# May 2022 VFW Proficiency Training Conference
# Grant Writing Session Book
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## 1. Introduction to Grant Writing

    a. Why are you interested in writing grants?


    b. What is your experience with grant writing?


    c. What do you know about grant writing?


    d. What sources of funding are you going after?
        i. Federal grants
        ii. Private foundations
        iii. Public grants
        iv. Corporate Foundations


### Exercise 1: Grant sites

With the other individuals at your table, explore these websites:

1. https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants.html
2. https://www.hhs.texas.gov/business/grants
3. https://www.cof.org/content/grants-management
4. https://www.grantwatch.com

What did you learn from these sites? What are the important and common elements of a grant proposal?


## 2. Overview of the Proposal or Grant Writing Process

The grant writing process starts well before you sit down to apply and the process includes:
1. Before you start:
    a. Ensure your status:
    b. Programmatic review:
    c. Determine amounts needed for each project:
    d. Create a grants pipeline and calendar:

2. Pre-Proposal Activities:

Pre-proposal activities require reflection, questioning, and research. Here are some questions to considering regarding your grant preparation

a. Why are you writing a grant proposal?
b. Why are you interested in writing a grant proposal?
c. Who's going to benefit if you write a grant proposal?
d. Can you identify the problem or idea that you want to address?
e. What is the minimum amount of money I needed to make the application worth it?

3. Apply

a. Develop a clear program plan:
b. Do your research:
c. Read instructions carefully:
d. Edit and finalize:

4. Manage the Grant

a. Keep track of the project budget:
b. Put together reports:
c. Steward funders:

## Exercise # 2:

Visit https://www.guidestar.org and pull up a foundation's 990 and review their funding records from the past year. What do you notice? What is the average gift size? Who do they fund? What kinds of projects do they support?

## 3. Creating the Proposal

a. Give yourself a long runway
b. Follow directions, follow directions, follow directions
c. Tailor the ask to the funder and the funder's questions
d. Simplify your writing, eliminate jargon, and use the active voice.
e. Invite a friend with NO knowledge of the program to read and edit.
f. Reach out to the funder to learn more (If you can-more information below)

### 1. The types of grant formats

a. A letter of intent, which is usually a two-page summary to brief the funding agency about the idea.
b. A one to two-page letter proposal (used for corporate, independent, and family foundations).
c. Long form applications that typically follow the preferences of the agency

2. The process

    a. Cover letters (typically from the ED or Board Chair)

    b. Introduction

    c. Need Statement (Why does the problem you are seeking to solve matter?) Developing a NEED or Problem Statement. A need statement is a key element for allgrant proposals. It should be clear, concise, and well-supported statement of the problem that will be overcome should grant funds be awarded. It is the explanation for the granting agency to award funds.

    d. Description of the intervention or project

    e. How will you measure success? *Often, grant writers do not spend enough time articulating the evaluation section, particularly for state and federal grants. This may be that grant writers believe that they may not have enough experience in evaluation. Evaluation should be planned carefully. It should reflect 10-15% of the proposed budget for state and federal grants. If you do not have the expertise, then add it to your budget. For example, add a consultant who can conduct an evaluation or seek information from others.*

    f. How will you sustain the project in the future?

    g. If this is an existing program, how have you measured success in the past?

    h. Detailed budget

## Exercise # 3

Think about your organization. Which project/projects are you seeking funding for? Take a few minutes to jot down an executive summary of the program and include the following:

- Who you are hoping to serve?
- How does the project/ program work?
- How will you know when you have achieved your goal?
- What will you measure?

*As you review private foundations, remember to always make time to review the 990. 90% of foundations do not have websites. In these situations, the 990 will tell you where and how to apply.

## Exercise #4

With the other participants at your table, review the grant examples at your table. What do you notice? Where could they be stronger? If you were reviewing the grant submission, how would you rate it? Which ones do you think were successful?

## 5. Managing And Reporting

While the reporting and management phase of the grant lifecycle may seem straight forward, in practice the steps involved are often overlooked.

After you receive a grant award, it is your responsibility to follow what you stated in your proposal. What are the ethical concerns? What happens if you change something in your proposal? How do you handle these issues?

    a. Make sure that you have an organized plan to submit a mid-term, quarterly, or final report(s) and budgetary requests to the funding agency when the date is listed. (You do want to receive future funding from this agency).

    b. Keep the funding agency happy and excited about your program. Consider doing the following:

        1. Send a thank you note

        2. Recognize the agency in some manner

        3. Invite the staff from the funding agency to your institution to show your program

        4. If you can't invite the staff, send a video clip or pictures!!

        5. Invite the staff of the foundation to get involved.

## 6. Site visits and follow up

Many foundations include either a site visit or meeting to discuss the proposal in more detail. At this point in the process, it is very important to be as professional and polished as possible.

Here are a few tips to help you prepare for the meeting:

    a. Re-read the proposal, and be very familiar with it.

    b. Take your time, think about what can be adjusted without sacrificing the grant.

    c. Be prepared to discuss the rationale for keeping certain items

    d. Show gratitude

    e. Ask for guidance

## 7. Accessing invite only opportunities

While there are many foundations that still take unsolicited requests, an increasing number utilize a closed process. However, just because the process is "closed", it doesn't mean they are inaccessible.

Below are a few tips to help navigate invite only opportunities:

a. 990s are king: Look through the 990 and take note of the organizations that have been historically funded by the foundation. Do you know anybody on the list? If so, reach out and ask for more information.

1. Board list: Each 990 requires board-members and highest paid staff to be listed. Take note of this list and share it with key community leaders you know. If any of them know somebody on the list, ask them to make a connection

2. Cold outreach: Utilize names in the 990 to help locate email addresses or linkedin accounts and reach out. Use this as an opportunity to to ask questions and seek input. DO NOT IMMEDIATELY ASK FOR MONEY.