



Brings You: The Grant Writing Accelerator

February 2026



1

HayDay Services Home of the Grants Lab & the Fundraising HayDay Podcast

Kimberly Hays de Muga & Amanda Day – speakers, coaches, trainers, podcasters

- Combined 50+ years of grant & fundraising experience
- Grant Professional Certified (GPC)
- International Grant Trainers – more than 20,000 students
- **Leadership at board levels:** Grant Professionals Association (GPA), Grant Professionals Certification Institute (GPCI), Grant Professionals Foundation (GPF), and Georgia GPA chapter
- Amanda – 2024 Grant Professionals Class of Distinguished Fellows



2

Grants Fix Everything, Right? (Spoiler Alert – NO THEY DO NOT)



Grants DO

- Augment Program/Project Supplies and Staff
- Expand Capacity
- Start Programs or Construction Projects
- Purchase Equipment

Grants DO NOT (Typically)

- Increase Administrative Staff
- Cover General Operations or Budgeted Costs
- Pay Off Debt
- Renew Automatically Without Reporting



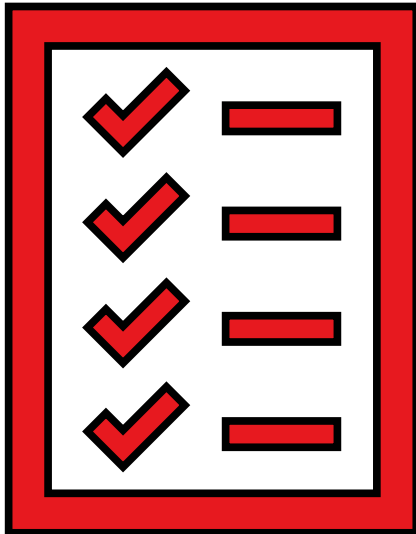
3

Common Components of A Grant Proposal

- Needs Statement
- Program Description
- Budget
- Sustainability
- Goals and Objectives
- Evaluation



4



Needs Statement



5



6

NEEDS/PROBLEM STATEMENT

DEFINE using definitions/ descriptions from trusted, authoritative sources.

DESCRIBE how the problem affects your community/region served. Be specific. Paint the whole picture.

SUBSTANTIATE AND COMPARE using data and stories.



7

Why Good Data is Important

- If you can't demonstrate need, you're not going to get the grant
- Funders want to see information and data from reliable sources
- Comparison data can help highlight why your community needs the help (your county vs. state, for example)
- Be sure to share where your data is from and keep a running list in case you need to cite something
- Try to find the most recent data to use, but understand there can be a lag time of a few years

NOTE: Resource guide is FULL of helpful sites for funding quality, current, and useful data



8

Identify Community Assets

They can include partners, local agencies, volunteers, faith communities, other organizations, program participants, and their families.



9

Stakeholder Input

Gather and use existing input from stakeholder groups – e.g., community members, local officials, service providers.



10

WRITING TIPS

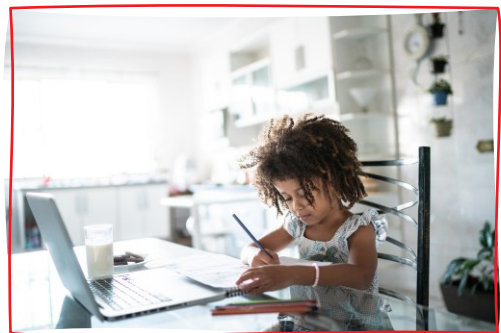
- Avoid wordiness
- Know your audience
- Avoid and/or explain jargon and acronyms your reviewers may not understand
- Do not be redundant
- Use the active voice whenever possible
- Use examples; tell stories



11

Color Between the Lines

- Answer each question in the order it was asked
- Follow formatting and character/word/page limits
- Make sure every requested document is properly formatted and uploaded or attached in order
- Deadlines are non-negotiable



12

REVIEW AND EDITING

- Don't do it all yourself
- Consistency is crucial
- AI is a tool, but don't assume it's error free
- Allow plenty of time to incorporate suggested changes
- There is always ONE MORE TYPO! (Ask me how I know)



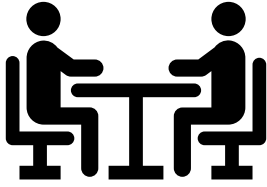
13

Needs Statement Practice

- Write a paragraph (4-6 sentences) on the needs of your community using some baseline data provided and your own experience with the people you serve.
- It's okay in this practice session (not for a real grant, of course) to estimate data if you don't have it immediately at hand.



14

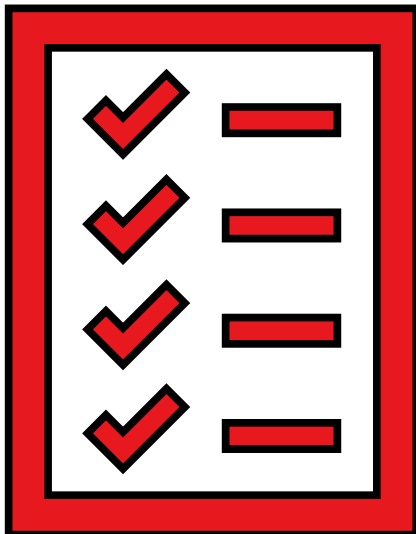


Let's Talk About It

- Sharing what you've worked on will help us all to learn.
- Ground Rules:
 - Be respectful and kind
 - Start with what works
 - Offer suggestions, not commands



15



Program Description



16

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/ METHODOLOGY

- What program/project are you implementing?
- What are you doing with the money requested?
- Answer ALL the questions the funder provides:
 - Who?
 - What?
 - When?
 - Where?
 - How?



17

What was the planning process for this project/program?

- When did it begin?
- Who was involved?
- Did this come out of a strategic plan?
- Is this based on another agency's program?
- Sharing these details lends credibility to your program.



speaking, coaching, training, & such

18



Evidenced- Based Program Design

- Modeled on successful programs in similar situations
- Modeled on research in peer-reviewed journals
- Adapted from data proving local need
- Received input from community members, partners, etc.



19

Program Capacity to Complete and Manage

- Who's running what?
- Why are they qualified to do so?



20



Administrative/ Grant Management Capacity

- Who's running what? (procurement, accounting, reporting, etc.)
- Why are they qualified to do so?



21

Program Description Practice

Answer the following prompts in approximately 2 paragraphs, or about 6-10 sentences. It's okay in this practice session (not for a real grant, of course) to estimate information if you don't have it immediately on hand. Another option is to refer to a recently declined grant that you may have brought with you.



22

Pro Tips

1. Follow formatting instructions exactly as described
2. Answer questions/sections in order listed in guidelines
3. Create template in Word or Google Docs for online portal



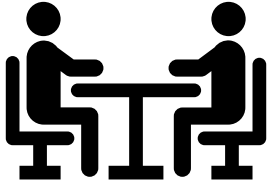
23

Program Description Writing Exercise

- New or ongoing program – if it is ongoing please share any successes or lessons learned
- Primary activities of your program
- Timeline for program activities/implementation, how much, how often
- Community and volunteer involvement and/or partners
- Your organization's qualifications to carry out the program
- Other funding received or committed to this program



24

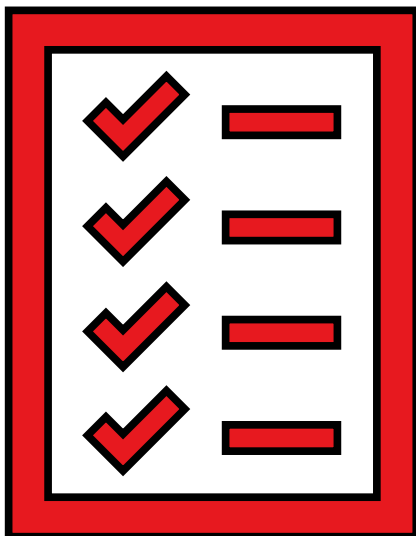


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25



Budget



26

ALL THE BUDGETS

Hopefully, you already have, or you may need to create...

- Organizational budget (annual)
 - Overview to share with funders
 - Line-item details to help you with grant budgets
- Projected budget for the next year
- Audited or Year-End Financials (to show final numbers for previous fiscal year(s))
- Program/project budgets, often incorporating the requested grant amount
- Salary scales for new positions (based on input from HR and other resources)
- Estimates for equipment, supplies, construction, etc.



27

Building Your Grant Budgets

PROGRAM

- All elements needed to implement a program
- Typically includes staff, equipment, supplies, etc.
- Pay close attention to what you need to implement program & what elements grantor will fund

PROJECT

- Often a construction project or other large capital item
- Staff costs are not common elements, but consultants/contractors often are

EQUIPMENT

- Simplest one
- List of all equipment needed
- Typically shows price per item & quantities of each



28

COST ELEMENTS

- Categories typically created by funder – in budget template, RFP/NOFO, or budget example
- Typical ACFB categories include:
 - Equipment
 - Supplies
 - Pantry Buildout / Installation
- Other grant categories often include:
 - Staffing – may be separated between personnel and fringe benefits
 - Contractor(s)
 - Travel
 - In-Direct



29

Costs Included in Your Budget Must Be:

- **Allowable** – By grant rules & legislation
- **Allocable** – Incurred for this grant program
- **Reasonable** – Consistent with policies and going rates in area
- **Necessary** – Helps accomplish goals of program



30

In-Kind Contributions

- Professional Services – Services provided pro bono by attorneys, accountants, engineers, medical professionals, and others.
- Volunteer Time – For a variety of purposes, individuals who help with your program or project. May use hourly wage found at [Independent Sector website](#) (value of volunteer time).
- Equipment – Donations of pieces of equipment, such as a refrigerator.
- Supplies – Things like food, plants, tablets, and laptops.
- Building – Entire building or space within a facility.
- Vehicles
- Land



31

MOST COMMON BUDGET MISTAKES

- Not including necessary costs
- Not building out entire project budget (only thinking of grant budget limitations)
- Match/cost-share is not in-hand
- Budget does not match program description
- Remember: your organization budget and project budget are not the same

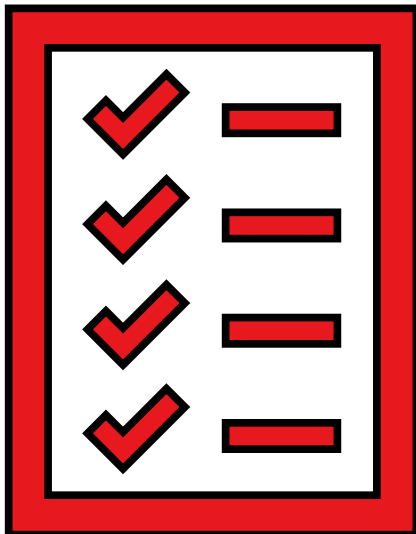
32

Budget Practice

Let's build a budget together! Get ready to share some input to make this as realistic as possible.



33



Sustainability



34

Example of Sustainability

Don't ask for a refrigerated box truck if you don't have operational funding to continue to pay for fuel, maintenance, a driver, and other expenses beyond the grant. If you purchase a vehicle that requires a CDL license – do you have someone who can drive it? You want to sustain operations beyond the grant award.



35

5 Ways to Diversify Your Fundraising for Sustainability

- 1) Money
- 2) In-kind / Operational
- 3) Collaboration
- 4) Redesigning Operations
- 5) Alternative Sources of Revenue



36



MONEY

Where it comes from & how to raise those funds...



37

Funding Source	Nonprofit
Public (government) grants	+
Private (foundation/corporate) grants	+
Individual Donations	+
Major Gifts/Endowments	+
Fees for Service	+
Planned Giving	+
Capital Campaigns	+
Corporate Sponsorships	+

Likelihood of funding opportunity

 Yes
  Less likely

38

In-Kind / Operational

- ✓ Volunteers
- ✓ Facility
- ✓ Equipment
- ✓ Staff



39

Building Capacity / Diminishing Expenses

- Certification
- Train the Trainer
- Expanding the Overall Budget
- Reserves



40



COLLABORATION

Sharing resources to save one another money



41

You can share so much...

- Building / space
- Vehicles
- Staffing
- Equipment
- Technology
- Supplies – decreased costs when bought in bulk



42



REDESIGNING OPERATIONS

Taking stock of what works, what doesn't, what could be improved, and how to do it



43



ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF REVENUE

- ✓ Provide consulting and/or training services
- ✓ Trade out services – I'll do "x" and you do "y and z"
- ✓ Sell ad space – on website, blog, social media postings, etc.
- ✓ Renting facility space



44

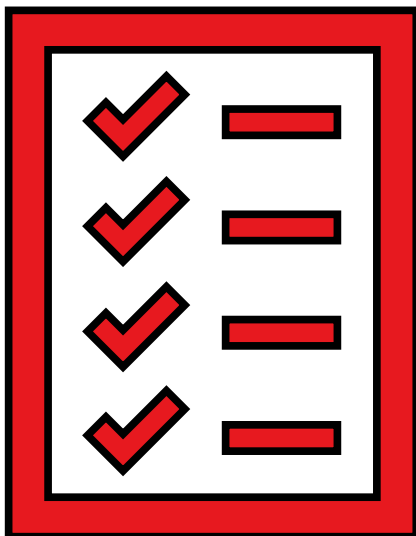
What Rings True?

Which of the 5 sustainability topics we discussed are most relevant for your agency?

- (1) Money
- (2) In-Kind
- (3) Alternative Sources of Revenue
- (4) Collaboration
- (5) Redesigning Operations



45



Goals & Objectives



46

DEFINITIONS

GOALS

- Long-term
- Broad impact
- May be impossible to achieve

OBJECTIVES

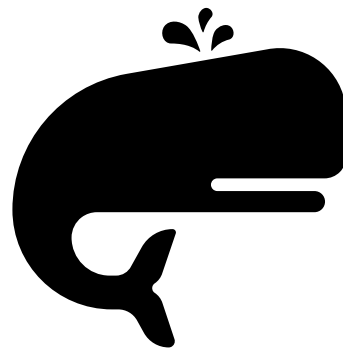
- Short- to mid-term (tied to grant cycle)
- Step by step
- Expect to achieve



47

SAMPLE GOALS

- Save the whales
- End hunger in North Georgia
- Prevent chronic diseases
- Clean water for all
- Stop gun violence in schools
- Spay & neuter all pets



48

OBJECTIVES

Not what you will **DO**, but what will **CHANGE** as a result of what you do.

- Who? Beneficiaries
- What? Change from the conditions described in the Problem Statement; for example, report changes in knowledge, attitude, actions, behaviors, and systems
- When? During the funding period
- How much? Yes, math is involved. But don't just share percentages.
- How measured? Using tools



49



50

PROCESS vs. OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

Objectives can measure **process** (numbers served) or **outcomes** (the change in behavior, or physical or emotional outcomes).



51

SAMPLE OBJECTIVES, PART 1

- Distribution of fresh produce will increase by 40% in the next 12 months measured by pound distributed in the Food Tracking System as compared to 2025's 300 pounds of distributed food.
- 80% of the 200 families who complete the Healthy Cooking and Nutrition Class in May 2026 will report an increase in their confidence levels in cooking skills, as measured by pre- and post-test questionnaire.



52

SAMPLE OBJECTIVES, PART 2

- 90% of the 325 middle school students who participate in the weekend backpack program will report that they did not go hungry from Friday afternoon – Monday morning. This will be measured by surveys conducted by the Grant Middle School each Monday.
- 80% of older adults who participate in the Senior Meals and Fellowship program at the Main Street Congregational Church for at least three months experience fewer feelings of isolation as measured by pre and post questionnaires

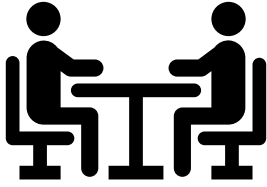


53

Objectives Practice



54

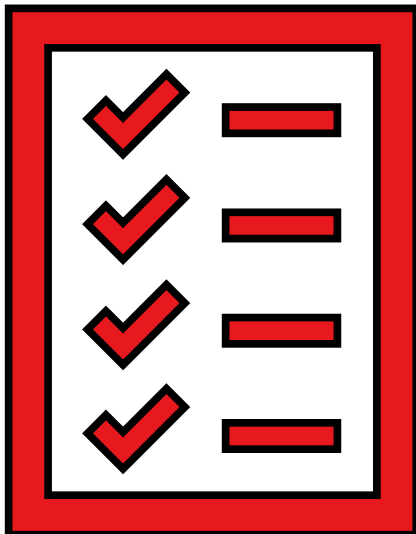


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55



Evaluation



56



EVALUATION PLAN

DESIGN OF PLAN

- Process/Output – How will you PROVE that you are following the methodology?
- Product/Outcome – How will you PROVE that you achieved your goals and objectives?
- The Work – Internal or External Evaluator?

57

Evaluation – How It's Done

DATA COLLECTION

- Quantitative – Hard Data
 - Pre- and post-testing
 - Surveys and questionnaires
 - Interviews
 - Activity logs
 - Case reports
 - Performance reports

DATA COLLECTION, CON'T

- Qualitative – Soft Data
 - Testimonials
 - Anecdotes
 - Success stories
 - Observations

ANALYSIS & REPORTING

- Formative – Ongoing
- Summative – Final Summary



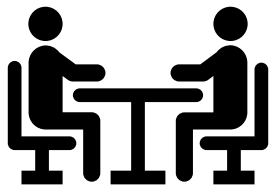
58

Evaluation Practice

- Write a short paragraph of 3-5 sentences. How will you measure the effectiveness of your program/project?
- Cover the following points in your answer:
 - Measurement methods (quantitative and qualitative)
 - Timeframe (short-term and long-term)



59



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60

Questions?



61

FREE RESOURCE ALERT!

HayDay Hot Takes Newsletter –

[https://haydayservices.com/
#newsletter-subscribe](https://haydayservices.com/#newsletter-subscribe)



Free Weekly Grant Tips

Fundraising HayDay Podcast –

[https://haydayservices.com/
podcast/](https://haydayservices.com/podcast/)



Fundraising HayDay Podcast

62

ON-DEMAND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Free Audio Course – How to Write Grants When You Hate to Write –

<https://haydayservices.com/#freebies>



Free Audio Course

Use code ACFB2026 for 25% off all on-demand training through 12/31/26 –

<https://haydayservices.com/shop>



On-Demand Content

63

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64

Review Please!

