Grant Writing Part I: How to Find the Right Grant for You and Your Program

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Grantmaker Sources

  - The Governor’s Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives compiles new federal, state and private funding opportunities every week. In addition to learning more about grants administered by their office, grantseekers can search for funding opportunities in the areas of:
    - Capacity/Operations
    - Education, Art, & Humanities
    - Environment & Agriculture
    - Health Services
    - Human Services
    - International
    - Youth
Grantmaker Sources

- [www.foundationcenter.org](http://www.foundationcenter.org)
  - The Foundations Center’s mission is to support and improve philanthropy by promoting public understanding of the field and helping grantseekers succeed.
    - Collect, organize, and communicate information on US philanthropy
    - Conduct and facilitate research on trends in the field
    - Ensure public access to information and services through the WWW, print and electronic publications, five library learning centers, and a national network of Cooperating Collections
    - Research foundations including IRS 990
Grantmaker Sources

- [www.ohiograntmakers.org](http://www.ohiograntmakers.org)
  - The Ohio Grantmakers Forum is a leadership and knowledge organization working to enhance philanthropy by providing needed tools, training, networking opportunities, research and information, and legislative monitoring to the state’s grantmaking community

- [www.philanthropy.com](http://www.philanthropy.com)
  - The Chronicle of Philanthropy is a biweekly national newspaper of philanthropic and nonprofit issues

- [www.cof.org](http://www.cof.org)
  - The Council on Foundations is a national organization working to support foundations by promoting knowledge, growth, and action in philanthropy

- [www.philanthropyjournal.org](http://www.philanthropyjournal.org)
  - News and information about the philanthropic and nonprofit sector is offered on this website, with the option of subscribing to weekly updates and alerts by email
Proposal Guidelines

- Guidelines usually tell you about
  - submission deadlines
  - eligibility
  - proposal format: award levels forms, margins, spacing, evaluation process, and restrictions (e.g., number of pages)
  - review timetable
  - budgets
  - funding goals and priorities
  - award levels
  - evaluation process and criteria
  - whom to contact
  - other submission requirements
Government Grants

- www.nonprofit.gov
- Fast Facts:
  - Most government grants are for specific purposes based on federal legislation
  - The application process is time consuming
  - Realistic evaluation of capacity is essential
  - Competition is fierce
- Tips & Tools
Corporate Grants

- Richard Male describes “three doors of corporate fundraising”
  - Membership
  - Philanthropic
  - Marketing
- It is important to develop a strategy that accurately reflects the thinking behind each door.
Foundation Grants

• Foundation Types
  ▫ Private
  ▫ Community
  ▫ Family

• Match Priorities
• The Letter of Inquiry
• Common Grant Applications
• Follow-up
Grant Writing Part II: Writing the Proposal
Before you write a word...

• Get to know your program
  ▪ Research – learn about the program(s) and those who administer the program(s)/let them get to know you
  ▪ Be skeptical
  ▪ Ask questions
  ▪ Identify strengths & **opportunities** (NOT needs)
Before you write a word...

• Network
  ▫ Get to know other grantseekers (within your organization and outside your organization)
  ▫ Learn about other relationships that might already exist with potential funders
  ▫ Determine if the funder has a “soft spot” for “pet projects”
  ▫ Identify programmatic trouble spots
Before you write a word...

- Identify prospects – match donor interest to the opportunity. Whether you are appealing to:
  - Individual donors
  - Foundations
  - Corporations
  - Government
Before you write a word...

• Resources and research
  ▫ Library (Infotree)
    • Databases
      • FC Search
      • GrantsNet
      • CFDA (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance)
    • Publications
      • Chronicle of Philanthropy
      • Grantsmanship Center Magazine
      • Grantsource
Before you write a word...

• Prepare
  ▫ Request and review ALL available literature on potential funder(s) including proposal guidelines
    • Learn “buzz words” and key interests
    • This is a critical aspect of any proposal narrative because it determines how compelling reviewers will perceive your proposal
  ▫ Talk to a representative
  ▫ Ask questions
Start Writing

• Letter of inquiry
  ▫ Match opportunity to goals of the funder
  ▫ Focus (present ONE project)
  ▫ Innovate

• Be CAREFUL!
  ▫ Grammar counts
  ▫ Include data, be thorough
  ▫ Include evaluation criteria

• Know your audience
  ▫ Put yourself in the donor’s shoes
    • Would you fund this
    • Does this sound viable
Writing the Proposal

• Match the **opportunity** to the interests and goals of the funder. Talk about solutions. Don’t describe the absence of your project as the problem or need. "We don’t have enough beds in our battered women’s shelter" is not the problem. The *problem* is increased levels of domestic violence. More shelter beds is a *solution*.

• Follow the directions
  ▫ Give them what they ask for
  ▫ Observe their submission guidelines/format

• Provide context (data)

• Show “client” involvement
Writing the Proposal

• Structure, attention to specifications, concise persuasive writing, and a reasonable budget are the critical elements of the writing stage.
• There are many ways to organize proposals. Read the guidelines for specifications about required information and how it should be arranged.
• Standard proposal components are: the narrative, budget, appendix of support material, and authorized signature. Sometimes proposal applications require abstracts or summaries, an explanation of budget items, and certifications.
Narratives

• **Summary**
  At the beginning of your proposal, or on a cover sheet, write a two- or three-sentence summary of the proposal. Include what you are asking for and what you are hoping to do with the contribution. This summary helps the reader follow your argument during the proposal itself.
Narratives

• **Organization Information**
  In two or three paragraphs, tell the funder about your organization and why you can be trusted to use its funds effectively
  ▫ Summarize organizational history
  ▫ Describe mission, whom you serve and your track record of achievement
  ▫ Describe, or at least list, programs
  ▫ Indicate your budget size
  ▫ Describe where you are located, who runs the organization and does the work
  ▫ Add other details that build the credibility of your group
Narratives

• **Statement of need**
  ▫ purpose, goals, measurable objectives, and a compelling, logical reason why the proposal should be supported. Background provides perspective and is often a welcome component.

• **Approach**
  ▫ method and process of accomplishing goals and objectives, description of intended scope of work with expected outcomes, outline of activities, description of personnel functions with names of key staff and consultants, if possible.
Narratives

• Method of evaluation
  ▫ some require very technical measurements of results. Inquire about expectations.

• Project timeline
  ▫ paints a picture of project flow that includes start and end dates, schedule of activities, and projected outcomes. Should be detailed enough to include staff selection and start dates.
Narratives

- **Future & Additional Funding**
  - Applicants may be asked to list expected sources of continuing funding after the conclusion of the grant. The applicant may also be required to list other sources and amounts of funding obtained for the project.

- **Credentials**
  - Information about the applicant that certifies ability to successfully undertake the proposed effort. Typically includes institutional or individual track record and resumes.
Narratives

- Narratives typically must satisfy the following questions:
  - What do we want?
  - What concern will be addressed and why?
  - Who will benefit and how? *Indicate broader impact*
  - What specific objectives can be accomplished and how? *Lay out the plan*
  - How will results be measured? *Include evaluation criteria*
  - How does this funding request relate to the funders purpose, objectives, and priorities?
  - Who are we (organization, independent producer) and how do we qualify to meet this need? *Show your organization’s investment*
  - Who will implement? *Tout the team*
Budget

• Attach a one- or two-page budget showing expected expenses and income

  ▫ Expenses
    • Personnel expenses
    • Direct project expenses
    • Administrative overhead expenses

  ▫ Income
    • Earned income
    • Contributed income
Funders may ask for a variety of materials along with the proposal itself. Almost all funders want at least the following:

- A copy of your IRS letter declaring your organization tax exempt
- A list of your board of directors and their affiliations
- A financial statement from your last complete fiscal year
- A budget for your current fiscal year
- A budget for the next fiscal year
Never

- Sound needy
  - “If you don’t give us this money, this program/service will cease to exist”
- Invent a program
  - Just because they fund it does not mean you should do it
Delivery

• The proposal must be **NEAT, COMPLETE, and ON TIME**, with the requested number of copies and original authorized signatures

• Make the visit
  - Don’t drop your hard work in the mail
  - Talk to a program officer
  - If you must mail, ask to whom you should mail your letter (bypass the intake office)
  - Request a face-to-face meeting
  - Ask questions – use the resources of the funder
Follow-up

• Contact the funding source about the status, evaluation, and outcome of your proposal
  ▫ Request feedback about a proposal's strengths and weaknesses
• Follow-up information is particularly useful if you choose to approach the same or different funder again with a new idea
Grant Management
Negotiating the Contract

- Scope of Work
- Performance Standards/Measures
- Reporting Requirements
- Compensation
- Amendment Process
- Termination
Performance & Compliance Reporting

- Fiscal Performance
- Service-Delivery Performance
  - Quantity
  - Quality
- Output-Effectiveness Performance
- Compliance Reporting
  - Service Provision
  - Income & Expenditures
  - Compliance Review
Organizing & Implementing the System

• Allocating Responsibility
• Work Breakdown Structure
  ▫ “Manageable chunks”
• Establishing Time Scheduling
  ▫ What needs to be done?
  ▫ How will it get done?
• Monitoring and Control
  ▫ Resource management
  ▫ Risk management
Evaluation

- Identify Objectives
  - How are the data going to be used?
  - Who is the audience?
- Key Performance Indicators
  - Are the data valid and reliable?
- Collect Data
  - Use more than one method to collect data
- Analyze and Compare Data