Elements of Proposal Acceptance

Formats

Letters of inquiry/concept papers/pre-application

LOIs and concept papers provide an overview of potential proposal/idea presented for initial review and can be accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year or in accordance with set application deadlines.

Unsolicited proposals/open requests for proposals (RFPs)

With unsolicited proposals, the foundation provides general guidance on funding priorities and accepts full proposals on a rolling basis throughout the year or in accordance with set application deadlines.

Solicited RFP/competitive process

In a solicited/competitive format, the foundation announces a specific funding priority and accepts proposals on a competitive basis to address that priority. This can also include grant competitions like 5x5 events where 5 applicants compete for a grant with a 5-minute presentation and 5 slides.

Invitation only

With an invitation only process, the foundation invites specific organizations to apply for a grant.

Internal process

Foundation has an internal process to identify and distribute grants – much like the MacArthur Genius Grants.

Hybrid

Foundations use multiple applications formats depending on the grant or funding source.
Timing

Open

Foundation will accept proposals at any time.

Calendar (quarterly, monthly, annually)

Foundation provides regularly scheduled application “windows.”

Goal-Specific Guidelines

Foundation accepts proposals in accordance to deadlines related to the project or funding goal.

Hybrid

Foundations use multiple applications schedules depending on the grant or funding source.

General Information Required

The following are examples of basic information which most foundations collect. Different grants require different types of information and different foundations seek different types of information based on their mission and values. (For example, a foundation focused on diversity might have highly specific questions about the organization’s board and staff composition.)

- Proposed project/implementation plan
- Finances
- Organization’s history and track record
- Governance
- Executive leadership and staffing