



Basics of Grant Writing

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STLS
Southern Tier Library System

Connecting Community Libraries





Topics We Will Cover

What a grant is.

What a grant is not.

Basic

Important things to remember

Common mistakes



01 Intro & Organization

02 Reading Calls for
Proposals

03 Preparing an
Application

04 Checking Your Work

05 Reviewing Process

06 Yay, Funded! Or Better
Luck Next Time





What a grant is

- Financial support given to nonprofits by corporations, foundations, or government agencies. Grants provide the opportunity for additional funding which does not need to be repaid and increases awareness of the organization.
- A grant is **one part** of a **well-balanced basket of revenue streams** that will sustain your organization for the years ahead.

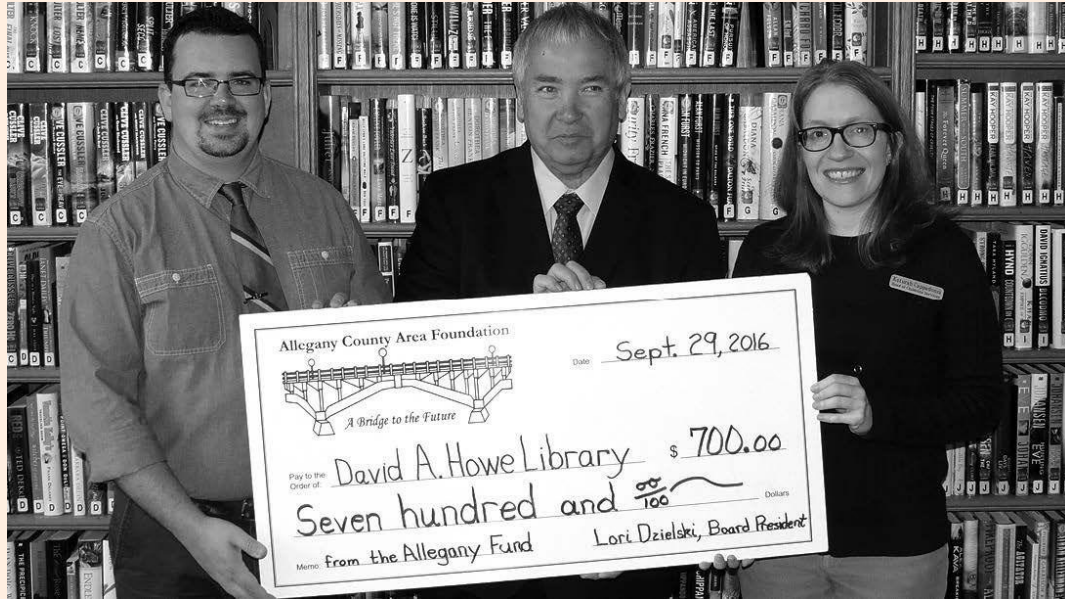




What a grant is NOT

- Rarely funds operating costs
- Should NOT be a major part of your library's finances
- Not a sustainable funding source
- Not easy money

Question: What are Grants About?



I used to think it was all about the money and giant checks!

But it is NOT ABOUT THIS!!



Answer: Grants are about PEOPLE!



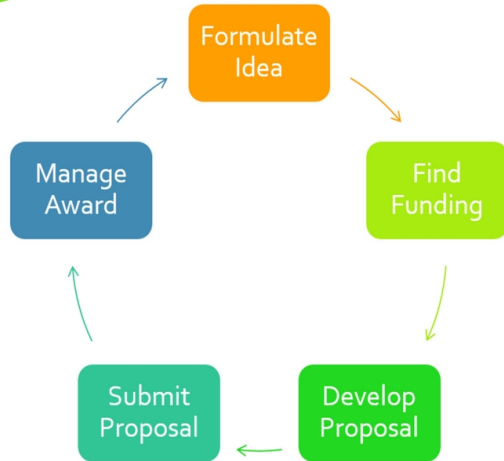
Grants and grant writing are all about PEOPLE, not money and not your organization.



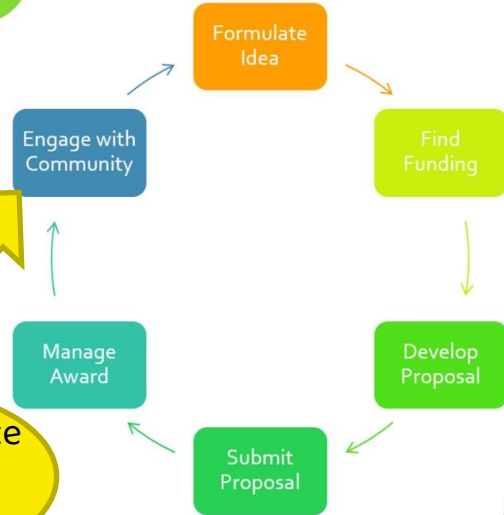
It is about THIS!!

Community Engagement is Key

traditional grant cycle



more effective cycle



Don't create ideas in a silo!



Don't Assume that You **HAVE** to Apply for Grants



- Many experts in the field agree that a healthy nonprofit should never depend on grant funding for more than 30% of its' total operating budget.
- Grants require a lot of work.

SMART



Specific



Measurable



Attainable



Relevant



**Time
Based**

Reading a Call for Proposals

Note priority categories

Note what programs will be funded

Note deadline!

Note amount that can be requested

Sample Call for Proposals

The Gordie Group Announces A Call for Proposals Grant Funds Available for Schools, Libraries, and Community Groups

The Gordie Group announces its annual funding program to provide public libraries, schools, and community groups with the opportunity to purchase supplies and materials for use in local programs. Applications must be for a program that fits one of the topics below.

The Gordie Group is particularly interested in funding that serves diverse or underrepresented groups. In the case of a tie, priority shall be given to smaller, rural populations.

The Gordie Group is interested in funding one of three types of programs:

- Literacy programs that develop skills and competencies of patrons/students in the areas of digital literacy, financial literacy, media literacy, data literacy, or traditional reading and writing for an audience of preschoolers, school-age children, tweens/teens, adults, and/or senior citizens.
- Programs that develop the skills and capacities of children and teens.
- Technology programs that improve community access to or use of technology. We do not fund 3D printers.

Grants at a glance:

- **Deadline:** August 31, 2021, at 11:59pm Eastern. Recipients will be notified by September 30, 2021, and all grant activities must be completed by August 31, 2022.
- **Submission:** online at <http://thisisnotarealsitesodonotactuallyclickthis.com/grants> only. We recommend that you draft your proposals offline so that you can copy-and-paste into the online fields and that you submit early enough so that submission errors can be corrected prior to the deadline. In addition to filling out the online application, please include at least two letters of support in PDF format from community members.
- **Eligible Institutions:** K-12 public, private, parochial, or charter schools, including after-school programs; public libraries that are eligible for state aid; 501(c)(3) groups with an educational mission.
 - **Funding levels:** \$500 - \$5000. Please note that funds are distributed via reimbursement after grant completion.

Is this grant a fit for us?

Does it fit with our mission?

Reimbursement vs. up-front funding

Timeline for prep, execution

Do we meet eligibility requirements?

Perceived competition for funds

Priority categories

Allowable Expenses

Staff capacity & Alignment

Rubric / Rating System





Key Terms

Applicant

Application

Budget

**Congressional
District**

Matching Funds

Date of Completion

Funding Period

**System for Award
Management (SAM)**

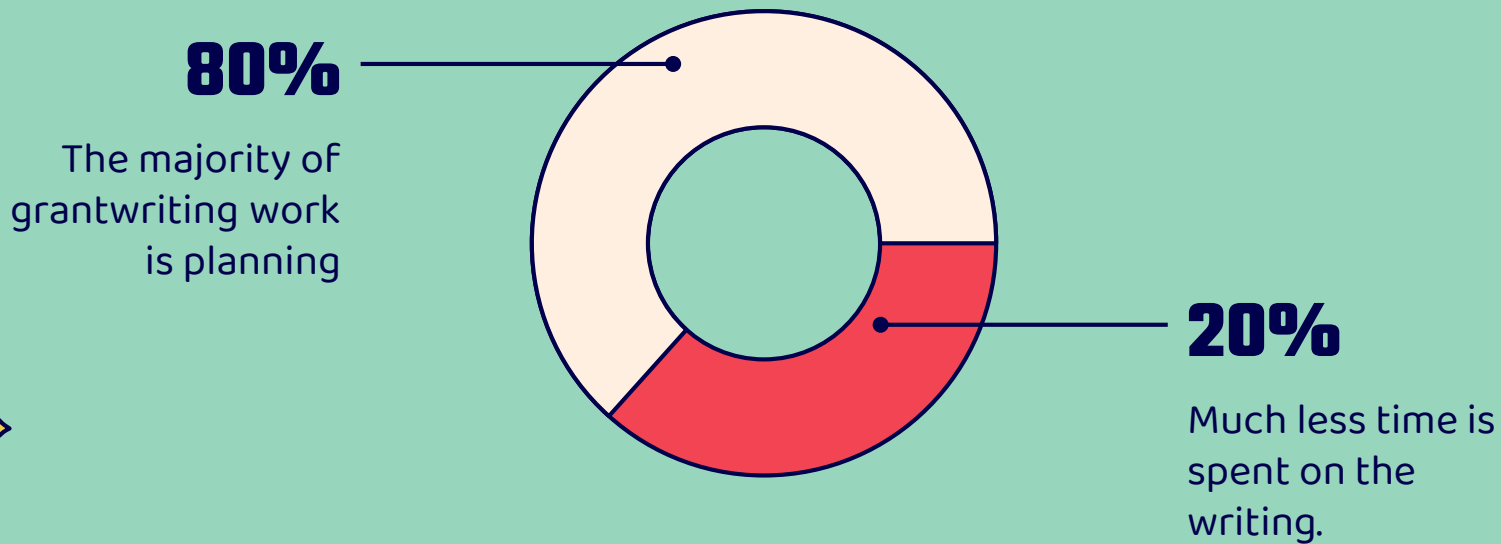
In-Kind Contribution

DUNS Number

**MOU (Memorandum of
Understanding)**

**Employer
Identification
Number
(EIN)**

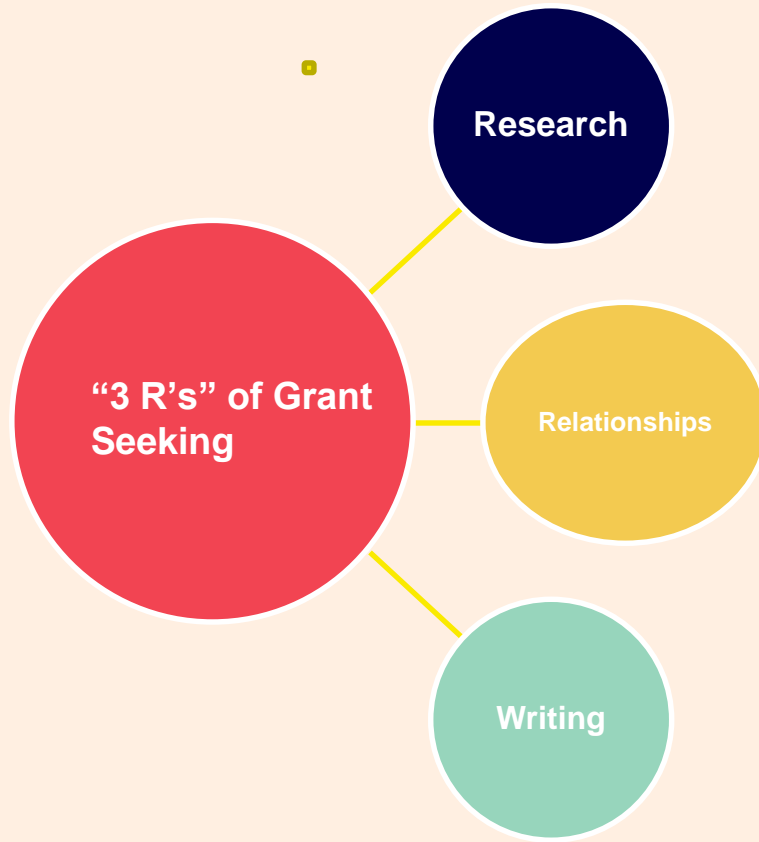
Plan, Plan, Plan! Because it's not all glam! ✨



Create a Relationship with the Funder

**Pro Tip from Executive Director
Brian Hildreth:**

“Creating relationships with funders is also key...Getting to know these people even if it is not grant-related is so important. They will take care of you when you need their help, and you can help them when they need something from your organization.”



Getting Organized in Advance

Assemble A Document Library

- ◆ 501 (c) 3 document and Tax ID
- ◆ Legal Organization Name
- ◆ Mission Statement
- ◆ Bylaws
- ◆ Short history of your library
- ◆ Short Bios of Key Staff

- ◆ List of Board Members
- ◆ Board Approved Annual Budget
- ◆ Most recent Audit or 990
- ◆ Letters of Support / Recommendation
- ◆ Annual Report to the Public

Make an Application **TIMELINE**

Meet with people,
collect data, plan
July

Aug. 17



Aug. 3

Aug. 31, at 11:59 pm
EST

Build a Community Profile



- In 400 words or less, briefly describe the geographic location and composition of the population your organization served.
- Do NOT assume funders know your community.



Looking at Data

Look at some of the data that demonstrates the need of your community.

- Descriptive Data
- Pockets of Need

- Average age of population
- the population density
- presence or absence of public transportation,
- the unemployment rate,
- education levels of your population
- Percentage living in poverty

Community Demographics Thinking Tool

Q ZCTA5 14510 Populations and People SEARCH

AGE AND SEX
Survey/Program: American Community Survey
TableID: S0101

Product: 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables CUSTOMIZE TABLE

Label	ZCTA5 14510		Percent		Male
	Total				
Label	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	Es
5 to 9 years	327	±125	6.6%	±2.5	
10 to 14 years	210	±92	4.3%	±1.9	
15 to 19 years	189	±79	3.8%	±1.6	
20 to 24 years	224	±122	4.5%	±2.5	
25 to 29 years	345	±122	7.0%	±2.4	
30 to 34 years	226	±106	4.6%	±2.1	
35 to 39 years	222	±91	4.5%	±1.9	
40 to 44 years	440	±151	8.9%	±3.0	
45 to 49 years	192	±85	3.9%	±1.7	
50 to 54 years	415	±121	8.4%	±2.4	
55 to 59 years	358	±114	7.3%	±2.3	
60 to 64 years	333	±92	6.8%	±1.9	
65 to 69 years	337	±115	6.8%	±2.3	
70 to 74 years	366	±138	7.4%	±2.8	
75 to 79 years	171	±85	3.5%	±1.7	
80 to 84 years	110	±46	2.2%	±0.9	
85 years and over	209	±74	4.2%	±1.5	

SELECTED AGE CATEGORIES



What does this data about Age of the Population tell us?

The age range with the highest percentage of the population is 40 – 44 years.

What might that say about your community?

RESOURCES

✦ **Esri Tapestry** - classifies neighborhoods into 67 unique segments based not only on demographics but also socioeconomic characteristics

✦ **NY State KWIC** - a tool to gather, plot and monitor NYS children's health, education and well-being indicator data.

✦ **Kids Count Data Center**

✦ **Census Data** – data.census.gov Replaces American Fact Finder

✦ **NY State Department of Labor**- labor market information in the state.
From wages to projections to the latest job figures

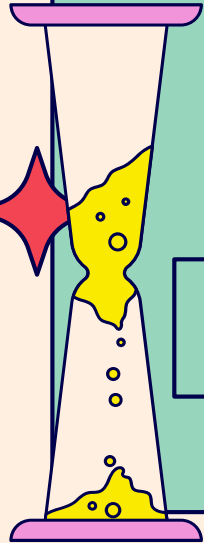
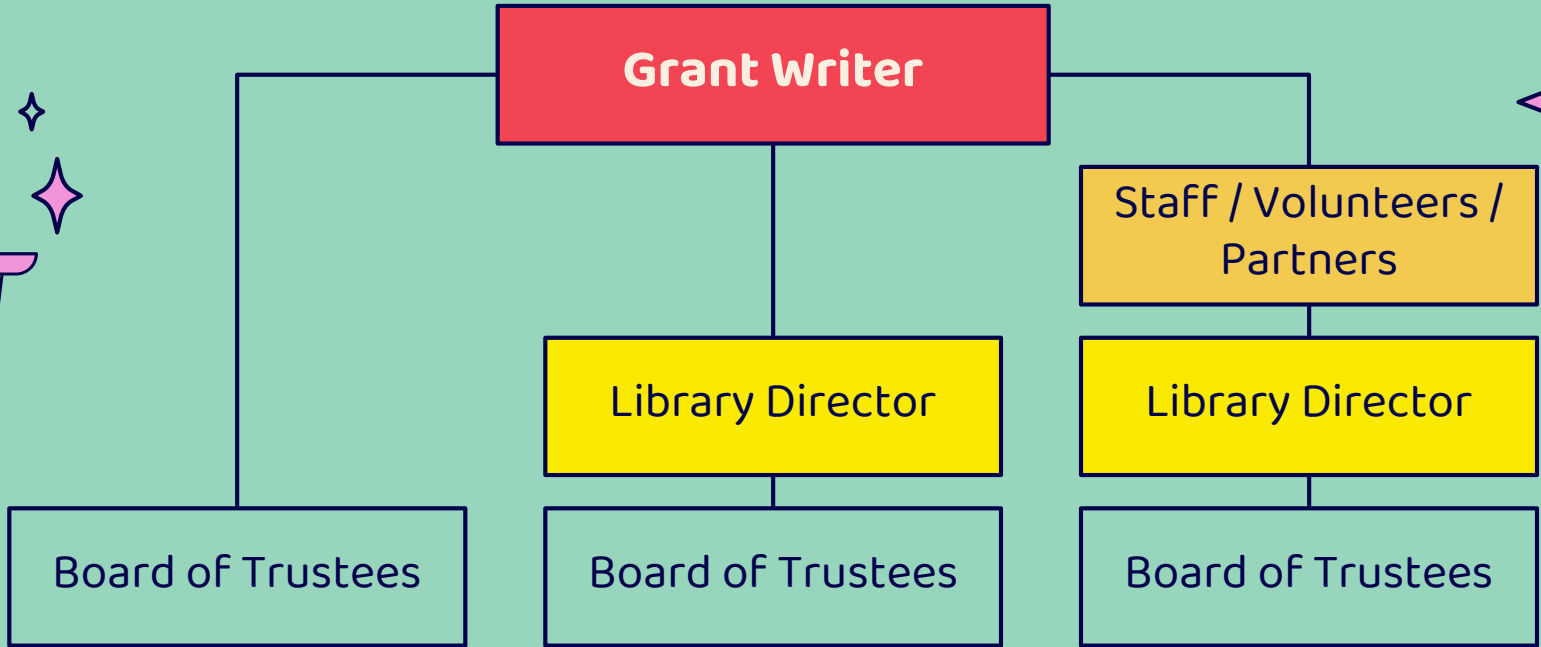


Sample Community Profile

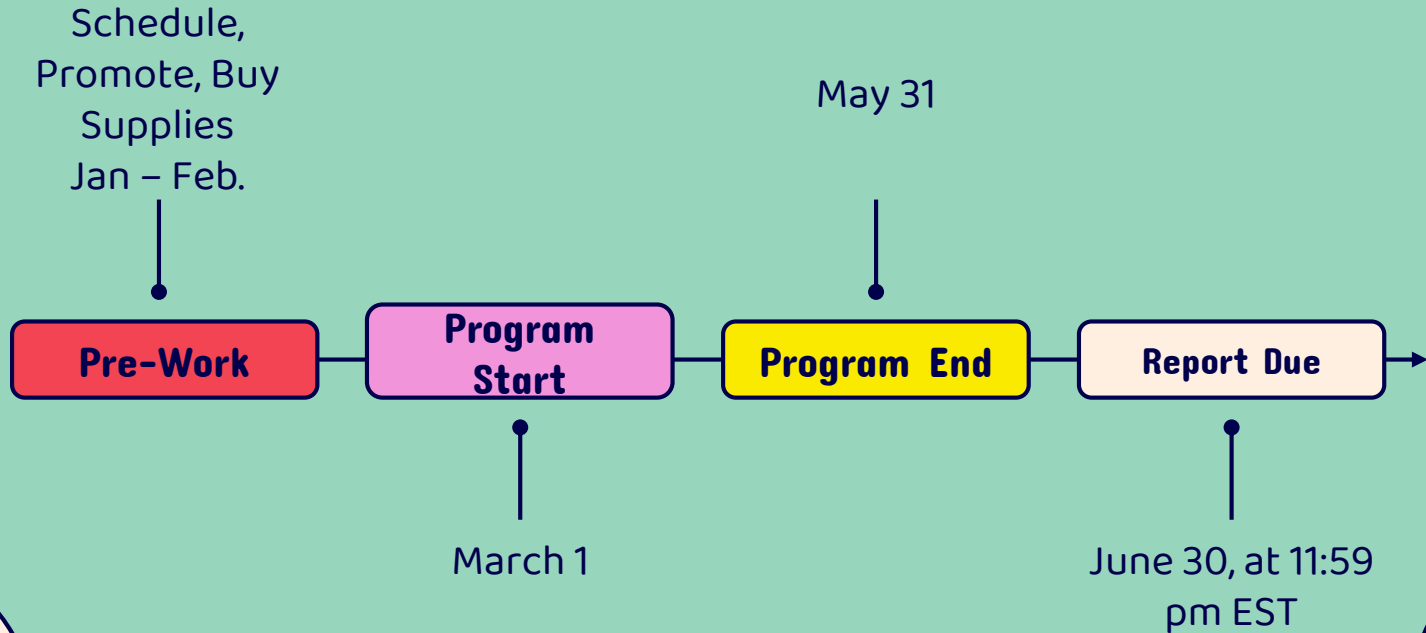
Gordietown, NY, is a town of approximately 4,929 people located in the Appalachian region of western NY State. The village was formed in 1818 along the banks of the Genesee River. The Genesee Valley Canal ran through the town from 1840-1878. Several railroad companies were also prominent in the area. In 1952, a major concrete dam was completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and since then has prevented an estimated \$1 billion in flooding damages. Major employers currently include a nearby state correctional facility and a state university located 15 miles away. Food canning factories also account for the employment of many residents new to the area. The largest percentage of the community's population is aged 40-44 years and the percentage of people living in poverty is 6.2%.

The Gordietown Library was built in 1910 and remodeled in 1998. It is a trusted institution and cornerstone of the community. From preschool classes to senior citizen social groups, the library is always busy. The 20-car parking lot regularly overflows when families come to visit for storytime, playtime, and summer reading programs.

Keep People in The Loop – No Surprises!



Make a PROJECT TIMELINE



Evaluation: What is it?



- A plan for assessing impact of the program
- May be required
- Measures results, not completion, of tasks
- Answers the question, "How do we know this project had an impact on our community?"

Evaluation Model

Should answer these questions:

- What specific goals are you trying to achieve?
- What measurable milestones will you reach in meeting those goals?
- How will your funder know that you are making progress toward your goals?

- What will you measure to evaluate your progress?
- What records & info will you keep to allow you to measure your progress?
- What data collection methods & tools will be employed?
- Will evaluations be objective and accurate?

Evaluation Methods

Qualitative

- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Observation
- Surveys / questionnaires / exit slips with space for open ended answers

Quantitative

- Door counts
- RSVPs
- Circ statistics
- Database / website hits
- Social media stats
- Surveys / questionnaires / exit slips where people rank or pick from predetermined choices
- Number of events attended, new library cards issued

Sustainability

**Project was
a Success**

**Project was not a
Success**

Let's Keep Doing It!

How will we fund it
when the grant
money runs out?

**What should we
do?**

Make adjustments &
improvements
based on feedback
and try again.

Use feedback to
determine if that
this project should
be sunsetted.

Sustainability

Money



Staffing



Time



BUDGET

Budget requirements can vary for different grant applications. Some will ask for a chart like this. Others may ask for a Budget Narrative or a paragraph where you explain what you will be using the money for in a descriptive way.



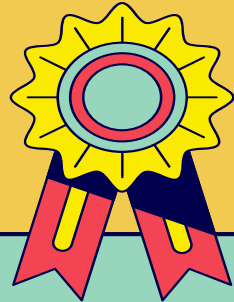
BUDGET

Category	Description	Cost
Personnel	2 hour of Librarian's Time per week for 50 weeks at \$20.00 per hour	\$2000
Equipment	1 laptop computer, 3 tablet computers, portable storage for equipment, Wi-Fi Hotspot	\$5000
Supplies	4,000 copies at \$.25 per copy	\$1000
Travel	Mileage for Librarian to travel to local libraries to conduct staff training, 100 miles per week at \$.53 per mile	\$2650
Other	Collection Development Materials	\$575
TOTAL		\$11,225



The Reviewing Process

- Will probably involve a type of scoring rubric.
- Applications will probably be read by multiple people.
- Sometimes the funder may contact you to ask a follow-up question.
- If you have the opportunity to sit on a grant review panel, use it as a learning experience!



Scoring Rubric

Program idea	Program replicates existing programs, lacks innovation, or does not seem viable. (5)	Program has some novel or innovative aspects. (10)	Proposed idea is extremely novel and innovative. (15)
Proposal clarity	Proposal is confusing or ideas do not fit together well. (5)	Proposal is often clearly written and is somewhat easy to follow. (7)	Proposal is clearly written and easy to follow. (10)
Proposal clarity	Community population over 26,000/Library class 5 or 6 (0)	Community population 7,000 –25,999/Library class 3 or 4 (5)	Community population under 7,000/Library class 1 or 2 (10)
Population Served	Very effectively provides quality services to unserved, underserved; those of diverse geographic, cultural, or socioeconomic backgrounds; those with disabilities or limited functional literacy; those with limited information access. (20)	Somewhat effectively provides quality services to an unserved or underserved population. (14)	Does not provide effective services to an unserved or underserved population. (0)
Are the project activities well described and consistent with effective practice in libraries, schools, and/or community groups?	No (0)	Somewhat (5)	Yes (10)
Is the need for the project locally well described?	No (0)	Somewhat (5)	Yes (10)
Is the need for requested funds clearly explained and for allowable purchases?	No (0)	Somewhat (5)	Yes (10)
Are project activities designed in such a way that they are likely to both reach and positively impact the intended target population?	No (0)	Somewhat (5)	Yes (10)
Are project outcomes clearly defined?	No (0)	Somewhat (5)	Yes (10)
Are the evaluation measures likely to measure outcomes well?	No (0)	Somewhat (5)	Yes (10)

You Received Funding! Yay!

What if something changes with our proposal after we receive the award?

- Notify the granting agency in a timely manner. Most agencies will work with you to accommodate changes.

What should I prioritize?

- Make sure you meet reporting requirements on time in order to maintain trust equity with the granting agency and to continue to be eligible for future grants.

Reporting

Formal Report to Funders

When is it due?
What is required?

Press Release

Article in local newspaper outlets

Social Media

- Promote events
- Document events
- Solicit feedback on events

Better Luck Next Time

What if we did not receive funding?

- You can contact the funding agency and ask if they have any feedback or comments from the review of your grant.

Am I terrible at grant writing?

- Nope! Not at all! Most all of us have had funding proposals turned down. Please don't let it discourage you from using this as a learning experience and trying again in the future. Practice is key!



Please Rememer:

- Follow specific application instructions
- Meet deadlines
- Realistic budgets
- Proposals which demonstrate thoughtful planning
- Project meets the purpose of the grant
- Application language echoes grant guideline language





Common Mistakes

- Did not tailor your ask
- Shoehorning
- Missed deadlines
- Being a stranger
- Sloppiness
- Lack of effort
- Hyperbole
- Jargon
- Budget errors



Common Reasons for Not Receiving Funding ✨

01 Project did not meet purpose

02 Guidelines / Instructions not followed

03 Proposal was poorly written

04 Budget did not add up or was unclear ✨

05 Project lacked partners / collaborators ✨


06 Evaluation planning was weak or absent ✨



RESOURCES


- [Keturah's List of Grants for STLS Libraries](#)
- [ALA Grant Database](#)
- [Junior Library Guild List of Grants for Books](#)
- [Scholastic List of Library Grants](#)
- [Web Junction – articles, webinar recordings](#)
- [YALSA "Partnering to Increase Your Impact" Resource](#)
- [Candid](#) (Formerly known as Foundation Center)

STLS Can Help!



We Can:



- Help you learn to locate data
- Help you think about possible partners
- Help you brainstorm ideas to reach underserved populations.
- Can review proposals and applications



PLEASE

Do not wait to ask for help until the deadline is imminent.

Asking in advance is helpful for all of us!





THANKS!

Do you have any questions?
Send me an email at
cappadoniak@stls.org.

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