

What Is a Letter of Inquiry?

Many foundations request a letter of inquiry that helps them determine if they are interested in your project before accepting your full proposal. The letter of inquiry must be brief—no more than three (3) pages. The proposal should follow this organization:

The Introduction includes the name of your organization, the amount needed or requested, and a description of the project. The qualifications of project staff, a brief description of evaluative methodology, and a timetable are also included here. This should not exceed one paragraph.

The organization description provides a very brief description of your school/district including geographical information and the resources you are bringing to the project. You will flesh this section out in greater detail if you are invited to submit a full proposal.

The statement of need is a most important section of the letter of inquiry and must convince the reader that there is an important need that can be met by your project. The statement of need includes: a description of the target population, appropriate statistical data in abbreviated form, and several concrete examples.

The methodology should be appropriate to your statement of need and present a clear, logical, and achievable solution to the stated need. Describe the project briefly, including major activities, names and titles of key project staff, and your desired objectives. As with the organization description, this will be presented in far greater detail in a full proposal.

Other funding sources being approached for support of this project should be listed in a brief sentence or paragraph.

The final summary restates the intent of the project, affirms your readiness to answer further questions, and thanks the potential funder for its consideration.