

Tips for Writing Successful Proposals

Teacher Creativity Fellowship Program 2012

\$8,000 award

Over the years, we have received many questions about what constitutes a good Teacher Creativity Fellowship Program proposal. The program brochure states that proposals are reviewed based on their substance, clarity, originality and feasibility. The first thing you should do is read the application information and guidelines carefully. Beyond that, though, reviewers have identified several hallmarks of proposals that have been accepted for funding. We hope these comments help you as you consider preparing a proposal for the Teacher Creativity Fellowship Program.

Preparation

Reviewers are impressed by proposals that show evidence that the project and corresponding activities have been well planned. Beyond simply appreciating a coherent application, reviewers look for evidence that research has been conducted about the opportunities available to pursue the project, contacts with relevant individuals and organizations have been made, and thought has been given to the kinds of experiences that applicants present for their projects.

Passion

One component of a successful proposal is the passion for the project that the applicant conveys in the application. Among reviewers, it is often referred to as being able to hear applicants' voices speaking from their hearts directly to the reviewers. This may be evidenced by having someone propose a project, talent or interest that has languished due to everyday demands and stresses. A proposal writer may discuss an opportunity he or she has been thinking about exploring for years, but has not had the time or resources to devote to it. Reviewers are drawn to proposals that convey enthusiasm.

Educator as Learner

Reviewers have found that the most compelling proposals place the educator in the role of learner and risk-taker. Proposals that take applicants out of their comfort zones and acknowledge this departure as useful in helping them understand their students' frustrations are enticing to reviewers.

Timeline

A successful proposal includes a timeline that reflects a full six weeks of time devoted to the project and its corresponding activities. Reviewers have noted that, especially for projects that include travel, a proposal is more compelling if sufficient time will be spent at the location(s) identified. If significant resources will be invested in traveling to a location, reviewers may be drawn to proposals that reflect a stay of several weeks rather than only a few days.

Also, reviewers suggest that proposals that devote most of the six weeks to project activities generally are stronger than those that engage in project activities for two or three weeks, then specify the rest of the six weeks as documentation (e.g., preparing PowerPoint presentations, sorting photographs, editing video, collating scrapbooks, and so forth). While documentation is important, it should not consume the majority of the project.

The timeline should be separated from the project narrative, not included within the description of the proposed project.

Attention to Detail

A successful proposal is grammatically correct and carefully proofread. Just as teachers demand careful work, reviewers of proposals are favorably inclined toward proposals that are easy to read and follow. The case for the proposed project should be stated concisely, and activities, timeline and budget should be compatible. Budgets should add correctly, and all necessary components should be included.

Three sets of the complete proposal, including three copies of your teaching or administrative license, and one original and two copies of letter(s) of recommendation (signed and on letterhead) are required. Each complete set should be secured with paperclips.

Please do not submit additional attachments unless specifically requested by the Endowment.

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