



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Grant Writing

CALIFORNIA YMCA YOUTH AND
GOVERNMENT TRAINING

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Presentation Goals

- **Are you Ready? Considerations in Grant Preparation**
- **Top Ten Reasons Grants Fail**
- **3 Secrets of Success**
- **Discuss how to write competitive grants including these major sections:**
 - Background/Rationale
 - Program Description/Aims
 - Budget
- **Think Like a Grant Reviewer**

What Experience Have You Had with Grant Writing?



Considerations

What you should know when you set out to find opportunities:

- **What is your “staff capacity” for grant prep?**
 - Time, Experience, Expertise
- **What is your project’s timeline?**
 - Start date & Length
- **What is the scope of your project?**
 - Local vs. Widespread interest
- **What size grant are you looking for?**
 - Size of Budget/Funds
- **Who do you know?**
 - Relationships with Foundations & Others
- **What data is available to make your case?**
 - Public Data and Program-Specific Data

Top Ten Reasons Why Grants Fail

- 10) Formatting Inconsistencies
- 9) Grammar &/or Spelling Mistakes, Factual Errors, and Wordiness
- 8) Budget Challenges (Budget does not tell a good story, cost padding, etc.)
- 7) Failure to Follow Funder’s Instructions / Guidelines
- 6) Assuming the Reader Already Knows Everything / Missing a Piece of the Pie
- 5) Unclear Goals or Outcomes

Top Ten Reasons Why Grants Fail

- 4) No Long-Term Plan For Sustainability
- 3) “We Think We Can” Attitude - Too Safe Outcomes
- 2) *Wrong* Program for the *Right* Funder
- 1) *Right* Program for the *Wrong* Funder



3 Secrets of Success

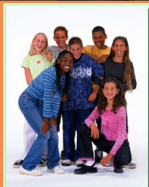
1. **Overt Benefit (Fixes a Problem)**
 - Clear
 - Concise
 - Quick
2. **Real Reason to Believe (What's your Proof?)**
 - Evidence – stats, awards
 - Compelling Case – examples, quotes
3. **Dramatic Difference (What's your Promise?)**
 - Unique Trait
 - Distinguishing Factor(s)

Know Your Funder

Research each funding opportunity you find:

- **What is the funding organization's mission & funding priorities?**
 - Are you eligible? / Does your organization qualify?
 - What is the granter's funding history?
 - Previous awarded grants
- **What is the funder's grant cycle?**
 - Quarterly, Biannual, Annual, or Open
- **Who will be reviewing your proposal?**
 - Grant Committee / Your audience
- **Does the funder expect that you will have multiple funding sources?**

The Funding Name Game



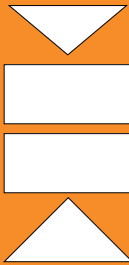
- **NOFAs - Notices of Fund Availability**
- **FOAs - Funding Opportunity Announcements**
- **PAs - Program Announcements**
- **SGAs - Solicitations for Grant Applications**
- **RFAs - Requests for Applications**
- **RFPs - Requests for Proposals**
- **LOI - Letters of Inquiry**

Background/Rationale

- Demonstrate Significance (“Promise”)
 - Does the project address an important, critical problem?
- Describe the Problem and/or Need
 - Don’t assume grant reviewers will know why your program is needed.
- References/Data shows proposal is Well-Informed
 - Peer-reviewed Journal Articles; Current Literature
 - Public Reputable Data; Relevant data from your own program
- Anticipate Reviewers’ Questions
- Provide Evidence of Feasibility
 - Examples of other programs and preliminary work

Writing Tips

- **Maintain Focus**
 - Use an outline
 - Only include what is needed to “make a case” for your specific aims.
- **Clarity is Key**
 - Each paragraph should have a clear, concise point.
 - Define terms that may not be understood
 - Uncomplicated, direct, persuasive language
- **Hourglass Structure**
 - From most general information to the most specific information relevant to your specific aims.
- **Avoid Massive Blocks of Text (Use white space)**
- **Reviewers** (expert to naïve) ensure rationale is clear & compelling



Linking to Research-Based Practices, Data

Proposal Rationale

- Youth in Government programs meet real community needs.
- Youth in Government programs provide hands-on experiences that make a difference.

Data Supporting Need

- Research
 - National
 - Local
 - Program-Specific
- Establish Relevance

Program Description

- Ensure your proposed program conforms with the grant's aims, the funder's priorities, and your agency's mission.
- Be *Clear and Specific*
 - Who will benefit/participate (how many people and what kind of people),
 - Who will lead/provide it,
 - How and Where will it happen,
 - When and for how long will it happen
- Highlight evidence that supports that this program will work
- Feasibility of your program is a major review criteria for all proposals
- Your program should build on what you can show you do best and be reasonable given the plan, timeline, and funding requested.

Program Description

Specific Aims: Clear Concise Statements of What You Want to Accomplish

- Most Read / First Read
- Very Important Part of a Proposal
- “Brief, Informative, Attention-getting headlines”
- Should convey “Why” you are proposing something
 - NOT ONLY “What” will be done.

Budget

- More detail is better than less.
- Don't round out if possible.
- Use bids and estimates for large expenses rather than guessing.
- Don't pad your budget. It will undermine credibility.
- Do include sources of support and pending grants, especially those that are likely to get funded.
- Include volunteer time, donated space and borrowed equipment.
- Don't shortchange the contribution your community is making to your project.
- A Budget is different than a Budget Justification.
- Clarify if the grant requires a match and calculate figures correctly.

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Think Like a Reviewer



Illustration of three people (two men and one woman) holding up signs that say '10'. They are standing behind a yellow tablecloth. The background is a blue circle with a black border.

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**QUESTIONS &
ANSWERS**
