

FUNDAMENTALS IN GRANT WRITING

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Grant Impact

- Effect change
- Build community capacity
- Create opportunities for staff and parents
- Fund or enhance innovative programs

TODAY'S GOALS

- Build your grant seeking and grant writing skills to secure necessary resources for your school
- Demystify the grant seeking process
- Connect with information and effective practices
- Connect with valuable data, new ideas, and practical tools you can implement immediately

BONUS GOALS

You will learn:

- The single best-kept secret about grant writing
- The top 5 ways to irritate your program officer
- Our 3 favorite cost-effective grant seeking tools

WORKSHOP SEGMENTS

1. Background on Grant-seeking: Who, What, When, Where, Why
2. How To: Practical Tips
3. Resources & Tools

WHO: FUNDERS

- Private Foundations & Family Foundations
- Community Foundations
- Corporate Foundations or Corporate Giving Programs (inc. Employee Matching Grants)
- Government Grants
- Faith-based Giving Programs
- Civic organizations
- United Way or other federated campaigns

WHO: FUNDERS

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

- Don't be afraid to make phone calls or send emails
- Be active in the community – network at conferences, seminars, etc.
- Extend creative invites for opportunities that don't involve an “ask” – great for cultivation/stewardship:
 - Corporate volunteer opportunities
 - Invitations to special events, tours, graduations, etc.
 - Invitations to speaking engagements by CEO or Board
 - Invitations to sit on a committee focus group, strategic planning workgroup
 - Offer behind-the-scenes/VIP experiences
- Personalize the relationship as you would when working with individual donors

WHAT: TYPES OF SUPPORT

- Agency general operating
- Program support
- Capital grants
- Special projects: planning, seed/start-up, capacity building, small capital/equipment, endowment
- Collaboratives/partnerships

WHEN TO APPLY & WHERE TO FIND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES *

Who else does this organization fund? Example tools used in Prospect Research:

- Minnesota Grantmakers Online Database * - <http://mgomcf.org/>
- Seminars available through MCN and AFP *
- “Top Donor Lists” <https://www.mcf.org/research/rankings>
- Foundation or Corporate Foundation Websites – e.g. <https://www.mnpartners.org>
- Annual Report and Donor List research for similar organizations – e.g. <http://www.tchabitat.org/about#step-6>
- IRS 990s: www.guidestar.org *
- Review your Board of Director or Trustee List for prospective donors affiliated with your Board

* Some resources require paid memberships or subscription services to access information.

WHY: IS THERE A FIT?

Does the funder fit your needs?

Does your organization fit the funder's needs? Grantees make up the donor's portfolio of investments.

- Do I fit the geographic limitations, focus areas/areas of interest, intended beneficiaries/demographic audience?
- Are there any published restrictions that would make me ineligible?
- Be aware of: reporting/compliance, overhead caps, match requirements
- Call and/or email the funders' staff/contacts for clarification

Examples:

<https://www.minneapolisfoundation.org/>

<http://www.ottobremer.org/grantmaking/grantmaking-faqs>

HOW: NUTS & BOLTS

Assemble a project team: executive, program staff, finance/accounting staff, internal reviewers.

Components:

1. Letter of Inquiry/Letter of Intent
2. Cover Letter, Executive Summary or Abstract
3. Proposal Narrative: e.g. Minnesota Common Grant Application Questions
<https://www.mcf.org/nonprofits/minnesota-common-grant-application-form>
4. Standard Attachments:
 - Financial statements: balance sheet, audited financials, organization budget, project budget, budget narrative
 - Board of Directors Roster, Executive Management or Key Program Staff Bios
 - Donor Lists, Annual Report
 - IRS Determination Letter – 501c3 Letter
 - Other

HOW: MAKE YOUR CASE!

Show your prospect how *your* project will advance *their* agenda. Whether in an LOI or a full proposal, you need to show:

- **The need:** In the community
 - Minnesota Compass (Wilder Research) - <http://www.mncompass.org/>
 - Census American Community Survey - <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>
 - Minnesota Department of Education - <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Data/index.html>
- **Why *your* organization is the right one to meet the need**
- **How your project will address the need**
- **Your plan for evaluating your success**

HOW: BE PERSUASIVE!

In addition to data, when possible, utilize:

- The power of storytelling – one person’s story makes a greater emotional impact
- Pictures/photographic images
- Impactful quotes or testimonials from participants/beneficiaries

HOW: EDIT CAREFULLY!

They can't fund you if they don't understand you!

In addition to data, when possible, utilize:

- Use plain language
- Don't assume your reader understands acronyms and specialized terminology
- Have a fresh reader, someone who is not too familiar with your program, read a near-final draft for clarity
- Make sure your budget and workplan (if required) tell the same story as your proposal

HOW: ONLINE PORTAL TIPS

Many proposals now are submitted through online portals.

- Mind strict word counts/character count limits
- Preview questions as much as possible – be aware of drop-downs and hidden questions (questions based on prior answer)
- Draft as a Word document first; copy/paste when ready to submit
- Use the same password for all grants so you will be less likely to forget multiple passwords
- Leave enough time to address technical issues, if they arise

HOW: AFTER YOU SUBMIT A GRANT

More due diligence:

- **Site visit:** hosting a visit, answering clarification questions, further discussion, guest speakers, e.g. program staff/participants
- **Presentations** to grant review panel/committees
- **Follow up** with thanks, additional information

HOW: AFTER YOU SUBMIT A GRANT

Bad news! You get a decline letter—or worse, no response at all

- Don't get discouraged—a “no” now doesn't mean “no” forever
- When to follow up
- How to follow up
- Note report requirements
- Provide excellent stewardship

HOW: AFTER YOU SUBMIT A GRANT

Great news! Your proposal was funded!

- Thanks!
- Note and track reporting requirements
- Provide excellent stewardship
- Start planning your next proposal

HOW: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Keep good records to track proposals and deadlines – database, Excel spreadsheet, etc.
- Be prepared to work around funder timelines: can take several months to work through the entire process
- Establish internal and external deadlines – editing and approvals add time to the production schedule – internal deadlines are key!
- Templates will help you to work efficiently

RESOURCES & TOOLS

Association of Fundraising Professionals – Minnesota Chapter (AFP) – www.afpminnesota.org

Minnesota Council of Nonprofits – www.minnesotanonprofits.org

Minnesota Council on Foundations – www.mcf.org

Charities Review Council – www.smartgivers.org

Map for Nonprofits - www.mapfornonprofits.org/

Foundation Center – www.foundationcenter.org

Chronicle of Philanthropy – www.philanthropy.com

Access Philanthropy – www.accessphilanthropy.com

Volunteer on a grant review panel, e.g. Minnesota State Arts Board
<http://www.arts.state.mn.us/volunteer/index.htm>

Q & A

THANK YOU!