

GRANTS FUNDAMENTALS

Presented by Dorothy Martel

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WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

I. Crucial pieces of grantwriting advice:

- ◆ Be sure that your organization is eligible.
- ◆ Know your funder.
- ◆ Tell your story with clarity and passion.

II. The mechanics of applying for a grant

- ◆ Read the grant offering (a/k/a RFA, RFP, NOFA...).
- ◆ Gather necessary documentation.
- ◆ Draft the narrative.
- ◆ Write goals and objectives.
- ◆ Develop a realistic budget.
- ◆ Pull it all together.

III. Wrap-up

IV. Additional resources

V. Questions & answers

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PART I: CRUCIAL ADVICE

BE SURE YOUR ORGANIZATION IS ELIGIBLE

Every funder has its own eligibility requirements. For example, this year's Request for Application (RFA) from the Maine Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure[®] specifies the following:

Applicants and institutions must conform to the following eligibility criteria to be considered for funding:

- Institutions must be non-profit organizations located in Maine.
- Project must be specific to breast health and/or breast cancer.
- Applicants must ensure that all past and current Komen-funded grants or awards are up-to-date and in compliance with Komen requirements.

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KNOW YOUR FUNDER

Before you consider applying for a grant, research potential funders to be sure your project is in line with their priorities. Some of the best ways to get information about a funder are:

- Explore their website, if they have one.
- Do an internet search to see what else they have funded.
- Speak to a grant officer, if possible.
- Explore the resources at The Foundation Center (www.foundationcenter.org). Note: There are fees attached to some Foundation Center services, but some libraries offer free access to their databases.
- Talk to past applicants.

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KNOW YOUR FUNDER (CONTINUED)

Once you have narrowed down the possible sources of funds to the most likely, read everything each funder has to say about their funding process. An application packet will usually specify:

- The funder's mission.
- Deadlines.
- Priorities for the current funding cycle. Note that these may change from one offering to the next.
- Eligibility and documentation requirements (i.e. proof of 501 (c)3 status, up-to-date insurance, DUNS numbers, support letters).
- Allowable uses of funds.
- Submission requirements. These may be very detailed, even to the point of excluding applications written in the wrong font size.
- The review process and scoring criteria.

READ EVERY PART VERY CAREFULLY!

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TELL YOUR STORY WITH CLARITY AND PASSION

Requirements aside, the most important thing you can do in a grant application is to engage the reader. Let her or him know why the work you do is important and who it will affect. Tell a story, and tell it well.

An illustration: Here are two statements that might be used in an application to fund a project at a domestic violence shelter. Which do you find more compelling?

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TELL YOUR STORY WITH CLARITY AND PASSION (CONTINUED)

Example 1:

Safe Place shelters women and children who have been abused. The funds requested in this application would pay to purchase new playground equipment and to install it in the backyard.



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TELL YOUR STORY WITH CLARITY AND PASSION (CONTINUED)

Example 2:

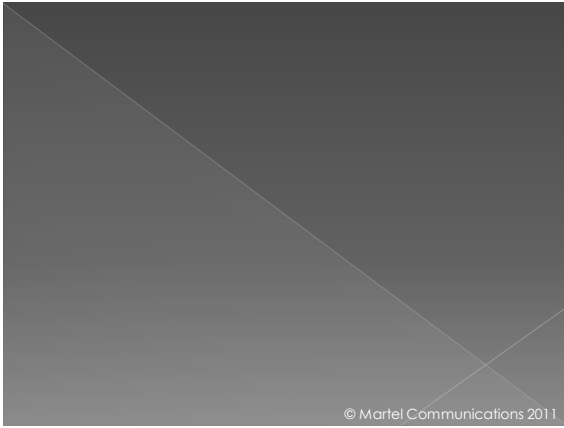
When Jane and her young children first arrived at Safe Place, they were afraid to look out the windows. For years, Jane's husband had kept the whole family isolated to hide the fact that he was physically abusing them. Jane and the children were not allowed out of the house unless he was present; nor were they permitted to open the heavy drapes that blocked sunlight from entering.

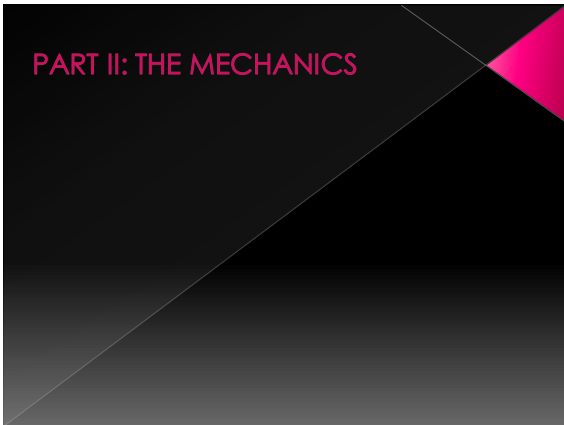


After a week in shelter, Jane and the kids timidly ventured into the backyard, and when Jane felt the grass between her toes, she wept for joy.

Safe Place would like help in making our shelter even better for families like Jane's. We are seeking \$25,000 to buy playground equipment to make Safe Place feel like home for people who have had to leave their own homes due to domestic abuse.

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PART II: THE MECHANICS



READ THE OFFERING

Read all the parts very carefully.
Read all the parts very carefully.
Read all the parts very carefully.
Read all the parts very carefully.
Read all the parts very carefully.

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READ THE OFFERING (CONTINUED)

Yes, it IS important enough to say it five times!

People who make decisions about whether or not to fund projects often say that their biggest frustration is receiving proposals from people who have not followed the directions. This might mean that your project does not align with the funder's stated priorities; or that you exceeded the specified word count; or didn't make the correct number of copies; or added unnecessary pages; or didn't include required documents; or forgot to get the appropriate signatures; or stapled when the RFA said not to....

Some of these things may seem small, but they can ensure that your application ends up unread, and your project --no matter how deserving-- unfunded.

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GATHER DOCUMENTATION

For most grant applications, this will include:

- A copy of your organization's IRS determination letter, as confirmation of nonprofit status
- A list of the members of your Board of Directors, with contact information
- The current fiscal year's operating budget for the organization (not just for the project for which you are requesting funds), including expenses and sources of revenue
- The most recent annual financial statement from an independent auditor, if available; or IRS form 990
- Letters of support or Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to demonstrate community support
- The most recent annual report
- A list of past grants received from the funder, if applicable

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DRAFT THE NARRATIVE

This is your opportunity to tell that compelling story we discussed earlier. However, it will include many other elements, including:

1. Organizational background and capacity, or WHAT DO YOU DO AND HOW WELL DO YOU DO IT?
2. Statement of need, or WHAT IS THE PROBLEM, WHO IS AFFECTED, AND WHAT IS YOUR PROOF?
3. Project Description, or HOW WILL YOU SOLVE THE PROBLEM YOU'VE DESCRIBED AND HOW WILL THE AFFECTED POPULATION BENEFIT?
4. Collaborations/partnerships, or WHAT OTHER ENTITIES WILL HELP YOU ACCOMPLISH YOUR GOALS; AND IF YOU HAVE NO PARTNERS, WHY NOT?

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DRAFT THE NARRATIVE (CONTINUED)

5. Sustainability plan, or
HOW WILL YOU CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN THE PROJECT WHEN THE GRANT ENDS?

6. Evaluation plan, or
HOW WILL YOU MEASURE SUCCESS?

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WRITE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Definitions:

- ◆ Goal: The broad purpose or general intention of the project. Goals are abstract and not measurable. Example: *To provide culturally sensitive health services to immigrants in Southern Maine.*
- ◆ Objective: A specific, measurable step toward accomplishing the goal. Example: *Ensure that 100% of Somali women referred to XYZ clinic are offered the option of receiving physicals from female staff.*
- ◆ Outcome: The result of the steps taken; the measurable consequence of the objective. Example: *In one year, XYZ clinic will see a 25% increase in use of our services by Somali women.*

Tips:

- ◆ Be specific.
- ◆ Be realistic.

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DEVELOP A REALISTIC BUDGET

There are generally two parts to a project budget: the budget itself (mostly numbers) and a budget justification, also known as a budget narrative (the words that explain the rationale for the numbers).

If you cannot justify your request in words, it is probably not realistic, meaning that you probably are asking for too much or too little money. Asking for too much money may alienate the funder. Asking for too little may mean you cannot accomplish the work.

To craft a realistic budget, consider:

- ◆ The actual costs of the project
- ◆ The proportion of the request to the organization's overall budget
- ◆ The degree of impact the project will have
- ◆ Other sources (secured or potential) of financial support.

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susan g. komen cure MAINE
Budget Template

	Requested from Komen	From Other Sources	
		Cash	In Kind
Salaries			
Fringe (Health, Taxes)			
Consultant costs			
Supplies			
Equipment (not to exceed \$5,000)			
Travel			
Public care costs:			
Screening			
Diagnostics			
Treatment			
Transportation			
Sub-contracts			
Other (specify below)			
Subtotal - Direct Costs			
Indirect Costs (not to exceed 20% of direct costs)			
Total			

Budget Justification

PULL IT ALL TOGETHER

- Whenever possible, have someone else read through the application. Leave yourself enough time to incorporate their feedback.
- Double-check to see that you have included all the parts.
- Proofread.
- Make the requisite number of copies.
- Send the package off well before the deadline, whether you are submitting electronically or by mail. Many funders will reject any application that arrives so much as a minute late.

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PART III: WRAP-UP


WHAT NOW? SOME AFTERTHOUGHTS

- ❖ Waiting is hard. Patience is a virtue.
- ❖ There are almost always more good projects than there are funds. Many, many good projects, therefore, do not get funded.
- ❖ If your project doesn't get selected, don't take it personally. (This is sometimes very hard.) Try again next time. Or try another funder.
- ❖ Whether or not you get the grant, you can probably use much of what you've written in the next application. Don't reinvent the wheel.
- ❖ If you do get the grant, congratulations! Now, don't forget to review the reporting requirements. Get those reports in on time. Keep your funder happy.

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PART III: RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ❖ Maine Association of Nonprofits (MANP): www.nonprofitmaine.org. MANP offers a wide variety of services and information for Maine nonprofits, including workshops and networking opportunities..
- ❖ *Grant Writing: A Complete Resource for Proposal Writers*, by Judy Tremore & Nancy Burke Smith. A compact, useful, inexpensive book on grantwriting. 
- ❖ The Foundation Center: www.foundationcenter.org. In addition to publishing directories of funders, the Foundation Center offers trainings, free as well as subscription newsletters, and other resources for grantseekers.
- ❖ State of Maine website: <http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/corp/NonprofitResources.html>. Contains a listing of resources useful in understanding what it means to be a Maine nonprofit.

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For additional information regarding the Maine Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure®:

Email: Grants@komenmaine.org

Call: 207-262-7117

To contact the presenter:

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PART IV: Q & A
