

# Grant Tips

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A publication of the Carroll County Grants Office

## Writing a Letter of Inquiry

Funding agencies frequently request a letter of inquiry prior to inviting a full grant proposal. An effective letter of inquiry has become an increasingly important step in securing grant funding from a foundation. The letter of inquiry, usually no more than 2-3 pages, allows an agency to test an idea with a funder to be certain that there is a strong match between the program goals and the funder's goals. In addition, if an agency is invited to submit a full proposal, they can receive feedback from the funder before finalizing the proposal. A letter of inquiry can save time and effort as well. If the proposal is rejected, an agency hasn't gone to great lengths to craft an application. And, if it is accepted, the ground work is in place for the application.

Keep the letter concise and make it easy to find information about your program. Make sure to highlight the impact and results you expect from the project. And remember, foundations do not have unlimited budgets, so tailor your request to the resources of the foundation. One way to approach a letter of inquiry is to assign a question to each paragraph.

**Paragraph 1** - Who are you? - Describe yourself and your agency, include your mission, who you serve and where you are located

**Paragraph 2** - Why this foundation/funding agency? - Show your knowledge of the funding agency's goals and priorities.

**Paragraph 3** - What is the need in your community? - Include a brief but clear problem statement with supporting statistics. Show your expertise and understanding of the problem.

**Paragraph 4** - What's the program plan? - Bullet the plan's goals and objectives. Use active statements to describe the program impact

**Paragraph 5** - Why fund you? - Highlight your agency's unique qualifications and establish your agency's credentials and expertise

**Paragraph 6** - How much? - Specify the amount requested in broad budget categories and include other funding sources and in kind support.

**Paragraph 7** - Closing - Provide contact information and enclose brochures and fact sheets.

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