

## The Very Best Fire Service Grant Proposals--

### 1. Your Best Punch

Lead off with your most persuasive argument. For example, if your proposal's greatest benefit is that you'll meet the needs of a large number of citizens in your community, tell the reader right up front.

Example---

"This juvenile firesetter intervention program provides a new resource enabling us to reach 12,000 middle school and high school students in our community."

### 2. Stay in Control

One of the most frequent mistakes I find in proposals is circular writing that leads to repeating points already made. To avoid this, prepare and follow a clear outline. Your reader should see only the results of your thinking process, not the thinking itself.

### 3. Show Passion

We're all drawn to winners. You want to make the reviewer believe nothing can stop you from succeeding.

Here's a line from a (successful) proposal requesting funds for an AED program:

*"Although survival rates in Atwater are well above the national average of 15%, the Atwater Firefighters Association is not content to let seven of every ten cardiac arrest victims die."*

### 4. Use Strong Verbs

Present tense, active verbs give your proposal added strength.

Original: "We would like to request \$25,000 for a thermal imaging camera that could be a valuable fire safety tool for the community."

Stronger: "We are requesting \$25,000 for a thermal imaging camera to improve fire safety in our community."

### 5. Throw Out Every Unnecessary Word

Effective proofreading and rewriting eliminates words and phrases that make your proposal longer than necessary. The reviewers will give you credit for making your proposal succinct and easy to read. Also, writers who are brief are perceived to be more decisive and confident.

Examples

"We will offer the program in five different languages." delete "different"

"There are currently fire hydrants in..." delete "currently"

"Past history has shown us..." delete "Past"

"The end results of the activity..." delete "end"

"as soon as" change to "when"

"by means of" change to "by"

"...for the purpose of..." change to "for"

"...due to the fact that..." change to "because"

Additional note...

Clichés are never read ("Thank you for considering our proposal..."). People simply skip past them in search of the real message, so remove any clichés before submitting your proposal. Here are examples of clichés I've seen in proposals that should be left out or reworded--

"On behalf of our fire department..."

"If you have any questions or concerns..."

## **6. Show the Funder How Your Proposal Matches Their Goals**

This is the golden rule of grant writing---Give the funding agencies what *they* want and you'll get what you want.

Here's an example, taken from one of last year's winning proposals. You can see how the writer underscores that the project addresses FEMA's goals and objectives--

*"...our funding request will help develop another cost-effective project leading toward FEMA's nationwide goal of reducing the threat of fire to our special needs populations."*

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### **To help you prepare a winning grant---**

Free Grant Writing Resource Library... [www.theideabank.com/grantlibrary.html](http://www.theideabank.com/grantlibrary.html)

Sample Proposals... [www.theideabank.com/onlinecourse/samplegrant.html](http://www.theideabank.com/onlinecourse/samplegrant.html)