

# **Non-Profit Grant Writing Instructions**



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## Introduction

Grant writing focuses entirely on the process of completing relevant grant applications for domestic and international projects. A grant proposal is basically an application articulating the reason we need funds. Grants are often a vital part to making projects and travel successful for countless organizations.

Tasks in the life cycle of a grant range from researching background information for a grant to completing the application using resources made available to you by your organization or company. Success within this field depends on adherence to deadlines and frequent communication with other contributors and editors. Details of your organization or company, project, goals, and progress must be written in a tone and focus that matches the funding organization's mission and explicit and implicit requirements.

The following instructions will provide a thorough overview of the entire grant writing process, from research to submission. This specific instructions are geared toward nonprofits seeking grants, however the general process can be applied to all types of grants, including government, business, scientific research, and more.

## Phases of Grant Writing



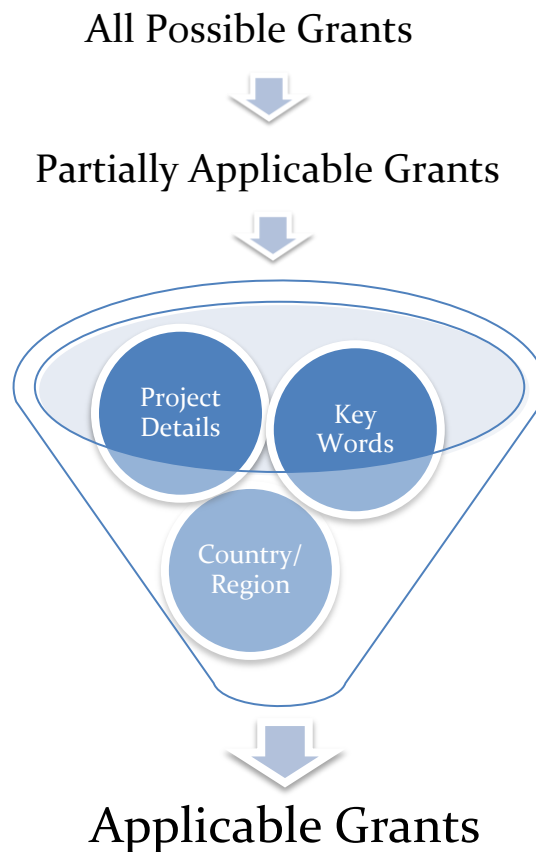
## 1. Research

### *a. Find a Grant*

Before a grant application can be started, you must find a grant to apply for. Some websites are especially helpful as a starting resource when searching for grants. Besides these sites, there is a method for how to find applicable grants online.

Using certain expressions and buzz words is essential for narrowing down the field of initial results. Inputting these key phrases into search engines helps to filtering the pool of all possible grants so that you only end up reviewing potential and generally applicable grants. This is only one stage in the process of narrowing down all of the grants that might partially apply to your project to find the ones where you can meet all of the criteria.

Some examples of what to include in grant searches are details about the type of project you are applying to get funded and the country or region where the project will take place.



If you have applied for grants for the same project previously there are also other methods you can utilize to pursue additional relevant grants.

1. *Review Previous Grants-* If there are grants that you have applied for in the past it can be helpful to take a second look. If you were:
  - a. *Successful-* You should see if your project still applies and, if so, apply again. You will have to check if it is a new grant cycle for the company because a lot of the time you can only apply once per year, quarters, or whatever their specified cycle may be.
  - b. *Unsuccessful-* You should reevaluate if your project may better fit the criteria of the grant now. If it does, then try applying again. If not, skip the application process and move on to a different grant.
2. *Find Affiliated Organizations-* To find new grants that you are more likely to receive it is helpful to look into companies that are know affiliates with organizations that you have previously received grants from. Associated companies tend to have similar mission statement and therefore similar policies for donations and grants.

**Tip:** Do not discredit a company or organization based solely on their industry

**Example:** The Diageo Foundation is the world's leading premium drinks business with an outstanding collection of beverage alcohol brands across spirits, beer and wine. These brands include Johnnie Walker, Smirnoff, Baileys, Captain Morgan, Guinness, and many more. They also strongly support sustainability projects that have positive impacts on local communities through grants and donations to Water for Life.

### ***b. Background Research***

Once you identify a potential applicable grant you need to compile general background research on the company or organization funding the grant. This can be done through a series of investigative steps. These can include reading their website, specifically their mission statement, researching projects they have funded in the past, and finding other relevant information.

All of this background information should be assembled into one comprehensive document to use as a reference throughout the rest of the grant writing process. Some of the information, like the mission statement, will be easiest to copy and paste directly from the grant's website, but other parts, like solutions to potential issues, will have to be written by the grant writer. This document should also include useful links, like to the actual online application.

### Company Mission

- The company mission statement can provide an idea of their focus. This can be used to determine some of the implicit requirements for grants.
- *Example:* If Diageo says in their mission statement that they "encourage projects that lead to sustainability through community groups and NGO's", then the grant application should focus on community partnership aspects.

### Grant Criteria

- Most grants have very specific criteria which applicants must meet the majority of to receive maximum funding. Outlining implicit and explicit requirements of the grant is essential to organize application materials.
- *Example:* Diageo has 8 explicit criteria listed. They range in specificity, with one being that the project must attempt to partner with a local Diageo business.

### Deadline

- The deadline is very important because it determines if you have enough time to apply within a certain cycle or if it can be put off.
- *Example:* If a company reviews grants on a rolling basis that application be given lower priority.

### Contact Information

- The contact information for the company or person in charge of the grant applications should be listed in case of questions or concerns.
- *Example:* Jane Doe from the community development department manages grant applications at Company X. She can be contacted at jane.doe@companyx.org or 123-4567.

### Potential Issues

- A list of potential issues should be compiled for further investigation into whether or not they will effect the likeliness of ultimately receiving the grant. Potential solutions should also be proposed.
- *Example:* Diageo does not generally give funding for travel expenses so it should be clearly stated in the application that, while we have travel costs included in the budget, their funds would go toward purchasing other necessary project resources.

### Past Work

- The past work or projects that a company has done can be an indicator of what they are most likely to support in the future.
- *Example:* If a company consistently supports water-related projects, even if they do not state this as a requirement for application, it is safe to assume that this may be their preferred area for donation.

## Background Research Example Document

**About Diageo:** Diageo is the world's leading premium drinks business with an outstanding collection of beverage alcohol brands across spirits, beer and wine. These brands include Johnnie Walker, Crown Royal, J&B, Windsor, Buchanan's and Bushmills whiskies, Smirnoff, Ciroc and Ketel One vodkas, Baileys, Captain Morgan, Tanqueray and Guinness.

**Company Mission:** The Diageo Foundation encourages projects which obtain additional funding from external sources as this can lead to sustainability. Their focus area now is Water for Life.

Explicit criteria listed

### Grant Criteria:

- addressing a community/social need, in particular excluded and disadvantaged people who, with support, can help themselves to transform their own lives
- building partnerships with community groups and NGOs
- helping build the skills-base of individuals or communities
- maximizing grants to make them as effective as possible
- building the economic prosperity of a community
- planning a clear exit strategy and appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the benefits derived from the project are sustainable
- having clear, well-defined objectives in place, including planned outcomes, desired impact, measurement and evaluation
- enhancing the project, if appropriate, by working in partnership with a local Diageo business

Lower deadline priority

**Deadline:** Rolling admission

### Contact Information:

<http://www.diageo.com/en-sc/csr/community/Pages/diageo-foundation.aspx>

Potential issues stated, followed by plan of action for best solutions approach

**Potential Issues:** It is generally outside of Diageo's guidelines to provide funding for projects that require overseas travels or capital projects (e.g. buildings). I think the best approach is to directly address these - convince that we are not working on a capital project and that we are not asking for any funding related to costs of travel (surely, there are other expenses, as well).

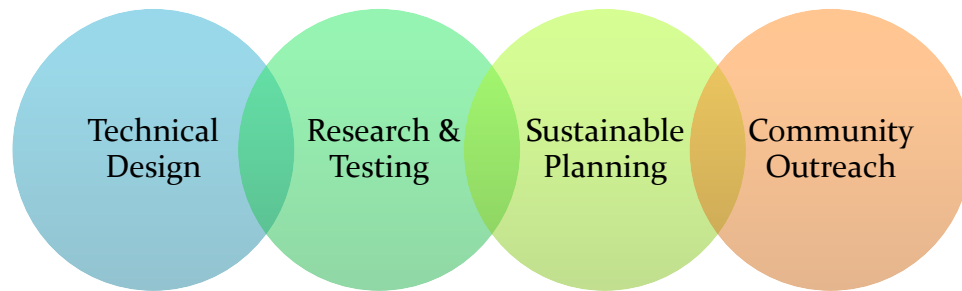
**Past Work:** Even though Diageo is a prosperous company in the controversial alcohol industry, it appears to have a strong commitment to sustainability and having positive impacts on local communities and natural resources (<http://srreport2013.diageoreports.com>). This is something that we should try to relate to in our application essay.



### ***c. Define an Approach***

Once you have compiled all of the necessary background research, you should use this information to state the approach you need to take in writing the particular grant. Even though a project may have multiple facets many grant applications will have a main focus or interest in only one of these aspects. The best way to define your approach is to identify all of the general areas your project includes and then see which one is most relevant to the grant you are applying for.

*Example:* Projects sponsored by Engineers Without Borders (EWB) chapters have many overlapping goals. Their projects seek to combine technical engineering design work with sustainable planning through research and testing. From there, they strive to teach the local communities they work with the importance of learning to use the equipment that they provide.



When writing a grant for an EWB chapter, they should endeavor to highlight whichever part of the project that most applies to that specific grant while still stating general information on all of their project work. The regions that overlap are representative of how much information about the other sections should be included after you have narrowed down the most applicable one for a specific grant.

If they applied for the Diageo grant, they would be most successful by accenting their work with sustainability through community partnership and outreach rather than the design or research portions. The latter two should still be mentioned, but more in a capacity of how they help to accomplish the sustainability and partnership phases of the project.

#### **d. Writing Preparation**

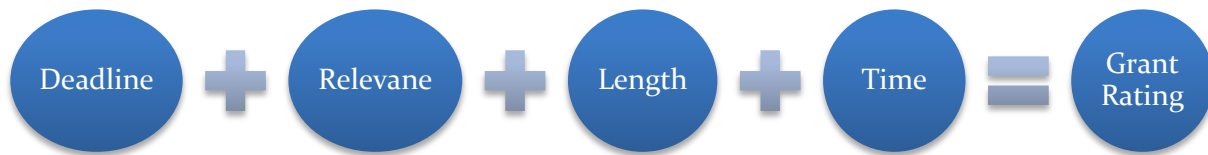
The final steps in the research phase are all preparation for the actual writing process. Completing these steps ensures that you can begin writing without having to back track to do additional research.

1. *Follow Up-* You should find the answers to questions that came up during the research step. This can include details of your project that you must check to see if they apply or any other questions that have not been answered in one of the other research steps.

*Tip 1:* Make sure to double check grant criteria in this step to avoid writing out whole sections of the application only to realize that your project does not fit one or more of the requirements.

*Tip 2:* If you have a question about how your project relates to the grant requirements you should look for contact information for a representative from the funding company or organization. It is better to ask someone ahead of time so that you do not end up wasting time on writing the application if your project is not what they are looking for.

2. *Rate Grants-* Rating the grants will help to determine which grants are most and least likely to be received. This will help to narrow the initial list of potential grants to apply for down to the best possible candidates. The number of people you have working on grant writing is also a factor on how much you should narrow down the list. Grants should be prioritized based on several main measures.



- a. *Deadlines-* Some grants have specific cycle deadline dates, but others have rolling submission. Grants with the closest upcoming deadlines should be started first and rolling submission applications can be done in the time in between other deadline grants.
- b. *Relevance-* While all of the grants you have narrowed your list down to should be relevant and applicable, there will be some that stand out as the most likely to be received.

*Example:* This could be because of a connection between your organization and the company or maybe you have received this particular grant before. Either way these more likely grants should be given a higher ranking.

- c. *Length of Application-* The length of the application can be a factor since it directly affects the amount of time it will take to complete the grant.

*Example:* If you discover a very relevant grant, but the deadline is in one week and the application requires several essay length responses to be written it may not be feasible, depending on how many people you have dedicated to working on the application.

- d. *Decision Time-* Some grants get thousand of application and may take months to get back to you, while others may be on a rolling basis and have a turnaround time of only a few weeks from your submission to their notification. This should factor in to the ranking, depending on how soon you need the money.

### ***Grant Rating Example Document***

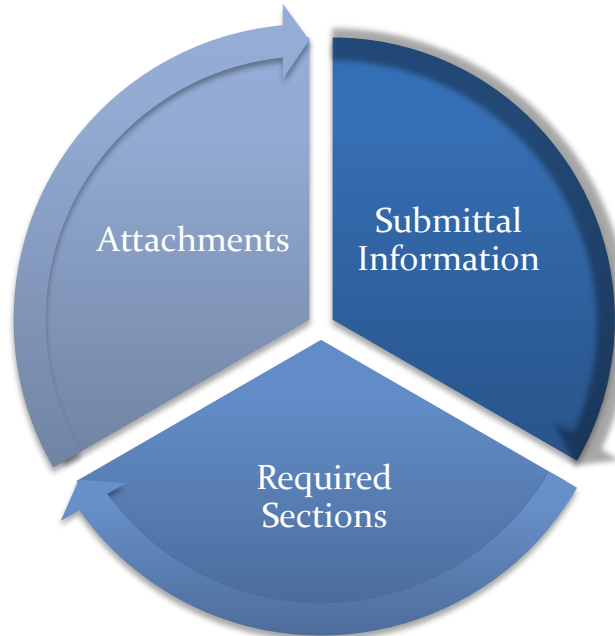
Below the grants are ranked where green is ready to be started at any time, red has a set deadline approaching, and blue needs to be clarified/ researched further.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Grant</b>	<b>Link</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1	Diageo Foundation	<a href="http://www.diageo.com/en-sc/csr/community/Pages/diageo-foundation.aspx">http://www.diageo.com/en-sc/csr/community/Pages/diageo-foundation.aspx</a>	Rolling Basis	Can receive up to 50,000 euros
2	ASME Diversity Action	<a href="https://www.asme.org/about-asme/get-involved/honors-awards/diversity-action-grant-(dag)">https://www.asme.org/about-asme/get-involved/honors-awards/diversity-action-grant-(dag)</a>	11/1/15	Assist developing communities with service learning design--EWB chapters encouraged. Would have to work to create learning opportunities for the community
3	American Society of Civil Engineers	<a href="http://www.asce.org/Volunteerism-and-Mentoring/Volunteerism/Engineers-Without-Borders-USA/ASCE-Grants/">http://www.asce.org/Volunteerism-and-Mentoring/Volunteerism/Engineers-Without-Borders-USA/ASCE-Grants/</a>	11/3/15	The ASCE states that they offer a \$5,000 grant to EWB chapters
4	First People's Worldwide	<a href="http://www.firstpeoples.org/grants/application-guidelines">http://www.firstpeoples.org/grants/application-guidelines</a>	Rolling Basis	Has to originate from community, they try not to place limits on what the grants will fund, but they do focus on empowering the community

## 2. Writing

### a. Outline

To begin the writing process you should briefly document and outline the application. There are three main sections.



1. *Submittal Information*- Information on how to submit the final application should be highlighted in the beginning of the outline.
  - a. *Links*- Links to the online application, if applicable, should be provided in this section to give the grant writers easy access to navigate between the outline and the actual application website.
  - b. *Template*- If there is a template available, this should also be incorporated. While it might be easiest to work on writing the responses in a blank document, they will eventually have to be transferred to the template.
  - c. *Mailing*- If the application cannot be submitted electronically, the mailing address should be provided here. It should also state if the deadline is “post marked by” or “received by”.
2. *Required Sections*- After the general submittal information each required section should be listed. All of the grant proposal’s specific questions that must be addressed should be highlighted within the outline in the order that they appear on the original application. This may involve copy-and-pasting from a website form or template.

- a. *Question Description*- Each question from the application should be listed, as well as a description or additional helpful notes on what might be good to include specifically, based on background knowledge of both the grant and your project.
  - b. *Length Requirements*- Most, if not all, grants have some sort of length condition. There are usually in the form of constraints, such as word limits. These can range from 100 words to 2 pages, depending on the grant and the information required in that particular section.
3. *Attachments*- Some grants allow for attachments, such as pictures and other supporting materials. This may be an option as single attachments or as appendices. This is not always required, but it cannot hurt to add some form attachment, as long as it is relevant to the overall application.

### **Outline Example Document**

*If you wish to apply, please write to us providing details of the project, how it relates to the Diageo Foundation's focus areas and the amount of funding required - on no more than two sides of a sheet of A4 paper. We will contact you if we require further details. You will normally receive written notification of whether your application has been successful or not within 6-8 weeks.*

#### **About the Project:**

**Limit- 1 page**

(ACTUAL CONTENT NOT SHOWN HERE)

#### **How the project relates to Water for Life (include community engagement aspects):**

**Limit- ½ page**

(ACTUAL CONTENT NOT SHOWN HERE)

#### **Amount of funding required:**

**Limit- ½ page**

Item	Cost
Cable	\$30.00
Satellite Mapping	\$1,500.00
Metric Scales	\$60.00
WaterGEMS Software	\$4,000.00
Water Testing Materials	\$800.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,390.00</b>

Original directions  
from Diageo website

Realistic and grant-  
specific budget

**b. Assign Tasks**

Sections of the grant can be assigned to different contributors, usually based on each person's specific knowledge or expertise. In many cases peoples' knowledge overlaps, which is why it is often helpful to have one person be the grant organizer. That person can take the lead on assigning people to the section(s) that are most pertinent to their specialized understanding of project topics.



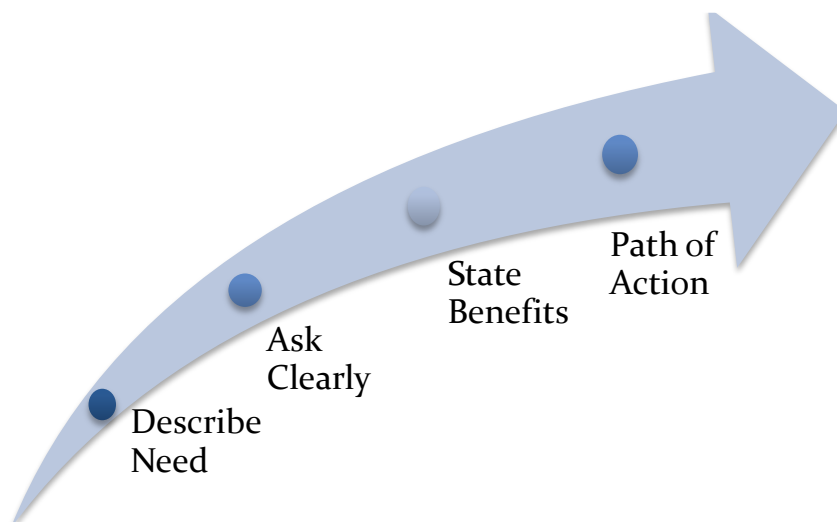
**Example:** Using the EWB example from earlier, people working with technical design probably also have a lot of knowledge about the research. The grant organizer should assign contributors to sections by considering who would be the most knowledgeable out of all the people who might know about the topic.

**Tip:** Keep in mind that cross collaboration between contributors working in different project areas is also encouraged, but sometimes too many people working on one section can cause things to be more complicated. The most important thing to remember here is that the questions asked in the grant application should be answers clearly and directly. Including irrelevant information from other project areas is not something to be promoted.

**c. Fill In Sections**

At this point, the actual writing of the grants is started. Responses to the specific questions should be pulled from personal knowledge on the organization and project, the background research document accumulated earlier, and additional resources.

Grants vary drastically in the format of their applications. Some list very specific short answer questions, fill in the blanks with drop down lists, open-ended essays responses, or a combination of all three. The writing process can vary with each of type of application, but no matter what there are four universal concepts that always apply.



1. *Describe Need*- Describing and justifying the need for funds is very important for gaining and retaining the attention of the funding organization. This should be applied in a question section related to stating the issue your project addresses and project objectives.
2. *Ask Clearly*- This section should be filled with direct statements and facts. It should back up the description of need with more justification, usually in the form of facts, data, details on project methods, and project evaluation.

3. *State Benefits*- Stating the benefits that both organizations will receive if your project is rewarded with the grant money is where you can call attention to additional reasons that you are deserving of the aid, besides the more obvious factual reasons.



- a. *Receiving Organization*- Benefits for the organization receiving the grant can be shown quantitatively, such as facts of how many people will be helped if the project earns enough funding. This can also be done qualitatively, like how the project community would improve if the project happened as expected. This tends to be shown through fact-based or more creatively presented information.

**Example:** Sometimes these types of benefits are conveyed in the form of anecdotes about the needy people in the community that will directly benefit from the project succeeding, which is dependent on grants as a main source of funding.

**Tip:** You should also check to make sure that you have incorporated your organization's "spin" on the application while still being truthful about the project. The "spin" is basically using carefully pointed phrasing to emphasize the benefits of your organization while still providing mainly factual wording.





- b. *Giving Organization-* Benefits for the organization funding the grant can be shown quantitatively, such as the budget of how the funds will be used and for what. This can also be shown qualitatively through the use of personal testimonies or stories. This tends to be shown through fact-based or more creatively presented information.

**Example:** Often community benefits are projected directly on the funding company. Clearly projects could not develop to the implementation phase without funding, but the organization giving the funds can tend to feel removed from any connection with the actual community. By using the funded project as a bridge between the company and the community you can create a more emotional connection, which can be powerfully persuasive.

**Tip:** While making more personal connection can be effective in reinforcing the importance of your project, make sure to always back this up with legitimate facts and data. Your application should still remain professional.

4. *Path of Action*- The path of action should give detailed explanations of how you plan to address the issues in various steps. This general outline can be applied to most projects, at least for the purpose of grant writing.



- a. *Assessment*- The assessment should describe how you plant to (or already have) evaluated the issue that your project seeks to address.
- b. *Implementation*- The implementation should explain your methods, in detail, of how your project proposes to provide a solution to the issue.
- c. *Monitoring*- The monitoring should highlight how you will monitor your project throughout the entire process and afterward to distinguish successes and failures.
- d. *Future of the Project*- The final project step in the path of action should always include plans for how the project will be sustainable. Companies want to invest grant money in projects that have a long-term future and potential for lasting impact.

In addition to the four steps explained above, there may also be space for including:

5. *Background Information*- This could include reference information on the field of study or more detailed background on the project itself.
6. *Introduction*- This would be a good area to provide additional information on your organization and how it relates to the project.
7. *Budget*- Practically all grants require a budget to be submitted. This should be as accurate as possible because it is generally what determines how much money you will receive from a grant, especially if their company has ranges of funding to be rewarded.

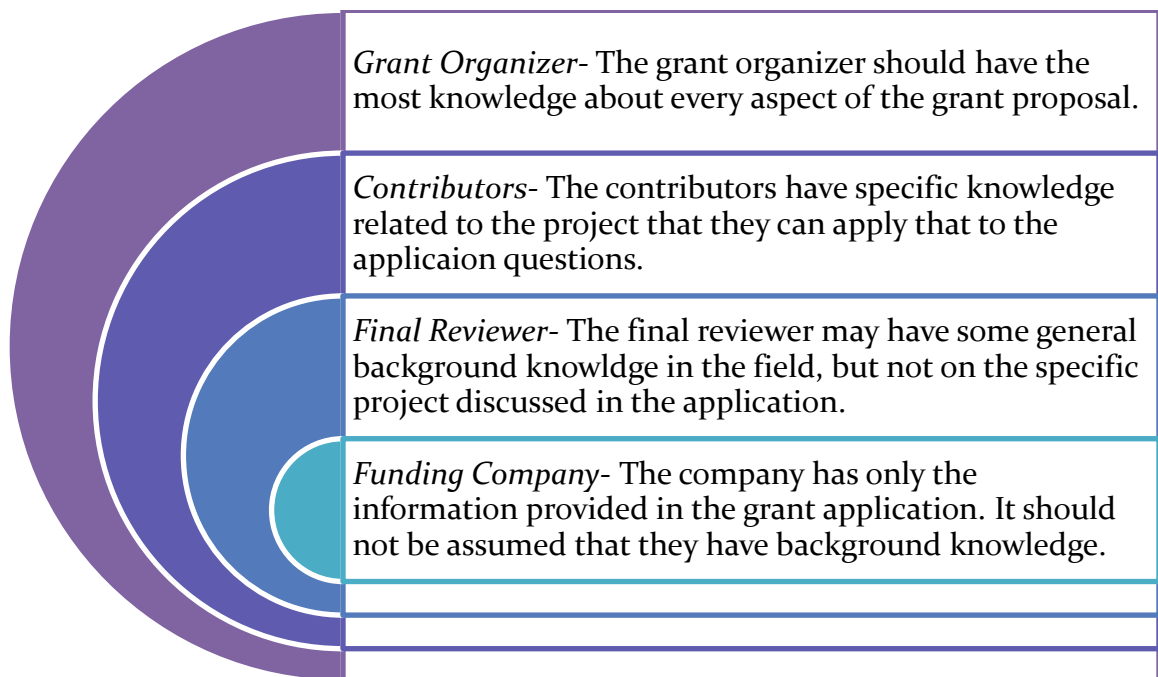
### 3. Editing

#### a. Accuracy

The wording, grammar, accuracy, other details should be checked thoroughly by the grant organizer, in addition to each contributor reviewing their own section.

#### b. Third Party Review

After all of the involved parties have examined the overall application, a final review should be done by a neutral third party. This ensures that not only is the grammar accurate, but also that the writing is clear and understandable by someone who has no background with the project. This is especially important since the company or organization reading the final submitted proposal will have only the information provided in the grant application.



Depending on the project topic the third party reviewer may need to have some general knowledge.

**Example:** Using the EWB example, a third party reviewer may need to have some general background in technical design to be able to comprehensively evaluate the proposal and understand the terminology used throughout. On the other hand, if it is a grant proposal for a company, such as Diageo, overly technical language should be avoided since the focus of the grant application was on sustainability and community partnership. In that case the design and research were presented as tools to bring about the goal of sustainability. This relates back to the “spin”, as explained in the previous section.

#### **4. Submittal**

##### **a. *Formatting***

When getting ready to submit the final grant application you should double check all formatting. This is especially important if you need to save your working document into a different format, such as PDF, or into a template given by the company or organization providing the grant opportunity. This should also be checked for any attachments you may be including with your application.

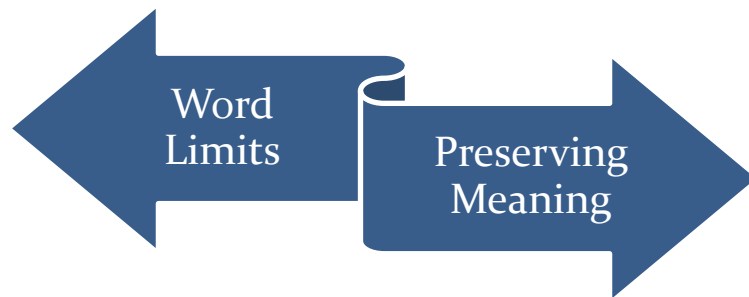
##### **b. *Additional Items***

You should be aware that some grants may require you to submit additional items with your application, such as a cover letter or appendices. If this is the case it should be specified in the original application or on the website where you initially found the grant information.

## Troubleshooting

### *Word Limits*

Word limits can be difficult to work with when writing a grant. To combat this issue it is best to write out all ideas first and then worry about cutting down each section in the editing phase. Also, by using clarity throughout the writing you will find that you can conserve words. Word choice and strategic phrasing is essential to stay within the word limit while still preserving the intended meaning.



Another common issue related to word count is that usually all contributors feel that what they have to add is essential to the application and cannot be cut during the editing phase. If this issue occurs the grant organizer should make the final editing decisions since they reasonably know the most about how the general project information relates to each specific grant.

### *Deadlines and Extensions*

As mentioned in the Research section, some grants have specific cycle deadline dates, but others have rolling submission. Grants with the closest upcoming deadlines should be started first. Rolling submission applications can be done in the time in between other grant deadlines. It is important to note that extensions are rarely given for grants, especially from large companies where they might receive hundreds or even thousands of total applications. An extension might be issued from a smaller company if you reach out to them on a more personal, however this is not a good idea to do because it may be viewed as unprofessional.

If a grant deadline is approaching too fast for a quality grant application to be completed, it would be better to choose a different grant to apply for. Also, many grants have multiple cycles within one calendar year so you may have multiple chances to apply. It is better to wait and submit a quality application with a real chance of receiving funding than to put together a rushed proposal that does not properly represent your organization and project.

### *Rejection*

Grant writing is hard. You will not receive every grant you apply for and you will have to accept this fact. It can be frustrating to be turned down for a grant, especially if you do not know why your application was not selected. The best thing to do is move on to the next application and use any criticisms given as advice to revise your proposal material for next time.

Also, remember that you should not necessarily discredit this grant when searching for applicable grants in the future. You can always reevaluate your project to see if it may better fit the criteria of the grant at a later date.

## General Writing Tips

### *Provide Specific Information*

With grant writing you should try to provide all information in as specific a manner as possible. Even though you may be working with length limiting factors, such as word counts, you do not want all of your writing to come off as vague. Try to be concise while still giving necessary details.

**Example:** Stating that you will implement community outreach programs is general. Saying that these programs will take place in local schools is more specific. Explaining that you will teach students ages 10-12 about the importance of your project through a demonstration of a simple sand filter and an engineering activity is very specific.

### *Tone*

The overall tone of a grant application should reflect the goals and ideologies of:

1. *Your Organization*- Remember that your application should align with the general interests of the organization that you will be representing through your project work.
2. *Your Project*- The tone should also convey the type of project that you are working on. Some projects may be very technical with emphasis on design implementation. This should be evident as stated by facts and in the tone of the entire application.
3. *The Funding Organization*- It can also be useful to address some of the main ideas and objectives stated by the funding organization. These may fall under the category of implicit requirements. Using the language of the company, even if not directly, can go a long way in relating your project to what they do as a company.

### *Neatness*

The general design and layout of grant applications should always be kept as neat and organized as possible. Some applications may provide a template, but if they do not it is up to you to draft a document that is easy to follow. This includes using appropriate fonts, text size, and other formatting considerations.

## Starting Resources

### *Workshops*

Many organizations that tend to have projects that require substantial funding choose to provide optional grant writing workshops. These may be given in the form of comprehensive all day seminars or shorter webinars that focus on only one aspect of grant writing at a time. To find workshop resources most useful to you, start by searching your organization website.

### *Reference Websites*

For more general references, there are a variety of resources available online. Many websites give additional grant writing tips. They may also help you search for relevant grants, provide free consulting advice from grant writing professionals, provide tutorials and examples, or share other useful materials.

See some of the following:

1. Foundation Center-  
<http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/>
2. General Code-  
<http://www.generalcode.com/resources/grant-writing>
3. Guide Star-  
<http://www.guidestar.org/rxa/news/articles/2006/grant-writing-101-resources-for-grant-writers.aspx>
4. Puget Sound Grantwriters' Association-  
<http://www.grantwriters.org/grantwriter-resources>
5. Purdue Online Writing Lab-  
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/981/1/>
6. Resource Associates-  
<http://www.grantwriters.net/>
7. University of California Berkley-  
<http://ls.berkeley.edu/graduate/grant-writing-resources>
8. University of Wisconsin Madison Libraries-  
<http://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/proposalwriting/websites>

## Conclusion

Grant writing can be a very detailed and complex process. There is not always one set way of approaching a grant, however it can be helpful to follow some general main steps. Whether you are applying for grants for domestic or international projects having some specific aspects that are conducted in a uniform manner is essential. Since grants are extremely important for funding travel and project work having the tools to properly prepare a successful grant application is invaluable.