

# Grant Writing: Steps to Success

**Presenter:**

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## Disclosure

- I have no financial disclosure or conflict of interest

## Overview

- Myths about Grant Writing
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Focus on Process (then Product)
- Steps to Take
- Post submittal tips
- Discussion

## Grant writing is our power! (but it's nerve wracking)

- Time consuming
- Requires creativity, precision, and importantly... planning
- Demands collaboration within a tight timeline

## Myths About Grant Writing

- If you don't get the funding, you have failed
- Small grants require more work than they are worth
- Being lead is better than being a partner or subcontractor

## Challenge = Opportunity

### The Challenge

- Selecting grant opportunities carefully
- Being open to partners yet careful to commit
- Supporting your programming, not leading it
- Having the grants process be a staff building v staff breaking exercise

### The Opportunity

- Prep and planning remind us of strategic plans and program goals
- New partners and synergies can emerge, established further deepen
- Opens ideas on growth areas programmatically & organizationally
- Strengthen staff individually and as team

## Step 1: Commit to Quality

- Decide if this is the right opportunity for your org. or collaboration – check in with others
- Better to submit a smaller # of high quality applications than large # of mediocre
- Give the team enough time; if don't have it, think carefully and proceed quickly

## Process and Product

- Both are important!
- Create the 3 C's:
  - Clarity of Vision
  - Coordination
  - Communication

## Step 2: Select the Leads

- Read carefully the RFA/RFP on who can qualify as lead
- Is your organization or collaboration ready to be lead?
- Being a partner or subcontractor is not inferior (your org may be stretched already, not closest fit, need exp., etc)

## Step 3: Choose the Writer(s)

- Ideally lead is a skilled writer & coordinator
- If not, offer targeted assistance and coordination (e.g. draft a timeline)
- Divvy up the sections among partners
- Are you lead? Ask for help to offset your weaknesses:
  - Strong writer may need help with mtg. facilitation
  - Gifted facilitator/creative thinker may need help with being realistic
  - A “talker” may need help in making deadline

## Step 4: Push the Plan

- Prevent grant horror story
- Let data speak in grant design
- Online apps pose additional challenge
  - give extra time for submission
- Many RFPs are very specific – offers a roadmap if “drivers” read it
- Circulate plan with initials/dates – remind, & remind again

## Step 5: Program Design

- Add new program or improve existing one per the opportunity (and feasibility)
- Look at the evaluation data you have or want to have – spend time planning on how to incorporate in text and in design
- Two important questions
  - Is it too much? Funders may question...
  - Is it too little? Funders aren't inspired...

## Step 6: Elevate Evaluation

- Don't make it too simple, make it meaningful
- Think through outputs and outcomes
- Check to see if you need an "evaluator" or if you or your staff need add'l training
- Evaluation is \$\$ - leverage your partnership and future grants

## Step 7: File (or Pile) Application

- Once submitted, never seen again?
- Make past applications your planning tool!
- Past apps make future ones easier – but don't force a fit
- Review at years end – what went in, what worked, what is on wish list, what is ready to let go

## Step 8: Communicate Outcome

- Submission is cause for celebration
- Keep track of data
- Watch out for success bind
  - Staff (you!) have new major project but nothing else drops off plate
  - Major funding begets more funding. Don't overlook writing in new hires with new funding streams

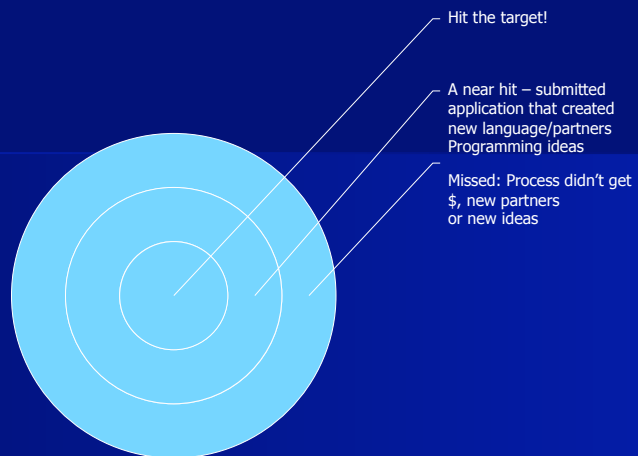
## Step 9: Grants are Year Round Effort

- Divvy up research on grant opportunities even if you have a dev dept
- Drill down when opportunity arises and you/your org/collab wants to be lead – first to call it has best chance
- Develop grant writing & manag. skills



## Summary

- Process and Product = More Benefits
- Collab. grants take more time in present, more opportunities in future
- Pick the lead, Prepare for partner meetings, Focus on data and evaluation early on, Push your plan, Celebrate the submittal, Communicate the outcome(s)



## Resources

- Grants: [foundationcenter.org](http://foundationcenter.org), [grants.gov](http://grants.gov), [grants.NIH.gov](http://grants.NIH.gov), [thompsoncenter.com](http://thompsoncenter.com), [lifp.org](http://lifp.org)
- Grant writers: Word of mouth, [guru.com](http://guru.com), [Elance.com](http://Elance.com)

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