

## **Tips for Writing a Strong Application**

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*[www.thompson.com](http://www.thompson.com).*

The following list of tips and suggestions were taken from a recent Department of Health and Human Services funding announcement. Although included in an HHS announcement, the advice is applicable to any proposal writing process.

**Include the DUNS Number** – Your DUNS number must be included for the application to be reviewed. Applications will not be reviewed without a DUNS number. To obtain a DUNS number, access [www.dunandbradstreet.com](http://www.dunandbradstreet.com) or call 1-866-705-5711. Include the DUNS number in item 8c on the application face page.

**Register in Grants.gov immediately** – In order to register in Grants.gov you must have a DUNS/CCR number. See instructions in Appendix A section 3 and Appendix B for more information on registering in Grants.gov. If you have never registered in Grants.gov, the process can take up to two weeks to complete.

**Keep your audience in mind** – Reviewers will use only the information contained in the application to assess the application. Do not assume that reviewers are familiar with the application organization, service area, barriers to health care or health care needs in your community. Keep the review criteria in mind when writing the application. The application should make sure the application responds to each program requirement.

**Be responsive to the review criteria** – Reviewers will assess an application based on the review criteria beginning in Section V., 1. Make sure the elements in the review criteria are included in the Project Narrative (section IV, page 20).

**Start preparing the application early** – Allow plenty of time to gather required information from various sources. Find out about current and previous grantees on the agency's Web site.

**Follow the instructions in the guidance carefully** – The instructions call for a particular organization of the materials, and reviewers are accustomed to finding information in specific places. Avoid the risk of having reviewers hunt through your application for information.

**Be brief, concise and clear** – Make your points understandable. Provide accurate and honest information, including candid accounts of problems and realistic plans to address them. If any required information or data is omitted, explain why. Make sure the information provided in each table, chart, attachment, etc., is consistent with the proposal narrative and information in other tables. Your budget should reflect back to the proposed activities and all forms should be filled in accurately and completely.

**Be organized and logical** – Many applications fail because the reviewers cannot follow the thought process of the application or because parts of the application do not fit together.

**Be careful in the use of attachments** – Do not use the attachments for information that is required in the body of the application. Be sure to cross-reference all tables and attachments to the appropriate text in the application. Be sure to upload the attachments in the order indicated in the forms.

**Carefully proofread the application** – Misspellings and grammatical errors will impede reviewers in understanding the application. Limit the use of abbreviations and acronyms and define each one at its first use and periodically throughout the application. Make sure you submit your application in final form, without markups.

**Print out and carefully review the electronic application to ensure accuracy and completion.** When submitting electronically, print out the application before submitting it to ensure appropriate formatting and adherence to page limit requirements. **Check to ensure that all attachments are included before sending the application forward.**

**Ensure that all information is submitted at the same time** – Most grantor agencies will not consider additional information or materials submitted after your initial submission, nor will most agencies accept e-mailed applications or supplemental materials once your application has been received.