LEARNING MADE EASY

7th Edition

Grant Writing

for dummies®

A Wiley Brand

Write compelling grant applications

Find reputable funding sources and organizations

Build the strongest application

Dr. Beverly A. Browning, MPA, DBA

Grant writing consultant, coach, and online instructor

Grant Writing

7th Edition

by Dr. Beverly A. Browning, MPA, DBA

for dummies®
A Wiley Brand

Grant Writing For Dummies®, 7th Edition

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Introduction

When I wrote the first edition of *Grant Writing For Dummies* in 2001, a lot of my grant professional colleagues thought I was giving away "our" secrets. However, I have never felt that way. I just wanted everyone who had an interest in finding grantfunding opportunities and writing grant proposals to have access to a handy reference tool filled with expert-driven insight and information. (If I didn't know anything about this process, I would certainly look to a leading reference tool to teach me.) With each new edition of this book, I have worked diligently to provide fresh perspectives and updated information on grant writing. With over a million readers, I am humbled at how much this book has introduced potential grantwriters to the world of grants.

By using this book daily, you can achieve your highest goals, including winning almost everything you submit for funding or award consideration. You can even build your funding success rate. And, if you want to dive even further into grant writing with me, you may want to consider enrolling in one of my online classes or sponsoring one of my virtual grantwriting training sessions.

About This Book

The structure of *Grant Writing For Dummies*, 7th Edition, is designed to help you get in and get out of the text with just the information you were looking for. Consider this book your ultimate grantwriting reference tool. Read it in any order you want and bookmark sections you expect to return to repeatedly.

You don't need to read the sidebars sprinkled throughout the text. You can identify them by their gray-shaded boxes. They're simply extra tidbits of information that are interesting but not critical to your understanding of grant writing.

What's New in This Edition

This new edition includes five major changes:

- Grantmakers (mainstream and some smaller funders) have shifted from paper grant applications to online portals only. The book reviews the portals and talks about the writing constraints involved with online copy and paste templates.
- More grants for women in business are surfacing weekly from the website `helloalice.com`. The book addresses these new opportunities and what they mean for for-profit businesses seeking grant funding.
- Technology rules. Nothing remains the same for a very long time in the online world. From new grant-research databases to other helpful websites to assist grantwriters in increased productivity, this edition covers it all.
- There are multiple federal portals emerging for submitting grant applications, including the Grants.gov workspace, JustGrants (USDOJ), and the ERA Commons (NIH).
- The emerging virtual world of remote working for grantwriters and the type of equipment needed to meet, work, and train (all grant-related).

Foolish Assumptions

As I authored this book, I assumed it would serve as a desktop and online reference for

- Individuals seeking research and education on grantwriting sources and approaches
- New grantwriters looking to be guided through every step of the process, from understanding the definition of a grant to planning, researching, writing, and submitting
- Veteran grantwriters seeking to increase their funding success rates

Note: Although I address grant opportunities for individuals and small businesses, the majority of this book focuses on winning grants on behalf of nonprofit organizations, government agencies, academic institutions, and other eligible applicants in the eyes and minds of the funders.

Icons Used in This Book

The little pictures in the margins throughout this book are designed to highlight information that's special and important for one reason or another. *Grant Writing For Dummies,* 7th Edition, uses the following icons:

This icon points to pieces of information you shouldn't forget.

Wherever you see this icon, you're sure to find a promising idea, trick, or shortcut that can save you time and trouble.

Make sure to read the paragraphs marked with this icon; it indicates information that can help you avoid disasters.

Beyond the Book

In addition to the material in the print or e-book you're reading right now, this product also comes with some access-anywhere goodies on the web. Check out the free Cheat Sheet for tips on writing effective grant proposals, where to look for grant funding, and grant research websites worth your time. To get this Cheat Sheet, simply go to `www.dummies.com` and type **Grant Writing For Dummies Cheat Sheet** in the Search box.

You can also go to `www.dummies.com/go/grantwritingfd7e` for templates you can use to make your next grantwriting experience a little easier.

Where to Go from Here

Where you start reading this latest edition of *Grant Writing For Dummies* is up to you. You can begin by perusing the table of contents and then hitting sections of interest. Or you can head to the chapter that addresses an area of grant writing you're currently struggling with. If, however, you're brand-new to the grant research and writing game, I suggest you begin with Chapter 1, which gives you an overview of this book's tips and strategies for finding grantfunding opportunities and winning grant awards.

1 Getting Started with Everything Grants

IN THIS PART . . .

Become familiar with grantwriting basics, including funding development plans and submission requirements.

Create a grantfunding plan.

Get familiar with the basics funders expect to see in a grant request — and numerous ways to give your application an edge over the competition.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Diving into grantwriting basics
- Creating a funding development plan
- Finding foundation and government grants
- Meeting submission requirements
- Preparing for acceptance or rejection

Chapter 1

Grantwriting Basics for Beginners

If I had a dollar for every call and email I received from everyone and every organization wanting to pursue grant funding, I'd be super rich. I can actually recite the response that I regretfully have to give most inquirers.

In this chapter, I give you an overview of everything grant related and encourage you to read on through each chapter to get the full picture of every aspect of the grantwriting journey. If you have always wanted to learn more about grant writing, want to build relationships with potential funders, learn how to connect with your elected officials to stay in the know about federal grantfunding opportunities, and secure funding, this is the only book written to put you in the driver's seat on your journey. Get out your highlighters and sticky notes and let's get started!

Orienting Yourself on Grantseeking Basics

In order to hone your "find a grant now" skill set, you need a lot of basic information. First things first: what a grant is *not.* A grant is *not* a way to pay off your debts, like mortgages, student loans, government loans, or utility bills. It's *not* a

way to fund your first trip abroad. A grant also is *not* a way to get out of jail free. You won't find a grantfunder that will give you free money for personal needs.

In this section, I explain common terms and lay out the basic information you need to know to jump on the grantseeking boat without a life preserver.

Learning common grantwriting terminology

Basically speaking, a *grant* (sometimes labeled a *cooperative agreement* by government funding agencies) is a monetary award of financial assistance to eligible grant applicants. The principal purpose of the grant is to transfer dollars from a funding agency or entity *(grantor)* to a recipient *(grantee)*, who undertakes to carry out the proposed objectives (the written implementation plans in the grant application narrative) that they committed to when they submitted the grant application. Here are some common grantwriting terms and their definitions:

- **Grant/cooperative agreement:** The distinguishing factor between a grant and a cooperative agreement is the degree of government (state, federal, or local) participation or involvement during the grantee's actual startup and implementation of the proposed activities.

  A grant award is made via a contract or agreement between the funding agency (the *grantor*) and the recipient (the *grantee*), with the grant supporting the activities and deliverables (implementation strategies and measurable time-bound objectives or benchmarks) detailed in the proposal/application (and finalized during the process of confirming the grant award). Reading the grant application's guidelines thoroughly (and multiple times) is critical to being funded. (Refer to Part 2 for tips on finding grantfunding opportunities.)

REMEMBER

- **Grantor:** A *grantor* (also known as a *grantmaker* or *funder*) is the organization or agency that receives your funding request and decides to fund it or reject it. Grantors include the grantmaking agencies of the federal government, tons of state and local government agencies (including in the U.S. territories), and more than 100,000 foundations and corporate grantmakers. Two categories of grantors exist:

  - **Public-sector funder:** Any government grantmaker (federal, state, county, or local unit of government) that awards grants with money that comes from congressional allocations, federal pass-through dollars to states and municipalities, or taxpayer dollars — the public-sector.
  - **Private-sector funder:** A foundation or corporate grantmaker (independent of private foundation, operating foundations, corporate foundations, and community foundations) that uses funds from private sources — investments, contributions, donations, or grants — to fund eligible grant applicants.

- **Grantee:** The eligible grant applicant designated to receive a grant award. All grants require the grantee to use the funds as written (and promised) in the grant application. The required grant award paperwork is considered a contract between the grantor and the grantee. Up until you're awarded the grant, you're a *grant applicant;* you become a grantee only if you are approved for funding and agree to accept the award.

REMEMBER

Be certain you are an eligible grant applicant before applying for the grant.

So, how do you get a grantor to give you a grant and make you a grantee? After you've reviewed the guidelines (at least three times) for submitting an application and made initial contact with the potential funder, you're ready to research, write, and submit your *grant application* or *proposal* (also known as a *funding request*). I fill you in on the pieces or sections of a grant application/proposal in the section "Looking at the components of a grant application," later in this chapter.

Checking out different types of grants

Almost every grantfunding agency publishes specific types of funding it awards to prospective grantseekers. When you know what you want to use grant monies for, you can evaluate whether your request fits with the type of funding the grantor has available. For example, if you want money for architectural fees related to a historical preservation project, you can skip applying to a grantor that's only accepting grant requests for small technology-related equipment.

Look long and hard at the different categories of funding offered:

- **Annual campaigns:** Grants to support annual operating expenses, infrastructure improvements, program expansion, and, in some cases, one-time-only expenses (such as a cooling-system replacement).
- **Building/renovation funds:** Grants to build a new facility or renovate an existing facility. These projects are often referred to as *bricks-and-mortar projects.* Building funds are the most difficult to secure; only a small percentage of foundations and corporations award grants for this type of project.
- **Capital support:** Grants for equipment, buildings, construction, and endowments. This type of request is a major undertaking by the applicant organization because this type of large-scale project isn't quickly funded. An organization often needs two to three years to secure total funding for such a project.

- **Challenge monies:** Grants that act as leverage to secure additional grants from foundations and corporations. They're awarded by grantmakers that specifically include *challenge grants* or *challenge funds* in their grantmaking priorities. These grants are contingent upon you raising additional funds from other sources. Typically, a challenge grant award letter directs you to raise the remaining funding from other grantors; however, that typically excludes government grants.
- **Conferences/seminars:** Grants to cover the cost of attending, planning, and/or hosting conferences and seminars. You can use the funding to pay for all the conference expenses, including securing a keynote speaker, traveling, printing, advertising, and taking care of facility expenses such as meals.
- **Consulting services:** Grants to strengthen an organization's capacity can be used to retain the services of a consultant or consulting firm. For example, if you bring in a consultant to do a long-range strategic plan or an architect to develop plans for a historical preservation project, you can apply for a grant to cover these types of expenses.
- **Continuing support/continuation:** Grants additional funds to your organization after you've already received an initial grant award from that same grantor. These monies are intended to continue the program or project initially funded.
- **Endowments:** Grants to develop long-term, permanent investment income to ensure the continuing presence and financial stability of your nonprofit organization. If your organization is always operating in crisis-management mode, one of your goals should be to develop an endowment fund for long-term viability.
- **Fellowships:** Grants to support graduate and postgraduate students in specific fields. These funds are typically awarded to institutions and not directly to individuals, with the exception of some international fellowship funders.
- **General/operating expenses:** Grants for general line-item budget expenses. You may use these funds for salaries, fringe benefits, travel, consultants, utilities, equipment, and other expenses necessary to support agency operations.
- **Matching funds:** Grants awarded with the requirement that you must match the grant award with your own monies or with in-kind contributions.
- **Program development:** Grants to pay for expenses related to the expansion of existing programs or the development of new programs.
- **Research:** Grants to support medical and educational research. Monies are usually awarded to the institutions that employ the individuals conducting the research.

- **Scholarship funds:** Grants to eligible organizations seeking to award scholarships to eligible individuals. Remember that when funds are awarded directly to an individual, they're considered taxable income (that is, the recipient owes taxes on them).
- **Seed money:** Grants awarded for a pilot program not yet in full-scale operation. Seed money gets a program underway, but other monies are necessary to continue the program in its expansion phase.
- **Technical (consulting) assistance:** Grants to improve your internal program operations as a whole (versus consulting on one specific program). Often, this type of grant is awarded to hire an individual or firm that can provide the needed technical assistance.

Understanding your eligibility for grants

The types of organizations or entities eligible to apply for a grant vary from grantor to grantor. Each type of grantor — government (public) or foundation (private) — always includes clear, published grantmaking guidelines that indicate who or what type of entity is eligible to apply for those specific grant funds. To access these grantmaking guidelines, simply visit the grantor's website.

Funders typically include one or more of the following types of grant applicants in their *eligible applicant* language:

- State government
- County government
- City or township government
- Federally recognized Native American tribal governments
- Independent school districts
- Nonprofits with and without Internal Revenue Service (IRS) 501(c)(3) (non-profit) status
- Private, public, and state-controlled institutions of higher education
- Public and Native American housing authorities
- For-profit businesses
- For-profit organizations other than businesses
- International nonprofits (called *nongovernmental organizations* or NGOs)
- Individuals

TIP

Always check with the funder in advance to make sure that the entity that you're applying for is an eligible grant applicant. For example, funders view a nonprofit as an IRS-approved 501(c)(3) designated tax-exempt organization. Just being incorporated as a nonprofit in your state (for United States-based grantmakers) is not going to qualify you to apply for funds. You definitely need IRS approval in writing.

REMEMBER

Familiarize yourself with Grants.gov before you actually plan on applying for funding. All federal grant applicants have to do a lot of upfront work before they can submit an application for funding consideration.

Grants are awarded to organizations that have applied to the IRS for nonprofit status and have received the 501(c)(3) designation as well as to units of government (state agencies, counties, cities, towns, and villages) and government agencies, including state colleges and universities. Foundation and corporate grantors focus predominantly on nonprofit organizations and aren't inclined to fund for-profits. However, a few grants are given to individuals (see Chapter 7 for details).

In some instances, government agencies have set up separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit structures in order to scoop up more private-sector (foundation and corporate) grant awards.

Recognizing the Purpose of a Funding Development Plan

REMEMBER

If you're searching for funding to support an entire organization or a specific program, the first rule in grantseeking is that you don't write a grant request without first completing a comprehensive planning process that involves the grant applicant organization's key stakeholders. This is the *target population* members (the people your organization serves), administrative staff, and the board of directors.

Without key stakeholder input on what your target population needs and the plan for closing the gap on these needs, you're jumping off the cliff without a parachute. You must have an organized *funding development plan* to guide your organization in adopting priority programs and services and then identifying all potential grantors you plan to approach with grant requests. A funding development plan answers questions such as the following:

- What programs are strong and already have regular funding to keep them going? Are they likely to be refunded?

- What community needs aren't being addressed by your organization or other organizations providing similar services?
- What new programs need funding and is there evidence of the needs?
- What opportunities exist to find new funding partners and who will be responsible for making the initial contact with each funder?
- What existing grants expire soon and can you reapply or do you have to find new funding?

When the stakeholders answer these questions, you can begin to look at the plethora of areas where grants are awarded and start prioritizing the type of funding you need. (For more information on funding development plans, see Chapter 2.)

Connecting to Public-Sector Grantmaking Agencies

I receive dozens of emails and social media inquiries every week asking about grants. Everyone wants grants; aka, everyone wants money! If you're feeling clueless as to how to find potential funding for your organization, you simply need to use your favorite search engine. You can search for potential sources that are interested in what your organization needs in the way of goods and services. Get your fingers moving on the keyboard and start searching for the monies that may be waiting for your organization. While you're at it, why not start with the nation's wealthiest relative, Uncle Sam?

TIP

Did you know that the U.S. government is one of the largest grantmaking entities? That's correct, Uncle Sam doles out approximately $500 billion in grant awards annually. If you want to score big in grant awards, you may want to consider targeting federal grantmaking agencies and researching their daily grant announcements. After all, there are 26 grantmaking agencies giving away boatloads of money to eligible grant applicants who have mastered writing highly competitive grant applications.

REMEMBER

Public government grants come in two types:

- A *competitive grant* is one where applicants compete against each other for a limited amount of funding.

» A *formula grant* is awarded based on a predetermined formula (a set amount of money per person) established by the funding agency. Formula grants aren't considered competitive. For example, community action agencies are funded formula grants, in part, through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program. These grants are awarded on a service-population-based formula. The agencies receive these funds year after year by merely updating the previous year's application and resubmitting.

In the following sections, I explain what type of public-sector grant money (or grantor) will pay you to implement your idea, project, or program.

Federal funding: Raiding Uncle Sam's stash

The first place to look for big pots of money is in Uncle Sam's closet of federal funding agencies. In Chapters 4 and 5, I explain public-sector grants and wade through the main federal e-grant portal, Grants.gov.

TIP

Many newly established nonprofit organizations think that they should apply for government grants before raising seed funding from local foundations and corporations. Your organization needs an established, credible track record for implementing, evaluating, and prudently managing funding from smaller fish in the sea before jumping into the federal grant application process.

TIP

To find active or current grantfunding opportunities from Uncle Sam, go to `www.grants.gov`, which gives you daily funding announcements on money you can apply for *now*, provided your organization is an eligible grant applicant.

State and local government funding: Seeking public dollars closer to home

Each state receives grant monies from the feds and from tax revenues that are funneled into and out of the state's general funds. After taking their fair (or unfair) share for administrative overhead, states re-grant the money to eligible agencies and organizations in the form of competitive grants or formula grants.

You can search the Internet to find state agencies that award grants. Examples of some of the state agencies that re-grant federal monies are agriculture, commerce, education, health, housing development, natural resources, and transportation. You can also contact your state legislator's local office for assistance in identifying grant opportunities in your state.