



## Tips for Creating a Strong Grant Application

### FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

Read all of the guidelines and directions and be sure to include all of the information asked for, in the format requested.

### WRITE IN A SIMPLE, DIRECT, AND PERSUASIVE STYLE

- Don't assume that the funder knows anything about your mission, community, or project unless you've told them.
- Make sure your ideas are organized and easy to understand.
- Don't use jargon or other special words that people outside of your field won't know.
- Spell out abbreviations.
- Express your passion and excitement about your work or project.
- Have someone else proofread your proposal to correct any errors.

### DO YOUR HOMEWORK

- Be able to explain why your project should be important to the funder and how it matches their grant guidelines.
- If others are doing similar work, explain what makes your work unique.

### BE AS SPECIFIC AS YOU CAN

Use numbers, percentages, and other data.

Don't write:

*"Last year, we served hundreds of developmentally disabled children."*

When you can write:

*"Last year, we served **1,235** individuals between the ages of **10 and 16**, or more than **27%** of all developmentally disabled young people in Waldo County."*

### SLICK DOESN'T COUNT! PREPARATION DOES

A good proposal isn't just fancy format, paper, or graphics. Good proposals are made of good ideas, lots of planning, and careful work

### PROVIDE A STRONG AND ACCURATE BUDGET

- Whenever possible, show that your project has other forms of support:
  - List other grants or sources of funding you have received or are trying to get.
  - Don't forget to include in-kind support.
- Double-check your budget to be sure that it is correct.

## TIPS FOR CREATING A STRONG PROJECT BUDGET

- Involve financial managers or others with expertise, such as accountants.
- Ask for help if you need it.
- Make sure the numbers in your proposal and your budget agree.
- Use existing budgets as templates.
- Check your math!
- In multi-year budgets, increase annual costs after year one to reflect inflation.

## SAMPLE BUDGET

Here is an example of what a project budget could look like when completed. You will see that the applicant is seeking \$3,700 from the Maine Community Foundation for a project that will cost \$10,240 to complete. The applicant included \$2,800 in in-kind donations to cover the costs of materials, project staff, transportation, and meeting supplies. The applicant also listed grants they have already secured and one that they hope to receive from other funding sources. If this fictional budget accurately reflects the project described in the application, a reviewer would probably consider it to be strong. It includes realistic costs for each item, and it shows that the applicant is contributing to the project through in-kind donations as well as seeking other sources of financial support.

## ANTICIPATED EXPENSES AND FUNDING

ITEM	1. AMOUNT REQUESTED from MaineCF for each item	2. IN-KIND DONATIONS to support each item	3. OTHER FUNDING SOURCES to support this item (include earned income and indicate if funding is already secured)			TOTAL BUDGET for each item (Add columns 1-3)
			Amount	Source	Secured?	
<i>Example: speaker fees</i>	<i>\$750</i>		<i>\$250</i>	<i>XYZ Foundation</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>\$1,000</i>
1. Consultant	\$500	\$ 0	\$ 1,000	ABC Foundation	Yes	\$ 1,500
2. Materials	\$ 2,000	\$ 500	\$0			\$ 2,500
3. Proj. Coordinator	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$2,500	XYZ Foundation	Yes	\$5,500
4. Transportation	\$	\$200	\$			\$200
5. Meeting supplies	\$200	\$100	\$240	Big Box Fund	No	\$540
<b>TOTAL</b> Sum of items in each column	\$ 3,700	\$2,800	\$3,740			\$10,240

## ANTICIPATED EARNED INCOME (if applicable):

ITEM	AMOUNT
Sales: <b>Book Sale</b>	<b>\$250</b>
Fees for Service:	\$
Other, <i>please specify</i> : <b>ticket sales</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>TOTAL ANTICIPATED INCOME:</b>	<b>\$750</b>