



Developing a Proposal with VMOSA Vision, Mission, Objectives, and Action

Neighborhood projects are generally undertaken for the development and upliftment of the community. A community project proposal is like a recipe detailing each step to prepare your favorite dish. A project proposal is a guide to transition ideas into reality. The proposal should inform potential investors and stakeholders about the project to be undertaken and stated in a way that it encourages participation and attracts financial support. Every proposal should contain VMOSA (vision, mission, objectives, and action).

First Things First – A Cover Letter

The cover letter should contain a summary of your proposal, introduce your organization and summarize any recent communications you've had with the funding organization. Include the amount of funding that you are requesting, the population it will serve, and the need it will help solve. Try to bring your project to life in the cover letter and actively engage your reader. Here are **five** sections that need to be included in a cover letter:

Introduction – This should grab the attention of the reader. Take this part to establish your agreement about the issue and begin to set the tone for the next section.

What is the problem? - Define the problem you are working on and what would happen if it is not resolved. This should be stated clearly and concisely to convince the reader that what you are proposing is necessary.

How will you solve the problem? - What this section includes will vary depending on the type of proposal, but it will be the most important part of the document. When describing your proposed solution, any supplemental information can be added as annexes to the document.

Executive summary – This is the conclusion. It needs to sum up the major points from your document and leave your reader with a good final impression.

The Proposal

Proposals come in two forms:

Solicited – This type of proposal usually begins with a request for proposals (RFP). Many companies issuing RFPs will have an RFP template to provide potential grantees details of what they are looking for in a proposal. It will usually give a timeline of when items are due and what they are looking for in the document.

Unsolicited – This type proposal is initiated by the person who writes it. The writer usually submits it because they have an initiative or idea they want to pitch.

The proposal should present a concise summary of the project. It should include the need for the project vision, mission, objectives and action. Also, included should be the organizations/applicant's background and qualifications. Make sure you include the amount of funding that is being sought.

Vision – Clarify your vision and then plan it with precision. A vision statement is a brief descriptive declaration of the community's dreams for the future. Vision statements communicate what your organization believes are ideal conditions for your community – how things would look if the issue important to you were perfectly addressed. The following are characteristics of a good vision statement:

- It should be inspiring and uplifting to persons involved in your initiative
- It should be easy to communicate – a short slogan

Mission – Be able to clearly communicate your organization's purpose. An organization's mission statement describes the purpose of the organization and or initiative- what you're going to do, and why. Mission statements are similar to vision statements, but they're more concrete, and "action-based". Typically a mission statement should spell-out the overall goal and provide a sense of direction. General guidelines about mission statements are:

- Although not as short a vision statement, a mission statement should not be more than 2 sentences
- Mission statements should state the outcome you are working to achieve

Objective –Objectives are intended outcomes or measurable results. It is a detailed description of what will be achieved. An objective can be used to validate the success of an organization or initiative. Consider the following when framing an objection:

- Objectives should support the vision/goal
- Use action words when drafting an objective

Action – Steps that turn your vision into a reality. A thorough action plan is a road map to successfully completing a task. An organization's action plan describes in detail the steps to be taken to accomplish a goal. Create an action plan that:

- Sets direction and establishes priorities
- Includes timetables

Additional items to be included in a proposal include:

Budget - Include in the budget all expenses for your project, including necessary training costs. Mention any co-funding that you are using from other sources. You may want to include a brief narrative of expenses along with a table of individual cost components.

Evaluation - Provide information on the metrics that will be used to determine the effectiveness of the project or program.

Organization Information - Describe the organization and include information indicating the organization's capacity to implement and sustain the program. List Board Member and Officers and positions. State your organization's 501c3 status and provide supporting documentation if available.