# Process of Locating and Formulating Grants and Tips for Grant Writing

By: Jessica Norman, OTDS

Belmont University

Contact Information:
Phone: (931)397-6878
Email: jdnorman12@gmail.com

Grants Overview

▸ Grant: a sum of money given by an organization, especially the government, for a particular purpose.

▸ Formula for successful grantseeking

Needs ➕ **Solution** ➕ **Commitment** ＝ **Educational Advancement**
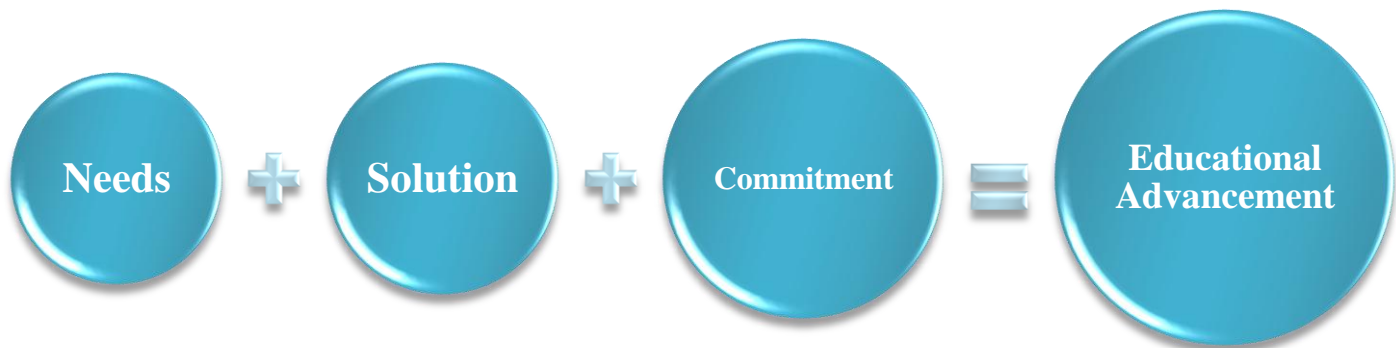
▸ Why do educators write grants?

  ▸ Educators write grant proposals to improve teaching, improve the school, community educational support system, and obtain the feelings of self-esteem that comes with managing a funded project.

▸ Time management skills are needed to write successful grants and balance other aspects of the grant writers career/personal life.

  ▸ Two to four hours per week is a reasonable amount of time to invest in writing grants and the grant process, if it is not your main job.

▸ The major goal for grant writers is to produce proposals that convince readers that the writer will do a better job of meeting the funder's goals than all the competitors would do.

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Types of Funding

- Federal Funding
  - The Federal Government is the largest of all grant makers.
  - The Federal Government administers several types of grants designed to accomplish different purposes.
  - Types of Grants
    - Research grants
      - Supports investigations aimed at discovery of facts, revision of accepted theories, or application of new or revised theories
    - Demonstration grants
      - Demonstrate or establish the feasibility of a particular theory or approach
    - Project grants
      - Supports individual projects in accordance with legislation that gives the funding agency discretion in selecting the project, grantees, and amount of award
    - Block grants
      - Provides states with funding for a particular purpose
    - Formula grants
      - Provides funding to specified grantees on the basis of a specific formula, using indicators such as per capita income, mortality, or morbidity rates, outlined in legislation or regulations

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Types of Funding

▸ Private Funding

  ▸ Private funding can be obtained from a variety of sources.

  ▸ For the most part, philanthropic organizations fund programs which either address their individual interests or benefit a particular group.

  ▸ Types of Philanthropic Organizations

    ▸ Private Foundations

      ☐ Receive income from an individual, family or group of individuals. The funding priorities of private foundations are usually based on the personal philosophies of the founding members.

    ▸ Corporate Foundations

      ☐ Receive contributions from a profit-making entity, such as a corporation

    ▸ Community Foundations

      ☐ Involved in grant giving within a specific community or region

    ▸ Direct Giving Programs

      ☐ Philanthropic arms of corporations which donate goods and services for charitable causes.

    ▸ Voluntary Agencies

      ☐ Private organizations which support charitable programs that are consistent with their overall mission.

    ▸ Community Groups

      ☐ Local organizations which focus on supporting projects within their communities. Examples of these organizations include churches, Junior Leagues, and civic organizations.

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How to Increase Grants Success

- Follow these five steps in order
  1. Develop and document the need or problem (opportunity)
     - Never start with the solution
  2. Propose several solutions for the need or problem
  3. Identify, through research, possible grantors that may be responsive to and interested in your project
  4. Contact the grantor (directly or through a link) to gather information that will help you choose the solution that will be the most appealing to the potential funding source
  5. Write the proposal

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6 Steps to Finding Funders for Your Grant

1. Identify the search criteria
2. Use the subject index of each directory to find the subject/type of support
3. Learn all you can about a prospective grantor
4. Visit prospective grantor websites to learn even more
5. Use the information to craft a proposal that "speaks" to each individual funder
6. Create a prospect grid

Steps 1 & 2

1. Identify the search criteria
   ▸ Criteria can include:
      ▸ Key words
      ▸ Subject matter
      ▸ Geographic area
      ▸ Target audience
      ▸ Gender
      ▸ Race
      ▸ Any other parameters that fit the interest
   ▸ This should be completed in advance so that the grant writer can refine and target the search areas.

2. Use the subject index of each directory to find the subject/type of support
   ▸ Predetermine the areas and type of support the grantee wants to receive, such as new program, capital, general operating expenses, technology, etc.
   ▸ The best prospects will be the foundations and corporations whose area of interest align with the grantee's subject areas that fund the type of support the grant is seeking.
   ▸ It is best to look for funders in the grants geographic area.

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Steps 3 & 4

3. Learn all you can about a prospective grantor
   ▸ Study all the information on each prospect the grantee identifies in order to determine how good a match the organization is to the grant's purpose.

4. Visit prospective grantor websites to learn even more
   ▸ Visit the websites to determine, their mission, values, vision, etc.
   ▸ Study annual reports, success stories of previous grants, staff biographies, and all information that is available for public viewing
   ▸ Check current guidelines

Steps 5 & 6

5. Use the information to craft a proposal that "speaks" to each individual funder

   ▶ With all the information gathered, the grant writer should have a good idea of how to target proposals for each funder.

   ▶ The information should also give a sense of how much the grant writer can reasonably request from each funder.

6. Create a prospect grid

   ▶ A prospect grid identifies every prospect identified.

   ▶ It includes the program of the organization that most closely aligns with each prospect's funding interests, proposed request amount, deadline dates, and any other pertinent information.

Prospect Worksheet for Foundations

Include the following information in the Prospect Worksheet for each organization.

- Date:
- Name:
- Address:
- Contact Person/Information:
- Total Assets:
- Total Grants Paid:
- Grant Ranges:
- Period of Funding:
- Subject Focus:
- Geographic Limits:
- Type(s) of Support:
- Population(s) Served:
- Type(s) of Recipients:
- Officers, Donors, Trustees, Staff:
- Printed Guidelines:
- Application Forms:
- Preferred Initial Approach:
  - Letter of Inquiry or Formal Proposal
- Deadline(s):
- Board Meeting Date(s):
- Source of Information:
  - 990-PF --- Year:
  - Annual Report --- Year:
  - Directories/Grant Indexes:
  - Grant maker Website:
- Notes

Online Sources for Information Grants and Funders

- [The Foundation Center](#)
  - Best resource for almost anything related to funding by foundations.
  - Sends out a free email newsletter with funding opportunities
  - Different subscription levels that provide access to over 100,000 foundations, corporate donors, and public charities.
- [BIG Online](#)
  - For-profit resource that provides online and telephone assistance for navigating the various tools on the website.
- [Foundation Search America](#)
  - For-profit resource, similar to BIG Online
  - Popular response available to nonprofits for a fee.
  - Offers ability to conduct in-depth analysis of prospective foundation.
- [Federal Funding Sources for Rural Areas Database for Rural Areas Database](#)
  - Online Internet database that contains information about rural federal domestic programs including federal grants, loans, insurance, and training programs; information is available on eligibility, application procedures, selection criteria, and deadlines.

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Online Sources for Information Grants and Funders cont…

- **Grant Station**
  - Interactive website that allows grantseekers to identify potential funding sources.
  - Searchable database of funders who are actively accepting inquiries and proposals.
  - Site requires fee-based membership, although some features are free.
- **The Philanthropy Journal**
  - The Journal publishes news about foundations, recent surveys about fundraising trends, and other nonprofit issues.
  - Free online newsletter available
- **Grants.gov**
  - U.S. government website that has lots of useful information for nonprofits, including announcements of federal grants.
- **GuideStar**
  - Provides information for all kinds of nonprofits, including foundations. Can register for free and use the advanced search capabilities which allows access to Form 990s, 990-PFs, and other publications.

Online Sources for Information Grants and Funders cont…

- **The Grantsmanship Center**
  - Click "Sources of Funding Information" at this site and you will find links to today's Federal Register, and to community foundation websites, listed by state.
- **Community Foundation Locator**
  - Website displays a map of the U.S. where you can click on the region and pull up a list of its local community foundations and links to those foundation websites.
- **Center for Civic Partnerships**
  - Search grant opportunities at this site by topic and by U.S. state by clicking on "Funding Sources"
- **Idealist.org**
  - Website that allows user to search more than 40,000 nonprofit and community organizations in 165 counties by city, state, keyword, etc.
- **Search for Charities**
  - IRS website that allows user to search by city, city and state, or state.

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Components of a Grant Proposal

▸ Cover Letter

▸ Proposal Summary

▸ Introduction of the Organization Seeking Funding

▸ Problem Statement (or Needs Assessment)

▸ Project Objectives

▸ Project Methods or Design

▸ Project Evaluation

▸ Future Funding

▸ Project Budget

▸ Appendices

Components of a Letter Proposal

- Introductory paragraph stating the reason you are writing
  - Begin by stating the reason for writing to the funding source
- Paragraph explain why you chose this grantor
  - Make clear in this paragraph, based on what you have discovered through research, that you believe the funding source is very likely to find your proposal interesting
- Needs paragraph
  - Include a few well-written statistics but do not overuse the facts
  - Exhibit sensitivity to the geographic perspective of the grantor
  - Portray the human side of the problem and the gap
- Solution paragraph
  - Brief description of the approach that will solve the problem and close the gap
- Uniqueness paragraph
  - Assure the grantor your institution is the best choice for implementing the solution.
- Request for funds paragraph
  - Refer to the factor that your request is (or is close too) the grantor's average size award and if the request does not cover the entire cost, mention other funders that have already given or that you will be approaching.
- Closing paragraph
  - Use this closing to underscore your willingness to provide any further documentation or information the funding source may desire.
  - Appropriate place to include your institution's designation as a 501(c)3
- Signatures
- Attachments if allowed

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Bauer's Rules for Proposal Development

1. A successful grants system takes work.
   ▸ It is not handed to the grantee.
2. Funder's do not care what you need or want to do.
   ▸ Funders care about their needs and wants.
3. Better to send the proposal to one funding source and be awarded that grant than to 100 funding sources and be rejected.
   ▸ The shotgun approach offends funders and gives the program a bad name.
4. Who you know is more important than what you know.
   ▸ Keep up with people's names and contact information
   ▸ It is good to start a "little black book" of contacts.
5. Quality proposals do not float to the top.
   ▸ Successful grants are pushed to the top.
6. Ask for a specific amount of money needed to complete the project or a specific portion of the money needed.

Developing a Profile

▸ Before developing a grant proposal, the grantee must build a profile of the project

  ▸ Knowing the profile of the proposed project will help you assess your capability, document the need for your project, identify similar efforts in the past, and search for likely sources of support.

▸ To begin building a profile, answer the following questions:

  ▸ What is the function of the project you are proposing?

    ▸ Research, development, demonstration, training, service, technical assistance, facilities, equipment purchases, etc.

  ▸ Is your project unique?

    ▸ It makes a big difference whether you are seeking a grant to try out a new idea or whether your need is for general organizational support.

    ▸ Many grant program fund one or the other, but not both.

  ▸ In what field is your project?

    ▸ Some of the standard categories include education, health, social welfare, civic or community improvement, arts, culture, science and technology, religion, or environment/conservation.

  ▸ Who will benefit from your project?

    ▸ Types of clientele or project participants might include low-income persons, infants, youth, families, the elderly, the unemployed, the homeless, refugees, persons of a certain race, ethnicity, or sex

  ▸ What are the geographical parameters of your project?

    ▸ In what country will it be located?

    ▸ Is it local, statewide, nationwide, or international?

    ▸ Is it oriented towards urban or rural areas?

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Organizing Organizational Information

- Gather and/or develop the following information and sources:
  - History and mission of the organization
    - Have the latest mission statement, vision, and history of the organization
  - Description of the organization's current projects and programs
    - Population, specific services, how the program measures results and evaluates progress
  - Special resources that would make a project successful
    - Could include human resources such as staff, volunteers, partnerships, or experience with particular populations and geographical locations
  - Documentation of the special accomplishments of the organization
    - Awards, media coverage, commended by a professional association
    - Collect articles from newspapers, magazines, and professional journals about the organization

Organizing Organizational Information cont…

▸ Gather and/or develop the following information and sources:

- ▸ Examples of community involvement by the organization
  - ▸ How is the organization a positive impact on the community?
- ▸ Copies of publications the organization has produced
  - ▸ Annual reports, newsletters, press releases, website, organization's 990s, committee reports, minutes, etc.
- ▸ Interviews with key staffers
  - ▸ Ask key members of the staff about the organizations strengths and weaknesses, greatest needs, and what they would do if more money was available
- ▸ Make sure to understand the concept of each proposal and how it fits with the mission
  - ▸ Document specific details of the project

As the grant writer, the job will be easier if you understand the organization thoroughly and have all the key information available.

Developing a Grant Proposal: The Writing Process

Grant writing is not a quick way to solve funding problems. Writing a grant proposal is not a one-shot experiment. Grantees write many grant proposals, they do not write one "shotgun" proposal.

1. Start with the organization's funding priorities
   - Identify on an annual basis the funding needs
   - Identify the plans or projects that are likely to translate into grant proposals and start the process of developing them.

2. Preparing a draft grant proposal
   - Put together a draft grant proposal for one of the projects identified for funding.
   - Assemble the detailed background information needed, decide who will write the proposal, and draft key components of the grant proposal.

3. Finding potential funders for the grant proposal
   - Look for appropriate funders using the tips listed previously in this document.

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Developing a Grant Proposal: The Writing Process cont…

4. Contacting and cultivating potential funders for the grant proposal
   - It is not wise to start dropping proposals in the mail or filling out online grant applications. The grant writer should try to call or email the foundation and speak to a program officer.
   - The grant writer should briefly explain the project and see if it is the type of project that the foundation is interested in. If not the grantee will find out the foundation's interests and this may be useful for future projects and proposals.

5. Packaging the grant proposal
   - Tailor the basic proposal to that funder's priorities once it is determined the proposal is a match for that particular funder
   - Understand the funder's guidelines and follow them
   - Make sure to add any documents requested by the funder.

6. Responding to acceptance or rejection of grant proposal
   - If proposal is accepted or rejected, take the responsibility to follow-up and respond graciously to the funder.

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Tips for Grant Writing

- Stop, think, and organize the ideas
- Take the time to write an outline of the proposal
- When confused, refocus on the outline
- Cut out any jargon and replace with everyday words
- Write simply, do not try to use big or fancy words that may be unfamiliar to the reader
  - Use simple structure in the writing
  - Be clear and concise
  - Write positively, not negatively
- To be compelling, include human interest
- Do not exaggerate
- Simplify the information
- Revise, edit, and clarify
  - Again revise, edit, and clarify the information
- Look online for past winners of the grant, and compare and contrast those recipients and their needs to your own situation.
  - Review the style of writing the winner used

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Tips for Grant Writing cont…

▸ Request guidelines, annual reports, and other pertinent information from the foundation before sending a grant proposal.

   ▸ You may be able to download most of this information from the organization's Web site.

▸ Unless your organization is a national one, try to stay local when looking for funding sources, particularly for operating or program costs.

   ▸ National foundations are more likely to fund capital expenses of programs that can be replicated nationally.

▸ Do you know the trustees?

   ▸ If the foundation is local, run the names of the trustees and foundation staff by your board.

   ▸ They often run in the same circles, and one phone call can help put your grant proposal on the top of the pile.

▸ Work with your program staff to be sure your information is up to date and relevant.

   ▸ They can also provide you with anecdotes and client testimonies that you might not otherwise have.

▸ Try not to wait until the last minute to prepare your grants.

   ▸ DO NOT use Express Mail to send your application. Using Express Mail can signal to the grantmaker that your organization is a poor steward of funds.

Tips for Grant Writing cont…

▸ Do not send a lot of "fluff" attachments. Many grantmakers will specify what to send. Do not send more than they request.

▸ If you are awarded a grant, be sure to send progress reports, whether they are requested or not. Keep in touch with your funding sources.

▸ Some foundations can be very picky with their requirements.

    ▸ If the funder specifies page length, page margins, typeface, etc., be sure to follow the specifications.

▸ Before mailing out your grant proposal, call the foundation to be sure you have current contact information.

▸ Many groups use a "Common Grant Application," developed by groups of grant makers to ensure that all applicants provide the same information.

    ▸ Be sure to check individual foundation guidelines to see if they use this tool and adhere exactly to the material asked for.

▸ Grants can have many hidden costs that can be addressed in the written proposal.

Tips for Beginners
(ways to improve areas of weaknesses)

▸ Become more realistic in choosing likely sources of support.

  ▸ By completing the application process, this can help direct you to sources where the competition may be less keen, such as a discretionary fund within the organization itself, awards from state agencies, smaller or regional private foundations, local businesses and service clubs, or small grant programs within federal agencies.

▸ Start looking for grant opportunities locally

▸ A novice grant writer can invite a more experienced colleague to serve as principal investigator or lead consultant in the application.

  ▸ This is a time-honored approach to help secure funds for ideas of interest to less experienced persons.

  ▸ The novice grant writer can also ask the more experience grant writer for tips and suggestions throughout the grant writing process.

▸ You can collaborate with another agency that has the requisite support services, experience or reputation in the project area.

  ▸ By joining enthusiasm with experience, this team approach is often successful.

▸ You can ask a better qualified organization to serve as "fiscal sponsor" for your project.

Tips for Online Grant Applications

▸ Keep track of username and password

▸ Start in word processing software

▸ Know the limits

    ▸ Character or word limitations for each question

▸ Watch out for special characters

    ▸ Some online applications will not allow the use of special characters (i.e. bullets)

▸ SEO (search engine optimization) the application

    ▸ Include key words in the application text so the computer can find "tags" that will compare it to the "maps" for suitable funding matches.

▸ Save the work

▸ Plan for Volunteers

    ▸ Some funders will not grant an award if there are no volunteer opportunities

▸ Incorporate Numbers into Recognition

    ▸ Funders want to know how the organization plans to recognize them for their support.

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Federal Grant Writing Tips

▸ A federal grant is an award of financial assistance from a federal agency to a recipient to carry out a public purpose of support authorized by Federal law.

  ▸ Grants are subject to statutory, regulatory, and policy-based requirements, depending on the particular program.

▸ When preparing proposals, applicants must carefully review the terms of the competitive announcement and make sure the proposal complies with the requirements in the announcement.

▸ Proposals must be submitted by the deadlines specified in the announcement and address all of the evaluation criteria in the announcement.

▸ Proposals must also comply with any threshold eligibility requirements and meet any match requirements described in the announcement.

▸ Some competitions provide the opportunity for pre-proposal/application assistance to potential applicants interested in competing for a grant.

  ▸ If applicable, this will be specified in the announcement. The Pre-proposal/application assistance may include helping potential applicants determine whether they and/or their proposed project is eligible for funding, or responding to requests for clarification of the announcement.

  ▸ If assistance is offered, the grantee should make sure to ask for assistance.

    ▸ This not only helps increase the chance of receiving the grant but also builds contacts within the granting source.

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Resources for Grant Writers to Improve Grant Writing Skills

- Take a class
- Check books out from the local library about grant writing
- Surf the web
- Ask colleagues
- Talk to experienced grant writers
- Get feedback from funders
- Become involved in the funding process yourself
  - Serve on grant review boards
    - Reading grants others have wrote can be very educational.

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Grant Writing Resources on the Internet

- Basic Elements of Grant Writing. Corporation for Public Broadcasting: http://www.cpb.org/grants/grantwriting.html.

- A Condensed Version of Proposal Planning and Writing. Jeremy T. Miner, Lynn E. Miner: http://www.minerandassociates.com/PPW3 Brief.htm.

- Developing and Writing Grant Proposals. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance: http://aspe.hhs.gov/cfda/ia6.htm.

- The Foundation Center's User-Friendly Guide to Funding Research & Resources: http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/gfr/.

- Grant Writing and Fundraising Articles. TechSoup: http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/funding/index.cfm.

- Non-Profit Guides: Grant-Writing Tools for Non-Profit Organizations: http://www.npguides.org/index.html.

- Preparing a Grant Proposal: Five Steps in the Proposal Writing Process. Appalachian Regional Commission: http://www.arc.gov/index.do?nodeId=102.

- Proposal Budgeting Basics. Foundation Center: http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/prop_budgt/.

- Proposal Writing: The Basic Steps in Planning and Writing A Successful Grant Application: http://www.ildceo.net/NR/rdonlyres/EC10F834-50A0-4CB0-8121-B6185951F91D/0/ProposalWriting2003.pdf.

- Proposal Writing Short Course. Available in English and Spanish. Foundation Center: http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/budget.html.

- What Grantmakers Want Applicants to Know. GuideStar: http://www2.guidestar.org/rxa/news/articles/2003/what-grantmakers-want-applicants-to-know.aspx.

- What To Do Before You Write A Grant Proposal. Ohio Literacy Resource Center: http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/grants/first.html.

- Writing A Successful Grant Proposal. Minnesota Council on Foundations: http://www.mcf.org/mcf/grant/writing.htm.

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Websites of Sample Successful Grant Proposals

- Examples of Successful Proposals. Appalachian Regional Commission: http://www.arc.gov/index.do?nodeId=1730.

- A Sample Grant Proposal. Plugged In: http://www.pluggedin.org/tool_kit/sample_grant.html.

- Sample Grant Proposals. The Idea Bank: http://theideabank.com/onlinecourse/samplegrant.html.

- Sample Proposals. Non-Profit Guides: http://www.npguides.org/guide/sample_proposals.htm.

- Sample Proposals. SchoolGrants: http://www.k12grants.org/samples/.

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Summary of EPA Grant Writing Tutorial from Purdue University

- Read the request for proposal (RFP) carefully
  - Organize your proposal according to the RFP
- Pay attention to the point allocation before you begin writing
- Explain things – do not declare them
- Do not make assumptions of your reviewers
- Avoid jargon and acronyms
- Do not simply reiterate buzzwords
- Be innovative – new audiences, new techniques, and so forth
- Be passionate
- Be realistic
- Be specific
- Show the funder the return on its investment
- Check grammar, spelling, and typos
- Ask someone else to review it
- Solicit partners
- If the funder says "no", ask why
- Volunteer to be an evaluator

- Link: EPA GRANT WRITING TUTORIAL

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Grant Writing Myths

- Myth 1: There is no money available.
  - There is money available .
  - Individuals, institutions, and agencies search for the right person or organization to give this money to as you and others are desperate to receive it.
- Myth 2: The money that is available goes to big, prestigious institutions and agencies, not to individuals, small institutions, and small agencies.
  - By responding to local requests for proposals, you have an advantage over the bigger companies
- Myth 3: Successful grant writing requires connections, and I do not have any.
  - To be sure, when used effectively, knowing people in the funding agency can be a valuable asset.
  - It is not a necessity.
- Myth 4: I do not have time to write grants.
  - Most individuals waste hours of a day completing unproductive activities.
  - Examine your routines and do not give up activities that you enjoy most.
- Myth 5: The grants are awarded to those applicants who have the greatest needs
  - Most grants are awarded not for the purpose of helping the investigators but to help the investigators meet the funder's needs; therefore, attention should be focused on convincing funders how the grantee can do a better job than your competition.

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