



# MONEY GRANT WRITING

REAL Nonprofit Storytelling Workshop

Slide Deck, Handouts, and Worksheets

February 5, 2026

# REAL Nonprofit Storytelling Training

February 5, 2026



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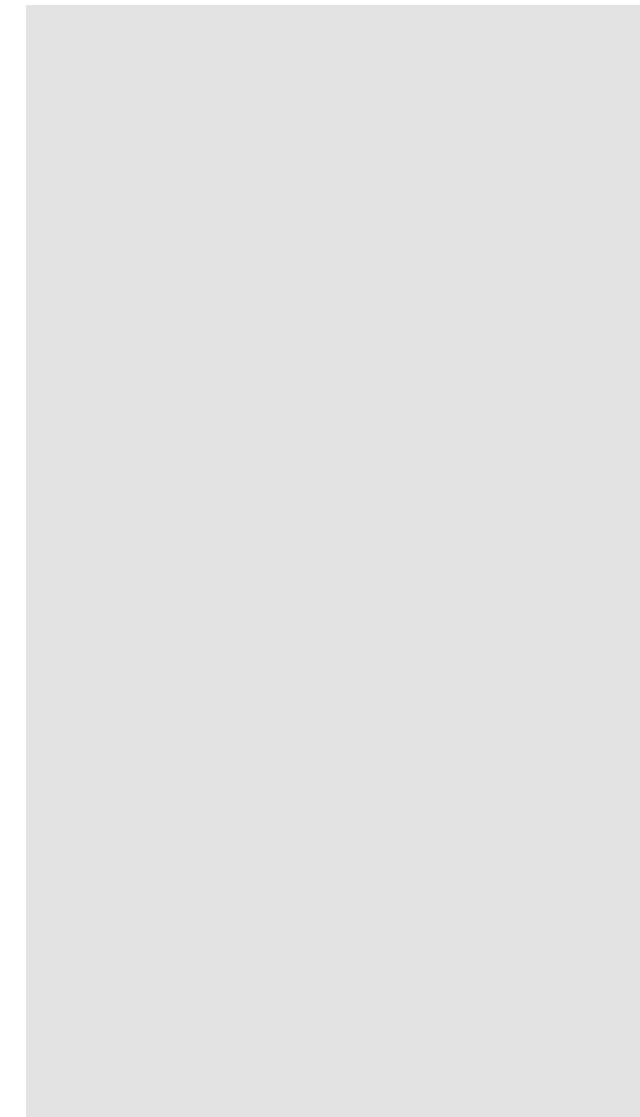
# QUALITY NONPROFIT STORYTELLING INCREASES CREDIBILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND FUNDS!



SMART  
MONEY GRANT WRITING



# Thank you for being a LEADER!



## Agenda:

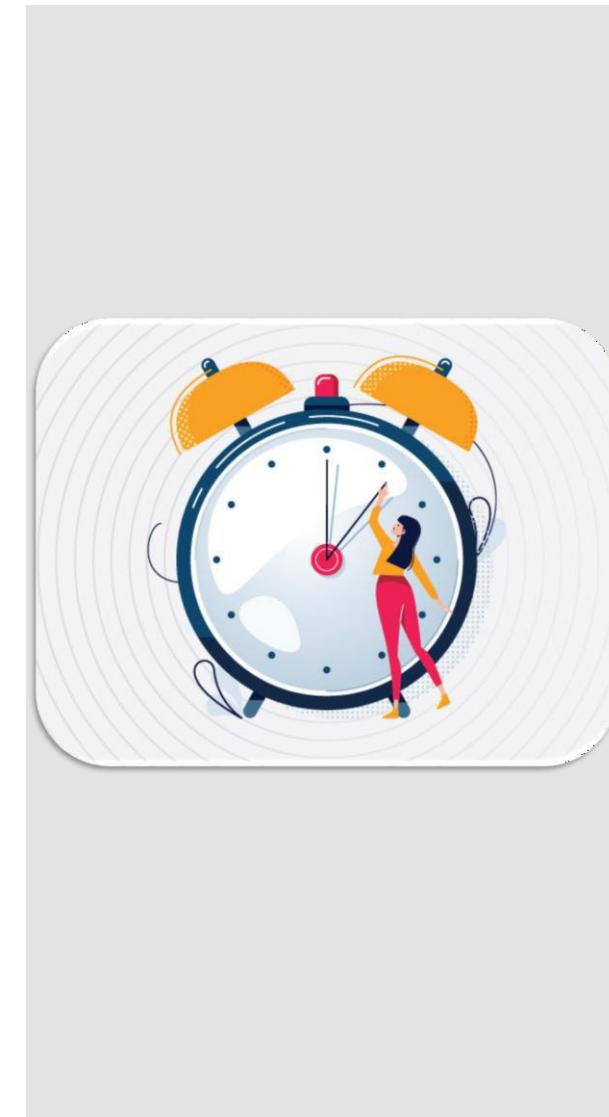
Prepping to Write

Purposes, Types, & Categories of Stories

Beyond the Grammar & Punctuation

Tips & Tricks in No Particular Order

Now You Try It



## PREPPING TO WRITE

Re-vet the grant opportunity AND the grantmaker...



through the lens of your nonprofit or program.



## PREPPING TO WRITE

Today, is your narrative preparation A. or B.?

A.



B.



Are the data, descriptions, evaluation methods, goals, budget, timelines, and any other pertinent information ready to go?



## PREPPING TO WRITE

Being budget-prepped is as important as being narratively prepped.

A side note about the Charles County Charitable Trust (CCCT) budget form and budget narrative...

[Grab the CCCT Budget form from Handouts Packet, please.]



# PREPPING TO WRITE

Elements of Traditional Storytelling



## PREPPING TO WRITE

Nonprofit storytelling is nearly identical to traditional fiction writing or many non-fiction genres (traditional storytelling).



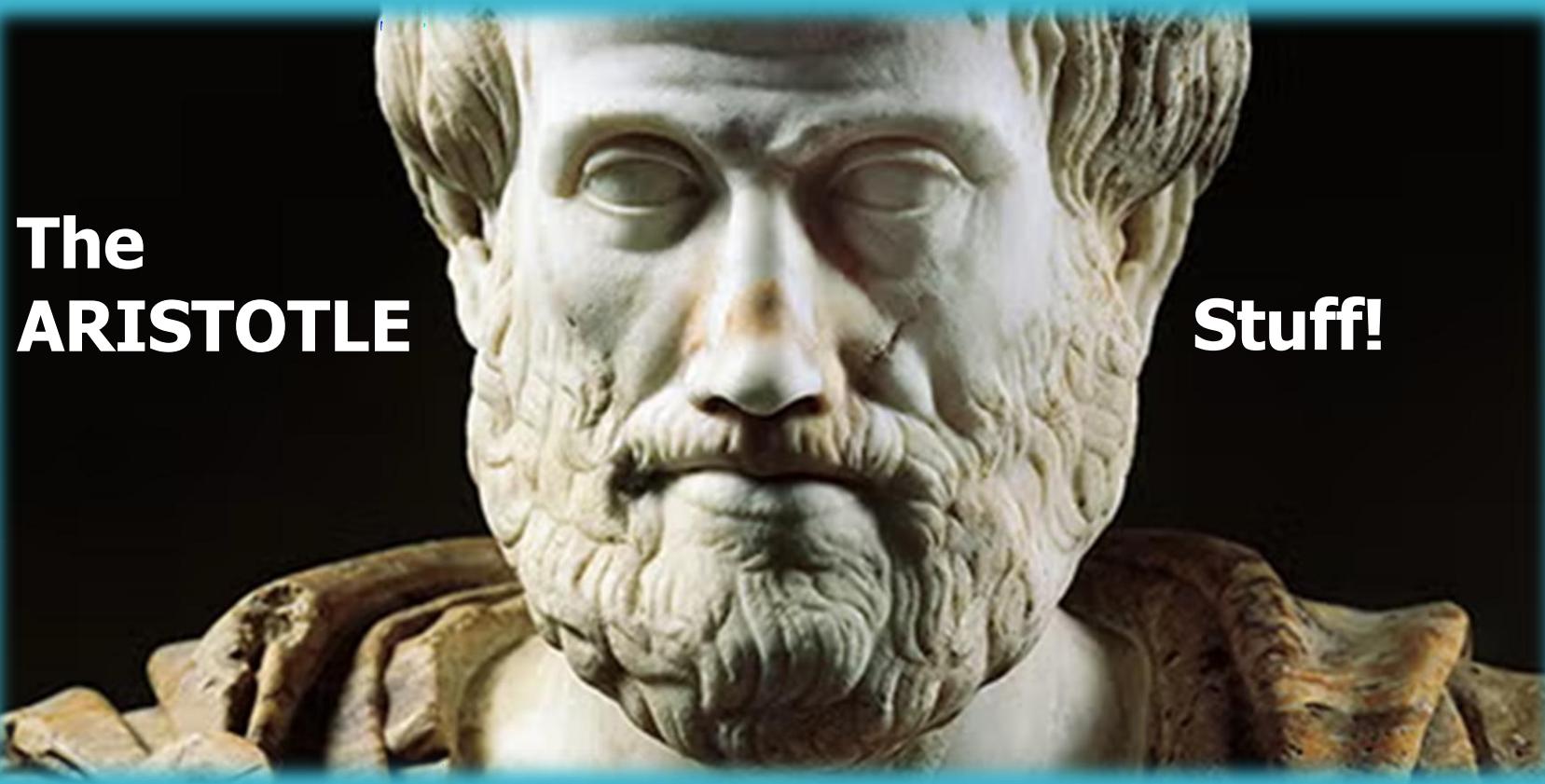
## PREPPING TO WRITE



Where did the PLOT go?

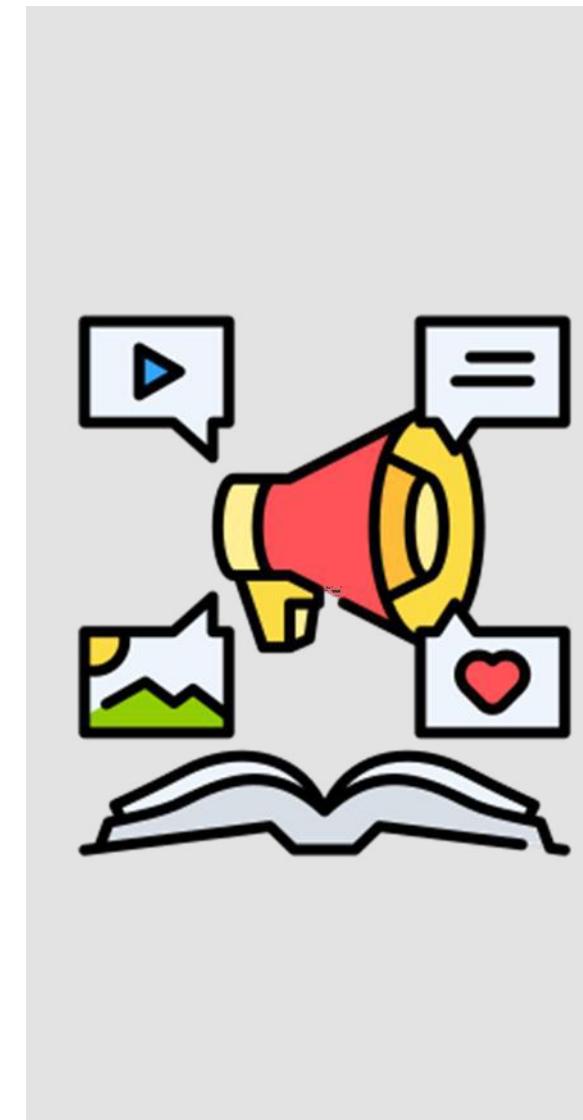


## PREPPING TO WRITE



## PREPPING TO WRITE





# NOT ALL NONPROFIT STORIES ARE CREATED EQUAL!

Purpose

Type



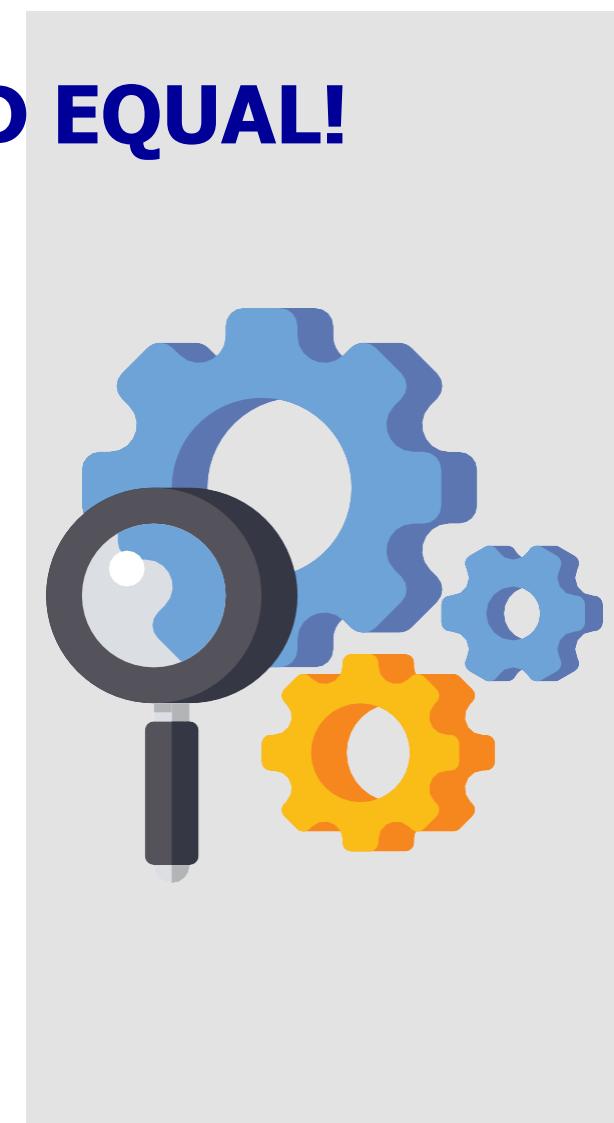
# NOT ALL NONPROFIT STORIES ARE CREATED EQUAL!

## Purposes:

Why are you telling the story?

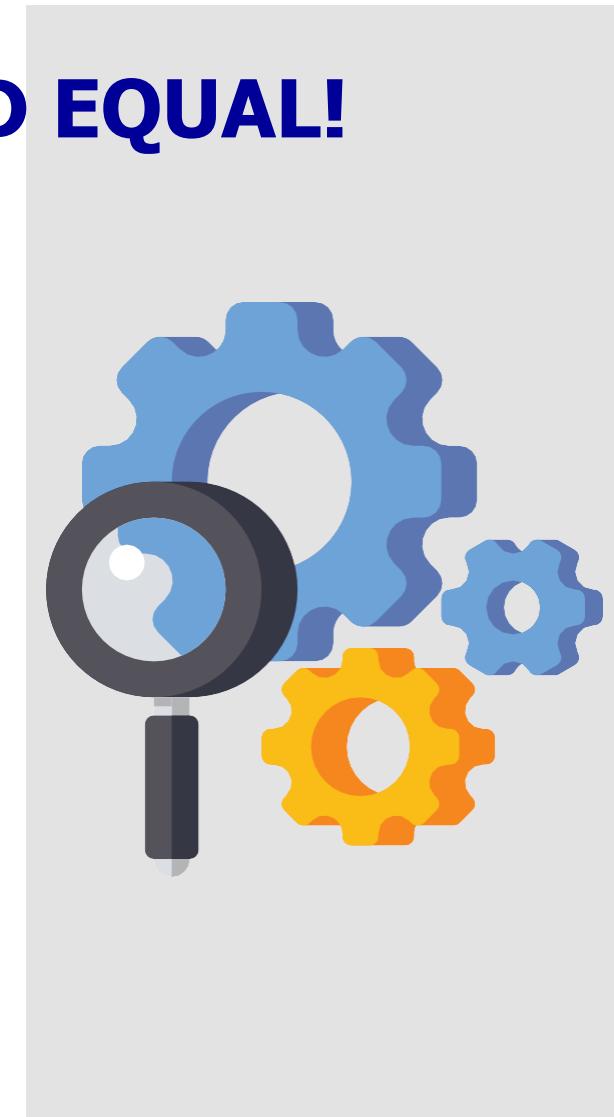
Which story are you telling?

\*\*\*This is NOT the *WHY* of your organization or the program on which the ask centers.



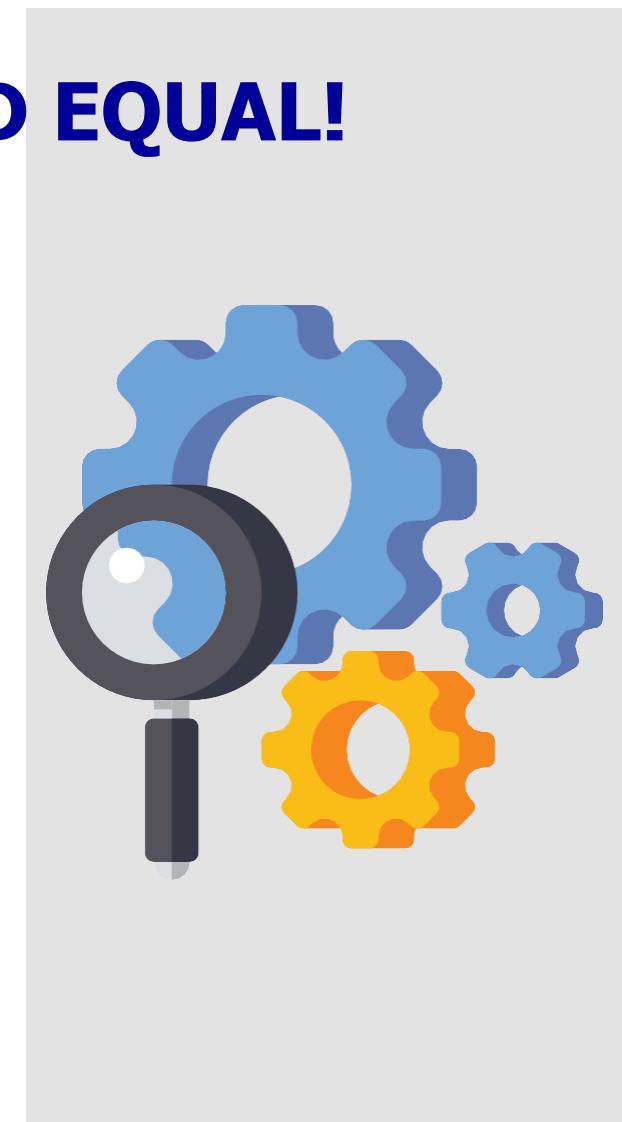
## NOT ALL NONPROFIT STORIES ARE CREATED EQUAL!

When the TYPE of story is a sub story for that of whose purpose is CONNECTING THE DOTS IN AN APPLICATION, The sub story must reference (be connected to) the original story. In other words, do not introduce new information or need throughout the proposal. Keep the storyline tight.



# NOT ALL NONPROFIT STORIES ARE CREATED EQUAL!

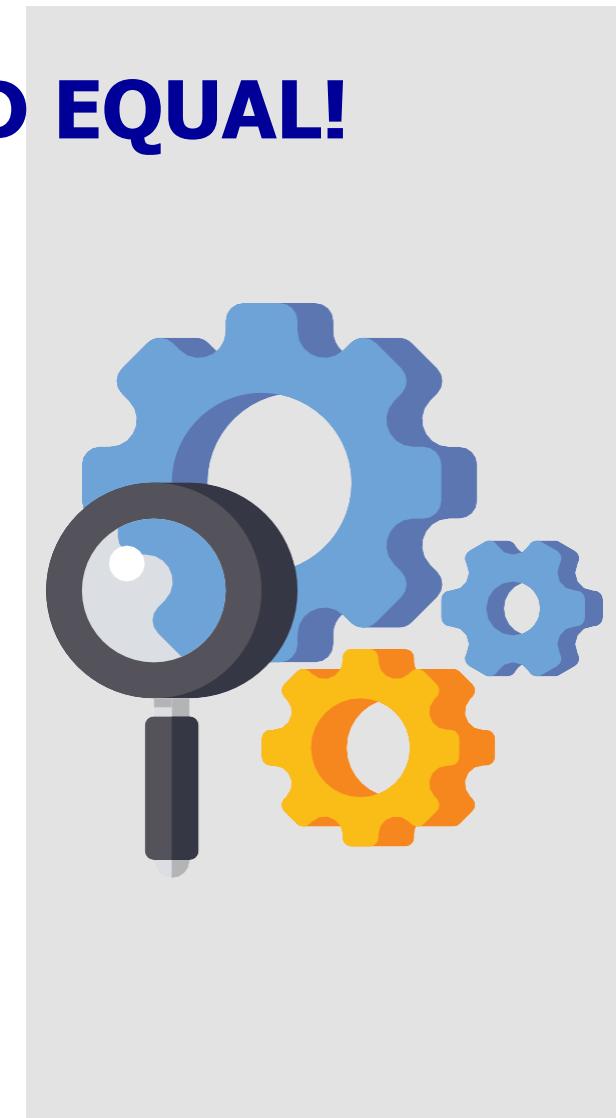
Type:



# NOT ALL NONPROFIT STORIES ARE CREATED EQUAL!



Leave the creativity in  
grant applications to the  
narratives!







## BEYOND THE GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION



These are the most IMPORTANT take aways from today's workshop.



## BEYOND THE GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION



Write one complete (but not run-on) sentence about the purpose of the funding.



## BEYOND THE GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION



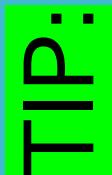
Heroes versus supporting role(s) in your stories



## BEYOND THE GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION

Incorporating **Empowering Language** is crucial to impactful narratives, avoiding exploitive connotations.

**Evidence reveals that increased use of dignified language and less shame/"poverty porn" raises a participant's motivation and confidence for the engagement.**



Developing narratives in the first person (e.g., we, our), for most grant applications, helps draw readers in to empower them with confidence in funding your proposal.



# BEYOND THE GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION

Empowering language involves:

- Person-first language
- Self-identification
- Active voice



# BEYOND THE GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION

## Passive Voice vs. Active Voice

*Active Voice obviously conveys action, making your writing sound competent, qualified, and confident.*

Active Voice often has fewer words and characters than Passive Voice.

Active Voice empowers the reviewer to take action to help improve the community.



# BEYOND THE GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION

## Passive Voice vs. Active Voice

The ball is being chased by the dog.



PASSIVE VERB

The dog chases the ball.



ACTIVE VERB



## ACTIVE VERBS

accelerate	coordinate	extend	maintain	question	shape
accomplish	create	extract	manage	raise	study
achieve	define	find	measure	realize	submit
acquire	delineate	formulate	mobilize	receive	summarize
act	deliver	generate	model	recommend	supply
adapt	describe	give	monitor	record	support
add	design	grow	motivate	recruit	survey
address	determine	guide	negotiate	reduce	target
adjust	develop	identify	observe	refer	teach
administer	devise	illustrate	operate	relate	test
advance	discover	implement	organize	resolve	track
analyze	distribute	improve	perform	respond	train
attain	draft	increase	plan	restore	transfer
calculate	elevate	inform	predict	retrieve	translate
compile	engage	insert	prepare	reveal	undertake
complete	estimate	inspire	produce	review	unify
compute	evaluate	interpret	promote	schedule	unite
conserve	examine	investigate	provide	search	update
construct	explore	launch	purchase	select	utilize



# BEYOND THE GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION

The Rules of 3:

#1 Impacts: primary, secondary, and tertiary impacts

#2 Use the dang Oxford comma

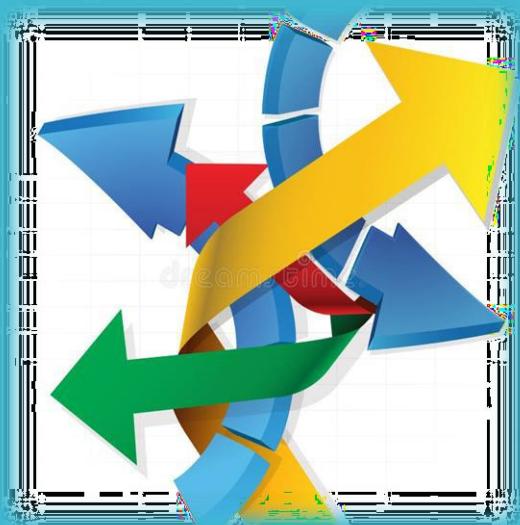
#3 Three classifications of editing for grant writing

Extra editing tip: tk



## BEYOND THE GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION

What's the difference between content and data?



Narrative-ize the data, regardless of the section of the grant application.



## BEYOND THE GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION

What is visually appealing? Spacing, bullet points, indentation, quotes/testimonials

Visual appeal helps break up the blocks of content and narratives, even in online, pre-blocked forms.



# BEYOND THE GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION

**Ethical Storytelling:** Centers on telling powerful stories without exploiting, misrepresenting, or harming the people involved.



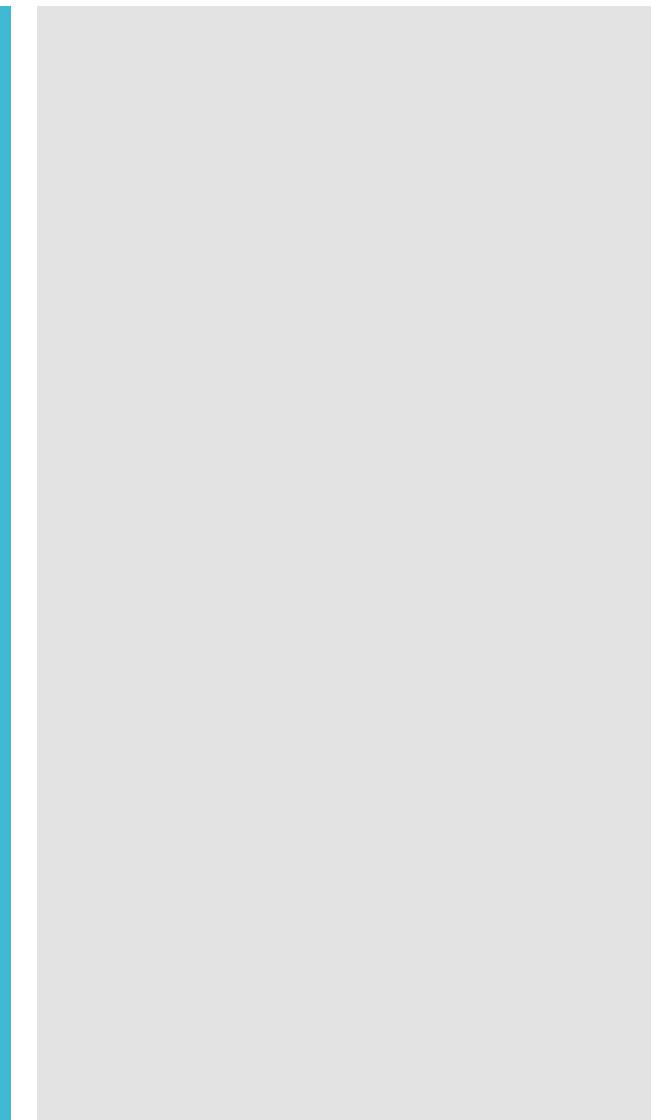
## BEYOND THE GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION

Verbally practice! If you experience some writer's block, let your voice break that block.

A 30-60 second elevator speech addressing a section of the application can get the words flowing on to the page again!



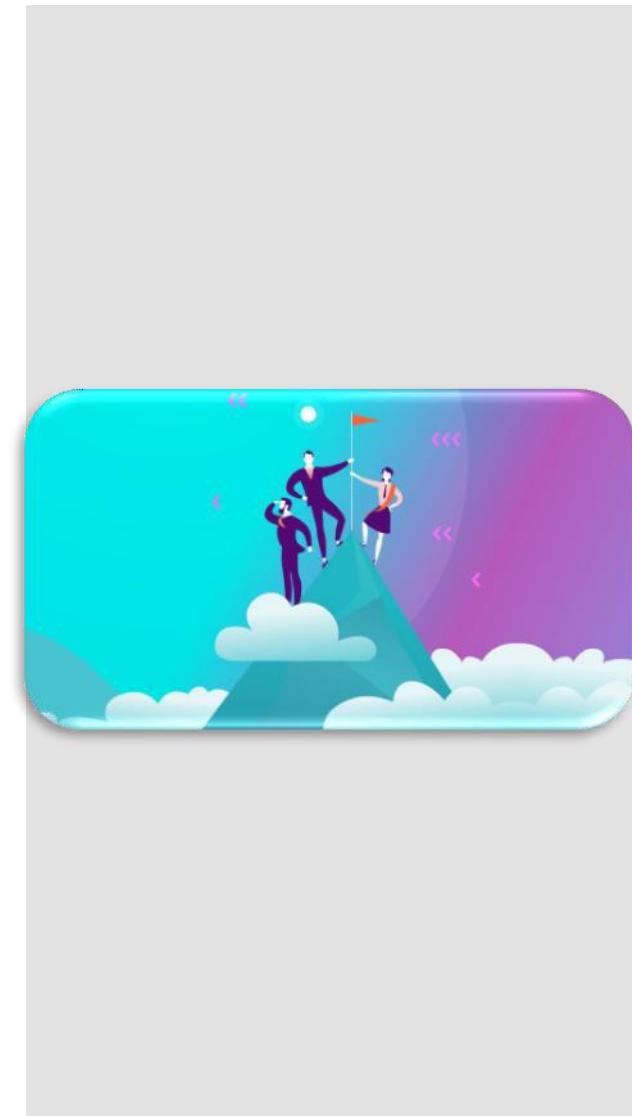




## In no particular order...

*First, focus on solutions,  
not problems.*

*Second, stop using scarcity tactics  
as scare tactics.*

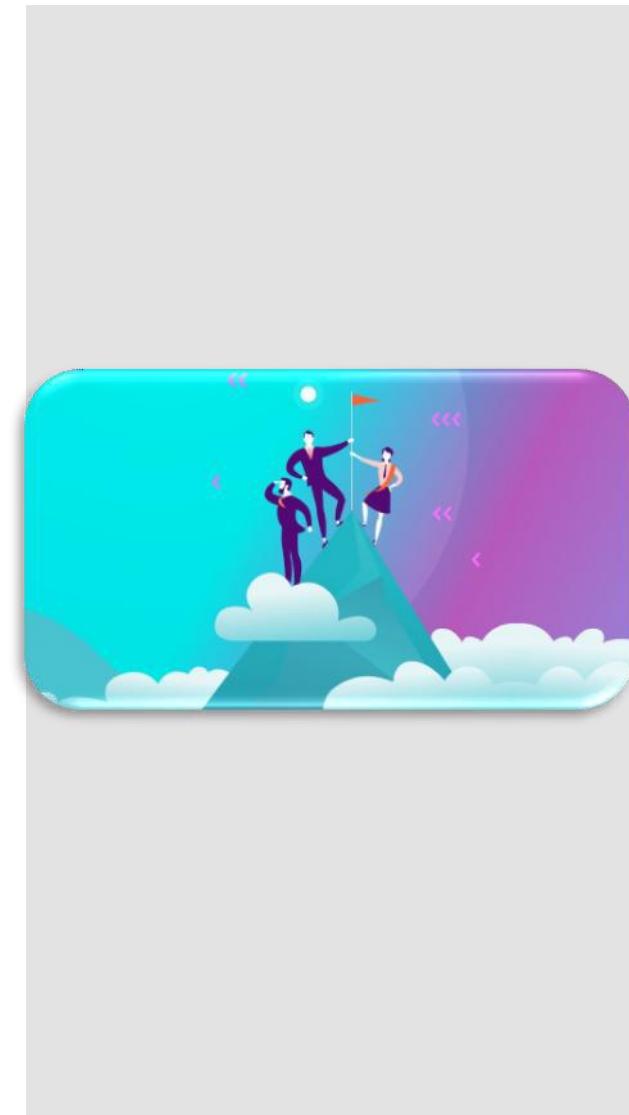


## In no particular order...

 Acronyms – ONLY after it is introduced

 Organizational or industry jargon

## THE 1 ATTACHMENT TRICK

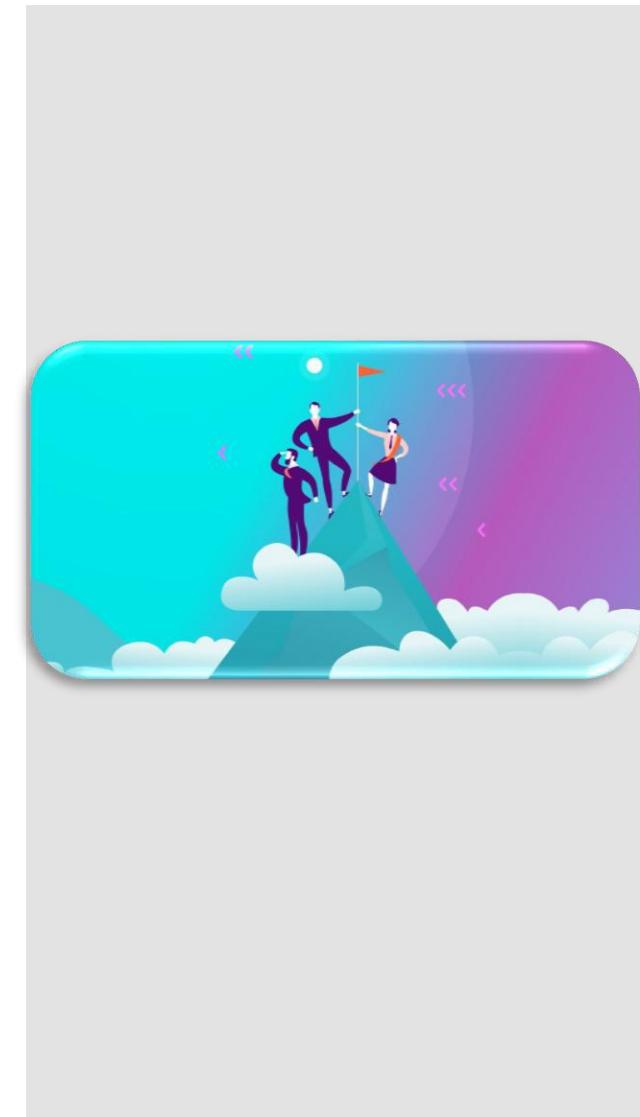


# In no particular order...

*To AI, or not to AI?  
That is question!*

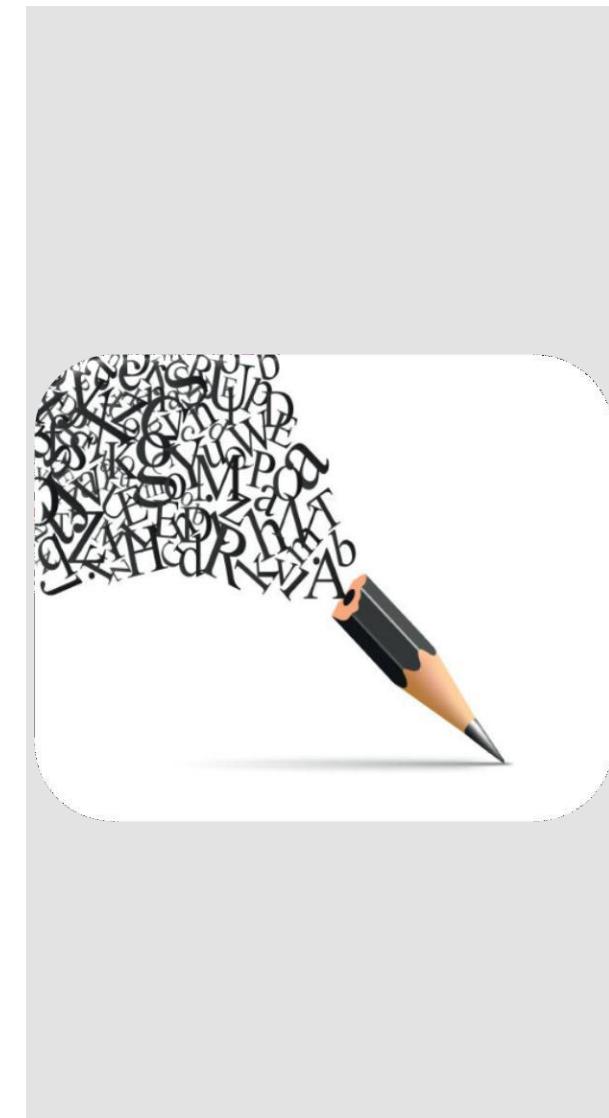
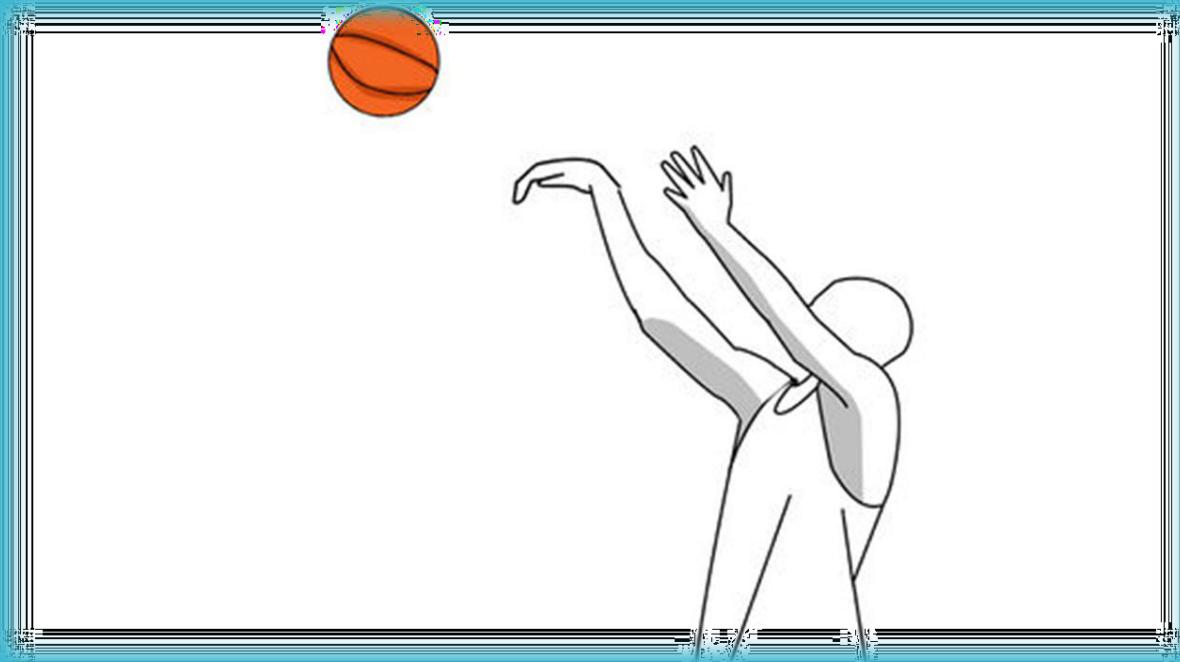


*What's your answer?*



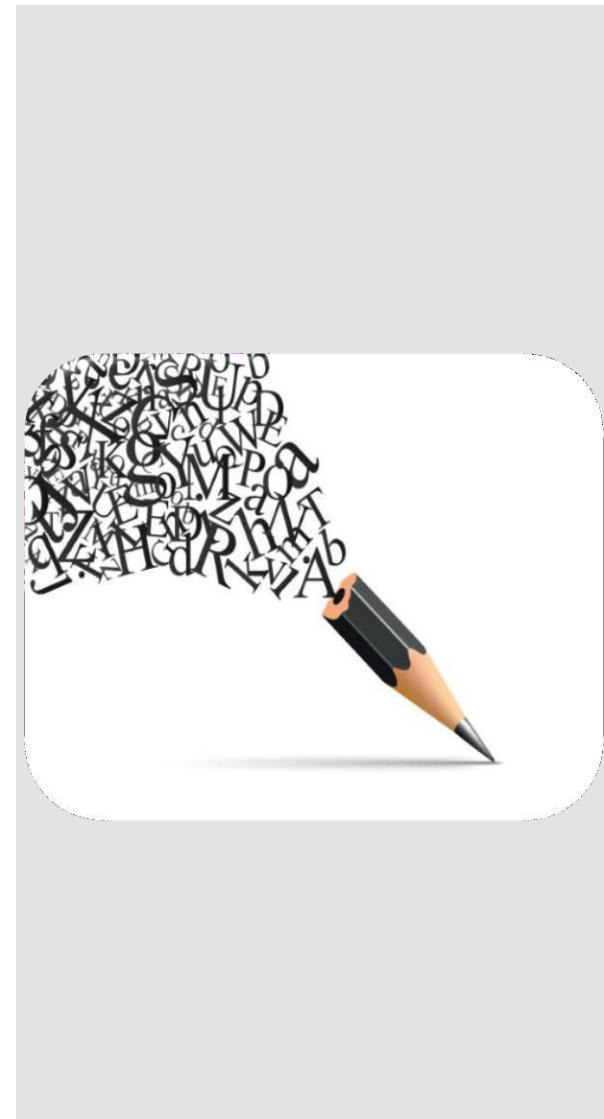
## Now, you try it!

“You miss 100% of the shots you take...”



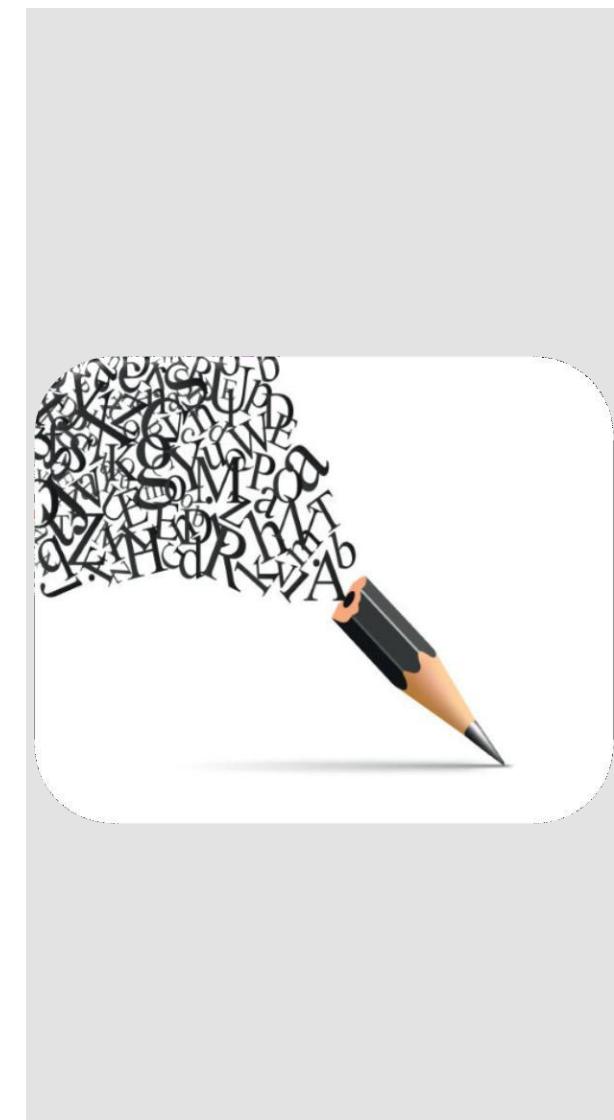
## Now, you try it!

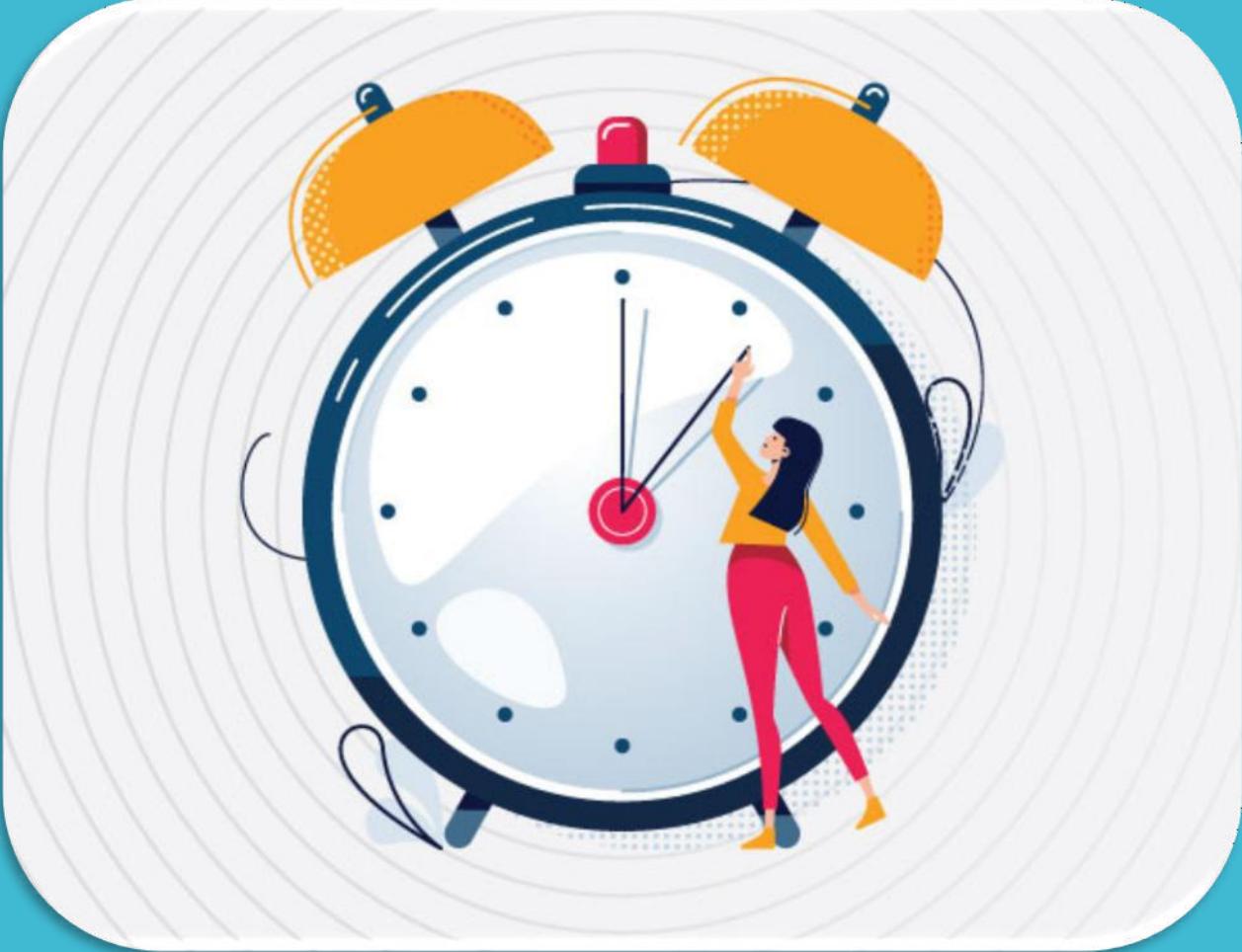
However, to take the best shot, you must PRACTICE and understand the game plan!



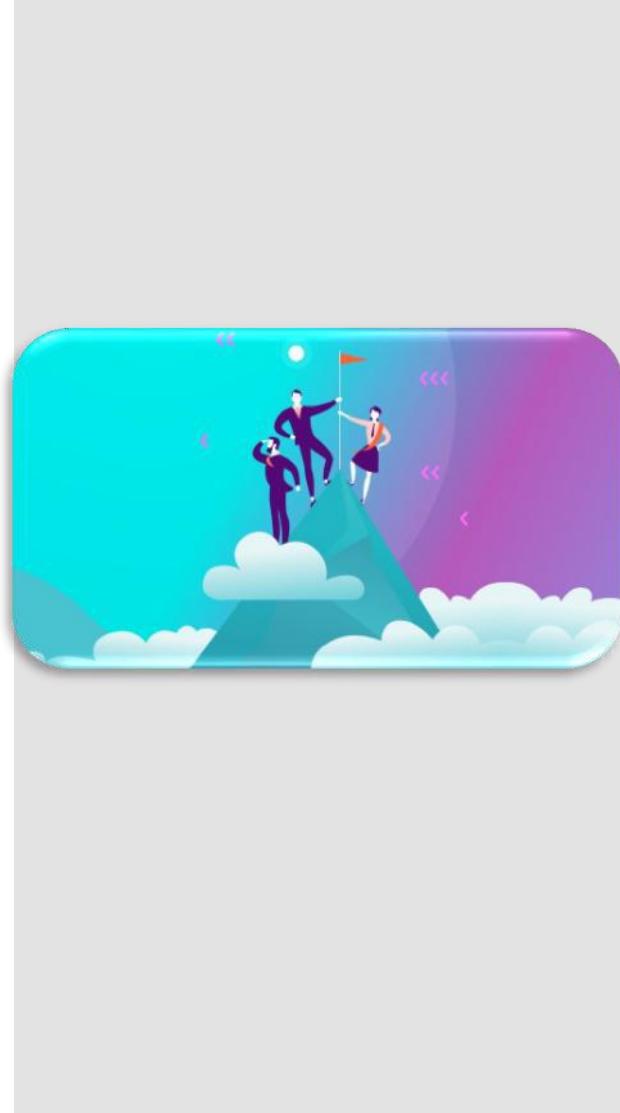
## Now, you try it!

It's time to practice!





# REAL Nonprofit Storytelling



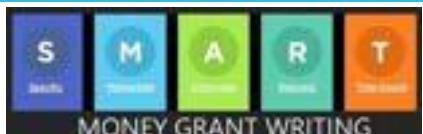
# Thank you for the privilege of your time!

Please take a few seconds to tell us what you think – a quick 4 Question Survey!

<https://s.zoom.us/m/bPFf3AOgN>



(With at least 50% of attendees responding, EVERYONE receives 50% discount on another 2026 training!)



Remember, if you've met one foundation, you've met one foundation. Each foundation is different, and they all have their own ambitions and boundaries. Building a strong relationship with a funder takes time and persistence. But when the relationship is strong, it can be one of the best things that ever happened to your nonprofit and will repay the energy you put into it many times over.

### Let's review Prepping to Write, Re-Vet the Grant

What clues did you get from re-vetting the grant opportunity and grantmaker?

Example1



**Types of Projects**

*What kind of projects do you fund and where?*

As a small foundation, we are particularly drawn to pilot projects and providing seed money. We also encourage planning grants and other capacity-building strategies. Most of our funding goes to geographies in which the trustees have a history: the North Country of New York, southern Connecticut, the Adirondacks, and Cambodia. Advocacy funding is almost always national in scope.

*Is there a minimum or maximum time frame for the projects you support?*

No. The time frame should realistically reflect the amount of time it will take you to activate your goals.

**Process**

*How can we apply?*

Grants are by invitation only, and grantees are often well-known to the trustees before grants are awarded. However, if you feel that your organization is an excellent fit, please contact us with a letter of inquiry as described in the grant guidelines.

*What is your funding cycle?*

Applications are by invitation only. Once grantees go through the LOI

What TYPE of story works best? Participant, Staff, Volunteer/Board, Donor, Community/Partner

Answer: Participant story

Clue: Grantmaker website focuses on individuals engaged in the funded project

Why are you a good fit?

Clues: The grantmaker is focused on environmental stewardship and engaging the next generation

What do you want the reviewers to remember?

Clues: The only organization focusing on protecting the entire St. Lawrence River, actively engaging the next generation with more than 1,000 students annually in environmental stewardship, plenty of photos on all pages of website of projects they funded

Example 2

 <b>Mother Cabrini</b> <small>HEALTH FOUNDATION</small>	About Us	Leadership	Our Grants
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## 03 —— Our Grants & Programs

Building upon the legacy of Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini and the Catholic tradition of healing for the sick and caring for the poor, the Cabrini Foundation supports programs that meet the unmet healthcare and healthcare related needs of individuals, families and communities throughout New York State.

In 2019, the Cabrini Foundation will focus on funding programs that provide services to the following communities:

- low income individuals and families;
- older adults;

What TYPE of story works best? Participant, Staff, Volunteer/Board, Donor, Community/Partner

Answer: Participant story OR Community story

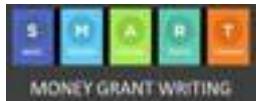
Clue: Grantmaker website and application focus on overall target population impact

Why are you a good fit?

Clues: The grantmaker is focused on low-income communities and partnering with the regional diocese.

What do you want the reviewers to remember?

Clues: The grantmaker is engaged in direct service to low-income individuals in the community and also is engaged in systemic change work in the community



## REAL Nonprofit Storytelling Workshop

### Worksheet: Type of Story / Grant Application Component Matrix

Charles County Charitable Trust

The screenshot shows the Charles County Charitable Trust website. The main navigation bar includes links for Home, About, Impact, News, Grants, and Contact Us. The 'Impact' section features a large image of a firefighter and a banner for the 'Impact' grant application. Below it are two rows of award lists: 'FY26 Microgrant Award List' and 'FY26 Grant Award List' on the left, and 'FY25 Microgrant Award List' and 'FY25 Grant Award List' on the right. The 'About' section includes a 'Who We Are' sub-section with a photo of a child. The 'Community News' section features a photo of two people shaking hands and a list of recent posts, including 'Charitable Trust visits the H.E.R.E Center in Waldorf' and 'Polonia Movement Opens New Home for Women and Children'.

\*CCCT does not have an FAQ page

What TYPE of story works best for the original/overarching story?

Participant, Staff, Volunteer/Board, Donor, Community/Partner

Answer: Participant story, Community story

Clue: Grantmaker website and application focuses on overall target population impact in Charles County.

What TYPE of story works best for the sub stories that support the original/overarching story?

Participant, Staff, Volunteer/Board, Donor, Community/Partner

Answer: Participant story, Staff story, Volunteer story, Board member story, Donor story, Community story, Partner story

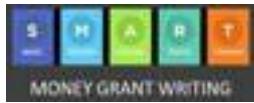
Your choices are mission-dependent and purpose-of-the-grant-dependent. Each component of the application should at least touch on one of these types of stories.

Why are you a good fit?

Clues: The grantmaker is focused on services and advocacy in Charles County, MD.

Clues: The grantmaker is engaged in supporting a variety of missions and services provided in Charles County, MD.

Clues: The grantmaker funds a range of annual budgets (i.e., sizes of nonprofits) from small to very large. This clues you into the fact that your application must be strong, well-written, on point/tight, evidence-based program(s), need, and evaluation, reasonable and complete budget with a cohesive budget narrative. Size and length of time in business does not seem to eliminate an organization, although there are requirements for the minimum length of time an organization has been operating as a nonprofit for grant eligibility.



**REAL Nonprofit Storytelling Workshop**  
**Worksheet: Type of Story / Grant Application Component Matrix**

Specific to your organization's Charles County Charitable Trust grant application, what additional clues did your review of the grantmaker and grant opportunity highlight?

<b>Clues</b>	<b>Possible TYPES of stories for this Clue</b>	<b>Possible Application Section(s)</b>
	Participant, Staff, Volunteer/Board, Donor/Grantmaker, Community/Partner	
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

**REAL Nonprofit Storytelling Workshop**  
**Worksheet: Type of Story / Grant Application Component Matrix**

*This worksheet is based on the Charles County Charitable FY26 Trust grant application.*

*Remember, ALL narratives are polished, well-edited complete thoughts, whether a story is included or not.*

*Remember, not every section is going to have a paragraphs-long TYPE of story. In some sections, the story will be a comprehensive phrase or a couple of succinctly informative sentences.*

**TYPES of Stories:** Participant, Staff, Volunteer/Board, Donor, Community/Partner

<b>GRANT APPLICATION COMPONENT/SECTION</b>	<b>TYPE OF STORY</b>	<b>NOTES, SUGGESTIONS</b>
Organizational History/Resume (11.)	No story	Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.
Purpose of Proposed Project (17.)	No story	Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story; and the character limit is 30.
Program Summary (20.)	Participant, Community	<p>Staff, Volunteer, Board member, Donor, or Partner stories will frame the nonprofit as the hero, not in the supporting role (unless the ask is specifically <i>for</i> the volunteer program, board development).</p> <p>Staff expertise and qualifications that align with grantmaker funding and are crucial to the program description for implementation and evaluation are not stories; they are facts and data in narratives.</p> <p>The Program Summary should relate to the Need.</p>
Need (21.)	Participant, Community	A Participant story can be specific to your organization or used as a profile/synopsis of the population in need of services.
Objectives and Outcomes (22.)	No story  Participant, Staff, Volunteer	<p>Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.</p> <p>As a sub story, a Participant, Staff, or Volunteer story can make connections between the Program Summary and Need.</p> <p>These TYPES of stories can also highlight how AND why it's important that a need or barrier related to the funding's purpose is addressed, as the anticipated outputs (objectives) and outcomes – quantitative and qualitative information.</p> <p><i>Remember, sub stories connect to the original/overarching story, and do not introduce new program or need information.</i></p>
Partnerships (23.)	Partner	Introduce your list of partnerships relevant to THIS grant with a value statement.
Key Program Staff or Volunteer(s) (24.)	Staff, Volunteer, Board Member	Introduce the Key Program Staff or Volunteer(s) relevant to THIS grant with a value statement, at minimum; use a story as space allows and as context dictates.

**REAL Nonprofit Storytelling Workshop**  
**Worksheet: Type of Story / Grant Application Component Matrix**

Timeline (25.)	No story	<p>Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.</p> <p>Also, having a section with no story provides relief for the grant reviewer from reading emotionally heavy or content-dense narratives, section after section.</p>
Scalability (26.)	<p>No story</p> <p>Donor including grantmaker, Partner</p>	<p>Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.</p> <p>A Donor or Partner story may be used to demonstrate community support for the initiative, and how adjustments to proposed plans are realistic; to demonstrate engagement by other stakeholders for scalability.</p>
Sustainability (27.)	<p>No story</p> <p>Donor including grantmaker, Partner</p> <p>Staff (department)</p>	<p>Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.</p> <p>A Donor or Partner story may be used to demonstrate community support for the initiative, and how the program continues after the grant funding period ends realistic.</p> <p>Staff stories might be used to outline the fundraising and budgeting activities that secure funding beyond this specific grant.</p>
Proposed Budget Narrative (32.)	No story	Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.
Source of Other Program Funding (33.)	(Major) Donor including grantmakers, (Funding) Partner	<p>Introduce your list of Other Program Funding relevant to THIS grant with a value statement.</p> <p>Also, each entry should be noted as secured, committed, or pending notification.</p>

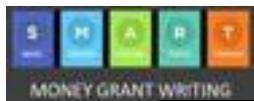


**REAL Nonprofit Storytelling Workshop**  
**Worksheet: Type of Story / Grant Application Component Matrix**

Review your progress!

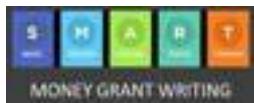
Date of Progress Review:

GRANT APPLICATION COMPONENT/SECTION	TYPE OF STORY	NOTES, SUGGESTIONS	COMPLETED
Organizational History/Resume (11.)	No story	Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.	YES NO
Purpose of Proposed Project (17.)	No story	Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story; and the character limit is 30.	YES NO
Program Summary (20.)	Participant, Community	Staff, Volunteer, Board member, Donor, or Partner stories will frame the nonprofit as the hero, not in the supporting role (unless the ask is specifically <i>for</i> the volunteer program, board development).  Staff expertise and qualifications that align with grantmaker funding and are crucial to the program description for implementation and evaluation are not stories; they are facts and data in narratives.  The Program Summary should relate to the Need.	YES NO
Need (21.)	Participant, Community	A Participant story can be specific to your organization or used as a profile/synopsis of the population in need of services.	YES NO
Objectives and Outcomes (22.)	No story  Participant, Staff, Volunteer	Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.  As a sub story, a Participant, Staff, or Volunteer story can make connections between the Program Summary and Need.  These TYPES of stories can also highlight how AND why it's important that a need or barrier related to the funding's purpose is addressed, as the anticipated outputs (objectives) and outcomes – quantitative and qualitative information.  <i>Remember, sub stories connect to the original/overarching story, and do not introduce new program or need information.</i>	YES NO



**REAL Nonprofit Storytelling Workshop**  
**Worksheet: Type of Story / Grant Application Component Matrix**

	Partnerships (23.)	Partner	Introduce your list of partnerships relevant to THIS grant with a value statement.	YES	NO
	Key Program Staff or Volunteer(s) (24.)	Staff, Volunteer, Board Member	Introduce the Key Program Staff or Volunteer(s) relevant to THIS grant with a value statement, at minimum; use a story as space allows and as context dictates.	YES	NO
Timeline (25.)	No story		Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.  Also, having a section with no story provides relief for the grant reviewer from reading emotionally heavy or content-dense narratives, section after section.	YES	NO
Scalability (26.)	No story		Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.	YES	NO
	Donor including grantmaker, Partner		A Donor or Partner story may be used to demonstrate community support for the initiative, and how adjustments to proposed plans are realistic; to demonstrate engagement by other stakeholders for scalability.		
Sustainability (27.)	No story		Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.	YES	NO
	Donor including grantmaker, Partner		A Donor or Partner story may be used to demonstrate community support for the initiative, and how the program continues after the grant funding period ends realistic.		
	Staff (department)		Staff stories might be used to outline the fundraising and budgeting activities that secure funding beyond this specific grant.		
Proposed Budget Narrative (32.)	No story		Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.	YES	NO
Source of Other Program Funding (33.)	(Major) Donor including grantmakers, (Funding) Partner		Introduce your list of Other Program Funding relevant to THIS grant with a value statement.  Also, each entry should be noted as secured, committed, or pending notification.	YES	NO



**REAL Nonprofit Storytelling Workshop**  
**Worksheet: Type of Story / Grant Application Component Matrix**

*Rate your progress!*

**SCORING RUBRIC:**

Thank you for taking time to further review the current grant application. Please consider the following when evaluating the projects:

- The Charles County Charitable Trust mission is to promote excellence throughout the community's nonprofit sector.
- Does this program requesting funding focus on improving the lives of the County's residents?
- Does the funding request address Quality of Life, Commitment to Excellence, Collaboration, and Impact by the nonprofit?

Please score the application in the following areas and note any additional comments.

**Matrix Score** Please review fund criteria with application and rate from 0-4.

0 - Not at all

1 – Somewhat

2 – Fair

3 – Good

4 – Excellent

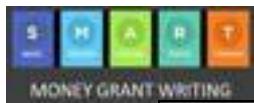
N/A - Not Applicable

Do you have a conflict or connection to this project or organization? YES      NO

Does the project align with the Charles County Charitable Trust funding priorities? \*

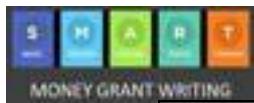
Any response scored below a 3 should be revised, and rescored.

<b>GRANT APPLICATION COMPONENT/SECTION</b>	<b>TYPE OF STORY</b>	<b>DOES THE TYPE OF STORY ACCOMPLISH THIS?</b>	<b>SCORE 0-4, N/A; NOTES</b>
Organizational History/Resume (11.)	No story	Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.	
Purpose of Proposed Project (17.)	No story	Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story; and the character limit is 30.	
Program Summary (20.)	Participant, Community	Staff, Volunteer, Board member, Donor, or Partner stories will frame the nonprofit as the hero, not in the supporting role (unless the ask is specifically for the volunteer program, board development).  Staff expertise and qualifications that align with grantmaker funding and are crucial to the program description for implementation and evaluation are not stories;	



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**Worksheet: Type of Story / Grant Application Component Matrix**

		<p>they are facts and data in narratives.</p> <p>The Program Summary should relate to the Need.</p>	
Need (21.)	Participant, Community	<p>A Participant story can be specific to your organization or used as a profile/synopsis of the population in need of services.</p>	
Objectives and Outcomes (22.)	No story  Participant, Staff, Volunteer	<p>Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.</p> <p>As a sub story, a Participant, Staff, or Volunteer story can make connections between the Program Summary and Need.</p> <p>These TYPES of stories can also highlight how AND why it's important that a need or barrier related to the funding's purpose is addressed, as the anticipated outputs (objectives) and outcomes – quantitative and qualitative information.</p> <p><i>Remember, sub stories connect to the original/overarching story, and do not introduce new program or need information.</i></p>	
Partnerships (23.)	Partner	Introduce your list of partnerships relevant to THIS grant with a value statement.	
Key Program Staff or Volunteer(s) (24.)	Staff, Volunteer, Board Member	Introduce the Key Program Staff or Volunteer(s) relevant to THIS grant with a value statement, at minimum; use a story as space allows and as context dictates.	
Timeline (25.)	No story	<p>Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.</p> <p>Also, having a section with no story provides relief for the grant reviewer from reading emotionally heavy or content-dense narratives, section after section.</p>	
Scalability (26.)	No story  Donor including grantmaker, Partner	<p>Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.</p> <p>A Donor or Partner story may be used to demonstrate community support for the initiative, and how adjustments to proposed plans are realistic; to demonstrate engagement by other stakeholders for scalability.</p>	
Sustainability (27.)	No story	Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.	



**REAL Nonprofit Storytelling Workshop**  
**Worksheet: Type of Story / Grant Application Component Matrix**

	Donor including grantmaker, Partner  Staff (department)	A Donor or Partner story may be used to demonstrate community support for the initiative, and how the program continues after the grant funding period ends realistic.  Staff stories might be used to outline the fundraising and budgeting activities that secure funding beyond this specific grant.	
Proposed Budget Narrative (32.)	No story	Although this is a narrative, it does not require a TYPE of story.	
Source of Other Program Funding (33.)	(Major) Donor including grantmakers, (Funding) Partner	Introduce your list of Other Program Funding relevant to THIS grant with a value statement.  Also, each entry should be noted as secured, committed, or pending notification.	

Grantmaker:

Grant opportunity:

Submission deadline:

Program, Project, other funding need:

*The data (quantitative information including anticipated outcomes and impacts) can be easily found in a logic model, Theory of Change, and perhaps the budget.*

Elements of Nonprofit Storytelling	Identify Your Story Elements	Tie the Data to the Element
<b>SETTING:</b> (Select location OR condition) Physical location/region in which the problem/need exists  Physical location where services that address the need are provided	Charles County, MD  <i>[address] where services are provided or where the need is addressed (if your org does not provide direct services)</i>	A physical location, and related resources, are INPUTS.
Current situation of the condition caused by the need (typically, for advocacy-type nonprofits without)	<i>The severity of the problem in Charles County, can be presented with comparison to regional or statewide statistics of the same condition</i>	Data for a condition should be sourced from evidence-based research, published by trusted resources. Data can include %, \$, #, mapping,
<b>CHARACTER(S):</b> The group receiving services	<i>The target participant group receiving direct services.</i>	The targets receiving services are INPUTS.
The inputs (human, financial, and physical/tangible resources)	<i>The internal tangible INPUTS of staff, volunteer, budget items, supplies, equipment, etc,</i>	The internal resources (staff, supplies, equipment, etc.) are INPUTS.
<b>PLOT/CONFLICT:</b> The storytelling	<i>The description of the organization's mission, programs or projects, and the cause(s) of the problem, including facts and figures, as well as anecdotes and testimony</i>	The need for the evidence-based actions, behaviors, or events are the ACTIVITIES. From the ACTIVITIES and need, the grant reviewer should feel the sense of urgency to empower the SETTING and CHARACTERS to achieve intended change (OUTCOMES and IMPACTS).
<b>RESOLUTION:</b> The experiences/intended change created by inputs, activities, and outputs, leading to outcomes for the characters	<i>The ACTIVITIES made possible by INPUTS (including the grantmaker's partnership with grant funding)</i>	The intended change is only an estimate – the forecasted, budgeted, or anticipated OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES, and IMPACTS.
<b>HAPPY ENDING:</b> The impacts (long-term change) experienced by the characters	<i>The long-range change anticipated for participants to experience.</i>	The intended or anticipated IMPACTS – positive change in the community.

Being a prolific writer is not a skill required for great storytelling in any nonprofit narrative. Knowing the elements of tried-and-true storytelling is necessary and recognizing where these elements are found internally and externally is crucial. The tried-and-true elements of storytelling are setting, characters, plot and conflict, resolution, and the (happy) ending. Here is how each is defined by or found in a nonprofit organization:

- ✓ Setting—The physical location in which the problem exists (area, neighborhood, community, city, state, region, country), physical location where services that address the need are provided, OR the current situation of condition (derived from the Needs Statement)
- ✓ Characters—The group receiving services OR the inputs (human, financial, and physical/tangible resources)
- ✓ Plot/Conflict—The description of the organization's mission, programs or projects, and the cause(s) of the problem, including facts and figures as well as anecdotes and testimony
- ✓ Resolution—The experiences created by activities and outputs and leading to outcomes for the characters
- ✓ Happy ending—The impacts (long-term change) experienced by the characters

After identifying these elements for the narrative, the writing is mechanical, taking the reader from Point A to Point B.

1. Write phrases and sentences depicting the physical location where the program/project or other funding need exists. The physical location can be a building, community, specific neighborhood, or group within a community or region. In contrast, the setting can be a situation or condition that exists. Many Needs Statements benefit from utilizing both settings.
2. Write phrases and sentences describing the characters—demographics, characteristics, expected numbers of the group receiving services OR list the inputs. For longer Needs Statements, it is likely to have both sets of characters.
3. Write phrases and sentences explaining how the intended outcomes involving the characters address the mission through the program/project or other funding gaps. The Needs Statement implicitly or explicitly talks about the problem(s) and the underlying cause(s) by addressing the mission.
4. Write phrases and sentences highlighting activities, outputs, and outcomes of the program/project and making logical connections between them using quantitative and qualitative examples. The logical connections portray progress towards the impacts and explain how the characters are positively impacted. This exemplifies improvement in the setting as well.
5. Write phrases and sentences illustrating the intended impacts—the fundamental changes anticipated as a result of the program/project, including the long-term benefits of the program/project. Impacts should be quantified whenever possible. (A word about Impacts: There are no right or wrong impacts.)

Work through the storytelling elements for each narrative in the grant application—Needs Statements, Program/Project Descriptions, Program/Project Evaluations, and even Budget Narratives. Remember, the setting is the tangible location, the "where." It can also be



**REAL Nonprofit Storytelling Workshop**  
**Worksheet: Identify Your Elements of Nonprofit Storytelling**

the current intangible situation of the need. The characters are the "who" and "what." The "who" are the living things receiving services. The characters, from an internal standpoint, are the inputs (the "what") used to implement the activities. The plot and conflict are derived from the Needs Assessment and Statement but are expressed in terms of the "how," "when," and "why" in the story. The resolution is conveyed as the activities, outputs, and outcomes expected as a result of implementing the program/project (or other funding needs). The sunset, or happy ending, is your program's positive impact(s).

About logic models and their INPUTS, ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES, AND IMPACTS...

***Inputs and activities make up your planned work;  
 outputs, outcomes, and impacts represent your intended results.***

It is essential to understand that submitting a grant proposal, in most cases, is for a new program/project or one that has had some changes from its initial implementation. Therefore, it is impossible to know everything about a program/project for sure. The actual inputs and activities are the only things known for sure. The outputs, outcomes, and impacts can only be estimated, projected, or anticipated. Here are the definitions of the details:

- Inputs (i.e., Resources) are the human, financial, and physical resources that support a grant-funded program/project. These include staff and volunteer time, facilities, equipment, supplies, building or office, transportation, and community partners. Inputs (resources) are the tangible and intangible components that go into a program/project, the ingredients aspect of the program/project's recipe for success. The list of what is considered an input/resource should be inclusive and encompassing.
- Activities are what a program/project does with the inputs. Activities are the processes, tools, events, technology, and actions integral to the program/project implementation. These processes, tools, events, technology, and actions are used to bring about the intended program/project changes or results. In rare cases, the activities can be conceptual. This list lays out the actual activities that will occur as a result of the grant, such as workshops and training in the sample program.
- Outputs are the direct results of a program/project's implemented activities. These are concrete, quantifiable indicators of productivity. What can be quantified as a result of the program? How many people will be reached? How many will participate? What events will occur, and how many?
- Outcomes are the short-term and intermediate benchmarks for the target constituency during and after program/project activities. These are the short-term benefits of the program as opposed to the long-range, big-picture changes expected. Outcomes should be quantified whenever possible.
- Impacts are the fundamental change anticipated as a result of the program/project—the long-term benefits. The impact should be quantified whenever possible. (A word about Impacts: There are no right or wrong impacts. There are no right or wrong outcomes. Every program/project is different. Every organization is different, and missions vary. Do not compare your programs/projects to the competition or collaborators. Be confident in what YOU want to accomplish.)

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
We use these inputs (resources)	for these activities or endeavors	to produce these (quantified) changes	so that the stakeholders can change in these ways	leading to these long-term positive effects

Brain response to storytelling:



## REAL Nonprofit Storytelling Workshop

### Worksheet: Identify Your Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Impacts

Capes come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Empowering Language is crucial to getting the fit for the cape and helps avoid writing a savior narrative – it is evidence-based.

*Eloquently noted by Thomas et al., (2020):*

*Narratives accompanying grants and donations often reinforce stigmatizing views of those in poverty as deficient in their circumstances or ability. These narratives risk undermining the very goals of nonprofits—to empower recipients to pursue their goals and experience dignity rather than shame. In contrast, narratives crafted to counter stigma and leverage culturally resonant forms of agency enhance recipients' beliefs in themselves and invest in their skills without reducing donor support. (p. 1)*

Thomas, C. C., Otis, N. G., Abraham, J. R., and Walton, G. M. (2020, June 24). *Toward a science of delivering aid with dignity: Experimental evidence and local forecasts from Kenya*. PNAS 117(27) <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1917046117>

**If donors are equally motivated to give, and empowerment language produces better program outcomes, there is absolutely no reason to use disparaging language.**

Empowering Language:

1. Person-first language – making personhood the most important characteristic
2. Self-identification – using language that people themselves prefer
3. Active voice – putting the actor of the sentence in the role of performing the action

**Person-first language** involves economy, indigeneity and ancestry, and housing and space. What empowering words could your organization use to describe a person or group's economic situation?

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What empowering words could your organization use to describe the indigeneity and ancestry of the groups you work with?

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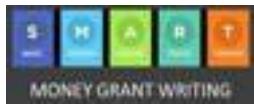
What empowering words could your organization use to describe a person or group's housing or living situation?

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**Language supporting self-identification** involves race/ethnicity, age, and disability. What empowering words could your organization use when identifying the race or ethnicity of a person or group?

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What empowering words could your organization use when identifying the age of a



**REAL Nonprofit Storytelling Workshop**  
**Worksheet: Identify Your Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Impacts**

person or group?

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What empowering words could your organization use when identifying the ability of a person or group?

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## REAL Nonprofit Storytelling Workshop

### Worksheet: Identify Your Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Impacts

**Write one sentence about the purpose of the funding/how the funds will be spent:**

Example: The primary goal of this project is to reduce cavities and poor dental hygiene.

Better: The primary goal of this project is to improve and maintain good oral hygiene and increase access to dental care.

**Write one complete (but not run on) sentence about the purpose of the funding.**

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**Does your sentence engender a positive image? If the answer is anything but YES, rewrite the sentence.**

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## Active Voice versus Passive Voice

## PASSIVE VOICE:

The ball is being chased by the dog.

## ACTIVE VOICE

The dog chases the ball.

Mental health services are provided.

The nonprofit organization provides mental health services to community members in need.

Active Voice with the recipient of services as the hero of the sentence is EVEN BETTER:

The nonprofit organization provides mental health services to community members in need.  
(hero of the sentence/story)

Community members access mental health services at the nonprofit organization.  
(hero of the sentence/story)

More ACTIVE VOICE, APPROPRIATE HERO practice:

Ok: The program shelters 30 homeless men each night.

Better: Thirty men experiencing homelessness find shelter each at the program.

Ok: The Center improves the health and wellbeing of each person we serve.

Better: Individuals improve their health and wellbeing by utilizing services at the Center.

Ok: The nonprofit organization will distribute free meals to community members who fall within the guidelines of the 200% poverty level.

Good: The nonprofit organization distributes free meals to community members who fall within the guidelines of the 200% poverty level.

Better: Community members who are increasing financial stability can enjoy free meals in a cooperative neighborhood setting.

Ok: The program mentored more than 200 youth in the past year.

Better: More than 200 youth aged 14-17 years engaged in mentoring services last year.

## Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Impacts

IMPACTS	Identify Your Organization's Impacts	Tie the Planning to the IMPACTS
<b>Primary:</b> The anticipated core results are fundamental to the purpose of the funding request.	<i>The immediate results of using the INPUTS for the ACTIVITIES experienced by the Participants</i>	The core results (Primary Impacts) occur based on the INPUTS and ACTIVITIES, to achieve evidence-based changes (OUTCOMES) towards long-term change. Primary impacts are typically experienced only by the Participants.
<b>Secondary:</b> The anticipated, probable, and possible core results from the changes experienced because of the initial INPUTS and ACTIVITIES.	<i>The additional changes experienced by the Participants and closely aligned stakeholder groups</i>	The expanded core results (Secondary Impacts) occur based on expected OUTPUTS and OUTCOMES, including changes likely or possibly to be experienced by the Participants. Some of the Secondary Impacts are experienced by indirect participants, such as the local and regional stakeholders groups and economies.
<b>Tertiary:</b> The positive changes experienced by stakeholder groups and economies because of the Primary and Secondary Impacts.	<i>The additional changes experienced by local, regional, and national (sometimes global) stakeholder groups and economies as result of the Primary and Secondary Impacts.</i>	The long- and wide-ranging core results (Tertiary Impacts) occur based on the changes from OUTCOMES and SHORT-TERM IMPACTS experienced by the Participants, closely aligned (local) stakeholder groups, and regional, national (sometimes global) stakeholders and economies.

Here is an example of the Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Impacts for a job development program for individuals with disabilities who want to be working:

IMPACTS	Impacts of Job Development Program	Tie the Planning/Goals to the IMPACTS
So, someone got a job...	Now what...	What does that look like in the broader sense...
Primary: Individuals with disabilities who want to be working secure gainful, long-term employment resulting from a structured, individualized job development program	Individuals with disabilities who want to be working secure gainful, long-term employment	Living-wage, competitive, sustained employment increases skills, improves economic outlook, enhances self-esteem, exponentially more for people with disabilities.
Secondary: The anticipated, probable, and possible core results from the changes experienced because of the initial INPUTS and ACTIVITIES.	People with disabilities benefiting from gainful employment experience greater financial stability, improved skill sets, expanded social and community engagement, and increased likelihood of securing health care benefits.	Employed citizens with disabilities have experience reduced reliance on public assistance programs, have more disposable income, improved self-worth and independence, contribute more to the social and economic aspects of their community.
Tertiary: The positive changes experienced by stakeholder groups and economies because of the Primary and Secondary Impacts.	People with disabilities benefitting from sustained, competitive employment also experience increased inclusion through professional opportunities and improved likelihood of post-high school education.	Community residents with increased disposable income contribute more to the local, regional, and national economies, including through educational programs and professional opportunities to network and engage in professional development activities locally, regionally, and nationally.

A few examples if you get stumped identifying secondary and tertiary impacts:

- Changed attitudes
- Increased readiness
- Reduction or elimination of undesirable behavior
- Increase in desirable behavior
- Maintenance of new behavior
- Increased social status
- Improved economic conditions (better housing options, better transportation options, more disposable income, improved food and nutrition security)
- Improved health conditions (tie to Social Determinants of health whenever possible)
- Increased local and regional economic development (due to increase in taxes collected)

Grantmaker:

Grant opportunity:

Submission deadline:

Program, Project, other funding need:

IMPACTS	Impacts of Job Development Program	Tie the Planning/Goals to the IMPACTS
Primary:		
Secondary:		
Tertiary:		



**Application Access Questions:**

**\*Are you an IRS recognized 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization operating in Charles County?**

**\*Will your proposed program activities be carried out for the benefit of Charles County residents?**

**\*If your organization has been operational for at least three full years, is it operating with an annual budget and a board that consists of at least three volunteer board members who are not related?**

If you respond "no" to any of these questions, you are not eligible to apply for a grant. For more information, contact: [cburnett@charlesnonprofits.org](mailto:cburnett@charlesnonprofits.org)

**Organization Information**

**1. Legal Name of Organization**

**2. Address**

**3. Email**

**4. Phone**

**5. Website**

**6. EIN #**

**7. Year Organization Was Established**

8. Please select the years you have received prior *Fiscal Year Grants* from Charles County Charitable Trust (Do not include information on other grants received from the Trust)

- FY25 Grant Amount
- FY25 Purpose (30 word limit)
- FY24 Grant Amount
- FY24 Purpose (30 word limit)
- FY23 Grant Amount
- FY23 Purpose (30 word limit)

9. Please select the years you have received grants or funding directly from Charles County government, in addition to or instead of grants from the Charles County Charitable Trust.

- FY25 Grant Amount
- FY25 Purpose (30 word limit)
- FY24 Grant Amount
- FY24 Purpose (30 word limit)
- FY23 Grant Amount
- FY23 Purpose (30 word limit)

10. IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter (PDF format)

**11. Organization Resume**

*What are your organization's mission, goals, history and recent accomplishments? Include information about your organization's demonstrated capacity to meet institutional and project objectives, including expertise of staff and volunteers (350 word limit)*

**12. Number of Full-Time Staff**

**13. Number of Part-Time Staff**

**14. Number of Volunteers, Including Board Members**

- Is this number an estimate?

**15. Number of Volunteer Hours in the Most Recent Fiscal Year**

- Is this number an estimate?

**16. Board of Directors, Titles, and Affiliations or Former Affiliations (PDF format)**

**Program Information**

*If you serve multiple counties, provide information for Charles County only*

**17. Purpose of Proposed Program (30 word limit)**

**18. Number of Individuals to be Served in Charles County**

- If you entered zero, please provide an explanation (30 word limit)

**19. Amount of Grant Request (Max. \$65,000)**

**20. Program Summary**

*Describe your grant request, including your overall goal(s), target population(s), and benefits to the people of*

## Charles County Charitable Trust - Grant Application

*Charles County. (350 word limit)*

### **21. Need**

*What problem or need does your grant request address? Describe the extent of the need or problem and provide evidence to substantiate it. (250 word limit)*

### **22. Objectives and Outcomes**

*What are the specific objectives of your grant request, including the number of people you expect to serve? What results are you committed to achieving? What evidence will prove your success? What impact will your program have on the individuals you serve? (350 word limit)*

### **23. Partnerships**

*List partner organizations specific to your grant request and explain the nature of the partnerships. (150 word limit)*

### **24. Key Program Staff (paid and/or volunteer)**

*Key Program Staff (paid and/or volunteer) who will implement the proposed program. List each person's title (if applicable) and provide a brief biography. (200 word limit)*

### **25. Timeline**

*Provide a timeline of major program activities. (150 word limit)*

### **26. Scalability**

*If this program is not fully funded, will your organization still be able to deliver the program? \* Y or N  
Explanation (30 word limit)*

### **27. Sustainability**

*Does the organization have a plan to sustain the program after the conclusion of this grant? \* Y or N  
Explanation (30 word limit)*

## **Financial Information**

### **28. Start Date of Current Fiscal Year**

### **29. Current Fiscal Year Budget vs. Actuals (PDF or Excel format)**

### **30. Prior Fiscal Year Operating Budget vs Actuals (PDF or Excel format)**

**31. Proposed Program Budget Template**

*Download the Proposed Program Budget Template by clicking [here](#). Once completed, upload it to the box below.*

**32. Proposed Program Budget (PDF or Excel format)**

**33. Source of other Program Funding**

*If your program budget is greater than the amount of your grant request, please indicate the source of the other funding, listing name of organization/agency/company, the amount of funding and indicate whether the funding is “secured”, “committed”, or “pending notification.” Provide any additional information that you feel is necessary (300 word limit).*

**34. Program Budget Narrative (500 word limit)**

**35. Most Recent 990 or 990-EZ, if you are required to file one by the Internal Revenue Service (PDF format)**

**36. Most recent Independent Audit Report or Review conducted in compliance with state and/or federal regulations or by choice. (PDF format)**

**37. If your organization does not file a 990 AND is not required to conduct an annual financial audit, upload a copy of your most recent fiscal year's Year-End-Budget vs. Actuals, signed by the chief volunteer officer of your board of directors (e.g. Chair or President). (PDF format)**

**38. Application Contact**

- Email
- Phone

**39. Board Chair or President**

- Email
- Phone

**40. Executive Director or Managing Head of Organization**

- Email
- 
- Phone

**CHARLES COUNTY CHARITABLE TRUST  
PROGRAM BUDGET**

Organization Name	
Program Name	

	Total Program Budget	Requested from Charles County Charitable Trust	Line Item Details
<b>Personnel*</b>			
Key Staff: (Titles)			
Consultants			
<b>Project Expenses*</b>			
Supplies			
Printing & Copying-			
Postage & Delivery			
Transportation			
Marketing			
<b>Total Costs</b>			

\*Additional line items may be added.