



Money Grant Writing

Being Grant-Ready Isn't Easy

By Tarra Nystrom, MBA

Being grant-ready is a mindset. There is work to getting grant-ready. Work beyond that Letter of Tax-Exempt status from the IRS. Work beyond lively, productive conversations about programs and missions at staff and Board meetings. It is work to pull together a list of documents and information required in grant applications. It is work figuring out which are all ready to go and which content needs to be written. It can be daunting.

There is a process involved preparing to complete grant applications, and there are things to consider for how well-positioned your organization is to be awarded grant money. These are two completely different activities. Funding is competitive. Be ready for competition by understanding the process and considering your current position.

The process – Grant-ready 1.0

Below is a mostly-comprehensive list of recommended documents and information to have ready. You need electronic versions of this information and content; keep hard copies as a back-up. You need to know where to find these files on your laptop or PC, and on your shared files system within your organization (if you have one). You need to know the names of these documents to find them easily. Searching takes valuable time.

- *Letter of Determination from IRS
- *Organization's EIN
- Incorporation documents from State
- *Organization background/history
- *Mission Statement
- *Needs Assessment and/or Statement
- *Program/Project Description
- Program/Project Sustainability Statement and/or Plan
- *List of Key Staff
- *List of Board of Directors and their Affiliations
- Resumes/Bios of Key Staff and Board of Directors Members Annual (Organizational)
- *Program/Project Budget (1 year); budget narrative
- *Budget (annual), budget narrative (annual) for organization
- *Program/Project Evaluation Methods List of Strategic Partnerships
- List of other funding, including pending and in-kind (organizational and program/project lists)
- Letters of Support, Memorandums of Agreement/Memorandums of Understanding
- Code of Ethics
- Executive Summary (organization, program/project)
- *Conflict of Interest Policy
- Nondiscrimination Policy
- Technology Use Policy
- Financial Management Policies
- Financial Management Policies
- Program participant, partner Testimonials
- Program/Project Logic Model
- Identified gaps in funding strategy

Not every document will be required for every proposal. Those with an * are most commonly required. This is not an exhaustive list. Any funder can ask for information relevant to its funding initiatives.

I will not apologize if this list seems daunting. This is what it takes to best-position your organization for funding, particularly grant funding. It is okay if your organization decides not to pursue grant funding. That decision should be made collaboratively with the key staff and Board of Directors, with constructive input from appropriate advisors. Not every nonprofit needs grant money to be sustainable or carry out its mission. However, if you are going to apply for grants, know what is involved, and understand what it takes to not waste time, energy, and money on grant applications. Also, know what is involved if the grant is awarded. I will remind you of this throughout this chapter and book.

Even if your organization does not have a tidy folder of grant-ready documents, you probably have much of this information somewhere.

Having your ducks in a row, having all of the content and documents either required or anticipated for grant applications will make your life a whole lot easier and take much of the dread you have of grant writing. By taking some time upfront to pull everything together, you will save yourself countless hours every time there is an application deadline. This will also let you know what content and documents you do not have handy.

For more information about grant proposal writing, please contact Tarra Nystrom at SMARTMoneyGrantWriting@gmail.com or visit my [Grant Writing Services information](#).