

Proposal Writing

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Preparing for writing a proposal	1
Asset-based approach to proposal writing	3
Proposal writing tips	5
Needs based proposal template	6
Asset based proposal template	9
Foundation list	11
Sample cover letter for a foundation proposal	15
On-line resources offering information and tutorials on proposal writing	15

Proposal Writing

All literacy programs need to raise funds in order to survive. Writing proposals is one way to bring in extra funds. All written proposals require certain basic information. Once basic information is collected, you can then fashion each proposal to match the specific funding interests of each corporation, business or foundation. **NOTE: In order to apply to a foundation, you must have a charitable number and be able to supply audited financial statements.**

Before writing a full proposal:

- ❖ Send a letter of introduction and a newsletter or brochure prior to sending your funding proposal. It helps to build a relationship.
- ❖ Make a connection. Call the Foundation or business to discuss your funding needs or project ideas to make sure they match their areas of interest.
- ❖ Find out who is on the board of the Foundation or business. If you know someone who knows someone it goes a long way.
- ❖ Foundations especially receive hundreds of applications a year. They appreciate short, succinct proposals that state a cause in six to eight pages. (This is difficult to do considering the amount of information they ask for.)

If you are writing to a business in your own neighborhood or community to request a small donation, then a letter and a visit will likely be enough. (This is something a volunteer can do for you and if a learner goes along to verify the positive ways literacy has influenced his or her life, there is a higher likelihood for success.)

When you are requesting for larger amounts, i.e. over three thousand dollars, or when you are writing to Foundations, much more information is required.

Each written proposal to Foundations or to businesses or corporations for large amounts of funding must include a cover Letter signed by the President or Chairperson of your organization. It must be a compact, concise

one-page letter that includes a compact version of the proposal's introduction plus a clear Executive Summary.

The Executive Summary:

- is written after your proposal is completed,
- must be able to stand on its own, and,
- must be a clear summary of your request including goals, key personnel, why you are unique and can carry out the project, who is affected and existing community support.

On a separate sheet of paper put the following information:

- ❖ Name of organization
- ❖ Contact person
- ❖ Contact information (phone, fax, e-mail, web site, mailing address)
- ❖ Charitable number
- ❖ Number of years in operation
- ❖ Name of project
- ❖ Project introduction (You can produce a stronger, more concise introduction if you write it after the rest of the proposal is completed.)
- ❖ Statement or survey of needs
- ❖ Who is affected by the project, how many and in what way, or, how your project changes society
- ❖ Objectives – goals, or what you plan to achieve
- ❖ Description of project
- ❖ How you plan to carry out the project – the method – if possible compare your methods with other successful projects and verify your sources.
- ❖ State who your partners are and how they are involved
- ❖ Numbers of volunteers and projection of their time
- ❖ The intended outcomes of the project
- ❖ How you will recognize supporters
- ❖ Evaluation plan – how you plan to measure progress and success. Include the cost of consultant in the budget if you or your organization cannot do the evaluation.
- ❖ The future of the project, or how it will be sustained.
- ❖ Audited financial statements.

In an appendix, organized in the order referred to in the project outline and clearly identified, include:

- ❖ A budget showing revenue and expenses. Clearly state the amount you are asking for.
- ❖ Last year's audited financial statement
- ❖ Last Annual Report if there is one
- ❖ Any data or stats to support your proposal
- ❖ A list of board of directors
- ❖ Letters of support from groups you are working with and a letter from the President or Chair acknowledging the project.

A note about writing proposals to Foundations:

- ❖ Your project must match the Foundation's interests and target populations.
- ❖ Some Foundations fund in certain geographic areas, while others fund Canada-wide.
- ❖ Some Foundations have deadlines for proposals while others take proposals throughout the year.
- ❖ Never make your proposal look fancy. Plain white paper fastened with paper clips or staples is the preferred look. No fancy covers.
- ❖ Few Foundations will accept applications by e-mail; some will accept fax. Most prefer regular postal service.

Asset-based approach to proposal writing:

The above set of guidelines is for needs-based proposals. There is another approach called asset-based. This approach suggested by John Kretzmann and John McKnight in *"Building Communities from the Inside Out,"* and is outlined below. The community mapping exercise on page ___ is a basis to successfully attracting support for your programs.

Be sure to ask the potential funder whether a “needs-based” proposal or an “asset-based” proposal is preferred. Not all funders have moved over to the “asset-based” approach yet. Provide the basic information required for all proposals such as:

- Organization’s name and contact information
- Contact name and phone number
- Operating budget – statement of revenues from other sources and expenses.
- Last audited statement
- Charitable number
- List of board of directors
- Support letter from President or Chair and from groups working with you on this project.

The difference in the asset-based approach outlined by Kretzmann and McKnight is as follows:

- ❖ Clearly identify the capacities or “gifts” that local residents will contribute.
 - How will you discover and use the gifts and assets of the “strangers” in your community – those people often overlooked because of labels? (Elderly, disabled, poor, offenders).
- ❖ Clearly identify the capacities of your community’s associations and indicate how they will be involved. Some may be involved in the governance of the project.
 - Involvement of arts associations, senior’s groups, church groups, cultural organizations, service groups, unions, youth, veterans, men’s and women’s organizations, etc.
- ❖ Indicate how the project will mobilize, utilize, enhance and expand these local capacities.
 - How will citizens and groups be stronger at the end of your proposed project or program?
- ❖ Describe how the project will contribute to the local economy either through purchasing goods, employment or better educated and happier citizens.
- ❖ Tell us how citizens have contributed or are contributing significant investments of time and resources.

(Kretzmann & McKnight, pp 356-358)

Tips on making your proposal easier to read:

- Use an easy-to-read font like Times Roman, or Arial. Use no more than two different fonts.
- Use 1 1/2 lined space. This gives enough white space to read easily, without it looking gap-like.
- Leave at least one inch margins all around.
- Number your pages.
- Use bullets or a number format when defining important points.
- Use a neutral tone of paper. Canary yellow is eye catching, but difficult to take in large doses.
- Avoid expensive or flashy packaging; use paper clips or staples instead. No artistic borders or designs on the title page or anywhere else in the proposal.
- Check spelling.
- Use proper footnotes.

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Proposal Writing Tips:

www.greenability.org is a great site for fundraising and proposal writing information.

Most libraries have a copy of the *Canadian Directory to Foundations and Grants* by the Centre for Philanthropy. This is a helpful guide but it, too, requires time for research.

On [page 6](#) is a template for writing a needs-based proposal followed by a template on [page 9](#) for an assets-based proposal. Sample cover letters and sample proposals are also included in this chapter along with information on foundations and corporations that fund literacy programs.

Needs based proposal template:

Name of organization or program: _____

Contact Person and title: _____

President or Chairperson: _____

Contact Information: Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____ Web site: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Street Address: _____

Province: _____ Country _____ Postal Code: _____

Charitable Number: _____ Number of years in operation: _____

Project Name: _____

Project Introduction: _____

Survey or statement of need: _____

Who will be affected, how many people will be impacted and in what way:

• _____

• _____

• _____

• _____

• _____

Objectives, goals or what will be achieved:

• _____

• _____

• _____

• _____

A brief description of the project: _____

- _____
- _____
- _____

How the project will be carried out:(method used) : _____

Partners and stakeholders:

How they are involved:

- | | |
|---------|-------|
| • _____ | _____ |
| • _____ | _____ |
| • _____ | _____ |
| • _____ | _____ |

Numbers of volunteers and projection of their time: _____

Intended outcomes:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

How you will recognize supporters:

Thank you letter

Feature name and/or logo on materials produced for the project

Feature name and/or logo on Web Site

Publicly mention support in speeches or press releases

Place name and/or logo on a sign in our class room or project

Other: _____

Evaluation plan: _____

The future of the project: _____

How it will be sustained: _____

Amount requested: _____

Attachments:

Budget showing revenue and expenses clearly stating request.

Last year's audited financial statement.

Last year's annual report if there is one.

Any data or statistics to support the proposal.

A list of the board of directors.

Letters of support.

Cover letter.

Asset based proposal template:

Name of organization or program: _____

Contact Person and title: _____

President or Chairperson: _____

Contact Information: Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____ Web site: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Street Address: _____

Province: _____ Country _____ Postal Code: _____

Charitable Number: _____ Number of years in operation: _____

Project Name: _____

Project Introduction: _____

Clearly identify in what ways local residents will contribute to your project or program. (Examples: Involvement of senior's groups, veterans, services groups, banking or other commercial institutions, local schools or colleges, etc.)

Clearly indicate how the project or program will mobilize, utilize, enhance and expand these local capacities. In other words, how will citizens and groups be stronger at the end of your proposed project or program.

Describe how the project will contribute to the local economy. (Examples: purchasing goods or materials, providing employment or better-educated happier citizens.)

Tell us how citizens have contributed or are contributing significant investments of time and resources to your program.

Attachments:

- Budget showing revenue and expenses clearly stating request.
- Last year's audited financial statement.
- Last year's annual report if there is one.
- Any data or statistics to support the proposal.
- A list of the board of directors.
- Letters of support.
- Cover letter.

The following Foundations will fund literacy and education in New Brunswick. It is highly recommended that you contact the Foundation first to discuss the potential of being considered before putting hours of work into a written application.

NOTE: As is common with corporations and not-for-profits, contact people may have changed since this list was compiled.

The Molson Foundation
Stephen T. Molson, Secretary
1555 Notre Dame Street East
Montreal, QC H2L 2R5
Tel: 514-521-1786
Fax: 514-598-6866

Honda Canada Inc.
Art Thomas
Donations Committee
Corporate Affairs
715 Milner Avenue
Toronto, ON
M1B 1K8
Toll free: 1-888-946-6329
www.honda.ca

Business Depot Ltd.
Andrea Dicosmo
Marketing Department
30 Centurian Drive
Suite 106
Markham ON L3R 8B9
Tel: 905-513-6116
www.staples.ca

Abitibi Consolidated Ltd.
Seth Kursman
Vice President, Communications
Corporate Contributions

1155 Metcalfe Street, Suite 800
Monctreal QC H3B 5H2
www.abicon.com

Great West Life - Canada Life - London Life
The first step is to contact:
Janet Belanger
Director, Community Affairs
P.O. Box 6000
100 Osborne St. North
Winnipeg MB R3C 3A5
Toll free: 1-888-873-8813
www.gwl.ca

For local requests contact the GWLCLLL insurance office in your area.

Ebenezer Foundation
Harry Gorenwold, Treasurer
300-2975 Gladwin Road
Abbotsford BC V2T 5T4
Tel: 604-853-9471
E-mail: hhg@lgho.com

Maytree Foundation
Ratna Omidvar, Executive Director
170 Bloor Street West, Suite 804
Toronto ON M5S 1T9
www.maytree.com
E-mail: info@maytree.com

JW McConnell Family Foundation
Joan McCammon, Secretary
1002 Sherbrooke Street West, Suite 1800
Monctreal QC H3A 3L6
(phone, fax and e-mail withheld by request)
www.mcconnellfoundation.ca

Harrison McCain Foundation
Ann Evans, Secretary
107 Main Street
Florenceville NB E7L 1B2
Tel: 506-392-5541

Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation
C/o Geoffrey Fages
30 St. Clair Avenue West 15th Floor
Toronto ON M4V 3A2
416-929-2066

Domtar Inc. (Priority is given to provinces where Domtar has operations)
National Donations and Sponsorships Committee
395 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West
Monctreal QC H3A 1L6
Tel: 514-848-5400
www.domtar.com

Imperial Oil Charitable Foundation
Lori Swinson
111 St. Clair Avenue West
Toronto ON M5W 1K3
Toll free: 1-800-668-3776
www.imperialoil.ca

Royal Bank Financial Group
Lori Smith
Manager, Public Affairs & Communications
RBC Financial Group
5161 George Street, PO Box 1147
Halifax NS B3J 2Y1
www.rbc.com/community/donations/index.html

R Howard Webster Foundation
Howard Davidson, Treasurer
1155 Rene Levesque Blvd West, Suite 2912
Montreal QC H3B 2L5

F. K. Morrow Foundation
Fern Demsen, Secretary and Treasurer
3777 Bayview Avenue
North York ON M2M 3S4
416-229-2009

Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Family Foundation
John Hobday
Executive Director
1170 Peel Street, Suite 800
Montreal QC H3B 4P2
Tel: 514-878-5270
info@bronfmanfoundation.org
www.bronfmanfoundation.org

George Metcalfe Foundation
Betty Emperatori, Office Manager
174 Avenue Road
Toronto ON M5R 2J1
Tel: 416-926-0366
www.metcalfefoundation.com

Deadlines for applications are April 1st and September 15th
The other foundations listed about will accept applications at any time.
However, it is a good idea to phone ahead to make sure of timelines.

Sample letter

Dear _____

I am writing with the anticipation that you will consider and accept the attached proposal requesting \$\$\$\$.

Literacy is an issue affecting 59% of adults in New Brunswick. Low literacy skills impact our province socially and economically and the costs of low literacy are in the millions of dollars.

Every dollar donated to a literacy program is put to good use. I have XX number of students in my program each year. I have operated for XX years. Since opening XX of my students have progressed, XX have written and passed their GED and XX have gone on to work or post-secondary education.

With your help, more adults will have success. Adults who attend literacy programs regain self-esteem and confidence and have improved attitudes toward health and educating their families. With improved literacy skills these adults and their families participate more and contribute more to their communities.

I hope you find this cause worthy of your generosity. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

On-line resources that offer information and tutorials on grant proposal writing:

www.grantproposal.com

www.jcdowning.org/resources/generalguide.htm

www.mcf.org/mcf/grant/writing.htm

www.silcom.com/~paladin/promaster.html