

Proposal & Grant Writing

Proposal & Grant Writing

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WISTECH OPEN



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ABOUT PROPOSAL & GRANT WRITING

Proposal & Grant Writing is a comprehensive guide designed to help students conceptualize, develop, and write effective grant proposals for government, corporate, and foundation funding sources. This textbook covers essential topics such as analyzing persuasion strategies, evaluating requests for proposals (RFPs), exploring funding opportunities, and creating systematic approaches to grant writing. It also provides step-by-step guidance on writing key elements of a proposal, modifying the document's appearance, and developing persuasive letters of proposal. With a focus on responsible grant stewardship, the book emphasizes post-funding activities, sustainability, and meeting grant terms and conditions. Ideal for both students and professionals, this resource equips readers with the skills needed to secure funding and manage grant projects successfully.

USING THE DIGITAL TEXTBOOK

The following video provides a quick overview of how to navigate the digital version of the textbook:



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Preface

ABOUT THIS BOOK

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Acknowledgments

Writing has always been a passion of mine, but I didn't have the confidence or infrastructure to follow through with publication. Because of the dream to provide students with free resources through WisTech Open, the amazing support of my writing team, and grant funding that started from a U.S. Department of Education Open Textbooks Pilot Grant, I was able to write and publish my first book.

First, I want to thank my dad, Neil Hovind. For years, he worked as a trusted servant in the community where I was raised. He connected impoverished families to resources for income in his early years of work and finished his career writing grants to develop a local food bank. He taught me to always put out a hand for others and to do it with a smile.

A special thank you to my mom, Linda, for always making me laugh, and to my sister, Christine, and my daughters, Hope and Jillian, for their undying support and love. When I told the three of them that my college invited me to write this book, they were not surprised. Instead, they were proud and excited with every chapter completed. Thanks for always believing in me.

Finally, thanks to Vince Mussehl for his mad organizational skills, but more importantly for being a consistent positive voice in my ear, cheering me on. I am also grateful for Sam Rubenzer and her creative, beautiful brain, and to Sophia Dramm for understanding and supporting my desire to make the language in my textbook student-friendly *and* grammatically correct.

Introduction to Proposal & Grant Writing

Grant writing is a wonderful way for local businesses to supplement income for improvements in their communities. Requests for proposals (RFPs) are published by cities and states to attract corporations, institutions, and industry to commit both planning and manpower to a project. The impacts of RFPs create positive changes to many areas and even job opportunities nationwide.

Wisconsin has a great example of powerful grant work accomplished. Jodi Peterson, Youth Justice Supervisor for the Portage County Health and Human Services Department in Portage, Wisconsin, developed the Youth Enrichment Services (YES) Program. The grant work was completed in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Portage County (BGC), Children's WI (an agency providing trust-based relational intervention [TBRI evidence-based] training), area school districts, and local law enforcement. The trauma-based system of care provides targeted behavioral supports, educational programming, and positive behavioral interventions for junior high school youth. This program was able to keep a total of 69.5% of the youth who were able to attain the services out of the formal youth justice system.

Peterson said that applying for grants for the program is laborious, and the responsibility of seeing the grant through from the proposal to disbursements of funding to the evaluation of deliverables needs to be handled with the utmost care to ensure future funding. Because of that careful attitude, the results were outstanding. Due to the work of the grant and so many in the community, she said that their partners still provide extra services, staffing, and programming for the project without utilizing grant funding. This has demonstrated a true commitment to helping youth in their community and instilled a core belief that working together promotes the best outcomes for youth.

Whether you work for a nonprofit, corporation, or government institution, funding is an important part of growth and development.

Letting the needs of your community tell the story can spark interest in funders that can swing the decision to fund your project in your direction. Spending time with seasoned grant writers does not come easily; however, this guide will give a glimpse into writing a successful proposal, looking over every section, every strategy, and every sentence to match the funder's priorities. It will highlight problem-solving, persuasion, and storytelling with a purpose; just enough to light a fire in you. You will see that grant writing is not just paperwork—it is a tool for change.

This *Proposal & Grant Writing* textbook is the toolbox for learning how to craft compelling, fundable proposals that make a real-world impacts. Whether you are aiming to support a local community project, launch a new initiative, or secure funding for an organization you are passionate about, this guide will help you navigate every step of the process. You will learn how to interpret RFPs, analyze persuasive techniques, tailor proposals to different funding sources, and ensure accountability once funding is awarded. With a strong emphasis on strategy, ethics, and sustainability, this book will prepare you not only to write grants but to become a responsible steward of funds that shape futures—starting with your own.

Chapter 1: Understanding Persuasion Strategies

“Character can almost be called the most effective means of persuasion.”
~ Aristotle

Course Competency: Analyze persuasion strategies

Learning Objectives:

- Identify rhetorical appeals
- Distinguish sponsor values
- Document applicant credibility
- Apply proposal logic
- Examine proposal psychology and logic

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the world of grant writing, persuasion is a vital component that can make the difference between securing funding for a project or being passed over for other proposals. This chapter delves into the various aspects of persuasion strategies in grant writing. It defines persuasion, discusses its importance in the grant-writing process, analyzes effective persuasion techniques, and provides examples of successful strategies in grant proposals.

The art of persuasion plays a big role in preparing a competitive grant

proposal. Imagine bringing the news to your board of directors or leadership team that you wrote a winning grant, and your organization will now be able to expand its impact and better serve the community. Grant funding can breathe new life into a struggling business, help a nonprofit reach more people, or provide the boost a new initiative needs to get off the ground. Persuasion strategies in grant writing are essential and equip writers with the knowledge and tools needed to effectively persuade funders to support their projects and ensure success. Real-life examples shared in this chapter will help demonstrate persuasion, also known as **rhetoric**.

Definition of Persuasion

Persuasion is the art of convincing someone to adopt a certain viewpoint or take a specific action by reasoning or argument. In the context of grant writing, it involves presenting your ideas in a compelling and convincing manner to potential funders to secure the financial support needed for your project. It successfully creates a connection between the proposed project and the funder, demonstrating why the funding should be awarded and the subsequent community impact.

1.2 IMPORTANCE OF PERSUASION IN GRANT WRITING

Persuasion is crucial in grant writing and the request for proposals (RFPs) process. It helps not only to capture the attention of the funder but also to engage their interest and, ultimately, persuade them to invest in your project. Without effective persuasion, even the most well-researched grant proposal may not be funded. There are many other reasons why persuasion and rhetoric are important.

1. Persuasion helps to demonstrate value and the impact the funding will have on the organization or **target population**.

Funders, whether they are government agencies, private foundations, or corporations, want to know that their investment will have a meaningful and measurable impact. Persuasive writing helps to articulate the problem the project addresses, voices the direct benefits it will provide, and states how it aligns with the funder's goals. Highlighting the project's value builds a compelling case for why it deserves to be funded and how it meets the requirements and proposal criteria. Persuasion can show how the grant will improve services, expand operations, or support community initiatives. It can help translate the investment into tangible outcomes, making it easier for a **stakeholder** to see how their money will be used productively.

2. Persuasion builds trust.

Persuasion builds credibility and trust. **Funders** need to feel confident that the organization receiving the grant will execute the proposed project successfully. The credibility of the grant writer will be appraised by the **grant reviewers**. Persuasive language conveys the organization's past successes, leadership qualifications, and feasibility of the proposed project. By presenting these elements effectively, grant reviewers will believe that the project can be carried out successfully. Further, sincerity fosters trust when the organization or community demonstrates transparency, accountability, and how they will deliver measurable results. If stakeholders believe the funding will be well-managed and lead to tangible, positive outcomes, they are more likely to be convinced that the proposed project is a good match. Persuasive communication also addresses potential concerns and offers assurances that the funds will be used in accordance with the desired outcomes. In the context of grant writing, funder, grant reviewer, and **sponsor** all are used interchangeably

for an external entity that provides funding for a project or activity, typically through a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement.

3. Persuasion shows alignment with funder priorities.

Funding organizations often have a specific priority or mission, such as supporting environmental initiatives, advancing educational opportunities, or promoting community health. Persuasive grant writing demonstrates how the proposed project aligns with the funder's priorities provided the grant writer takes the time to research the funder's mission. Carefully tailoring the proposal to meet the funder's interests and objectives will increase the likelihood of being awarded.

For example, the [U.S. National Science Foundation](#) (NSF) has a website that can be researched by the curious grant writer. When reviewing the website, the user can find a drop-down that shows areas of interest to the foundation. Within a few minutes, a writer can see if their potential proposed project is in alignment with the NSF's areas of interest.

4. Persuasion can make the grant stand out in a competitive field.

Grant opportunities are highly competitive; typically multiple organizations apply for the same funding. Persuasive writing makes a grant proposal stand out from the crowd. Clearly articulating the uniqueness of the project, potential for success, and ability to achieve funder goals makes a proposal more compelling.

When a proposal is grounded in facts and data, it utilizes the rhetorical appeal of **logos** for the funder. Persuasive writing appeals to the emotions, or **pathos**, and values of the funder. Effective proposals tell a compelling story that evokes empathy or passion, especially when dealing with issues like poverty, healthcare, children, or education. At times, grant proposals might even appeal to the funder's sense of **ethos** by using examples that include popular programs or celebrities. By drawing on shared values and creating an emotional connection, grant

writers can motivate funders to act in favor of a project. Emotional appeal is essential to success in writing grant proposals, and overlooking this is a beginner grant writer's mistake.

1.3 ANALYZING EFFECTIVE PERSUASION TECHNIQUES

There are several key techniques that can be employed to enhance the persuasive power of a grant proposal. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Using clear and concise language to convey your ideas.
- Demonstrating the need for funding by highlighting the problem or issue that your project aims to address.
- Providing evidence to support your claims, such as data, research findings, and testimonials.
- Appealing to the funder's emotions by telling a compelling story or painting a vivid picture of the impact of your project.
- Clearly outlining the benefits and outcomes of funding your project.

1.4 POPULAR GRANTS

Below are the details of certain grants that are available each year, offering an introduction to the grant world. Looking at the websites and their summaries below will give a short explanation of their grant-seeking process. Also included is a past case study that can be examined to gain valuable insight into what works in persuading funders to invest in a

project and how grant writers can apply these strategies to their own grant-writing efforts.

1. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) awards grants to researchers who effectively communicate the potential impact of their research on public health and scientific development. Successful applicants clearly articulate the problem being addressed, the significance of the work, and the alignment with the goals and priorities of the NIH.¹
2. The Gates Foundation, created by Bill and Melinda Gates, awards grants for organizations that demonstrate a strong, evidence-based approach to addressing global health and poverty issues. Successful proposals use data and examples to make a compelling case for the effectiveness of their proposed intervention as well as the potential for scalability and sustainability.²
3. The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF)³ funds grants for researchers who effectively communicate the broader impacts of their research beyond academic publications. This includes demonstrating how their work will benefit society, industry, or the environment, as well as how it will contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge.
4. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)⁴ supports projects that engage local communities and stakeholders in the

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2025). *Grants & funding*. National Institutes of Health. <https://www.nih.gov/grants-funding>

2. Gates Foundation. (2025). *Our work: How we drive global impact at gates foundation*. Gates Foundation. <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/our-work>

3. U.S. National Science Foundation. (n.d.). *About NSF*. <https://new.nsf.gov/about>

4. United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). *Sustainable*

development process. Successful proposals use persuasive storytelling and community engagement strategies to demonstrate the relevance and potential impact of the proposed project as well as the level of support and collaboration from key stakeholders.

5. [The World Bank](#)⁵ funds projects that align with its development priorities, such as poverty reduction, infrastructure development, and sustainable economic growth. Successful grant proposals demonstrate a clear understanding of the Bank’s goals and priorities as well as how the proposed project will contribute to achieving these objectives in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.

1.5 CASE STUDY: THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

To see an excellent grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application, [see the Appendix](#). The Office of Challenge Grants shared, “The example narrative is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations” (National Endowment for the Humanities).⁶ The sample

development goals. <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>

5. World Bank Group. (2024). *What we do.* <https://www.worldbank.org/en/what-we-do>

6. National Endowment for the Humanities. (n.d.). *Narrative section of a*

demonstrates persuasion as it proposes funding a project to help meet critical needs in cultural heritage preservation. It does so by using an authentic blend of pathos and logos.

1.6 CONCLUSION

Persuasion is an essential skill in grant writing because it makes a convincing case for why a project is important, feasible, and aligned with the funder's goals. Strong persuasion elements in a proposal not only increase the chances of securing funding but also establish a foundation for continued partnership and success.

1.7 LEARNING ACTIVITIES



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successful application. <https://www.neh.gov/sites/default/files/inline-files/Alexandria%20Archive%20Institute%2C%20Data%20Literacy%20and%20Community%20Building%20in%20Digital%20Heritage.pdf>



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<https://wtcs.pressbooks.pub/grantandproposalwriting/?p=5#h5p-2>

Chapter 2: Evaluating a Request for Proposal (RFP)

“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work and learning from failure.” ~ Colin Powell

Course Competency: Evaluate a request for proposals (RFP)

Learning Objectives:

- Assess for relevance
- Assess for feasibility
- Assess for probability
- Analyze evaluation criteria
- Ascertain availability of funds
- Confirm acceptable uses for funds
- Distinguish alternative terms
- Identify background/problem
- Establish priority funding areas
- Determine methodological approaches
- Analyze timelines

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Funding entities issue a **request for proposals (RFPs)** to obtain submissions that align with their strategic goals while ensuring quality,

cost efficiency, and risk mitigation. RFPs are used for specific projects and provide a structured framework to help applicants provide the parameters of the services that are needed. Essentially, it's an invitation for organizations to apply for funding by submitting a detailed proposal that aligns with the funder's goals.

Note: There are many different terms that refer to RFPs that essentially mean the same thing. Examples include “notice of funding opportunity” (NOFO), “invitation to tender,” “bid requests,” and “invitation to bid.”¹ Because grants are competitive, evaluation methods become an important part of the process. This chapter provides insight regarding the purpose of RFPs, criteria for evaluation, and tips for deciphering requirements.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING AN RFP

The primary purpose of an RFP is to outline the project's requirements, goals, and evaluation criteria. This process enables potential applicants to submit detailed proposals that address the funder's needs. This process fosters competition, allowing the funding organization to compare various solutions and select the most suitable one based on factors such as quality, cost, and the applicant's expertise. Below is a list of items that should be demonstrated by the grant writer in response to the request.

1. Identify the Best Solution

Funders are looking for the most effective and efficient solution to meet an identified need or gap in service, whether it is for a product, service, or

1. United States General Services Administration. (2025). *15.203 Requests for proposals*. Acquisition.gov. <https://www.acquisition.gov/far/15.203>

project. Responding to a proposal without understanding the problem at hand will result in coming up short.

2. Cost-Effectiveness

Funders seek proposals that offer value for money to maximize return on investment. Writing a proposal that pays attention to cost-effectiveness will help it stand out. However, it is important to balance quality and price to ensure a good return on investment.

3. Risk Mitigation

Funders want to minimize risk, so they will select an applicant who has proven experience, reliability, and the capacity to deliver on time and within budget.

4. Innovation

Funders may be seeking fresh ideas or innovative approaches to solve challenges, especially in competitive or rapidly changing industries. Finding ways to demonstrate creativity using clear examples helps funders to better follow the idea at hand.

5. Compliance and Standards

Demonstrating how the applicant can meet the regulatory requirements, internal standards, or other criteria will ensure that the solution aligns with legal or organizational expectations. Familiarity with the funder's requirements and organization will help to create cohesion between compliance and innovation, making the proposal more attractive.

6. Partnerships and Long-Term Relationships

In some cases, funders are looking to build ongoing relationships with applicants, especially for large-scale or multi-phase projects. To connect

with funders on a long-term level, it is important to understand the core values of the granting entity. Taking time to study their mission and goals will make it easier to align the applicant's proposal to the requirements of the funder.

Not-so-fun fact: Most often, proposals are not considered due to the grant writer not following the directions listed in the RFP and “forgetting” details that will address their eligibility.

2.3 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING AN RFP

When writing a successful proposal, it is helpful to think about how it will be evaluated by the funder and its grant-review panel. There are many different aspects that are taken into consideration. A checklist, along with questions to guide the development of the proposal, are included below.

Requirements and Solution: Did the applicant sufficiently address the information requested in each section? Is the language in the proposal speaking to the solution? Does the proposal use examples that show past success and a clear understanding of the problem?

Sustainability: How will the organization carry the project forward after the grant period has ended, if applicable? Will it reach beyond the community that is being served, and can it be reproduced? Will people learn a skill that will last for years or a skill that can be passed down to others?

Qualifications and Experience: Does the plan highlight the

qualifications of the current staff or new staff that might be needed to fulfill portions of the work? Does it show special certifications that the organization has that are required to complete the deliverables? Are similar experiences and successes demonstrated in the proposal?

Financial Structure and Budget: Is the cost breakdown transparent? Is the financial structure competitive, and does it clearly lay out how all funding will be spent?

Measurable Deliverables and Evaluation: Are the deliverables measurable? Will both quantitative and qualitative data be collected and communicated as part of the evaluation process? How will the grant be evaluated? Will the evaluators be hired, eliminating possible bias? Do you have a team in mind to evaluate the grant process and outcomes?

2.4 DECIPHERING RFP REQUIREMENTS

So often, proposals are turned down due to oversight or a small error. Assuming that funders will understand what is meant can have devastating results. Much work goes into preparing to write a response to an RFP. Stakeholders are called in to gain favor for the project, research committees spend months gathering information and data, and hours are spent in committees dreaming of innovative solutions. Few mention the blood, sweat, and tears that go into the preparation that is completed prior to even submitting a proposal for consideration.

The competition is fierce, and the applicants are passionate about why they should win the bid. It is a shame, but the fact is that many grants are lost due to common errors like format and failure to pay attention to directions. Action to avoid dismissal should be taken in the earliest stages. Prior to writing the proposal, it is important to read the RFP multiple times and identify the scope, noting key parts that will need attention. The scope of work (SOW) outlines the objectives and associated activities,

time frame, responsible parties, and deliverables of the project. When looking at the RFP, look closely at the mandatory requirements that, if missing, will disqualify the proposal, along with the optional or preferred items.

After the first draft is written, fill in the following checklist prior to your final revisions. Included items should be in alignment with the evaluation criteria, deadlines, industry standards, legal and technical requirements, format, and the organization issuing the RFP.

Table 2-1. Grant checklist.

Requirements	
Optional Features to Enhance the Bid	

2.5 CASE STUDY: SUCCESSFUL RFP RESPONSES

Actual examples of proposals are difficult to find due to confidentiality, yet there are resources that provide samples and insight into winning RFPs. Reaching out to grantees who have a currently funded project to ask if they would be willing to share their experience is a great idea. Further, examining these case studies will give readers an idea of the importance of structure, clarity, and innovation.

1. **DemandStar’s sample of a winning RFP:**² Offers a sample of a winning government proposal and is useful for understanding structure and content.
2. **Responsive’s curated RFP examples:**³ Provides 33 RFP examples

across various industries, highlighting unique and effective practices.

3. **OpenAsset's analysis of winning RFP responses:**⁴ Discusses real-life examples of successful RFP responses, detailing what made them effective.
4. **Bidsketch's proposal templates and samples:**⁵ Offers templates and insights into what makes a winning proposal based on research from over 25,000 proposals.
5. **Storydoc's winning RFP examples:**⁶ Features RFP examples across different industries, analyzing what makes each effective and techniques to apply these principles.

2. DemandStar. (2022). *Sample of winning RFP*.

<https://network.demandstar.com/supplier-support/sample-of-winning-rfp/>

3. Responsive.io. (2023). *33 RFP examples*. <https://www.responsive.io/blog/rfp-examples>

4. OpenAsset. (2024). *5 winning RFP responses and why they worked*.

<https://openasset.com/blog/5-winning-rfp-responses-and-why-they-worked-part-one>

5. Bidsketch.com. (n.d.). *Proposal templates and samples*.

<https://www.bidsketch.com/proposals>

6. Krukowski, D. (2024). *Winning RFP examples*. Storydoc.

<https://www.storydoc.com/blog/rfp-examples>

2.6 CONCLUSION

Understanding how grant reviewers evaluate RFPs takes away some of the mystery. This allows applicants the opportunity to focus on the specific needs of their organization, finding areas where the services they have to offer align. Awardees of RFPs pay attention to the details and are able to paint a picture that is innovative and captivating. Concise writing and word choice will ensure the crafted proposal will be read, and adherence to the format and specifications keep the candidates in the pool of consideration.

2.7 LEARNING ACTIVITIES



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Chapter 3: Exploring Funding Options

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.” ~ Marcel Proust

Course Competency: Explore funding options for grant projects

Learning Objectives:

- Match request with appropriate grant funders
- Identify sponsor priorities
- Access grant directories
- Distinguish between public and private funding
- Compose grant appeals
- Explain strategies for personal contact

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Grant writing starts with knowing where to find a grant that will match the needs of the applicant. Grants can be funded privately or through the local, state, or federal government. It is up to the proposal team to come up with innovative ideas to help the organization or community in which they serve. The ideas should be unique when applicable but also grounded in logic with deliverables that can be measured and attained

within the time allotted for the grant period. Some grants are funded for a year, and others extend for several years. Grants can also be applied for (and won!) on an annual basis, provided the project was successful and additional funding is needed to sustain and/or expand efforts.

This chapter dives into the deep well of exploring funding options. It sheds light on various sources for grant projects, the differences between government and private grants, tips on researching funding opportunities, and examples of successful funding strategies. At the end of the chapter, you will find an activity where you will get the opportunity to create a script for communicating professionally with funding organizations.

3.2 DIFFERENT FUNDING SOURCES FOR GRANT PROJECTS

Grants are funded by a variety of sources ranging from private to public depending on the type of project. Some of the most common grants are those issued by government agencies. These grants can be at the local, state, or federal level, and they provide funding for things such as research or education for small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and community development. Here are some common federal grant options with short descriptions to explore; but looking at grant opportunities within your local area or state first is an excellent idea.

Table 3-1. Grants available in the United States and internationally.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) ¹	Grants for rural development, farming, and food security
Grants.gov ²	The primary portal for federal grant funding
National Institutes of Health (NIH) ³	Funding for scientific and medical research
U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) ⁴	Grants for research and innovative projects
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Programs ⁵	Grants for small businesses that are developing or conducting research
U.S. Department of Education ⁶	Funding available for qualifying education programs and institutions
National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) ⁷	Grants for artists and diverse organizations
The World Bank Grants ⁸	Provides funding internationally to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development
Wisconsin Workforce Innovation Grant Program ⁹	Grant program of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), which is committed to revitalizing regional economies

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture. (n.d.). *Grants and loans*.

www.network.demandstar.com/supplier-support/sample-of-winning-rfp/

2. Grants.gov. (n.d.). *Funding solutions for a stronger nation*. <https://www.grants.gov/>

3. National Institutes of Health. (n.d.). *Grants & funding*. <https://www.nih.gov/grants-funding>

4. U.S. National Science Foundation. (n.d.). *Getting started*. <https://www.nsf.gov/funding/getting-started>

Table 3-2. Grants available through private foundations.

<p>The Gates Foundation¹⁰</p>	<p>Philanthropic organization funding global health, economic development, and education</p>
<p>The Rockefeller Foundation¹¹</p>	<p>Grant funding for health, food, innovation, and energy</p>
<p>Ford Foundation¹²</p>	<p>Funding for social justice and human rights initiatives</p>
<p>Open Society Foundations¹³</p>	<p>Grant funding that supports democracy, human rights, and social reform</p>

5. Small Business Innovation Research. (n.d.). *America's seed fund*.

<https://www.sbir.gov/>

6. U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Available grants*. <https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/apply-grant/available-grants>

7. National Endowment for the Arts. (n.d.). *Grants*. <https://www.arts.gov/grants>

8. World Bank Group. (n.d.). *Projects by country/area*. <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-country>

9. Department of Workforce Development. (n.d.). *Workforce innovation grant program*. <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/workforce-solutions/wig/>

10. Gates Foundation. (n.d.). *Grant opportunities*. <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/about/how-we-work/grant-opportunities>

11. Rockefeller Foundation. (n.d.). *Our grants*. <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/grants/>

When researching grant opportunities, there are a few categories to explore. Funding is available through corporate grants and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs like Google.org grants, The Coca-Cola Foundation, and Amazon Future Engineer Grants. Organizations are more likely to receive funding from local foundations like United Way and Walmart. They require unique qualifications such as workforce development, STEM education programs, community-based programs, artificial intelligence (AI) solutions, and sustainability.

Another category that can be found when exploring grant projects is crowdfunding and community grants, as seen in organizations like GoFundMe, GlobalGiving, and Patreon. In smaller cases, public fundraising is a great source of funding, and in others, it might be sensible to connect nonprofit organizations with donors. Funds can be used for artists, creators, or even for social impact projects.

Finally, it is worth mentioning academic and research grant programs like the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Fulbright Program, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Although they have very specific criteria, they make a huge impact on the lives of many qualifying students and faculty.

12. Ford Foundation. (n.d.). *Grant opportunities*. <https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/our-grants/grant-opportunities/>
13. Open Society Foundations. (n.d.). *Grants and fellowships*. <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants>

3.3 IDENTIFYING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

A strategic approach is required to effectively research and identify funding opportunities. An organization may spend a significant amount of time identifying the best grants and funding sources, but this can be a great investment to support a program. Matching the grant with the project in the early planning stage will save time in the end.

As you begin your research, create a simple outline or spreadsheet like the one below to help with tracking your work. Sometimes grant writers have to wait until the following year to submit. Keeping everything in the spreadsheet allows the grant team to drill down and find what is needed throughout each year, thus improving grant-writing efforts.

Table 3-3. Grant research.

What is the purpose (i.e., research, education, nonprofit work) of the funding?	
How much funding is needed? Is it a small grant project, or does it need large-scale funding?	
What are the criteria for eligibility? What kind of grant fits?	
What are the compliance and reporting requirements? Does our organization have the capacity to meet these requirements?	

In the search to find a perfect grant competition, continue to ask questions to narrow down funding opportunities. A great place to start is with grant databases and directories like the ones listed in Chapter 2. Often, there are government grants that are available for large-scale

funding. Depending on the funding needed, there are social media sites to explore along with community and private grants.

Sometimes your organization is not eligible to receive grant funding. It does not mean that you need to stop. Instead, try to collaborate with a partner who is eligible. Collaborating on projects with partner entities strengthens any grant proposal. When a nonprofit isn't the right entity to receive funds, working with an eligible entity will allow you to write the grant and complete the work together.

Finally, once you find a grant that matches your needs, consider looking at the past recipients and what their businesses do. Keep in mind things like matching fund requirements, eligibility, and project alignment with the funder's goals and mission statement. Using strategies like these will be helpful in organizing ideas and maintaining a focus for the grant proposal, ensuring alignment between the goals of the organization and the funder.

3.4 CASE STUDY: SUCCESSFUL FUNDING STRATEGIES

Exploring various case studies can provide valuable insight into funding strategies that have previously been used successfully by organizations. Whether the grant seekers are data-driven or focus on partnerships, science, or innovative projects—success is success. Below are some examples of entities that have developed extensive strategies for success in funding.

1. **Nonprofits or Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) and Strategic Partnerships:**¹⁴ Many NGOs have successfully secured funding by forming strategic partnerships. These collaborations often

lead to innovative solutions and sustainable funding models. Certain NGOs have enhanced their funding prospects by aligning with organizations that share similar goals, allowing them to amplify their impact and resource base.

2. **Research Institutions and Public–Private Funding:**¹⁵ The development of the open-source software library scikit-learn exemplifies effective use of diverse funding sources. By combining public research grants, commercial sponsorships, micro-donations, and significant government funding, scikit-learn has maintained its operations and growth. This approach highlights the benefits and challenges of balancing various funding streams in open-source projects.
3. **Foundations and Innovative Funding Approaches:**¹⁶ Foundations such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Pioneer Portfolio have adopted unique funding strategies to support early-stage, high-impact ideas. By investing in innovative projects, they have seeded and scaled initiatives such as Project ECHO. Foundations can effectively nurture groundbreaking solutions by offering grants that you can explore and apply for, allowing innovative ideas to be funded.

¹⁴. Funds for NGOs. (n.d.). *The best case studies of NGOs that successfully partnered for funding*. <https://www2.fundsforngos.org/articles-searching-grants-and-donors/the-best-case-studies-of-ngos-that-successfully-partnered-for-funding/>

¹⁵. Osbourne, C. (2024). *Public-private funding models in open source software development: A case study on scikit-learn*. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2404.06484>

¹⁶. Deloitte Insights. (2025). *Case studies in funding innovation*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20250515140605/https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/case-studies-in-funding-innovation.html>

4. **Municipalities and Equitable Funding Allocation:**¹⁷ Cities like Philadelphia and Minneapolis have implemented data-driven approaches to ensure equitable distribution of funding for urban park systems. By analyzing community needs and resource allocation, these cities have developed strategies that promote fairness and inclusivity in public space development.

3.5 CONCLUSION

Finding a method to the madness is essential for grant writers to be successful. Most funders have a question and answer period listed in the guidelines. Taking advantage of the opportunity to speak with the reviewers can increase the chance of being awarded the grant. The next chapter focuses on communication between the grant team, outside reviewers, and past grant recipients.

17. City Parks Alliance. (2019). *Investing in equitable urban park systems: Case studies and recommendations*. <https://cityparksalliance.org/resource/investing-equitable-urban-park-systems-case-studies-recommendations>

3.6 LEARNING ACTIVITIES



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<https://wtcs.pressbooks.pub/grantandproposalwriting/?p=31#h5p-7>

Chapter 4: Creating a Systematic Approach to Writing Grants

“A bad system will beat a good person every time.” ~ W. Edwards Deming

Course Competency: Create a systematic approach to writing grants

Learning Objectives:

- Plan questions using the PREP method
- Practice requesting application forms and guidelines
- Construct appropriate communication for contacting past grantees
- Construct appropriate communication for contacting reviewers
- Construct appropriate communication for contacting program officers

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Grant writing—yet another area in life where communication can make or break it. When it comes to writing a successful grant, it is paramount to create a timeline based on grant requirements, along with having a

clear grant-writing process. The level of success can vary depending on how well a grant writer researches the grant opportunity they are applying for and how they plan to communicate with the funders and past recipients, even though they can be difficult to reach in some cases. This chapter encompasses the communication process, including helpful tips for developing a timeline and creating a systemic approach. In addition, it provides thought starters to help you write a grant that resonates with the grant-review committee.

4.2 PLANNING AND ORGANIZING THE GRANT-WRITING PROCESS

As with anything, it is great to have a plan. The complexities of the grant-writing process make planning and establishing a systematic approach valuable. This section expands upon the previously covered topics of applying logic and persuasion in writing, appealing to funder requirements, and identifying viable funding sources, to help the grant writer develop a strategy for writing a proposal. When creating the writing plan, begin with researching the perfect funding opportunity, reviewing the grant guidelines, putting together a team, and developing a timeline.

1. Explore Funding Options

Begin by searching for grant opportunities that match your project goals. Refer to Chapter 3 for websites that offer funding of various amounts to jumpstart your project. Next, narrow down your search to a few grant opportunities that align with the project goals and get ready to study the grant guidelines.

2. Review Grant Guidelines

As discussed in Chapter 2, many writers lose a grant because they overlook a crucial requirement. To avoid missing out on funding, be sure to look carefully at the eligibility requirements. Know exactly what is needed to apply and whether your project meets the requirements.

In addition to eligibility, deadlines are just as important to keep in mind. “Wiggle room” does not exist in the world of grants. Assuming it is acceptable to submit an application a day or two past the deadline may take the project out of the running altogether, and it is a misconception that you can call the grant officer after missing a due date. There is no such thing as “why do today what you can put off until tomorrow.” Deadlines are not flexible and need to be adhered to.

Another common misconception is that the grant writer will be compensated for the hours spent writing the grant. While they can be listed among the “key project personnel,” they will not be compensated by grant funding for work completed prior to the grant being awarded. Funds are used for work after the grant is awarded.

Finally, review the required documents and ensure all are accounted for in your application. Even if a required document does not apply to your organization, note it as “not applicable.” Missing documents may make the application incomplete or ineligible.

3. Put Together a Team

During the pre-planning and research stage, pull together a team that can help with various aspects of the grant project and application process. Be sure to include writers, key stakeholders, researchers, budget experts, and evaluation reviewers. The intricacies of the project and the type of organization applying will determine the expertise needed on the team. For example, a local nonprofit applying for a small grant might do best with a team of three (e.g., director, board, and/or staff members), while an educational institution applying for a million-dollar grant may

benefit from the expertise of a larger team. The type of funding being applied for, public or private, will influence the team as well.

4. Develop a Timeline

Begin with the end in mind. Use the deadline as the starting point and develop a timeline with milestones for every stage of the grant-writing process. Be sure to include development with funders, addressed in Chapter 5.

5. Develop the Proposal

Once the planning and research phase is complete, the writing team can begin proposal development. The key components identified in the RFP should be discussed by the team and outlined to ensure the best outcome. Most grants have an **executive summary**, a concise overview of the need or problem, objectives, implementation plan, budget, and evaluation plan. Notes from these development meetings are useful when crafting the narrative, the most important part of the grant, which will be covered in detail in Chapter 5.

Editing the draft proposal and double-checking that all of the guidelines are met comes next. This should be completed by individuals with expertise in grammar and persuasive writing. The draft should be easy to read and concise. It is important to avoid **jargon** to ensure that funders are able to easily understand the project.

While the grant narrative is being written, other team members can compile any required supporting documents such as letters of support, resumes of active personnel, and financial statements. This is also a great time to begin developing the budget for the grant. Once this information is compiled and the narrative is complete, the full application can be put together and prepared for a final review.

Just before submitting the grant, an internal or external review of the application takes place in order to collect feedback. The grant application

should be proofread one more time and formatted properly. When the final edits are completed, it is time to submit and celebrate!

4.3 EXAMPLE: GRANT-WRITING TIMELINE

Below is an example of a grant-writing timeline, beginning with the research phase. The timeline continues through the follow-up, when it is determined if the proposal was successful. Other deliverables might need to be incorporated depending on the type of grant application.

<p>MAY 15: START PLANNING AND RESEARCH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential funding opportunities • Review grant guidelines and requirements • Assemble the grant-writing team • Create a project timeline and budget estimate
<p>JUNE 1: DEVELOP PROPOSAL FRAMEWORK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize the project scope and objectives • Assign writing tasks to team members • Draft the Statement of Need and Project Description with the team
<p>JUNE 15: FIRST DRAFT COMPLETED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the first full draft of the proposal • Ensure alignment with grant requirements • Gather supporting documents (letters of support, financials, etc.)
<p>JUNE 25: INTERNAL REVIEW AND EDITS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have team members review and provide feedback • Revise for clarity, consistency, and persuasiveness • Update budget details to ensure accuracy
<p>JULY 5: EXTERNAL REVIEW AND FINAL EDITS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share with an external reviewer for feedback • Make final revisions and proofread • Double-check compliance with grant guidelines

<p>JULY 15: PREPARE FOR SUBMISSION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize and format all documents • If applicable, upload files to the submission portal or prepare hard copies • Conduct a last-minute check
<p>JULY 20: SUBMIT THE PROPOSAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit the grant at least 1–2 weeks before the deadline to account for any technical issues • Confirm receipt with the funding agency
<p>JULY 31: OFFICIAL DEADLINE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If necessary, follow up to ensure the submission was successful
<p>AUGUST: FOLLOW-UP AND NEXT STEPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track the grant status and expect a decision date • Prepare for potential follow-up requests for additional documents • If not funded, request feedback for future improvement • Notify the grant-writing team of the final status



4.4 THE PRE-PROPOSAL SCRIPT-WRITING PROCESS

Prior to submitting your grant application, there are experts that can answer questions to enhance your success rate. For all conversations, having a script to guide you is essential.

First, consider calling the grant program officer. Doing this can satisfy two objectives. The first objective is to obtain the application forms and guidelines that are not typically found online. The second objective, and possibly most important, is to begin building a relationship with the program officer. This is a great opportunity to ask questions, such as questions unique to your organization or project, questions about common errors, or any other questions with answers not readily available online. The time that the program officer has may be limited; mindfulness will be appreciated.

Keep the PREP (position, rationale, expectation, priority) acronym in mind when formulating your questions. You should be prioritizing what information you might need to have to pursue this grant. With limited time (often the case), you should ask your most important questions first.

A past grant winner is another contact whose guidance can help you develop a successful proposal; they were successful, and you could be too! They can offer tips, provide insight into their success, and detail experiences they had with the sponsor. Even if your organization is pursuing a different grant, past grant winners may still be able to offer words of wisdom. There is no better way to learn than through experience.

In addition to past grant winners, connect with past grant reviewers if possible. Many can be found by directly contacting the foundation or searching online. Past reviewers have invaluable experience and possibly the most up-to-date information about the current review process or even other reviewers. It's also an opportunity to learn about the scoring system, which can help the writers. Knowing that the reviewers are held to a tight time frame versus having unlimited time to read and score the application, for example, will change how the application is written and organized.

Consider the following questions for each conversation, taken from *Proposal Planning and Writing*¹ for each potential contact.

1. Miner, J. T., & Miner, L. E. (2019). *Proposal planning and writing*. 6th ed., ABC-CLIO.

Program Officers	Past Grant Recipients	Past Grant Reviewers
Could I get a copy of the current application guidelines and required forms?	What materials did you find most helpful in developing your proposal?	What were the most common mistakes?
Could you supply me with a list of past grant recipients?	Who did you find most helpful on the funding source staff?	What was the most important criterion on the rubric?
Would you be able to share the names of past grant reviewers?	How close was your initial budget to the awarded amount?	What were the biggest hurdles people faced in reaching their grant objectives?
	Did the funder show a preference for internal or external evaluations, or both?	In what environment did you review the proposals, in the office or at home?
	What positive feedback did you receive from the funder about how you addressed the problem?	Could a higher scoring proposal get overlooked in favor of a lower scoring proposal that meets other special criteria?

The questions above are important, but knowing what you will say in the beginning of your call is just as important. Take time to build a script that you can follow. This will calm your nerves and help you stay on track. Begin your script with identifying information, gratitude, and something to grab the attention of the recipient. Letting your personality shine through will help build the relationship and confidence in your project; however, keep your tone and language professional. Being too casual can send the wrong message and lead the person on the other end of the line to believe you may not care about the grant or respect their time.

When the grant application period opens, grant seekers can contact the funding organization to ask questions about criteria, eligibility, and to seek any other useful information. Federal agencies typically host a webinar where they review the guidelines and answer questions.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Organizing how and when you plan to complete the grant objectives and knowing the right questions to ask will improve your outcome. The amount of work, time, and commitment that goes into grant seeking and writing is tremendous, but with the right plan, it does not have to be arduous. Putting together a team and delegating tasks can break up the work and make the experience more rewarding and inclusive.

4.6 LEARNING ACTIVITY

Grant-Writing Checklist

Create the structure of your own grant-writing timeline based on the previous example. Feel free to create a table or use Canva or a Word template. Be creative!



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://wtcs.pressbooks.pub/grantandproposalwriting/?p=33#h5p-6>

Chapter 5: Writing Elements of a Proposal

“There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed.” ~ Ernest Hemingway

Course Competency: Write elements of a proposal

Learning Objectives:

- Compose an introduction
- Describe the need or problem
- Explain methodology
- Determine evaluation methods
- Predict methods of dissemination
- Summarize project in abstract
- Compose a cover letter

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The most intense stage of grant development is writing the proposal. The previous chapters introduced rhetoric, requirements, and readiness. Now, it is time for the “rubber to meet the road.” This chapter illustrates the components of a grant proposal and amplifies the importance of concise writing. It includes a detailed look at the various components of a

proposal, how to craft a budget, and case study examples of successful proposals. In the Appendix, there are resources for checking grammar and a guide for using artificial intelligence (AI) to check the elements of the proposal and revise a working draft.

5.2 COMPONENTS OF A GRANT PROPOSAL

Writing a grant proposal is a structured process. It requires clearly and concisely presenting a project to a possible funder. The narrative should be authentic and highlight a problem in the community that aligns with the funder's mission and can be measured with clear **deliverables**.

1. Introduction

The introduction of the proposal shares the purpose of the project and the reason for seeking funding. In a concise manner, the introduction summarizes the project's purpose, goals, and objectives as well as the target audience and anticipated impact. Additionally, it is important to demonstrate how the project aligns with the funder's mission or interests and highlight any relevant experience.

2. Background Information

Provide historical information about your nonprofit including experience completing similar projects, if possible. If this is not possible, include information about any past projects that you completed successfully. Explain the impact of the project(s) on the target population and illustrate their positive outcomes.

3. The Need or Problem

The need or problem affects a specific population that could benefit from relief or funding. Identify your target audience and geographic region. Ask yourself, who is my project serving, where is it occurring, and what is it accomplishing? It is up to the grant writer to tell a story that appeals to the funder and meets the needs of the community. Drawing a clear picture of how the lives of people in the community will be impacted with the funds granted through the project helps the funders connect to the proposal emotionally. If using an example of a similar project in a different community, the claims must be supported with credible sources.

The funders need a clear understanding of the need or problem that your proposal is trying to address. Utilize statistics, data, and real-world examples to help clearly define the problem at hand. Fully describe what your project will accomplish and how you plan to follow through; include enough information to help reinforce the need for the project. Grant writers need to demonstrate a sense of urgency by explaining how or why the issue is important *now*.

Finally, when describing the problem, experienced grant writers can illustrate how existing efforts are not enough. They know where the gaps are and can demonstrate how the grant funding will fill those gaps.

4. Methodology

The methodology section of a grant proposal details the plan for executing the project. This section is detailed and includes a timeline with milestones. It concisely describes the specific actions, activities, and strategies that will be used. This is also a great time to address any interventions that will be made and key personnel that will be directly involved in the activities funded by the grant. Savvy writers will list the qualifications of the staff and the resources needed in regard to technology, facilities, and partnerships.

Maryann Ledin, a Wisconsin grant writer and educator from Northwood Technical College, shares other key sections that should be included:

- **Project Objectives:** Explain the milestones, overall goals, and any other objectives your project seeks to accomplish. Provide quantitative statements for each, as appropriate.
- **Project Timeline:** Include the project's start and end dates, as well as important dates in between that correspond with the activities outlined in your Project Objectives section. Doing this will allow the reviewer to see what you plan to accomplish in a quick glance.
- **Key Staff:** Include the key staff that will be contributing to each of the activities, goals, outcomes, and milestones in your project. List each staff member separately and include an explanation of their role in the project.
- **Project Outcomes:** Explain what will be solved, created, or ongoing by the end of the project. What is the expected overall impact on the target population and geographic region that you are serving? Provide quantitative statements that can be measured at the completion of your project. Tie this section back to your project description, but do not confuse your project outcomes with project objectives. This section must address what your project will look like at completion as well as project sustainability.

5. Scalability

Another element that funders find important is scalability, or the ability to take what is done at a small level and scale it up. Funders like to be able to clearly envision how other communities, organizations, or institutions could build something similar in their areas. Remember to include how the project itself can grow as well!

6. Evaluation and Dissemination

The proposal must include how the success of the proposed outcomes and objectives will be measured after the performance period. The reviewers need to be able to easily identify what the goals of the project are and how to measure progress. To track progress, qualitative and quantitative data collection are imperative. It is also important to show how the grant project lead will conduct pre- and post-assessments.

A grant proposal should include tentative or estimated outcomes, though actual outcomes may be hard to articulate. Creating or hiring an evaluation team is necessary to ensure the project is meeting milestones. Successful grants regularly check the status of the project's outcomes, tracking progress and making adjustments as needed throughout the performance period.

Consider how the findings or outcomes of the project will be disseminated after the project is complete. In many cases, the evaluation team will complete this portion of the grant process. When the grant term is complete, the evaluation team should have a full report ready to be presented to stakeholders, professionals, other organizations, and the public. Some grants are successful enough for national recognition, allowing the grant to scale up. Reporting the project's outcomes through conferences, webinars, social media, or the news makes it possible for others to utilize the findings to improve their projects, as well.

5.3 CRAFTING A COMPELLING NARRATIVE

As mentioned in Chapter 1, rhetoric makes all the difference when it comes to grant writing. Writers must take the audience into account. Preparing to write the narrative means getting to know the funder and

project partners, if relevant. To build a compelling narrative, the writer should tell a story that makes the reader empathize with the problem from the beginning. This can be accomplished with rhetorical language, using voices from the community (ethos) combined with current data (logos). The language should align with the values of the funder, but jargon is best left out. The narrative should be organized, easy to read, and easy to understand.

Each section should build on the previous one, guiding the reader through the narrative with formatting, such as headers and bullets, that makes it easy to follow. The use of concrete details such as numbers, timelines, staff responsibilities, and resources helps the reader visualize the project. Breaking up the narrative with tables and bullets gives the reader's eyes a slight break, as well.

Finally, it is challenging but critical to find a balance between facts and emotion in a proposal. When writing the narrative, be specific and authentic. Be professional but human, confident but humble. Writers can be passionate, but they need to also be grounded. Be ambitious but make plans that can actually work.

5.4 CASE STUDY: SUCCESSFUL PROPOSALS

Below you will find examples of successful proposals. There are many that can be found online. Looking at the proposals of previous grant winners can help the writer identify important items to include and help increase the likelihood of being awarded the grant.

1. **National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)—Sample Applications:**¹ NIAID offers a comprehensive collection of sample grant applications and a summary of statements

from funded research projects. These samples span across various grant types and have won career development awards.

2. **National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)—Sample Grant Applications:**² NIDCD provides examples of successful grant applications and summary statements for research project grants and exploratory/developmental research grants. These samples can guide applicants in preparing competitive proposals.
3. **GrantStation—Award-Winning Grant Proposals:**³ GrantStation showcases a selection of award-winning grant proposals recognized for their effectiveness as well as their adherence to sound grant-writing principles. These examples span various sectors and are available to GrantStation members.

1. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. (n.d.). *Sample applications & more*. <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/sample-applications>
2. National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders. (n.d.). *Sample grant applications*. <https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/funding/sample-grant-applications>
3. GrantStation. (n.d.). *Samples of award-winning grant proposals*. <https://grantstation.com/writing-proposals/samples-of-award-winning-grant-proposals>

5.5 LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Building a Detailed Budget

Imagine you are responsible for attaining the funding for a new engagement area at a children’s museum. Using the examples below as a guide, create a detailed budget for the project based on what its probable needs might be. Similar to the grant checklist, feel free to create a table or use Canva or a Word template. Be creative!

Below are three different examples of budget tables from hypothetical grants.

Example 1: Small Foundation Grant

Grant: Local Arts Foundation—Community Mural Project

Grant amount requested: \$15,000

Category	Requested Funds	Total Cost
Artist Stipends	\$7,500	\$7,500
Supplies	\$3,000	\$3,000
Wall Preparation	\$2,000	\$2,000
Marketing	\$1,000	\$1,000
Community Events	\$1,500	\$1,500
Total	\$15,000	\$15,000

Example 2: Federal Government Grant

Grant: USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program

Grant amount requested: \$200,000

Category	Requested Funds	Matching Funds	Total Cost
Personnel	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$150,000
Supplies	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$15,000
Equipment	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$30,000
Contractual Services	\$50,000	\$20,000	\$70,000
Indirect Costs (10%)	\$20,000	\$8,000	\$28,000
Total	\$200,000	\$93,000	\$293,000

Example 3: Nonprofit Health Grant

Grant: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation—Health Communities Initiative

Grant amount requested: \$500,000

Category	Requested Funds	Total Cost
Program Staff	\$250,000	\$250,000
Training and Capacity Building	\$50,000	\$50,000
Outreach and Community Events	\$100,000	\$100,000
Data Collection and Evaluation	\$75,000	\$75,000
Indirect Costs (15%)	\$75,000	\$75,000
Total	\$500,000	\$500,000

Along with the line items, a thorough grant writer will include a budget narrative. As an example, the budget narrative might read something like this:

Artist stipends: two artists @ \$3,250 each to paint four murals at the XYZ building. Supplies included: paint, paint brushes, cleaning supplies for artists = \$3,000 (if exact costs are known for each supply item, include the details, i.e., 30 gallons of paint @ \$70/gallon =

\$2,100). 15 paint brushes @ \$30 ea. = \$450. Wall preparation: 15 hours power washing and primer application to prepare wall for mural painting @ \$30/hour = \$450.

In addition, when building a budget, the project team should pay attention to what is allowable and not allowable. Some grants, for example, do not support administrative costs or salary and fringe benefits. It is important to review the grant guidelines for details.



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Chapter 6: Modifying the Proposal Appearance

“It is no sign of weakness or defeat that your manuscript ends up in need of major surgery. This is common in all writing and among the best of writers.” ~ E.B. White

Course Competency: Modify proposal appearance

Learning Objectives:

- Modify materials to match sponsor materials
- Comply with style and layout requirements
- Adhere to format requirements
- Prepare charts and graphs to enhance materials
- Select transitions to add coherence to narrative
- Use white space for readability

6.1 INTRODUCTION

If the most important part of grant writing is developing the proposal, then time must be spent making sure all of the requirements are met. Thoughtful revisions and attention to grammar will ensure the best possible outcome. Being able to clearly outline the project to reviewers is like planting seeds in rich soil, but the design is the sunshine that brings

your grant proposal to life. It should be appealing to the reviewers, utilizing images or graphics that are relevant and eye-catching.

6.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF REVISION AND ADHERENCE TO REQUIREMENTS

Writing can be intimidating, but the best writers know they are not alone in the process and not to take revisions personally. The first draft of the grant proposal should be written without worrying too much about grammatical errors. This speeds up the writing process and allows the grant writer to complete the draft. Once the first draft is done, it should be reviewed line by line for grammar, spelling, and word usage errors by someone who has expertise in the mechanics of writing. Often, board members or other stakeholders have experience editing or proofreading and are eager to help.

Proofreading and revising the draft comes first and is followed by checking that the grant proposal meets all of the requirements of the RFP. Grants can vary in their requirements, so it is good to start by reading the RFP carefully, line by line. Spend time looking at the scope, budget guidelines, formatting rules, and evaluation methods. Look for sections titled “Proposal Requirements,” “Scope of Work (SOW),” “Evaluation Criteria” or “Selection Process,” “Submission Instructions,” and “Eligibility Criteria.” Every funder does things differently, making all RFPs unique. Not only are the titles sometimes different for the same or similar requirements, but they are also located in varying areas of the document. The best writers get out their magnifying glass and make sure not to miss a thing.

In addition, locating the RFP summary can provide a detailed overview of the funding opportunity and help grant writers decide if the RFP is congruent with their project. Consider going to the funder’s website to

look through the FAQs, if available. As previously mentioned, some funders will allow phone calls. If given the opportunity, a great question to ask a funder is: What are the most common mistakes you see in the proposals you review?

RFP Requirements Checklist

Below you will find many of the common requirements for writing in response to an RFP. The requirements will vary for each RFP, but one thing is for sure—they need to be followed closely.

Look for These Requirements	Possible Criteria
Formatting Rules	Does the RFP require a specific font style or size? Are there citation (usually APA for grants)? Margin size? Page limit? Word limit?
Eligibility	Must the organization be a nonprofit, business or individual, or government institution? Are there geographical restrictions? Are matching funds required?
Required Attachments	Does the proposal need to include resumes, a budget narrative, or letters of support?
Deadline	Is there a hard submission deadline or is it rolling?
Budget Requirements	Are there fringe benefit requirements or rules for equipment and other restrictions for employee funds, contractual services, or indirect administrative costs? Check that no disapproved costs are included and budget doesn't exceed the budget requirements.
Evaluation Criteria	How will the proposals be scored?
Submission Method	Does the proposal need to be submitted via email or postal mail? Is there an application portal?
Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number	Do you have the unique nine-digit identification number assigned by Dun & Bradstreet to businesses worldwide? This number serves as a standard for businesses, particularly when interacting with government agencies.

Access, download, or print your own copy of the [RFP Requirements Checklist](#)

6.3 ENHANCING PROPOSAL APPEARANCE

Enhancing the design of a proposal can mean a few different things. In the grant world, this includes making the proposal easier to read. An example of this is how data is displayed. In the first draft, the proposal might look like a long paragraph of writing, including in-text citations and dates. Revising the draft to include data visualization, such as tables or charts, can enhance readability. With help from an AI tool like ChatGPT, one can easily convert written information into a table or chart. AI can be a helpful tool for implementing data visualization, but it is not the only tool; data visualization can be done manually too. It is important to check your organization's policies to ensure AI use is allowed. Although AI is phenomenally easy to use, the final product must *always* be checked. Often, the computer-generated brain cannot do what a human brain can. It is still a great place to start, though!

There are many ways to format a proposal to make it easier to read. Using headings and bulleted lists can help organize the proposal and simplify data into a snapshot rather than a lengthy paragraph. (Tip: Use the guideline section headers!) Using numbered sections will also make quickly locating information easier for the reviewer.

A grant writer should confirm the font guidelines; many federal grants require a specific font type and size. Remember to include page numbers

and either the recommended font or a professional one like Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman. Often, the page numbers must be located at the bottom middle or right of the page, but pay special attention to the requirements. Use the prescribed margin size and do not exceed the page limit.

Avoid flashy designs and overuse of bold font or italics. Unless you are writing for a private foundation that recommends creativity, save stylistic choice for headings and key points. Having a clean background is professional and makes for easier reading. If there is a template you are advised to use, make sure to use it. A reviewer should be able to skim your proposal in 5 to 7 minutes and understand the project concept. Cramming words onto the page without any kind of page break will slow the reviewers down, and that can have a negative outcome.

Be concise, clear, and clean.

6.4 USING GRAPHICS AND IMAGES EFFECTIVELY

Even though the recommendation is to have a clean page with clear and well-organized information, that does not mean graphics are off-limits in grant writing. Certain parts of a grant are more clear when presented in a graphic table or chart. The NIAID recommends that the grant writer “use a timeline to demonstrate the feasibility of the project... Timelines should include major tasks and milestones.”¹ Timelines can be inserted into a simple, easy-to-read table that includes specific tasks or action items, the

1. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. (2019). *Timeline to plan and write your application*. https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/timelines-plan-write?utm_source=chatgpt.com

dates in which the work is to be completed, and the staff members or team who are responsible for carrying out the work.

Organizational charts can offer a quick glimpse of the staff and their titles to help give reviewers a big picture of the stakeholders. In conjunction with a timeline or organizational chart, a grant writer may find it beneficial to include a logic model that illustrates the progression of the plan, including inputs, activities, and outcomes.

Infographics are rarely permitted in grant proposals. Proposals need to be clear, concise, and easy to read. Keeping the proposal neat and to the point will have a positive impact on the reviewers. If grant reviewers can easily read and score the proposal, the chances of being awarded the grant increases. Keep it simple and do not miss a single requirement.

6.5 EXAMPLES: VISUALLY APPEALING GRANT PROPOSALS

Of course, there are graphics and data visualization companies that will be happy to charge for use of their templates, but often, funders will have templates of their own or examples of past successful grant proposals. [Venngage](#) has a variety of aesthetically pleasing and functional templates available for a fee. However, Word and Google Docs have templates that are a great place to start and FREE!

Here are a few examples of real-life grant proposals with graphics that were appealing and effective.

2023 Winners

Together Women Rise: Timeline of Activities²

² Together Women Rise. (n.d.). SWB Nicaragua education & leadership program PDF. GrantStation. https://grantstation.com/sites/default/files/2023-08/Soccer_Without_Borders_Winning_Proposal_2023.pdf

Major Activity to be Accomplished	When will the activity be completed?											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Leadership workshops 1x/month		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Homework help & tutoring hours (daily M-F)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Academic check-ins with scholarship recipients (quarterly and at semester breaks)				x			x		x		x	
Education program end-of-year report											x	x
Team-building activities (1-2 days/week)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Soccer team activities (2-3 days/week)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Scholarship recipient selections							x					x

Gateway Pet Guardians: Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs and Outcomes (Drafted during application)				Progress Against Performance Measures (Left blank during application)
Who	What and how much?	By when?	How will it be known?	
Goal 1: Decrease the homeless pet population				
Outputs				
GPG—Clinic	Spay/neuter 400 community pets per year in 2022 and 2023 (800 total)	12/31/23	Though Cornerstone/ Database reporting	
GPG—Clinic	TNR 325 feral cats per year in 2022 and 2023 (650 total)	12/31/23	Through reporting managed by volunteer	
GPG—Clinic	Ensure 100% of pets adopted out by GPG are spayed or neutered	12/31/23	Though Cornerstone/ Database reporting	

3. Vianello, A. (n.d.). *Beyond rescue* [PDF]. GrantStation.
https://grantstation.com/sites/default/files/2023-08/Gateway_Pet_Guardians_Final_Proposal_2023.pdf

Women's Audio Mission (WAM): Bullet List of Gender-Diverse Youth⁴

Women's Audio Mission increases access to arts and creative youth development programming to students from the most vulnerable communities in Northern California, addressing music and arts education gaps at 50+ school partners (majority Title I, low-income serving schools):

- 96% low-income
- 93% BIPOC
 - 37% Latinx
 - 34% Black
 - 16% AAPI
 - 7% White
 - 5% Multiracial
 - 1% Native American/Alaskan Native
- 78% have never played a musical instrument
- 43% primarily speak Spanish
- 73% had no access to a computer/mobile device before the pandemic

The above examples have a unique way of illustrating the main points they want the reviewers to consider, and they were all awarded funding.

4. Winston, T. (n.d.). *CAC creative youth development* [PDF]. GrantStation. https://grantstation.com/sites/default/files/2023-08/Womens_Audio_Mission_Final_Proposal_2023.pdf

Further, each of the grant proposals did a great job of staying within the grant requirements. Although the applications contain a great deal of information, it may have been strategic use of visuals like these that brought funding to their organizations.

6.6 CONCLUSION

While the grant is still in draft form, prior to a final revision, review the grammar and mechanics. The language should be clear and concise. Adding charts and graphics provides a nice break for the grant reviewers' tired eyes. They also offer a way to communicate important data or information to the reviewer. Use them sparingly and check the grant guidelines to confirm they are allowed.

6.7 LEARNING ACTIVITIES



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Chapter 7: Developing a Letter of Proposal

“The first impression is by appearance. The best impression is by words.” ~ Vikrmn (CA Vikram Verma)

Course Competency: Develop a letter of proposal, or cover letter

Learning Objectives:

- Use proper business letter format
- Compare letter proposals to full grant proposals
- Summarize project elements
- Create the appropriate ancillary materials for letter proposals

7.1 INTRODUCTION

If first impressions are really as important as people say, paying close attention to the **letter of intent** (which is often referred to as a “cover letter”) will serve the applicant extremely well. The cover letter is a summarized version of the proposal. It is concise, confident, and tailored to the opportunity presented by the funder. This summarized version of the proposal is the first chance the organization has to make a

compelling impression on the funder. Usually, cover letters are allowed, but occasionally they are not. It is always best to check the guidelines first.

7.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE COVER LETTER

The cover letter is an excellent addition to a grant application. Not all organizations submit a cover letter, so including one offers an extra opportunity to connect with the reviewer and build rapport. A cookie-cutter letter is a mistake. The cover letter is often the first thing that the reviewers read. Following a “thank you” template will not help the application stand out. Take advantage of this opportunity to introduce your organization, idea, or goal with a hook that will speak to the mission of the funding company.

Some grant applications require a cover letter, while others do not. Even if a cover letter is not required, they may still be submitted and can strengthen your chances of being funded. When a cover letter is required, ensure you fulfill all requirements. Common required sections include the following:

- Introduction
- Statement of Need
- Methodology
- Other Funding Sources
- Summary Statement

If you have already written the grant narrative, it will be easier to write the cover letter. As previously mentioned, the cover letter is a shortened version of the grant narrative and should include the most important

pieces of your project. It should be a professional, formal letter that is easy to read and clean yet utilizes emotion (or pathos) to emphasize your need. (Tip: Be sure to stay within required page limits. A common requirement is one page in length, single-spaced.)

The purpose of the cover letter is to give the reviewers a snapshot of why your project stands out from the rest. If written well and with intention, the cover letter will grab the attention and the favor of the scorers. Intentional writing includes details about the applying organization that will highlight the project and goals. According to the Indeed Career Guide, “Introducing your organization at the beginning of your grant proposal cover letter can be beneficial, as it can provide reviewers with a background understanding of your organization and its purpose.”¹ Finally, be authentic and passionate but grounded.

7.3 WRITING A CONCISE AND PERSUASIVE COVER LETTER

The recommended length for a cover letter is one page. A clearly written, one-page cover letter that looks professional and is easy to read will surely grab the attention of reviewers. Grants.gov advises, “Request that your colleagues or mentors review a first draft of your specific aims early in the process.”² When writing the cover letter, remember that this is your

1. Indeed. (2025). *How to write a grant proposal cover letter*.

<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-write-cover-letter-for-grant-proposal>

2. Grants.gov. (2020). *Tips for proofreading your next grant application*.

first opportunity to appeal to the pathos of your reviewer. Try to put the following into practice.

1. Address the Cover Letter Correctly

- Use the formal contact information from the RFP, including the correct name and title of the contact person
- Write the address of the organization as a traditional header at the top left of the page
- Along with the address and name of the organization, note the RFP grant announcement name and number

2. Introduce Your Organization and Mission

- Include the title of your organization
- Summarize the values of your organization and showcase the mission
- Share how long your organization has been in business

3. Summarize the Purpose of the Project

- Prove you are a human by speaking to both the empathetic and logical sides of the reviewers
- Include the name of your project and anything that demonstrates how the outcomes align with the funder's mission

4. Paint a Clear Picture of the Outcome(s)

- Highlight the outcome(s) that your project aims to achieve
- Write about the people in your community who will be positively impacted by your project

<https://grantsgovprod.wordpress.com/2020/07/14/tips-for-proofreading-your-next-grant-application/#more-4759>

5. End With a Formal Closing

- Be concise and keep your closing statement between two to three sentences
- Reiterate the intentions of the project, tying in what makes it unique
- Express your appreciation for those who are reviewing the proposal
- Keep your sign-off professional by using “Sincerely”
- Include the name and contact information of the writer

The letter of proposal, or cover letter, is a wonderful opportunity to give the reviewers a clear image of your organization’s mission and how the project will impact the community and beyond. This document provides an opportunity for the writers to increase their chances of success by doing something the competitors might not. Going the extra mile can make all the difference in the end.

7.4 COVER LETTER BEST PRACTICES

Best practices are considered by organizations of all kinds. When it comes to grant writing and the cover letter, authenticity, formality, and conciseness all come to mind.

Summit Strategy states, “Proposal writers fall into the trap of copying and pasting the same old boilerplate text they’ve always used, which typically sounds like every other firm submitting a proposal. The result? Your proposal that you worked on for months ends up forgotten on the ash heap of boring proposal history.”³ This might be tough to hear, but

³. Summit Strategy. (2023). *How to write a cover letter for a proposal: Best*

the results of a so-so cover letter will be just that: so-so. A team that has put so much time and effort into their grant proposal should definitely take advantage of the opportunity the cover letter presents to maximize success.

In some cases, such as when applying for a grant with the NIAID, cover letters are only permitted if there is special information, a needed approval, the application contains genomic data, or the application is late or needs correction.⁴ Once again, following directions proves critical when it comes to grant writing. The score your submission receives will benefit from the time and care that is put into its development.

7.5 EXAMPLE COVER LETTER

Below is a fictional example of a cover letter relevant to a foundation that supports youth mental health.

[Your Organization's Letterhead]

April 30, 2025

Dr. Olivia Petras

Director of Grants and Partnerships

practices & tips. <https://www.summitstrategywins.com/blog-posts/lets-put-an-end-to-bad-cover-letters>

4. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. (2020). *Cover letters.* <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/cover-letters>

Joyful Futures Foundation
123 Giving Way
Chicago, IL 60603

Re: RFP#1234 Never Sleeps Community Health

Dear Dr. Petras,

I am writing on behalf of **Never Sleeps Community Health**, a nonprofit dedicated to providing mental health services to underserved youth in the greater Chicago area. We respectfully request a grant of **\$150,000** from the **Joyful Futures Foundation** to support the expansion of our **Never Sleeps Community Youth Wellness Program**, which offers free 24/7 counseling, mentorship, and resilience workshops to at-risk teens.

[Explain Company Values] Your foundation's unwavering commitment to early intervention and youth mental health strongly resonates with our mission. Like Joyful Futures, we believe that mental health care must be always accessible, culturally competent, and rooted in community trust. This shared vision forms the basis of our proposal and partnership request.

[Explain Need and Support With Data] In 2024, Chicago Public Schools reported a 47% increase in anxiety and depression diagnoses among high school students, with the highest rates in neighborhoods served by our clinics. Our pilot program, launched last fall in West Town and Lincoln Park, reached 120 youth in three months. Of those, 83% reported improved emotional well-being, and school counselors noted a marked drop in behavioral referrals.

With your support, we plan to scale this program to four additional neighborhoods over the next 12 months, enabling us to serve an estimated 400 youth through:

- Weekly drop-in counseling (in-person and virtual)
- Peer support circles led by trained mentors
- Monthly mental wellness workshops for parents and caregivers

[Demonstrate Credibility and Trust] Since our founding in 2012, Never Sleeps has built lasting relationships with local schools, faith organizations, and clinics. Our team includes licensed clinicians, youth advocates, and peer mentors, 70% of whom are from the communities they serve. We bring both clinical expertise and lived experience—critical for effective, trust-based mental health care.

This version of our proposal reflects direct feedback from prior grant cycles: It includes clear impact metrics, a detailed timeline, and a strong emphasis on equity. We're committed to continuous, sustainable learning and transparent communication with all funding partners.

[Give Appreciation and Call to Action] Thank you for considering this request. We value the work Joyful Futures does to advance youth mental health across the nation, and we would be honored to be part of that movement. I welcome the opportunity to speak further or provide additional materials.

Sincerely,

Sarah Salsa

Executive Director

Never Sleeps Community Health
ssalsa@neversleeps.org
(617) 555-2201

7.6 LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Cover Letter Practice

Rewrite a portion of the above cover letter in your own words. Feel free to focus on any of the paragraph objectives such as company value, data, credibility and trust, or appreciation and call to action.



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Chapter 8: Valuing Responsible Grant Stewardship

“Finance is not merely about making money. It’s about achieving our deep goals and protecting the fruits of our labor. It’s about stewardship, and therefore, about achieving the good society.” ~ Robert J. Shiller

Course Competency: Value responsible grant stewardship

Learning Objectives:

- Prepare plan for site visits
- Review plans to meet grant terms and conditions
- Explain publicity plan for grant award
- Investigate options for developing rapport with grantee

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In grant management, **stewardship** is a core value. The funder wants to know that their money will not be misused and that the awardee will deliver long-term results from the funding. It is really important to build a team with a clear system built on ethics and leadership in place to deliver what was promised. In grant management, stewardship includes using

funding wisely and transparently, being accountable to the donors and community served, and maximizing the impact of every dollar awarded.

8.2 IMPORTANCE OF RESPONSIBLE GRANT MANAGEMENT

Grant management is about honoring trust and building long-term credibility. In the grant process, this is demonstrated through outcome measurement, clear budgets, evidence of past success, and sustainability planning. Here are just a few key reasons why responsible grant management is important.

1. Accountability for Funders

Mismanagement of funds can lead to distrust and hinder future funding. Funders trust your organization with their resources to achieve a shared mission. They will expect to see evidence of impact, clear reporting, and compliance with all terms and conditions. Some government grants come with strict regulations. It is important to be able to demonstrate how your organization will be both legally and ethically compliant in use of funds and audits. There can be severe consequences, such as fines, for using grant funds on prohibited costs.

2. Efficiency and Impact

The better the organization is with handling spending resources, the more impactful the funding will be. Good management allocates funds strategically. This will ensure the funds go directly toward the intended outcomes of the grant, aligning the goals to the mission.

3. Public Trust and Sustainability

A great way to demonstrate sustainability is to teach others how to continue the work after the grant period ends. This Chinese proverb is a perfect example of sustainability: “Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.” When an organization can bring long-term value something to a community, it builds its reputation and sometimes garners media attention. This may assist the organization in attracting multi-year or **unrestricted grants**.

4. Learning and Improvement

Being fiscally responsible and tracking outcomes allows the organization to collect quantitative data and identify what is working. This also allows the opportunity to identify and reflect on how to improve areas of weakness. As both **qualitative data** and **quantitative data** are collected, the resulting reported success stories will please stakeholders and funders, improving confidence in the grant team.

8.3 ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN GRANT WRITING

Ethics in stewardship is about managing grant funds and programs with fairness, accountability, and transparency. It can also look like respecting the community and beneficiaries. The Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO) believes that ethics are about being community-centered, not just funder-facing. Prior to writing the proposal it helps to design the project with, not just for, the people served¹. Accurately

1. Lopez, A. (2022). *Community in philanthropy: What it is, why we need it*,

describing needs or outcomes while seeking funding will demonstrate truthful representation. It is also ethical and responsible to avoid misleading statistics or inflating success rates when writing a grant. Further, ethical grant writers correctly cite information borrowed from outside sources as well as any models or tools developed in collaboration with others. They acknowledge partnerships and give credit where credit is due.

Integrity in grant writing includes being honest about your intentions. Outcomes or project goals should be achievable and supported by a sound plan. Integrity also includes doing the right thing even when no one is watching. Reflect on mistakes and be accountable. Share what was learned and how the data will improve outcomes.

In stewardship and reporting, ethics and integrity are of the utmost importance in maintaining positive relationships with funders. Below are a few examples of what ethics and integrity can look like in the grant-writing process.

Using Accurate Financial and Impact Reporting

- Do not falsify data, inflate numbers, or overlook budget discrepancies
- Submit truthful and timely reports even when outcomes fall short
- Ensure all required quantitative and qualitative data are collected and delivered to the funders on time

Spending Funds and Resources as Agreed

- Never reallocate funds without prior approval from the funding agency

and how we can build it. Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO). <https://www.geofunders.org/news/community-in-philanthropy-what-it-is-why-we-need-it-and-how-we-can-build-it>

- Only spend money on what is included in the approved budget

Maintaining Strict Confidentiality and Privacy

- Protect all personal information by handling participant data ethically
- Obtain consent for all stories and photos

Giving Gratitude and Acknowledgment

- Recognize the funder's role in publications, media, and all communications during the grant period and after
- Thank any and all partners who contributed to the success of the grant

8.4 ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

To ensure the grant team understands who at the organization is responsible for what during the grant period, it is common to create a table that denotes the various elements of the project with descriptions and requirements. A table like the one below adds transparency to the project and could be used to track milestones or action items.

Table 8-1. Grant project accountability table.

Element	Purpose	Responsible Party	Tools/ Methods	Frequency
Grant Agreement	Defines expectations and obligations	Grantor and grantee	Signed contract, terms and conditions	At project initiation
Budget Tracking	Ensures proper use of funds	Project manager, finance	Accounting software, spreadsheets	Monthly
Milestone Reports	Tracks progress and deliverables	Project lead	Timelines, Gantt charts, status reports	Monthly/ quarterly
Expenditure Reports	Provides detailed spending accountability	Finance team	Financial statements, receipts, audits	Quarterly
Independent Audit	Validates financial integrity	External auditor/ evaluator	Audit reports, financial reviews	Annually
Stakeholder Updates	Informs stakeholders	Communications officer/project lead	Newsletters, email updates, webinars	Bi-monthly
Performance Metrics	Measures outcomes and impacts	Evaluation team	Key performance indicators, surveys, evaluation reports	Middle and end of project
Transparency Portal	Public access to grant progress and spending	IT, compliance team	Web dashboard, public data-sharing	Live/ monthly updates
Issues/ Concerns	Handles complaints and disputes	Compliance officer	Hotline, grievance system	As needed
Final Project Report	Summarizes achievements, lessons, and financials	Project team	Narrative and financial report	End of project

Access, download, or print the [Grant Project Accountability Table](#). You can also select “File,” then “Make a Copy,” and you will have your own to modify to suit your needs.

8.5 CASE STUDY: SUCCESSFUL GRANT STEWARDSHIP PRACTICES

Wisconsin is a beautiful state full of much more than just countryside and farm animals. With a total of 16 technical colleges and 56 four-year colleges, Wisconsin has been awarded many grants to aid in the development of industry, education, youth services, and workforce. Below are some insights from grant writers living and working in the state of Wisconsin and surrounding areas.

Dr. Anne Hoeltke

Long-time Minnesota consortium grant director Dr. Anne Hoeltke said, “Embedding sustainability into a grant proposal is not just a commitment to being a good steward; it’s a pledge to foster long-term social and economic resilience, ensuring that funded projects continue to benefit communities and science and research well into the future.”



Dr. Anne Hoeltke

Jodi Petersen

Jodi Petersen, a Youth Justice Supervisor in Portage, Wisconsin, shares how the youth in her area now have an effective alternative to being issued youth justice referrals because of the community-developed Youth Enrichment Services (YES) program. When a youth is referred to the program, the YES specialist meets with the youth and their parent or guardian to review program expectations. The YES social worker then completes evidence-based assessments of the youth's behavior and social history. Based on the results of these assessments and collaboration with the youth, parents, school, and other providers, an individualized plan is created for each youth to determine which services will provide the greatest benefit. These services could include art therapy, music activities, Taekwondo, Carey Guides, BITs programming, and other evidence- and research-based programs. The results are seen in the absence of future duplication of services.



Jodi Petersen

Sarah King

Sarah King, a Stateside Grant Director at Mid-State Technical College in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, says that when it comes to transparency and stewardship with both grantors and her grant team project members, she will always try to “4-C” the grant administration process—focus on communication, collaboration, commitment, and clarity. This is a great philosophy for open and ongoing sharing of successes, changes, and problems.



Sarah King

8.6 CONCLUSION

Knowing where funds go and how they are used during the duration of the grant ensures that the recipients have been responsible and followed through with their plan. Many grants have 1- to 3-year time frames, and recipients can reapply to continue projects.

As mentioned in the introduction, this *Proposal & Grant Writing* textbook is the toolbox for learning how to craft compelling, fundable proposals that make a real-world impact. You have learned everything from making decisions about the kind of grants that will suit your organization best to being honorable as a trusted recipient of funding. Keeping your community in mind is essential as you navigate every step of the grant-writing process. Partnering with others can increase the likelihood of being awarded funds and achieving long-term sustainability. The futures of many businesses and communities depend on receiving outside help. Being strategic and ethical in proposal and grant writing can change your life and the lives of those around you.

8.7 LEARNING ACTIVITIES



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://wtcs.pressbooks.pub/grantandproposalwriting/?p=52#h5p-11>



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://wtcs.pressbooks.pub/grantandproposalwriting/?p=52#h5p-12>

Glossary

Deliverables: Specific tangible accomplishments or outcomes of the grant-funded project. ([Chapter 5](#))

Ethos: An appeal to the reader's sense of community and culture, beliefs, and aspirations. ([Chapter 1](#))

Executive summary: A concise overview of a longer document, such as a business plan, report, or proposal. It is designed to quickly inform decision-makers about the main idea. ([Chapter 4](#))

Funders: The grant reviewers. The two words assume the same meaning. ([Chapter 1](#))

Grant reviewers: The funders. The two words assume the same meaning. ([Chapter 1](#))

Jargon: Words that are used by a particular group or profession. ([Chapter 4](#))

Letter of intent: Often referred to as a cover letter. ([Chapter 7](#))

Logos: An appeal to logic and reason. It's a way to persuade an audience by using facts, evidence, and logical arguments. ([Chapter 1](#))

Pathos: An appeal to emotion, to persuade an audience by purposely evoking certain emotions to make them feel the way the author wants them to feel or an artistic representation evoking pity or compassion. ([Chapter 1](#))

Persuasion: The art of convincing someone to adopt a certain viewpoint or take a specific action by reasoning or argument. ([Chapter 1](#))

Qualitative data: Non-numeric, descriptive information that focuses on concepts and characteristics rather than numbers and statistics. It is collected through methods like observations, interviews, surveys, and focus groups. ([Chapter 8](#))

Quantitative data: Numerical data that can be counted, measured, and expressed as numbers. It is data that can be subjected to mathematical and statistical analysis. Examples include age, height, weight, temperature, and scores on a test. ([Chapter 8](#))

Request for proposals (RFPs): A document issued by a funding agency, like a foundation or government, to solicit proposals for specific projects or programs. It outlines the funding opportunity, including the purpose of the grant, eligibility requirements, and submission guidelines. ([Chapter 2](#))

Rhetoric: The art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the use of figurative language and other compositional techniques. ([Chapter 1](#))

Sponsor: In the context of grant writing, a sponsor is an external entity that provides funding for a project or activity, typically through a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement. This entity could be a government agency, a foundation, a corporation, or another organization. In our text, the term will be transposed with funder or grantor often. ([Chapter 1](#))

Stakeholder: A person with an interest or concern in something, especially an unmet need. ([Chapter 1](#))

Stewardship: The ongoing commitment to build and maintain relationships with grant funders and the community after the grant has been awarded. ([Chapter 8](#))

Target population: The community or recipients of the efforts of the grant funding. ([Chapter 1](#))

Unrestricted grants: Financial gifts or grants provided to a nonprofit organization without specific usage limitations, allowing them to allocate the funds as needed. ([Chapter 8](#))

Appendix

Useful Websites

1. GrantSpace.org. (n.d.). *Build nonprofit and fundraising skills*. Candid. <https://learning.candid.org/> — Provides resources, training, and tools for grant writers.
2. Foundation Center. (n.d.). *Essential nonprofit data, tools, and resources*. Candid. <https://candid.org/> — Offers a comprehensive database of grant opportunities and resources for grant writers.
3. Grants.gov. (n.d.). *Discover your next grant*. <https://grants.gov/> — Official website for federal grant opportunities.
4. The Nonprofit Times. (n.d.). <https://thenonprofittimes.com/> — A news source for nonprofit organizations and grant writers.
5. Chronicle of Philanthropy. (n.d.). <https://www.philanthropy.com/> — Provides news, resources, and job listings for grant writers in the nonprofit sector.

Books

1. Browning, B. A. (2022). *Grant writing for dummies* (7th ed.). Wiley.
2. Karch, E., & Fox, A. S. (2019). *The only grant-writing book you'll ever need*. Hachette Book Group.
3. Geever, J. C. (2012). *The Foundation Center's guide to proposal writing*. Foundation Center.
4. Griffiths, D. (2017). *The grant writing & funding coach*. Self-Counsel Press.

Organizations

1. Grant Professionals Association. (n.d.). *GPA is THE place for grant professionals*. <https://grantprofessionals.org/> — Offers professional development opportunities, networking events, and resources for

grant writers.

2. Association of Fundraising Professionals. (n.d.). *What's new at the Association of Fundraising Professionals*. <https://afpglobal.org/> — Provides resources, training, and networking opportunities for fundraising professionals, including grant writers.
3. American Grant Writers' Association. (n.d.). *Welcome to American Grant Writers' Association*. <https://www.agwa.us/> — Offers certification programs, workshops, and resources for grant writers.

Tips for Networking and Staying Current in the Field

1. Attend conferences, workshops, and networking events for grant writers and nonprofit professionals.
2. Join online forums and discussion groups for grant writers to connect with others in the field.
3. Follow industry publications and websites to stay up-to-date on trends, funding opportunities, and best practices in grant writing.
4. Consider joining a professional organization for grant writers to access resources, training, and networking opportunities.
5. Build relationships with funders, nonprofit organizations, and other grant writers to collaborate and share knowledge and resources.