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## A New Jefferson Docwnent

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# A New Jefferson Document

The following recently discovered document sheds important light not only on the underlying causes of the American Revolution but also on the relatively unexplored, but nonetheless vital, history of grant making. The document is what is called in grants biz a “questions letter,” one of the many ways in which grants analysts attempt to help applicants.

*To: Mr. T. Jefferson*

*From: His Majesty's Grants Office, the Court of King George III*

*July 25, 1776*

*Dear Mr. Jefferson:*

*We have read your proposal with great interest. Certainly, your considerable undertaking does merit serious consideration. Unfortunately, the proposal fails to meet many of the required specifications for proposals to the Crown, so we must return the document for further revision. The following questions might be of assistance:*

- 1) In your opening paragraph you use the phrase “the Laws of Nature and Nature's God.” What are these laws? In what way are they the criteria on which you base your central arguments?*
- 2) In the same paragraph you refer to the “opinions of mankind.” What survey results are you using? Without specific evidence, it seems to us the “opinions of mankind” are, not to be flippant, a matter of opinion.*
- 3) As you say in the proposal, you hold certain truths to be self-evident. Could you please elaborate? If they are as evident as you claim then it should not be difficult for you to locate the appropriate supporting statistics.*
- 4) “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” seem to be the goal of your proposal. These are not measurable goals. Please quantify.*
- 5) You provide a long list of “grievances.” We suggest that you be less whining in tone. Also, the list should precede the statement of goals, not follow it. In other words, your problem statement needs improvement.*
- 6) Who among the signatories is the project director; who is the sponsoring institution official? Also, our grants officers had difficulty even determining what is the sponsoring institution. In addition, is there an advisory committee and, if so, what will be its duties?*
- 7) Your strategy for achieving your goals is not well developed. You state that the colonies “ought to be Free and Independent States.” How will this be accomplished and how long will it take? We have found that a little foresight in these areas helps to prevent careless errors later on and, indeed, helps guard against the tendency to underestimate the length of time necessary to complete the work.*
- 8) You must include a goals checklist. Against what performance measures should your project be judged? We have been requiring this since Queen Anne's War. I might add that in every respect it is a good idea for grant applicants to familiarize themselves with the grant agency's policies and goals. The proposal, for example, does not explain how the project would significantly advance the overall objectives laid out in His Majesty's Grants Office Strategic Plan.*
- 9) What impact will your program have? Your failure to include any assessment of this inspires little confidence in the long-range prospects of your undertaking.*
- 10) Please submit a time-line, a staffing plan, and a budget showing the required level of cost-sharing. Also, please demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of your strategies.*

*We hope these questions are useful and we look forward to your revision.*

*In the King's Service*

*Lord Byron Chesterton,*

*His Majesty's Royal Grants Analyst*

*To hell with them. We'll do it another way.*

*79*

[The addendum is in another hand.]

*Editor's note: We were unable to provide an image of the original document. It is in private hands, and the owner fears that facsimile reproduction would reduce its market value. We thank Roger Bruns for providing this transcription.*