

4 Helpful Grant Writing Tips

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#1 Know the Types of Grantors

There are SEVERAL Types of Grantors that issue out grants. Each grantor has different requirements and qualifications that must be followed. Make sure you read the Grantors Request for Proposals and most of all know what type of grantor you are submitting your application to.

Types of Grantors

- **Foundation**
- **Corporations**
- **Government**
- **Community Groups**

What Grantors are Looking For

It's important to know that a very small portion of grant dollars get invested into Black and other communities of color which makes grant writing very competitive. Many people approach grants with only their interest in mind and see it as a way to get free money for their programs/service ideas that do not have to be paid back which is a BIG mistake.

Grantors have needs, interests, criteria and are always looking for a return on the initiatives they support. Simply they care about making a difference by improving the categories they fund in. It's very critical to find out what the Grantor wants and to evaluate your ability to deliver on the job. Now it's important to BALANCE this with the need for you to be firm in NOT changing your ideas to meet foundations/grant interests- this is a BIG problem! Stay TRUE to your vision, just understand you have to meet the grantor half way so both parties get what they need and want.

Simply, the days of getting grants so easily is over, funders care about measuring outcomes/impact, success, your capacity to do the work, how you collaborate with others, your experience in the work and so much more... Again it's really important to learn about the grantors interest and requirements BEFORE applying for a grant if possible.

Here are a few things to consider

- ✓ Reach out and have a conversation with the grant contact person listed on the Request for Proposal document. Ask them any questions you have about the grant criteria, requirements and learn more about what the grantor is actually looking for. Sometimes this helps create relationships, gain inside knowledge/advocates and better positions you for the grant
- ✓ Attend grant info sessions or webinars to gain a deeper understand of the grant.
- ✓ Research the grantor and learn about their history/focus areas and values. Find out what types of programs/services they have funded in the past and the amounts given out
- ✓ Research grants online with similar ideas as yours to get a feel for how
- ✓ Talk with people who have received grants and get insights from them about how to approach grants etc

#2 KNOWING THE TYPE OF GRANT SUPPORT YOU'RE ASKING FOR

It's critically important that you know what type of grant support you are looking for. There are at least three categories of granting

- **Planning grant**

A planning grant is usually a very small grant no more than 10-15k that is used to help you flesh out your idea, activities and overall strategic plan

- **Start up ideas/programs**

A start up grant is usually support to help you execute or demonstrate your project/program. This is generally a one time smaller grant of 20-40k

- **Long-term ongoing support**

This type of grant is designed for existing programs/services that have a track record of success of some sort yet need more funding support to improve, expand and or sustain services. This is generally a 2-3 year grant of 50k or more

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General Lists of NEED TO KNOW about Grants

- ✓ Know the terminology used in the grant world ([Check it out here](#))
- ✓ Know the landscape- who is working in the same areas as you? What similar programs etc exist? How is your program different? Or how will you work with others to do more in this area?
- ✓ What is your experience and background in the areas you are proposing to work in? This really matters, there are lots of people who have ideas they're passionate about yet have no experience working in the area. If you have no direct experience then make sure you connect with someone who does and show how what you bring to the table adds to the overall value.
- ✓ How will you measure your program/initiative etc? It's really important to know what success will look like for you and how you will evaluate yourself along the way to build on your success. Ask yourself a series of questions around success, outcomes and how you measure it all- write it down and make it a part of your plan. Grantors want to know that you are intentional about the outcomes and impact of your work
- ✓ Keep it simple, while it is very important to tell your story and outline what you like for the grantor to support and why it's important- it is equally important to write as clear and concise as possible. You are NOT writing an academic paper and people simply don't have time to read through pages and pages before they understand your idea. Honestly, I've sat through enough grant committees to tell you that if it isn't clear on the first or second page then it gets least of my attention. Most times there are LOTS of proposals to read through- Time and clearness is everything
- ✓ Show how you will sustain your work without a grant. Grantors understand that some projects/programs will need 3-5 yrs of funding but what's the plan after the grant money? This is VERY important to grantors. Figure it out!