

## Effective Proposal Writing

### Fundraising 101 Workshop New York City, October 16, 2003

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From notes taken during the presentation “Effective Proposal Writing” with Caroline Crumpacker

- Proposals must begin with strategic searching of foundations and knowledge of foundations.
- It is a good idea to make a distinction between your organization’s mission and artistic vision in the proposal.
- You must show that you are viable; put together a strong package showing your fundraising methods and earned income. Show that you are well on your way to sustainability.
- Show that you are fulfilling a certain need and contributing to the field.
- Emphasize growth in your organization (100% staff increase, 30% more programs last year, etc.)
- Contextualize your organization within the outside world, include quotations, statistics, anything that grounds and frames the work you are accomplishing within your particular niche in the larger community.
- Show lines of progress: what you have done as well as what you plan to do.
- Emphasize that you have a business plan that is well thought out and makes sense.
- Proposal requests should not ask for more than 45% of your organizational budget.

- Assume that the foundation you are writing to is NOT your audience. Don't use insider language/jargon. Don't assume that funders who are reading your proposal understand the same set of references and terms that are common in the literary community.
- Don't use hyperbole or high flattery words; substitute quantifiable examples instead.
- Show that you have given much attention to evaluation. You can emphasize what went wrong or failed in a program and how you can better the situation in the future; how have you assessed the problems and what will you do differently to remedy them. Even if a program fails you can always emphasize the learning experience and its value toward future improvement within your organization or, better, your field as a whole.