

Grant Writing

Grant writing is changing fast in this digital age, but, especially locally, many grants still have to be written in a format provided by the grantor.

The workshop is divided into three parts.

Writing traditional grants

Online grants

Crowd funding on sites such as GoFundMe.Com



Researching grants

1. Community/City:

This is your most promising. You probably know everyone in town, or you have come close. Your contacts in the City, in business organizations, Chamber of Commerce, other civic organizations, all can help you find funding sources right where you live. You might even be able to talk a business into funding the project in whole or in part. All anyone can say is "Yes" or "no."

 - a. Community Foundations
 - b. Arts Funders
 - c. Large Employers
2. County
 - a. County Foundations (Rural Counties have different opportunities that densely populated counties from government grants and other funders)
 - b. County Partners
 - c. Large employers
3. State
 - a. Large employers in a state often fund projects that interest them.
 - b. State government funding sources
 - c. Foundations
4. National
 - a. Large employers
 - b. Foundations

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html>

<https://www.grantwatch.com/grant-search.php> (there is a cost)

<http://www.thegranthelpers.com> (no cost, helpful blog. They are professional grant writers and will try to sell you services, too)

In the search engine, look for specific grants—“literacy for Grade 4 students in Title 1 schools in southern California”

“Food for homeless children and families in rural northern California.”

Read the Grant Carefully

1. Purpose of the grant



- a. If the grant’s main purpose is to promote literacy in title 1 schools, you will want to emphasize that throughout your grant proposal. Do not try to fit your round peg into a square hole. If the grant doesn’t fit your project, don’t bother.

2. Requirements for the grant

- a. Grantors have requirements—sometimes it is matching funds, sometimes it is partnerships in the community, and so on. Don’t bother to apply if your organization and project don’t meet these requirements

3. Instructions

- a. Follow instructions to the letter without fail. Make a big note of the deadline and post it where you can see it. People have lost out because they were an hour late.

Brainstorm with people involved in the project

- Have everyone involved look at the grant application and get together to brainstorm what information would get across to the grantor just how great the project is.
- Do remember—sell the sizzle, not the steak. The outcomes after the grant is implemented, with numbers to back it up, is what really sells a project.



Write a summary

- Who you are, explained as if the grantor has never heard of Altrusa

- What your project is, and specifically what you plan to do and when and where you plan to do it.
- How much you're asking for, and exactly what you'll use the money for.

Create an outline

- Expand each point as needed to explain each section.
- Use the grantor's request for proposals (RFP) or criteria as the basis. The outline should **EXACTLY** follow the sequence prescribed by the grantor.



Write the first draft

- Look at your brainstorm ideas and your outline, and start with the questions that you have the most answers for. If you get stuck on one question, work on another one for a while. Ask for help from the people involved.
- Focus on the parts of your project that the grantor will like best—use their guidelines for clues.
- Where appropriate, highlight your organization's partnerships with other groups. This builds credibility.

Clearly lay out specific goals.

- Saying “500 children who went hungry on the weekends will go home from school on Friday with weekend backpacks full of groceries,” will have more impact than “this project will feed hungry children.”
- You can use the key words and phrases you underlined in the application. But don't worry about getting fancy—just say what you have to say, briefly and clearly.
- Review your original summary. Make sure it exactly reflects the proposal you've written.

Review the proposal and the requirements. Read and re-read the requirements and instructions carefully. It helps to have a list of the requirements separate from the grant, so you can check each off as you complete its addition.

- **Proofread carefully.** Take time to have at least two people proofread your proposal before you submit it—and then read it out loud to yourself to make sure.
- Reading something from back to front is a good way to catch errors you might otherwise miss. You want to submit a flawless document. **Remember! Finding errors before the funder does is wonderful. You can correct them and your organization will benefit from looking so professional!**

Do a reality check.

- Ask someone from the outside to read your proposal. Have them explain to you what it says. If they can't, no one else will be able to understand it either.

Define the project's budget. Don't guess about the numbers. Instead, take the time to research and evaluate the actual expenses.

- What kind of equipment, supplies, and anything else you are going to need, and exactly what the cost will be so you can spell it out.
- In all circumstances, make sure your amounts balance out, meaning that everything adds up to the same numbers throughout the proposal.

Add other documents as required. For example, you will need a 501(c)(3) letter of tax-exemption; an audit or financial report, and a list of the board of directors. Make a file with several copies of each, so you have them ready whenever you write a proposal.

Proofread everything—again. You may think the document has been thoroughly proofread, but do it again anyway. It's not unusual for a word to be misspelled and have nobody catch it.

- Keep alert for small details, such as a "there" that should be "their," an "it's" that should be "its," or a word that is commonly misspelled.

Add a cover letter. This should include a summary of your request, including the purpose of your project and the amount of money you are requesting. It should also list the contents of your proposal (i.e. which documents you have included).

- Your cover letter will, in many cases, provide your grantor with their first impression of you. You should invest as much time and care in the cover letter as the other parts of the document.
- **Double check everything.** Make sure you answered all the questions and are sending all the required materials.

Online Grants

Look Before you Leap.

1. Online grants have as many (almost) requirements and sometimes narrative as do written grants.
2. Read before you begin to fill in the forms. Print out the list of what you will need in terms of documents and justifications and have them at your side when you completing online grant submissions.
3. All ask that letters of tax-exempt status and sometimes other documents (including financial justifications for the grant amount request) be attached. Have those scanned into your computer and ready to go.
4. Just as in the written document, proofread as closely as possible. If it possible to save and come back before submitting the document, print it and have someone else read it.

Crowd Funding

If your project is popular in your community, you may be able to raise funds through a crowd funding site such as GoFundMe.com. Often used to raise money for individuals who need

medical care, scholarships, save a home, this site appeals to people's emotions. Easy to follow directions make it possible to raise funds simply and easily. There is a 2.9% fee for credit card processing and a 30 cent fee per transaction. Other than that, all the money you collect is your own.

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<http://www.thegranthelpers.com> (no cost, helpful blog. They are professional grant writers)

<http://www.gofundme.com> Crowd funding

Compiled by Pat Hansmeyer from various sources, including her own experience and notes, as well as:

<http://www.wikiHow.com> : *write_a_grant_proposal*

Grant Writing by Carol Latham

How to write a kickass grant proposal: <http://www.nonprofitaf.com>