# HOW DO I...

PREPARE A GRANT PROPOSAL?

Requesting funding for your project can be overwhelming! However, if you take the time to gather all your materials and prepare a clear grant proposal, your chances of securing funding improve greatly. This guide describes the grant application process, highlights the information you should prepare, and provides additional tips for finding funding sources.

build relationships

apply!

tell your story

GRANT

complete a package
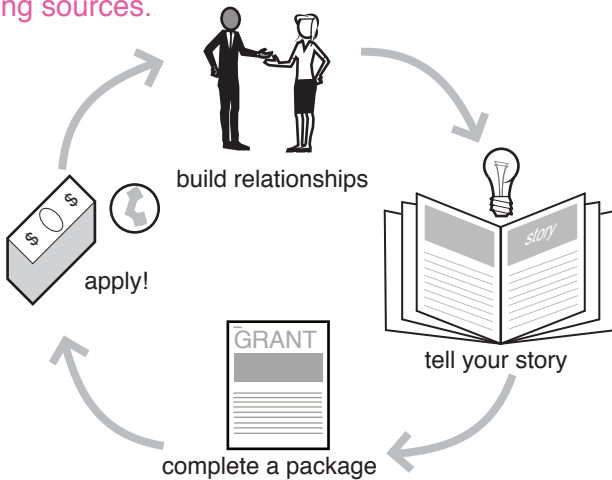
GETTING STARTED

1 **DEFINE YOUR PROJECT!** Be specific about why you need the money you are requesting and why your idea is worth funding. Also, be realistic about how much money you will need and how long your project will take.

2 **CHOOSE THE RIGHT FUNDING SOURCE AND BUILD A RELATIONSHIP.** Funding sources range from federal and local governments to foundations and private donors. Find out which grants suit your needs and become familiar with the grant criteria. Most importantly, reach out to funders so they get to know you and your work.

3 **TELL YOUR STORY.** Develop a compelling, convincing, specific and clear project description and statement of need. This will be the backbone of your grant application.

4 **COMPLETE THE APPLICATION PACKAGE.** Make sure you have all the pieces you need to apply for a grant, which often include: cover letter, mission statement, project description, goals and objectives, grant activities, evaluation methods, key personnel and budget. Make sure your final package looks neat and professional.

5 **BE PATIENT!** Grant applications and funding take time, sometimes up to a year. Make sure you account for this timeline in your project planning and follow up with funders along the way.

When preparing to apply for a grant, you can follow these 'W' questions to make sure you cover your bases:

WHO am I? Are you applying for the grant as an individual or do you represent an organization? Provide background information about the organization!

WHAT is my project? Make sure that your project fits in with larger plans for you or your organization. Be clear and concise.

WHY do I need the money and how much do I need? Be specific about how you will spend the money and why the project is important to fund.

WHO will benefit? Use data and a narrative to describe the community that will benefit from the project. If possible, include the community in the process and secure letters of support.

WHO will implement the project? Describe your project team and provide information about the organization's board, staff, goals, mission and track record.

WHAT is the project timeline? How long will it take you to complete the project? How will the project carry on after the grant money has been spent?

WHAT is my evaluation plan? Be prepared to document the implementation process and the end product of the grant.

What are tips for creating a budget?

- Make sure you account for all possible costs and line items, including personnel, materials, equipment, direct and indirect costs.
- Check whether the grant requires matching funds. These could come in the form of staff time and donated services or another funding source.
- Check what the grant can cover. Often grants distinguish between operational costs (staff time, etc.) and hard costs (project materials and implementation).

Additional grant-writing resources:
Non-Profit Guides: *http://npguides.org/index.html'*

About Non-Profits Funding: *http://nonprofit.about.com/od/fundraising/u/happydonors.htm*

Foundation Center Proposal Writing: *http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/learnabout/proposalwriting.html;jsessionid=QRH2MPZLDYOWTLAQBQ4CGW15AAAACI2F*

Foundation Center Resources: *http://foundationcenter.org/ http://ww2.fndcenter.org/*