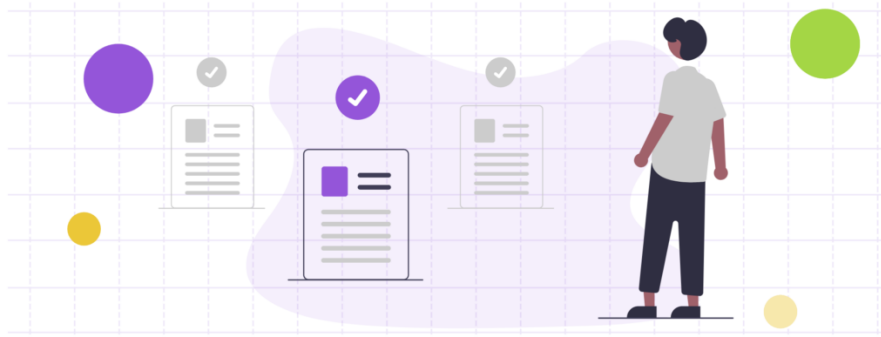


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Funding: A Comprehensive Guide to Grant Writing for Nonprofits

Sheila Kern • Oct 25, 2021



Reading Time: 14 minutes

Grant writing for nonprofits is the process of applying for funds to support your nonprofit organization's programs. It involves performing research on potential grant funding sources and opportunities that align with your mission and goals, developing a compelling proposal that convinces them to fund your programs, submitting the proposal for review, and



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Understanding Grant Writing for Nonprofits

What is Grant Writing?

Grant writing is the process of preparing and submitting a proposal to request funding from various sources, such as government agencies, private foundations, corporations, and

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more. Grants not only provide financial support but also lend credibility to an organization, validating its cause and attracting other potential funders.

Role of Grant Writing in Nonprofit Organizations:

Grant writing plays a pivotal role in the sustainability and growth of nonprofit organizations. Here are a few key aspects to consider:

Identifying Funding Opportunities:

Successful grant writing begins with identifying appropriate funding opportunities. This involves researching and understanding the priorities, funding criteria, and guidelines of potential grantmakers. By aligning your nonprofit's mission with the goals of a funding source, you increase your chances of securing financial support.

Building Relationships with Funders:

Grant writing also involves [developing relationships with potential funders](#). Cultivating connections through networking events, attending conferences, and engaging with philanthropic community and [talent community](#) can lead to valuable insights, partnerships, and funding opportunities. Building trust and rapport with funders can strengthen your organization's chances of securing grants in the long run.

Grant Management and Reporting:

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Challenges in Grant Writing

By understanding common challenges and implementing effective approaches, you can enhance your chances of securing grants and making a meaningful impact in your community.

Finding the Right Grant Opportunities:

One of the initial hurdles in grant writing is identifying the right grant opportunities for your organization. With countless grants available, it can be overwhelming to determine which ones align with your mission and goals. To overcome this challenge:

- **Conduct thorough research:** Explore grant databases, online platforms, and government websites to find grants that fit your organization's focus areas.
- **Network and collaborate:** Engage with other nonprofits, attend conferences, and join professional associations to discover potential grant opportunities through shared experiences and connections.
- **Create a tailored grant calendar:** Maintain a calendar with upcoming deadlines, eligibility criteria, and requirements to stay organized and ensure you don't miss out on valuable opportunities.

Developing a Compelling Proposal:

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examples, and data to illustrate the importance and impact of your work. Highlight the personal stories of individuals who have benefited from your programs or services.

- **Align with the funder's priorities:** Tailor your proposal to align with the funder's interests and priorities. Show how your project fits within their funding guidelines and supports their overall mission.

Addressing Budgeting and Financial Management:

The budgeting process can be intricate, particularly when aligning it with the grant requirements and expectations. Nonprofits often face challenges in accurately estimating project costs, managing budgets effectively, and demonstrating financial sustainability. To overcome these hurdles:

- **Be meticulous in budget planning:** Conduct a comprehensive assessment of your project's needs, including personnel, resources, supplies, and indirect costs. Provide clear justifications for each budget item.
- **Develop strong financial systems:** Implement robust [financial management](#) systems to accurately track expenses, demonstrate transparency, and ensure compliance with grant reporting requirements.
- **Seek expert assistance:** Consider involving a financial expert or consultant to assist with budgeting and financial reporting, particularly for complex grants.

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contribute complementary resources or expertise.

- **Establish clear roles and responsibilities:** Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each partner involved in the grant project, ensuring everyone is aware of expectations and timelines.
- **Foster effective communication:** Regularly communicate with your partners to maintain alignment, address any issues or challenges, and ensure a coordinated approach.

Ensuring Grant Compliance and Reporting

When it comes to managing grants, compliance and reporting obligations are paramount. As a recipient of grant funding, you have a responsibility to ensure that the funds are used appropriately and in accordance with the grant guidelines. Additionally, timely and accurate reporting is crucial to [maintain transparency and accountability](#). Let's delve into the importance of grant compliance and reporting obligations and provide you with valuable guidance on establishing effective systems for tracking progress and meeting deadlines.

Importance of Grant Compliance:

Grant compliance serves as the foundation for a successful grant-funded project. It ensures that the funds are utilized for their intended purpose and in accordance with the grant

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- **Legal and Ethical Obligations:** Compliance with grant regulations is not just a matter of good practice; it is often a legal and ethical obligation. Failure to comply with grant requirements may lead to financial penalties, legal consequences, and even jeopardize your organization's reputation.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Compliance ensures transparency and accountability in the use of public or private funds. It allows stakeholders, including grantors, community members, and the public, to have access to accurate and timely information about how the funds are being utilized.

Establishing Effective Systems for Tracking Progress

Tracking progress is crucial for effective grant management. By establishing robust systems, you can monitor and measure your project's advancement, ensuring compliance and demonstrating the impact of the grant. Here are some steps to establish an effective tracking system:

- **Understand Grant Requirements:** Thoroughly review the grant agreement and guidelines to gain a clear understanding of the reporting and compliance obligations. Identify specific deliverables, milestones, and deadlines to guide your progress tracking.
- **Develop a Project Plan:** Create a comprehensive [project plan](#) that outlines the tasks, timelines, responsible parties, and expected outcomes. Break down larger goals into

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Meeting Reporting Deadlines

Meeting reporting deadlines is essential for maintaining a positive relationship with the grant provider and ensuring ongoing compliance. To meet these deadlines effectively, consider the following:

- **Establish Internal Deadlines:** Set internal deadlines well in advance of the actual reporting due dates. This buffer allows time for any unforeseen issues or delays and helps you stay on track.
- **Maintain Clear Communication:** Regularly communicate with your team members and stakeholders involved in the project. Clear and open lines of communication will help ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities and can address any challenges promptly.
- **Regularly Review Progress:** Continuously monitor your project's progress against the established milestones and deliverables. Regular reviews will allow you to identify any potential roadblocks and take necessary corrective actions in a timely manner.

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Leveraging Evaluation and Impact Measurement

When it comes to grant writing, securing funding is often contingent on demonstrating the potential impact and measurable outcomes of your proposed project. Evaluation and impact measurement play a pivotal role in this process, providing essential evidence of your project's effectiveness and demonstrating your organization's commitment to accountability. By leveraging these strategies effectively, you can enhance your chances of securing grants and driving meaningful change.

Understanding the Role of Evaluation and Impact Measurement:

Evaluation and impact measurement are integral components of grant writing, as they allow funders to assess the effectiveness and sustainability of proposed projects. They provide a systematic way to collect data, measure progress, and determine whether project objectives have been achieved. By incorporating evaluation and impact measurement into your grant proposal, you can showcase your commitment to

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Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) criteria to ensure they are well-defined and actionable.

Specific:

Clearly articulate what you aim to achieve, focusing on specific outcomes rather than vague intentions. For example, instead of stating a goal as “improve educational outcomes,” specify it as “increase the high school graduation rate by 10% within two years.”

Measurable:

Establish concrete indicators that allow you to measure progress and determine whether your goals have been met. These indicators can be quantitative (e.g., number of participants, percentage increase) or qualitative (e.g., improved quality of life, increased satisfaction).

Achievable:

Ensure that your goals are attainable and realistic within the scope of your project’s resources and timeframe. Setting unrealistic goals can undermine the credibility of your proposal.

Relevant:

Align your goals with the overall mission and objectives of your organization, as well as the specific funding opportunity.

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Showcasing Outcomes:

Effectively showcasing outcomes is crucial for demonstrating the impact of your project and increasing your chances of securing grants. Here are some strategies to consider:

- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Develop a comprehensive plan for collecting relevant data throughout your project's lifecycle. Use both quantitative and qualitative methods to capture a holistic view of the outcomes. Analyze the data to identify trends, measure progress, and determine the success of your project.
- **Narrative Storytelling:** Supplement your data with [compelling narratives](#) that illustrate the real-world impact of your project. Share success stories, testimonials from beneficiaries, and anecdotes that highlight the transformative power of your work. This humanizes your project and helps funders connect emotionally with your cause.
- **Visual Representation:** Utilize visual aids such as charts, graphs, and infographics to present data in a visually appealing and easily digestible format. Visual representations can effectively convey complex information and make a stronger impression on funders.
- **Comparative Analysis:** Provide benchmarks or comparisons with similar projects or interventions to demonstrate the uniqueness and effectiveness of your approach. Highlight how your project outperforms existing initiatives or fills a gap in service provision.

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your chances of success.

Fundraising Software:

Keela's [integrated fundraising software](#) simplifies donor data management, enabling you to track and nurture relationships efficiently. By leveraging this feature, you can identify and target potential donors who align with your organization's mission and funding criteria. Keela provides customizable donor profiles, donation tracking, and analytics, offering valuable insights for strategic grant writing. [Centralized access to donor information](#) empowers you to tailor your proposals and create compelling narratives that resonate with funders.

Communication and Email Marketing:

Keela's [email marketing capabilities](#) are a powerful tool for engaging potential funders and stakeholders. With pre-designed email templates and automation features, you can streamline your outreach efforts and maintain consistent, professional communication. Craft personalized email campaigns, update donors on project progress, and share success stories that demonstrate your impact. Keela's email marketing functionality allows you to segment your contact lists, ensuring targeted messages that enhance your grant proposals.

Donor Journeys and Automation:

Keela's automation tools simplify repetitive tasks, freeing up time and energy for strategic activities. From automated

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Grant writing is an essential skill for nonprofit organizations seeking funding to support their mission and initiatives. In today's ever-changing landscape, it is crucial for nonprofits to stay updated on the latest grant writing trends to maximize their chances of success. Here are six key trends to consider when crafting your best grant proposals:

1. Shifting Funding Priorities: Examining the Changing Landscape of Grant Opportunities

The pandemic has brought about significant shifts in funding priorities. Granting organizations are increasingly focusing on supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion in their funding decisions. They are seeking to promote transparency, provide easily accessible information, and simplify application or grant request forms. As a nonprofit, it's important to understand these changes and ensure that your application aligns with the evolving priorities of grantors.

2. Embracing Technological Advancements: Leveraging Digital Tools and Platforms

In today's digital age, nonprofits have access to a wide range of [technological tools and platforms](#) that can enhance their grant writing efforts. From online grant databases to project management software, these digital solutions can streamline the application process, improve collaboration among team members, and enhance reporting capabilities. Embracing

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between multiple nonprofit organizations. Instead of viewing similar organizations as competitors, nonprofits should explore opportunities for collaboration, pooling resources and expertise to solve complex problems. Highlighting partnerships and demonstrating a collective impact in your grant proposals can make them more compelling to funders.

4. Data-Driven Grant Writing: Incorporating Evidence and Impact Metrics

Grantors are placing greater emphasis on data and evidence-based practices. Nonprofits should focus on collecting and presenting relevant data that demonstrates the impact of their programs and initiatives. This includes outcome measurements, success stories, and other evidence of effectiveness. By incorporating data-driven elements into your grant proposals, you can provide funders with a clear understanding of the results your organization can achieve and the value of their investment.

5. Grantor Expectations: Understanding the Evolving Requirements and Application Processes

Grantors are continuously evolving their requirements and application processes. It is crucial for nonprofits to stay updated on these changes and tailor their proposals accordingly. This includes understanding the specific goals and priorities of each grantor, as well as any new reporting or evaluation requirements. Taking the time to research and

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potential alignment between your organization's mission and their funding priorities. Building relationships with grantors can lead to more targeted and successful grant proposals.

By keeping these grant writing trends in mind, nonprofits can enhance their grant-seeking efforts and increase their chances of securing funding to advance their mission and make a positive impact in their communities. Stay informed, adapt your strategies, and always strive for strong partnerships and measurable impact.

See how Keela can help you access all the reports you need for your grant application.

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Grant writing is a crucial skill for a nonprofit organization looking to secure funding for their programs and projects. A well-crafted grant proposal can make all the difference in attracting the attention and support of grantors and funders. Here are some essential tips to enhance your grant writing process and increase your chances of success:

1. Conducting Effective Grant Research:

Identifying Suitable Opportunities Before diving into grant writing, it's essential to [conduct thorough research](#) to identify suitable grant opportunities for your organization. Utilize funding databases, both online and offline, to explore various family, corporate, federal government, and other grant sources. Create a calendar to track deadlines and set realistic targets for funding amounts. Remember that larger grants often have longer review processes, so plan accordingly.

2. Crafting a Compelling Grant Proposal:

Key Components and Writing Strategies A compelling grant proposal should clearly convey your organization's mission, goals, and the specific project or program you seek funding for. Consider the following key components when crafting your proposal:

- **Executive Summary:** Provide a concise overview of your organization and the project, highlighting its significance and impact.

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- **Organizational Capacity:** Highlight your nonprofit's strengths, experience, and track record in delivering successful programs.
- **Evaluation Plan:** Outline how you will measure and evaluate the success of your project, including data collection methods and indicators.
- **Sustainability and Budget:** Discuss your organization's plan to sustain the project beyond the grant period and provide a realistic and comprehensive budget.

Ensure that your proposal is clear, concise, and compelling, using simple and jargon-free language. Follow the grant application guidelines provided by funders and tailor your proposal to resonate with their mission and goals.

3. Demonstrating Organizational Capacity:

Highlighting Nonprofit Strengths and Track Record Grantors are interested in funding organizations that have the capacity to successfully implement and manage projects. Clearly demonstrate your nonprofit's strengths, experience, expertise, and track record in delivering impactful programs. Highlight any relevant partnerships, collaborations, or achievements that showcase your organization's credibility and ability to achieve the desired outcomes.

4. Building Strong Relationships:

Nurturing Connections with Grantors and Funders Building relationships with grantors and funders is crucial for successful

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5. Effective Budget Planning

Developing Realistic and Comprehensive Budgets A well-planned and realistic budget is an integral part of any grant proposal. Develop a comprehensive budget that aligns with your project's activities, timelines, and anticipated outcomes. Ensure that all expenses and revenue sources are clearly outlined and justified. Pay attention to any specific budget requirements outlined by the grantor and ensure accuracy and consistency throughout the proposal.

6. Reviewing and Editing:

Ensuring Clarity, Coherence, and Error-Free Proposals Before submitting your grant proposal, review it thoroughly to ensure clarity, coherence, and error-free writing. Check for spelling and grammatical errors, mismatched dates, and missing information. Engage your grant and fundraising strategy team or other colleagues to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. A well-polished proposal enhances your professionalism and increases your chances of success.

Conclusion

Successful grant writing for nonprofits requires continuous learning, adaptation to trends, and leveraging technology and resources. Key points include understanding grant writing,

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