GrantStation and the Grant Professionals Association
Grantwriting Tips from the Field
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Team Approach
- To write a winning grant, a team approach is needed.
- Everyone on the team has a role (from the coaches who collect demographic data, to researchers who pull information, to the financial staff who develop budgets, to the grantwriter that pulls all the information from the team together, etc.).

How Does an Organization Start Writing Proposals?
A lot can be done before a funding opportunity is identified. For example:
- Develop a file of common attachments (nonprofit incorporation letter, list of board members, 990 tax forms, annual reports, audits, etc.).
- Create universal language to common grant questions. This way, you don't have to start from scratch with each application.
- Modify universal language to tailor your answers to particular funding opportunities.

What Should Nonprofit's Know About Timing in the Grantwriting Process?
- It takes a lot of time to put together a successful grant proposal.
- Before you start writing a proposal:
  - Read the funder's website closely to understand where your work aligns with their priorities and to make sure you are eligible. If you can, try to find information on their existing grantees or grant amounts.
  - Identify and read through all the questions that need to be answered. Look at the overall structure and the way the funder uses terminology so you can establish an initial strategy to address each question.
  - Identify all the documents that need to be submitted, including all attachments. Make a plan to collect each and every document and do not assume they will all be easy to complete/obtain.
  - Pay special attention to your team's schedules to ensure you are being realistic to get all the work done on time.

Sustainability
This can be a frustrating and intimidating question because nonprofit programs largely exist to fill gaps in services that are not supported by the private or public sectors, so by definition you are working against market forces. Financial sustainability or self-sufficiency may not be possible. The question can be reframed to think about sustainability in a few different ways:
- How can the program generate some revenue to offset reliance solely on philanthropy?
- Can you demonstrate stability over time, including stability of services through economic, socio-political, climate, or other crises?

- Can you highlight continuity of leadership and/or community embeddedness over time?
- Can you demonstrate a steady increase in investment and growth over time?
- Do you have a clear strategy and plan for the future that adapts to changing conditions?

Evaluation
- Focus on right-sized monitoring and evaluation strategies. It is important to be realistic in identifying what information you can collect and what you can achieve.
- Not all projects will have a rigorous, scientific evaluation.
- It is important to decide upfront what information you need to make program modifications/adjustments from your program data.
- There is much research out there already! If you do not have independent evaluation data, consider what relevant evidence for your program model already exists, and demonstrate how your program aligns with these best practices.
- While it doesn't meet a social science standard for controlling variables, offering comparison data between participants in your program in relation to the general population or a relevant comparison group is very effective in making a case that your program shows promising results.