FUNDID

Grant Application Guide

We hope you'll get a lot of value from this resource. This guide will help you increase your grant writing skills to ultimately win more grants.

Here, you can learn about how to write a grant application that will stand out. We will go through aspects like how to find grants, along with how to fill out the application for success!

✳ Getting Started With Grants:

Finding Grants:

We understand how hard it is to find grants, searching the internet and coming across so many grants that you don't know if you should take the time to apply for. Our goal is to make getting grants as easy as we can for you! We have created the Grant Marketplace to help save time with searching so you can focus on the important part- applying!

Keeping Track & Staying Organized:

Not only have we created the Grant Marketplace, we have also created a Grant Tracker that helps you keep track of the grants you find. Through this tool, you can select the grants that fit your needs, then track information regarding the deadline dates, grantor information, and any notes you might want to keep.

✳ How Do You Apply:

The first step to a successful grant application process is selecting a funding opportunity that makes sense for your needs. Contrary to popular belief, applying for every grant opportunity you find does not increase your chances of receiving funding. Depending on the application,rant applications can be a hefty time commitment, so vetting opportunities to make sure the odds are in your favor is important.

Join Our Grant Match Program

Get a custom list of grants that match your Fundid Profile sent straight to your inbox!

Get Your Grant List

A few things you should consider before applying to a grant opportunity:

- **Do you qualify for the grant?**

It's important to look at all of the eligibility requirments of the grant you're thinking about applying for. You'll want to be extremely confident that you meet all of the funding entity's criteria. For example, if grants are being offered to women-owned businesses where 100% of the founders identify as women, and you're only 50% women-founded, you'll want to invest your energy elsewhere.

- **Who have they funded in the past?**

Most funding entities will advertise previous recipients of their grants on their website or past articles archived in their newsletters. It will be extremely helpful to see what kind of businesses they've funded in the past so you can see if your organization aligns similarly. If you see common themes between your business and past recipients, this grant is likely a good fit for you.

- **Do the funders' values align with yours?**

Funders support businesses whose mission and values align with theirs. Looking at a funding entity's "About Us" or "Mission and Values" page will help you identify where they stand and what they value. Then, you'll be able to tailor your grant application to these themes for a better chance of success.

✳ The Application:

When it comes to deciding where to put their dollars, most funders are looking for three things: a story, a solution, and a market. This guide will walk you through how to make the most appealing case when writing a grant proposal.

Cover Letter:

The cover letter is another vital part of your application and goes hand and hand with the title page. A cover letter should be very intentional in mentioning the grant title in the first and sentence and reiterate in the last paragraph as well. A cover letter that is to the point, brief, and does not repeat the same information from the title page is ideal.

As important as the content is for a cover letter, the formatting and presentation is also key to catching the funder's eye. Keep in mind that not all funders want a cover letter, but those who ask for it want it done with no spelling mistakes and they don't want to read a huge report. A couple of paragraphs (three to four) will do for the cover letter.

Organizational Background and Staffing:

You're in the final stretch! The organizational background section is typically the last section of a grant application. In this section, you'll be describing your organization, it's history, and your key team members. This is a great section to brag about yourself, your company, and it's accomplishments.

You should prepare answers to the following questions in advance:

- When was your business's start date?
- What is your business EIN?
- Do you have a written business plan?
- Do you have Articles of Incorporation for your business?
- What is your mission statement?
- Provide a brief history of your organization's founding and evolution.
- Provide a short bio for your leadership team and key employees.

When describing your organization's history and evolution, you should include your proudest accomplishments and any other "bragging rights" you feel would appeal to the funder.

Organization Overview:

When you talk about your business, you should start by defining the problem you are solving. Make sure your audience can easily understand that there's a real problem that your company can solve by making your story real and relatable. Funders need to see you as a real person who is passionate about what they do.

Over-use the fact that you bring something to the table that other businesses don't. Advertise yourself as a good investment, because you are! Funders are more likely to invest when they feel an emotional connection to the business and its mission, so it's important that you emphasize that you are a diverse investment that is further paving the way for entrepreneurs.

Top 5 Reasons on Why You Should Hire a Grant Writer

Grant writers can help save you time so you can focus on growing your business. If you plan to apply for a lot of grants, you might want to...

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Common Documents You Need for Grant Applications

While every grant application has it own requirements, a lot of themrequest common documents like past taxes, business plan...

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How to Avoid Business Grant Money Scams

Millions of americans fall victim to money scams and they can happen with business grants. Follow these tips to stay safe and avoid...

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Executive Summary:

An executive summary will help the grantor understand very clearly what it is you're asking for. Your executive summary should be concise and extremely engaging. Your executive summary will include a brief introduction, a summary of a problem and how your business will solve it, supporting data or evidence, and a call to action.

Depending on the format of the grant application, your executive summary can range from a few sentences to one page. Click the link to the Executive Summary Resource to learn tips and tricks on how to get started.

Statement of Need:

The next section of most grant applications will be the statement of need. In this section, you'll need to convince the grantor that your product/project is essential and your business is the one that can get it done. When you're ready to begin, be sure to check out this Needs Statement Resource for additional guidance.

The key to a good statement of need is to use plain language. Technical jargon will distract the reader from your point and cause them to lose interest if they cannot easily understand what your need is. When crafting your needs statement, you should assume that it is the first time the funder is hearing about the problem, and choose your language accordingly. You should avoid sweeping statements that lack specificity.

An example of a sweeping statement would be:

"Because of social distancing, customers were not comfortable coming to my store."

One way to modify this statement could be:

"Because of social distancing, customers were not comfortable coming to my store, which impacted my revenues by 40% between March and April."

When creating your needs statement, you should support it with statistics, expert opinions, and concrete evidence of trends. It's important that the information you're citing is from reputable sources that the grantor can trust.

Finally, you should make sure that the needs you mention in your statement align with the goals of the funder. The statement of need will drive your entire proposal, so focus on the main issue you want to address and let the smaller issues fall to the wayside.

✳ The Project:

Goals and Objectives:

The goals and objectives section of your grant proposal will let the grantor know what success could look like if they invest in you. In this section, you could clearly identify your goals and what you expect to achieve. The first step to identifying your goals and objectives is to make your SMART Goals.

SMART is an acronym that stands for:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-bound

Methods and Strategies:

The methods and strategies portion of a grant can also be thought of as the "activities" section of the application. This section will outline the actions you plan on taking to achieve the goals outlined in the previous section. You should include who will be participating, what service you're providing, how often, and for how long.

Your methods and strategy section is where you want to provide as much detail as possible. Think, "who, what, when, where, why, how'. You should include specific timelines and actions that demonstrate that you have thought everything through and know exactly what action steps need to be taken. Reviewers are always drawn to numbers, so keep this in mind when writing this section. Providing as much actionable detail as you can will make a considerable impact on the grantor.

The Solution:

It's important to ask yourself 'how does my business meet the needs of the consumer/audience?' and 'how do I convince funders that it's important to them?'. You might not have a lot of space in a grant application to go into extensive detail about your company and your product, so keep the description of your solution simple and straightforward.

Describing your customers' problems can be done by looking at 'pain points'. Knowing your target audience's pain points helps you frame the solution your business is bringing to the table. The problem you identify will serve as the foundation for your company, and the main reason as to why you should receive funding.

Financial pain points:

Your target market spends too much on their current provider's products or services.

Productivity pain points:

Your target market wastes too much time using their current provider's products or services or wants to use their time more efficiently.

Support pain points:

Your target market does not receive the support they need in their customer journey from their current provider.

Implementation Plan:

An implementation plan shows that you have a clear understanding of where the funds will be going. After you have outlined your objectives and goals, finish with the implementation plan on accomplishing them with the requested funding. Continue to show the funder what you will accomplish if funded. Be sure to cover how you will achieve each goal and objective you outlined above.

Evaluation Plan:

The main thing grantors want to see in the evaluation section of your application is how you intend to measure impact. Your evaluation should include both an implementation evaluation and a summative evaluation. There are a couple options when it comes to executing your evaluation. You can do an internal evaluation, where you dedicate staff to do an internal assessment, or you can hire outside expertise to conduct your evaluation. Keep in mind, if you decide to conduct an external evaluation, you should dedicate about 5-10% of your total project budget to evaluation. Also be sure that the grant specifications allow you to include this as a covered cost, not all funders will!

An *implementation evaluation* should address whether you are completing the activities you outlined in your methods section.

Your *summative evaluation* should address whether or not you are meeting your overall goals and objectives.

- To track progress about how your implementation and summative evaluation plans are going, remember to ask yourself these questions: What records are you keeping? What data are you collecting? How are you going to use this data?

The next thing you need to decide is whether or not you will use quantitative or qualitative methods for your data collection. You'll need to develop a good description of these methods and justify why you're using them.

Your evaluation should connect back to your goals, objectives, and methods. As long as your targets and methods are measurable, your evaluation will be easy to execute.

Budget Information:

Grantors want to see exactly what you plan to do with the funding they give you, plain and simple. Typically, they'll ask you to upload an excel sheet outlining your expected expenses and revenue or ask you to fill in their own template form.

Some general expenses may include:

- Personnel costs (including payroll taxes and benefits)
- Materials/Supplies
- Facilities Costs
- Travel
- Marketing
- Equipment
- Construction
- Subcontracts

Some income sources may include:

- Earned income
- Donations
- Sponsorships
- In-kind donations
- Other grant funding
- Loans

Although it may be hard to know exactly where every dollar will go, it's important that you're as accurate as possible. Giving a percentage or range for each subcategory in your budget will give grantors context on your highest priorities.

Any messaging that will set you apart from the 'large-male-dominated' norm that is typically seen will further set you apart from other businesses and make a funder feel good that their money is going to someone that is part of a larger overall movement.
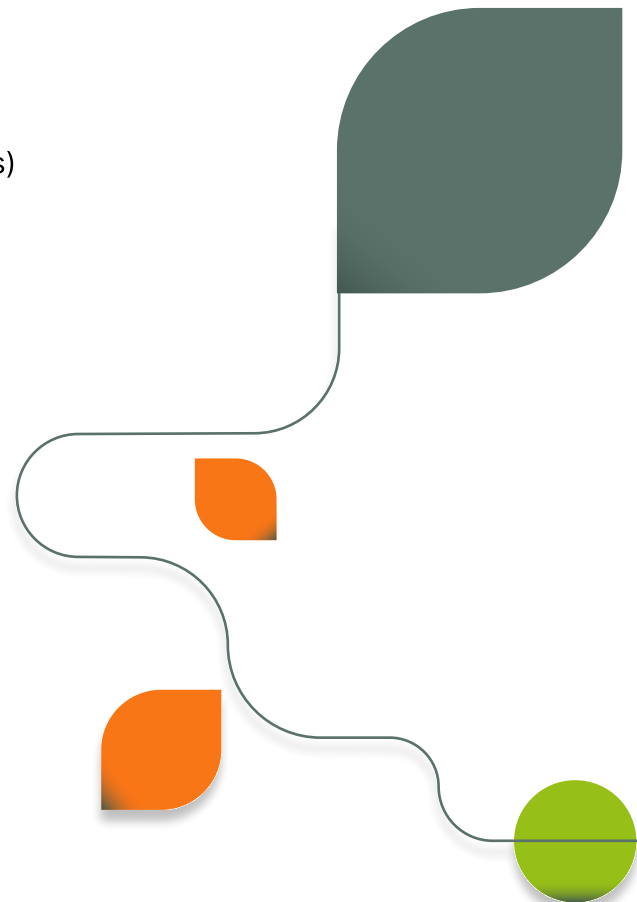
Strategic messaging is important when thinking about how you want to tell your story. A funder should be able to understand your business/mission in a fewshort sentences. Our rule is, "get it down to what you can say between floors if you meet someone on an elevator". You want your messages to be remembered, so you should use strategic language that's going to stick with people.

Describing your customers' problems can be done by looking at 'pain points'. Knowing your target audience's pain points helps you frame the solution your business is bringing to the table. The problem you identify will serve as the foundation for your company, and the main reason as to why you should receive funding. The main types of customers' pain points: Financial pain points: Your target market spends too much on their current provider's products or services.

Productivity pain points: Your target market wastes too much time using their current provider's products or services or wants to use their time more efficiently.
Support pain points: Your target market does not receive the support they need in their customer journey from their current provider.

✳ Check Your Work (Then Check It Again!):

You only have one chance once you click the send button and submit your grant application. Most funding entities will not allow extra supplemental material or edited applications once your grant is submitted, so it's extremely important to make sure you've got everything right the first time.

Allow yourself ample time to write your application, edit, and share with colleagues and key stakeholders. Having a fresh pair of eyes edit your application will help you get perspective and useful feedback as to what your application looks like to a blind reader.

In addition to editing your application for grammar and content, be sure to review the application requirements like word or character count/page limit, and any other documentation you might need (such as letters of support).

After doing your due diligence, take a deep breath and hit send! Remaining confident in yourself and your business goes a long way.
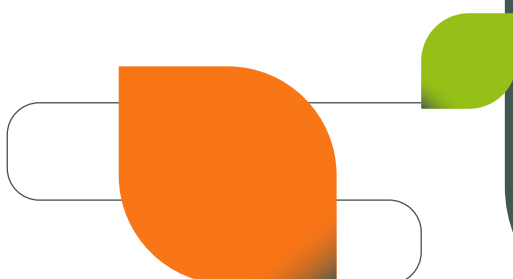
Start Searching For Grants!

Hopefully you have all that you need to feel confident in applying for business grants!

Find Business Grants