

IPF

INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION FUND

FISCAL SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PROPOSAL

Your proposal to IPF will need the following:

1. Letter of Intent (1-2 pages)

This is your introductory letter to any foundation. It should include the purpose of the grant, the reasoning for the amount of the grant, as well as a detailed project description that includes:

- Statement of problem and purpose of grant
- A description of the project's targeted audience(s)
- Project design, including schedule and workplan
- A description of the project's expected outcomes, including distribution
- Estimated total project cost and total amount requested from the Fund
- Organization staffing, and fundraising status & approach

This is often sent separately from the items below.

2. Executive Summary (1 page)

This project statement and proposal summary is the most important component of your proposal. Summarize all of the key information and convince the grantmaker to consider your proposal for funding. Introduce your project, present a clear, concise summary of, and the visual framework for, the proposed project/program, and include: Applicant contact information, purpose of the funding request, need/problem, objectives, methods, total project cost, amount requested.

3. The Narrative (5-7 pages)

This is where you describe the project you are seeking funding for in much greater detail. It should include:

Statement of need - Purpose, goals, measurable objectives, and a compelling, logical reason why the proposal should be supported. Background provides perspective and is often a welcome component.

In other words: Why does your audience need this project?

Project Description: This section should include the format and style of your project, as well as the structure of your story and how you will organize the elements into a coherent and interrelated dramatic whole from beginning to middle to end. Describes the big picture vision and explains how you envision translating your story from page to screen. This description should convince the reader that you have a well-conceived structure and plan for your project.

In other words: What is your project going to look and feel like?

Methodology – This is a complementary piece to your project description. This section states the process of you will go about the process of accomplishing goals and objectives you've set forth during your production, a description of intended scope of work with expected outcomes, as well as an outline of activities embarked upon during the project.

In other words: How, specifically, are you going to create your project?

Target audience - Describes what cross-section of the world's population you think is best suited to receive your project. Often, there are four or five categories that will match your project. Be specific - your project is most likely not for "everyone, everywhere, " but will generate a great deal of interest in certain circles.

In other words: Who is most likely to view my project?

Project timeline - Paints a picture of project flow that includes start and end dates, schedule of activities, and projected outcomes. Should be detailed enough to include staff selection and start dates.

In other words: How long will this take you to do?

Credentials - Information about the applicant that certifies ability to successfully undertake the proposed effort. Typically includes institutional or individual track record and resumes.

In other words: What have you done that makes you the right person to undertake this project?

Special Note: Always remember to include The HOOK.

There are many ways to represent the same idea. However, the HOOK tailors the description of the idea to the interest of a particular funder. The HOOK aligns the project with the purpose, and goals of the funding source. This is a critical aspect of any proposal narrative because it determines how compelling reviewers will perceive your proposal to be.

In other words: Why am I interested? Why do I want to see this project happen?

4. The Supporting Materials (3-5 pages)

This part of your proposal deals with everything that will happen once the film is actually completed. This should include:

Distribution / Promotion Plan - This describes how you plan to get your project viewed once it is completed and how you will let your target audience know it is available. You can include many avenues (theatrical release, public television, film festivals, etc.) but be sure to prioritize them and provide examples of how you plan to secure this distribution and promote the project at each step of the way.

Outreach Plan - You will need to explain to your funder how you plan to achieve the goals set forth on your statement of need. Whomever is funding your project will want to know how you are going to connect your project with the outside world. Again, you can explore several avenues (educational outreach, community outreach, etc.) but make sure you have 2-3 solid options for how your project will improve or engage the situation you have focused on. Also, a description of your website and how interested viewers will interact with it should be included here.

Evaluation Plan - You will have to formulate a way to measure whether your project was successful. Often, this can coincide with the outreach plan, but it's always a good idea to state this outright. You can go about it several ways, depending on your distribution plan and your outreach plan (community discussions, classroom observance, etc.). Whomever funded your project will most likely want a final report of measured success, and this is a first step toward what you expect to see in that report at the end of the process.

5. The Budget (2-3 pages)

The Budget will consist of two parts: the budget narrative and the line item.

Budget Narrative - The narrative serves two purposes: it explains how the costs were estimated and it justifies the need for the cost. In this, you will describe each category of your budget, the relevant expenditures, and briefly how each is needed to complete your project.

Line Item - The line item lays the entire budget out "line by line." In this, the funder will get a chance to see how each part of your budget is broken down, and how you came to the total of your requested grant. This includes every single item you will spend money on during the cost of the documentary, including all the categories mentioned above. IPF has a sample budget form we can provide upon request.