

## **WRITING THE GRANT PROPOSAL**

**Some Writing Tips:** Write with specific source in mind, brief, avoid unsupported assumptions, positive ideas, and winning attitude.

### **Cover Letter**

Signed by highest official. Should briefly describe what is being sent. Just as when you apply for a job, the cover letter for your proposal is often the basis for consideration or rejection. The cover letter gives you an opportunity to capture the Foundation's attention and encourage them to read your proposal. The best cover letters state clearly and concisely why you are sending a proposal to the foundation and explain the purpose of the project. The cover letter should include:

- A statement of who you are (full, legal name), why you are approaching the funder, and what you are requesting. Include specific dollar amounts if you are requesting money, and list exactly what you want if you are asking for services or equipment. This information will make up your first paragraph.
- If your proposal does not meet the funding organization's guidelines, state why you decided to apply to them. You must convince why the project should be supported by them.
- Briefly describe the project, and who it will benefit.
- If you spoke with someone at the organization, be sure to mention it.
- Indicate what you are including in the proposal package. This can also serve as a good checklist before you mail the package.
- Offer to provide them with additional information, if necessary. Make sure that a phone number is in your letterhead or in the body of the letter.
- The Chairman of the board or the chief executive officer should sign the letter, unless the foundation indicates otherwise.

### **Sample letterhead**

March x, 2001

UUUUUUU U. UUUUU, Title  
The UUUU XXXXX Foundation  
address  
city, state zip

Dear Mr. XYZ:

This is a request for a grant of \$10,000 for the completion, the automation, and the integration of the automated library project at XYZ. The XYZ is celebrating its fourth years of excellence in higher education, and we are pleased that we have the opportunity to serve students from varied socio-economic, religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds in the XYZ

City areas. We are committed to equipping our students to be positive community leaders, international ambassadors, and life-long learners.

The purposes of this project are: to automate and use modern computer technology to greatest advantage, to maximize linkage between archival and bibliographic holdings, and to provide the greatest possible access to library information resources. The long-range technology goal for the Library is the implementation of an independent and fully integrated automated library system. The system will also integrate the use of electronic sources of information and will have the capability to connect to online, and also provide access to the Internet.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this request with you. Please know that The XYZ Foundation has our greatest respect and appreciation for your philanthropic contributions. Your interest and support is not only a testimony of your commitment to today's youth, but to the future quality of our community as well. If there is any further information that I can provide for the funding of this project, please let me know. I would be more than willing to meet with you in person to further explain our orientation involved in this project. I thank you in advance for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

XXX YYY,  
XYZ, President

## **The Anatomy of the Proposal**

### **I. Summary or Abstract**

Should contain brief description of applicant; definition of problem to be solved; statement of objectives to be achieved; outline of activities; statement of cost to funding source.

### **SAMPLE**

#### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

This project will result in course development and faculty/staff training for delivery of a cohesive first-year experience to improve the educational environment for beginning students and support their persistence in attaining educational goals.

#### **ABSTRACT**

The XYZ College has a very low retention rate due in part to being an open enrollment campus. Our student population is often under prepared for the task of being a successful college student. Having invited them to seek a college education, it is our responsibility to provide an optimal atmosphere and educational environment that will ensure their ability to be successful. To respond to this need, a faculty and staff task force investigated successful

first-year experiences at other colleges and universities and within our own XYZ system. Applying the XYZ literature to the needs of our students, the task force identified the components and skills necessary for successful first year experiences on our campus. This proposal seeks support for 10 faculty and staff (and student mentors) as they develop and implement three courses: a 2-credit orientation course paired with a 1-credit technology literacy course and a 3-credit freshman seminar. In order to achieve this objectives, XYZ is seeking \$50,000 over two years for Planning and Implementing a Successful First-Year Experience for Students project.

## **II. Introduction**

In this part of the proposal you introduce your organization as an applicant for funds. The introduction builds your credibility, and make the case that your organization should be supported.

### **Sample Introduction**

"Connect XYZ" will primarily serve students, teachers, administrators and parents in the XYZ Area School District. The XYZ Area School District is a public school district with more than a century of history. XYZ Schools serve 2,723 Pre-K through 12th grade students from the city of XYZ and surrounding communities of AAA, BBB, and CCC in DDD and EEE counties of XY State.

The school district supports a neighborhood school concept for K-5 students along with a Middle School and a High School. The strength of neighborhood elementary schools is the ownership of the community in the mission of their local school. A recent facilities study committee affirmed the desire to maintain neighborhood elementary schools with proposed new construction. A disadvantage of the neighborhood school arrangement is communication between the nine key sites in the district (six elementary schools, middle school, high school and district offices). "Connect XYZ" will connect these schools in "real time" via telecommunication.

Currently communications within the district is restricted to mail which takes two days or a special trip between buildings, with the exception of the telephone, and limited on-line communication between the central office and the high school. The difficulty with using the telephone is playing telephone tag or disrupting class to take or make a phone call. XYZ and the surrounding communities are considered economically depressed with an average income \$28,906. compared to a state average of \$35,180. Forestry, dairy, light (minimal skilled) manufacturing, assembly and XYZ Company are the main employers. Many residents of XYZ also commute to surrounding communities including FFF and GGG for employment.

Even though the unemployment rate is similar to the state average, unskilled employment provides minimal income for many of our families even when both parents work. Because of housing covenants in regional communities, XYZ has seen a recent influx of mobile home housing. Even though four significant employers: A, B, C, and D are involved in international business, the community remains parochial in many respects.

The XYZ Area School District is a below average per pupil spending district. The complete annual school cost per member from the Department of Public Instruction's current "Basic Facts" publication reports the 1999-2000 average spending per pupil in the State of

YX of \$6681.22 compared to the XYZ Area School District expenditure of \$5926.63 per student. The relative level of expenditures have been locked into place because of the XY revenue cap. An additional factor affecting XYZ is the reduction of Title I funding. Because of the large percentage of low income families in the XYZ School District, the district has been receiving funding from usual Title I programs and the "Title I Concentration Grant." The federal government is also reducing the "impact aid" that has been received to compensate the zero tax base of students living at MMMMMM. "Connect XYZ" will provide much needed funds to connect the schools within the district through telecommunications, provide ramps to the Information Super Highway and provide teacher training necessary to make the system work effectively. Connect XYZ will have a positive maximum impact by improving educational opportunities for all students.

### **III. Need or Statement of the Problem**

Define problem in terms that allow funder to see specific problem can be solved in a reasonable amount of time with a reasonable amount of money. Include clear case of how requesting organization can solve the problem. Quantitative data important.

#### **Sample**

As an open enrollment campus, X College seeks to increase access to students who may not have previously considered college attendance. A significant portion of our students fit the profile for economically disadvantaged, first generation college students who are recognized as the "new majority" or non-traditional students based upon age. Our student services staff find that these students often hold assumption as about their success for attaining a baccalaureate degree that are less than realistic. Many of these students are considered "at risk" due to their under preparedness for college work. Once these students have been attracted to the possibilities of a college education, X College (like many other baccalaureate institutions) is concerned about the retention and graduation of these students. Equally importantly, we are concerned about their intellectual and personal development. We believe that building a community of experiences for these students will result in their intellectual and personal development and also assist in the attainment of their educational goal.

The rationale for building community is that many of the shared characteristics of effective communities: shared culture, diversity, effective communication, caring, trust, teamwork and shared leadership are markers of developmentally powerful learning environments. Some of these students need remediation, while others need to upgrade their academic skills. The problem is that with these obstacles facing them, only about half graduate with most failing to return between the first and second semesters. This proposal outlines a first-year program that will allow students to build on the skills they bring with them, initiate them to the ethos of learning and provide a structured environment that will increase retention and support a positive attitude toward learning.

The proportion of freshmen those who leave college before becoming sophomores has reached a record high. In 1996, 29 percent of students in public colleges did not return after their first year. Many colleges and universities are implementing specific retention plans to encourage students to remain or the numbers would be even more dismal. This story is very true at X College. We have the lowest retention figures of the X campuses. As background

and contextual information, let us describe to you the attitudes often observed in our first-year students. As indicated, many of our first-year students are not experiencing the exciting intellectual challenge of a college experience. Instead, they are experiencing pre-college level developmental courses. Students are resentful about taking these courses. Their goals are not set on learning but on "getting through" so they can start coursework that "counts." Partially because of these attitudes, students lose interest in the goals that enticed them to try college, which results in their unwillingness to practice the habits and actions that would support their success.

Taxpayers are increasingly unhappy about spending tax dollars on developmental education. Students are resentful at having to take courses that do not count towards a degree or a major. Faculties do not want students in their classes that are unprepared to learn the content. We want to investigate strategies that would tailor a first year experience for students at X College that would achieve the goals of effective programs undertaken elsewhere and that would also result in meeting the goals of students and faculty. This proposal complements another SDC proposal from the X campus which asks for funding to increase the number of student assistants and teaching assistants for courses in which the number of failures is high. The first-year experience is designed, not only as a strategy for retention, but also as a means for making a permanent change in the attitude, skills and performance of beginning students.

#### **IV. Objectives**

Specific, measurable outcomes; what one intends to have accomplished at the end of a specified time. Who or what will be changed? In what direction? How much? Be prepared to do what you say you will do.

Samples:

##### **Goals are general**

- To establish the American Education Center in Southeast Asia.
- To form partnerships with American colleges and schools in this project.
- To recruit international students for our partner colleges and schools.
- To provide English education for students, business executives and working adults.
- To provide free education services for the poor and needy student in rural areas.

##### **Objectives are measurable**

- To organize two college fairs per year and to provide 30 weekly information seminars to recruit international students for our partners.
- To attend six major academic fairs throughout Asia to recruit more international students for our partners.
- To host 50 American students per year to have short term study in Southeast Asia.
- To recruit 100 American volunteers per year.
- To recruit 600+ international students to our partner schools and colleges.
- To provide English classes for 3,000 students per year.
- To provide free English class to 1,000 needy children.

#### **V. Methods, Design**

In detail, the activities to reach stated objectives; who will participate; sequence; dissemination. Explain why chosen methods are considered to be the most successful. It should be clear that the applicant has a through knowledge of the field and has made rational choices.

**Sample:**

This proposal seeks funding for faculty and staff to work collaboratively in the development of a first-year experience for students. It also seeks funds to implement such a program in spring of YEAR. Effective first-year programs elsewhere often identify such goals as:

- develop essential academic skills
- development analytical and critical thinking skills
- improve communication skills
- improve personal responsibility and self-assessment
- engage in goals clarification, academic advising, planning/decision making
- improve relations between faculty and students

Throughout spring and summer semesters in YEAR, faculty/staff teams will investigate and plan the use of paired courses, team teaching, special advising tools, peer mentors, the use of modules and a curriculum design that develops skills in a scholarly environment. This planning will result in the development of specific experiences for their implementation in spring YEAR. This proposal meets the initiatives of the Charter by building a community of learners that places student learning, intellectual exploration, persistence and attainment at the center of the university's mission and through enhancement of student-oriented policies and practices, especially expanded mentoring, tutorial and advising initiatives.

Student experience on our campus is similar to that occurring elsewhere in the X College system and on campuses of other institutions. Upon application to the college, students take placement tests in reading, writing and math. Depending on their scores, the vast majority are placed in developmental courses in composition, math and reading. They may also be required to take Study skills. Typically, most of these students spend their time (and financial aid) on 12-16 hours of developmental coursework during their first case semesters. In the worst case scenarios, students simply ignore the advice of their advisors (and the policies of the campus) by not enrolling in developmental courses, thereby delaying college level composition or math courses. These students are very much at risk in 100 level discipline course that assume students have college level skills in writing, reading and math. Overall, much of what we are doing is not having the positive effect it was meant to have.

The retention rate at X College is about 45%. It is the lowest in the X system. The campus has several successful programs in place to assist under prepared students. We have a grant-supported learning laboratory that provides students with help in composition, math and reading. We also have a student-as-instructor (SI) program that provides tutorial assistance to students. Recently, we have also added undergraduate teaching assistants to courses where drop-out and withdrawal levels are above 40%. Despite these helpful programs, our retention rate has stayed low. It is our goal to create a learning community that makes it likely that students will succeed in college level courses and at the same time exposes them to the ethos of learning.

In the fall of YEAR, a task force was formed to study a cohesive approach to a first year experience. The faculty and staff on the task force have developed a firm grounding in the research related to first-year experiences for beginning students by reading the literature accessed through the WWW and through the experiences and publications of XYZ at the University of SNSNCC.

They have also visited and consulted with faculty engaged in similar programs at XYZ (arts and sciences faculty) and Y College. The work of the task force is beginning to bear fruit. Tentative plans are to develop three courses: a freshman orientation course paired with a technology literacy course and a freshman seminar course. The orientation course would introduce students to the resources of the campus, provide

self-analysis of strengths and efficiencies through inventory assessment and encourage study skills and survival techniques needed to be a successful college student.

This course would probably team students with an advisor/teacher and a peer mentor. The freshman seminar focuses on a discipline-related area, such as humanities or the sciences. The point of this course would be to give students an opportunity to explore an intellectual question (or questions) through a problem solving and interactive approach. Continuation of the project over time will investigate restructuring developmental math into a 100 level math course (for non-math and science majors) that incorporates readiness activities with an appreciation for math as a useful tool and a discipline worth pursuing. For example, students may be required to interview someone in their field/discipline to find out how math is used and to write a paper explaining the value of math to their chosen field. The point of this course is to help students understand the potential of math and to invite them to learn more about math as well as prepare them to take math courses beyond the developmental level. Another area of investigation will likely be paired composition and speech courses in which pairs of faculty would plan together so that topics and assignments in each course were integrated. As faculties investigate these possibilities, they will be asked to explore alternatives for delivering and packaging these traditional course offerings.

This proposal focuses on the first phase of this undertaking. Faculty and staff will build on the work begun in fall YEAR to develop a 2-credit orientation course paired with a 1-credit technology literacy course that students will take the first semester they are enrolled. A faculty member in each division of humanities and fine arts, behavioral and social sciences and natural sciences and math will work with faculty in those Divisions to develop a 3-credit freshman seminar for students who are interested in majoring or exploring a discipline within the Division. Students may take this course in the first or second semester. In both cases, students will take the courses in cohorts of approximately 20 students and receive enhanced and individualized advising/mentoring from a faculty/staff/student team.

Much of the planning will be completed by the end of spring semester for these three courses. Summer semester will be used for development and implementation of training modules for faculty, staff and students (peer mentors) who will be engaged in initial implementation. Fall semester YEAR will be used to continue training while also providing additional workshops from experts and colleagues more experienced in this undertaking than we are. Implementation will occur in fall YEAR or spring semester YEAR. Fall implementation is a goal but spring provides a fallback position if we do not feel we are ready. Spring provides more time to prepare and also has a smaller incoming freshman class (about 200 students) than the fall semester (about 400 students). This is an ambitious undertaking, particularly given the timeframe as outlined, but we are not working from ground zero. The research into first-year experiences is extensive. We have identified the problems, appropriate goals and possible alternatives. Experiences of other Universities and of our colleagues within X College inform us so that we are able to tailor much of the work already accomplished to our students. The benefits of this project, however, are enormous. Students who might have previously left college due to their initial frustrations are more likely to remain in school. They will more likely complete coursework applicable to their designated programs/degree. They will have used their financial aid wisely and most importantly, they will be more likely to have learned in a positive environment. Faculty will have the benefit of teaching students who are better prepared to successfully complete their classes which tends to raise the intellectual standards enjoyed in all classes. But all this is theoretical until faculty and students participate and see the results for themselves. Consequently, the proposed project must create invitations for participation.

## **VI. Evaluation**

How will you know that you did what you said you would do? Measures should be summative and formative; objective and multi-faceted.

### **Sample**

The overall goal of this project is to give time to faculty and staff to design, develop and prepare curricular experiences for students in their first year at X College. The resulting implementation will seek to determine if students participating in this experience are more

successful academically than students who did not previously participate and if their attitudes toward learning are positive after participation. At the end of each semester, data will be collected on the following:

(1) Students enrolled in the project will have successfully completed their coursework with a C+ or better in each course. Rationale: Retention is closely aligned with academic success. Students who achieve academic success are likely to remain in school and complete their educational objective.

Assessment Measure: It is our prediction that at least 75% of the students enrolled in the project will remain in school throughout the project and maintain a C+ or better.

(2) Students in the project will state a high level of satisfaction with the academic and personal support they are receiving from project faculty, advisors and peer mentors. Rationale: Personal contact (mentoring) and academic support are the characteristics most often mentioned by students as making a difference in their ability to overcome the stresses and challenges of beginning college experiences.

Assessment Measure: Students in the project will be asked to maintain a learning log and a log of advising sessions and to use the logs as data to evaluate the impact of the pilot project in which they are enrolled. We predict that 90% of the students will attend individual mentoring sessions and rate questions pertaining to the support of faculty and advisors as very satisfactory or outstanding.

(3) Students will use the resources available (library, assisted instruction, etc.) at X College. Rationale: It is not enough to expose students to the resources that can help them be successful college students. It is necessary to assess their willingness and their ability to use these services and support systems and to determine what will motivate them to seek advantages available to them.

Assessment Measure: We predict that 75% of the students in the project will be knowledgeable about and voluntarily use the learning resources available to them.

(4) Students will successfully deal with obstacles that interfere with learning (time management, study skills, etc.). Rationale: These obstacles are identified by students as one of the important reasons they drop out of school. Assuring their ability to deal with study skills, time management, etc. will raise the predictors for academic success.

Assessment Measure: At least 85% of the students remaining in the project will identify their ability to deal with obstacles and challenges (such as study skills and time management) as very satisfactory or outstanding.

## **VII. Future Funding:**

How will project be continued, once funding has expires?

Financial records for this project will be maintained by XYZ Bookkeeping office, which will process grant monies and any related expenses, according to required procedures. This office audited on an annual basis. The plan to continue is sponsored in part by a parent-student fundraising committee and the school budget. Each year parents and students together raise over \$80,000. The staff development budget will be funded by XYZ Budget. The cost invested in these materials is slight compared to the opportunities for students to have access to technology.

### VIII. Budget

Amounts should be as specific as possible; minimum sufficient to support the project, yet allowing for inflation. Indirect costs should be included if requested; budget justification sometimes needed.

#### SAMPLE BUDGET

	Requested	Donated	Total
<b>I. Personnel</b>			
A. Salaries and Wages			
B. Project Coordinator @\$3,000/month@100% time x 12 months	\$36,000	-0-	\$36,000
Project Assistant @1,800/month@100% time x 12 months	\$10,800	\$10,800	\$21,600
50 Volunteers@30 hours each/year x\$7.00/hr.	-0- \$	\$10,500	\$10,500
B. Fringe Benefits			
20% of \$57,000	\$6,400	\$5,000	\$11,400
C. Consultant and Contract Services			
Bookkeeping@\$250/months x 12 months	-0-	\$3,000	\$ 3,000
Fundraising Services@\$1,000/month x 12	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$12,000
Trainer@\$300/day x 15 days	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$ 4,500
Annual Audit	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$ 4,000
<b>II. Non-Personnel</b>			
A. Space			
1500 sf. @\$2.00 sf/month x 12 months	\$16,000	\$20,000	\$36,000
Telephone@\$200/month x 12 months	\$ 2,400	-0-	\$ 2,400
Utilities @\$250/month x 12 months	-0-	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Facility Insurance @\$1000/year	\$1,000	-0-	\$ 1,000
B. Purchase of Equipment			
Computers (2)@\$1,500 each x 2	\$3,000	-0-	\$ 3,000
Laser Printer (1)@\$890	\$ 890	-0-	\$ 890
Photocopy (1)@\$5,000	\$5,000	-0-	\$ 5,000
Desk/chair sets @\$350 each	\$1,050	-0-	\$ 1,050
C. Supplies			
Desk top supplies @\$300/year/staff x 2	\$ 600	-0-	\$ 600
Educational materials @\$800/month x 12	\$9,600	-0-	\$ 9,600
D. Travel			
4 roundtrip airfares to Asia@\$2,500 each	\$10,000	-0-	\$10,000
Reimbursement for staff auto travel			

\$0.25/mile x 500 miles/month x 12 months	\$ 1,500	-0-	\$ 1,500
30 days per diem (Asia) x \$200/day	\$ 3,000	\$3,000	\$ 6,000
<b>E. Other Costs</b>			
Conference Tuition@\$1,000/each x 3 staff	\$3,000	-0-	\$ 3,000
Board Liability Insurance	-0-	\$2,500	\$ 2,500
<b>III. Indirect Cost</b>			
10% Total Allowable Direct Costs	\$11,800	-0-	\$10,800
<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$122,740	\$70,300	\$193,040

**IX. Project personnel:**

Include a resume or vita on each person in the project.

The XYZ Area School District is a public PreK-12 school district located in State.

1. MMM DDD \* 20%-Technology Coordinator, XYZ Area Schools.
2. Dr. Jerry MNM \* 10% - Director of Instruction and Inservice, XYZ Area Schools.
3. Kevin YYY \* 5%- telecommunication Specialist, XTelephone Company.
4. EEE and BTBT TTT \* 12% - Professor, X College.
5. Dr. Charles CCC \* 1% - Graduate Studies X College.
6. Jan WWW \* 3% - Library Media Specialist and Private Consultant NNAA and others.
7. Mr. Marlin PPPP \* 1% - Superintendent, Appointed XYZ Area School District.

All key staff are currently employed by their respective participating organization and it is anticipated they will continue their employment through the time period of the grant and beyond. (\* percentage of time devoted to "Connect XYZ.")

**XYZ Board of Education:** Mr. Richard SSS, Dr. Mark HHHH, Mr. Jim LLL, Ms. Tonya CKC, Mr. Dennis LLL, Mr. David RRR, Dr. Donald GGG.

**X. Conclusion and List of Attachments**

Some grants are read in the entirety by reviewers. They are quite detailed in their requirements. The process of review is “blind”. There can not be contact between the applicant and the reviewers. Therefore, the completeness of each section and its evaluation by the panel of reviewers is critical to success.