

# ADVICE FOR ZONTA GRANT WRITERS

So you want to write a grant application to Zonta International for a ZISVAW grant or to another foundation for a local Zonta project? You can do it! It's not rocket science, and we Zontians are professional women with considerable skills in communicating. Like any other specialty, though, there are some "tricks of the trade" that may help make your grant writing easier and more successful. Here are a few.

Let's assume that you already have a general or fairly specific idea of the project you would like to carry out. If not, that is your first step.

**The first advice is to find a partner** – Search out a local non-profit organization that shares Zonta's values and mission, and is interested in your project idea. If you are lucky, as the Oneida club was, the partner will actually write the grant. And, if you are applying to a foundation other than Zonta International - I don't know the rules for Canada but - in the U.S. a foundation will almost never give funds to directly to a Zonta club (unless you have your own foundation as the Syracuse club does.) That is because, as a service club we are not a tax exempt charity. Your partner, being a "501(c)(3) organization," – that's the U.S. Internal Revenue designation for an organization to which donations are tax deductible – will be able to receive such funds.

**The second is to obtain the grant application guidelines from the funder.** If it's Zonta International, go to the [www.zonta.org](http://www.zonta.org) web site and click on ZISVAW. If you are looking at other foundations (and why not!) you need to do some research to identify appropriate ones...but that's another topic for another time.

**The third step is to follow Sylvia's © four easy rules of grant writing.** (Don't laugh!)

1. Neatness counts – *Your submission should look professional and well laid-out*
2. Follow the directions – *Do whatever the grant guidelines tell you to do*
3. Answer the questions – *Include every piece of information they ask for*
4. Don't annoy the reviewers – *Use a decent sized font, label the sections – Remember, real people will have to read your proposal*

**Fourth, write the grant to make a compelling case for your project.** It is your job to make the readers understand what you want to do, to excite them about the project, and to make clear the importance of its outcomes.

**Stating your case:** Every grant proposal should contain the following seven elements. The order in which they appear and the form they take will vary depending on grant maker requirements and how you can best state your case. You need to include them all *EVEN IF THE GRANT MAKER DOESN'T ASK FOR THEM!*

- **AGENCY QUALIFICATIONS** - This is where you establish your club's and the partner agency's credentials and qualifications, telling how your joint expertise and experience will enable you to carry out the project you propose.

- **PROBLEM STATEMENT (OR NEEDS ASSESSMENT)** - This is where you describe the problem or need you propose to meet or solve with your project.
- **GOALS/OBJECTIVES** - This is where you describe the specific, concrete, measurable things (called 'outcomes') that your proposed project will achieve.
- **METHODS/ACTIVITIES** - This is where you explain exactly what you and your partner will do in order to achieve the goals/objectives you have set for the program.
- **EVALUATION** - This often neglected element is crucial. Tell how you will measure the results of your project so you will know if you have achieved your goals/objectives ('outcomes').
- **FUTURE OF THE PROJECT** - or, What will happen to this program after the grant has run out? Describe the plan for continuing the project. Will your club continue to support it?
- **BUDGET** - Be very clear about what the funds will be used for, and how these uses relate to program results. Make sure you tell about funds from other sources that will be used for the program – including funds supplied by your local club.

**And some advice about the writing!**

- Don't be wordy. Short is better than long. Write first and then edit down to eliminate unneeded wordage and streamline your presentation. Avoid adjectives and adverbs whenever possible.
- Get organized. Make an outline of the topics you will cover, in a logical order, and then stick to it.
- It may be helpful to think of the proposal as a glorified college essay, with your job being to convince the reader of your point of view.
- Get someone else – another Zontian and/or a partner staff person, or even someone who is unfamiliar with the project - to read the draft proposal and critique it. What's clear to you may not be to others, including the grant maker.

...And now you've actually written a grant. It's hard work, but worth it if your club receives additional funds for that special project that improves the status of women. Good luck!

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