

Grant Writing 101

Grant writing made easy

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How to Write a Grant Proposal

Step 1: Agree on the Problem

- The grant maker must be convinced that funding your service project will have a positive and measurable affect on your community.
- Start by identifying a need. What problem or issue in your community can be improved or changed with the grant money and a good effort?

Involve All Stakeholders

- To develop a successful proposal, it's important to involve all of the stakeholders. A stakeholder is anyone affected by, or with an interest in, the project.
- Seek involvement from the organizations you already partner with, and consider forming new relationships with like-minded groups.
- Plan a meeting of stakeholders at a convenient time and an acceptable place.

Define the Problem or Situation

- Involve stakeholders in developing a clear, concise description of the problem or situation.
- When describing the problem, avoid using subjective terms like "ugly" or "outrageous." Instead, using the most current information available and, giving credit to the source, describe the problem objectively. Avoid attributing blame.

Describe the Impact of the Problem

- Use the same clear, objective language to describe the problem's impact, both in social and economic costs.
- Show how the situation has changed the way people live.

Investigate Possible Causes of the Problem

- Even if the cause(s) of the problem appear obvious to you, seek formal agreement from as many stakeholders as possible on the cause(s).
- The amount of detailed evidence you will need to present to a grant-making agency will vary.
- If a formal investigation into the causes has not been conducted, consider forming a committee to conduct or oversee an investigation and a follow-up report.
- When describing the problem, avoid technical terms and jargon wherever possible. Instead, use layman's terms. All stakeholders should clearly understand what is being said.

Step 2: Describe What You Hope to Achieve

- Focus on the solution or desired outcome of your proposed activity.
- What will occur as a result of your project?
- How will a situation improve?

Measuring Success in Outputs and Outcomes

- Outputs are measures of a program's activities.
- Outcomes are changes that result from the activities.
- Outputs matter because they lead to outcomes.
- Also realize that a funder may specify a different way to measure success.

Identify the Key Outcomes

- Work with your stakeholders to develop a consensus on two or three primary outcomes.

Set Realistic and Achievable Outcomes

- Your projected outcomes must be realistic.
- Failing to meet goals will make getting additional funding in the future more difficult.
- It is far better to promise less and exceed your goals than to over-promise and under-deliver.
- don't seriously underestimate what can be achieved.
- Promise too little, and the project may not appear cost-effective.

Measure and Record the Result of Your Work

- State what measurements you hope to achieve and when you hope to achieve them.
- If you cannot measure or count an output, do not include it.

Focus on End Results

- Always keep in mind your goal(s).
- Every activity should be evaluated on how it helps to achieve the ultimate goal(s).

Step 3: Design Your Program

- Your next step is determining the best path to get there.

Get Expert Opinions

- Grant makers, both governmental and private, often have experts on staff who can help you.
- When contacting a funding source, explain that while you might be asking them for funds in the future, for now you're interested in their expertise.

Research What Others Have Done

- There is no need to reinvent the wheel.
- Find organizations that have developed projects similar to yours.
- Look at the failures as closely as the successes.
- Knowing what does not work is often more valuable than knowing what does.

Clearly Describe Your Solution

- With your key stakeholders' and experts' assistance, clearly describe your solution.
- What will be done, and by whom?
- If your project is technical, you may want two versions: one expressed in technical terms and the other in layman terms. It is important that both technical experts and the general public understand your plan.
- A clear description of how you plan to achieve your desired outcomes, with a timeline and detailed work plan can be a great help in obtaining funding and getting a broader range of stakeholder support.

Step 4: Locate Funding Sources

- Locating funding requires an investment of time and careful planning.
- Many funders have a lengthy process for reviewing proposals.

Start with Organizations or People You Know

- As most funders, both government and private, provide money for rather specific purposes, your search can be targeted.
- Inquire with the most obvious choices first, like those that have funded similar projects in your geographic area.

Use the Internet to Research Funders

- Visit the federal government Web site www.grants.gov, the central source for locating and applying for up to 900 programs from 26 federal grant-making agencies, covering \$350 billion in annual awards.
- Check individual federal agency Web sites, as not all programs are listed on www.grants.gov.
- Also check state and local government Web sites to see what grants they offer.
- State and local governments administer many federal and private grants and will list these as well.

Questions to Ask When Reviewing a Funding Source

- Once you find a promising funding source, learn as much as you can about that organization and its particular funding program.
- Read the information on the organization's Web site thoroughly to find out:
 - * Do you want to work with this organization?
 - * Does it typically fund organizations and projects like yours?
 - * Do you qualify for a particular program?
 - * Can you meet all of the grant requirements?

Establish a Relationship with the Grant Program Officer

- Grant announcements, often called "Request For Proposals" (RFPs), usually list a contact person—the program officer—who manages the process.
- Arrange to meet the program officer, preferably in person, or by phone.

- Program officers are usually experts in the application process and may be knowledgeable about your type of project.
- Let him/her know about your organization, its accomplishments, and your proposed project.
- Confirm that your project is eligible for funding.
- Ask any questions you have about the grant announcement and clarify anything you don't understand.
- You will not appear foolish by asking a question; however, it would be a real mistake to omit a main item from your grant application.

Involve Your Funder in Your Project

- Your funders are key stakeholders in your project.
- Make every effort to fully involve them.
- Invite representatives to be on hand for key milestones.
- While some funders want little involvement beyond giving you the money and periodically receiving a report, others want to be very hands-on and share in your success.

Step 5: Write Your Proposal

- Once you have a written description of your program, needs, outcomes, and activities, use this as the basis for numerous grant applications.
- Tailor each proposal to each funder.
- Use the style and format that the funder prefers.
- Most organizations make their winning proposals public. Study these proposals. Use them as guides for how to assemble yours, what information to include, and what style and terminology is preferred.
- Each RFP usually specifies what information to include and in what format.
- Some specify page limits and even font size.
- Carefully read through all of the directions and ask about any that seem unclear.

Follow the Instructions

- If there is a page limit, stick to the page limit
- Include all documents asked for by the funder..

Study the Criteria

- Most grant programs are competitive, meaning only the proposals judged best by the grant maker get awards.
- The RFP may specify evaluation criteria and allocate a certain number of points to specific sections or components.
- Study all of the application criteria.
- Check with the program officer to see if there are other criteria or factors considered in making the funding decisions.

Use a Checklist to Make Sure Your Application is Complete

- Make a list of all criteria with the point values, if applicable.
- Use this checklist to be sure that you have included everything that is required.
- Missing or incomplete items often result in outright rejection or at least a lower score, limiting your chance for funding.
- Use your checklist as a table of contents for your proposal, to make it easy for reviewers to find the required information.
- Pay particular attention to your budget, making sure all costs are eligible and fully explainable.

Edit Carefully

- What you say and how you say it may be the only information the reviewer has about you, your community, and your project.
- Be sure that your proposal is clear and easy to understand.
- Before you attach your signature to an application, be sure that the application is complete and accurate.
- Thoroughly edit your text.
- Try to eliminate all spelling and other typographical errors.

- Follow standard grammatical usage and avoid jargon and local expressions.
- Electronic dictionaries, spell checkers, and grammar checkers will catch 80 percent of your errors.
- Have two or three people read your proposal to catch the remaining 20 percent.

Give Your Proposal to a "Cold Reader" to Review

- Ask one or two people who have not been involved in the process or project—and can come to the proposal "cold"—to read the proposal.
- Give them a copy of the RFP and the review criteria, but little other information.
- Ask them to read the proposal quickly. (That is how reviewers will likely go through it, at least initially.)
- Do they understand it?
- Does it make sense to them?

Meet Deadlines

- Most grant programs have deadlines that are specific and unyielding.
- Missing one will most likely eliminate your chance for funding during that cycle.
- Allow plenty of time for delays, because they invariably happen during the proposal writing process.

Components of a Grant

1. Proposal Summary/description

- Provides the background and understanding of the project
- Indicates you have an understanding of the topic
- Refer to the funding agencies purpose and goals, and likely results and benefits for the stakeholders.
- Provide evidence of your accomplishments and demonstrate why you should be funded.
- Be brief and free of jargon
- A clear concise summary should contain:
 - Identification of applicant and credibility
 - Issue/problem to be met
 - Objectives to be achieved
 - Activities to be conducted to achieve objectives
 - Total cost of the project and amount requested
 - Describes problem – related outcomes (not methods) of your program (to increase, reduce, etc.)
 - Measurable and demonstrates effectiveness
 - “Who is doing what, when, how much, and it will be measured by...”

2. Introduction of the Organization Seeking Funding

- State clearly who is applying

3. Problem Statement (or Needs Assessment)

- Provide details and references on why this project is needed and why
- Interesting to read and accurate
- Related to purposes and goals of your organization
- Supported by evidence (data)
- Is responsible – issue/situation you can really do something about over the course of the grant
- Stated in terms of the clients or beneficiaries

4. Project Objectives & Goals

A common way of describing goals and objectives is to say that :

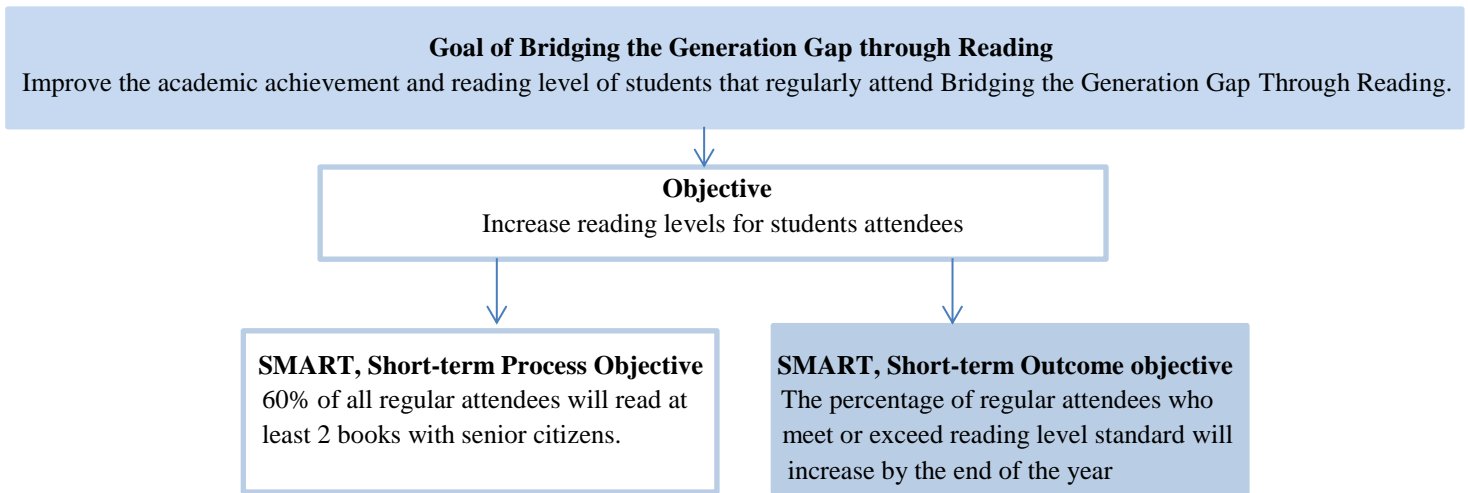
Goals are broad	Objectives are narrow
Goals are general intentions	Objectives are precise
Goals are intangible	Objectives are tangible.
Goals are abstract	Objectives are concrete.
Goals are generally difficult to measure	Objectives are measurable

Objectives - Broadly defined action targets that are needed to attain a specific purpose. Objectives are **SMART**

Goals – The purpose toward a specific endeavor.

Task >>>Activities>>>Objectives>>>Goals

Example: Bridging the Generation Gap Through Reading is a service learning project where a teacher takes a group of students to a local nursing home to read with the residents of the facility to eliminate the stigma of disabled and elders as well as improve reading levels of the students.



Process Objectives focus on the activities to be completed in a specific time period. Process objectives support accountability by setting specific activities to be completed by specific dates and explain what and when it will be completed.

Outcome objectives are specific and concise statements that state who will make what change, by how much, where and by when. clear, concise outcome objectives clarify program expectations and can be used to determine progress towards a program goal

- What you intend to accomplish with as few words as possible
- Tally your objectives
- When stating your objectives, state them such that you are attempting to:
 - “ Increase, ”
 - “ To Decrease, ” or
 - “ To Reduce, ” something
- Defines the population served
- Includes the time involved
- Described in numerical terms (if possible)

Smart Objectives		
S	SPECIFIC	Details exactly what needs to be done
M	MEASURABLE	Achievement or progress can be measured
A	ACHIEVABLE	Objective is accepted by those responsible for achieving it
R	REALISTIC	Objective is possible to attain (important for motivational effect)
T	TIMED	Time period for achievement is clearly stated

5. Project Methods or Design

- This section should flow from the stated problems to be addressed and the associated objectives
- Sequence of activities that is reasonable to lead into the next section.
- Flows naturally from problem and objectives
- Clearly describes program activities
- States reason for activities
- Describes staff and client selection
- Shows that time and resources

6. Evaluation

- Clarifies program objectives
- Process evaluation – program has been conducted in a way that is consistent with plan/proposal
- Product evaluation – measures outcomes, impact, or summative evaluation
- Define evaluation criteria
- Identifies data gathering methods
- Explains any tests or surveys
- Describes process of data analysis and how results will be used

7. Budget

- Includes funds for travel
- Include small amounts for photocopying, telephone, postage, and supplies and materials
- Indirect cost rate is somewhat flexible depending upon the source to which the funding request is directed

8. Budget Narrative

- Details the reasons for all the items you have requested.
- Give some examples of supplies and needs for equipment
- Specify planned trips and/or local travel
- Show cost sharing if you think you need it
- The budget should include all costs for all years of the grant.
- Read and understand the budget form(s).
- The budget should demonstrate that grant funds are aligned with funding agency policies.
- Describe how costs are derived.
- Discuss necessity and reasonableness.
- Describe specific functions of personnel, consultants, purchases, etc.
- Match activities, resources, and staff to cost/budgetary items.
- Budget narrative and project narrative must match – referencing same activities, resources needed, etc.
- Triple-check mathematics!

Types of Funding Sources

Public Sources of Funding

Federal Agencies

Non-Competitive (Formula Grants, Entitlements/Block Grants generally awarded through states, counties or cities)

Competitive (Federal agency awards to a specific grantee in response to a request for proposals)

State and Local Agencies

Types of Funding
Private Sources of Funding

Foundations

General support, Endowments, Project Grants, Challenge (Matching) Grants, Fellowship, and Capitol Grants

Corporations

Direct Cash, Donations, (equipment, facilities, land, employee services, etc.), Marketing and Promotion Products (creating income)

Professional and Trade Associations

Including groups such as fraternities, sororities, labor unions, etc. – generally smaller \$ for a specific purpose

Fundraising Activities

Activities an organization sponsors to fund specific projects

Advantages of Funding Sources

Public	Private
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose set by legislation • Most likely to award large contracts • Most likely to pay all project costs • Use prescribed formats for proposals • Most likely to offer technical assistance • Funds available to a wider array of organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on “emerging issues” • Wide range in size of available grants • Willing to support start-up funds • Complex proposals are not always required • May provide alternative forms of assistance • Often fewer applications because of specificity

Disadvantages of Funding Sources

Public	Private
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More bureaucratic • Complex proposal requirements and compliance procedures • Sometimes difficult to sell new ideas/high risk approaches • Changing political trends... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants are usually smaller • Information on policy and procedures and must be researched • Limited staff, less opportunity for personal contact • Less likely to cover all project costs (often no indirect)

Commonly Cited Proposal Weaknesses

1. Talking more about problems than solutions. Your proposal must show that you are familiar with the issue you're dealing with, but must first and foremost focus on what you're going to do about the problem or need.
2. Addressing specific problems with general solutions. A successful proposal provides a clear picture of what your organization will do to address the issue at hand. Provide specific details about the actions you will take to address the problem.
3. Using buzzwords and jargon. What one needs is simple prose that "tells a story or paints a picture." Avoid vague claims, trendy language, and obscure terms
4. Budgets that don't make sense. The budget should not only add up, it also has to support the logic of the proposal's narrative."
5. Repeating exact phrases from the funder's guidelines. All good proposals should fit the foundation's guidelines, but telling how and why they fit is what is important.
6. Staff responsibilities are not explained (time commitment)
7. Evaluation is only summative
8. Evaluation lacks details
9. Problem is not one of interest to funder
10. Reader cannot locate scoring information
11. Missing or incomplete Answers
12. Problem Statement is not well defined, documented, or understandable
13. Objectives are too vague or not measurable
14. Objectives do not match problem statement(s)
15. Budget is not substantiated by the narrative (items not explained) and/or costs for
16. Budget items are inaccurate or inflated

Funding Sources

Target Field Trip Grant <https://corporate.target.com/corporate-responsibility/grants/field-trip-grants>

- Each grant is valued up to \$700
- Due between noon CST August 1st and 11:59 p.m. October 1st

Walmart Foundation Grant <http://giving.walmart.com/walmart-foundation/community-grant-program>

Community Grant Program

- Awards grants ranging from \$250 to \$2,500 through each of our facilities (Walmart Stores, Sam's Clubs, and Logistics Facilities).
- Eligible nonprofit organizations must operate on the local level (or be an affiliate/chapter of a larger organization that operates locally) and directly benefit the service area of the facility from which they are requesting funding.
- The 2016 grant cycle begins Feb. 1, 2016 and the application deadline to apply is Dec. 31, 2016
- Awarded grant range from \$250 to \$2,500
- Walmart and the Walmart Foundation have identified four core areas of giving: Hunger Relief & Healthy Eating, Sustainability, Women's Economic Empowerment and Opportunity.

National Giving Program

- The National Giving Program awards grants of \$250,000 and above.
- Nonprofit organizations must operate on a national scope through chapters/ affiliates in many states around the country or through programs that operate regionally/locally but seek funding to replicate program activities nationally.

State Giving Program

- The State Giving Program awards grants of \$25,000 to \$200,000.
- Nonprofit organizations must operate on a regional/ state level or be affiliates/ chapters of larger organizations that operate on the regional/ state level.

Click [here](#) for more details on these grants.

Battle Creek Community Foundation Grants <http://www.bccfoundation.org/grants>

Please note all grant seekers must attend orientation in order to be eligible for funding. Orientations are held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month. The 2nd Wednesday will always be from 2-3:30 p.m. and the 4th Wednesday will always be from 10-11:30 a.m. If these times do not work for you they can come to you at your school for orientation. For more info call 269.962.2181 or email at bccf@bccfoundation.org.

Arts in Education Grant (BCCF)

- Grant valued up to \$2,500
- Designated to fund **creative projects/programs** that incorporate “the Arts” in any curriculum accepted the first of February, May, August and November

You must mail or email a copy of your grant to Annette Chapman, Vice President of Grant making and Scholarships
Battle Creek Community Foundation
32 W. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1
Battle Creek, MI 49017
Annette@bccfoundation.org

Mini Grants (BCCF)

Mini Grants are up to \$1,000 are available and are intended to be a fast, flexible, local funding opportunity for small but important community needs. They are intended to be a fast, flexible, local funding opportunity for small but important community needs. Grant must be submitted online.

[Mini Grant Budget Form](#) – word doc

[Mini Grant Budget Form](#) – excel doc

General Grants

General Grants are requests over \$1,000. These requests are reviewed by committees of volunteers. The average grant awarded in this category is between \$5,000 – \$15,000. The general grant application is for use for the following: Health Grants, Senior Independence, Youth Specific, Education, Livable Communities, Emergency Funding (Community Crisis), and Capital Campaigns.

In the event you would like guidance in developing your proposal or have any questions about our process, please contact the grants staff at (269) 962-2181.

Additional Forms

[Organizational Grant Application Operating Budget Template](#) - word doc

[Organizational Grant Application Operating Budget Template](#) - excel doc

[Organizational Grant Application Program Budget Template](#) - word doc

[Organizational Grant Application Program Budget Template](#) - excel doc

Deadline	
Spring 2016	3/28/16
Fall 2016	7/27/16
Winter 2016	11/28/16

Battle Creek Literacy Collaborative <http://www.battlecreekliteracy.org/>

Grants are accepted on a rolling basis.

- One-Time Funding Requests – maximum \$500. If your activity requires additional dollars, please contact the Community Literacy Collaborative directly.
- Funds must be used to promote literacy.
- Priority will be given to events and activities that (any of the following):
 1. Focused on literacy and education.
 2. Connect with residents
 3. Are resident-driven (initiated and organized by residents)
 4. Target populations in neighborhoods near schools that have high numbers of students receiving free and reduced lunch
 5. Target family reading (incorporating both parents and children)
 6. Seek to improve and/or increase reading behaviors (the frequency and quality of reading).
 7. Have potential for impact following the activity or event.

Click [here](#) for grant application.

Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning <http://www.macul.org/grantsawards/>

Educator Awards

- **Technology Using Teacher (PK-12 Classroom teacher):** A classroom teacher that effectively uses and integrates technology to support teaching and learning in the classroom.
- **Digital Leadership:** An individual who leads outside of the classroom and supports effective use of technology for teaching and learning.

Student Awards

- **Student Technology Award (individual or group):** An individual or group of students who initiated change through the use of technology to support their own learning, learning within the school or greater community.
- **Student Video Contest:** A video contest to highlight creative approaches to teaching and learning. In partnership with Next Vista for Learning. These videos will follow the rules for the Creative Storm Video Contest by Next Vista.

Grants

- **Purpose:** To encourage and support members interested in promoting effective instructional uses of the computer or related-equipment.
- **Grant Goal:** Each project should focus on an instructional use of the computer or related equipment, which has the potential of being replicated in other educational settings.
- **Eligible Applicants:** MACUL members who are classroom teachers, coordinators, administrators, or higher education personnel. MACUL grant recipients from the last two years are ineligible to apply.
- **Grant Limit per Application:** \$1,500. MACUL members who are classroom teachers, coordinators, administrators, or higher education personnel are eligible to apply. **Important Note: You may not apply if you have received a MACUL Grant within the last two years.**

Please click the links below to view the grant worksheet and rubric

[Grant worksheet](#)

[Grant Rubric](#)

Search Engines

W.K. Kellogg <http://www.wkkf.org/grants>

W.K. Kellogg have over 20,000 grants to choose from with focus areas that include educated kids, healthy kids, secure families, racial equity, and civic engagement.

GetEdFunding <http://www.getedfunding.com/c/index.web?s@qdxDbzak4zd2>

GetEdFunding is a free and fresh grant-finding resource, dedicated to helping educators and institutions identify the funding they need in budget-tight times.

Edutopia <http://www.edutopia.org/grants-and-resources>

Get a roundup of educational grants, contests, awards, free toolkits, and classroom guides aimed at helping students, classrooms, schools, and communities.

Grants For Teachers <http://www.grantsforteachers.net/>

Search for grants based on subject, grade, and state to help fund the classroom for projects and more.

References

- Appalachian Regional Commission. (nd). General information on grants and funding: How to Write A grant Proposal. Retrieved from <http://www.arc.gov/funding/howtowriteagrantproposal.asp>.
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- Tips for Writing Goals and Objectives. (nd). Retrieved from <http://www2.tulane.edu/publichealth/mchltpl/upload/Tips-for-writing-goals-and-objectives.pdf>
- Writing SMART, Short-term Outcome Objectives. (nd). Retrieved from <http://www.azed.gov/century-learning-centers/files/2011/06/16.-writing-smart-short-term-outcome-objectives.pdf>