



SUGGESTED GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDE

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
16 DÍAS DE ACTIVISMO CONTRA LA VIOLENCIA DE GÉNERO
16 JOURS D'ACTIVISME CONTRE LA VIOLENCE DE GENRE
25 NOV - 10 DEC <http://16dayscwgj.rutgers.edu>



By *Mama Cash*

FIVE DO's

✓ *Do your homework*

- ✓ Check the funder guidelines, criteria or thematic priorities to see if your organisation is eligible for funding.
- ✓ Find out information about the donor— what are they interested in? Where do they work? How do they work (i.e., do they accept proposals year round or only during specific calls)?
- ✓ Do you have all the information you need to submit a proposal? If not, or if you are not sure about what the donor means with certain criteria, don't be afraid to ask!

✓ *Say what you mean and mean what you say*

- ✓ Does your organisation have a well-written mission and vision statement? Do you have a paragraph that clearly states what your organisation is and does? It is important and worth your time to develop this story in clear and focused terms. Be yourself— creating a story that is authentic to what your organisation stands for and wants to be known as will help others to see this.
- ✓ Sometimes donors will look up your organisation on the internet, so having consistent messaging online is a must (i.e., on Facebook or your website)!
- ✓ Showing donors that your organisation is “professional” or good at what it does, doesn't mean you have to use jargon or complicated language. Sharing what inspires and motivates your organisation is good!

✓ *Be your own advocate*

- ✓ What is the problem your organisation addresses? How does this relate to the donor's interests? What makes your organisation best placed to address this problem? Being clear and focused in your reasoning can help convince funders.
- ✓ How will supporting your organisation help the donor meet their goals? A note of caution: make sure the proposal is about what you want to do, not what you think the donor wants you to do!

✓ *Share your vision of your success, and get specific*

- ✓ Donors will want to know what you think (short and long term) success will be as a result of their grant support—and after their grant ends. It is important to show that you appreciate the importance of monitoring and evaluating your own efforts and that you have an idea about how you want to do this.
- ✓ Make sure to include expected change at the level of your beneficiaries, not just your organisation.
- ✓ Be honest— don't make promises you cannot keep. Instead, share how your organisation plans to address challenges and document success over time. Share stories of success to support your claims.

✓ *Show the power of movements*

- ✓ Show how you partner with others, either informally or formally, as donors want to see that you are not working in isolation.
- ✓ If you have other funders, share this information. Donors are interested in knowing that you have been able to secure other sources of support. It can help strengthen their trust in your organisation's ability to deliver on its goals.
- ✓ If you have attended meetings or conferences where you have been able to share your work, let the donor know. A commitment to sharing your own work shows donors that you are serious.

FIVE DON'Ts

✓ *Think you can fit a square peg in a round hole*

- ✓ If your organisation does not meet the eligibility criteria, don't apply. Most donors will not even look at the proposal if it is outside their criteria, which is a waste of your hard work.

✓ *Assume the donor will 'get it'*

- ✓ Make sure to avoid jargon or abbreviations, as the donor might not be familiar with these.
- ✓ Don't assume the donors know the context very well! Instead, clarify why your work matters in your specific context.

✓ *Forget who is on the other side of the application*

- ✓ You are not writing to convince yourself. Your proposal should help the donor understand what your organisation is and why your work is important.
- ✓ Don't include everything that you have done or would like for a donor to know about your organisation. Share only what the donor is asking for— as they read many proposals, it helps both of you to be concise and concrete!
- ✓ The donor is not just a 'pot of money'— donors are individual people who also have organisational goals and need to be accountable to their constituents, funders, and/or Board of Directors. Seeing them as a partner can help build a relationship based on trust and mutual understanding. Additionally, your input could even help a donor strengthen their case to others why funding women's rights is important.

✓ *Rush through the numbers*

- ✓ A poorly written budget (like when it contains errors, or seems unrealistic) can result in a quick "no" from the donor. In contrast, it instills confidence when you present solid budgets for your organisation as well as your grant proposal.
- ✓ In bad proposals, the details of the budget do not match up with the narrative story. Make sure you connect the two parts of your proposal!
- ✓ Be sure to give budget information in the currency that is requested in the application format. If you cannot, give information about what currency you are using and why.

✓ *Count your chickens before they hatch – you may not receive funding*

- ✓ Donors get many more applications than they can fund, and often it takes months for them to come back with a decision. Make sure also to have a plan to find alternative funding support if this proposal is not successful. A fundraising plan can be a helpful tool.
- ✓ If your application is unsuccessful, be sure to ask feedback so you can use it to improve future proposals. Also ask for suggestions of other donors that you could approach for funding. Investing time in building a good relationship with donors, even if they turn down your proposal (the first time), is worthwhile.

Resources

- Association for Women's Rights in Development: <http://www.awid.org/Our-Initiatives/Where-is-the-Money-for-Women-s-Rights>
- Global Fund for Women: <http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/impact/publications/127-other-resources/208-womens-fundraising-handbook>
- International Network of Women's Funds: <http://www.inwf.org/>
- Mama Cash: <http://www.mamacash.org/>