



Don't Get Buried in Grant's Tomb!

by Diane McDonald

I have often been asked, "How do I set my application apart from all the rest?"

A valid question as competition soars for limited resources. Fortunately there are several things you may do to ensure your application gets that second look! The tips below may not guarantee funding however; they will help keep you in the game.

- **A little legwork goes a long way!** Something as small as making a phone call to the contact person for the grant can provide a wealth of information and suggestions that will be invaluable as you apply for the grant.
- **Know the grant rules before you apply.** It is much better to find out the facts before you begin the laborious grant writing process. Be sure your project is compatible with the funder's priorities and you can give them what they ask for.
- **Be honest and specific about what you want from the grant and how it will be used.** There is nothing to be gained from misleading or stretching the truth. Vagueness in a grant proposal is almost certain to illicit a negative response.
- **Pay attention to the little details.** When there's a choice between awarding a grant to two strong competitors it often becomes a matter of which proposal most closely followed formatting guidelines, provided all the information requested or is well written minus the typos and grammatical errors. When funders are faced with a stack of applications it can be the small details that matter most.
- **Establish your need from the beginning.** Without a realistic sense of urgency and need you can't really expect organizations or the government to hand over copious piles of money (as nice as that thought may be). When you know what your goals are you're in a better position to convey them to the committee that awards money you are trying to get.
- **Keep it short and sweet.** No need to write a novel. Keep your grant heavy on relevant information and short on filler text. It will show the committee that you value their time as well as your own.
- **Double check the guidelines to ensure all information required is included in the proposal.** One of the most important steps in the process, if you forgot anything, you might have wasted a lot of time and energy to no avail. Funders ask for specific information for a reason. If something's missing they may not be able to make an award, no matter how deserving you or your organization may be.

Remember, as a Nonprofit Network member benefit, we will review your grant application and make suggestions about how you may make your application **stand out**.