NONPROFIT EXCELLENCE SERIES:

FIVE ESSENTIAL TOOLS FOR GRANT WRITING SUCCESS
GRANT WRITING SUCCESS TOOL #1

WELL-DESIGNED PROGRAMS
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• Strong statement of need
  • Prove the problem or opportunity exists in your community

• Demonstrate that your program is an effective solution
  • Evidence-based
  • Outcomes-oriented

• Use **data** to back up your claims
  • Census data
  • Peer-reviewed journal articles
  • Academic or government studies
GRANT WRITING SUCCESS TOOL #2

STRONG OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION PROCESSES
Grantmakers want to know that they are making a difference.

Programs should be outcomes-oriented:
- Start with the end result in mind
- Measure quality, not quantity

Connect performance targets to desired outcomes.

Develop processes to ensure accurate, complete data collection:
- Involve program staff in planning and implementation.
GRANT WRITING SUCCESS TOOL #3

ADHERENCE TO BEST PRACTICES
ADHERE TO BEST PRACTICES

• Demonstrate that your organization is qualified to carry out the program and manage grant funding

• Research, understand, and comply with best practices across the organization, not just in your program
  • Governance
  • Finances
  • Collaboration
  • Policies
  • Record-Keeping
  • Fundraising
  • ...and more!
ADHERE TO BEST PRACTICES – RESOURCES

- Poudre River Public Library District’s Nonprofit Resources
- United Way of Larimer County
- Community Resource Center
- Board Source
ADHERE TO BEST PRACTICES

FINANCES

• Is your organization using financial resources effectively and efficiently?

• Budgets
  • Are expenses connected to outcomes?
  • Is the budget realistic? Does it make sense?
  • Is the request consistent with the budget?

• Financial Statements
  • Assesses ongoing financial performance
    • Is your budget reflective of your actual financial situation?
    • Are you at risk of running a deficit?

• Audit
  • Conducted by an outside agency to ensure accuracy and completeness
    • Demonstrates transparency and trustworthiness

• Sources of Income/List of Major Contributors
  • Demonstrates diversity of revenue sources
  • Lends credibility
  • Alignment in funding interests
ADHERE TO BEST PRACTICES

COLLABORATION

• Are your services duplicative?
  • If so, why are they still needed?
• Are you coordinating with other organizations to ensure effective use of resources?
  • Referrals
  • Cross-training
  • Resource sharing
  • Formal and informal partnerships

GOVERNANCE

• Is your Board of Directors leading the organization effectively?
  • Composition and qualifications
  • Strategic planning
  • Board giving policy
  • Role and performance
GRANT WRITING SUCCESS TOOL #4

FINDING THE RIGHT FUNDERS
FIND THE RIGHT FUNDERS

• Most of your time should be spent learning who wants to fund you
  • Alignment between grantmaker’s funding priorities and program purpose/organization’s mission
  • Request falls within funding restrictions

• You are the rule, *not* the exception
“WE’RE TAUGHT THAT IN LIFE, WE SHOULD TRY TO LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, TO BE OPTIMISTIC. NOT IN THIS CASE. IN THIS CASE, LOOK ON THE DARK SIDE. ASSUME REJECTION FIRST. ASSUME YOU’RE THE RULE, NOT THE EXCEPTION.”

— LIZ TUCCILLO, HE’S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU
Most of your time should be spent learning who wants to fund you
  • Alignment between grantmaker’s funding priorities and program purpose/organization’s mission
  • Request falls within funding restrictions
You are the rule, not the exception
Grant writing still involves relationship building
Tools/Databases:
  • GrantStation
  • Grant Opportunities Advancing Larimer (GOAL)
  • Foundation Directory Online
FIND THE RIGHT FUNDERS

FREE TRAINING OPPORTUNITY:

Learn How to Use Candid’s Foundation Directory Online (FDO)

Thursday, March 11 at 11 a.m.

More info + registration at poudrelibraries.org
GRANT WRITING SUCCESS TOOL #5

CLEAR AND CONCISE COMMUNICATION
COMMUNICATE CLEARLY AND CONCISELY

• Simplify your message as much as possible
  • If possible, do your research about who will be reviewing your application
  • Don’t make assumptions
    • Concepts
    • Acronyms
    • Jargon
• Edit as much as possible
  • Keep it short
  • Keep the focus on your program’s impact
A REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE:

What community issue are you trying to solve? How long has your organization worked in this area? What are some of the ways you have collaborated with other agencies to identify goals and measure outcomes in this work?

(Limit 1,000 characters)
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What community issue are you trying to solve? How long has your organization worked in this area? What are some of the ways you have collaborated with other agencies to identify goals and measure outcomes in this work?

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• Edit as much as possible
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  • Keep the focus on your program’s impact
  • Be strategic - don’t take it one question at a time
BONUS!

DON’T GIVE UP HOPE!
THANK YOU!

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