SWNI Grant Writing Tips:
Prepare a Successful Grant Application

Successful grant writing is a skill but if you follow the key tips below you will not need to be an expert at writing a great proposal. This is a competitive grant process so make a good case why your proposal should receive funding from us!

Narrative Highlights-Your Story!
Can you tell us something compelling about:

Your community and neighborhood and who you are planning to engage in your project proposal?

The impact your project will have in the community and what current needs will be addressed that relates to our grant program goals?

Your strategy and why your group has the capacity to meet the objectives with the requested funds?

How the funds you are requesting will be used to achieve the goals listed in your narrative?

If you think of your story before applying you'll be better prepared to make your proposal stand out.

126,000 WORDS DONE...NOW I JUST NEED TO WORK OUT WHAT ORDER TO PUT THEM IN!

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Eight Helpful Tips to Follow

1. Read the grant application and any instructions carefully. The application requirements are designed to help you through the process. Applicants sometimes omit or misread instructions that are clearly written in the application. It helps to read the form thoroughly before filling out the grant application.

2. Ensure your proposal meets the criteria and is eligible before moving forward. Ask yourself how the proposed project fits with the identified program goals and the narrative questions. Also, ask yourself if the project benefits communities in one or more of the CNN neighborhoods on the map.

3. Attend the grant workshop that is offered. You will learn more from hearing other applicants' questions and learn to avoid common pitfalls that often make a difference in funding.

4. Contact the grants staff to get advice when you have questions. It is to your advantage to seek advice <u>early</u> to allow the staff time to provide you with the assistance needed and to allow yourself the time to prepare a feasible proposal. It is beneficial to contact the grant program staff with questions after you have become familiar with the grant criteria, eligibility and requirements in the application.

5. Write clear and concise answers. Your application should be written simply and in a straightforward manner. You should make it clear why it is important for your group to undertake the proposed activity and answer <u>all</u> questions as "to-the-point" as possible. Broad generalizations and wordy transcriptions do not make an application more competitive.

6. Submit a realistic budget that will support your proposal. Most grant making committee members will have the expertise enough to recognize inflated figures. Make sure to check your math and to include totals. Prepare a balanced fundraising strategy that includes leveraged funds and in-kind resources or donations.

7. Take care to properly arrange and present your application packet as directed. This includes page limits, font size, printing specifications, etc. <u>Make sure to provide all the materials requested</u>, and only those requested; do not submit extra documents.

8. Review application and sign the application checklist. Proofread your work or have another person read it to make sure there are no unclear descriptions or omissions, or any typographical errors.

~Once your application is submitted, staff will not be contacting you about any omissions or errors. Late applications will not be accepted. By following these key tips you will greatly reduce the risk of your proposal not being considered by the grant committee. It will also help demonstrate you are ready to take on the project you are seeking funding for!

Additional Resources
<u>2008 Community & Civic Engagement Small Grants Program Grant Writing Basics</u>
Office of Community & Civic Life
http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=165946
<u>Getting Funded: The Complete Guide to Writing Grant Proposals</u>
By Mary Hall, PhD & Susan Howlett
Publisher: Continuing Education Press
<u>Proven Strategies Professionals Use to Make Their Proposals Work</u>
By Michael K. Wells, CFRE
Publisher: Continuing Education Press
<u>Oregon Foundation DataBook, 8th Ed.</u>
www.foundationdatabook.com
<u>OR Community Foundation</u>:
www.ocf1.org

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