



## Step 2: Typical Components of a Proposal.

*Be sure to check each grant source carefully for any specific format or content requirements.*

Name	Contains	Suggested Length (unless otherwise specified)
Executive Summary	Overall summary of your proposal and your project.	One page in length.
Statement of Need	Why is this project needed? Who will it benefit?	Two pages in length.
Project Description	Details on the project itself. How will the project be implemented? How will the project be evaluated?	Three pages in length.
Budget	Broad financial description.	One page in length.
Organization Information	Background of group. Why formed? Group's activities and services.	One to three pages in length.
Conclusion	Summary of main points. Solid closing argument for receiving funding.	One page in length.
Support	Letters of support or stories of clients helped.	Varies.

**Executive Summary** - This is the most important page of your document. It is on this page that you provide the reader with an overall summary of your project and convince the reader that your project deserves the funding you are asking for. Be sure to include the following:

- Problem – brief statement about the need for this project.
- Goal – clear and concise statement of the goal(s) of the project
- Solution – a short description of the project including what will take place, how people will benefit from the project, etc.
- Funding requirements – the request for the grant money, how it will be used and how the project will be funded in the future.
- Organization history – a brief statement of the history of the organization, its purpose, activities and the ability to carry out this project.

**Statement of Need** - Your statement of need enables your reviewers to learn more about the details of your project and the issues behind it. This section is your opportunity to present your side of the debate. Line

up all your arguments and present your case logically and convincingly for the reader. Consider the following points:

- Find current facts or statistics to support your argument.
- Give the reader hope. Don't lead your reader to believe that investing in agriculture is a grim prospect, but rather, present how your project will be a viable solution to the problem producers are facing.
- Decide if you want to put your project forward as a model or pilot. This could expand your funding options, but it also leads the funder to believe that you are willing to establish this project in other areas. Models only work for certain value added ag projects.
- What additional opportunities or benefit might occur for others as a result of this proposals success?
- Determine your level of need. You are asking the funding source to believe that your project is needed more than somebody else, or your solution to the problem is better than another person's and therefore, fully fund yours. Is it? Make sure you can support your need.

- Demonstrate that your project addresses the need differently or better than preceding projects. Without being critical of your competition, describe how your project complements and enhances, but does not duplicate, the work of others.
- Be persuasive and to the point. Avoid circular reasoning – this presents an absence of confidence that your solution will solve the problem. Discuss what this project would mean to your community, your area and agriculture in general.

**Project Description** - This section of your proposal includes the following five sections – objectives, methods, staffing, evaluation and sustainability. Your objectives, combined with your methods, will dictate your staffing needs and will then become a basis for your evaluation. Sustaining the project will come after its success and its ability to survive without a grant source. Together, the five sections give a solid picture of your entire project.

- Objectives must be tangible, specific, measurable and achievable within your specified time frame. Goals are conceptual and show the big picture – objectives are detailed and measurable.
- Methods describe the specific actions your group will take to achieve the objectives. It might be helpful to divide your methods into how, when and why.
- Staffing needs to be covered as specifically as possible – how many staff, their qualifications, specific assignments, etc. Describe your plans to administer the project, salary and benefits, etc.
- Evaluation should be built into the project and not something done once the project is complete. There are two types of evaluation – one measures the product and one measures the process. Consider both in this section.
- Sustainability is critical to the proposal reader. You need to demonstrate a plan for your value added ag venture that includes how the project will survive long-term and without grant funding. Be specific about current and projected funding streams and the base of financial support for your organization.

**Budget** - Your budget section is dependent on your project itself. Your proposal may be as simple as a one-page statement of projected expenses, or you may have a complex document of projected support and revenue and various items of expense.

**Organization Information** - At this point in your proposal, you will want to include a resume for your value added ag institution and/or the staff members involved in the project. It is not necessary to overwhelm the reader with pages of facts – the information can easily be conveyed by a brochure or other prepared statement about your project. Explain why your organization came into existence, your mission, your goals and your organizational structure. Discuss your board of directors, if applicable and your activities.

**Conclusion** - It is important to leave the reader of your proposal with a good feeling about your project and sum up your need for the funding. Call attention to the future – underline some activities that you plan to begin following the funding award or state how you might continue, or not continue, without the funding support.

Make a final appeal for your project. Re-state why your value added ag project is important and what you want to accomplish. Why do you need funding to accomplish your goals?

Consideration for Grant Writing:

- Carefully review the grant requirements to ensure you are applying with an appropriate funding source.
- Carefully read and follow all directions and adhere to specific limits on content.
- Develop a plan and timeline for completing the grant application.
- Write clearly and concisely. DO NOT use wordy jargon, abbreviations and acronyms.
- Clearly identify the problem you are addressing.
- Clearly identify the goals and objectives of the proposal for solving the problem.

- Collaborate with others to show support and commitment from other sources to help solve the problem.
- Include appropriate evaluation methods to provide accountability.
- Proof read several times. Have someone unfamiliar with the project read the application for clarity.
- Follow-up. Determine why the application was or was not successful. Identifying the applications strengths and weaknesses will help in your next grant writing effort.

**Support** - Attach letters of support or testimonials of need/assistance from affected publics for your business idea.

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