

Building Proposal Outlines

Writing Effective Proposals

Learning Objectives

- Create detailed, logical proposal outlines
- Identify and include key sections required by funders
- Use appropriate, grant-specific terminology
- Align language with funder expectations
- Effectively collaborate on proposal outlines

Importance of Proposal Outlines

- Establishes clear, logical flow of content
- Ensures all required sections are included
- Facilitates collaboration among writers and reviewers
- Saves time and reduces revision cycles



Key Sections of a Strong Proposal Outline

- Executive Summary / Abstract
- Statement of Need
- Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes
- Project Description / Methods
- Evaluation and Measurement
- Budget and Justification
- Organizational Background / Capability
- Sustainability



Using Grant-Specific Terminology

- Align terms with funder's guidelines and objectives
- Clearly define terms and use them consistently

Benefits:

- Reflects knowledge of field-specific or industry language
- Demonstrates credibility and readiness
- Clarifies meaning, reducing ambiguity for reviewers

Aligning Language with Funder Expectations

- Carefully review funder guidelines and previous awards
- Mirror language and terminology used by the funder
- Clearly connect your program objectives to funder priorities
- Avoid generic phrasing; customize content specifically for each funder



Collaborative Writing & Submission of Outlines

- Clearly define roles (lead writer, editors, reviewers)
- Utilize collaborative software (Google Docs, MS Teams)
- Regularly scheduled review meetings
- Version control and tracking changes clearly

Common Outline Mistakes to Avoid

- Omitting essential proposal sections
- Lack of logical flow or unclear connections between sections
- Poor alignment with funder priorities
- Failure to clearly define roles or timelines in collaborative writing



Reflection

Consider your typical process creating proposal outlines

- Share your experience creating proposal outlines - what does your process involve?
- What has worked best for your organization, and what challenges have you faced?

Key Takeaways & Next Steps

- Essential components of strong proposal outlines
- Importance of grant-specific terminology and alignment with funder expectations
- Effective collaborative outline strategies
- Common outline mistakes to avoid