



# Grant Writing 101

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UnitedHealthcare Community Grant Services

## Topics

1. Grant writing and organization development
2. Proposal components
3. Identifying funders and creating your strategy
4. Setting up your tracking system
5. Writing and submitting proposals
6. Following up

## Goals

1. Understand how grant writing connects to an organization's mission and strategic plan
2. Understand how a grant writing system works
3. Develop grant writing skills
4. Develop funder relationship and management skills

## Challenges

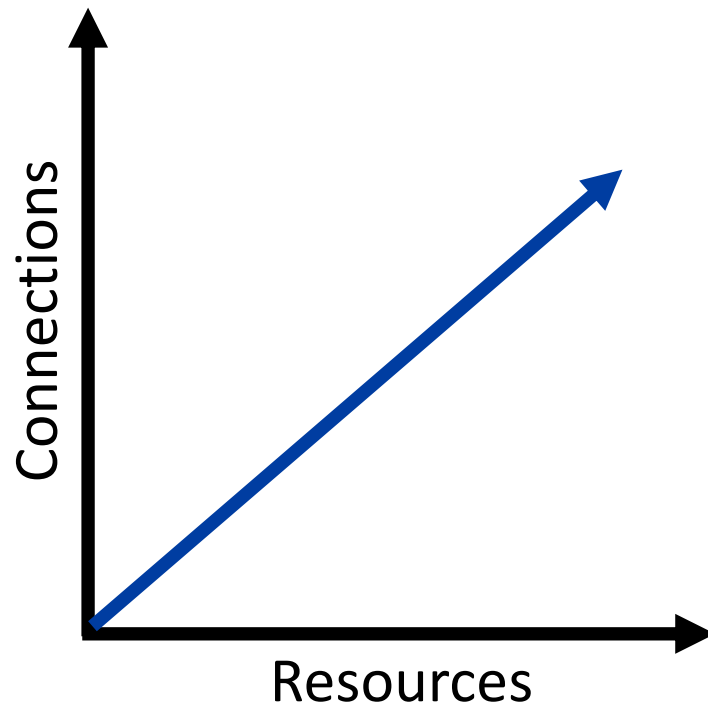
- Less money
- Increased demand for services
- Increased competition
- Economic and political changes
- Vulnerability to special interests
- Corporate social responsibility
- Move to unit costs

## Opportunities

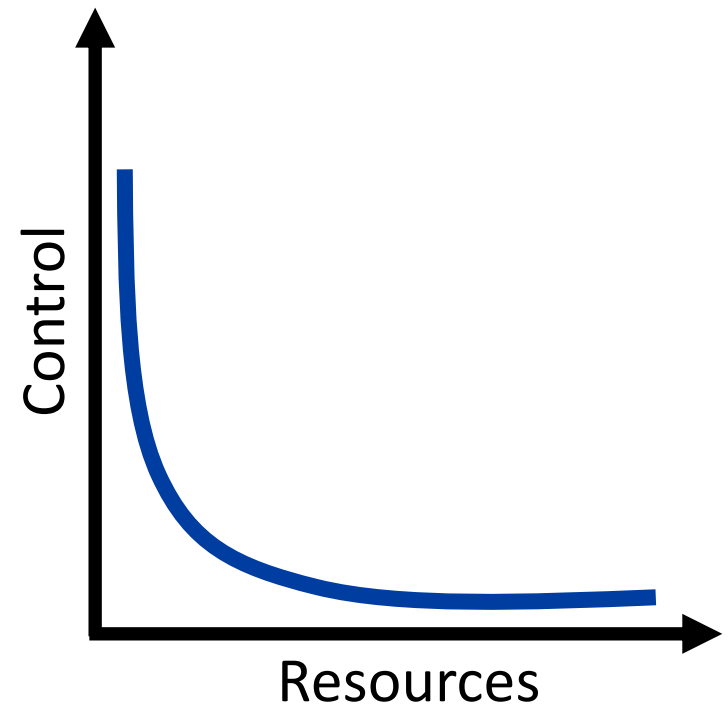
- Revisit mission
- Incentive for innovation
- Collaboration
- Reduction of redundancies
- Local access to local funds
- Incentive for evaluation
- Motivation for public relations

Adapted from Emil Angelica, Community Consulting Group

Fundraising is built on relationships



Flexibility of funding varies



Emil Angelica, Community Consulting Group

- What you're currently doing (must)
- What you plan on doing in the near future (must)
- Keeping operations up to date (should)
- What you want to do (may)

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- Projects, programs and contracts
  - General operations
  - Technical assistance
  - Capital campaign

**Pro Tip 1:** *Always be aware of what your organization needs both programmatically and administratively. Meet with leadership frequently to understand and support those needs.*

## The 5 Questions

### 1. Who are you?

- a. Mission and vision
- b. History and **reason for creation**
- c. Staff
- d. Services
- e. Accomplishments**
- f. Partners

### 2. What problem are you addressing?

- a. The issues your activities will address
- b. Local statistics and agency data**
- c. Quantitative and qualitative information
- d. Understanding of client needs and culture**
- e. Connection to program
- f. Manageable

### 3. What are you going to do about it?

- a. Who, what, where, when, how
- b. Rationale, evidence-based practice, theory**
- c. Uniqueness of approach**
- d. Demonstration of staff capability

### 4. How will you know you've done it?

- a. Evaluation plan
- b. Client-centered outcomes**
- c. Activity outcomes
- d. Understanding of funder requirements
- e. Data collection tools
- f. Data collection, management, and analysis

### 5. What do you need to do it?

- a. Staffing plan
- b. Budget and budget narrative
- c. In-kind resources
- d. Partnerships
- e. Connection to activities**

**Pro Tip 2:** *Setting up your proposal components in advance helps you stay true to your organization's needs as you navigate and respond to funder interests and requests.*

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## What They Ask

1

- Describe your organization's history.
- Provide information on your current mission, structure, and scope of current activities.
- Discuss your organization's capability and experience with similar projects/populations and in providing culturally appropriate services.

2

- Describe the nature of the problem and extent of need.
- Document the inability to respond to the need with existing resources and services.
- Describe the potential impact if the problem is not addressed.

3

- Present a detailed work plan that outlines the activities or steps that will be undertaken to achieve project goals and objectives.
- Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished.

4

- Provide quantitative goals and objectives for the services in terms of the numbers served, types and number of services to be provided, and outcomes to be achieved.
- Description of the expected outcomes in terms of real changes in the lives of your constituents.

5

- Provide an itemized list of the use of funds.
- Describe how funds will be specifically applied to the overall program budget.
- Complete the following organization and program budget forms.

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## Small Foundations

- |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ May provide flexible/ongoing dollars</li><li>+ Broad guidelines</li><li>+ Informal request process</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Few professional staff</li><li>- Small awards</li><li>- May require personal connection</li></ul> |
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## Large Foundations

- |                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Sources of large sums of money</li><li>+ Professional, accessible staff</li><li>+ Clear guidelines and process</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- May only provide start up funds</li><li>- Process may be long, unique deadlines</li><li>- May have additional requirements</li></ul> |
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## Federated Funds

- |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Steady source of large funding</li><li>+ Professional staff</li><li>+ Clear guidelines and process</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Must fit priority focus, social service</li><li>- Very lengthy entry process</li><li>- Time consuming (site visits, reviews)</li></ul> |
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## Government

- |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                     |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Steady source of large funding</li><li>+ Professional staff</li><li>+ Clear process</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Long and tedious applications</li><li>- Difficult record keeping</li><li>- Influenced by politics</li></ul> |
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Adapted from Barbara Davis



# Identifying and Evaluating Funders

- What are their funding priorities?
- What are their funding restrictions?
- What/who have they funded in the past?
- What's their typical award size?
- Do we know anyone associated with them?
- What level of effort do they require?



[foundationcenter.org/find-funding/fdo-quick-start](http://foundationcenter.org/find-funding/fdo-quick-start)



[www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)



[www.tgci.com/funders](http://www.tgci.com/funders)



# Creating Your Strategy

- Gather every bit of information possible from websites, brochures, program officers, information sessions, other grant writers, open houses, brown bag lunches, associations of funders, etc.
- Rank potential funders according to their fit with your needs. Organize this list according to what you want them to fund.
- Determine the amount you will ask for based on their history.
- Note preferred method of contact.
- Identify application deadlines.
- Understand the length of their funding decision process.
- Notify people you know who have a connection with the funder that you will be applying.

**Pro Tip 3:** *The general rule is that only one in three proposals gets funded. For your initial strategy, plan on asking for three times more than you will need overall. You can increase this ratio by being thoughtful of who you ask and forming relationships with them.*

# Setting Up Your Tracking System

Funder	Types	First Contact	Program	Due	Submitted	Request	Result
McKnight	1, P, GO, C	LOI	General operations	2/1/99	2/1/99	\$200K	\$200K
MPAAT	P	Proposal	Chicano Latino tobacco network	3/1/99	2/28/99	\$75K	\$60K
Dain Rauscher	1, P	Phone	Employment	3/15/99	3/15/99	\$10K	pending
USBank	P	Proposal	Employment	4/1/99	4/1/99	\$20K	pending
Ramsey County	P	Proposal	Mental Health	7/1/99	7/1/99	\$50K	pending
Hennepin County	P	Proposal	Chemical Health	7/1/99	7/1/99	\$150K	pending
SHARE	P	Proposal	Elder Wellness	8/1/99	7/28/99	\$200K	pending

**Pro Tip 4:** *You may also include contact information, decision dates, and a notes section in your grid to keep track of any contact with the funder, and other pertinent information (e.g., connections with the funder).*

# Writing Your Proposal

1. Review proposal requirements and evaluation criteria (if available)
2. Get required authorization
3. Identify questions that are repetitive or not part of the “5 Questions”
4. Connect the RFP questions with the “5 Questions” and drop in pre-written components
5. Answer any remaining questions
6. Compile attachments
7. Have others review your final draft before submission
8. Get it in on time!

**Pro Tip 5:** *Funders rarely ask you questions that cleanly fall into one of these five categories. Assign these categories to each RFP question understanding that some questions may cover more than one category.*

**Pro Tip 6:** *Funders frequently ask the same question over and over. Answer the question again with new information from a different level or a different perspective. Repeating previous answers can create point loss.*

# General Tips

- Use your proposal as a method for developing a relationship with your funder
- Assume funders know nothing about your community, organization, services, or clients (even if they do, they want to get your understanding)
- Make the funders want to get involved, turn your reviewer into an advocate
- Answer every single question and answer all questions directly
- Use short, to the point sentences
- Don't use jargon, explain acronyms
- Avoid restating proposal requirements

# Now What?

- During the review process, funders may request additional information or a site visit. Respond to their needs as quickly as possible.
- If you've received a reward, say "thank you!" and find out the details of ongoing communication with the funder. Share your success with your organization's staff, clients, and other stakeholders. Keep in contact if your program changes or if you have questions. Invite them to events or programs. Send pictures.
- If your proposal was declined, find out why. "Should I apply again? How can I make my proposal more competitive?"

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# Additional Resources

For articles, tips, resources, and proposal examples, go to:

- [The Grantsmanship Center](#)
- [The Balance](#)
- [Minnesota Council on Foundations](#)
- [Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Principles and Practices for Excellence](#)

*“The challenges facing us require the involvement and resources of our entire society. We have more than enough people, skills, technology, and funding to achieve our visions for the future if we can only direct and redirect them. We need to develop the will and the ways to do this.”*

— Emil Angelica and Vince Hyman, *Coping with Cutbacks*



# Thank you!

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**For additional information, contact**  
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