

Hello all.

Oddly enough, now that you've worked so hard to "grow" your proposal template into a detail-filled, solid document our next step is to shrink it back down!

You won't need to start from scratch but use this same material to produce two additional documents. Make sure you have one or more copies of the full template before you start deleting anything!

Our goal is to have three finished documents so you're ready and prepared no matter what the funder requests for their initial approach or first form of contact.

The full template

A 2-page letter of inquiry (LOI)

A 3 or 4 page letter-style proposal. (3LP)

Fortunately, you can prepare the LOI and the 3LP using the template material you've already composed, so you'll need to find your "editor" hat. It's not as scary as it sounds!

The good news: to make the document shorter, entire subheads and their text can be pulled out. Long text sections, such as your problem statement can be cut down to the bare minimum. For the LOI, you shouldn't need the subheads at all—to save space it should appear as a regular business-style letter.

Evaluate each section, line by line. What absolutely must stay and what can go? If in doubt, pull it out.

For example, if you feel your Partnerships section is not all that strong anyway, pull it completely out.

Most everyone can pull the evaluation section. For the LOI, you can also pull the entire Amount of Funding Requested section. Another possible section to reconsider is Timetable for Implementation.

If you got carried away with your background and mission, wonderful as it is, cut it down to two paragraphs only. These shorter documents are not the

place to discuss the wonderful dogs and cats you've saved, at least not in any detail. That's great material for the full template but "extra baggage" when you need fewer words.

When you've finished cutting, have someone read the material to be sure it still makes sense.

By now you're probably wondering what is the difference between the LOI and the 3LP?

Generally, the LOI does not actually ask for ANY money. It's only a first step and it presents the question to the funder: **MAY WE SEND A FULL PROPOSAL?** The point of the letter is to peak their interest and find out if your programs fall within their range of funding. You're trying to get your foot in the door.

A letter-style proposal does ask for the money, just in a shorter format—when a shorter format is appropriate.

More good news—if a funder specifies the initial approach should be a letter, you have the choice to send either the LOI or the 3LP.

But think carefully about your choice. If you're requesting \$150 from a local grocery store to provide hot dogs and pop for your volunteer appreciation cook out, the 3LP will be fine. There's no need to lay the ground work and then send another bigger proposal.

On the other hand, if you're requesting a larger sum, say \$8,000 toward the replacement of a 25-year old shelter roof, you might be better off starting with the LOI.

Always attach your 501c3 letter **NO MATTER** what you send out.

If you'd like to see copies of any of these three documents, please email me and I'll send you examples.

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