



# CONNECTING TO THE MONEY: WRITE LIKE YOUR GRANT DEPENDED ON IT

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## THE BASICS

Do you feel like funders hold all the power when it comes to grants? It may feel like you are “begging for money” with a virtual tin cup. But look more closely at the situation.

### Why are grants awarded?

Grantmakers are dedicated to making our communities better places to live.

They look to the nonprofit sector for the tools and know-how that will help them make the biggest difference they can with their investment - to turn their dollars into real changes in our communities.

While they are great at providing resources, grantmakers need organizations like yours to turn their dollars into real changes in our communities. They simply cannot do so without your help!

As a grantseeker, your job is to show them that working with YOU will offer them the opportunity to make an effective contribution -- a wise investment.

You want to demonstrate that you can help them accomplish *their* community mission.

So funders are there to support your ideas. But without the organizations to implement those ideas, nothing changes. You both need each other.

- Private foundations are legally required to make charitable expenditures of at least 5% of their prior year's assets. (That can be averaged out over a few years.) So they actually **need** to be charitable if they want to avoid IRS penalties and remain tax-exempt.
- Corporations usually are interested in positive public relations in their communities of business.
- Government agencies often provide grants to other organizations that work in their field of interest.

### Are grants the best way to fund your organization?

According to the Foundation Center, foundations and corporations together account for **only 20%** of total charitable giving in the U.S. That means that the lion's share of giving happens in other ways – primarily from individuals in one way or another. That may include major individual donors, events, fees for service you provide, social enterprises you run (e.g. a thrift store or café), etc.

So any grant strategy should be part of a MUCH LARGER fundraising plan.

### What are some limitations of grants?

ALL GRANTS ARE NOT NECESSARILY GOOD FOR YOU! Here are some critical things to consider when going down the grantseeking road:

**LIMITATION #1: Grants generally take 6-12 months to be awarded after you apply.** This is often too long to wait for an urgent project! Sometimes board members, or even Executive Directors, are unfamiliar with grantseeking and may think that grants would offer a quick way to fund the organization. This is generally NOT the case.

**LIMITATION #2: Grantmakers often change their priorities and can be unreliable.** You don't want your org to be dependent on only 1 or 2 grants that could disappear next year. At the end of the day, your organization cannot control grantmakers' decisions. It's best to diversity your sources of income in case any dry up. Don't put all of your eggs in one basket!

**LIMITATION #3: Grants are only temporary and have no guarantee of continuing.** Grants are not long-term. Your organization needs to be sustainable – that is, have a strategy to ensure that you can survive or thrive past the duration of any specific grant. While grants can and should be part of the mix, you can't expect them to be anything more than a short-term fix. Living grant-to-grant is like living paycheck-to-paycheck without a job that's guaranteed for life: not a good idea!

**LIMITATION #4 (THE BIGGIE): You might not be ready (or only partially ready).** The process of seeking and managing grants takes a lot of resources (despite what you may think). If your organization isn't ready with all of the information and people you will need, you will be wasting your time and money pursuing grants. You need to make sure you are ready and able to take this on.

For example, funders may see your organization as too new or inexperienced to make the best use of a grant. Or a given grant may not be worth the time and effort it would require. Or a large grant may not be appropriate for your organization's capacity.

## ASSESSING YOUR GRANT-READINESS

How can you tell if your organization is fully ready to make the most of your grantseeking efforts?

*Here you'll get a sense of what to expect, and you may need to manage the expectations of others at your organization, too.*

### **Absolute Minimum: 8 Things You Need to Be Grant-Ready**

The idea here is to prepare to be worthy of a grantmaker's investment. That is, you need to be credible, well-run, and effective at carrying out your mission.

Think about it – if you were thinking about making an investment of any kind, wouldn't you be looking for the same thing: a good "return on your investment"?

As a grantseeker, you will need to know a lot about your organization!



**1. Nonprofit tax status and other state/local certifications:** You will need either your own non-profit status, or if you are not a separate nonprofit you will need a fiscal sponsor (a like-minded nonprofit that agrees to administratively sponsor your organization in exchange for a fee). The IRS tax status called "501c3" is the one that most nonprofits qualify for and is generally required for grants. Some 501c4 activities are also eligible for grants.

At a minimum you will need to have certifications on the federal and state levels, and some areas require a county or city business license or other documentation.

Also, some grantmakers only are interested in organizations that are somewhat established (at least 1-3 years old). If you're younger than that you may need to wait to apply to those specific funders.



**2. Clear, unique mission statement that addresses a pressing need:** Do you know how your organization plays a special or unique role in your field? Or could your mission statement describe any of several other organizations that are similar to yours? A mission statement should clearly identify your nonprofit's value to your community. A rigorously crafted mission statement can do wonders for your grantseeking strategy (in fact, all of your fundraising and marketing work). You will need to clarify what you set out to do in your community, and that it continues to be relevant, even as times and circumstances change. It should inspire and motivate support and commitment.



**3. Appropriate financial accounting system:** Depending on the size of your organization, your accounting system could be very simple (even an Excel spreadsheet!) or a complex network (many of my clients use Quickbooks if they are not too large). Whatever you use needs to be able to produce organization and program budgets, expense and revenue reports, IRS filings, information for auditors, and the like.

Your accounting system should help ensure that you are current on all past grant reports and IRS filings, and passed all recent audits. It will also help you make sure your organization has a complete profile on [guidestar.org](http://guidestar.org).



**4. History of, and future plan for, financial sustainability:** On a related note, a funder wants to know that it will not be your sole source of support. You have to show that you are on solid financial ground (even if you are just starting out). You should have a diversified mix of grants, contracts, fundraising campaigns or events, fees, donations, and/or in-kind donations (products or pro bono services). Even if you are brand new, you need to show some sort of community support to keep your head above water. You want to show stable or increasing revenue.

If you are in debt you will most likely need to get out of it before seeking new grants. (No one wants to fund a sinking ship.)



**5. Active, supportive, well-run Board of Directors:** Of course, your organization has a board of directors. But how active are they? Do they meet regularly? Do they all contribute financially (e.g., give or get donations)? Do they have community connections that they are sharing? They also need to be supportive of your grantseeking efforts. Sometimes board members even are involved in the actual grantseeking process (by writing proposals, meeting with grantmakers, or connecting your nonprofit with people they know who are affiliated with grantmakers).



**6. Track record of success (or at least the right leadership for that)**  
You will need to be clear on how your organization and/or project has already made a positive difference in your community. If you're a new organization, you will need to be able to show how the successful track record of your leadership and/or affiliates can lead to the success of your specific organization.



**7. Identification of priority programs with budgets:** You may already know that the vast majority of grants are given for specific programs or projects for 1 year. And to pursue funding for them requires priority-setting. While funders have their own interests, **you** need to be clear about your own funding priorities over the next year or more. If you have a strategic plan, your priority programs should be aligned with that.

Start thinking about dividing your work into related units -- with realistic expectations for a 1-year period. For example, you might want to run a pilot project to try something new, or a collaborative project with a related organization. If your organization is very new, you may only have one program to start with. Remember that each program or project needs a separate (and realistic) budget.



**8. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation system for your programs:** Program evaluation and accountability have been hot topics in the nonprofit sector for quite a while. Funders want to know what's working, what's not, how you may or may not be accomplishing your mission, what needs are going unmet, and how you might make improvements in the future. They will want to know the results of your work (e.g., how many people you served in your community), and how well you made the impact you intended. Funders are also interested in lessons learned and how you will evolve over time!

**\*\*\*\* CAN YOU CHECK ALL THE BOXES? \*\*\*\***

**Not quite all ready?** You may want to collaborate with another organization to see if together you can get to a place of readiness. For example, if you're missing a piece or two but you could easily coordinate with a peer organization to fill in the gaps, that may be a reason to partner. Or perhaps a more developed organization is interested in doing a project that you can contribute to; in that case, you would contribute as a paid "service provider" on the funded project.

**NEXT-LEVEL: Highly Recommended Items**

The more pieces you have in place, the more you will impress a funder. Don't just get by with the minimum. Stand out!

1. Strategic plan or business plan
2. Board and staff diversity that represent your community
3. Official board governance policies
4. Organization's non-discrimination policy
5. Logic Model(s) for your work
6. Action photos
7. Letters of support from partner organizations

## **Organizational Capacity You Need**

The 3 phases that require time, people, and know-how:

1. You will need to seek out, research, plan, and develop applications for appropriate funding opportunities
2. You will need to implement, monitor, and evaluate everything you described in the grant proposal
3. You will need to report to the funder on your results

Every grant is different and will require a different level of these resources. Different types and sizes of funders require different capacities and approaches:

- small or family foundations usually have fewer requirements than large foundations
- government agencies usually require even more paperwork
- corporate funders' requirements vary widely

***Most of you have more than 1 person involved in grantseeking.*** Great! Grantseeking is a team sport! Your grant team may include the following:

- Executive Director (blog post: <http://www.writingtomakeadifference.com/archives/6564>)
- Fundraising staff or volunteers (see "Traits of a Good Grantwriter" in the Appendix)
- Program staff or volunteers
- Community relations/communications staff or volunteers
- IT staff or volunteers
- Finance/administration staff or volunteers

Everyone likes to be an expert, so help each team member carve out a specialty:

- **Content specialist:** to take a stab at an initial draft or review drafts by others
- **Needs assessor:** to help establish why the project is so crucial in the first place
- **Evaluator:** if you're lucky, a non-invested third party
- **Accounting specialist:** Usually the finance folks

***Most of you told us that you're involved in more than one of the above.*** While that can feel burdensome, it actually helps in grantseeking! Why?

- You have good access to the information you will need
- Program and fundraising folks need to strategize together to set priorities and coordinate applications
- You are close to the action in monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the grant
- You can recognize when a collaborating organization will strengthen your grant applications

## LIFE CYCLE OF A GRANT

*Now that you know what it takes to get grant-ready, let's check out the life cycle of a grant. What can we expect from the process?*

### **1. You research grantmakers**

As you know, there are literally tens of thousands of grantmakers in the U.S. As a grantseeker, you could waste a lot of time and money unless you zero in on the select group most interested in your work. It takes a lot of research to **find the right match!** This is often the first step in the grantseeking process, and it should be ongoing.



### **2. You begin to cultivate relationships**

Another word for this is “shmooze”. This is all about relationships: It’s not just what you know but who you know. You need to build trust with good communication. This step usually involves the Executive Director, Program Director, and/or the Development Director. This step is CRITICAL and often means the difference between a rejected, anonymous proposal and a familiar, funded one. If there’s any way to touch base with the funder BEFORE applying, do so by phone, email, or even a personal visit.



### **3. You submit your LOI (Letter of Intent/ Inquiry/ Interest) or full proposal**

You’ve done your research and struck up some contacts (even if they’re minimal). NOW is the right time to submit something in writing.



### **4. Program Officer reviews your information**

Your Program Officer is the “**gatekeeper**” to first review your documents. You want to be sure to pass this first test, which could take a while. This is the person who you may have already started a relationship with. If they have any questions, be prepared to answer right away! Remember: questions usually indicate interest. Make it easy for them to get behind your work by quickly getting them whatever they need.





### **5. Program Officer advocates for your project**

If you've arrived at this stage, your Program Officer believes in your project so much that he/she is ready to **advocate for you** to the Board of Directors. That entity is comprised of the ultimate decision-makers on who gets the grants.



### **6. Foundation board votes on your proposal**

Cross your fingers! Let's hope that you've provided your Program Officer with enough information, in the right format, at the right time. Remember: factors beyond your control can sometimes derail the decision-making process.



### **7. You rejoice OR learn why your proposal lost**

If you win the grant, great! If you don't win the grant this time, ask your Program Officer for some feedback on how you can be more successful next time.



### **8. CONGRATULATIONS! You implement the project.**

After thanking the grantmaker for the grant, and signing the grant agreement, it is time to make sure that those implementing the project are doing what you promised.



### **9. You report outcomes to the grantmaker.**

**Keep the funder apprised of how things are going and if there are significant changes to the original project plan.** Different grantmakers have different reporting requirements, usually with progress reports and a final report. Again, keep cultivating that relationship!



### **10. You explore opportunities to renew.**

Close to the end of the grant period, start considering opportunities for renewing the grant for another round, upgrading it, or shifting to another project of interest to the funder. Your solid relationship with your Program Officer can help you get inside information about future funding.

## OVERVIEW: PPRR PLANNING SYSTEM

1. Understand your **P**urposes
2. Define your **P**riorities
3. Know your **R**eaders
4. **R**efine your messages

### GRANTWRITING **P**URPOSES

- Inspire the funder with your uniqueness
- Encourage the view of your organization as a good investment
- Explain your pressing issue
- Show that you share goals and values
- Instill trust in your ability to get the job done

### SUMMARY OF “FIRST” **P**RIORITIES

- **Facts & Figures:** Answer the basic questions: who, what, when, where. Here you are describing the context you’re working in and the problem you’re addressing. This is a great place to look at both overall numbers and statistics, as well as a couple profiles of clients.
- **Importance of the issue:** To be blunt, why should the funder care about your work? Another way to think about it is: what would happen if you DIDN’T do your work? If you can relate what you’re doing to current news or cutting-edge research, all the better!
- **Results you envision:** What will your success look like (in both the short- and long-term)? This impact needs to be very measurable, both quantitatively (in numbers) and qualitatively (how will people’s lives be improved)? If you need help here, go back to your mission statement and cut it down to size to fit into the grant period.
- **Solution you are proposing:** There are many ways to tackle the same problem. But which specific services, programs, and processes did you choose to pursue? This is what you will do to achieve your results. We need details here. And why did you choose that path in the first place? If your solution includes collaborating with any other organizations, groups or agencies be sure to include that!

**RED FLAG!** Make sure that the solution you propose solves more than the problem of the lack of your solution.

**Example:** The problem is that our neighborhood lacks a health clinic. Our solution is to build one.

But is that really the problem? Lots of neighborhoods have health clinics and still experience seriously poor health among residents. The problem you're trying to address is actually poor health. While a new health clinic might be a significant part of the solution to that real problem, it is still only a part.

- **Track record:** How has your organization and/or project already made a positive difference in your community? That is, what results have you already successfully accomplished? This is another great place for client stories and testimonials. If you're a brand new organization, then describe the track record of your staff/board/affiliates.

## "F-I-R" EXAMPLES

### **FACTS & FIGURES**

While demand for salon services has grown, little attention has been paid to health impacts associated with the occupational exposures of low-wage workers in this sector. On a daily basis, for long hours, salon workers handle solvents, glues, polishes, dyes and other beauty care products containing a multitude of chemicals known or suspected to cause cancer, allergies, respiratory, neurological and reproductive harm...

Women working in salons are increasingly reporting acute health concerns such as headaches, dizziness, rashes and breathing difficulties in addition to more serious/chronic problems such as miscarriages, birth defects, cancers and respiratory illnesses. Evidence is mounting that links exposure to specific chemicals (or combination of chemicals) found in salon products to poor health outcomes. Despite such occupational exposures, there is very limited and ineffective state and federal regulatory oversight of chemical used in salons...

Of the more than 10,000 chemicals used in beauty products, 89% have not been tested independently for their safety or impacts on human health. This vacuum in regulatory protection creates a context where manufacturers are not taking upstream responsibility for the safety of chemical used in salon products.

## **IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE**

The consumption of fish is an important part of a healthy and balanced diet. Fish contain polyunsaturated omega-3 fatty acids that help reduce chronic diseases and aid in brain development. Mercury and PCBs are found in certain fish caught in San Francisco Bay and Bay Delta.<sup>1</sup> These toxins affect the immune, reproductive, nervous, and endocrine systems. Those exposed in utero, while breastfeeding or while young children are particularly at risk and effects can be lifelong. Without proper education on making healthy choices eating fish poses a threat to cognitive development and health of children in our county.

## **RESULTS**

Anticipated outcomes of our work include: At least 60-85% of 150-250 low-income people of color in our community will demonstrate -- through written/oral assessment, participation, and observation -- increased understanding of the environmental challenges facing our local coastline and increased advocacy and leadership skills concerning relevant local policies. They will contribute to the growing momentum toward community engagement on local environmental issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Gehrke, G., J.D. Blum, D.G. Slotton, B.K. Greenfield. Mercury Isotopes Link Mercury in San Francisco Bay Forage Fish to Surface Sediment. *Environmental Science & Technology* 2011 45 (4), 1264-1270

# EXERCISE #1: YOUR “FIRST” PRIORITIES

**Facts & Figures:**

**Importance of the issue (what’s at stake):**

**Results you expect in a 1-year grant period (make them measurable!):**

**Solution you are using/why you chose it (including its budget):**

**Track record of success:**

## EXERCISE #2: ROLE PLAY

This is an initial 5-minute phone conversation between a Grantmaker and a Grantseeker that should take place before an LOI is submitted (if at all possible).

**Person #1** will practice speaking as a **Grantseeker** who is calling a Grantmaker to find out if it makes sense to submit an LOI. After sharing your FIRST, ask the Grantmaker:

- Do they prefer to give program-specific grants or general operating support?
- What amount is appropriate to ask for?
- Can you send them more information and how should you do that?

**Person #2** will play the role of the **Grantmaker**. Ask if Person #1 has a specific Grantmaker in mind and what they're interested in.

**Person #3+** will be the **Observer**.

## **WORKSHEET FOR PERSONS #2 AND #3+**

### **FIRST PRIORITIES covered:**

- Facts & Figures:
- Importance of the issue:
- Results you expect:
- Solution you are using/why you chose it (including budget):
- Track record:

### **Great things I heard that resonated with me:**

### **Suggestions for improvement or things I want to know more about:**

### **Did the call end with an action step?**

### **How did I *feel* after the conversation?**

## BUILDING ON “FIRST” ...

Once you are clear on your organization’s “FIRST” priorities you can begin to move that information into a specific proposal format. Below you will find a standard template, which you can use if the funder of interest does not specify their preference. Always check if the funder has a requested format. And remember that all templates need to be updated regularly and tweaked for each funder.

### Generic Grant Proposal Template

**A. Cover Letter** (1 page): Should summarize the proposal’s basics: who you are, how you qualify, what your project does and why, how your project fits into one of their priority areas, how much money you’re seeking, and why you need it. Mention any other funders on board. (Note: Letters of Inquiry are proposal summaries of approximately 1-3 pages. The cover letter is a truncated version of the LOI.)

**B. Narrative** (5-10 pages) (Note: for longer proposals include a 1-page Executive Summary)

**1. About Your Organization**

- Mission (statement plus elaborate if space permits)
- History and **track record** of Accomplishments (especially anything relevant to the proposed project)
- Your organization’s **unique** capacity or skills (i.e., those needed to do your proposed project)

**2. Your Clients**

- Demographic data with examples/profiles/stories/quotes
- How are they involved in the project’s design and implementation?

**3. The Need**

- Background info: historical context and current trends
- **Facts, figures**, statistics (who, what, when, where) – you may find reports on your issue at: [issuelab.org](http://issuelab.org)
- **Importance** of the issue—what’s at stake?

**4. Project Plan for Addressing the Need**

- Overall goals (long-term)
- Specific objectives (short-term, feasible, measurable), tied to specific outcomes
- Timeline: put objectives into 1-6 month blocks



- How is this project a priority for you in working toward your organization's overall mission?
- How did you arrive at this **solution** instead of any others?

## 5. Evaluation Criteria

- How will the outcomes of each objective be measured or observed (what data/indicators will you collect)? When? Will you have an outside evaluator?
- What will success/intended **results** look like?

## 6. Staff/Volunteers/Collaborators

- Number
- Qualifications/bios

## 7. Financial Plan (also: refer to organizational and/or project budget)

- Resources available from other sources (including in-kind community support)
- Funds needed (applied to specific line items)
- Plan for future sustainability (with a diversity of sources)

## 8. Conclusion: brief summary of the need, the proposed solution, and the request

**C. Budget** (1-2 pages): must be realistic and closely tied to narrative

**D. Possible Attachments** (do not include unrequested material):

- 501 (c)(3) letter
- 990 tax form and audited financial statements from previous 2 years
- Grants list from previous year and committed/pending for current year
- Board roster with emails, affiliations, and ethnicity breakdown
- Board contributions (100%?)
- Bylaws
- State Articles of Incorporation
- Logic Model
- Strategic Plan
- Letters of support
- Staff bios and ethnicity breakdown
- References
- Brochures
- Most recent newsletter
- Most recent Annual Report
- Organizational chart
- Non-discrimination policy
- Action photos, videos
- Press clippings

## **E. Corporate funder additions**

- List of existing support from employees of any company that may offer grants
- Volunteer opportunities for any grantor's employees
- Public recognition you can offer
- Current W-9

### **For examples of what specific funders' formats look like:**

- <https://www.unitedphilforum.org/common-grant-applications>
- <http://www.agmconnect.org/resources-tools/resource-center-agm/agm-common-proposal-form>
- <http://chfs.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/635F46A0-8EF6-4CE7-A6AE-B33D3DBE35A6/0/NNGCommonGrantApplication.pdf>

## SPECIAL FOCUS: EVALUATION IN YOUR PROPOSAL

No matter what resources you have at your disposal, **even a bit of evaluation is better than none**. Learn what you can now, and then make incremental improvements.

As you articulate the general goals and specific objectives of your program, you will need to find ways to measure your success. These evaluation measures must be part of the proposal, and will make it easy for you to generate the required funder reports.

### You will need to ask the following questions at your organization:

1. What do you most need to learn to make better decisions in the program?
  2. What will you measure to learn this?
  3. How will you measure it?
  4. Who will measure it? If you use a third party, respondents won't self-censor or "tell you what you want to hear." (For example, many graduate schools in public policy, business, etc. have classes in evaluation and may offer students to work with you.)
  5. When/how often will you measure?
- All relevant stakeholders need to agree on common indicators, benchmarks, and milestones: standard ways to measure across time and program
  - Once you know, measure your baseline so you can compare before/after results

Listen to all stakeholders' voices from the very start. It can motivate people to support and participate in the evaluation, and even help implement the suggested changes. It also boosts the credibility of the evaluation, and can help you choose the right words to use that will resonate with your respondents (and avoid your assumptions about them).

Offer a small incentive for helping evaluate: a group meal, entry into a prize drawing, etc.

### You will want to use both numbers AND narrative:

- Numbers (quantitative measurement): "what," "how many," or "who"  
Use: surveys, service usage/activity records, pre-and post-tests
- Narrative (qualitative measurement): "how" and "why": themes, ideas, and stories  
Use: interviews, focus groups, observed or stated behavior changes, notes from clients

For example, has your program proven to be:

Well-liked/recommended	Important	Valuable
Effective	Motivational	Practical
Timely	Efficient	Professional

\*\*\*\*\* **BREAK** \*\*\*\*\*

## EXERCISE #3: SPOT THE WEAKNESSES

*Can you identify the problems in this piece?*

Our organization started up a few years ago because we wanted to improve the dismal quality of life and alleviate economic inequality for other women in our community. These problems do not actually affect our lives, but we wanted to appear charitable.

We propose the “Get A Life Project,” which will have a tiny effect on housing conditions for low-income women and will probably do nothing to change their economic status. We don’t have an innovative bone in our bodies, so we’re just doing the same old project that we’ve always done. Actually, there’s no urgency to the project, and it’s not part of any larger plan. In fact, we think there are already many organizations doing this work in our town.

We think that our Get A Life Project will provide much-needed assistance. Although no low-income women have asked us to help them, or have joined our organization, we think the project is a great idea. It’s not clear how we will do this work, but we are sure that we’ll come up with something. We will have to figure out how to serve people in unfamiliar languages, but we don’t think you want to know any details of how we actually will implement the project, and we definitely will not be evaluating it.

Our project does not address any of your Foundation’s priority areas, but we believe you will make an exception for us because of our good intentions. We will have to indefinitely rely on your foundation to sustain our work. We’re pretty desperate so if you don’t fund us we will have to close our doors.

## THE 1<sup>st</sup> R: READERS

- Who are your readers?
  - ✓ Program Officers usually are your first readers – foundation gatekeepers
  - ✓ They have significant background and concern about your issue but may be unfamiliar with your organization's particular slant or niche
  - ✓ They are time-pressed, and want direct and succinct answers to their questions
  - ✓ They want to be inspired by your vision
  - ✓ They've been around the block and frequently talk to each other (so always be honest and upfront with them).
  - ✓ They are people too, with hearts, minds and concerns
- What is their relationship to you? Think about if they know your organization or anyone connected to it. If not, start developing a relationship through the mail, email or phone. You want to create a partnership with them to achieve a community goal together.
- What information is of most interest to them?
  - ✓ Your goals, objectives and priorities match theirs
  - ✓ Local funders want to fund local projects; national funders want to fund national or demonstration projects
  - ✓ They want to be reasonably sure that their grantees will succeed
  - ✓ They want to fund programs that:
    - a) Have a realistic plan for a new solution to a community problem
    - b) Involve the beneficiaries in the planning and/or implementation
    - c) Have a clear, direct, measurable impact on a vital community need in both the short- and long-term
    - d) Are the best choice to address an expressed community need
    - e) Seem prepared to deal with the unexpected
    - f) Can deliver what they promise
    - g) Will evaluate their success and act on any suggested improvements
    - h) Have community support (financial, volunteer and in-kind)
    - i) Have a clear role to play in collaboration with others in the field

- j) Share their experiences with others (i.e., planned to be replicable)
- k) Are funded by other foundations

Note: Corporations are looking for how their investment will benefit them (e.g., PR, employee volunteer opportunities).

### **DATA YOU NEED TO GATHER**

- Their values, hopes, giving philosophy
- Why they care about your issue
- What they already know or believe
- How you can help them solve problems that matter to them
- How you fit into their grant portfolio, alongside their other grantees
- Their relationship to your org or issue
- All of the information they need/request

### **WAYS TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SPECIFIC FOUNDATIONS AND CORPORATIONS:**

- Read their publications, websites and grant guidelines
- Research what they have previously supported  
(Is there enough similarity with your project, yet uniqueness in your specific approach?)
- Call or email to clarify their guidelines

## THE 2<sup>ND</sup> R: REFINE

### TOP 12 WRITING & EDITING TECHNIQUES TO USE

#### 1) FOCUS ON CLARITY

- You know all about your program, but your readers don't; explain everything!
- Avoid vagueness; talk specifics, use examples

#### 2) ENGAGE BOTH THE HEART & HEAD

Your reader will remember how you make her/him *feel* more than anything else you say or do. Even we left-brained people need an emotional clue.

#### 3) TELL STORIES

Abstract concepts and stats are less compelling than real people's stories. They can crystallize the ideas you are trying to communicate.

- Talk about how people have benefited: results they've gotten, importance to them
- Choose memorable characters who go through a transformation and solve their problem through wise use of your services

#### 4) USE QUOTES WELL

- Capture the essence of the story with short quotes from your clients. Strive to create a human, emotional connection
- Ask: "How did you benefit from the experience? What changes did you see happen? And why is that important to you? What other changes did it lead to?"

#### 5) TAKE CUES FROM THE FUNDER

- Remember to answer all of the funder's questions with detailed answers
- Use the funder's language
- Use headings and sub-headings with chunks accessible at a glance

#### 6) AVOID YOUR ORGANIZATION'S JARGON AND UNEXPLAINED ACRONYMS

- Would your readers use the term themselves?
- Does the term mean the same thing to them as it does to you?
- If you must use technical terms or acronyms, explain them the first time

## 7) SHOW, DON'T JUST TELL

*Ask yourself:* How would you illustrate the concept in a photo or video?

Show HOW your solution benefits folks (car dealers let you test drive; realtors SHOW houses)

The more ways we get to experience something, the better we own it. The idea: prompt their own experiences that will lead to their support of your conclusions.

## 8) FAVOR VERBS IN THE ACTIVE VOICE

Passive voice: forgets about the subject (who or what is performing the action) and only focuses on the object (the recipient of the action)

**Active voice: shows what's happening and WHO or WHAT is doing the action**

## 9) USE VIVID VERBS

- Try to create a picture in the reader's mind
- Replace adverbs with stronger verbs
- Eliminate weak forms of the verb "to be"

*Original:* The emergency food pantry is helpful to individuals and families in times of crisis.

*Suggested revision:* The emergency food pantry **immediately delivers** critical support to hundreds of individuals and families in times of crisis.

## 10) MAKE IT SKIMMABLE

Remember: Your reader is skimming many of these per day. Be easy on them and they will appreciate it! Use:

- White space
- Legible font
- Numbering
- Bullets

## 11. LESS IS MORE

*"I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead."* —Mark Twain

- Sentences should strive to be 14-20 words max.

## 12. PROOFREAD

- Check your document for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and other slip-ups.
- Read it out loud to catch things that don't sound right or that you overlooked



## EDITING CHECKLIST

*"The beautiful part of writing is that you don't have to get it right the first time, unlike, say, a brain surgeon."* —Robert Cormier

You can copy this Checklist and attach it as a cover sheet to any document that needs editing. If you serve as both the author and editor of the piece, distinguish between your “author” self (full of creativity and experimentation) and your “editor” self (adopting an outsider’s perspective).

**AUTHOR:** Fill in these two blanks:

1. The purpose of the piece is to:

---

---

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2. The piece aims to engage its specific intended readers, who have these specific interests:

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**EDITOR:** Mark the points that ring true or need strengthening. These general comments should accompany your line-by-line edits.

- ☐ The piece begins with a strong summary of what is requested.
- ☐ The piece is reader-centered, not writer-centered
- ☐ The piece casts the organization or work in the best possible light and positions it as vital to the community and the intended readers
- ☐ The piece clearly demonstrates the uniqueness, results, and importance of the organization’s work
- ☐ The piece communicates shared values, needs, interests, social context
- ☐ It includes all the information the readers need to know, but excludes unnecessary concepts
- ☐ The piece really shows, not just tells
- ☐ The writer makes his/her points clearly

- ☐ The piece flows nicely and/or the sequence and organization make sense
- ☐ The “sound” (or tone) of the piece is consistent and appropriate, and can be described as: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ The piece is easy to read and understand
- ☐ The sentences and paragraphs are concise but not choppy
- ☐ The piece is not abstract, but specific and intriguing
- ☐ The piece is accessible to me and pulls me in
- ☐ The writer lives up to the promise he/she makes at the beginning of the piece
- ☐ The ending wraps it up and motivates me to act or to find out more
- ☐ I felt \_\_\_\_\_ after reading the piece.
- ☐ My favorite part of the piece is: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ My least favorite part is: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I want more examples, stories, or explanations regarding:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ My additional specific suggestions for improvement include:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## PRINTED VS. ONLINE APPLICATIONS

### Printed Applications:

- Include a 1-page cover letter for full proposals (an LOI is already a letter)
- You can often play with margins and formatting but may have requirements
- Often require more than 1 copy
- Note if deadline is *postmark* or *delivery*
- May require a certain type of paper, binding
- Need a real signature

### Online Applications:

- No cover letter but has an initial section for basic info
- Suggestion: write the application in Word and then copy/paste into the online form
- Watch out for a strict word/character count that might not be the same as you see in Word (so double-check once the text is in the online form)
- Some forms can be saved; others cannot
- Usually no formatting (but you might be able to do numbering, bullets or ALL CAPS)
- May require certain file types for upload (e.g., PDF)
- *Deadline may be Eastern Time – so double-check the time zone*
- Relationship with program officer is still important
- Need final authorization to hit “submit”

## SPECIAL NOTE FOR GOVERNMENT GRANT PROPOSALS

Government grant proposals generally require more work than either foundation or corporate proposals. However, the dollar amounts available are generally higher. Listen to this recording of my interview with a grant professional who specializes in government grant proposals: <http://bit.ly/1JE3jAl>

## GENERAL REPORTING GUIDELINES

Not only do you want to show what you've done and what difference that has made, but you also want to position yourself as a strong candidate for a possible grant renewal. While each funder has a specific format in mind, here's a handy list of things you will probably need to include in your report. **Start preparing NOW!**

**Accomplishments:** Of course, you will want to recount all of the relevant results you achieved during the funding period. Look back at the measurable objectives you listed in your proposal. How many of them did you meet or exceed? Maybe you even accomplished some unanticipated things! If so, describe, explain and highlight.

**Client profiles/success stories/testimonials:** Tell a couple of stories of people who benefited from your work. Show how their lives were improved because of your project. Use their words as much as possible.

**Lessons learned:** What did you learn from doing the project? Funders are not only interested in your successes, but also how you will modify your work in the future to address any challenges you encountered along the way. By showing that you're a learning organization, you demonstrate that you are dynamic and interested in maximizing your effectiveness. Describe how the organization will use evaluation in program planning.

**Your partnership:** Think back to the foundation's goals, objectives and priorities (which you found in their RFP or other documents). Write about how your work addressed those things. Demonstrate how your partnership with the funder made that possible.

**Plans for the future:** Unless your project is now finished forever, tell the funder how you intend to build on it. This will help show that the funded project was part of a sustained effort. If you can show why a larger grant would be more effective next time, please do so.

## DEVELOPING A BUDGET

### SAMPLE ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGET

July 1, 2018- June 30, 2019

	Proposed Budget	<i>Amount Requested</i>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b><i>Personnel Costs</i></b>		
Project Director (1.0 FTE)	\$50,000	
Project Assistant (0.5 FTE)	\$15,000	
Payroll Taxes & Benefits (11.15%)	\$7,248	
Employee Fringe Benefits (8.85%) (note 1)	\$5,753	
Temporary Help (seasonal)	\$1,500	
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$78,001</b>	
<b><i>Nonpersonnel Costs</i></b>		
Professional Dues and Subscriptions	\$500	
Insurance (Note 2)	\$1,500	
Advertisement Placement (note 3)	\$2,000	
Office Rent	\$6,000	
Office Supplies	\$1,000	
Postage and Delivery	\$700	
Printing/Copying	\$1,500	
Professional Fees (Note 4)	\$5,000	
Small Equipment (Note 5)	\$4,000	
Staff Development (Note 6)	\$3,000	
Telecommunications (Note 7)	\$2,500	
Training & Workshops Offered (Note 8)	\$5,000	

Travel (Note 9)	\$3,000
Utilities	\$700
Special Event	\$22,000
Misc.	\$1,500
10% of gross receipts for fiscal sponsor	\$15,700
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$75,600</b>
 <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	 <b>\$153,601</b>

### Notes

- 1 Health Insurance, Vacation, Retirement
- 2 Building & Equipment, D & O Liabilities, Liability, Worker's Comp
- 3 Print, Radio, Other
- 4 Audit, Legal, Payroll, Media/Fundraising Consultant
- 5 Lease, Maintenance, Purchase
- 6 Conferences, Trainings
- 7 Conference Calls, Internet, Website, Telephone
- 8 Childcare, Food, Beverages, Materials, Venue, Other
- 9 Lodging, Meals, Transportation for off-site meetings

**INCOME*****Earned income***

Honoraria	\$2,000
Special Event (gross)	\$42,000
Fees for Service	\$8,000
Interest & Dividends	\$5,000
<b><i>SUBTOTAL: Earned Income</i></b>	<b><i>\$57,000</i></b>

***Contributed Income***

Foundation A – committed	\$35,000
Foundation B - pending <b>(at 50% likelihood)</b>	\$10,000
Corporation A-committed	\$10,000
Corporation B-pending (at 50% likelihood)	\$7,000
Individuals-Major Donors	\$5,000
Individuals-Small Donations	\$3,000
<b><i>Current Request</i></b>	<b><i>\$30,000</i></b>
<b>SUBTOTAL: Contributed Income</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>

**TOTAL EARNED & CONTRIBUTED INCOME** **\$157,000**

**Additional In-Kind Donations**

Office Volunteers/Interns (100 hrs at \$30/hr)	\$3,000
Professional Volunteers (160 hrs at \$50/hr)	\$8,000
Meeting Space	\$800
Refreshments	\$500
Computer equipment	\$5,000
<b>TOTAL IN-KIND DONATIONS</b>	<b>\$17,300</b>

## SAMPLE PROJECT BUDGET: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT

### EXPENSES

#### New classroom furniture

5 medium-length rectangle tables	\$1,000
2 chairs with each table = 10	\$620
5 square tables	\$850
2 chairs with each table = 10	\$620
62 Classroom chairs - replacements for worn existing chairs	\$3,850
6 shelving units	\$1,800
<b><i>Subtotal</i></b>	<b><i>\$8,740</i></b>
Sales tax (8.75%)	\$765
<b>Furniture Total (incl. tax)</b>	<b>\$9,505</b>

New classroom sink and faucet purchase and installation	\$10,000
Existing playground structure re-sanding and re-sealing	\$1,800
<b>Total Project Expenses:</b>	<b>\$21,305</b>

### INCOME

XYZ small business (awarded)	\$5,000
Individual donations (awarded)	\$2,000
ABC Foundation (awarded)	\$4,500
<b><i>Current Request</i></b>	<b><i>\$10,000</i></b>



## BUDGET NOTES

- Funders often read budget first, and then the narrative to make sure they are realistic and consistent
- The “Misc.” line item should be minimal
- Estimate 12-25% for fringe benefits
- Consultants generally would be part of non-personnel expenses
- Compare narrative with budget: double check that they are consistent
- Request amount: should be aligned with the funder’s average grant size; must be significant to the project but not the majority of funds needed (average: 1/3-1/2)
- Watch for line items that a funder will NOT fund
- Get approval from the funder about any major changes in budget

# APPENDICES

## SAMPLE RFP

### GEOGRAPHIC LIMITATIONS

The foundation gives priority to proposals from California organizations.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Nonprofit organizations with evidence of IRS 501 [c] (3) designation or de facto tax-exempt status may apply for a grant, with the following **exceptions:**

- Grants or scholarships to individuals
- Fund-raising activities, including tables, tickets, dinners, walks, sporting events, etc.
- Capital investments, equipment purchases, depreciation
- Religious organizations in support of their sacramental or theological functions
- Advertising
- Political causes or events

**The foundation strongly prefers the following:**

- A minimum of six years of experience in City housing and community development;
- Strong board involvement and competent leadership
- Proven track record of relationships fostered with other organizations and constituencies in the community, and City government.

### GUIDELINES

Nonprofit organizations seeking a grant from the foundation should **begin by submitting a short letter of inquiry** that briefly states the purpose and scope of the project, the background of the organization, a project budget and the requested amount.

**Letters of inquiry for the November funding cycle should be submitted by August 1. The foundation cannot consider multi-year requests.**

If the foundation requests a full proposal, please include the following information:

1. A statement of how the proposed project fits within the foundation's priorities (which you can find on their website)
2. Background and history of the organization, with particular emphasis on relevant work leading to the current project.
3. A statement of the issue, problem or need to be addressed by the project, including appropriate evidence or documentation necessary for describing the problem.

4. A description of the project, including the objectives or outcomes to be achieved, and the methods and activities chosen for accomplishing the objectives. Attach a timeline for completing the work during the proposed grant period. A Logic Model is recommended.
5. A description of the steps the organization will take to measure the project's success, with particular emphasis on the specific criteria to be used in evaluating the project.
6. Total project and annual organization line item budgets with actual figures for the previous year and proposed amounts for the new funding year, including both expense and revenue. When listing means of support, please give details for each major source, including amount committed and/or proposed. Please include information about endowment funds and, if available, recent audit reports. This section also should include a statement of plans for funding beyond the proposed period of foundation support.
7. Board of directors' list; 501(c)(3) tax-exempt letter; and copies of any pertinent media coverage.

Please note that the number of grants and total dollars awarded will depend upon the quantity and quality of applications received, availability of resources, and criteria outlined in this text. **Grants will not necessarily be awarded at the full amount requested.** Receipt of this RFP is not a guarantee of funding.

*Grants requests are limited to a maximum of \$5,000. This RFP is for one-time, short-term (one year, maximum) projects.*

## GLOSSARY OF GRANTWRITING TERMS

**Boiler-Plate:** Pre-written blocks of generic material which, with slight modification, can be used in a variety of proposals, templates. (marketing plan, organization description, community profile, staff and board qualifications, etc.)

**Bricks and Mortar:** An informal term for capital funds generally used for building renovation or construction.

**Case Statement:** A summation of all the reasons (including accomplishments, current activities and future plans) that would encourage support (economic, personal and public) for the organization

**Challenge Grant:** A grant that must be matched with money raised by the recipient.

**Community Foundation:** A 501 (c) (3) organization that makes grants for charitable purposes in a specific community, region or affinity. The funds available to a community foundation are usually derived from many donors and held in an endowment that is independently administered. Income earned by the endowment is then used to make grants. Although a community foundation may be classified by the IRS as a private foundation, most are classified as public charities and are thus eligible for maximum tax-deductible contributions from the general public.

**Company-Sponsored Foundation:** (Also referred to as a corporate foundation): A private foundation whose assets are derived primarily from the contributions of a for-profit business. While a company-sponsored foundation may maintain close ties with its parent company, it is an independent organization with its own endowment and as such is subject to the same rules and regulations as other private foundations.

**Deadline:** The final date for proposal submission or reports, either by hand delivery to the funding agency or to the post office for mailing sometimes called a “target” date (if the date has to be established by postmark, send your proposal or report *Certified* and get a dated receipt or use a service that will give you a receipt!). In the process of seeking grants, deadlines are almost always set in concrete; as always read the RFP carefully and fully. In the process for reports there may be room for extension, but discuss the need with the funder before the deadline.

**Demonstration Grant:** A grant made to establish an innovative project or program which, if successful, will serve as a model and may be duplicated by others.

**Family Foundation:** An independent private foundation whose funds are derived from members of a single family. Family members often serve as officers or board members of family foundations and have a significant role in their grantmaking decisions

**Form 990:** The information return that public charities file with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); required for all nonprofit organizations that have been recognized by the IRS as a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt and have annual income of \$25,000.00 or more. The information includes financial information, the names of the officers and highest paid employees and their salaries. Some states require that this form be filed with the Attorney General or other state agency. These forms as filed are available on the Internet at <http://www.guidestar.com>. The 990 is a public document and must be shared with the public when requested, along with other documents. This document is under scrutiny by the IRS and Congress for changes.

**Form 990-PF:** The public record information returns that all private foundations are required by law to submit annually to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This form provides financial information, names of officers, trustees or directors, and a list of grant recipients and amounts contributed during the year. These forms as filed are available on the Internet at <http://www.guidestar.com>

**LOI:** Acronym for Letter of Intent, Letter of Inquiry, or Letter of Interest. These are introductory letters (usually 1-3 pages) often requested by foundations before inviting a full proposal. The Request for Proposal (RFP) will let you know if and LOI is required.

**Prospecting:** The term used for researching potential grants. This includes reviewing databases of funders, IRS forms, funder websites, etc.

*Adapted from:* [www.CharityChannel.com](http://www.CharityChannel.com)

## FAQs ABOUT GRANT PROPOSALS

### Question

As a rule of thumb, how detailed should one be (without being too wordy) about each topic? Should I keep the proposal focused on just what purpose I would be using the money, and not the rest of the program ideas?

### Answer

This is going to depend on the questions asked in the RFP, as well as the page length you are allowed. Make sure you give an overview of the entire project, but most of your detail will be on how you will use the money you are requesting. You want to give enough detail that will answer the questions we went over in class, but you don't need to go into minutia -- if they want it they will ask. Remember, you want to sound like you know what you're doing, but you don't need to share all details of your business plan upfront. Your reader probably doesn't need to know it all to get a picture of what you're up to. This is \*especially\* true in a Letter of Intent (usually 1-3 pages).

### Question

Do I need to spell out exactly who will do what? How in-depth should I get?

### Answer

Feel free to include the number of employees, volunteers and collaborators and give a general sense of what they will be doing and how they will work together. But you generally don't need to give a complete flow-chart. Again, this will depend on the RFP requirements. For example, sometimes the funder will request full resumes of everyone involved or specific job descriptions. Often, though, this is not the case.

### Question

I want to expand on the evaluation component of my proposal. Should I pair the objectives to the evaluation points, and leave out the other evaluation points? Or, should I write about all of the objectives and evaluation points of my entire program, but specify which will be covered in the money I am seeking?

### Answer

Definitely talk about any and all evaluation points you are planning. Objectives that will not be covered by the money you are seeking should be mentioned in your program overview, but usually not in detail.

## **Question**

In the FIRST acronym, I often get confused between the "results" of my work and the "solution" I'm advocating. Can you clarify?

## **Answer**

"Results" are things you envision as the outcomes of your work. What do you plan to achieve at the end of the day? What changes or community benefits will be the end results? What will success look like? For example, your organization may seek to fight AIDS/HIV in your community by educating folks. This education is a short-term result, and the long-term result is that this education leads to a decrease in the spread of the disease.

The "solution" is the specific way you are working to achieve these results (i.e., solve the problem you are addressing). What program or project are you advocating? Your plan should be specific enough that it can be measured and tied to specific outcomes. For example, the AIDS/HIV education group cited above may be holding an educational event. How many people will attend, and who will they be? How will the event be educational? How will you know that your solution (i.e., the event) has brought about the intended results?

**Note:** You'll find many FAQ's about grantseeking in this article:

<http://charitychannel.com/commonly-asked-grant-seeking-questions/>

Also, I have a blog series called "Ask Dalya," which often covers grantseeking questions:

<http://www.writingtomakeadifference.com/archives/category/ask-dalya>

## TRAITS OF A GOOD GRANTWRITER

Your job includes the following roles:

- 1) **Foundation Whisperer:** Know who to ask, for how much, when, and how. Read between the lines to determine if the match with the funder is strong enough to pursue.
- 2) **Assessor:** Figure out what info you need to gather for any particular RFP or application. Review the requirements EARLY so you can track it all down.
- 3) **Interviewer/storyteller/journalist:** Identify whose expertise you need and arrange a meeting.
- 4) **Editor:** Once you have the info/draft, clarify it, add missing pieces, make it flow, and clean it up
- 5) **Formatter:** Fit the required word count, do any layout or document formatting (e.g., charts or tables or photos); uploading to any online portals.

### Traits You Will Need:

1. Strong writing and storytelling skills
2. Content knowledge as a specialist or generalist in your field
3. Passion for the nonprofit's work
4. Training and on-the-job experience
5. Resourcefulness as a self-motivated researcher
6. People skills for relationship building, networking
7. Multi-tasking and prioritizing skills
8. Ethics/integrity/reliability with funders and the org you work with
9. Listening/interviewing skills to get the information you need
10. Adaptability and flexibility to changing needs and priorities
11. Ability to lead/coordinate the team working on a specific grant
12. Ability to follow funder's guidelines, nonprofit's requirements, etc.
13. Project management skills for handling a lot of deadlines and other information
14. Administrative skills, both big picture and nitty-gritty details
15. Confidence based in knowledge and preparation
16. Ability to learn from rejection and persist



## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

### BOOKS

- Massachi, Dalya F. *Writing to Make a Difference: 25 Powerful Techniques to Boost Your Community Impact, 2011.*
- Clarke, Cheryl A. *Storytelling for Grantseekers: A Guide to Creative Nonprofit Fundraising, 2009.*
- Strunk and White. *Elements of Style* (a classic on writing well)

### ONLINE RESOURCES I OFFER

- Grant Info page: <http://www.writingtomakeadifference.com/grant>
- Videos and Recordings (webinars, interviews, etc.):  
<http://www.writingtomakeadifference.com/videos-recordings>
- Free monthly newsletter: <http://www.writingtomakeadifference.com/newsletter>
- **COMING IN 2019: ONLINE GRANTSEEKING COURSES VIA TECHSOUP**

### OTHER ONLINE GRANT ADVICE

- Foundation Center: lots of online resources and useful e-newsletters:  
[www.foundationcenter.org](http://www.foundationcenter.org). Example; sample documents at:  
<https://grantspace.org/resources/sample-documents/> Also has publications and classes on topics such as budgeting (<https://grantspace.org/training/introduction-to-project-budgets/>). Chat/email with an online librarian about your questions:  
<http://foundationcenter.org/ask-us>
- Non-profit Guides: free web-based grant-writing tools, including samples of private and public RFP's and proposals, and links to other resources: [www.npguides.org](http://www.npguides.org)
- Cleveland Foundation: good sample forms of what a foundation could require:  
<https://www.clevelandfoundation.org/grants/grantee-toolkit/>
- Resources for Grantwriters from the Puget Sound Grantwriters Association:  
<http://www.grantwriters.org/grantwriter-resources>
- Common grant application for selected regions:  
<https://www.unitedphilforum.org/common-grant-applications>

### OTHER SITES OF INTEREST TO GRANTWRITERS

- <http://charitychannel.com/five-lesser-known-sources-every-grant-writer-use/>  
(this is also a good website to follow)
- IssueLab: great source for reports on many issues addressed by nonprofits:  
<http://www.issuelab.org/home>
- Showcase of Fundraising Innovation and Inspiration: <http://www.sofii.org/must-reads>