

Organizational Grant Readiness Checklist:

- Can you describe what problem or opportunity needs to be addressed?
- Is your organization eligible to receive funds from government funders, private foundations, or corporations?
- Does your organization have a good governing structure or board? Are the leaders experienced and committed?
- Is the purpose of the proposal consistent with the mission of your organization?
- Does your organization have a strategic plan that effectively guides your work?
- Can you clearly articulate who or what will benefit from your proposed project?
- Do you have a clearly laid out strategy to accomplish what you intend to do?
- Can you measure the outcomes of your work?
- Do you know who else is doing similar work on this issue, and can you explain how your work is distinct from theirs? Do you understand your organization's competitive advantage for this particular proposal?
- Do you have collaborative relationships with others doing similar work?
- Do you know how the reputation of your organization will affect this proposal?
- Do you have a project budget that fits within your overall organizational budget?
- Can your organization respond to deadlines and benchmarks on time?
- Does your organization have the required commitment on the part of all those who could affect the proposal's success or failure?
- Do you have the appropriate infrastructure to support the project, and does it ensure that you can spend the funds within the required time frame?

Writing Tips:

- Use language to match the grant writer. If you are writing to the government, write in the third person. If you are writing to a family foundation, use the first person.
- Avoid jargon unless it's jargon that the grantmaker will appreciate.
- Avoid using ten-dollar words if a one-dollar word will do. Grant reviewers won't take the time to look up a word in the dictionary.
- Avoid acronyms. They are not memorable.
- Make sure your grant is readable. In fact, I highly recommend reading it out loud so you can catch all the typos and see where your sentences bog down.
- Write with brevity. Avoid complex sentences. Use simple and compound sentences only.
- Use keywords from the question and answer the question fully.
- Do not refer the reader to another section of your proposal.
- Answer the question in the first sentence of the paragraph, then add detail and examples to back up your answer.
- Use APA-style citations to cite your sources. However, note that if you are pulling information from your own organization's website, consider that your own writing. You do not need to cite it.