

Grant writing 101: Practical steps & strategies

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About Me



- Former public and academic librarian
- Secured over \$50,000 in state and IMLS grants
- PI on state, IMLS, and Folger Library grants
- Fulbright Scholar (2017-2019) — Botswana
- Presented internationally on grant writing
- Co-author of *Transforming Libraries, Building Communities* (with Robinson & Unger)
- Instructional designer at [Niche Academy](#)

WHY WRITE GRANTS?

- Expand existing programs
- Launch new and innovative programs
- Raise the profile of your library
- Build and leverage collaborations and partnerships
- Build personal capacity and professional development
- ...increase library funding

What kinds of grants?

- Grants can fund
 - Programs and services
 - New equipment
 - Collection building
 - Professional development and continuing education

- Grants are given by
 - Governments
 - Library associations and organizations
 - Private foundations

Step 1: Preparation — Identify needs & outcomes

- Needs
 - Identify what you want to fund
 - Leverage what is already successful
 - Demonstrate impact
 - Carefully consider time management
- Outcomes
 - Don't focus on the library!
 - Know your outcomes
 - Demonstrate impact
 - Patrons + Outcomes + Impact = Your Roadmap

Step 2: Identify key players

- Inside the library
 - Assess your skills
 - Identify colleagues to fill gaps
 - Assign responsibilities
 - Set deadlines and communicate
 - Keep teams nimble
- Outside the library
 - Know your partners — and what they do
 - Build a contact list and be proactive in reaching out
 - Develop draft letters of support

Step 3: Match the grant to your mission

- Know and tell the story of your **library's** mission
- Know the **grantor's** mission
- Check the grant requirements, and reframe if you have to
- Talk to past recipients
- Talk with the program officer

Step 4: Sustainability and time management

- Sustainability
 - Programs, not projects
 - Can the library commit?
- Time Management
 - Deadlines are firm
 - Plan backwards
 - Submit **early**

Step 5: Write the grant

- Narrative
 - Plan section headings and be clear and concise
 - Link ideas, funds, and outcomes
 - Incorporate outside research
 - Measure outcomes
 - Borrow the grant's language
 - Highlight your past success
- Budget
 - Know your allowable expenses
 - Be specific
 - Outline shared expenses
 - Review

Step 6: Build a grant toolkit

- Collect and compile documents
 - Census and demographic info
 - Mission, vision, strategic planning documents
 - Library data like collection size, budget, hours
 - Service data like programs, events, visitors
 - Staff resumes
 - Tax exemption documents
- Keep things together and updated
- Add to the file as needed
- Determine who will be able to access it

Step 7: Managing and reporting

- Management
 - Communicate with the media
 - Stick to a schedule and watch deadlines
 - Stay in contact with the grantor and fiscal manager
- Financial and final reporting
 - Gather documents, data, and feedback
 - Save receipts
 - Say thank you
 - Submit on time
 - Keep records

What if you don't get a grant?

- Read the response
- Talk through the grant
- Revise and resubmit
- Think smaller
- Have a backup plan

Stay up to date

- Make a grant searching schedule
- Watch tutorials and webinars
- Read successful grants
- Chat with other librarians
- Ask around your community

Discussion

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