

**TheGrant
Helpers.com**

Making the Case

**How to Make a
Strong Argument for Funding**

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THE CASE

The Case is the foundation for funding. It is the reason why a funding organization would choose to fund your effort. Before generating the copy that goes into the proposal itself, in a separate document, prepare your case to make sure your logic and rationale are in place. The case document often works best as a one-page outline, containing your main points. Be prepared to spend a fair amount of time working on the case outline prior to generating the proposal copy. You can then adapt the argument from the case outline to the format required by the proposal guidelines. If the outline is good, the case will flow naturally into prescribed layout.

A large part of proposal writing is building and substantiating the main pillars of the case. Keep the outline available as a guideline as you write the proposal. Make sure that every statement in the proposal relates to the case and supports one of the basic pillars of the argument. Also, be able to prove each one of your claims.

Often you will find that you need to revisit the case statement as you develop the proposal. If you find that a line of thought is not consistent with the case, and you think the line of thought is worthwhile, take the time to revise the case outline. As a corollary, you might find that you need to alter your proposed project to build up the case in some area of weakness. A common example of this is tailoring the project tasks and outcomes to better match the goals of the funding organization.

FIVE PILLARS OF SUPPORT

Here are five basic pillars of a typical case statement. Case outlines may differ depending on the proposal. Regardless, if any one column is weak, it threatens the strength of the entire case and the proposal may not stand up to the rigors of competition.



The Need. From the very onset, the proposed project must meet a need or solve a clearly identified problem. Alternatively, the project may be taking advantage of a unique opportunity, such as expanding a field of knowledge. Research proposals fall into this category.



Funding goals. Meeting the goals and objectives of the funding organization is paramount, yet, amazingly, many proposals fall short in this category. Also, proposals sometimes need a secondary pillar to demonstrate that the project could not be funded by other sources.



Uniqueness. In order to compete with other proposals, yours has to distinguish itself. You must offer something that no one else can offer. Proving this usually requires extensive knowledge of the field in which you are proposing to work.



Impact. Unless your project results in a significant, positive outcome, there is little incentive to pursue it. Explain what your project will accomplish.



Feasible Plan. Good reviewers will scrutinize your team's capabilities and credentials as well as proposed resources, methodology, deliverables, and timetable. You must satisfy the reviewers that your proposed effort stands a strong chance of bearing the promised results.

CASE QUESTIONS

When building your case outline, here are several questions to consider that relate to the five pillars. When addressing these questions, remember that in the proposal you will need to substantiate and justify each of them. Therefore, think not only of a solid response to each question but also how you will prove it to reviewers.

Need

- ? Why is this work important? Why does it matter?
- ? What problem does it solve?
- ? What opportunity does it take advantage of?
- ? How will your proposal address the need or opportunity?

Uniqueness

- ? What is unique about your solution?
- ? What else has been done or is being done in the field by others?
- ? How does your concept build on existing work?
- ? How is it different from existing work?
- ? Why is this the best approach?
- ? What are the current standards and benchmarks for measuring success in this field?

Impact

- ? What significant, positive benefits will occur if the project is successful?
- ? Who are the beneficiaries?
- ? How widespread is the benefit?
- ? What are your target results compared to existing benchmarks?

Funding Goals

- ? How do you meet the expressed goals and objectives of the funding organization?
- ? How do you meet the goals of the guidelines?
- ? How will you show your appreciation to the funder?

Feasibility

- ? What specific factors give you confidence that the project will succeed?
- ? What preliminary work indicates success?
- ? Are the team members highly credentialed in the field?
- ? Are there sufficient areas of expertise to excel in all areas of work required to complete the project?
- ? Are the facilities sufficient to carry out the work?
- ? Are all required resources identified and planned for?
- ? Is the budget sufficient to fund all required resources?
- ? Is the work plan complete? Logical? Reasonable?
- ? Is the evaluation plan sound enough to demonstrate success convincingly?



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