

Proposal Components

The application guidelines usually provide the framework for the sequence and content of the proposal narrative. While the format will vary from one agency to another, certain basic information is usually requested by a sponsor. Typical components include the (1) abstract/summary, (2) introduction / review of literature, (3) needs statement / statement of the problem, (4) objectives, (5) plan of action / methodology, (6) personnel, (7) facilities, (8) time frame, (9) evaluation, (10) dissemination, (11) budget, (12) resumes, and (13) letters of endorsement.

Abstract / Summary

The abstract is a significant part of the proposal. The reviewer will probably read this section first to gain an overview of the proposed project. Interest often can be captured at this point if the abstract is written in clear, concise terms. Content should center around the objectives and purposes of the project and how they will be achieved.

Introduction / Review of Literature

A limited explanation of the subjects, the theory behind it, and the efforts that have been devoted to it in the past are typical kinds of explanations. This section must demonstrate to the reader or reviewer that the applicant has a familiarity with current thinking on the topic and an awareness of how this project relates to present trends.

Needs Statement / Statement of the Problem

The needs statement explains why the program, services, or research is needed at this time, or in this particular school, or for this particular population. The sponsoring agency must be convinced that there is a measured or verifiable need for the activities described in the remainder of the proposal.

Objectives

The purposes, the aims, and the goals of the project are contained in this section. In establishing objectives, it is essential that project planners be specific.

Plan of Action / Methodology

The activities or methodologies to be employed must be carefully detailed. Reviewers are especially concerned about the relevance of each of these to the project objectives. The most important guideline concerning the procedures section is that it must describe how the project will be carried out.

Personnel

The personnel section of the proposal should convince the reviewer that the project team members have the expertise to conduct the proposed activities. A brief description of each team member should be prepared, indicating his or her professional experience and how they will contribute to the project.

Facilities

The emphasis in this section should be on the institutional facilities that are beneficial to the project. Facilities such as libraries, special service units, research apparatus, laboratories, conference rooms, or media equipment may be described in a proposal.

Time Frame

The time frame should specify dates for completion of all activities or tasks and their sequence and interdependence. The ability to stay on schedule is one of the most important aspects of project management.

Evaluation

An important part of a project is a well-designed plan for evaluation. Funding agencies highly stress the importance of a proper assessment of the achievement of project goals and objectives. Evaluation can be formative (process) and summative (product). Formative evaluation provides feedback as a program progresses; it facilitates appropriate decision making on a day-to-day basis. Summative evaluation measures program attainments, including the outcome of the project and the achievement of goals.

Dissemination

To be useful, research results must be disseminated. This section of the proposal should describe who will be informed of project results, which results will be reported, and in what form the results will be disseminated.

Appendices

Be sure to check your guidelines carefully to see what is allowed. Do not assume that important information will be read if it is included in an appendix; include, if appropriate, in the body of the narrative. Please note that the agency may not return any original or one-of-a-kind attachments.