, 3-ring binders, they get trashed immediately, so save the expense. Only send videotapes if absolutely necessary for your proposal. Most times, these are discarded immediately. There is typically no time to watch a video.



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### Good Practice List

- (1) Frame the Problem Upfront – “we have a problem with urban education, school breakfast, etc”
  - a. National context, competitive landscape?
  - b. Local context, how do you distinguish your work from others in your community?
- (2) We have a solution – it will work locally, there is national evidence
- (3) Ask for money you get advice, ask for advice you get money
- (4) What are going to do with the grant
- (5) Reference both macro “statistics” and tell anecdotes
- (6) How does your work spread, grow?
- (7) Name drop – other funders, who sent you
- (8) Who is the team working on this
- (9) One size fits all does not work – tailor the pitch
  - a. Know you potential donor

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