



TRACY  
LYN  
COMMUNICATIONS

## Anatomy of a Proposal

### TITLE Page:

A Proposal Respectfully Submitted to XXXX  
to support [program/project title]  
at [name of organization]  
Month, Year

### Overview/Executive Summary (beginning of proposal, 2 paragraphs max)

- General information about the organization, its mission, current stats/recent “wins”
- Brief introduction of the program/project you’re seeking to fund and why your organization is best suited to execute it

### The Need (2 paragraphs max)

- Describe the need you are seeking to fulfill in your community.
- Use statistics from other resources that back up this need (use endnotes to source stats).

### The Ask (it’s important that this section be on the first page, or as close to the first page as possible, which is why the 1<sup>st</sup> two sections are kept short. You want the financial amount to be up front and not buried.)

- Begin with, “[Name of organization] respectfully requests [name or person/foundation] to consider a gift of \$XX that will...” (describe how the gift will be invested).
- This section might also touch upon the donor’s previous involvement with organization and mention how a strengthened partnership will be mutually beneficial to organization and the donor.
- Highlight donor benefits in this section, i.e. “In recognition of a gift of this size, organization would be privileged to include your name/foundation’s name in our Donor Honor Roll, sent to XX individuals and corporations annually.” (list other possible benefits to recognize/thank a gift of this size, i.e. invites to VIP events, meet/greet with President/Doctor, Board Member, etc.)

### The Solution This section will detail how private funds will enable your organization to provide a solution to the need described in the second section. Can be a longer section, 1-2 pages, be detailed and specific with measurable results!

- Use statistics to highlight and validate your argument.

- Be as specific as possible (measurable results).
- Possible use of graphs/tables, if necessary and depending on donor.
- Create a sense of urgency to the program (i.e. w/o this program/project, this would happen).
- Use quotes from people affected by your program/project (if already in place) or from community members/board members who are familiar with your organization (if not already in place) that validate why your organization is prepared to solve this issue.
- If writing for a foundation, you may be asked to write Outcomes/ Objectives/Strategies/Activities
  - Outcomes: usually longer timeframe (think long-term objective you hope to achieve, usually 5-10 years)
  - Objectives: The measurable objectives that you will accomplish during this grant period
  - Strategies: the specific strategies that this program/project will achieve with THIS funding in place (short term, i.e. only the life of this funding request)
  - Activities: the activities that you will take to achieve the strategies you've described (may also appear in the form of a timeline, i.e. "In Q1 we will XXX, in Q2, etc.)
- Foundations will also want to know how you will sustain program once funding expires (some individual donors may also be interested in this). Be specific, can use annual support, operating money, sponsorships, board appeal, etc.

**Conclusion** (one, maybe two paragraphs)

- The conclusion should be personalized to the donor, talk about her/his relationship with the organization, why organization values/appreciates her/his involvement, how this gift will be transformative to the organization, etc.
- Reiterate that organization would be proud to partner with (name of donor) to make this opportunity a reality.
- Conclude by saying how donor will be helping to solve a problem in your community through this investment.