

Several of you have told us that you want to know more about grant writing. How do you learn to write compelling (i.e., successful) grant requests? How can you improve on the applications you're already writing?

As we researched this topic, we found that there is *a lot* of information on it, much of it easy to find. Determining what would be most useful to you was more difficult, however. To make sure we pointed you in the right direction, we turned to the experts—your fellow Newsletter readers. The February 2006 Question of the Month asked, "What is the most valuable resource you have found for learning grant writing basics?" Here is what several readers recommended, along with some resources we found during our research.

Classes

By far, the most common answer was "I took a class," either free seminars or fee-based courses. Readers specifically mentioned classes offered by Associated Black Charities of Baltimore, Maryland; Circle of 10 in Tyler, Texas; Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts; CompassPoint; the Foundation Center; the Grantsmanship Center; Iowa State University Extension; and Zocklein & Associates.

If you are interested in taking a grant writing course but can't make it to one of the ones mentioned above, there are several places where you can look to find offerings in your area. Check with your state nonprofit association (see the list at www.ncna.org) or your local library. Watch your newspaper for announcements about grant-writing classes being given for local nonprofits. Search the Internet using "grant writing class" and your city or state as your keywords. And don't forget your local college(s) and university(ies).

Books

Readers also recommended several books:

- Larissa Golden Brown and Martin John Brown, *Demystifying Grant Seeking: What You REALLY Need to Do to Get Grants* (San Francisco, 2001).
- Beverly A. Browning, *Grant Writing for Dummies* (Hoboken, N.J., 2001).
- Susan L. Golden, *Secrets of Successful Grantsmanship: A Guerrilla Guide to Raising Money* (New York, 1997).
- Grantsmanship Center, *Program Planning and Proposal Writing* (Los Angeles, 1981).
- Cheryl Carter New and James Aaron Quick, *Grantseeker's Toolkit: A Comprehensive Guide to Finding Funding* (New York, 1998).
- Deborah Porter, *Successful School Grants: Fulfilling the Promise of School Improvement* (Pittsburg, Tex., 2003).

Other

Surf the Web

We've listed some specific sites at the end of this article, but don't limit yourself to them. Try doing an Internet search using "grant writing," "sample grant proposals," "grant writing tools," and similar phrases as your keywords.

Feeling overwhelmed? Trying to find funding for a special kind of programming few grantmakers support? "A Google a day should do the trick," Lisa Skaggs of Newton/Jasper RSVP notes. "Go to www.google.com and type in the type of program you need funding for. (I.e., Literacy grant, transportation grant, mentoring children of inmates grant, etc.) It takes time to find one that matches, but do one search a day and it will pay off."

Ask your colleagues

"The best way to improve your basic skills," advises Sarah Todd of the Art Center College of Design, "... is to ask for guidance from your colleagues along the way. If possible, read previously submitted proposals available in your organization's files and read proposals available on some funders' websites. Read, read, read. Don't be afraid or ashamed to ask questions."

Talk to experienced grant writers

"Talk to those in your community who have 10 years of experience under their belt," an anonymous reader recommends. "Ask them to review one of your grant applications and offer suggestions. It's a quick way to learn the do's and don't(s) of grant writing."

Get feedback from funders

"[Ask] funders for comments or advice on the submitted proposal," suggests Stephanie DeChambeau of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra.

Become a grantmaker yourself

"When I first began grantwriting," explains Cindy Garren of the Girl Scouts, Scranton Pocono Council, "I volunteered to serve on grants panels on a local, regional and state level. Reading grants was extremely educational. I learned to avoid jargon and to grab the funder immediately."

Places to Get Started

Here are some sites that offer grant-writing resources:

- **EPA Grant-Writing Tutorial,** www.purdue.edu/dp/envirosoft/grants/src/msieopen.htm
Software program produced by Purdue University under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- **Grant Proposal Writing Tips,** www.cpb.org/grants/grantwriting.html
Resource published by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting that provides guideposts for the grant-writing process.
- **Grantwriting Basics,** www.gse.harvard.edu/~hgseosr/toolbox.html
Ten tips for writing a successful proposal, along with additional resources for grant writers.

- **Grant Writing Tips,** www.seanet.com/~sylvie/grants.htm
Grant-planning questions, basic elements of good proposals, and links to grant resources from an experienced grant writer.
- **Grant Writing Tip Sheets,** http://grants.nih.gov/grants/grant_tips.htm
General grant-writing tutorials as well as specific information about applying for National Institutes of Health grants.
- **Non-profit Guides,** www.npguides.org
Grant-writing tools for nonprofits, including tips, sample proposals, and links.
- **Successful Grant Writing,** www.generalcode.com/grants/grant_writing_get_started.html
A grant-writing consultant's outline of the basic steps necessary for planning the grant-writing process.
- **Writing a Successful Grant Proposal,** www.mcf.org/mcf/grant/writing.htm
The Minnesota Council on Foundations' detailed outline of a grant proposal, which is particularly oriented to project proposals.

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