

# Welcome to Grant-writing

Arizona Food Bank Network  
Annual Conference  
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# Foundation Giving

## Minimum Payout Requirement Qualifying Distributions:

- Grants
- Direct expenditures to accomplish charitable purposes, like technical assistance to grantees
- Charitable administrative expenses
- Amounts paid to acquire assets used for tax exempt purposes, such as purchasing office furniture or computers
- Program-related investments
- Certain amounts set aside for future charitable projects



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# What is a Grant?

- A gift of funds given with very specific restrictions on the activities the funds are to support
- A contract between the grantor and the grantee that involves:
  - Fixed amount
  - Fixed length
  - Focused program/activities
  - Administrative/Evaluative oversight
- An investment by the grantor in the grantee and the community/population it serves
- A great way to try something new, cover start-up costs, get the ball rolling, demonstrate value/ROI



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# Great Grants

## Sesame Street

Although *Sesame Street* is self-supporting today, this was not always the case. During the early 1960s, the National Education Association endorsed the idea of making preschool education available to all children, but funds available within school budgets were not sufficient for such programs. In 1966 the Carnegie Corporation of New York underwrote a feasibility study on the use of television for preschool education; the same foundation then gave the [Children's Television Workshop](#) a two-year grant to launch *Sesame Street*. Grants from the John R. and Mary Markle Foundation and others followed.



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# Great Grants

## White Lines on Highways



In the early 1950s, engineer-inventor Dr. John V. N. Dorr had "revolutionary highway theory." He postulated that at night and when rain, snow or fog impaired vision, drivers hugged the white lines painted in the middle of highways. Dorr believed this led to numerous accidents and that painting a white line along the outside shoulders of the highways would save lives. Dorr convinced highway engineers in Westchester County, New York, to test his theory along a stretch of highway with curves and gradients. The decrease in accidents was dramatic, and a follow-up test in Connecticut had similar results. Dorr then used his own foundation, the Dorr Foundation of New York, to publicize the demonstration's results. Although state funds are now used to paint white lines on the shoulders of this nation's highways, every person who travels in a motor vehicle is indebted to Dorr and his foundation the implementation of this life-saving discovery.



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# Things a funder may ask for (and therefore you need)

- Mission Statement
  - Mission, vision, values, strategic plan
- Incorporation Documents
  - Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws
- Tax-Exempt Letter (501c3 letter from IRS)
- Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- DUNS/UEI Number
- Organizational Chart
- Board and Key Staff lists
- Annual Report/Audited Financials
- Brief History/Description
- Current Program Descriptions



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# Mission Statements

Yours must answer the following questions:

- What needs are we addressing?
- What are we doing to address those needs?
- What core beliefs guide our actions? What do we value?

See this guide to vision and mission statements:

<https://topnonprofits.com/mission-vision-statements/>



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What is your Vision?

What is your Mission Statement?

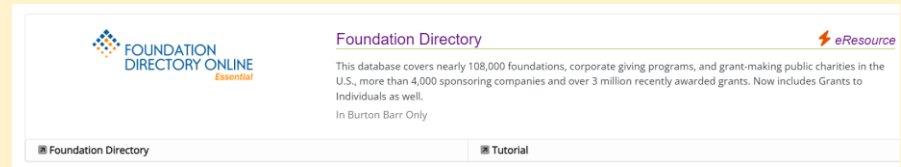


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# Grant Searching – Which One?

- Finding grants to apply For
  - AZ Impact for Good – Guide to Grants Online – grantsaz.org (membership needed)
  - <https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/> membership needed



- Matching your needs to the grantor's program
  - Eligibility rules
  - Program focus
  - Previous projects supported
  - Grant dollar amount/limits
  - Program time period, deadlines



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# Grant-Writing

- Biggest point: you aren't writing for "stuff"



- A grant writing complete free training:  
<https://learning.candid.org/training/courses/introduction-to-proposal-writing/>



# Grant Searching – Applications

- Application guidelines
  - Deadlines are usually non-negotiable
  - Format is often dictated for font size, margins, sections, etc. as well as word counts
  - Submission instructions
  - A word about grant portals
- Guidelines must be followed to the letter!



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# Grant Searching – Relationships

- Should you talk to the grantor first? Yes, no, maybe...
- Then, do your homework (don't ask uninformed questions)
- Do you already have a relationship (e.g. past funder)?
- Don't just contact when you want to apply
  - Look for opportunities to meet grantors in the community
  - Once a relationship is established, maintain your connection with periodic contact



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# Grant Ethics

- Grant-writing is a demanding process in a competitive environment – don't let the pressure make you do something silly!
- “Mission Drift”
- Handle confidential information (salaries, etc.) with discretion



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# Grant Ethics

## Letting someone else do the writing for you

- Grant-writing is better as a team sport
- Use pre-existing information (if you own it)
- Use information from commercial vendors with caution
- Using a professional grant writer:
  - Make sure they know your org and program
  - Don't let them commit you to more than you can handle
  - You're still ultimately responsible for everything in the proposal



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# Keeping the Budget in Mind

- Grants are all about the money (partly)
- Must keep the budget, grant \$ limit, in mind
  - Organizations needs, available resources
  - Creating the program, features, size
  - Easiest to write the budget in parallel to the rest of the proposal
- Another ethical issue -- don't "pad" budgets, inflate costs, or include unnecessary luxuries



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# Keeping the Budget in Mind

Think about expenses as you write the proposal, and add them to your budget as you encounter them

- Who's going to do it?
  - Personnel (how many, time, salary, fringe benefits)
  - Consultants, contracted services
- What will they need?
  - Supplies (expendable), equipment (durable)
- What else will it take to get it done?
  - Space (rent, utilities)
  - Travel (program-related, training, meetings)
- “Overhead”
  - Indirect costs – usually a percentage of total budget to cover shared expenses of the organization

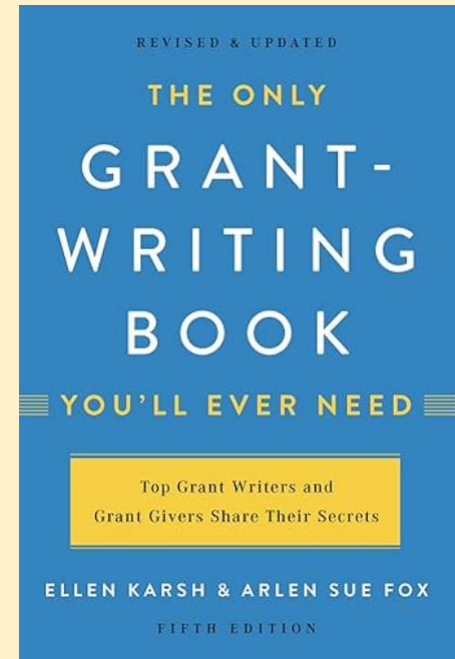




# Proposal Writing - Style

## The 12 Rules (from The Only Grant-Writing Book You Will Ever Need)

1. Create an outline reflecting the funder's guidelines/selection criteria. Organize your resources according to the outline before you start writing.
2. Write as you (should) speak. Don't be too casual, or so formal that you sound pretentious.
3. Double-think about your choice of words. No slang or non-PC terms.
4. Don't exaggerate! Avoid clichés, overused terms, unrealistic claims.



# Proposal Writing Style

5. Buy a grammar book and use it (or visit online resources)
6. ...and a dictionary and thesaurus
7. Use the “active voice” - Write about what you “will do,” not about what “will be done.”
8. Keep politics, value judgments, controversial ideas, and humor to yourself and out of your proposal.
9. Limit the use of adjectives and overblown terms.
10. Avoid first person pronouns (I, We, Our), write from the organization’s position. Avoid abbreviations and acronyms
11. Introduce new acronyms, then use them quickly, and reintroduce them when needed (or just avoid them altogether).
12. Back up claims with evidence.
13. Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof!



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# Proposal Writing - Needs

- What need will your project meet?
- Why is this need compelling, both to society and to a potential funder?
- How do you know this need genuinely exists?
  - Data, Statistics
    - Demographics, census data (target population)
    - Economic statistics
    - Health department statistics
    - Crime statistics
  - Current Literature/Research
  - Program statistics



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# Proposal Writing - Goals

- Goals: broad statements of long-term intentions
- BHAGs
- Often beyond the lifetime of the grant-funded program
- Program contributes toward the eventual (hopefully) achievement of the goals.



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# Proposal Writing - Objectives

- Objectives are specific statement of outcomes expected from the program. They must be:
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Attainable
  - Realistic
  - Time-limited
- Each goal is supported by objectives



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# Proposal Writing - Objectives

- Whose goals and objectives – yours or the funders?
  - YOURS!
  - If your goals and objectives don't fit within the scope of the funders' goals, you're applying for the wrong grant
- State your goals and objectives using the funder's language
- Show how your goals and objectives support those of the funder



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# Needs

- Funders (most) want to give you money to solve a problem or meet a compelling need, not just to buy something or pursue a random idea, no matter how clever it is.
- “...view your entire proposal as a marketing tool – to sell the seriousness of your problem and the wisdom of your solution.”

Some comments from funders:

To show need is very important”

...make the case for a need, organize it well, and show how it is relevant to the program you want to implement

Beginning grant writers tend to base their proposals on ideas rather than on real need

Grants don't always go to the greatest need, but to the organizations with the strongest proposals to meet a need

# Review – Goals and Objectives

Measurable  
objectives – very  
important

Be realistic

Be Results  
Oriented

Frankly, I don't care how  
many widgets you make, I  
only care if the widgets make  
a difference....

It may be OK to try  
to meet an objective  
and fail, but it's not  
OK to fail to try



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# Proposal Writing - Program

**The program description is the heart of the proposal**

**The program is your solution to the problem/need that will meet your goals and objectives. It should be:**

- Well thought-out – have you considered all the angles, possible alternatives?
- Clear and detailed – will an intelligent but naïve reader understand your idea?
- A workable solution – have you shown how the work will get done and by whom?



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# Proposal Writing - Program

- Program Description must:
  - Address *your* problem/need
  - Address the *funder's* priorities (without sacrificing your integrity)
  - Be consistent with other parts of the proposal (need, goals and objectives, evaluation, budget, etc.)
  - Show how the program will fit into the existing organization and its other programs, not to mention your program partners, the community it serves, etc.



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# Proposal Writing - Program

- Program Description includes:
  - Introduction, general “big picture” description of program.
  - Narrative timeline
    - When: From start of project to end, usually monthly
    - What: Lists specific activities
    - Why: Relate activities to back to objectives.
    - Who: Personnel who will complete each activity.
    - A graphic timeline is a nice additional option



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# Proposal Writing - Program

Program Description includes:

- Staff requirements
  - What personnel are required to complete the activities and what qualifications do they have/need?
  - If hiring, how will you recruit?
  - Job descriptions and/or resumes
- Marketing plans
  - Participant recruitment
  - Program publicity
  - Community involvement
  - Publicity for funder



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# Proposal Writing - Collaboration

## Why collaborate?

- Almost any problem large enough to deserve a grant is best served by more than one agency
- Collaborative arrangements demonstrate your connection to the broader community, and your appreciation of the larger context of your problem/need
- Collaborative partners may have good ideas, maybe even as good as yours!
- Collaboration creates community buy-in, provides built-in community support



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# Proposal Writing - Collaboration

- If a funder's guidelines require collaboration, don't bother applying if you're not going to genuinely engage others
  - "Lip service" to collaboration won't fly
  - "Consultation" (advisory boards, statements of support, etc.) is not the same as genuine collaboration (but its better than no collaboration at all)
- The best way to engage others is to involve them in planning the program BEFORE you write a grant proposal



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# Proposal Writing - Collaboration

## Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- A letter from a program collaborator describing their understanding of the program, their role and responsibilities in it, and confirming their commitment to it (should the funding be received)
- Sometimes called “letter of commitment”
- One from each program partner is usually REQUIRED

## Letter of support

- A general letter stating an organization’s positive support for a program (without direct involvement)
- Sometimes required from key government agencies
- One from each related/affected agency is usually DESIRED



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# Evaluation

- Remember all that talk about “objectives must be measurable”?
- Evaluation shows:
  - That you conducted the project activities you proposed
  - That your project activities produced changes, created improvements
  - That your objectives were achieved
  - That your project addressed the “compelling need”
  - That the funder’s money was well spent



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# Evaluation

- **Process evaluation** shows that you conducted the activities that you said you would (or why you didn't)
  - Process measures
    - Achievement of work plan milestones
    - Activity completion dates/deadlines
    - Program statistics (number of participants, programs presented, etc.)
- **Outcome evaluation measures** show achievement of objectives
  - How many helped
  - Impact on the problem with data



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# Sustainability

- How will you sustain the change/improvement achieved by your grant-funded project?
- What about your project will (should) live beyond the period of the grant?
  - Physical changes (construction, equipment, etc.)?
  - Program activities (classes, meetings, outreach, etc.)?
  - Target population (knowledge, attitudes, behavior)?



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# Sustainability

- If sustaining the changes/improvements created by your project will require ongoing funding, what money will you use after the grant runs out?
  - Long-Term government support (Federal, State, Local)
  - Other Grants
  - Other non-grant fundraising initiatives (can you remember what these might be?)
  - Fees for service, program income
- And if you don't have ideas for any of these?



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# Capacity

- Do you have what it takes to execute this program?
- If so, what proof do you have?
  - History of similar programs, grants
  - Organization's human, physical and financial resources
  - Contributions of your partners
- If not, how will you build it if you receive the grant?



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# The Review Process

## Review Criteria:

- Strengths, Weaknesses
- Fundamentals: complete, comprehensible, etc.
- Need (compelling?)
- Response (program): Goals, Objectives, Activities
- Evaluation, Sustainability, Capacity
- Budget
- How does it compare to other applicants?



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# The Review Process

## Funding Decision

- Reviewers meeting
- Scoring
- Program officer's review/recommendation
- Rank order, start with highest scoring applicant, work down the list until all funds committed
- Board approval
- Notice of award/rejection to applicant



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# Questions?

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