

How to write effective proposals

The Dos and Don'ts of a Good Proposal

DO

- 1) Your homework. Will your idea work? What will it really cost? Has anyone else already done something similar?
- 2) Check the funder's priorities and be sure they match with what your organization wants to do
- 3) Make it clear why the work is urgent.
- 4) Explain why your organization is the best one to get results
- 5) Write your results in terms of real, concrete changes in policy or the lives of real people. Differentiate between outputs and outcomes.
- 6) Make sure your results are measurable and tell how you will measure them
- 7) Show how the project will work with other key partners, as necessary
- 8) Practice what you preach: If you call for survivor inclusion, is the project inclusive of survivors'?

DON'T

- 1) Focus only on expected 'process' results or outputs: Example—20 people will attend a workshop [SO WHAT?? WILL THEY LEARN SOMETHING OR CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOR IN SOME WAY?]
- 2) Leave spelling mistakes in the final version
- 3) Submit a budget with mathematics mistakes
- 4) Duplicate the efforts of other organizations
- 5) Over promise: Be realistic in what you can achieve
- 6) Be afraid to share your past successes: Include information about how your work has made a difference.
- 7) Claim success for something you didn't do. The donor could check!
- 8) Leave it all to a couple of days before the deadline. The best proposal is shared with other partners for their feedback before submitting.
- 9) Submit the proposal after the deadline! At worst, it won't be considered. At best, the donor will think you are unprofessional.