

Common Proposal Criticisms

- Proposal is hard to understand. *Write clearly. Don't repeat; be specific.*
- Funder doesn't believe organization is capable of executing project. *Prove management capabilities; use examples of previous successes.*
- Proposal doesn't look professional. *Check budget for mistakes and proofread narrative. Be sure it's bound in the manner requested.*
- The project does not appear realistic or meaningful. *Show how project fits your mission.*
- Timeline is absent or unclear. *Show milestones and endpoint on schedule of tasks.*
- Amount requested isn't clear or appropriate. *Request must fit the project scope and the funder's range.*
- Proposal is long and boring. *Imagine yourself as a funder wading through proposals. Avoid jargon; read it aloud or ask someone outside your organization to read it.*
- Project doesn't match funder's priorities. *Don't distort your mission or the funder's. Be sure you understand what the funder wants to accomplish.*
- Personal contact has not made a good impression. *Be formal in all communications.*
- Proposal is too desperate. *Request, don't beg. Focus on strengths and positive outcomes.*

(Payne, 2002, p. 25)