Writing a $uccessful Funding Proposal

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ATTACHED SAMPLES: INQUIRY LETTER, COVER LETTER, COVER SHEET AND BUDGET

TIPS FOR GRANT AND PROPOSAL WRITERS

These tips are invaluable. Read them before you begin your writing and again when you feel you have finished.

- ✓ Before starting the application process, be clear about what you want to accomplish. Draw up a long-range plan that projects goals at least three years ahead.

- ✓ Research potential funding thoroughly – a cursory look through a foundation directory isn't good enough. There are volumes of information available through the Internet. Once you have researched, apply what you have learned. DO NOT ignore a grantor's guidelines in the hopes of "fitting" your proposal into their niche.

- ✓ Once you verify available funding by submitting a "letter of intent/inquiry", divide your efforts into three further phases: Writing the proposal, marketing, and management.

- ✓ Writing the proposal should take only about 30% of your time. Try to get program officials to review a 3 – 5 page summary of your plan first, to make sure you are on the right track.

- ✓ Basic rules of proposal writing: Do not ask for more than you need; take your time writing the proposal; never lie; never use the same application twice; be up front about asking for money; and do not waste the reviewer's time – get to the point.

- ✓ Don't overlook marketing. It should take at least 10% of your time. Make sure your organization will appeal to a potential grantor, try to look professional and involve key organizational and/or community figures where possible.

- ✓ Management is vital. You must be able to demonstrate that you have the management skills and experience that can deliver success.

- ✓ ALWAYS work to a timetable. The deadline date is not the due date. Submit your proposal early. Whatever you do though, DO NOT SUBMIT THE PROPOSAL AFTER THE DEADLINE. If you don't have time to do it properly, don't compete for the grant at all.

- ✓ Give thought to the idea of a cooperative proposal. Many grantors, particularly federal agencies, like applications where more than one organization is involved. But it is important that a formal and informal relationship already exists between grantees.

- ✓ When dealing with any granting entity, remember to read the instructions before applying. It sounds simple, but grant competitions live by two rules: 1. The grantor is always right, and 2. When in doubt, refer to the first rule.

- ✓ Don't just tell the grantor about the existence of the problem you intend to solve; prove it with statistics, case studies, testimony, and any other measurable data that supports your position.

- ✓ Know your budget. It is probably the first thing a grantor will look at in your proposal. It needs to be realistic and give credibility to your entire proposal. Make sure the figures are correct and that the budget accurately reflects your needs. Keep a record of how you arrived at your costs.

- ✓ If your proposal does not win support, keep calm. Eighty-five (85) percent of applications are rejected by foundations. Most grantors do not provide feedback or even notification of a rejection. Go back over your proposal carefully to see if you can find places where it might have been stronger.

- ✓ The key to a strong proposal is simplicity. Don't waste words. Grantors are looking for a proposal that will succeed, so keep things clear, actual, supportable and professional.

- ✓ When dealing with foundation or corporate grants, don't under estimate the importance of the original contact letter. Make it as strong as possible and keep it to the point.

- ✓ Other writing tips:
  1. Avoid filling your proposal with jargon and acronyms
  2. Begin each section with a strong, clear sentence
  3. Don't go overboard, but do try to make your proposal interesting
  4. Check with the grantor to see if there is a desired format, typestyle, etc.

PRIMARY SOURCES OF FUNDS FOR NONPROFITS

Philanthropic giving in the U.S. reached a historic high in 2002 of $240.92 billion.

Corporate gifts were $12.19 billion.
Foundation gifts were $26.9 billion.
Individual gifts were $183.73 billion.
Bequests were $18.1 billion.

Seven Primary Sources of Funds

Government funds: Federal, state, county and city.

Foundations: Includes private foundations that normally tend to give by subject area and community foundations that normally give by geographic area.

Corporations: Philanthropic money can be given by the corporate entity or by the corporate foundation. Corporate foundations can be researched; information on corporate entity giving is not publicly available.

Fees for service: This includes charging clients, patrons, customers, and others for the services of a nonprofit program.

Special projects: Includes special events (celebrity tennis match), bake sales, car wash, silent auction, etc.

United Way or Combined Federal Campaign: Continuing support funds for a selected group of agencies in a given geographic area.

Individuals: Represents the largest segment of giving in the U.S.; approximately 76% of the philanthropic dollar comes from individuals. Individuals make (1) Outright gifts of cash, securities or other assets, and (2) Deferred or planned gifts (trusts, pooled income funds and insurance policies).

In this book, we will address the requirements for securing funding from Foundations – Corporate, Private and/or Community – Grants.

WHAT IS A GRANT?

Simple definition: A source of funds which an organization or corporation wishes to donate for a worthy cause. Most grants are awarded for specific programs, activities or projects.

Funding organizations are much more likely to fund small grants -- $500 to $5,000 – than large ones. However, grant awards can and do go into the millions of dollars. One important point to remember as you begin your fundraising activity into the area of grants is ***don't get greedy!***

Types of grant proposals:

- Program proposal. To provide one or more services to individuals, families, groups, or communities.
- Research proposal. To study a problem, group of people or organization or to evaluate a service or program.
- Training proposal. To offer training and educational programs to individuals, groups, organizations or communities.
- Planning proposal. To provide planning, coordination, and networking in connection with a problem or among a group of organizations or programs.
- Technical assistance proposal. To provide assistance to groups, agencies, and organizations in developing, implementing, and managing programs, studies or other activities.
- Capital improvement proposal. To build or remodel buildings and acquire equipment.

There are other types of grant proposals. However, these six are the major types.

Determine your funding need(s). Only a few funding bodies grant money for general operating expenses. Identify a specific need. Then pick four or five sources (at the very least) to apply for funding. To only pick one would drastically reduce your chances of securing funding. Remember the earlier statistic – 85% of grant applications are rejected. That means if you submit 10 grant proposals, you stand a better chance of getting one funded. However, do not inundate the foundation/corporate world with dozens of different proposals. Pick a specific need and stick with it until you get funded.

Funding needs might be:

Scholarships for cadets to attend a special activity
A new squadron building (or a new roof for the old building.)
Cadet uniforms
Sponsorships for teachers to become AE members

Remember, writing a successful funding proposal begins with an idea or vision – the identification of a problem (need) and your hope to solve it through the acquisition of money, equipment, or supplies.

WHERE DO I FIND FUNDING SOURCES?

In this electronic age, you can find all of the information you need right from your computer on the Internet. There are specifically designed databases that offer an abundance of information on funding sources. Be aware though that some do charge a fee.

The following sites are excellent resources to do your search and in most cases are all you will need:

http://fdncenter.org This is the site for The Foundation Center. They do charge if you want to access their entire databases. However, there are ample foundations listed for free.

http://dir.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/issues_and_causes/philanthrophy/organizations/grant_making_foundations This is one of the best sites I have found.

http://www.foundations.org

http://www.guidestar.org Fee is involved.

http://www.cof.org/links/memberindex.htm

http://www.pnnonline.org

http://www.grantselect.com

http://www.philanthropy.com/grants

Approximately 56,500 foundations exist today. Of these, only 2,018 are corporate foundations. The number of corporate foundations has decreased for the past several years. Thirty percent (30%) of corporate giving is in-kind gifts, not money.

Finding corporations and business funding on the Internet is sometimes as easy as remembering their name or abbreviation; for example, the Internet address for IBM is www.ibm.com. Some corporations such as IBM include corporate giving information on their Web site.

For corporate giving information, the best Internet sources include:
www.wealthid.com
www.hoovers.com
www.bizjournals.com
and even the Securities and Exchange Commission (www.sec.gov) provides helpful information.

For government funding, you can't beat what the U.S. Government gives away. Begin with *The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* found at www.cfda.gov. Every federal funding program is listed in full detail. Click on "Search Catalog (FAPRS)" to get to the very straightforward searching screen.

Some states, counties and even cities are beginning to list similar kinds of information on their home pages. Go to the state's home page and do a search for "grants." Some cities do the same.

If you do not have access to a computer, go to the Foundation Center in your public library. There you should be able to find

large volumes listing foundations and the type of activities funded.

Whether you get the information from the Internet or from the public library, you should be able to find all the information you need to write a successful funding proposal. Most sources will list:

Name of the foundation
Areas of interest
Type of projects funded
Eligibility requirements
Geographic restrictions
Award amounts
Projects previously funded
Application procedure
Contact name and position*
Dates to submit application

*It is always a good idea before submitting your proposal to call the foundation office and confirm the name and position of the contact person and the correct address.

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

Research. Writing a successful grant involves much more than filling out an application form or caring deeply about your cause. You need to have detailed knowledge of the organization, the community and the funding source. You must first do the research. A grant writer should spend at least sixty percent (60%) of his or her time in preparation – talking with and interviewing fellow members and leaders in the community, researching the appropriate funding source(s) and contacting the funding source with questions.

Identify the types of causes your potential funding sources support. Read their application guidelines and determine what they have funded in the past year. Look for categories of interest that correspond to your programs. Those that provide a broad spectrum of services have a greater chance of getting funded.

To build collaboration for your request, talk to community leaders to gather statistics to back your cause. Make sure your cause has a “shelf life” of more than a year, because so often at least a year will pass between applying for a grant and actually receiving a check.

Part of your research is to send a "letter of intent." The letter should tell the funder who you are, what you are seeking support for, and how much you are requesting. It should be addressed to the foundation's executive director (or appropriate program officer) or the corporation's contributions officer. Use organizational letterhead and have the squadron, group or wing commander sign the letter. Be concise and clear. The letter should not be longer than a page and a half. Include the following information:

- **WHO YOU ARE:** State what the organization is (always state you are a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization), who you serve, where you are located, and how long you have been in existence. Keep in mind that you are stating your credibility as an organization to carry out a contract with the funding source.

- **WHAT YOU PROPOSE TO DO:** Briefly describe your project, including the cost, duration, and population served. Emphasize the results, not the means. State why there is a need for the project. Be specific. Tell why the organization is capable of carrying out the proposed idea.

- **WHAT YOU ARE ASKING FOR:** Attach a dollar amount to your request and ask if you might submit a proposal for your project. State whether you will follow up the letter with a phone call. Thank the funder for his/her time and attention.

Note: Take the time to find out the name and title of the individual to whom you should address your letter. Do not send a "Dear Sir:" or "To Whom it May Concern" letter. This is a sure way to kill any deal you may have been able to close.

Once the need is determined and funding sources identified, you are ready to begin writing.

...BUT BEFORE YOU BEGIN WRITING THE PROPOSAL...

...you should know that a funding proposal serves four main functions: (1) a program plan (2) a request (3) a promise, and (4) an instrument of persuasion.

(1) A program plan – a written statement that represents a particular program or project that your organization would like to undertake. For you, it represents a set of guidelines for implementing the program. To the funder, it is an indication of your program planning ability. Therefore, it's important that the proposal clearly indicate all of the major activities that will be carried out and how they will be organized and implemented.

(2) A request – the second function of a proposal is that it represents a request for the allocations of financial resources from the funding source, which means that the proposal should clearly indicate the exact amount of money being requested, what specific items the money will be spent for, and a justification of the need for each major item.

(3) A promise – the third part of your proposal is a promise. You will make a commitment to the funder that certain things will be done during a specified time period at a specific cost.

(4) Persuasion – the fourth function of a proposal is that it is an instrument of persuasion. Through the proposal you will seek to persuade some person or organization to support the proposed

activity by allocating funds to it. In addition to providing money, the funding source normally lends its name to the project, helping to legitimize the project. Money and legitimization are not easily disbursed, so the funders need to be convinced that their support should be granted.

WRITING THE PROPOSAL

There are different forms and formats for proposals. Every funder has different guidelines, priorities, deadlines and timetables. Some funders accept a Common Application Form (CAF), a single proposal accepted by a number of grant-makers to help grant-seekers save time and streamline the grant application process.

Always follow the exact specifications of the grant-makers in their grant applications and guidelines. Full funding proposals are generally a maximum of 15 pages (single-spaced) and include these components:

- Cover Page
- Cover letter – 1 page
- Cover Sheet (Summary) – 1/2 to 1 page
- Introduction
- Narrative, to include – 8 to 10 pages
  Introduction
  Needs assessment
  Goals and Objectives
  Methodology
  Evaluation
- Budget
- Qualifications – 1 to 2 pages
- Conclusion – 1/2 page
- Appendices

Present your full proposal neatly, professionally, and in an organized package. Do not bind your proposal or hole-punch it and put in a three-ring binder with tabs. The funder will want to make copies. You may put in a folder with the cover letter in the left pocket and your proposal (stapled, if you choose) in the right

pocket. Type and single-space all proposals. Write, organize and present your proposal in the order listed in the application and guidelines. ONLY include the information and materials specifically requested by the grant-maker. **The proposal is judged on content and presentation, not weight.**

Unless required, do not include an index or table of contents (unless requested in the guidelines), be sure to have someone in a leadership capacity sign it and submit the number of copies requested by the grant-maker.

Some preliminary considerations as you begin…

The average person's span of attention when reading is ten (10) minutes. After that, scanning will begin.

GRAB THEIR ATTENTION. What can you do to make sure that your writing captures and keeps your reader's attention?

- Use **boldface,** UPPERCASE, underlined, or *italicized* type for key words, phrases, or sections.
- Use single spacing, but with wide margins on all sides.
- Use bullets to list key points.
- Use graphics – lots of them.

Next, consider the paper that you use. Use good quality paper. Gray, buff, white, or off-white is equally acceptable. Only use black ink.

NEVER USE ANYTHING BUT WHITE PAPER WITH STATE OR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS.

Before you begin…

…select a name for the project. A tried and true fact: The project name will serve as a driving force to help you in writing your funding proposal. It should be brief, suggestive of purpose, and memorable.

TWO ORDERS FOR WRITING AND ORGANIZING

Your proposal will have two orders: The writing order and the final project order

The Writing Order

- Introduction
- Needs assessment
- Goals and Objectives
- Methodology
- Evaluation
- Budget
- Qualifications
- Conclusion
- Cover Sheet
- Cover Page
- Cover letter
- Appendices

Final Project Order

- Cover letter (loose, not attached to the proposal)
- Cover page (also known as the title page)
- Cover sheet (case statement and summary)
- Introduction (who, what, when and where of CAP)
- Needs assessment (what is the problem?)
- Goals and objectives (what are the outcomes?)
- Methodology (your plan of operation, detailed solution)
- Evaluation (how will you measure the effectiveness)
- Budget (try to tie each dollar requested to an objective. Ask, does the money match the request?)
- Qualifications (what resources are already available to you to help realize the outcome)
- Conclusion (a brief, concise summary of your proposal)
- Appendices (additional attachments required by the funder, i.e. verification of tax-exempt status, listing of Board of Directors, etc.

Use the "Writing Order" when composing your proposal. Use the "Final Project Order" when organizing your proposal.

ACCEPTABLE FORMAT FOR MOST FOUNDATIONS

Three primary elements:

The Cover Letter
The Introduction
Cover sheet (Case Statement or Summary)

These three items will most likely take the funding representative minutes to read. This will be your best shot, so give it just that! After this he/she will skim the document or they will continue to read with great interest depending upon how well you grabbed their interest.

THE COVER LETTER

Your cover letter will determine if the funding body will read your proposal. It will be the motivating factor in determining if you are indeed better than the competition. So follow the following points closely. It could determine success or rejection. Your letter should....

....be brief
....be short (one page is good)
....proclaim the urgency of the problem you propose to address
....say something different
....cite dramatic need or unique quality
....highlight outstanding endorsements
....offer to provide additional information

Finally, show evidence of organizational commitment to your proposal through the cover letter. Commitment by the board of directors is required by some funding sources. In most cases the letter should be signed by a top authoritative figure within the squadron/wing/organization.

WRITING THE PROPOSAL

INTRODUCTION

Be different. Make your proposal stand out from the rest.
Your introduction is the *who, what,* and *where* of CAP and your squadron/wing...a mental trip through Civil Air Patrol.

- Introduce the organization.
- Where is the organization located?
- What is the purpose of the organization?

Length of the introduction: No more than one to one and a half double spaced pages.

Use factual information about the organization:

- Legal name of organization.
- Address, city and state of your location.
- Interesting information about your area -- demographics (unemployment, average income, population, etc.), what is unique about your county, city, squadron, etc.
- The date the organization was founded.
- Circumstances leading up to the organization's establishment (CAP has a tremendously interesting and exciting beginning -- BE excited about it.)
- The organization's mission.
- The population you serve -- type and size.
- Unique qualities of your squadron/wing.
- The organization's/squadron's/wing's niche or area of expertise, awards, or recognition.

COVER SHEET (Case Statement/Summary)

Another name for this section is the executive summary. This is your case statement and proposal summary. It is guaranteed that this section will be read prior to the rest of the proposal.

Here you MUST introduce the proposal, present a clear, concise summary of proposal and visual framework of project and include the following:

- Your contact information
- Purpose of the funding request
- Needs/problems
- Objectives
- Methods
- Total project cost
- Amount you are requesting

The key word is concise! Remember this section is to a half page to one page.

<u>NEEDS ASSESSMENT</u> *(3 – 4 pages)*

ALWAYS provide a transition statement from one section of your proposal to the next.
Example: At the end of the "Introduction" you might write, *"The purpose of this request is to enlist (garner, elicit, encourage, seek*) your support for Project (name of project)."*

Use a Thesaurus. Everyone doesn't have the vocabulary of Webster.

Your introduction will establish your credibility. Your "Needs Assessment" will demonstrate your ability to <u>plan</u> a good program.

NEVER, NEVER list a "lack of money" as the need!
Everyone understands you are asking for money. It is a given.

Objectively address a specific situation, opportunity, problem, issue, need and the community (audience) your proposal addresses. Support your statement with qualified third-party research/evidence to justify the need or problem.

Only describe and document the situation that will be dealt with if you are awarded the funding. DO NOT go into the method you will use to deal with the situation --- save that for later.

Clearly and concisely demonstrate that a need exists. In this section you should....

- Use the most impacting language in your entire proposal.
- Use factual terms supported by statistics.
- Use quotes from authorities.
- Make a case for the problem/project on a local level.
- Use hard-hitting language and information.
- provide a heart-wrenching picture of the need if possible.

FOUR RULES FOR WRITING YOUR STATEMENT OF NEED:

1. Make a logical connection between the organization's background and the problems and/or needs with which you propose to work.

2. Clearly define the problem(s), need(s) with which you intend to work. Make sure that what you propose is workable -- that it can be done within a reasonable timeframe, by your organization/squadron/wing and with a reasonable amount of money.

3. **Support the existence of the problem/need with evidence.** Statistics, statements from groups in the community concerned about the problem/need, from individuals involved with similar or related situations, and from other organizations working in your community and from professionals in the area.

4. Be realistic. Don't try and solve all the problems of the world in the next six months.

Give careful consideration to your presentation in this section. This is not the area to project hope or a solution. It is worth repeating -- that will come later. AVOID using the phrase "a lack of" anything. To do so denotes a lack of method, also.

<u>GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</u> *(1 – 2 pages)*

Describe the outcome of the proposal in measurable terms, in a succinct description of the proposed project outcome and accomplishment. In other words, provide a clear statement of the purpose of your project (your opening paragraph) and…

List your attainable goals in rank order with objectives following each goal. Think each goal through carefully. Make certain it is measurable and fits the definition listed below:

- ✓ Goals – Outcomes. What you want your project to accomplish by the end of the funding period.
- ✓ Objectives – Measurable steps your project will take to achieve the related goal and address the problem introduced in the Needs Assessment.

Program goals and objectives should include:

- ♦ Minimum of one goal for each problem or need in the problem or statement.
- ♦ Description of the benefiting population.
- ♦ Performance – the action that occurs within a specific time frame at an expected proficiency.
- ♦ Process – the method by which the action will occur.
- ♦ Product – the tangible results from the action's performance and process.

METHODOLOGY *(4+ pages)*

Your methods will flow from your objectives. Make them understandable and include detail.

Describe the process to be used to achieve the performance and product, in a rational, direct, chronological description of the proposed project; actions that will accomplish your objectives; impact of your proposed activities, how they will benefit the community and who will carry out the activities; time frame for your project/program; long-term strategies for maintaining the on-going project/program.

Methodology should include:

- Restatement of the problems and objectives
- Clear description and explanation of program/project scope and activities
- Sequence of activities and staffing
- Time line of activities

A timetable should be included to indicate when you intend to accomplish the project objectives. Don't underestimate the time it will take to accomplish your goals, just because you think it sounds good in your proposal. Do not use specific dates in this section. You do not know when funds will be awarded. Use *month 1, month 2*. Timetables should include the titles of persons responsible in the narrative portion of this section.

A flowchart tracking the flow of each activity (objective) is helpful, but takes more time to develop. Various software programs can lessen preparation time.

This is not the section to skimp on. The “keep it short and simple” rule does not apply in the Methodology section of your proposal. UNLESS the guidelines provided by the foundation state a “one page” plan or methodology. ALWAYS go by any guidelines provided.

EVALUATION *(2 pages)*

The evaluation portion of your proposal will have two components:

- The **outcome evaluation**
- The **process evaluation**

Outcome evaluation – measures the results of your program. Did the program (1) achieve its stated objectives? And (2) show how this accomplishment can be attributed to the program.

Process evaluation – determine whether it has been conducted in a manner consistent with the proposal's plan, and the relationship and impact that other CAP programs had on the project's success.

If you do not include an evaluation plan, the foundation will use its own plan and it may be much more critical of the program than if you provide your own plan.

Provide a brief paragraph stating who will conduct the evaluation. Sometimes an outside evaluator will do the evaluation. You can provide for the cost of the evaluation in your budget.

Identify what you hope to learn for the results of the project evaluation – for example, problem areas, areas of strength, areas to improve, and ways to redirect your efforts.

BUDGET

Make sure the budget you submit is a **well thought-out, well-researched** estimate of what your project will cost.

Offer a detailed narrative on each final line item in your budget. Include specifics on personnel costs, fringe benefits, travel costs, equipment, supplies, construction and any other expenses.

You may want to break out your budget into categories:

Personnel costs
Non-personnel costs
Indirect costs

Personnel costs will include a listing of all full and part-time staff in the proposed program. Even if the staff is a volunteer, show the time the volunteer(s) will be spending and assign a value to that. Funding bodies often require the organization to "donate" 20% to 25% of the grant amount. Volunteer time can account for this.

Non-personnel costs will include space costs (facilities), rental, lease or purchase of equipment, supplies, travel, and other costs.

Indirect costs are defined by the federal government as "those costs of an institution that are not readily identifiable with a particular project or activity, but nevertheless are necessary to the general operation of the institution and the conduct of the activities it performs." This could include operating and maintaining buildings and equipment, depreciation, general telephone expenses, etc.

You will want to mention any other money or grants you are receiving in support of the proposed project. *Don't be afraid to mention other grants or funds – it usually works in your favor if the foundation knows that others have committed to the success of your project.*

QUALIFICATIONS (Capacity)

What is the capacity of CAP (or your squadron or wing) to implement and manage this project?

What assurances can you give the funding source?

If the project is part of CAP's long-range strategic plan, then discuss the plan and how this project fits.

Some, but not all of the following areas can be addressed in this section:

- Commitment to the proposed project
- Fiscal capacity
- Program capacity
- **Future intention of responsibility for the program after funding period is over**
- Adequacy of budget
- Effective management plan

CONCLUSION *(Not always required, but if included no more than half a page.)*

If included, present a brief, concise summary of your proposal that states your case problem, solution and sources/uses of project/program funds.

APPENDICES

Additional attachments are usually required at the funder's discretion. Typical appendices generally include:

- Verification of tax-exempt status (IRS determination letter)
- Certificate of Incorporation and By-Laws
- Listing of officers and Board of Directors
- Financial statements for the last completed fiscal year (audited preferred)
- Current general operating budget
- List of other current funding sources and uses
- Biographies of key personnel (only if requested)
- Support letters or endorsements (limited number)
- Diagrams for equipment or schematics for building requests (if applicable)

PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

As you prepare your foundation request, the following checklist will help keep you focused on what each section should include. It is designed as an aid to the proposal writer to highlight necessary components that should be considered when writing a full-length proposal.

Cover Letter:

- ❑ Is correctly addressed to the proper person
- ❑ States what you propose to do
- ❑ States why your project is important
- ❑ Contains the dates of the project
- ❑ Highlights potential accomplishments
- ❑ Specifies the total support requested
- ❑ Signed by the proper person

Summary:

- ❑ Appears at the beginning of the proposal
- ❑ Identifies the squadron/wing, etc…as the grant application
- ❑ Includes at least one sentence on credibility
- ❑ Includes at least one sentence on the problem/needs
- ❑ Includes at least one sentence on objectives
- ❑ Includes at least one sentence on methods
- ❑ Includes total cost, funds already obtained, and amount requested
- ❑ Is brief, clear, and interesting

Introduction:

- ❑ Clearly establishes who is applying for funds
- ❑ Describes your purpose and goals
- ❑ Describes CAP's missions and activities
- ❑ Provides evidence of CAP's accomplishments
- ❑ Offers statistics in support of accomplishments
- ❑ Offers endorsements in support of accomplishments
- ❑ Supports qualifications in area of activity in which funds are sought
- ❑ Leads logically to the problem statement
- ❑ Is as brief as possible
- ❑ Is interesting

Needs Assessment:

- ❑ Relates to the goals of CAP/squadron/wing
- ❑ Project is of reasonable dimensions – not trying to solve too much
- ❑ Is supported by statistical evidence
- ❑ Is supported by statements of authority
- ❑ Is developed with input from others
- ❑ Makes no unsupported assumptions
- ❑ Is interesting and brief
- ❑ Makes a compelling case of support

Goals and objectives:

- ❑ Has at least one objective for each listed problem need
- ❑ Objectives are outcomes, not methods
- ❑ Objectives are measurable
- ❑ Describes the population that will benefit
- ❑ States the time by which objectives will be accomplished

Methodology

- ❑ Flows naturally from problems to objectives
- ❑ Clearly describes program activities
- ❑ States reasons for the selection of activities
- ❑ Describes sequence of activities
- ❑ Describes staffing of the program
- ❑ Describes clients and their selection

Evaluation:

- ❑ Presents a plan for evaluating accomplishments of objectives
- ❑ Has a plan to evaluate and change methods during grant period
- ❑ Tells who will do evaluation and how they were chosen
- ❑ Clearly states criteria of success
- ❑ Describes how data will be gathered
- ❑ Describes any evaluation reports to be produced

Budget:

- ❑ Tells the same story as the rest of the proposal
- ❑ Is detailed
- ❑ Contains no unexplained amounts
- ❑ Includes all items asked for by the foundation
- ❑ Separately details all non-personnel costs
- ❑ Indicates indirect costs, if used

Support Material:

- ❑ Is what was asked for included

- ❑ Is in proper order
- ❑ Is supportive of the proposal

"Don't assume that once you have the grant (money) in hand your obligation to the foundation has ended. The foundation would not have made the grant to you if it had not had a strong interest in your activities. Share lessons learned, successes, and failures honestly with the funding source as a way to inform them about future grant actions." *Northwest Area Foundation.*

"Effective fundraising is finding needs and interests and fulfilling them by talking to people. It is talking to people of influence, sharing dreams, and ideas, making bold plans and taking the risks necessary to achieve the results of those plans. Effective fundraising is commitment. Depth of commitment in wisdom, wealth, and work by professional and volunteer alike." *Boy Scouts of America, Irving, TX*

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Inquiry Letter

Generally, inquiry letters are no more than 2 or 3 pages, typed on letterhead, signed by CEO/Board Chair. Always follow the exact guidelines specified by grantmakers. This is a sample inquiry letter.

April 1, 200X

Mr. Grantmaker
CEO
Community Help Foundation
100 Main Street
Any-City, Any-State, Zip Code

Re: Letter of Inquiry

Dear Mr. Grantmaker:

Thank you for our recent meeting at the Community-Based Organization Conference where you were kind enough to visit with our staff and take the time to learn about our mission and current projects. We thoroughly enjoyed your visit with us, and sincerely appreciate your thoughtful attention to Neighborhood Improvement Association, Inc. (NIA)

Your interest in NIA is a significant acknowledgment of our successful track record of delivering superior community improvement projects for nearly 15 years.

We are aware that the Community Help Foundation distributes a number of grants for community improvement and development purposes. We wish to apply for one of the Foundation's grants.

NIA has enjoyed a significant growth within the last ten years. Last year, NIA launched 5 new programs, including a community day care center, computer training center, substance abuse program, and an alternative learning program for high school dropouts. A total of $15 million in community improvement projects in one year alone; an outstanding record of achievement. Our staff has doubled in an effort to effectively administer our new programs as well as keep pace with our organization's growing administrative responsibilities.

I am pleased to write to you about a project that I believe will be of interest to the Foundation. The NIA is seeking $550,000 over three years to expand its very successful Tech Ed (Technical Education) program to provide aggressive, hands-on computer training and alternative education programs in our inner-city neighborhoods.

Tech Ed is a highly effective 5-year-old academic enrichment program for inner-city junior high and high school students. Formed through a partnership between NIA, the local college and the city's school district, the program currently has a total enrollment of 500 students, and is funded by the school district and matching HUD CD funds which are administrated by the city.

The newly expanded PUTER (People Using Tech Ed Resources) outreach program will, utilizing the resources and leadership of Tech Ed students, bring computer skills and knowledge to high school drop-outs, underskilled and unemployed adults, single parents, and other community members lacking the adequate computer skills and educational resources needed to secure and maintain skilled jobs with which to support themselves and their families.

We are seeking support from the Foundation to enable us to develop a pilot PUTER program and demonstrate its soundness and effectiveness to the Tech Ed funders, the city, community development agencies, and local private funding sources for future funding of the long-term program.

We ask for your partnership because of the Foundation's demonstrated interest in alternative education and youth leadership development, especially for those from the underrepresented minority communities.

We critically need funds to launch this sorely needed computer training program, fund the equipment, software, and the resources of two teachers to oversee and assist the volunteer student educators. This equipment and support resources will constructively assist the 2,500 undereducated minority residents to be served by our new community service program. The ethnic composition is approximately 49% Hispanic, 39% African-American, 9% Asian-American, and 2% Other.

NIH has already raised an initial investment of more than $50,000 in absolutely necessary computer equipment toward a computer system, training and services budget of more than $1 million. We have worked hard to bridge the gap and anticipate receiving grants and donations totaling $300,000 from private sector sources, banks, foundations, and private donors.

Despite our general fundraising efforts, our program budget is far from balanced. Cuts in government financing continue, with more expected, especially those affecting our clients with income below poverty level.

Undaunted, NIH is an organization committed to excellence, with a clear vision and a passion for delivering outstanding results. We ask you to work with us to capitalize on our growth and these strengths.

Over the years the Foundation has proven the effectiveness of youth leadership development and community-based programs. The Foundation has helped to demonstrate the community outreach programs, which are developed and managed by a community for a community make a striking impact. With the partnership of the Foundation, our young Tech Ed leaders will bring vital alternative education and critically-needed training skills to their neighbors, family members and peers, and, in so doing, will effect positive change in their own communities.

Tech Ed student teachers will serve as a model outreach volunteer corps and for our inner-city neighborhoods throughout the country. The Tech Ed program has attracted national attention as an innovative prototype for academic enrichment, and has been replicated in at least four major cities already.

The challenge at this stage is to seize the opportunity, to take the risk, to realize an innovative, new, rewarding and productive future. With the strength that has made NIH and the Tech Ed program what it is today, the choice is an easy one—help our community meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

The need for effective computer training and education cannot be overstated. The technical training requirements of our community are overwhelming and mirror the needs of most other inner-city populations. The PUTER program is ready to be launched as a national model for all inner-city community organizations everywhere for building the future, uplifting individuals, and creating self-sufficiency.

Thank you for your support and assistance to NIH, and the community residents it serves. We look forward to your consideration of our request and the opportunity to submit a formal proposal for your review. We will be pleased to submit additional information at your request. Please do not hesitate to contact me at *(telephone number)*.

Sincerely,

Dolly Do-Good
Executive Director

Attachments: audited financial statement for the fiscal year ending December 31, 200X, IRS 501(c)(3) designation, and 200X annual report.

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Cover Letter

It is customary to provide a cover letter on your organization's letterhead, signed by the Chairman of the Board, CEO or Executive Director. This is a sample cover letter.

Date

Name, Title (Grantmaker Contact)
Foundation, Bank, Corporation (Grantmaker)
Address
City, State, Zip

RE: Name of Grant

(Name of Organization) is pleased to submit this request for your review. We look forward to your partnership in our cooperative efforts to rebuild (Name of Community).

Our proposal requests $ (amount of request) to launch our creative homeowner down payment revolving loan program to provide a 50/50 match down payment to enable the low and moderate income residents of (Name of Community) the opportunity to own their own homes.

Our homeownership down payment loan model is creative in promoting homeownership opportunities for the tenants of (Name of Organization) rental housing. This (Name of Grant) program supports the (Name of Grantmaker) objectives to promote community resident homeownership opportunities.

We have secured $ (Amount) funds to seed the program, have pre-qualified more than 100 community residents for down payment loans, and bring a 50/50 match for every dollar in this request.

For the last fifteen years, (Name of Organization) has successfully produced affordable housing in (Name of Organization). We have delivered more than 1000 units of affordable housing to our community. Your ongoing investment in our housing programs and projects will enable us to continue to effectively serve our impoverished community, and its working poor residents.

Thank you for your interest in (Name of Organization). We envision building upon our collaborative success by developing our homeownership down payment loan program with you.

Sincerely,

(Name of CEO/Board Chair)
(Title of CEO/Board Chair)

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Cover Sheet

Most grantmakers will request a cover sheet or executive summary. The cover sheet introduces your proposal to the grantmaker, and can be the most important part of your application. This is where you state your case and summarize your proposal. This is a sample cover sheet.

Date of Application: May XX, 200X

Name of organization. (exact legal name): Neighborhood Improvement Association, Inc. (NIA)

Purpose of grant (one sentence): NIA will use Urban Betterment Foundation funds to form a housing management company that will forge private and public partnerships to manage a portion of the City-owned or controlled low-income housing units in our community.

Address of organization: 100 Main Street, Any-City, Any-State, Zip Code

Telephone number: 888-800-8888

Executive director: Dolly Do-Good

Contact person and title (if not executive director): Grant Find, Director of Fundraising

Is your organization an IRS 501(c)(3) not-for-profit? (yes or no): Yes
If no, please explain:

Grant request: $25,000

> *Check one:*
> *General support:* X
> *Project support:* N/A

Total organization budget (for current fiscal year): $2,100,000

Budget Period (mo/day/year): January 1, 200X through December 31, 200X

Total project budget (if requesting project support): $25,000
Dates covered by project budget (mo/day/year): June 1, 200X through May 31, 200X
Project name (if applicable): Do-Good Housing Management Initiative

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Budget

Most grantmakers will request both a general operating budget and special projects budget (if applicable). Budgets are cost projections. They also show the funder how your project will be implemented and managed. Good budgets reflect carefully planned projects. This is a sample-operating budget.

Budget Purpose: _____General Operating Support _____Project Support
Budget Period: _____to _____

I. Income		II. Expense	
Sources	**Amount**	**Uses**	**Amount**
Revenue		**Support**	
Government grants & contracts		Salaries & Fringe Benefits (for period budgets detail each position to be funded)	
Banks & Foundations		Salaries, Fringe & OTPS	
Earned Income		Salaries, Fringe & OTPS	
Fundraising		Insurance & taxes	
Donations		Consultants & professional fees	
In-kind support		In-kind expenses	
I. TOTAL INCOME		**II. TOTAL EXPENSE**	
Detail of Other Than Personnel Services (OTPS)		Subtotal OTPS Expenses	
Banks & Foundations		Equipment	
Earned Income		Supplies	
Earned Income		Printing & copying	
Earned Income, Banks & Foundations		Telephone & fax	
Earned Income, Banks & Foundations		Postage & delivery	
Earned Income		Rent & utilities	
Other Income (specify)		Other Expense (specify)	
Other Income		Other Expense (specify)	
Other Income		Other Expense (specify)	
I. TOTAL		**II. TOTAL EXPENSE**	
INCOME			
		Net Income (Income less expense)	$