

GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Scholarly Communications

Grantees should consider the information below as a guide to assembling an invited proposal to the Foundation. The Foundation reviews the proposal to make informed judgments about the merits of the project, its likelihood of achieving its stated goals, and the organization's capacity to carry out the project activities effectively. Policies underlying these guidelines can be found on the Foundation's [website](#). Please be prepared to work closely with program staff in revising and refining the proposal, often through multiple drafts, before it is finalized.

Submission Format

Draft proposals should be submitted to the Foundation through email in no more than four files: the information sheet; an MS Word file that includes the proposal narrative and budget narrative; an Excel budget spreadsheet using the Foundation's budget template; and a PDF file containing any additional supporting materials. When a proposal is accepted by program staff for recommendation to the Board of Trustees, staff will request the final version to be submitted in two formats: (1) a single unbound hard copy, with all relevant signatures; and (2) a single searchable PDF of the signed hardcopy. A final proposal should not be submitted until requested by program staff.

A final grant proposal to the Foundation should contain the following four parts:

COVERING MATERIALS

Proposal Information Sheet

A summary "[Proposal Information Sheet](#)."

Cover Letter

A cover letter on organizational letterhead, signed by the principal investigator(s), should accompany the final proposal and match the date of the Proposal Information Sheet. It should be addressed to the relevant program officer and include the title and a brief summary of the project, the amount of funding sought, and the names and contact information of any collaborating institutions and individuals. The cover letter should also include reference to the Foundation's "[Grantmaking Policies](#)" and state that the organization understands and will comply with these policies.

Endorsement Letter

A signed endorsement letter from the chief executive officer of the organization is needed when the chief executive officer is not the principal investigator on the proposed project. The endorsement letter, on organizational letterhead and dated the same as, or later than, the cover letter, should be submitted with the final proposal. It should refer to the proposed grant and project title, budget and timeframe, and the date and substance of the principal investigator's cover letter.

NARRATIVE MATERIALS

Proposal Narrative

Proposals to the program area in Scholarly Communications should include the following information. Please note that the Foundation expects concision and few, if any, superlatives in proposal narratives. The list below is not a template; it should be treated as a checklist of topics to be covered:

- a. A clear and concise summary description of the project, the rationale for the request, the total amount requested, and the length of time it will take to complete the proposed activities.
- b. The reason for the project, including:
 - i. Area(s) in which the institution sees a need to advance its mission or serve a particular constituency for which outside funding help is required.

- ii. To what extent, if any, such needs are filled by other institutions, and what still needs to be done.
- iii. The means by which the institution can provide this service or services.
- iv. What the institution needs to accomplish these tasks.
- v. Which of those needs require help specifically from the Foundation.
- c. A schedule of major activities, including:
 - i. A clear, concise description of the activities that the institution would like to carry out to meet the needs identified.
 - ii. A description of legal and operational relationships with other organizations, subcontractors, consultants, administering agents, or collaborators on the project (see also the Foundation’s [“Guidelines for Grants Involving Consultants and/or Subcontractors”](#)).
 - iii. The names, affiliations, job titles, and qualifications of the people already employed by the institution, as well as the titles and responsibilities of positions that would be created or filled during the grant term. An appendix should include CVs for the principal investigators and draft job descriptions for positions that would be created or filled during the term of the proposed grant.
 - iv. A timeline that shows the steps by which the project will proceed and how staff will participate.
- d. Expected outcomes and benefits of the project.
- e. Diversity and inclusion – The Foundation is committed to diversity and inclusion in all grantmaking programs. Please describe how your organization defines and approaches diversity and inclusion, referring to its mission and operations, and please provide one or more examples of challenges and successes the organization has experienced. If the proposed grant is intended to address diversity and inclusion, please help us understand how.
- f. Intellectual property – If the proposed project has any aspects pertaining to the digitization of works, or the creation of digital technology, software, and/or digital databases, the proposal should provide a separate description of this work in a section entitled “Intellectual Property.” The section should include a statement affirming that the principal investigator has discussed the Foundation’s Intellectual Property Policy with appropriate officials at institutions that would participate in the proposed project, and that all institutions understand that the policy would apply to the grant. This section should then give a detailed account of the intellectual property to be created, any rights and/or permissions that the grantee will need to secure, the means by which the technologies and/or content would be distributed, including the type of license that the institution would issue to users, and how the organization will ensure the long-term sustainability of the digital and/or software products.
- g. Sustainability – As appropriate, an account of how the organization will ensure the longer-term sustainability of project results and/or institutional changes supported by Foundation funding.
- h. Reporting – A statement indicating that the organization will provide the Foundation with interim and final reports according to the schedule specified in the Foundation’s award letter, identifying the person(s) who will have responsibility for reporting and describing the criteria to be used in assessing the progress and success of the project.
- i. A description of any financial difficulties or deficits the grantee has experienced in the last two years.

Budget Narrative

The budget component of the grant proposal includes a budget spreadsheet and the corresponding budget narrative. The budget narrative should describe and justify the cost assumptions for each category and line item in the budget spreadsheet. The narrative may refer to a subordinate spreadsheet that provides a detailed breakdown of cost assumptions for some or all of the budget categories. The budget narrative should not introduce new features of the project beyond what is presented in the project description. Budget categories may vary according to the particular project. Examples include:

- a. Personnel – List all personnel costs, excluding fringe benefits, for each requested staff position. This section should include all positions and their base salary (including, if applicable, the FTE percentage allocation).
- b. Fringe Benefits – List all benefit costs related to personnel involved with the project, including pension contributions, insurance, and other benefits provided to the employees.
- c. Travel and Meetings – This section should describe all costs directly related to the major activities of the grant and the source for these estimates, including expenses for all modes of transportation, lodging, meals, mileage reimbursements, and per diem payments.
- d. Equipment and Supplies – This section should include an itemized list of equipment and supplies to be purchased along with cost and depreciation assumptions, as well as anticipated shipping, licensing, maintenance, and insurance costs.
- e. Contractors and Consultants – The budget narrative should describe all existing agreements and those expected to be made or negotiated with external entities, including both consulting firms and individuals who are employed through fixed fees. It should include a description of the work to be performed, whether the amount is based on a fixed price or an hourly per diem, whether it includes travel and other additional expenses, and whether the contract is confirmed or projected.
- f. Subgrants – If applicable, the budget narrative should identify and explain the budget for grant funds that are anticipated for use by other organizations. Please also include the names of subgrantees, a description of the work to be performed by each, and the amount of allocated funds.
- g. Additional Support – If the proposal requests only partial funding for the grant activities, the budget narrative should include a listing of all other funding sources, the corresponding amounts and percentage of the total budget, and whether the funding is committed or potential. This section should also describe contingency plans if full project funding does not become available.
- h. Investment Income – The budget narrative should include a description of how unspent grant funds will be invested, including the overall investment strategy and asset allocation, and how income will be calculated and allocated within the grant budget. If the organization cannot legally invest grant funds in interest- or income-generating instruments, please provide an explanation.

BUDGET SPREADSHEET

The Foundation requires that budget spreadsheets be submitted using the Foundation’s “[Budget and Financial Report](#)” template, available with instructions. **The budget spreadsheet should include only funds requested from the Foundation and exclude projected interest or investment income.** Please note the following regarding the spreadsheet:

- a. Expenses should be separated by clearly defined major categories—for example, personnel, fringe benefits, travel, meetings, equipment, supplies, contractors and consultants, subgrants, and other major categories appropriate to the project;
- b. Major categories should be accompanied by detailed subcategories of anticipated component costs. For instance, the major category for personnel should include subcategory listings of participating staff. Grantees should use their judgment about the appropriate level of detail when completing the budget spreadsheet and may consult with Foundation staff for guidance;
- c. If the proposed project timeframe is for more than one year, then the budget should be allocated over multiple periods, each of no more than 12 months in length. Each period should be listed in a separate dated column, with the period covered clearly shown. There should be no gaps between budget periods. The Foundation will consider these budget periods as the proposed reporting periods; and
- d. Proposals for collaborative projects should include a consolidated budget, showing separate entries for each participating institution.

If the proposal is accepted, annual reporting must follow the same expense categories set forth in the proposal for easy line-to-line comparisons.

APPENDIX

Provide an appendix to the proposal that includes:

- a. a list of members of the organization's Board of Trustees or Directors, submitted as an MS Word document;
- b. for grantees classified as supporting organizations under section 509(a)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, an affidavit of supporting organization status, available from the Foundation; and
- c. other supplementary materials as requested by program staff or as needed to explicate the proposed work.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

Grants to Non-US Institutions

The Foundation requires foreign grantees to use the special "[Budget and Financial Report for Non-US Institutions](#)" in proposals, budgeting all amounts in local currency and showing the total requested sum in US dollars. Where indicated, the exchange rate used, the corresponding date, and the source should be cited. The exchange rate should be from a public source and correlate with rates published within a week of the date of the final proposal. Foreign grantees may refer to rates available at www.oanda.com.

Endowment Grants

For organizations with endowments of less than \$100 million, proposals for endowment funds should include the following items:

1. A copy of the Investment Policy Statement ("IPS"), which must include the: (a) Asset Allocation Policy; (b) Spending Policy; (c) Rebalancing Policy; (d) Conflict of Interest Policy; and (e) Roles and Responsibilities of the Board, the Investment Committee, Staff, and Consultants/Advisors;
2. A description of the decision-making process for making changes to the IPS, and, if applicable, how and by whom managers are sourced and evaluated;
3. The current roster of investment managers
4. The current members of the Investment Committee and the name of any Investment Consultant or Advisor;
5. A summary of the actions taken and a list of attendees at the last four meetings of the Investment Committee, or the minutes of those meetings;
6. The current Asset Allocation;
7. Investment Performance for the past one, three, five, and ten years;
8. Copies of the two most recent audited financial statements; and
9. Should a grant be awarded, a commitment to provide, at the conclusion of each of the subsequent three fiscal years, the following:
 - a. a summary of the actions taken by the Investment Committee during the fiscal year and a list of the members who attended each meeting; and
 - b. a report on Investment Performance for the past one, three, five, and ten years.

Matching Grants

To evaluate a proposal for a matching grant, the Foundation requires a description of the organization's strategies for meeting the conditions of the match, details of the prospective donor base, and the intended uses of matching revenue. The narrative should also state that the organization will observe the criteria for satisfactory evidence of matching contributions set forth in the Foundation's "[Grantmaking Policies](#)."