

# GRANT WRITING 101

Bethany Taylor

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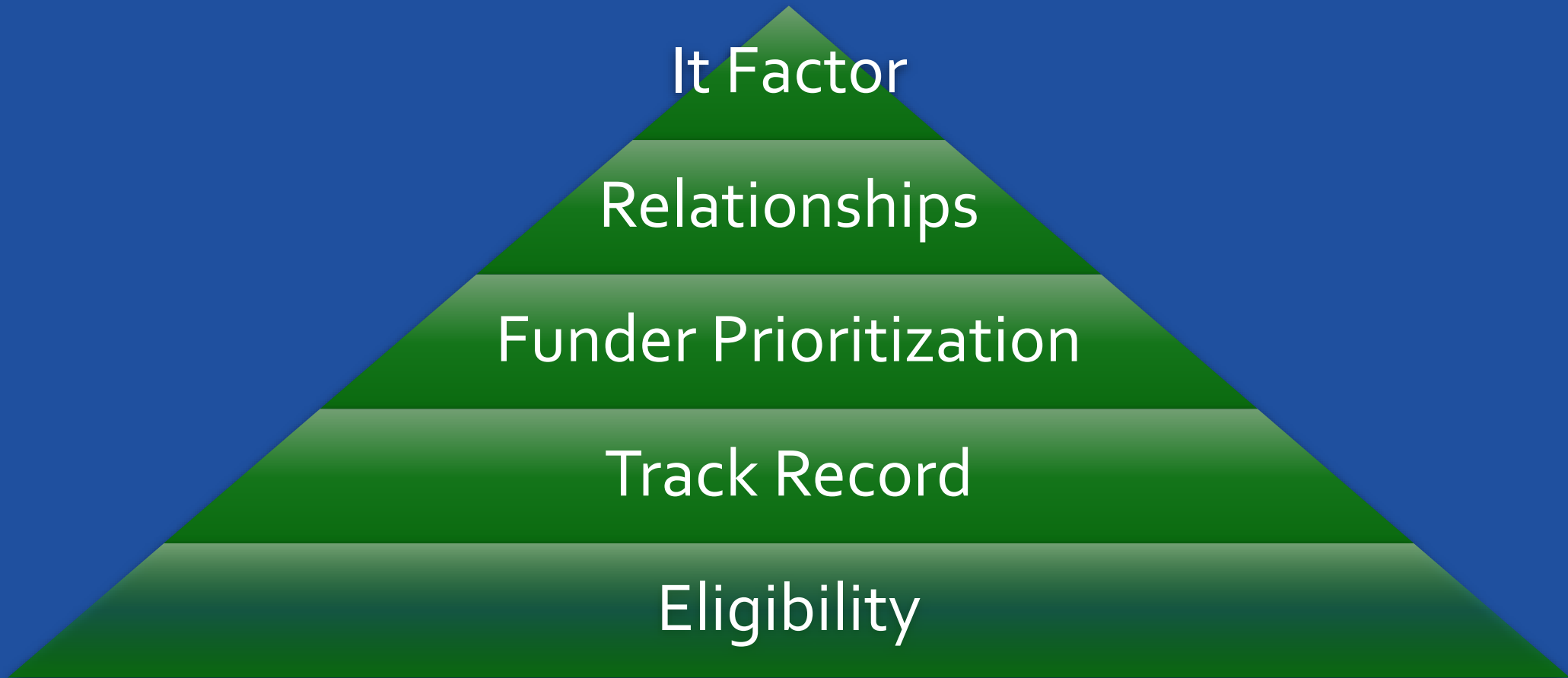
# WHAT CONSTITUTES SUCCESS?

You can measure success by:

Proposal Win Rate

Money Raised

# BEYOND THE PROPOSAL: FACTORS THAT IMPACT SUCCESS



# ELIGIBILITY

It's simple – make sure you are eligible to apply!

**DO NOT WASTE YOUR TIME ON A PROPOSAL THAT IS NOT A FIT!**

Ways to verify you are eligible:

- Review funder guidelines/RFP (request for proposal)
- Attend funder webinar/orientation
- Take eligibility quiz (and answer honestly)
- Review funder Form 990 (Part XV on page 10)
- Call the funder and ask

# TRACK RECORD

Funders want to see that you have past programming success.

It is harder for newer, less established organizations to get funded.

Many funders require three years of operations before applying for this very reason.

# FUNDER RESEARCH: TYPES OF GRANT FUNDERS

## Foundation

### Public foundations

- Outside board of directors
- Websites
- Application process readily available

### Family Foundation

- Family serves as board
- Often no formal application

### Community Foundations

- Donor-Advised Funds

## Corporation

### Foundation Grants

- Separate foundation to makes grants
- Formal grant application

### Corporate Giving

- Corporate makes gifts directly
- Community Relations Dept.

### Sponsorships

- Often run by Marketing Dept.

## Government

### Federal

- Large grants that require significant scope and evaluation

### State

- Grant sizes vary, but usually significant evaluation

### County/City

- General Fund
- Sector specific (arts council)
- Federal grant distribution

# FUNDER RESEARCH

Prioritize your prospects:

Research Area	What to look for
Funder/Program Fit	A close match between what the funder is interested in funding and what you program does.
Geographical Scope	The narrower the scope, the less competition and the greater the likelihood they are already familiar with you
Total Giving	The more money they give, the better
Frequency of Giving	The more grants they make, the better
Size of Gifts	This factor doesn't impact your likelihood of getting the grant, but it does impact whether the work involved is worth the effort.

# Good Works Grant Writing's Prospect Research Matrix

Areas of Interest	2	Exact fit with a narrow scope (i.e. assistance dog program for veterans)
	1	Close fit (i.e. veterans)
	0	General fit (i.e. health)
Geographic Scope	1	Giving limited to the city, county or state of your program OR city of your program is one of a handful of cities the prospect funds
	0.5	Giving to multiple states including the state of your program
	0	National or International
Total Giving in Last Reported Year	1	\$250,000 statewide or \$1 million nationwide
	0	Less than the amounts listed above
Typical Gift Sizes  *when gift ranges overlap, we select the score corresponding to the suggested ask amount	2	\$100,000+
	1	\$10,000 - \$99,999
	0.5	\$5,000 - \$9,999
	0	Less than \$5,000
Gift Frequency for last Five Years*  *for your geographic region	1	125 gifts or more
	0.5	50-124 gifts
	0	Less than 50 gifts
Bonus Points	1	Volunteer Engagement (i.e. staff member serves on your board or a committee, staff team volunteers at your organization)
	1	Past Donor



# WHERE TO FIND FUNDER INFORMATION

- Funder Website (Guidelines, RFPs, proposal questions)
- Foundation Directory Online (Libraries often have subscriptions you can use)
- Just Grants AZ (get through the Alliance of AZ Nonprofits, have an RFP list)
- Guidestar.org (Form 990s)
- Instrument'l
- Grant Station
- Grants.gov

# RELATIONSHIPS

Often, the better relationship you have with the funder, the more likely you are to get funded.

People like to solicit foundations because they don't have the uncomfortable "ask" element – they give you permission to ask . . . But that doesn't mean that you should skip the relationship building.

See if board members, volunteers, staff, colleagues from other nonprofits can make an introduction.

CALL – INVITE – EDUCATE – ASK QUESTIONS . . . But do your homework first.

# IT FACTOR

You either have it or you don't. SORRY!

But that's okay . . . Very few organizations have the special "It Factor" at any given time. You do not need it to get funding . . . But if you have it, you will get a lot of funding!

# BONUS FACTOR: SUBMISSION PHILOSOPHY

CONSERVATIVE: Only submit to funders that you have a relationship with.

AGGRESSIVE: Submit to all funders to which you are eligible to apply.

\*Here is the rub: A conservative approach will improve your success rate, but an aggressive approach will improve the amount raised. So you need to find the proper balance.

# QUESTIONS ON FACTORS THAT IMPACT SUCCESS



# GRANT WRITING BASICS

# 3 STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

## 1. Define the Problem

- Funders must first and foremost believe that the proposed program is serving an important need. If they don't believe in the urgency of the problem, nothing else you write matters.

## 2. Propose a Viable Solution

- Funders must then believe that what you are proposing will help solve the root cause of the problem or alleviate the immediate need/hardship.

## 3. Establish Your Organization's Credibility/Capability

- Finally, funders must believe your organization can complete the proposed program successfully.

# DEFINE THE PROBLEM

Needs Statement

Target Population

Geographic Area Served



# NEEDS STATEMENTS ADDRESS:

- What the issue or need is in the community you serve
- Why we should care (connect the dots)
- What will happen if the need is met / how the situation will improve
- Why the program is necessary

# A GOOD NEEDS STATEMENT:

- Establishes that the applicant understand the problem
- Conveys to the funder the urgency and significance of the problem
- Emphasizes the need(s) of your constituents (not the organization's need)
- Supports the assertions about the need/quantifies the need with documented, credible sources
- Uses internal citations for your sources (when space allows)
- Discusses the impact on people if the need is resolved
- Assures the funder that addressing this need is a wise investment

# GAP ANALYSIS

Identify hinderances or roadblocks that prevent the target population from achieving the desired outcome (this is the gap your program will fill).

1. Define the desired future state
2. Identify the current state
3. Determine the gaps / barriers / missing services

# TARGET POPULATION

Show your target population is in greater need than others. Compare to other geographical areas, income levels, etc.

Provide characteristics of our target population:

- Demographics (especially those relevant to the problem)
- Description of the problem they face (tell their story, draw the readers in)

Make the case with:

- External statistics (i.e. U.S. Census, government reports, MAG interactive map)
- Internal statistics (i.e. organization's constituents' stats, internal survey results)
- Constituents' stories or testimonials (pre-intervention or program)

# GEOGRAPHIC AREA SERVED

- Define the geographical area served (i.e. state, city, neighborhood, school district)
- Localize the need data/documentation as much as possible to your geographic area (if the need is greater in your area than surrounding areas or the state, demonstrate that)
- Regional and national funders are not necessarily familiar with local attributes, neighborhoods, population statistics, so add specificity to geographical descriptions for them.

# “DEFINE THE PROBLEM” TIPS

- Do not assume the funder know or understand the problem already.
- Even if the funder does not ask a specific question about need, work it into the proposal in an abbreviated way.
- Tailor the information to address the funder’s area of interest.
- Do not include assumptions or undocumented assertions.
- Use the most up-to-date information available from the most credible sources.
- Use simple, clear statistics that support your argument.
- Quote authorities (individuals, organizations, research reports)
- Use touching stories to illustrate the need.
- Don’t jump into describing the solution. Present the problem in a way that sets up the solution.

# PROPOSE A SOLUTION

**Program Description**

**Anticipated Impact**

# PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program description is the heart of the proposal and should, in a clear and concise manner, show a thoughtful, workable solution to the problem you've presented.

Explain the purpose of the program:

- Describe the activities the grant will fund
- Describe who will benefit from the program and how they will benefit
- Tie the program to the need/problem you have previously defined
- Tie the program to the funder's goals and objectives

Show how the program fits within the organization:

- State how the program advances the organization's mission
- Show how the program aligns with the organization's scope of services
- State if program is new, continuing or an expansion of an existing program



# PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Questions to answer when writing a program description:

- What is the proposed program? (title, purpose, and activities)
- Why is the proposed program important?
- How does the program address the stated need?
- What will be accomplished by this program during the time period of the grant?
- How does the program fit within your organization's mission?
- What resources are needed to complete this program? (staff, equipment, space, funding)
- What is the timeline for the proposed program?
- Why is your organization suitably equipped to undertake this program?

# ANTICIPATED IMPACT

## Goals: WHAT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH

- Broad, overarching statements of purpose for your program
- Not measurable, but should be realistic
- Generally not met during time period of grant, or entirely by one program

## Outcomes: WHAT YOU WILL CHANGE

- Benefits or changes that result from your program activities (i.e. changes in behavior, knowledge, skills, attitude)
- The basis for your evaluation plan, so must be measurable (SMART)
- Distinguish between short-term (12 months), medium term (2-3 years) and long-term (5-10 year) outcomes

# ANTICIPATED IMPACT

## Objectives: WHAT YOU WILL DO

- A list of activities and/or items you will produce, participate in, and/or use to achieve the goals and outcomes of the program (look at it as the workplan)
- Measurable and can be placed on a timeline

## Outputs: WHAT WILL RESULT FROM THE OBJECTIVES

- The direct product from the program activities/objectives
- Measured in volume of work accomplished (i.e. number of service units, participants, products developed)

# IMPACT EXAMPLE

**Goal:** To improve high school graduation rates of minority students.

**Outcomes:**

- 1) Increased parent engagement in child's education.
- 2) Increased % of parents who feel empowered to engage.

**Objectives:**

- 1) Train teachers on parent engagement strategies
- 2) Hold parent engagement events (i.e. Parent University)

**Outputs:**

- 1) Number of teacher trainings held
- 2) Number of teachers who attend trainings
- 3) Number of parent engagement events held
- 4) Number of parents who attend parent engagement events.

# ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY AND CAPABILITY

Organization History

Organization Accomplishments

Financials

Evaluation

Letters of Support

# WHY CREDIBILITY AND CAPABILITY

- Funders want to support organizations with a track record of successfully serving the community and making an impact on the target populations.
- You can demonstrate that you are capable of:
  - Managing money efficiently
  - Implementing programs successfully (including the proposed one)
  - Handling reporting requirements
- Even if this question is not asked, you should include evidence of your credibility and capacity throughout your proposal as you are able.

# ORGANIZATION HISTORY

## Brief Description of Organization's Beginnings:

- When was organization founded?
- Where was organization founded?
- Who founded organization?
- Why did they found it?
- Who was the initial target population?
- What was the original scope of the organization's work?
- How many employees and/or volunteers did the organization have at founding?
- Any interesting trivia about the organization's beginnings

# ORGANIZATION HISTORY

## Key Milestones:

- When organization received nonprofit status
- Key program inceptions (can be tailored to the proposal)
- Noteworthy awards (or grants)
- Key hire(s) – only if still relevant
- Accreditation or membership in national governing body

## Examples of Growth:

- Expansion of programs (either new programs or increased scope of original programs)
- Geographic reach
- Annual budget
- Number of employees and/or volunteers
- Target populations



# ORGANIZATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Illustrate your organization's success using a combination of:

- Longevity (In our 54 year history)
- Position in the community (Arizona's largest or only)
- Numbers served annually and in total
- Honors and awards received
- Financial endorsements (grants from respected funders)
- Certifications, accreditations, seals of approval
- Testimonials from constituents
- Reviews (from respected critics or constituents)
- Test scores, graduation rates
- Evaluation results
- Program growth

# FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Demonstration that organization is in good financial shape:

- Financial Statements (audited preferred)
- IRS Form 990

Demonstration that you have a grasp on what is needed for a successful program:

- Organization Budget
- Program Budget

Demonstration that the organization/program is sustainable:

- Sustainability Plan (earned income, fundraising programs, cost savings, increased organizational capacity, emphasize any one-time costs)
- Listing of Other Funders

# EVALUATION

Your evaluation plan shows that you are serious about achieving your outcomes and continuously improving your program.

**Outcome Evaluations** – Measure program's effectiveness, impact on the problem designed to address, whether outcomes met and what new knowledge is generated (before and after measures to analyze changes in attitudes/behavior/knowledge)

**Process Evaluations** – Assess the functioning of the program and provide input to strengthen future program offerings. Measures whether activities are implemented well, reaching intended audience, can be performed more efficiently, satisfied participants.

# EVALUATION

Identify the people who will be involved in the evaluation:

- Administrators (internal or external)
- Respondents (stakeholders)

Tie evaluation to outcomes/outputs/objectives

- For each outcome/output/objective listed, match it up with the evaluation used
- Use qualitative and quantitative measures

Detail data collection and reporting process

- When the information is collected
- How often it is collected
- Who collects the information
- When /how the information is used by the organization
- When/how the information is reported to stakeholders

# LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Letter of Support can come from partner organizations (confirming partnership, listing commitments, describing benefits) or community leaders (validating the need for the program and credibility of the organization).

Grant writer often writes the first draft, provides it to the signer to edit/sign. The final draft should be on signer's letterhead. Try to keep to one page.

Write letters of support first because you don't want to get it last minute to the signer.

Do not use the same narrative for letters of support from different signers. Use as opportunity to provide credibility of signer's organization.

# OTHER WAYS TO ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY

- Success in implementing similar programs (show longevity, implementation success, impact of programs)
- Reputation in the community you serve
- Management and staff qualifications (relevant experience, degrees, awards)
- Description of strategic plan and/or financial controls
- Description of board involvement
- Overview of management structure

# OTHER INFORMATION

**General Grant Writing Tips**

**Types of Proposals**

# GENERAL WRITING TIPS

- Avoid jargon
- Avoid overuse of acronyms
- Make arguments that appeal to both the head and the heart
- Know your audience – write how they want to receive information
- Keep sentences short
- Use simpler, more familiar language
- Use concrete, vivid language
- Use only the space needed to make a compelling case (aka – don't feel like you need to use all the space allotted to you if it is not moving the case forward)



# TYPES OF PROPOSALS

## Online Proposals

- The majority of proposals are now online
- Specific questions, often with character/word count limits

## Formatted/Fillable Proposals

- Specific questions, often with space or character limits
- Sometimes in fillable forms

## Unformatted Proposals

- No specific questions or format given
- Generally, I break into following subheads: Need, Organizational Overview, Program Description, Invitation to Partner and try to keep to less than four pages

# QUESTIONS?

Bethany Taylor

President, Good Works Grant Writing

[bethany@goodworksgrants.com](mailto:bethany@goodworksgrants.com)