

## Common Proposal Problems

*Association of Small Foundations*

Consistency and clarity are the hallmarks of excellent proposals. Below are some common proposal problems:

- **Financial information**, including the project budget, potential sources of income, annual organizational budget or audit, is missing, incomplete or inadequately rendered.
- **Board lists** fail to include affiliations, professional skills or contact numbers.
- **Evaluation plans** are sketchy or absent.
- **Staff biographies** fail to correlate past experience to the skills needed to complete the project.
- **Knowledge of best practices** is not apparent in the narrative, thereby failing to demonstrate the staff's grasp of the field or their own organization's experience.
- **Budget expenditures** are not justified, suggesting that the applicant may be attempting to plug holes in the organization's leaky operating budget.
- **Explanations of rapid staff turnover** or recent changes in leadership remain unexplained raising questions about organizational continuity, direction and morale.