

Long Island Sound Community Impact Fund



Full Proposal Training

CONNOR YAKAITIS - JANUARY 28TH

Letter of Intent vs. Full Proposal

- Your letter of intent (LOI) should be considered as your outline that guides your full proposal
 - While your LOI focused on story-telling and your vision, your full proposal is more specific
 - Your LOI was intended to capture the funder's attention and make them want to learn more
 - Now your full proposal will convince them to **A) Fund your work** and **B) How much to fund**
 - This where you get to sell your idea, vision, organization and experience
 - DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS!!!!
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A Good Proposal Should:

- Highlight the need for your project in your community
 - Provide a historical context
 - Utilize “we” and “us” rather than “they” and “them” - You **AND** the funder are part of this work!
 - Provide a timeline for the work being done
 - Highlight partnerships - Rule of thumb is “The more, the merrier!”
 - Provide longterm sustainability of projects
 - Provide metrics for success - How we will measure our impact and the funder’s investment?
 - Answer the questions asked - too much narrative may actually omit answering the questions
 - Understand all reporting requirements
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A Good Proposal Should NOT:

- **Be too wordy** - Yes, provide details, but don't overwrite just to fill out the word count - this can cause confusion and muddle your overall message.
 - **Overpromise** - do not inflate your project's capabilities in the hopes of receiving more funding. It is ALWAYS better to report having completed more than you initially proposed.
 - **Omit required elements outlined in the Full Proposal Guidance Document** - make a checklist and ensure all requirements are provided and **all questions are answered**
 - **Be completed last minute** - funders can ALWAYS tell when proposals are done last minute. Prepare in advance to ensure you can anticipate any questions that might come up during the application process.
 - **Reminder: Applications due Friday, March 13th 2026 at 4:00PM**
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How much should I ask for?

- Don't be afraid to ask for the full maximum amount, but be sure to have a budget to support that amount.
 - Make your budgets scalable: For \$50,000 we can achieve XXX, for \$100,000 we can do XXX.
 - Highlight partnerships and other sources of funding - Funders like to see they are part of a broader investment!
 - Clearly explain why the funder's investment is needed and what it will produce.
 - Highlight long-term impacts - the longer the benefits last and the more they produce will elevate the funder's willingness to give.
 - See what other projects the funder has supported and how much they have given.
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Where do I begin?

- Read **ALL** of the documents provided for this funding request. Have your team read them as well. Clearly understand the scope of work that funds are being offered for as well ensure you understand the funder's mission.
 - Meet with your team to discuss your organization's capacity to carry out your project. What are the limitations? Are there areas where the organization can grow through this project? How will this project elevate the organization's long-term goals and Strategic Plan?
 - Determine an application timeline and assign roles. Set deadlines for drafting, revisions and submission. Identify supporting documents to help elevate your case of support.
 - Begin drafting - Take the questions/requirements from the application and open up a Word Doc. Start by writing as much as you can for each section, regardless of the word count. From there, begin to condense and refine your proposal and stick to key themes.
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Key Themes

- **Clean Waters and Healthy Watersheds**
- **Thriving Habitats and Abundant Wildlife**
- **Sustainable and Resilient Communities**
- **Informed & Engaged Public**

You may find that your project covers elements of different themes. Be sure to highlight this! Look at your project through the lens of each of these themes to identify crossover.

Schedule A One-On-One Meeting

- ALWAYS schedule a one-on-one appointment with a representative from the funder.
 - Great opportunity to brainstorm ideas and vision for your project.
 - Be sure to ask plenty of questions and encourage the funder to ask questions as well!
 - Don't be afraid to ask questions after your meeting, the funder will notice your thoughtfulness!
 - Anticipate questions that may be asked after you submit and be prepared to answer them.
 - Include another member or two of the team that will implement the project - the funder will want to see and understand the various roles of responsibility and this adds personality to your proposal.
 - There is no such thing as too much communication with a funder during the proposal process!
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Supporting Documents

- ALWAYS include supporting documents and try to include as many as you can.
 - Supporting documents can provide in-depth data that you can highlight in your proposal without getting too in-the-weeds and diluting your main message.
 - Think case-studies, similar projects that have been successful, articles about the problem you are trying to solve, polls/surveys, etc.
 - Also include letters of support from partners (required).
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Submitting Your Proposal

- Submit your proposal before the deadline, including well before 4PM to avoid any technical issues and be sure to have a backup method of submission.
 - Be sure to email the proposal's contact to confirm receipt of your proposal.
 - Make it clear who is your organization's main point of contact for any follow up questions or requirements.
 - Thank the funder for the opportunity to be considered for funding and reiterate your vision or goal in 1-2 sentences.
 - Don't be afraid to follow up with the funder regarding the status **at an appropriate time.** The majority of funders will always contact you regardless if your proposal is accepted or not.
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Questions?

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Feel free to reach out with any questions
as you put together your proposals!