
Grant Writing Guide & Tips For Beginners

HOW TO WRITE A **GRANT** STARTER KIT

YOUR GUIDE TO
WRITING YOUR FIRST
GRANT IN

30 DAYS!

Rodney Walker



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Grant Writing Tips: Before You Start Writing Anything Read This!



So you want to write a grant proposal? Congratulations!

You are seeking a noble task, but why do you want to write a grant in the first place? Have you ever written a grant before? Do you know the rules and guidelines you are supposed to follow? Do you know where to send the grant proposal once you have written it? What should you ask for and not ask for on your grant? Are you trying to write a grant for a nonprofit organization, your business, or an individual?

All of these are important questions that must be considered before ever embarking on the journey to write a grant. Here are a few tips to help keep you from wasting a lot of time and unnecessary energy.

Do not embark on grant writing alone making unnecessary mistakes when you can learn from others.

One of the biggest mistakes you can make in grant writing is just blindly deciding to write a grant proposal without any training.

At the very least, read a good grant writing book or take a grant writing course. This will save you hours of time and energy and help you avoid many of the common mistakes that new grant writers often make.

Remember, even the Lone Ranger had his faithful sidekick, Tonto, and his horse Silver.



One of the best ways to learn grant writing is by simply doing it with a bit of coaching in the process.



Grant writing is a skill that must be developed. However, just like any building, you want to make sure you lay a solid foundation to build up on.

So be sure to get real life experience by working on an actual grant proposal, while also learning how to write grants the correct way from the very beginning.

This is often best done when you have a grant writing sample or a template to start from instead of going at it totally from scratch.

It will also be important to have a mentor or a coach who has been successful in securing grant monies to be a sounding board and to help assist you when you get stuck or have questions.

Coaching can come in many different forms; for instance, you can learn by reading articles, books, attending workshops, or grant trainings. You can also seek out an experienced grant writer who might be willing to coach you through the process.



Make a commitment to learn grant writing the correct way and volunteer to write a few for some nonprofit organizations in your area.

Nonprofit organizations tend to really love grant writers, and these individuals are often in high demand.

If you volunteer to write a grant for a local nonprofit in your area, some of them might have a previous proposal on hand that from which you may glean as you develop a new one.

This will allow you to get some real life experience while also helping an organization possibly get funded. It is worth noting that most grants are not given out to individuals or to for-profit businesses.

Don't believe all the hype and sensationalism from those late night commercials and waste your money and time.

Remember, the best investment you can make to learn grant writing is to make an investment into you.

If you are really going to become a skilled grant writer you must dedicate the appropriate time, energy, and resources into developing this valuable skill set.

So sign up today for a training that can help you cultivate or enhance your craft as a grant writer.

There are many grant writing tutorials and online grant training to help you learn this wonderful skill, so take advantage of these and get the assistance and help you need.



Four Magical Words that Might Change Your Life

She had no idea how she was going to start and grow her business and was mentally afraid to take the first step until..... until.....until she heard "four magical words" that helped to unlock her true potential...but more on this later....

On Monday, I visited one of my favorite places in California...the Huntington Library and Gardens.

I love going there because it is so *beautiful* and *peaceful*. This time I spoke with a tour guide name Bill to learn a little more about the Chinese Garden.



Bill, a peppered haired, wise man in his late 60s began to explain to me the difference between the Japanese and Chinese Garden. I must admit, both are quite serene and lovely.

He said that the Japanese Garden was designed to be “looked at” and “admired”...almost like viewing a beautiful painting.

However the Chinese Garden was designed for: ***“YOU to be in the picture... YOU are a part of the design!”***

Wow! This really struck me when he said it and reminded me about life. Sometimes it is much easier to just sit back and watch someone else create something lovely instead of *being in the picture yourself*...right?

Her name is Lisa Lucio.

She’s the one I told you about earlier that was afraid to take the first step to starting her grant writing business after wanting to do so for many years. Well, last November Lisa decided to stop simply viewing the picture and made the mental leap into envisioning herself in the picture. She decided to attend my boot camp after hearing four magical words I shared with her (I promise, I’ll share it with you in just a few).

Ok, I’ve got to be totally honest with you. When Lisa came into this 5 day event, on the first day she was quite negative with ***“Stinking – Thinking!”***

But, somewhere through the course of the training (around day three) I or more accurately we (the other attendees) noticed a *“mental shift”* had taken place inside of her. The “Negativity” was being replaced with “Positivity”.

Lisa was experiencing a breakthrough that would be much larger than simply starting and growing a business...she was changing her perspective about herself and life!! I’m happy to announce that last week **Lisa secured her first paying client and signed her first agreement worth \$4,000.00.**

I am so proud of her. Not for just getting her first client...but for **having the courage to take a mental leap** to do something she earlier couldn’t envision herself doing.

So what were those four magical words I shared with Lisa? Do you really want to know? *It was really quite simple*...I told Lisa, “You CAN DO THIS!” She believed me.

The magic really isn’t just in the words, but also in YOU mixing the words with your belief about yourself and getting out of negative thinking. I’d love to help you in this process to move forward like Lisa.

Don’t wait for change, make the change!

Positioning Yourself To Write and Win Grant Money!



Self-Test Checklist

- Do you have a sincere desire to write grants?
- Are you willing to invest in yourself to learn the correct way to write a grant?
- Are you willing to invest a few hours into developing your skills as a grant writer?

If you checked all the above boxes continue the test because you could do well with our course.

Do you have basic computer skills? _____

Do you have basic internet research skills? _____

What are you seeking to do with grant money?

When do you want to get started?

How much do you desire to raise?

Do you or your organization have a 501(c)(3) nonprofit status? _____

What's your next step?

- Take a course Read a Book Get a mentor

Positioning Yourself To Write and Win Grant Money!

To write an award-winning grant proposal, you must begin to position yourself and the organization to do so. Below is a checklist of things you can start doing now to help you in this effort. We discuss this in more detail throughout our course.

Prep-Work Checklist

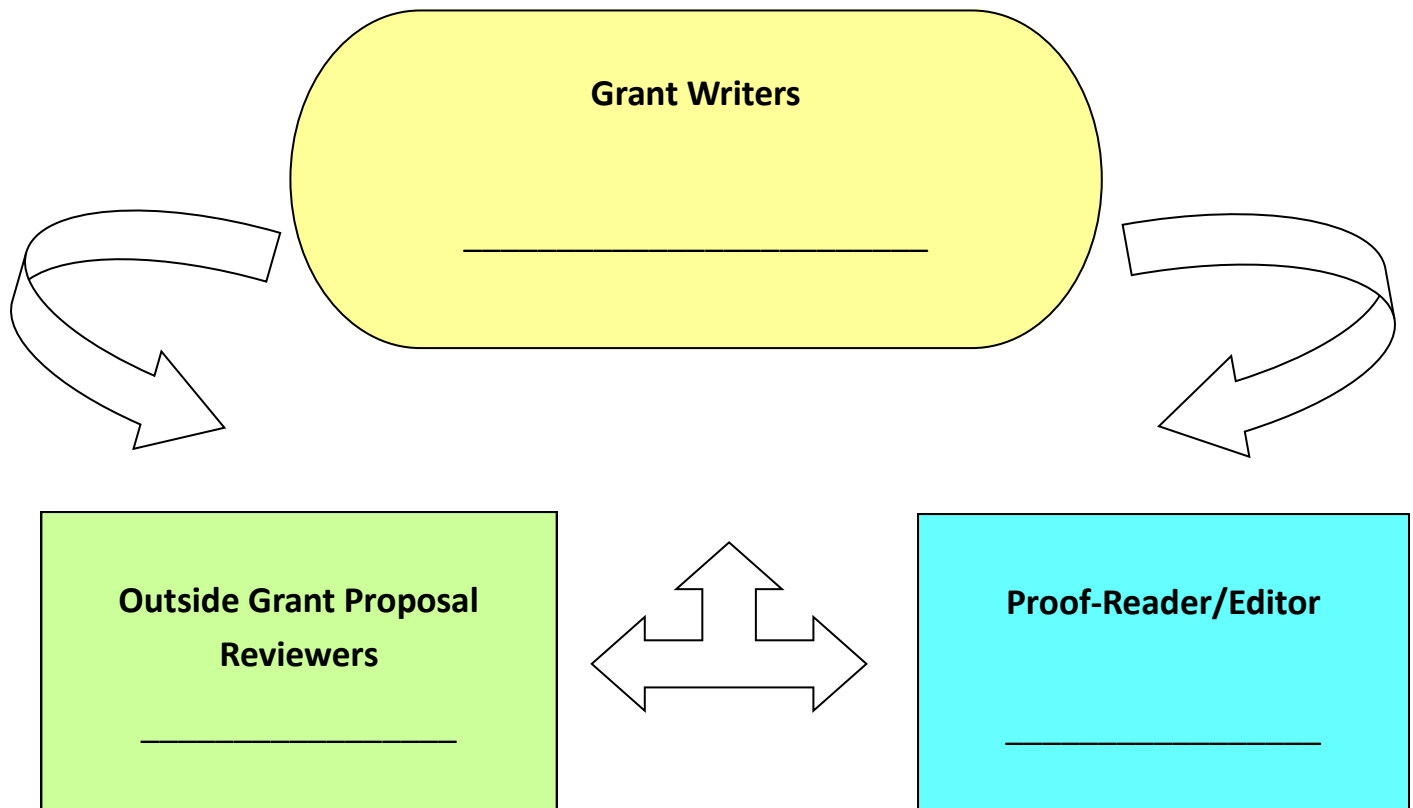
- Ensure you have the knowledge to write a grant proposal correctly
- Determine the project you will pursue in your grant writing effort
- Select a team of people, if possible, to help work with you
- Get organized and set up systems to be able to locate things quickly

Grant Writing Checklist

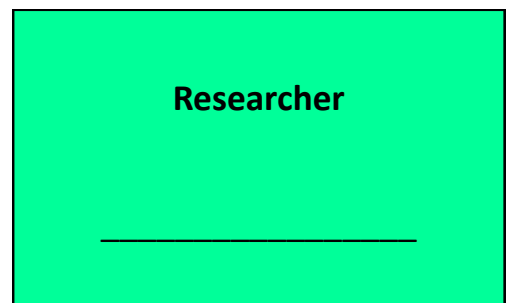
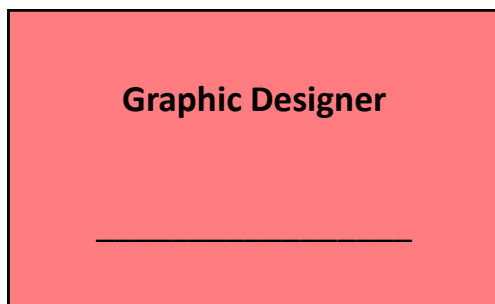
- Research funding opportunities
- Select potential funders you will pursue for a grant
- Read the funder's guidelines carefully before writing anything
- Gather all important documents to prepare your grant proposal
- Gather support documentation and relevant information
- Develop a checklist of things you must do to meet funder's request
- Write your proposal's 1st Draft and 2nd Draft
- Find two reviewers to critique your proposal
- Make adjustments to proposal based on feedback from reviewers
- Select an editor to proofread your grant proposal
- Make final corrections to your grant proposal
- Submit proposal to funders well before deadline

Grant Writing Team Chart

The best way to write a grant proposal is to have a team. Even if you are writing the grant proposal alone, you will still want to have a team to help you on other aspects of your project. This form will help you think through who you will have on your team. *We discuss this in greater detail throughout our course.*



Here are a few other optional roles you might consider adding to assist in the development of your grant proposal.



Developing Award-Winning Grant Proposals



What is a grant?

A grant is funding that nonprofit organizations and sometimes individuals receive to help them carry out a particular mission, project, or service.

Grant funding comes from either private foundations or from the government, and those are called public grants.

The grant money usually does not have to be paid back.

Who is qualified to get grants?

It depends on what the funder specifies. For instance, a funder may choose to fund youth programs, family crisis assistance, homeless causes, or special needs.

The funder determines who qualifies for the funding. If it's a government program grant, then the government agency determines who will receive the funding. If it's a private foundation, they can determine their priorities for the monies they issue out. It really depends on what the funder says.

Does it have to be a foundation or government that would provide a grant, or can some wealthy person decide they want to give a grant, or do they first have to become a foundation before they could provide those monies?

Anybody can give money, so it doesn't necessarily have to be a foundation or individual. But most of the time people who issue out grants are foundations or some kind of government agency.

As the government, they don't really benefit directly from issuing out grants other than that they are helping to put forth a mission to help resolve a particular problem.

For the individual who gives out money for a foundation, there are certain tax benefits they get from giving out their money.

The average foundation has to give out a certain percentage of money, and that percentage equals out to roughly 5% of their assets every year.

Then they determine the areas for which they want to give out their monies. Therefore, it's more beneficial for them to have 501(c)(3) status that qualifies them as a foundation.

When you're going to get a grant, what are some tips so that you can win that grant? How does one do a proposal?

You can do a proposal in a number of different ways. But the most helpful piece of advice is that as you are developing your grant, first of all, make sure you follow all the directions the funder has provided.

The funder normally tells you what they want you to do to apply for a particular grant, and you'd be surprised how many people don't follow all the directions.

Think about it from the funder's perspective. If you don't follow all the directions, then how reliable will you be with using their money? They want to be sure that they give their monies to people who are well-qualified and will carry out the responsibilities.



So the very first thing to remember in developing an award-winning proposal is that you **follow all the directions the funder gives you**.

The proposal is essentially telling the story of what you are proposing to do, and you need to make sure that what you're writing makes sense – that it's not too heady and it's not going to lose people as they read through it.

It has to be very practical, and it has to be logical. The proposal is not something that is done as a personal appeal; it's something that is logical, very concrete, and very factual as well.

As you begin to develop a proposal, **make sure that you are telling the story** of what you're proposing to do in a very logical way. This will help increase your chances of someone reading your proposal and it making sense to them.

There are also some things you can do to add a little spice to your proposals. Be sure to add some charts, facts and statistics that back up what you are proposing to do.

This will help them learn in a visual way what the program is about.

What are the mistakes we need to avoid as we're doing this?

First, the person writing the grant needs to avoid some of the jargon of the organization.

A lot of times, you're writing and you think the person knows exactly what you know.

For example, if you refer to your Community Development Corporation as the CDC, someone reading the proposal may think you are talking about the Center for Disease Control.

So you *definitely want to avoid jargon and acronyms*. If you need to use an acronym, use it, then spell out what it means at least once. Those are some things that will help ensure that your proposal is done right.



What Others Are Saying

She Used Our Grant System And Won \$25,000.00 in Less Than 3 Months



"...I took his class before I started my new job as a grant writer and felt equipped and ready to go upon my first day. Within 90 days we received funding!" *Kelsey Prenger, Grant Writer, Project Transformation in Dallas, TX*

From Not Knowing What She Was Doing Wrong...To Writing A Grant Worth \$400,000.00 Within 6 Months!



"Thank you again for what you shared with us in the grant writing class. I took your advice...Last Wednesday we received notification that the foundation board has approved our proposal of \$400,000."
- *Kathleen Tiemubol, Brehm Center, Pasadena, California*

She Started With ZERO Knowledge...Used The System...Resulting In Over \$205,000.00 In 6 Months



"It was literally my first week of working at Deaf Action Center...they threw me into your workshop. I knew nothing about grant writing and your workshop helped a ton!" - *Hollie Abraham, Executive Assistant Deaf Action Group*



She Raised Over \$2.5 Million In 9 Months Of Implementing Our Grant Development System And Strategies! - *Nikki Kelley, Grants Manager at YWCA Greater Los Angeles*

This Librarian Helped Her School Secure A \$25,000.00 Within 5 Months Of Using Our Comprehensive Approach!



"Thank you so much for your help. Probably not a day has gone by that I didn't use something from your workshop." - *Evelyn Barker, Director of Grants and Special Project at University of Texas*

This Educator Helped Raised \$15,000.00 For Their Youth Center In Under 6 Months To Buy Much Needed Supplies!



Last year I was seeking to set-up a community youth center...I attended the grant writing seminar. This was followed by several sessions of one-on-one coaching opportunities. We applied for a set-up grant and was awarded \$15,000. This grant was possible primarily due to the professional guidance through the project design and the grant writing process." - *Kinoti Meme, PhD., Associate Professor at Regis University, Denver, Colorado*

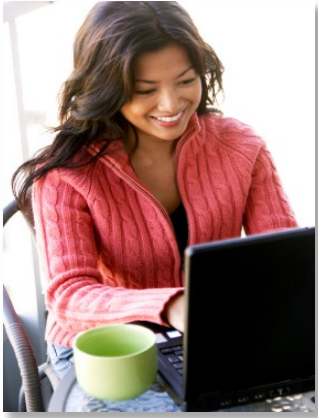
10 Things To Ask A Grant Writing Online Course Provider BEFORE You Let Them Teach YOU To Write A Grant!



If you are considering taking a grant writing online course you owe it to yourself to watch this short and informative video to help you discover the types of questions you should be asking an online grant writing course provider to ensure you get what you really want.

1. Is the grant writing online course video-based or is it *antiquate* and *outdated* requiring me to read everything like a text book?
2. Can I see and hear a sample of what your grant writing instructors are like so I can assess their knowledge and communication style to see if it fits with how I like to learn?
3. Will all my lessons be available at once or do I have to wait for the lectures to be delivered when it is convenient for you?
4. Am I learning from just one instructor or will I be able to hear from several experts while taking this course?
5. Does your grant writing course come with a free membership to the Grant Writers Association or any grant professional organization with a national presence?
6. Will I have access to your online grant writing course for at least 6 months to give myself plenty of time to re-listen to the lessons if I desire?
7. Does your grant writing trainings offer free, on-going support such as grant writing coaching videos after the course? If so, can I see a sample?
8. Will your grant writing training provide me with any exclusive grant writing training videos and special reports to help guide me step-by-step and motivate me to action after the course is over?
9. Am I required to show up at a set time and participate in group activities?
10. Does your training help me turn the skill of grant writing into a career, full or part-time business if I want to earn extra money on the side using this newly acquired knowledge?

Secrets to Make Your Grant Proposal Attractive to Funders



One of the biggest mistakes a new grant writer makes is that their request simply does not make sense, and it is too wordy and not straight to the point.

In our Grant Writing Online Course, you will learn many secrets for making your proposal a story that could grab the attention of the reader.

As well, you will learn how to make it stand out from all the other proposals the funder reads. To give you an idea of the many great things you will learn, here are three great tips for grant writing success:

First, when you write grants, do your very best to paint a picture for the funder to tell and show them what your project is all about.

We go into detail about the best ways to do this in our grant writing courses. Best of all, we provide you with samples so you can see exactly what we mean.

The sample grant included in this course is an award-winning grant proposal that was funded. Many grant writers do not dare let you see their grants that have received funding.

However, we provide you with this one as a bonus to help you start ahead of the game.

This sample grant alone is worth far more than your entire investment that you will make into any of our courses, because we charge \$2,500 or more to produce a grant proposal like this.

Second, tell your story with flair without boring the reader.

You would be surprised to learn exactly how much time the average funder actually spends reviewing your grant proposal, (we talk about this in our course, but it is probably not as much time as you think).

So, it is important that you ***tell your story with flair*** and hold the funder's attention for the brief moments that they review your proposal.

Besides, you do not want them to put down your grant proposal and pick up someone else's proposal...do you?



Let us show you how to keep potential funders engaged with your proposal to increase your chances of getting funded.

One of our students followed our advice and used our strategies with their grant proposal and received funding of over \$200,000. Yes, over \$200,000!

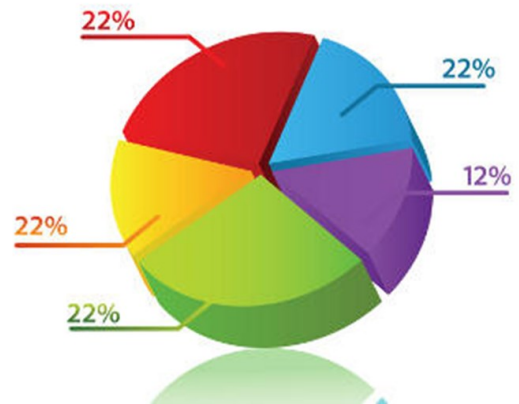
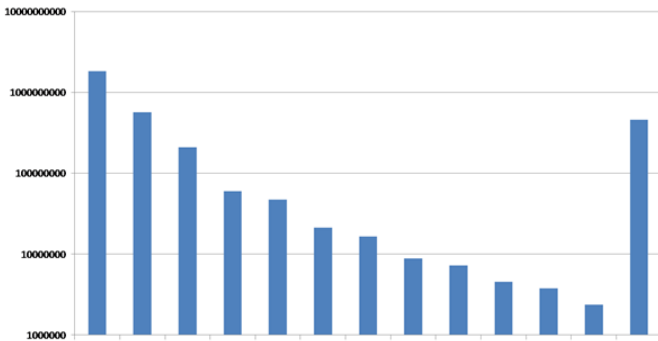
Don't settle for trying to figure this out all by yourself when we can coach you through our grant writing courses that are loaded with great resources.



Third, do not just use words to capture the heart of the funder, but spice up your grant proposal by adding visual appeal, such as charts, graphs, and pictures.

The sample grant proposal that we include as a bonus with our grant writing package will help show you how to present your proposal in an appealing way that will quickly distinguish your proposal from all the rest.

We also provide you with special access to our Grant Writing Online Library to benefit from our pre-designed templates (valued at \$350) to save you time as you download them into your Word document when you sign-up.



Learn to Write Grants the Smart Way and Not the Hard Way



There are basically two ways to write a grant...the smart way and the hard way.

The smart way is when you learn to write grants by learning from someone else's mistakes and successes.

When many people get started in grant writing, they don't have anyone to teach them the INs and OUTs of the grant writing game. They may get a few tips here and there, but it would be really helpful to have a coach to point them in the right direction.

More importantly, it is helpful to have a good sample grant. But often, good grant writers are not willing to let go of any of their successful grants.

So new grant writers are forced to learn the hard way, and they make many of the common rookie mistakes.

In our Grant Writing Online Course, you will learn skillful grant writing from many of the pros in the industry. Some principles we'd like to share with you today are:

1. **The smart way to write grants is to learn from someone else's mistakes and successes.**

In our Grant Writing Courses, we provide you with things you need to know, including a sample of an award-winning grant proposal.

What took us years and thousands of dollars to learn is provided for you for only \$129. Do not waste valuable time making careless mistakes. Get training and learn the correct way from the start.

You will be glad you did.

2. **Learn from a sample grant or template instead of starting from scratch.**

Sure, you can start from nothing and write an average grant proposal that has a low chance of getting funded. But why waste time and make unnecessary mistakes when you don't have to?

By starting with a great sample grant you can see firsthand how to layout your grant proposal to increase your chances of getting funded.

3. **Get all of the necessary information gathered before you start.**

You will need background information in the following areas: concept (the area or thing that you will be addressing), program, and expenses.

In conclusion, there's a smart way to write grants, and a hard way to write grants. Make the best use of your time by writing grants the smart way.

Do You Make These Mistakes When You Go After Grants?

So you have finally decided to go after that grant. Boy, it took a lot for you just to get to this point, but you are here. You have surfed the web and have gotten tidbits here and there.

You have given your very best because you are committed to fulfilling your dream, mission, or purpose. No one knows how long it has taken for you to even get to this point.

Yet, unfortunately, you have possibly made many of the common mistakes! Yes, there are many common mistakes that people make when they go after grant money that can simply be avoided.

We will share our tips and secrets to help you win grant money.

Here are a few questions and tips to see if you are making any of the common mistakes as you go after grant money.

1. Do you just apply for a grant out of the blue?
2. Do you send out the same generic grant request to many funders?
3. Do you look for grants to apply for in a bookstore or a local library?
4. Do you even know where the best place is to start looking for grants? *Here's a clue...it is not at your local bookstore.* Most of the information is outdated in those books before it even makes it to the bookshelves.
5. Do you ask for money solely based on your needs? Yes, we all have needs and wants. But have you thought about the fact that the person, organization, or government agency giving out the money also has some *desires that they want to serve*?
6. Do you ask for a certain amount of grant money based solely on how much you need?
7. Do you even know how much money to ask for? *This is critical, because if you ask for too much you will likely be denied, and if you ask for too little you shortchange yourself. We will share our secrets to asking for the right amount.*
8. Do you write a grant and send it out overnight just to make sure it gets there on time?



These are just a few questions that are addressed in our Grant Writing Online Course.

You really don't have to look, sound, or act like a rookie as you go after grant money. We can help you avoid some of the common mistakes with our grant writing courses, and we share the answers to the questions above and so much more.

Here are a few questions worth asking yourself:

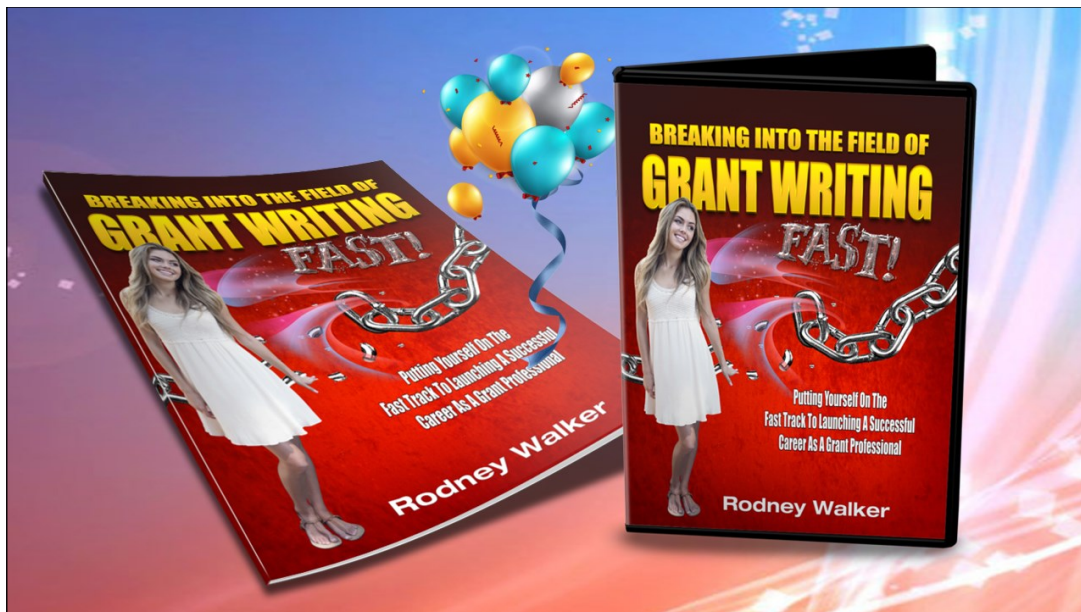
- Is the project for which you are requesting money doable?
- Does your project have a start, middle, and end time?
Can it be done within a year?
- Can you define who will benefit from the grant money and how it will help?



Normally, when we are consulting with a client, the cost is \$250 per hour. Yet, we provide you with hours of great advice and strategies to getting grant money in our various grant writing courses, starting as low as \$99.

We are convinced that once you try us, you'll want to stay with us. It has helped many others and it can also help you!

One of our students took our advice and secured over \$15,000 to help with his after-school youth program, and now they are getting computers and other necessary equipment to make their program a success.



Be sure to check this out in our store at
GrantCentralUSA.com

What is the Single Most Important Advice You Would Share with Someone New to Grant Writing?

Sara Farina: It's very basic, but it's also a very common mistake- a grant writer MUST read and follow the guidelines in the NOFA/RFP/Applicant Instructions/etc. – what is required, what is optional, funding priorities, even margins and fonts.

Branwen Cale: Managing and understanding the process is just as important as the writing!

Michele Boyer: Sara's advice is absolutely essential. The first thing reviewers do is look for any breach in their guidelines, and cull down the number of proposals they need to review.



The rationale is that if you cannot follow clear instructions, should they trust you to conduct your programs in line with their mission and goals?

They have many applicants to choose from and would do best to choose those who are meticulous in following guidelines.

Once you have accomplished that, my advice is to organize your entire funding plan strategically.

Know who you will submit to, when and for what. Make sure you schedule your proposals to be sent well in advance of the deadline. Delays can, AND DO, pop up unexpectedly and if you are too close to the deadline, your proposal may not be completed, sent or received before the deadline.

Julie Marino: Also remember that quality of writing is only one of a number of factors that affect the success or failure of a grant proposal, unless of course the writing is really bad. It could be that there are lots of similar competing proposals.

It could be that the amount of available funding is down — we've all experienced that over the last couple of years. It could simply be that the board member or peer reviewer is having a bad day.

Just because you've written a really compelling proposal, that doesn't automatically mean your client will get funded.

Michele Boyer: Learn how to prepare budgets. Breaking out income and expenses per the funder's guidelines can be time consuming and cause one of those unexpected delays.

Begin work on the budget early in the process in case your organization accounting categories are grouped differently than how the funder requests them to be presented/broken down.

Grant Writing Advice—Continued

Joseph Mayerhoff: Similar to what what Susan said, your proposal should track the RFP closely. Don't put your proposal in a format that covers all the bases in the way the works best for you – do it in the way that works best for the funder.

So when the funder looks for criteria a,b and c as listed in the RFP, they find it in front of them without having to search through your entire proposal to find the part they are looking for.

Remember, many funders have different people reviewing different parts of the application so if you don't give it to them in the order they ask for it, they may never find it. Stick to the script!

Kris Butler: I think the most important thing is to contact the place who is offering the grant and gather information about the grant itself and why they are offering it, establish a relationship and learn about the organization that is offering the grant.

If you can find out who will be deciding the grant and pick their brain as well.

Information gathering is very important and I have found can save me from wasting my time on grants that are not a good fit for my application.



Diane Fulham Blaszk: It's estimated that 70% of funding success is due to the work done before "pen hits the paper" or, nowadays, "fingers hit the keyboard!"

Work closely with your client to make sure they have a credible, professional presence (strong website, materials, profiles on [Guidestar/Charity Navigator](#), etc.) and have researched any personal connections that may exist (among board members, etc.) with the funding prospect BEFORE they invest a lot of time/money into proposal writing.

Those things are so important, especially in this competitive environment.

As tempting as it may be to jump on each and every job offered to us as grant writers, success rates will typically be greater if we caution clients against applying too randomly and (especially with newer non-profits) before they have key things in place to come across as a credible organization.

Such an approach also positions you as a true and ethical adviser, and not someone simply looking to make a buck.

Sara Farina: Bernie and Michele, that's an excellent point. I've had to tell potential clients before that I couldn't help them with the grants they wanted because their programming wasn't strong enough – and on the off chance that they could have received funding, they could not possibly have carried out the terms of the grant.

Grant Writing Advice—Continued

Bernie Nofel: These are all great suggestions. I would add one more — begin with a strong program design! An application can follow all the required formatting, include all the proper documentation, align with the funding priorities, and be clearly written, but if the program design is flawed, it's highly unlikely to be funded.

That's why I believe an effective grant writer does more than generate a document – they become a sounding board and consultant on the strength of the program's design.

If the need is clearly established, the organization's capacity, niche and network in the community defined, the program service model supported by evidence-based best practices, the outcomes clearly enumerated, a sensible system for tracking and evaluating outcomes incorporated, support from the Board and stakeholder community established, a sensible budget generated, and a plan for sustainability described, then the proposal practically writes itself. You could almost write it with a crayon.

A good grant writer knows program, ideally from years of experience in a leadership position in that arena.

Michele Boyer: Bernie brings up an important, but easily overlooked point about clearly enumerated outcomes. You will be surprised how many organizations have no idea how to develop an outcome measure.

For someone new to grant writing, learn how to help your client develop clear and effective outcomes measures, and you will increase your value manyfold. Good outcome measures will have no more than one very specific measure per outcome, (EXAMPLE: Use two measures to track, "will administer correct 'medication' 100% of the time" AND "administer 'medication' in correct dose 100% of the time," as compared to "will administer correct medication in correct dose 100% of the time.")

The latter has two parameters and if one or the other is wrong, it is impossible to determine which was done right and which was wrong. Results give useless information for determining outcomes.)

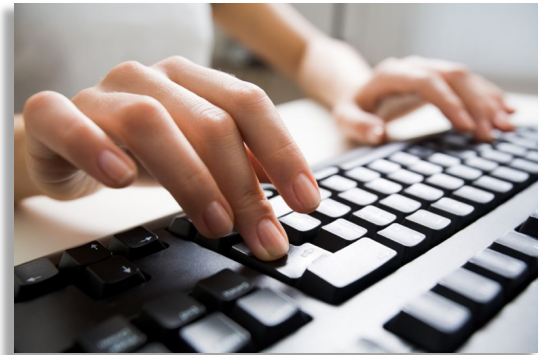
Also, keep outcomes to fewer than 10 whenever possible. Too many outcomes make data tracking more difficult. Make sure your client actually tracks the data, and reports it at specified intervals.

Failure to show progress early can give the client a chance to correct their methods and achieve better results. Periodic results also may be required for interim reports to the funder.

Janice Baker: When I first started, I found this quote kept me grounded: "In my opinion, the success of grant proposals depends on four factors: (1) The quality of the nonprofit organization. (2) The innovative nature or critical importance of the proposed project. (3) The emerging priorities of a funding source or the competition level in a particular grantmaking cycle. (4) The skills of the grant writer in building a compelling case.

No matter how carefully and strategically I prepare a proposal, these other factors impact the outcome.

As a result, grant writers deserve upfront compensation for their time. " It comes from this website: <http://www.grantproposal.com/starting.html> (I am not affiliated with the site in any way).



Grant Writing Advice—Continued

Cindy Sterling: I concur with what Susan and Joseph stated. Read the RFP carefully and make sure you respond to all the criteria / issues they want you do address.

Be clear and concise! In many grants they want to see collaboration / partnerships – you should work on developing these prior to the RFP being release because the grant response time is generally short. I recommend, maybe as part of your strategic planning, knowing what services/research/projects...you want a grant to support/develop so you are not just “chasing” grants.



Jan A Beeton: Don't just inform, PERSUADE.

Judy Anne Cavey: It's about relationship—create a solid working one between nonprofit, grant writer and funding institution.

Harry Schiffman: Judy Anne Cavey is right! Developing relationships between the organization and those you are

seeking funding from on all levels – government or private – is key.

These also have to be LONG TERM relationships! One can't just knock on someone's door and say “show me the money” but you have to develop credibility with these folks.

Judy Anne Cavey: Thanks Harry! Love the “show me the money” ...sadly, some people think that's what it's all about.

Trudy Kilian: I agree with folks that have said something to the effect of “follow the instructions.” If you can't understand them or think anything is ambiguous, contact the entity that released the grant proposal opportunity. I know, that's 2 things.

Marilyn Rice Korhonen: Create a system that works for you so you can manage all of the disparate pieces of each project as well as multiple projects. Dedicate time for yourself to get exercise, relax, blow off steam.

Be selective about projects and work on those that mean something to you personally. Initially, I wrote many types of proposals.

Now, I concentrate on a specialty of creating partnerships in and for small, rural communities to improve education and social services for children and their families. It never ceases to be inspiring and worthwhile. I would do this work for free if I did not require an income.

Mark Buckley: Apply for grants that fund the work you do, and answer the questions and only the questions.

Grant Writing Advice—Continued

Laurie Johnson: Wow – great comments so far and many that I believe are critical to success. I would add Do Your Research. A few well spent minutes researching what organizations the funder has supported in the past, the amount of their typical grant award and any other vital information will inform your work as you plan the project and budget.

So many times, new grant writers will ask for the moon which can mean the proposal won't even be considered.

Julie Hudash: Drink lots of coffee. Follow ALL directions listed above. Drink more coffee. Mix proposal with exciting passion for the mission. Drink more coffee. Edit. Edit more. Submit. Pour a glass of good wine and celebrate!



Brian Sheridan: These are all great answers. In the spirit of relationship building and also possibly saving you time, I recommend to first, do extensive research on a funder and second, call them to confirm something.

Do not call and ask “I’ve got this program. Will you fund it?” A question like that will simply lead them to direct you to look at their grant guidelines and may even annoy the funder.

A more nuanced question shows you’ve done your homework and may lead to a brief conversation, which will help both you as the proposal writer and the reviewer (who has a bit more of a feel for what you are doing).

During the conversation, if they tell you that they probably wouldn’t fund the program, consider it a blessing. If they consider your program a square peg to their round hole, even the most well-written proposal won’t be funded.

Cindy Sterling: I concur with what Susan and Joseph stated. Read the RFP carefully and make sure you respond to all the criteria / issues they want you do address. Be clear and concise!

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Grant Writing Advice—Continued

Judy Anne Cavey: Thanks Harry! Love the “show me the money” ...sadly, some people think that’s what it’s all about.

Judy Whittier, CFRE: I’m ignoring the guidelines by sharing more than the “single most” important advice, but this isn’t a grant so I can! I’d add a few thoughts:

1. **Read the RFP or guidelines carefully** — Don’t try to fit your square peg into their round hole.
2. **Plan** — not only the program you want them to fund, but the grant writing itself. Don’t wait until the day before to discover you need to have your board chair’s signature — and he’s in China.
3. **Write clearly and concisely.** Answer their questions in the order they’re asked. As Joseph mentioned, don’t make it hard for the funder to find the answers to their questions.
4. **Consider who the funder is** — if it’s a corporate funder you may need to do more to explain the basics of the need for your services and why your approach is successful, than you would for a government grant where the staff specializes in your field.
5. **When you’re done** — you’re not. Have other people read your grant request – they’ll point out where you need to clarify. Set it aside overnight and then read it out loud to yourself. This is a good way to pick up awkward phrasing, incorrect grammar, and convoluted wording.
6. **Talk about your successes** – share stories. Funders are people — you need to give them the facts and stats so they’ll feel that you can be successful, but they’re people — tug at their emotions a bit.
7. **See Jan’s comment** — Persuade! Grants have become more competitive than ever — why is your organization the best place to invest?
8. **See Judy Anne and Harry’s comments** — Relationships.
9. **If you get the grant — thank the funder and report on time as requested!** Share the successes through your outcomes, but also share stories. If appropriate, have the funder observe the services they funded or hear from a client.
10. If you get the grant, and the project doesn’t go as you intended – adapt, but **keep your funder in the loop.** There will be no second grant if the funder feels you didn’t do what you said you would.
11. **Thank them again — and ask again!**



This isn’t rocket science — it’s persuasive writing and careful attention to detail — a missed attachment or late submission can keep your request from being considered.

Grant Writing Advice—Continued

Anne Ackerson: Great comments, all. I'd like to build on them by saying that BEFORE you start approaching funders (be they foundations, government or corporate sources or individuals), put your house in order so that your organization is the most *donor-worthy* as it can be. To me, that means having:



- ◆ a strong mission and mission statement
- ◆ a focused strategic plan
- ◆ enough internal infrastructure in place and functioning to not only create compelling funding proposals, but also to build relationships with funders, and monitor and follow-through on funded proposals so that your organization continues to amass a positive track record as a grantee a plan to remain in contact with funders, once the grant period is over.

Lastly, I am a firm believer that one does not pursue funding sources that would require an organization to detour from its mission and plan or drain its resources (that can happen!). Funders can become “the tail that wags the dog” — in the end, you and your organization must stay true to its underlying reason for being.

Frank A. Monti, CPA: Write in terms of the program accomplishments that the grant will help you achieve. If you can relate the accomplishments directly to the dollars requested and then talk about the efficiency of the program (accomplishments per dollar) that is how resource providers make investments in programs.

Olga de la Cruz: I have to say that organization is key. Make sure you have all your “ducks in a row” before starting to write. Read the directions carefully, have all of your back up documents ready, really familiarize yourself with the funder and their purpose for distributing the funds.

Rebecca Tortes: Research projects that have been funded before under the same program. Get in touch with the program personnel at the federal level to introduce yourself and ask questions, I tell people to never underestimate the power of person to person relationships.

Look for keywords or program priorities in the NOFA, underline them and MAKE sure you address those key words. Make sure that the agencies current infrastructure can handle the grant work plan without much outside help. Be data driven and not emotions/story driven. Have clear, well defined outcomes attached to each task.

Teri Pinney: Before you do your research, accomplish all necessary interviews, gather the data, and begin writing the narrative—make sure that your client is ELIGIBLE to apply for the grant.

Sometimes, the grant announcement is not clear or specific enough. It will save you time (and heartache) if you connect with the grant administrator to assure that your client does indeed fit the eligibility requirements.

Grant Writing Advice—Continued

Lynn Pinder: All of the comments I've read are definitely on target! I would just add that new comers should not take a "no" personally, but use that decline as an opportunity, if possible, to develop a relationship with the potential funder.

Follow-up with the program officer to schedule a telephone conversation or even a face-to-face meeting if possible to discuss why your proposal was rejected. Most funders have a process for scoring grant proposals that include the use of reviewers [people they contract to read and score your proposal based on quality, content, etc.].

Request a copy of the reviewer's comments/notes. Some funders will give you a copy but others won't. However, many program officers will take the time to talk you through the comments shared by reviewers.

Anne Ackerson: Great comments, all. I'd like to build on them by saying that BEFORE you start approaching funders (be they foundations, government or corporate sources or individuals), put your house in order so that your organization is the most *donor-worthy* as it can be.

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Lastly, I am a firm believer that one does not pursue funding sources that would require an organization to detour from its mission and plan or drain its resources (that can happen!).

Funders can become "the tail that wags the dog" — in the end, you and your organization must stay true to its underlying reason for being.

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Tale of Two Would-Be Grant Writers

About three years ago, around late winter I received a call from Laura Stevens*. She was really interested in **learning how to write grants** so that she could transition into a new career as grant writer because she had outgrown her current job.

However, she was having a hard time finding anyone who would take her underneath their wings to teach her.

Around the same time, I received an email from Melissa Anderson* who also wanted to **become a professional grant writer and start her very own business.**



She eagerly asked me a number of questions about what it took and how I got started. I shared my experience and she sounded like she was going to step out and do it.

I recently had an opportunity to connect with Laura and was excited to learn that she had left her old job and was doing extremely well in her new role as grant writer for a small nonprofit in the Midwest.

Melissa on the other hand was working for the same employer and was quite frustrated that she had not received a pay raise in the past two years while being overlooked for a promotion she was expecting.

What The Difference Between These Two Ladies?

They were both *smart, well educated* and came from *good families*. However, one was now living her dream while the other one grew bitter because her dream had died. *Yes, a slow death.*

We both know the main difference between these two is that one **ACQUIRED** the **KNOWLEDGE** she needed and **ACTED** upon that knowledge... while the other never got knowledge and never took action.

That is why I'm writing you today, to ask you about your dream.

Is it a seed you are watering that is growing or is it a seed that's slowly dying from neglect.

I've built Grant Central USA - Grant Writers Association from the ground up with the purpose of helping people to get funded and inspire them to achieve their dreams.

I'm happy to say that we've helped a lot of people do this.

But, I want to help you too.

If you aren't experiencing the type of success you'd like to have as a grant writer or as a grant writing business owner, I have a few things I'd like to share with you.-Rodney

*The names in the story were changed to conceal the true identity of the individuals mentioned.

First, we have two incredible programs designed especially for those who are feeling stuck and have yet to take action on their dreams of becoming a grant writer.

We have a 6 month **Grant Writing Internship** and **Apprenticeship** program that is now accepting applications... (learn more at <http://GrantWritingInternship.com>).

This is ideal if you desire to learn grant writing, get real life experience and credibility by interning with a nonprofit... this is a virtual internship.

The Apprenticeship program is ideal for you if you desire to learn grant writing, get real life experience designed to help you launch you own business. This one includes two internships... one with a nonprofit and the other one with Grant Central USA - Grant Writers Association.

If you have already started your business and need more ideas on how to best market your services I have a few resources designed especially for you in our store.

Here is one that can really help your business grow... <https://www.grantcentralusa.com/store/gk9hipDr> (be sure to look around at the other resources in the store).

Until then, remember YOU have a story.

What story are you writing with your life? I hope it is one where you chase your dreams and make things happen.



Be sure to check this out at
GrantCentralUSA.com



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