

Most grant proposals contain a lot of information. Assume your reader will need help staying interested. Insert sub-headlines every few paragraphs that contain mini-summaries of what is being discussed. This allows the reader to stay on track if he or she starts skimming the application or if his or her mind wanders. For example:

High Demand, Excellent Location

Based on discussions with realtors, professional market studies and preliminary outreach, demand for Oakhill units is high. As of April, a time when homes are traditionally placed on the market, there are only thirty homes for sale in

Always use your cover letter to summarize the importance of your request and the excellence of your project. It will orient the reader so he or she has a sense of what you will be requesting in your grant (and also serves to encapsulate your request in case they don't read it carefully.)

Keep things interesting. Use stories of real live people and pepper your proposal with photos. (Place them in the margins so as not to exceed page restrictions.)

Read and follow the funder's directions carefully. Don't make exceptions.

Make things pretty and clean. Use tabs; make a nice cover sheet. Some people use folders available from Staples that have a square cut out of it where one can insert the cover sheet. Inside pockets allow room for the proposal, attachments and background material. (Check directions, however, since some grantors specifically say they do not want extra folders or binders.)

Form a relationship with the Program Officer. Invite him/her to the project or ask if you can meet in his or her office. Bring copies of your plans, nice photographs.

Always follow-up. Confirm that the proposal was received. Maintain communications – provide e-mail updates about the project, for example – even if you are denied funding. Maintaining a presence in the funder's mind can sometimes pay off.