

NUMBERS AND NARRATIVE: THE SUBTLE ART OF  
GRANT WRITING FOR NON-PROFITS

by

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GRANT WRITING FOR NON-PROFITS

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## ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify the best practices of grant-writing and create an understandable analysis for new non-profit communicators. In a realm reliant on the generosity of others, writing strong grant-applications has become an indispensable skill. In all forms of persuasion, the art of blending numbers and narrative requires a subtle touch, striking passion, and bold confidence. Yet for an organization without much donor loyalty or traction, a skillfully written grant application could be the sole factor keeping a starving non-profit and its benefactors alive and well.

With qualitative interviews and work spanning humanitarian aid, foundations, and missions in Texan Lamar and Tarrant Counties, this study will present a detailed guide to effective grant-writing. Proven alongside primary research and direct implications for strategic communicators, this study will dissect the **three core concepts behind persuasive applications: impacted data, effective storytelling, and strong relationships.**

Thus, from one new communicator to another, this study presents a guide to effective grant-writing for non-profits.

**KAREYN HELLMANN**



# Numbers and Narrative

THE SUBTLE ART OF GRANT-  
WRITING FOR NON-PROFITS

**MAY 2023**

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## Abstract

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This study sought to identify the best practices of grant-writing and create an understandable analysis for new non-profit communicators. In a realm reliant on the generosity of others, writing strong grant applications has become an indispensable skill. In all forms of persuasion, the art of blending numbers and narrative requires a subtle touch to confidently persuade and impassion readers. For an organization without much donor loyalty or traction, a skillfully written grant application could be the sole factor keeping a starving non-profit and its benefactors alive.

With qualitative interviews and work spanning humanitarian aid, child advocacy, and foundations in Lamar County, Texas, this study will present a detailed guide to effective grant-writing. Proven alongside primary research, this study proves the importance of impacted data, effective storytelling, and strong relationships, while posing numerous key strategies and implications for communicators, their profession, and their local communities.

Thus, from one new communicator to another, welcome to Numbers and Narrative: a guide to effective grant-writing for non-profits.

# Thesis

This paper aims to develop and implement a practical understanding of the best practices for writing non-profit grant applications by studying purpose, process, and elements. The secondary research is further augmented by primary examination of collected strategies and techniques from field experts. After the information was gathered, its theoretical applications were tested practically through partnership with a local non-profit in need of grant-writing assistance. By analyzing findings, new strategic communicators can learn how to combine style, strategy, and storytelling for effective writing.



## 01

### LEARNING THE STYLE

The art of grant-writing requires precise attention to detail. Though some applications will include an itinerary of all required information, others will expect the grant writer to have already familiarized herself with the components necessary to write a good grant. Understanding a grant's purpose and its variations, preparing effectively with all necessary elements, and checking for stylistic errors are crucial skills every communicator should possess.

## 02

### CURATING A STRATEGY

After establishing the basics, the grant writer can begin developing a personal strategy for success. By applying given techniques from non-profit leaders, such as business approaches, reputation management, and precision workmanship, the writer can create a repeatable roadmap for successful grant-writing. By establishing a rhythmic process, the grant writing process can be expedited.

## 03

### TELLING COMPELLING STORIES

After the details have been managed, the writer can settle into the fine art of persuasive writing, honing her own storytelling skills to weave powerful narratives that appeal to both the head and heart of the application's readers.

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# Part One: Theoretical Foundations of Grant Writing

*"The time spent building a solid  
foundation will pay for itself tenfold."  
- Darren Varndell*

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Before composing any masterpiece of persuasive writing, communicators must know the fundamentals inside and out. Writers must understand the purpose of grant-writing, execute refined preparation, gather all requested elements, and apply the key strategies for success. Because the main strategy for success is understanding what the funder expects and requires, the following pages will outline the components every grant has in common before analyzing the practices that set an application apart.

# A Grant's Nature

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## *Why do grants matter?*

The suffering of a nation plagued by a volatile economy, stratification of wealth, and systematic inequalities harms the traditionally impoverished and reinforces cultures of substance abuse, food insecurity, the school-prison pipeline and more. In the gaps left between the government and the people, enter the local non-profit. Nestled on sketchy street corners, they seek out the suffering in their local communities, meeting needs and giving people the opportunity to survive and eventually thrive. Without the revenue model of a traditional business, non-profits rely on the generosity of others to maintain operations.

However, according to a report conducted by Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, the number of American households giving to charity dropped from 66.2% to 49.6% between 2000 and 2018. Further, the Fundraising Effectiveness Project found both that the number of donors decreased by 5.6% between 2021 and 2022 and that the donor retention rate dropped by 6.2% year over year. The Chronicle of Philanthropy study reported that in 2015, 75% of itemized giving came from income earners making \$200,000 or more, up by 53% from 2000. These statistics represent a general decline in small donations over the past 20 years, making non-profits significantly more dependent on the wealthy for funding.

To maximize tax returns and accept multiple types of assets, many wealthy individuals create private foundations to manage their philanthropic funds, designating the amounts in a manner capable of accruing interest and maximizing financial impacts. With such a primary source of generosity now coming from private foundations, non-profits must secure access to this important source of funding, a method typically conducted through a competitive grant application process.

## *What is a grant?*

When Dr. Ron Pitcock poses this question to his Philosophy of Giving classroom at Texas Christian University, he wants to hear, "A grant is not a gift." Like every other legally binding transfer of money, grants require a mutual exchange of services. Unlike a gift, freely given and necessitating nothing in return, grants involve a complicated and competitive process of discernment and responsibility between grantor and grantee. Depending on the size and focus of the foundation, hundreds of non-profits or more may besiege it for funds each year. With so many valid needs clamoring to be met, an application can easily be tossed aside for the smallest of reasons—even a comma error. Standing out from the crowd requires an attention to precise detail and a fundamental knowledge of the basic elements of grant writing.

Traditionally, three entities award grants: the government, corporations, and foundations. Government grants can be split between state and national funders, with national grants typically providing a significantly larger amount of money and requiring a significantly larger amount of work and accountability than state counterparts. For the purpose of this analysis, corporation and foundation

grants can be regarded together.

Though some exceptions allow for-profit organizations to apply for grants, the majority of applicants are non-profit or government entities. Most grants can be split into two categories: research and aid. Small aid and advocacy non-profits like the Boys and Girls Club of Paris, Texas or the Baptist Student Ministry at Paris Junior College have the option to apply for large government grants, but most rely on the generosity of local foundations for support.

Grants can also be split into two categories: restricted and unrestricted. Unrestricted grants offer absolute freedom, though they still may require the recipient to report back on its accomplishments. Other grants can require the non-profit to use the money for specific causes, like a new awareness program. Once a specific strategy is specified, funds cannot be used for any other purpose.



United Way of Lamar County Director Jenny Wilson recalled being the recipient of a large amount of CARES Act funding that required her to run radio advertisements reminding community members to get a vaccination for Covid-19. Provided more money than she knew to spend, Wilson ran advertisements

everywhere she could. Had she received an unrestricted grant, the excess funds could have gone towards her other utility or rental assistance programs. However, to ensure alignment with the funder's objectives, she could only spend on advertisements to get vaccinated against Covid-19.

Another time, Wilson was offered a large grant for mental-health resources, for little to no application effort at all. Yet one of the restrictions would have required her to dramatically increase her staff size from two part-time employees to a full team of mental-health professionals. Though it would have temporarily funded the positions, it would not have ensured long-term stability if she didn't get offered the grant again the next year. Further, it would not fund another position to manage the new team. Recognizing her limits, she turned down the grant because the restrictions would not have been tenable for her non-profit to maintain.

Hence the delicate balance between financial support and restricted accountability is introduced: the murky middle-ground where effective grant writers thrive.

### *Think local*

Wilson recommended entry-level grant-writers start by applying to small foundations and corporations in the area the non-profit serves. Local foundations often have longstanding relationships with nearby non-profits. New relationships can also be strengthened and established more easily. Making a case for the benefits a non-profit provides to the community is more effective when the benefactors can see the immediate impact on their lives each day. For these reasons, this paper will only discuss grants from local foundations.

### *The non-profit niche*

Grant writing requires specialization. Though there are some universal rules—such as grammatical accuracy and concise language—the differences necessitate an independent thesis. To successfully write academic grants, someone must be able to navigate complicated IRB boards and dense data. Most classes and books teach on grant writing for research because of its complications.

However, non-profit writing differs by relying on relationships and storytelling. For local non-profits especially, relationships build trust. Trust opens wallets. If torn between donating to two excellent non-profits, the donor will almost always choose the one led by a person he knows and trusts. An effective grant writer cultivates relationships with foundation leaders, past donors, and potential donors to create a healthy degree of trust. Without longstanding relationships outside the bounds of the grant, a submitted application may never even be opened. Additionally, storytelling creates connection in a way data can not do alone. By explaining what a donation would mean by using the name of a child helped, the non-profit can more easily connect the donor to the organization than with dense statistics. Thus, non-profits operate in an independent niche that combines relationship, story, and data.

### *Grant-writing as a career*

Especially for non-profits with a smaller staff, grant writing skills see high demand. A grant writer makes between \$45,600 and \$54,115 in Texas annually. However, when combined with other communication skillsets, its value increases and becomes one of the most important skills a communicator could develop.



# Preparation

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## *Identifying needs*

Without an explicit need, there is no reason to write a grant. Grandma sends birthday money because she loves her grandchildren. Donors send money because they love a cause and want to contribute to solutions. Grandma never needs a specific reason to show support, but donors do. For non-profits, needs can range from administrative costs and light bills to mini food pantries stationed around town. Regardless of the need, it should be identified before the proposal application begins. Good applications center the need the non-profit solves before the organization itself. Sometimes, the entire grant application will mention the need and its proposed resolution without even discussing the organization once. Further, having a known need helps focus the grant search. A private gardening foundation won't fund a general unrestricted grant to a community aid organization. However, if that organization saw a need for fresh produce and healthy greens among low-income community members and wanted to start a community garden, the foundation may be more likely to fund the endeavor. The need provides clarity, focus, and direction to every grant application.

Further, as with any communication technique or strategy, problems must be separated from strategies and tactics. In advertising, the need is never more TV spots about the importance of therapy for mental health. The need may instead be that teenagers struggle with self esteem, and the campaign can solve the problem by helping them better understand their inherent value.

## *Make a plan*

After the need has been identified, plan ahead. If the non-profit had all the funding it needed, how would the problem be solved? Grantors want to fund solutions, not the random possibility of throwing spaghetti at a wall. Even if not all elements of a plan are used in the final grant, the communicator should understand clearly what it wants to fund, which helps prepare the project's budget as well.

When creating a plan, consider: what will it take to meet the need? How would the organization obtain what it needed to meet it? Is there any part of the project that could be provided through pre-existing resources and connections? Who would run the program? If it's a new staff person, how much would they be paid? What other organizations or community stakeholders would the non-profit partner with to make the project happen? How much would the project cost? How and where would it be implemented?

After all these questions have been accounted for, the organization likely has a rough idea of its strategic plan. Honing the details and connecting them to a set of core goals and objectives can further the organization's objective. Knowing that a local gardener has some extra space to donate by the downtown pool can save a significant amount of money in the budget for renting land.

Like all strategic plans, the project's should be manageable and implementable. Using it in a grant application is like making a promise to the potential grantor that the project will occur as stated. Any deviations from the plan would later need to be run by

the funder to receive their approval. Thus, it is particularly important to make sure the plan is possible.

### *Search for grants*

After finding specific needs, creating solutions, and perfecting an implementable plan, the writer may finally begin looking for grants. The communicator should first check if this a grant has funded this need in the past. Many needs, like the United Way's one salaried position, receive the same grant annually to cover the cost. For needs covered by continual grants, the organization should first apply to those it typically receives and keep track of application deadlines.

Secondly, the organization should develop relationships with local companies, businesses, and foundations and monitor grant application deadlines. Local donors can see the impact of their gifts on the communities they live and work in, making them more likely to donate to non-profits, especially smaller ones.

If no local foundations or companies can cover the need, organizations can expand their reach to niche funders. Websites like [grant.gov](http://grant.gov), [grantwatch.com](http://grantwatch.com), [candid.org](http://candid.org), [grantli.com](http://grantli.com), and [instrumentl.com](http://instrumentl.com) can help communicators find grants to cover specific needs. Many grant requirements can get particular. Some foundations even want to cover endeavors to promote left-handed instrument use. With so many available grants, the writer will likely find some to apply for online.

### *Evaluate*

Given the strict requirements and expectations of many grant applications, non-profit communicators should always evaluate the

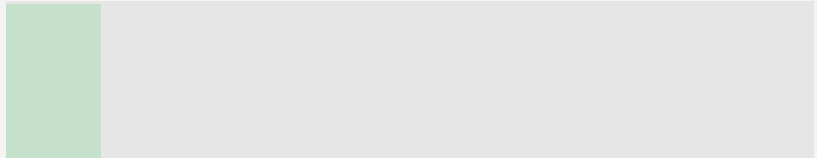
listed requirements, expectations, and purpose of the requested grant. Few things frustrate grantors more than receiving a grant request for a project entirely different from what it wants to fund. Making sure that the organization qualifies for the grant saves everyone time. To check qualifications, make sure the application's location, deadline, and additional files are achievable and within the writer's capability. Even though a grant seems perfect for a project, a two-day deadline to complete thirty pages of financial documents may not be realistic for the organization. Similarly, if a non-profit must hire a new staff or manager to ensure a project of the grant's expected size is completed, it may not be worth it for a small non-profit to apply. Make sure all expectations of the grant are within the organization's abilities.

### *Document*

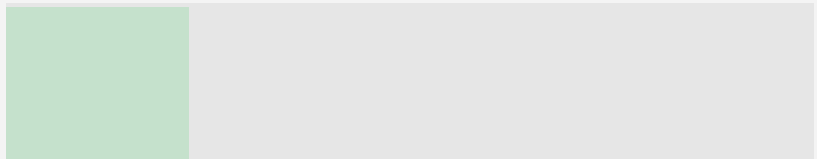
Finally, be sure to gather all documentation in advance. The easiest way to do this is to make sure documents are kept up to date as the year progresses. For example, Wilson keeps track of every rental assistance transaction in a spreadsheet immediately after it occurs. This regular tracking lets her apply for grants at any time with an updated copy of her financial situation. It also allows her to report back for grants she has already received with an itemized list of those the United Way of Lamar County has aided. At the end of the year, she can send all the expenses for the year in one action, which keeps her applications timely and reportable. Without a clear tracking system for revenue and expenses, many writers struggle to produce updated copies of financial records. However, before applying for grants, the writer should already have gathered these and any other expected records, which saves time and reduces guesswork for applications.

# Elements of an Application

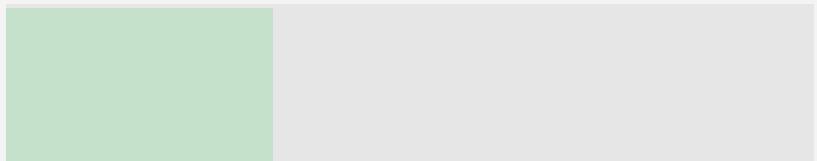
**INTRODUCTION,  
BACKGROUND,  
AND SUMMARY**



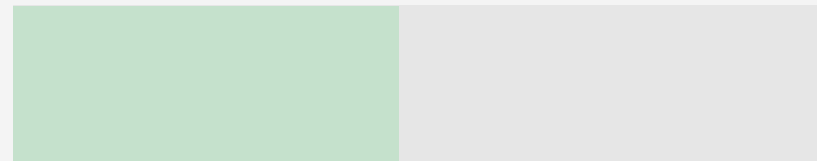
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ASSESSMENT**



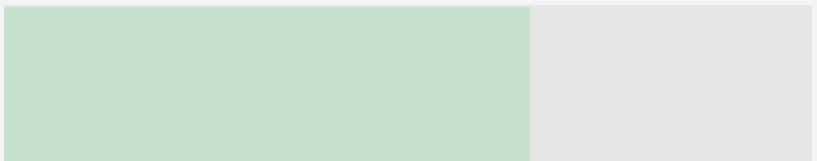
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OBJECTIVES**



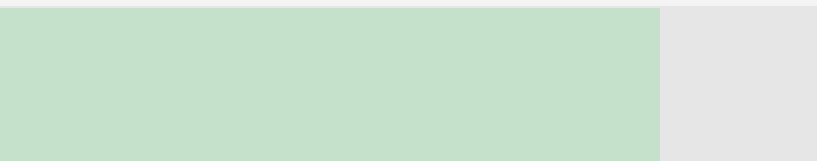
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AND TIMELINE**



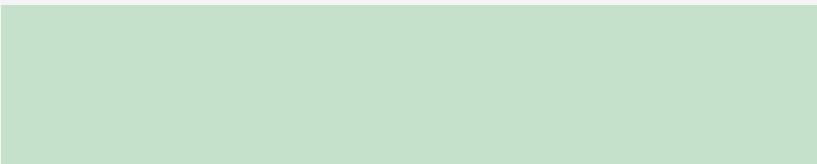
**BUDGET**



**EVALUATION  
MEASURES**



**ADDITIONAL  
STEPS**





# Introduction

Every grant application must have a strong introduction. The introduction includes all necessary background information about the organization, its mission, and why its mission matters. For instance, the Paris Metro in Lamar County, Texas provides low-cost rides for anyone who needs them. If applying for a grant to fund new bus stops, the organization might include the name of the organization, its mission, a brief summary of the routes it reaches, and the number of people who rely on it to get to work or school.

# Needs Assessment

Clearly stating the need is the most important part of every grant application. The need is the entire reason the organization is applying for a grant. Typically, grant applications are used for specific needs over operational expenses because they are a limited time only endeavor. The need is also usually urgent or approaching urgent. The Tarrant Area Food Bank might apply for a grant to remodel its kitchen, but it will probably wait to apply until the room borders disrepair. Similarly, the Paris Metro would wait to apply for funding for new bus stops unless the necessity of expanding the route or replacing the new ones became clear. Donors are much more likely to fund grants where the need is immediate and clearly stated.

The needs assessment must answer the question: "Why is this needed?" It's not enough to just say the city needs new bus stops. Instead, the writer should use a combination of logos and pathos to express the idea. "Because bus stops are important for the safety of waiting passengers, Paris Metro must replace three in the city limits."



# Goals and Objectives

Every application must also include what the organization's goals and objectives are for the grant application. If a group applies for money to start a community garden, what way does will the community benefit? Will the project have a measurable impact at the end of its implementation? To create well-written goals, use the SMART analysis method. Writers must create objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. Losing realism, for instance, might mean the Paris Metro sets an objective to increase bus traffic by 150% with the installation of new bus stops. Without data to support the realism of such an increase, the Paris Metro will almost inevitably fall shy, leaving the donor feeling unhappy and jipped at reporting time.

# Strategic Plan and Timeline

Every project should also include a strategic plan and thorough timeline. Once written, this timeline and plan becomes like a promise to the potential grantor. When it is broken, it breaks trust and makes the donor unlikely to give the organization another grant. Often, non-profits are more willing to have a longer deadline promised than to have a promised deadline unmet. The Salvation Army of Paris, for instance, promised the completion of its homeless shelter by November of 2022, but by May of the following year, it had still not completed the project. One organization writing grants for it began to revoke pledged funding for every month the project was late. Don't add or exaggerate details to make a plan or timeline sound more compelling on an application.

# Budget

Without a budget, the grantor has no security or direction for funding a grant. Before applying, the organization should have already figured out how much the project will cost in full and how much they want the grant to cover. Budgets are best presented as a brief, itemized list of all expenses to cover. For a community garden, a budget would include the price to rent the land and buy seeds, tools, and fertilizers. A grantor then has the choice to return the request with a restricted donation for the amount of all the equipment, conditional on the organization to instead find a community member willing to give use of his land to make the project happen free of charge. The budget lets the donor know exactly how much to fund and why the project costs as much as it does.



## Evaluation Measures

Finally, the organization must show the grantor how it will evaluate the effectiveness of its work. How will it know if the community has actually been enriched when the project ends? For a food pantry, evaluation might mean indirectly monitoring the number of cans of food taken from the shelves. For a rental assistance program, evaluating may be making note of how many people apply for funding each month compared to how many receive it. Contacting the individual helped again in three months helps the organization know if the assistance had a long-term impact and kept the person in need from being evicted. A request for a local organization to sponsor a fundraising event might include letting the donor know how much money the event raised and whether or not the organization met its desired goals and objectives. It's important to make sure the reported outcomes align with the initial expectations set in the grant application.

## Additional Steps

Though these elements cover the basics of grant writing, every request may have other steps it asks the writer to complete prior to submission. Typically, a grant may ask for additional information like a copy of the organization's financials. Grant writers should check to make sure they have attached all required and expected materials. Wilson and Fasken said that one of the most common mistakes made in grant applications was using incorrect financials. If the organization wants hard data, it should be the newest available to the organization. Financials should all be for the year the organization applies, not one or two before. Making sure all additional paperwork is filled out correctly can be a deciding factor that wins or prevents an organization from receiving a grant. Further, if incorrect information is submitted, many grantors will push back with more questions or reject the application to prevent fraud and dishonest use of their funds.

# Key Strategies

Analysis of interviews conducted with non-profit leaders yielded forty significant insights for grant-writers. For easy analysis, the suggested strategies have been divided into three categories, designed to empower and inspire potential grant writers. With experiences spanning 25 years or more, each executive director interviewed emphasized the importance of grant writing as a necessary skill for their agencies, drawing from personal familiarity writing and receiving grants to give their own suggestions for potential writers. Though the following pages elaborate on each strategy and the ways it can be implemented directly in a written grant, Appendix B lists each of the captions alone.



## 01

### **LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS**

Though a non-profit has a different tax status, Executive Director for the Ram Foundation Dede Fasken emphasizes the importance of treating it like a business. Grant applications should reflect a business-driven technique in strategic planning, financials, tracking and transparency, research and approach. Though a compelling story is great, funders care first about the facts and want to know the leader manage any awarded funds competently and effectively.

## 02

### **REPUTATION MATTERS**

Especially for small non-profits, reputation matters. When the funder knows a non-profit is trustworthy, honest, and reliable, it builds trust and amplifies the funder's desire to support the organization. Following up with donors through regular reporting and relationship-building contact builds a reputation of cooperation and mutual support goes a long way towards securing repeated and long-term funding.

## 03

### **PRECISION WORKMANSHIP**

With most grant applications, the applicant gets only one chance. If the writer doesn't get it right the first time, the application will just be thrown out. From tracking the finer points of every application to perfecting the techniques that speak volumes outside the standard application, the art of precision and excellence must perforate the language and artistry of every successful grant writer.

# Let's Get Down to Business

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## TREAT IT LIKE A BUSINESS

Executive Director for the RAM Foundation, Dede Fasken takes a rather cynical approach to new non-profits – at least to the unprepared ones. For her, a non-profit has to show dedication and commitment on par with a full business if she will make it a grant recipient. She says, “A non-profit is simply a tax status. It is still a business. All these people come in and they’re like, ‘well, we’re looking for seed money,’ ‘we want to start this new foundation,’ ‘we want to help people,’ ‘we want to set up programs to help tutor kids after school,’ ‘we need to rent a new office building, we need this, that and the other, and we’re asking for \$50,000 to get this started.’ But they have no business plan. They have no idea what they’re going to do six months after they have money coming in. So, people are raising money to build the building, but they’re not thinking ahead as to how they’re going to fund their operational cost on a yearly basis after that.”

In the same way that businesses keep pristine documentation of meetings, financials, and other records, a non-profit must ensure it upholds all standards of professionalism, transparency, and accountability. Grants don’t represent free money. Like with any business, it’s payment for a good or service. The only difference between a non-profit and a corporation is that the buyer and the benefactor are not the same person.

Similarly, the non-profit should uphold all standards of best practice. If someone pays a local firm to mow his lawn, and the group does a terrible job, the customer won’t use the agency’s services again. Receiving a grant represents a commitment to provide the expected return on investment.

Non-profit leaders suggested four primary methods to use business-like practice, as follows.

### *Give them what they want*

Grant applications usually have a detailed list of required information. They may ask a writer to observe particular formatting requirements or to attach a certain kind of Profit and Loss (P&L) sheet. Especially for state and federal applications, violating a requirement in any way, even something as small as the font size, might get an application immediately rejected and thrown away. However, even for local non-profits with established relationships, neglecting to send an updated copy of the agency’s annual budget requires the grantor to take on the extra work of reaching out and checking in to make sure all the information is gathered correctly. This extra risk is often superfluous.

In fact, if instructions are unclear on expectations, choosing to call the foundation to make sure the requirements are understood can often save time and help all parties involved. “Find out what they want to see. Find out what they want to know,” Fasken continues. Before submitting the application, make sure to double check that all requested information is attached.

### *Accurate financials*

Because financials require a lot of work to gather and navigate – especially if they

haven't been monitored and tracked throughout the year — many grant writers submit documents with missing information or resort to using the previous year's financial reports instead of the current ones. Because financial records reflect how well the non-profit uses the resources it is given, many donors use them for their primary decision making, and the records pose significance for acquiring new grants. Donors scour financials to identify corruption or effective leadership, and the absence of such documentation raises red flags and inhibits trustworthiness, even in established relationships.

"It's never just about the writing. It's never just about the narrative. It's also going to be about the financials," Wilson said. Submitting impeccable financial records is a crucial business practice that bleeds well into the non-profit world.

### *Strategic planning*

Without a strategic plan, a business will falter. In the same way, a non-profit should have a clear strategic plan for the future that accounts for potential projects, initiatives, and more. Analyzing the organization's projected growth and goals will allow it to find grant applications that connect with its ambitions, then allowing its endeavors to be funded and

prosper. If the non-profit has a strategic plan, the grant-writer should read it thoroughly to make sure the goals of the plan and the proposed grant applications are aligned. For instance, when Wilson was offered a grant to spearhead a massive mental health project that would require hiring multiple new staff members and managing a secondary team, she chose not to accept. Her strategic plan and core objectives spoke to enhancing collaboration among the non-profits in Lamar County, not running her own large initiatives and ongoing programs or managing a team of employees. Understanding her goals and objectives allowed Wilson to know the scope of her organization and its abilities, including what opportunities she needed to say turn down.

"Non-profits miss the ball when they don't do strategic planning for their organizations because their clients depend on them as well as financial aid," Fasken said. Operating a non-profit or applying to grants without clear objectives and needs is much like throwing spaghetti at a wall and seeing what sticks, she added.

### *Contingency funding*

"A lot of times, people become complacent with their funding, and they don't go out and seek additional funding," Fasken said. One agency in Lamar County had relied solely on the funds it received from its annual foundations, choosing not to apply to others in the area or online. But when a core donor passed away, it found itself in a suddenly imminent situation, not having any cushion or additional funding. Most businesses have some form of contingency funding in case of emergencies or sudden eras of reduced prosperity or revenue. During the Covid-19 pandemic, some non-profits lost funds when





investments made for events or programs fell through without the expected returns. In the midst of a pandemic, they had to navigate financial difficulties and survive with reduced revenue. Non-profits must also be prepared for other emergency events, like natural disasters sweeping away offices or program facilities.

One way to build a contingency fund is through an endowment. A good rule of thumb is to have between three and six months of operating expenses saved in an emergency fund. This amount can often be enough to start an endowment. Grant writers should also seek streams of funding outside of its normal application circuit. If it gets additional funds, the non-profit can grow its programming or build a greater savings pool, then enhancing its long-term stability and security.

### **TRACKING**

After receiving a grant, the non-profit must prove it used the funds as they donor intended them to be used. Though sometimes the reporting process may be as simple as a narrative explanation of the good deeds the non-profit accomplished this year, often it requires deeper analysis of the exact amount spent on each item and what the return on investment was for the organization. Effective reporting and tracking show the donor that the non-profit honored its commitment and actually helped people in the same way it said it would.

At the United Way of Lamar County, Wilson documents every expense as it happens, keeping a live time spreadsheet ready to send to anyone who requests it at a moment's notice. Maintaining such a degree of transparency and efficiency builds trust and

makes it much easier to apply for grants, particularly large state or federal ones.

### *Be transparent with funding sources*

When trying to fund a project, grant writers will often reach out to numerous foundations or agencies for funding. However, if the writer doesn't make it clear that they are requesting funding from multiple agencies for the same need, they may be given twice as much as they need for a project. If restricted, the funding then goes to waste or is used in superfluous ways. A mark of a strong grant writer is one who includes a clause in the grant application listing the other places she has sought funding from for the same project. The transparency builds trust and increases a foundation's willingness to donate.

### *Track important documents like meeting minutes or financials*

Though less important for local grants, many federal and state grants will dock application points from non-profits who don't keep regular minutes of their meetings. The Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program grant, for instance, penalizes non-profits who don't meet at least once monthly. However, if the non-profit doesn't attach minutes of each meeting to its application, it counts the meeting as having never occurred. Showing proper attention to detail then, whether it's in keeping track of meeting minutes and financials, can be the turning point for receiving more complicated grants.

### *Keep track of reporting documents alongside each necessary expense*

Mentioned earlier, Wilson keeps a spreadsheet to document her financial expenses as they occur. That way, when it comes time to create her end-of-the-year report or apply for grants,

she doesn't have to spend weeks gathering old information or making things up to fill the gaps in her records. She's able to instantly provide the exact name, address, phone number, and more of every person she helps with rental or utility assistance. For non-profits that keep poor records or wait until the last minute to gather everything they need, it's hard to keep up with the pressing demands of multiple grant applications or donors. Keeping up with reporting documents is a business strategy necessary for non-profits, one that often decreases stress levels and makes a grant-writer's job much easier.

### *Be aware of grant requirements*

Wilson has contemplated applying for the ESG grant through the HUD, a federally funded grant. However, in addition to the lengthy and demanding application process, she would be required to alter the way she ran her rental assistance program to prohibit aid to anyone who receives Section 8 housing or is in the Paris Housing Authority. There were also significant reporting requirements that would require a tremendous amount of work for a small non-profit with only one full-time employee. Knowing her limits, she chose not to apply for the grant, even though it would help her expand the program in the community.

When applying for grants, it is absolutely crucial that all the requirements for the grant are read, understood, and achievable. As Pitcock said, "Grants are not a gift." In that vein, the writer must make sure the non-profit is fully capable of fulfilling every expectation and requirement, and further, that those are compromises they are willing to make in exchange for the funds. For this reason, a grant writer should not operate independently from an organization's

leadership. Instead, he should consistently check in with those who would be responsible for carrying out the grant's responsibilities after it had been achieved to make sure the expectations are realistic and ideal for the organization as a whole.

## RESEARCH

Especially for new non-profits without an annual cycle of grants to apply for every year, effective research is important for identifying the right grant for the job. For instance, a grant to build and maintain a small community garden likely wouldn't require hundreds of pages of financial documents to earn a million-dollar landscaping grant. Before applying to any grant, the writer should research the difficulty and scope of the application and make sure its requirements and eligibility standards are within the non-profit's greater ambitions.

Additionally, new grant writers should research what other examples of successful grant writing look like to learn how successful writers have perfected the scientific art of blending numbers and narrative or what kind of materials would be required if he expanded his sphere of influence and applied to a state or federal grant to help fund a large mental health or educational program.

### *Study other grant applications*

Beginning grant writers should perfect their strategy by studying examples of successful grant applications and examining applications online. For instance, knowing that the ESG grant requires attached minutes for every meeting might help bring a lapse of meeting documentation to the non-profit's attention, enabling it to have all the required information if the organization decided to

apply for that grant or a similar one the next year. The practice also familiarizes the writer with the scope and material requirements for a larger grant.

### *Conduct research*

Before applying for a grant to start an after-school program, make sure no one else has already started a similar program or has an aligned mission. Make sure the need is unique and that the proposed solution is reasonable and solves an ongoing problem. The writer should research the grant she's applying for and ensure it has a history of funding similar programs to hers. Then, the writer can find a niche and settle into it, applying for grants with a direct correlation to the problem it's trying to solve. This amplifies the likelihood both the non-profit and the grantor will connect and reduces wasted time.

### *Apply to a variety of grants*

"Don't put all your eggs in one basket" rings true for grant writing too. Applying to many different grants hedges one's bets, and if the non-profit doesn't get all the funding it initially expected to receive, it has other options it can fall back on and still achieve its revenue goals.





## BUILD THE SKILL

Finally, good business means building skillsets over time, often starting from the ground zero. No one can become an expert at a skill overnight, especially one as complex as grant writing can become. Non-profit leaders suggested beginner grant writers should start by applying to small, local grants, before working their way up to the more complicated state and federal applications. This builds the skillset and gives the grant writer a playground on which to practice with smaller dollar amounts at risk.

### *Start small and start local*

Whether it's a local foundation, company, or individual, the best grant writers take time to perfect skills in persuasive communication. Many non-profit leaders make the mistake of assuming all funds must come from grants. However, a lot of funding may come from local companies in the form of program or event sponsorships. Sponsorships still fund a non-profit's endeavors while giving the company the positive incentive of having their name associated with the good actions being done by the empowered non-profit.

A lot of companies also have small foundations or funds to give back to local causes, like Walmart. Walmart offers \$2,000 for non-profits that apply and the application only takes five minutes. Wilson recommended it as a great place to start for people dipping their feet in the waters of grant writing for the first time. Local applications also rely more heavily on relationships and reputation than state or federal grants. Reporting requirements are often less extensive, and funders tend to be more forgiving of small mistakes in the application. It's a great, low-risk place for beginners to start, Wilson said.

### *Understand your target audience*

Just like in the business world, a good non-profit understands their target audience. For instance, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Wilson was offered \$10,000 to use for efforts encouraging Covid-19 vaccination. However, knowing her predominantly rural Texan audience had extremely negative viewpoints of the vaccine, she made a strategic decision to remove the United Way's name from the vaccination campaign, fearing it would harm her fundraising endeavors the next donation season. Understanding her target demographic allowed her to make a strategic decision important for the wellbeing of her organization. The next time it was offered, she denied the grant because it had not been effective for the Texan residents who had encountered the campaign.

Her discernment saved her a lot of additional time and effort and preserved federal funds that would have otherwise been wasted. In the same way, a grant writer must make sure that all requirements for a campaign can be met without alienating the non-profit's target audience, even when presented with a tempting payout.

### *Get used to asking for money*

"It's almost like this weird personality quirk of people who like to ask for money," Wilson said. "And I think you can romanticize it, like I write grants! No, I beg for money. And you have to keep that in perspective. I think some people lose that, and it's all about the win." For non-profit leaders, the daily recognition of their reliance on the generosity of others can be a humbling experience. Realizing that not only the leader's job, but the entire mission depends on how much they fundraise raises the stakes significantly.



Keeping with that humility, grant writers should also get used to asking, thanking, and explaining concisely as they woo donors and sponsors for events and programs. Learning how to navigate persuasive writing and appeals outside the standard application can help writers make the most of their letters within the application too.

“It’s just like with sales; the first call is always the hardest,” Wilson said. When asking for funds, petitions to someone the caller already has a connection with are easier and often more likely to return positive results.

### *Get some wins under your belt*

“There’s nothing that feels as good as getting the email that says your grant has been awarded for \$20,000. And then you know that you’re doing it because you truly are doing good with that money. It’s a great feeling,” Wilson said.

The process of applying for grants initially can seem like an intimidating process, especially for those trying to start with a state or federal grant. However, the first step is simply to take a leap forward and learn the techniques through trial and error. The wins don’t have to be big, but starting small and earning some money helps build confidence and motivation. Like all other abilities, it’s a skill that requires time and practice to perfect.

Ultimately, good business practice is also good non-profit practice. Non-profits should be financially responsible, have a strategic plan, track their funds and expenses, conduct research to support its initiatives and focus on building skillsets and high performers.

# Voices of Leadership



## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DEDE FASKEN**

Ram Foundation

"A lot of people don't provide accurate financials, especially your budget to actual. There's a lot of people that'll just provide last year's. And when you get sloppy financials, you're just like, 'why would I give you \$100,000 if you can't even fill out a four-page application correctly?'"



## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JASON MACCHIA**

Boys and Girls Club of Paris, Texas

"Your resource development team is also your marketing team, and your marketing team is the most valuable part of your resource development. If you can't sell the product, you can't get the funds. If you don't invest in the resource development side of it, you can't have the marketing you need. So that collision is where you want to be."



## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JENNY WILSON**

Boys and Girls Club of Paris, Texas

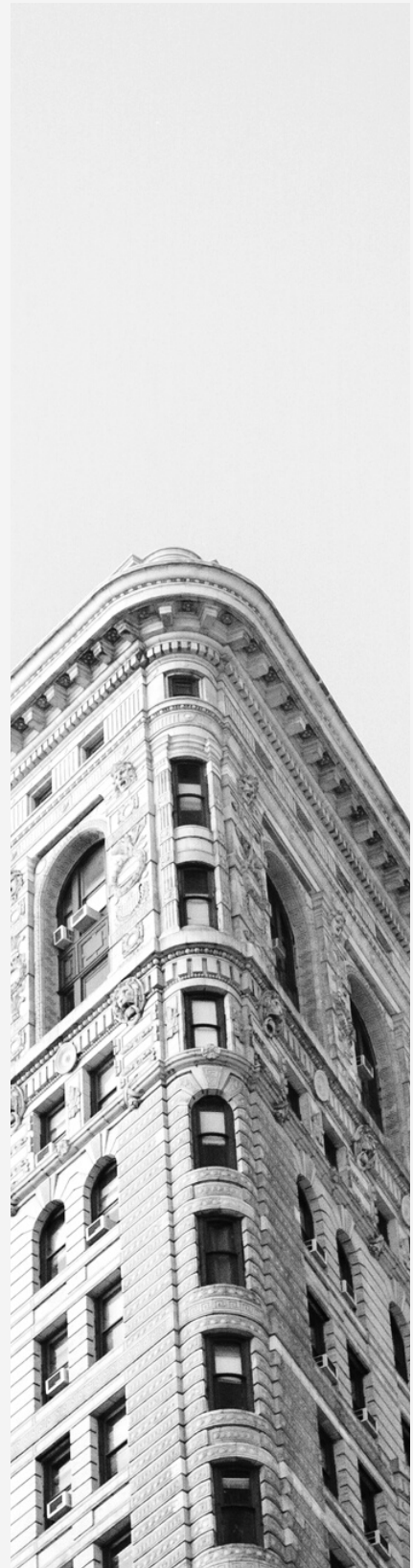
"There's a part of it too which is about humility, and I never forget it. I could say I'm requesting funding, no. What I'm really doing is begging for money. So you should be humble. If you're ever given a grant, you should always send a thank you letter. You kind of file those things away."

# Jenny Wilson

*United Way Executive Director*

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"What is successful is a well-defined need, that the non-profit does not have the funding to fund themselves, that is going to benefit their clients and then the community. The Children's Advocacy Center is a specific example. So they had just gotten a letter from us saying, congratulations, we're giving you \$30,000 for 2023. That's their regular allocation. Not but three, four weeks later, I get a request from them for an Emerging Needs grant for \$10,000. It was specific. Their recording system for their forensics interviews had broken. It was \$30,000, and they were willing to put up the other 20,000. They did not have funding. They cannot serve their clients with broken machinery. And the community, we all benefit when sex offenders are behind bars. So that was a well written grant request that wasn't even an application. It was literally an email of three paragraphs, but it checked every single box. I was then able to copy and paste that to an email to my board of directors that said "Emergency Email Vote Needed." By the end of the day. I let them know their \$10,000 had been approved. And by the next day, I sent a check. So those are the stories, but again, it's those relationships. I know they're a good agency. I know everyone who works there, so those are important."



# Reputation Matters

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## BUILD RAPPORT

Especially for local non-profits reliant on small town funding, relationships can define the trajectory of an organization and the amount of funding it receives. Numerous non-profit leaders reported the importance of strong relationships and rapport with local funders. Relationships establish trust. If a funder trusts the leadership of a non-profit, he will be more likely to sponsor the organization and its mission. Fasken reinforces this concept, saying she will be more likely to fund a non-profit if she knows its leadership has “some sense to them.” For organizations that rarely try to connect with her or have neglected to check in with her, Fasken has cut funding and also marked them as ineligible for future funding. One of the best ways to establish this trust and support from donors is to reach out regularly and build rapport with the foundation’s leadership.

Though not all grant applications will have opportunities to develop relationships with the foundation, especially state and federal grants, the generosity of local groups can depend entirely on them, making them a critical component for beginning grant writers.

Wilson further emphasizes this idea, saying that some of her donors have a standard application process for most grants that they give, but for her, they’ll send a check directly

to the United Way of Lamar County without her even needing to apply because they know she is trustworthy and they want to support her initiatives.

Non-profit leaders proposed several strategies and practices for building connections with funders, many of which occur after the non-profit has received the grant.

### *Stay in contact*

Many non-profit leaders receive a grant, cheer, and leave the conversation there. Besides the mandatory end-of-year report, a grantor might never hear from the non-profit again. This kind of behavior can leave foundations feeling unacknowledged or like the organization isn’t grateful for the donation.

However, good non-profit leaders will follow up with the foundations which fund them regularly, even outside of the mandatory reporting periods. Calling a donor just to check in or provide an update on current objectives, or to reveal another source of funding can build a deeper relationship and make the organization more likely to give another grant the following year. Personal contact shows the donor that the non-profit leader is willing to take the time out of a busy schedule to check in. It shows that the non-profit respects the donor’s feedback and in turn makes them feel like a valued contributor to the cause.

It also keeps the connection “warm.” If an emergency need arises where extra funding is necessary or something goes wrong with the use of the grant, the organization has built a safety net of communication and are more likely to receive grace in the eyes of the donor when the reporting season rolls around.

Thus, whether it's a quick five minute phone call or a monthly email, staying in contact with grantors can improve a non-profit's likelihood to receive the grant again in the future.

### *Send pictures*

Another great way to show donors that they're contributing to the benefit of real people is to send pictures of the work that has been done, even outside of regular reporting times. For instance, the Downtown Food Pantry in Paris, Texas needed to repave its parking lot and add striping once the concrete had been poured. As part of its communication with the funders who had approved grant requests to fund it, executive director Allan Hubbard took photos of the parking lot as soon as the concrete had been poured and sent them to all donors.

For the grantors, it allowed them an opportunity to connect with the project at a deeper level, connecting the literal details and statistics behind the grant with the actual benefit it created for the community.

The Boys and Girls Club of Paris, Texas sought to fund the purchase of new football equipment for its team. Sending pictures of the team to donors would reinforce the positive connection the grantors felt with the organization, making them more likely to give to the non-profit again when it applied for another grant the following year.

However, as with any distributed photos, permission must be gathered from everyone in the photo and the person who took it for it to be sent out. When photos include kids, parents must have signed a permission slip or give explicit permission for the non-profit to use or share the photo.

When used correctly, pictures and other visual content can be a fantastic way to build rapport with grantors.

### *Follow-up timely and appropriately*

Though similar to an earlier strategy, this practice refers to more than just checking in with donors. Though a check in may be a five-minute conversation designed to keep a relationship active and the donor aware and engaged in the non-profit's mission, a true follow-up tracks the path of the grant and the work it has and will continue to do for the organization.

In the same way that children taught to write thank you notes are encouraged to tell their aunt exactly what they will buy with that gift of money, non-profit leaders should be critically clear in their follow-ups on what every cent of the grant will or has gone towards. Writing good follow-up messages function similarly to writing good grant applications. Each should combine the narrative with the numbers—explaining the tangible benefit the organization has provided through data while sharing some personal stories of those who have been aided. For instance, the Children's Advocacy Center may include in its monthly update that the organization helped 27 children transition from an abusive situation to a foster home. The number is made more impactful by explaining that many of those children came to them with no clothes or supplies but those on her back, and the organization stepped in to meet her need and give her some new personal items to take with her to her new foster home.

Grant writers or non-profit leaders should follow up with donors regularly about the organization's actions. Though some may

choose to update their grantors monthly, others often choose a bi-annual or annual update schedule. For those choosing to wait annually for an end-of-the-year report, regular check-ins with donors throughout the year are more critical for maintaining relationships and establishing rapport.

## COOPERATE WITH OTHERS

One of the most important keys for building community relationships is cooperation, even with other non-profits. At first, it may seem like the connection to grant writing is minimal, but non-profit leaders emphasized its importance for building relationships and gaining funding. Grant-giving organizations like seeing partnerships within the community for three main reasons. First, it shows that the concept has a lot of traction and is a clearly felt need. When an entire city or region agrees that a certain measure is necessary, it probably is. Second, it reveals a collaborative spirit among the people running the project, an important trait of good leadership. Third, it shows grantors that the organizers are looking for the best solution, not necessarily the easiest or most self-glorifying. Recognizing and using the strengths of other organizations in the community demonstrates self-awareness and a desire to help as many people as possible through mutual support and connection.

### *Don't duplicate services*

Fasken has gotten countless requests for funding to start after school programs for children. Though well-intentioned, many start-up non-profits want to get funds to rent an office, hire new staff, draft materials, and more, an expensive and time-consuming process that takes away from funds used to help kids grow in after-school activities.

Rather than encourage the aspiring non-profits or funding their efforts, Fasken points them to the Boys and Girls Club, an organization that already does after-school programs for kids. Instead of starting a brand new non-profit and trying to gather funding for it, people who want to do good for their communities would best serve the local area by working with the organizations that already exist to meet a specific need. Only when a niche need is unmet – like mental health services for the homeless or imprisoned in Paris, TX – is it worth trying to get funding for a brand-new organization. For one-time events like a community healthcare fair or a Down Syndrome fundraiser, it is better to part with organizations already associated with these areas.

Avoiding duplicated services concentrates funding towards helping the most people in need while minimizing confusion among potential donors. It's also easier to write grant applications when the organization championing the program has a proven track record for success.

### *Don't make false claims*

Once, Wilson received a grant application claiming it would have a massive partnership with another non-profit, leading to a fantastic good done for the community. However, when she called the other non-profit, its leadership had no idea what the first was talking about. In grant writing, it can be tempting to try to gain funding for tentative ideas without thinking through the practicality of them. However, if a concept is included in a grant application, it functions much like a promise to the grantor that the idea will happen as written. Write all parts of an application as if it will be fact-checked, because it probably will be.

## MAINTAIN STRONG CHARACTER

One key way a non-profit can establish rapport and trust with a grantor is to prove it is reliable, trustworthy, honest, and hard-working. Demonstrating personal characteristics like humility and gratitude in all forms of communication with the donor shows a strength of leadership a grantor will want to stand behind. Most donors give to non-profits because they want to do good or help people. If they think the leader of a non-profit is untrustworthy, they may not even look at the proposed grant application and reject it on the basis of leadership alone. Fasken has done that with certain applications to her foundation before because of leadership she views as untrustworthy. Combined with stories of corrupt leadership and non-profits stealing 97% of donations for personal salaries, it's important to stay transparent and open to everyone, especially potential grantors.

### *Be knowledgeable*

All leaders interviewed emphasized the importance of knowing every aspect of their organization before attempting to write grants for it. Trying to write grants without knowing the organization is like trying to tell someone what a stranger thinks or needs. Without an intimate familiarity with the non-profit, the grant writer will likely misunderstand its necessities and possibly land it in a dangerous situation by applying for and accepting the wrong grant.

For instance, if Wilson hadn't accounted for her diminished staff when evaluating a large mental health grant, she would have been overwhelmed and unable to manage its requirements. Accepting the grant would have harmed her organization instead of helped it even though it may have seemed like a good idea to someone not as familiar



with the United Way of Lamar County's inner workings.

Fasken states it clearly, saying, "I want what I want, and when I ask you, I want you to be knowledgeable about your program." If a grant writer wants someone to fund a project, they have to be prepared to fight for it and be able to rattle off compelling reasons for it to be funded, both on written applications and personal interviews.

Non-profit leaders who are unknowledgeable about the project or their programs come off as distant, misinformed, and unengaged with the organization. It leaves the grantor wondering if they even care about the mission and if their funds are going to a good cause or just a useless salary.

### *Be honest*

Never lie in a grant application. Though the temptation may be strong to change some numbers or stories to look more favorable, grant writers should always act as if the donor will ask them to prove every piece of information included in the application. If a





grantor catches a lie, not only will the grant application get denied, the foundation may also blacklist the non-profit and harm its chances to get grants from other non-profits, foundations, or donors elsewhere.

There can also be legal repercussions for certain kinds of falsehoods, especially when included in official documents or contracts. As mentioned earlier, some non-profits will write as if innovative ideas are already in the work or change financial information to try to hide a mathematical discrepancy. These lies will get caught, and it will reflect poorly on the organization and prevent it from effectively serving its mission. It will lose support and funding from community members as well, severely damaging its ability to aid those it aims to help.

### *Be trustworthy*

One of the most important characteristics of a non-profit is trustworthiness. Checking in every month or so and providing honest information doesn't guarantee a grantor will perceive an organization as trustworthy. To build credibility and perceived reliability, grant writers should respond quickly to any questions a funder may ask, ideally within thirty minutes in regular business hours. Immediate response times build trust and increase a perceived sense of reliability.

Another way to demonstrate trustworthiness is to inform donors of potential obstacles as they arise. If difficulties have come up while attempting to deposit a donor's check, it is better to tell them as soon as possible instead of waiting until a crisis is at hand. This process keeps the funder feeling informed and engaged throughout the process and its associated challenges, making donors feel like their values align with the non-profit's.

Connecting with the funder over a set of shared values or ideas can also increase the grant writer's perceived trustworthiness.

When a funder views the non-profit and its leadership as trustworthy, it's going to foster an environment of respect, leading to continued generosity and support in the future. In this way, establishing strong character and connections ensures present and forthcoming financial stability.

### *Stay transparent*

For all grant applications, make materials as available as possible to the donors. A one-page application may only want a brief summary of financial need, but offering to attach the annual budget can give the grantor more information that might help in the decision-making process.

On the other hand, if a donor's requests for more information or financial documents don't receive a response or are washed over in some other way, it creates a negative impression and will likely result in the grant application being denied. When looking for organizations to fund, grantors want to make sure the non-profit will use their money wisely. Hidden or obscured information will make them suspicious and less likely to give. When in doubt, it is far better to error on the side of too much transparency over too little.

### *Work hard*

Non-profit roles require a lot of hard work. Positions can sometimes be underpaid or understaffed, but employees know they are helping others with the fruit of their effort. Though a project should never be made unnecessarily hard, grantors like seeing someone willing to back their proposed idea with plenty of action and effort. If it's worth

giving their money to, it has to be worth the non-profit giving its time.

### *Stay humble*

Wilson says it numerous times. "There's a part of it too which is about humility, and I never forget it. I could say I'm requesting funding, no. What I'm really doing is begging for money," she states. Non-profits rely on the generosity of others, and when an organization begins taking grant money for granted, it can backfire quickly. Recognizing that the generosity of others keeps the organization afloat can be a humbling experience and reduce prideful tendencies. When writing grant applications, it's always important to keep in mind that any money provided is earned only in that it is given. Without the generosity of others, the non-profit wouldn't exist.

### *Show gratitude*

Finally, Wilson says, "If you're ever given a grant, you should always send a thank you letter. You kind of file those things away." A matter of common courtesy when receiving a gift, thank you letters mean the most when hand-written. A good thank you letter should always include what the act of generosity was (a.k.a. a sponsorship, grant receipt, or donation) and what the donation will be used for. Like any other form of follow-up with the donor, it's good to include a personal note, whether it's checking in about his wife's health or sending a picture of the child the donation will go towards.

Taking the time to send a personalized thank you note shows the donor that the non-profit hasn't taken them for granted, and it makes them feel more open to donating again in the future.

# Precision at all Costs

## ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Though relationships can spark tremendous partnerships that empower the work of a non-profit, a lot of grants won't have an option to meet or communicate with the grantor one-on-one. Barring any way to connect or form a relationship with the funder, it all comes down to the application alone, which must then be perfect. One of the ways to achieve a stellar application is to ensure that all necessary information is included; there are no punctuation, grammar, or spelling mistakes; and each section is uniquely written and crafted.

Because so many organizations apply to each grant, the foundation doesn't have time to reach out to a non-profit to track down missing information. If its requested files aren't there, the foundation will just scratch the organization and move on to the next one. For this reason, filling out the application correctly and double checking that all required information is present is imperative.

### *Be concise*

Few people truly enjoy reading hundreds of pages of dry material about finances and organizational structures. When reading applications, most funders will skim the first few lines quickly, hoping to gather all of the relevant information in as little time as possible. Extra unnecessary language will get

skipped over, and important information may be lost. Instead, using design and technical writing principles to state the application's objectives clearly will improve its likelihood of becoming a successful grant request.

Replace large words with smaller synonyms and avoid complicated language and ideas. State concepts as simply as possible and in as few words as possible. Unless otherwise noted by the application requirements, try to keep typed applications to a single page.

### *Dot your i's and cross your t's*

Grant writers should double and triple check that all sentences are grammatically correct. Comma errors, misspelled words, and run-on sentences reflect poorly on the application and the organization, making the writer seem unprofessional, rushed, and unbothered to proofread his work.

Though every writer has different revision practices, printing a hard copy of the text and running through it with a red pen can help catch mistakes. Reading the text out loud can also help the reader discover grammatically difficult sentences. Finally, spell check software can also help identify mistakes or unnecessary language, making the application easier to read and process.

Before submitting an application, the technical writing should be checked numerous times.

### *Don't copy and paste*

Being in a small town, most non-profits the United Way of Lamar County works with apply to the same grants every year. Sometimes, in the rush of the end-of-the-year season, non-

profit leaders will simply copy and paste the same information from last year's application or make no changes except for the year.

Wilson notes, "The worst thing you can do is copy and paste. Which a lot of my people do, and I think they're surprised that I actually do read it, and I'm like, you have the wrong year here, or I'll pull up last year's, and I go back and look, and I'm like, you copied and pasted. At least take the time and respect to write a new grant."

Grantors, especially regular ones, will know if the non-profit spent the extra time to draft a new grant application with updated information and new projects happening in the new year. Copying and pasting looks bad for the non-profit who does it and reduces the chances it will receive funding from the foundation applied for.

### *Know what you applied for*

When writing end-of-the-year reports back to grantors, it's important for grant writers to make sure they're reporting on the right idea. If the non-profit received the grant to build a community garden, but the end of the year report only talks about the new playground, the grantors will likely be unhappy and reach out for more information because that's not what the grant was originally for.

Before writing her final reports, Wilson retrieves the grant applications she sent out and reminds herself of what she applied for. She can then write targeted response letters about the concept the grantors actually want to hear about.

### *Make sure you're eligible*

Most grants will have a clear list of requirements near the beginning of the document. Before continuing with the grant,

writers must first make sure they're eligible to receive it. For instance, if the application is designed only for non-profits in four counties, it's good for an organization outside that area to pay attention to the eligibility requirements and not waste its own time applying or the reviewer's time on the application.

Some grants will have forms to fill out that will automatically show whether or not an organization is eligible to receive a grant.

### *Get it right the first time*

Non-profits rarely get an opportunity to fix a mistake, and there's never a second chance at a first impression. For those reasons, it's crucial that non-profits aim for precision from the beginning in all written and verbal communication. No one is perfect and mistakes will be made (especially near the beginning). Yet when it comes to writing grant applications, the writer must aim to do it correctly the first time to avoid embarrassing the non-profit or losing important grants.

### *Double check the requirements*

Finally, grant writers should always double and triple check application requirements before submission. Again, because there's rarely an option to send in additional information forgotten in the first submission, it's crucial that all the information is included the first time the documents are submitted. At the start of each grant cycle, make a list of all the requested information and double check the list against the documents to be submitted.

## **BE CONSCIOUS OF THE ARTISTRY**

Though technique, a business mind, reputation, and precision matter, grant writing remains an art form. A delicate bridge

between passionate storytelling and analytically-driven data, navigating the bridge of persuasive communication requires skill and particular attention. Listed above are numerous suggestions and strategies from non-profit leaders. However, one of the most important takeaways for beginning non-profit communicators is to remember that stories sell, and the ability to craft an excellent narrative can transform the future of a non-profit.

### *Craft excellent narratives*

An excellent narrative requires more than a personal example from a child helped by a non-profit. It requires more than a spreadsheet of names and numbers. An excellent narrative explains the entire lifecycle of the non-profit's mission and purpose, starting with the problem or need. Once the need has been established, the non-profit can weave the statistics and the stories together, harnessing the art of storytelling in a compelling way. When the stories intersect with the non-profit, powerful narratives begin to emerge, ending in a compelling call to action designed to lead the donor to action.

### *Stories sell*

Finally, stories sell. If someone approached and said, "there are 168 million child laborers aged from five to 17 around the world," it would be a sobering statistic but no action would happen. However, if a six-year-old child laborer stood before a person and asked for help, few would be able to say no. Good grant writers can make it seem as if the cause is alive and breathing in front of the reader, calling for help. By combining strong storytelling with hard data, the complicated world of grant writing can be easily navigated, leading to more empowered and passionate causes.





# Part Two: Illustrative Application

*"Knowledge is like paint. It does no  
good unless it's applied."  
- Doe Zantamata*

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By studying a prototype grant proposal written for the Boys and Girls Club of Paris, Texas, the reader can better understand by example the application of previously given strategies and techniques. The sample grant proposal serves as a model for application letters and shows how to incorporate numbers and narrative effectively for persuasive storytelling. By following along from the first step to the final, readers can see the given process demonstrated for non-profit grant writing.

# Getting Started

So it's time to write a grant proposal! You've read this entire thesis and now want to see how every component works together for success. Because of the first section, you already know what grants are and how they work, meaning you can skip to the next steps in the process: identifying a non-profit to work with, preparing materials, and gathering the elements of your application. The following pages introduce the reader to a specific organization and its journey through the grant application process.



## 01

### **CONNECT WITH A NON-PROFIT**

New communicators trying to develop grant-writing skills should connect with local non-profits and volunteer their amateur abilities for free. After having a chance to apply for more grants and build a resume of success, communicators can then use the ability to write grant proposals as a marketable skill for the workforce. Those already connected with a specific organization should make sure that information channels are open in case they need to learn more about the non-profit to apply for grants on its behalf.

## 02

### **BEGIN PREPARING TO WRITE**

As mentioned earlier, identify a critical need warranting funding, develop a strategic plan, and start searching for grants. Depending on the size of the organization and its needs, local foundations and corporations may be the best places to start. Use grant finding websites to help curate and evaluate potential applications. Make sure the non-profit meets all eligibility requirements and has all requested documents.

## 03

### **WRITE THE GRANT**

Using the elements of a grant application and the key strategies for success, start writing! Keep it brief, impactful, and focused. Focus on the need and how the non-profit would meet it using the strategic plan you formulated in the preparation stage.



## Boys and Girls Club

The Boys and Girls Club of Paris, Texas resolves to "inspire and enable all of (its) young people to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring citizens."

A subsidiary of the national organization, BGC of Paris hosts after school clubs, athletics, robotics, and more for local kids.

The Boys and Girls Club connects with kids in four main areas: service to the club and the community; education; health and fitness; and social recreation. The organization encourages kids to volunteer in their communities and take on leadership roles, perform at their best in academic settings and take learning outside the classroom, play youth sports and develop healthy habits, and spend time with other kids in a similar life situation as they.

The organization sees a massive return on investment, with kids who go through the program becoming much more likely to graduate high-school, apply to secondary education, and become leaders and volunteers in their communities.

However, the Boys and Girls Club has become so popular that it has run out of room in its building to host afterschool classes and activities for all the kids who want to

participate. In order to build a new and bigger building, the director has to run a massive capital campaign, which has left him frazzled, overwhelmed, and lacking time for any of his previous responsibilities, like writing grant proposals.

Between the capital campaign and searching for a full-time grant writer, Director Jason Macchia had a great opportunity for an amateur grant writer to volunteer to help.

Thus, when this author contacted the organization looking for practice with grant writing, she managed to establish a mutually beneficial partnership for the interim left before the new hire arrived.

In particular, the Boys and Girls Club had no funding to replace worn-out football safety equipment, a need the non-profit asked her to write about.







## The Need

The Boys and Girls Club has its own youth football team to promote its health and fitness initiatives. In 2014, they even went to the Super Bowl! The Club prioritizes football because of the numerous health and athletic benefits it gives to the students who play. It also fosters skills in teamwork, leadership, discipline, and resilience—core character building activities the Club wants to encourage. Because football equipment wears out over time and protection is especially important in contact sports, the Club retires 12 safety helmets and knee pads each year. However, supply shortages have prevented the Club from buying new equipment to replace the worn-out gear for the past two years, making it necessary for them to buy 24 new sets of gear, just to maintain the football team at its current size of 100 participants. If the program continues to grow without funding to replace the equipment, the Club will have to shrink the team significantly - threatening its long-term survival. Without the game, the kids lose a plethora of health and character-building benefits.

Here, the Club has identified an imminent need to solve. It must have equipment to preserve its football program. It needs funding to buy equipment. Situations like these are perfect for grants because they are specific and targeted. Now that the Club has identified its need, it can begin preparing for the application process.

# Preparation

Luckily, Director Macchia has written this grant successfully before and discovered that an organization called the Denver Pyle's Children's Charities has funded the cost of the equipment in previous years. Instead of reaching out to several other organizations and scouring online forums for niche grant requests, his grant writer can contact the previous organization first to see if it will fund the request again this year.

The need doesn't require a specific plan beyond equipment provision, simplifying the process. The Club meets Denver Pyle's eligibility requirements and is within the deadline to apply. With all financial information already prepared, the writer can move forward.

# Gathering the Elements

Before writing, gather the elements of the grant. The introduction, background, and summary would include information about the importance of football as a sport, the need for it in the community, and why the Club has its own team. After establishing the introductory information, the writer includes the needs assessment, which the non-profit already provided. The Club's goals are to maintain the size of its football team despite supply shortages because of the numerous benefits it offers children. After funds are secured, it will purchase the safety gear immediately, which will provide them another year of football. The director provided some budget information in his email. This grant application doesn't have need for significant evaluation or other complicated steps.

# Identify Key Strategies

The writer should also choose some key strategies to use. Keeping the application brief and business-oriented builds trust and saves time for Denver Pyle's. Because the Club has secured this grant before, it has a pre-existing relationship and reputation with the organization. Harnessing its connection in the application can remind the organizations about the mutual trust already built. Finally, in an application a page long, every word must contribute to an overarching narrative and compelling storyline. In this case, football improves health. Without safety gear, the Club loses its team and health decreases. With these strategies equipped, the writing process can begin.

Use the name of the person who will receive the application.

Keep the application concise. Write no more than one or two pages.

Explain why the issue matters. Why should your reader care? What benefits do your actions create?

Explain how your organization solves a related community need.

Explain the specific need you want funding for. Concisely explain the problem and why it is a problem.

Highlight, bold, or italicize the important information. Unless formatting requirements give other instructions, bolded text draws attention to the most pressing details.

Give specific numbers when possible and why those numbers were picked.

Provide a budget and other important information from your strategic plan. Don't try to hide or obscure data.

Show gratitude. In this case, the organization has previously given the BGC a grant for equipment. Reminding the donor of prior support is a great way of establishing continued connections.

Dear Treasurer Courtney Wiles:

As you know, youth sports foster skills in teamwork, discipline, and resilience while providing them an opportunity to connect with their peers. Football, specifically, provides numerous health benefits, primarily by amplifying speed, strength, stamina, and cardiovascular health.

Recognizing the benefit of sports among our targeted youth, the Boys and Girls Club of Paris, Texas enabled 100 students to play competitive football across four teams last year. Due to its popularity among students, we expect the program to continue to grow.

However, to maintain the safety and wellbeing of students, the Boys and Girls Club must retire worn-out and cracked helmets and shoulder pads every ten years. Safety gear is particularly important for high-impact sports like football, and the game cannot be played without it.

Unfortunately, supply shortages have prevented us from buying new equipment, placing us two years behind. We now **need 24 new helmets and shoulder pads just to sustain 100 participants.**

**Each helmet costs \$189.00. Shoulder pads cost \$69.99. Before tax, the estimated cost will be approximately \$6,216.00.** I will attach the vendor's quote once it has been updated.

Thank you for considering funding new gear for our football program. Your past support of helmets, pads, face shields, and gym heaters has let us continue offering this sport to the many youths interested in pursuing it. If you would like any additional information, feel free to let me know. We are looking forward to a continued relationship with Denver Pyle's Children's Charities!

Thank you again,

Jason Macchia

Use the executive director's signature to establish authority and a more significant connection. All ghostwritten documents should be run by the director before submission.

# Analysis

## *It doesn't have to be difficult*

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Grant writing doesn't have to be a difficult and intimidating process. Though some applications for state and federal funds require significantly more time, energy, and attention to detail than the one for Denver Pyle's Children's Charities, a lot of grants are as simple as a one-page letter containing each of the essential elements. Think back to Wilson's story of receiving a grant request for immediate funding that was three paragraphs long. It was written simply but effectively. She trusted the organization's leadership, so she immediately sent it on to her board and had its funding approved the same day.

The Club's grant request was effective for the same reasons. Short, succinct, and compelling, it conveyed all of the relevant details and managed to ask for help in a convincing way. Though it didn't require extensive financial reporting and monitoring, it still had the important numbers it needed.

A lot of times, the concept of grant writing can seem like an overwhelming, foreign, and massive endeavor. However, taking time to go through the process step by step—as with the grant written for the Boys and Girls Club—gives the writer a compass through the murky waters of non-profit funding.





# Part Three: Implications of Grant Writing

*"The short form allows evocation,  
suggestion, implication. Its potency  
often lies in what it does not say."  
- Isabelle Carmody*

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Initially, grant writing for non-profits seems like a niche skill, useful only for communicators entering the world of philanthropy. However, further exploration reveals a tremendous array of benefits the skill can provide for communicators, the strategic communication profession, and the communities grant writers live and work in. The achievable good possible from grant writing provides a great deal of perspective for strategic communicators, particularly those entering the field directly from college.

# Implications

Specifically, grant writing offers implications for individuals, the public relations and advertising professions, and the local communities grant writers work within. Named the most important skill for non-profit strategic communicators to possess, the ability to write grants is highly coveted and promises a rewarding career. Researching the best strategies of grant writing has tremendous potential for developing writing skills, perfecting the art of persuasive communication, and accomplishing long-term good.



## 01 FOR THE COMMUNICATOR

A well-written grant application targets the heart of persuasive writing. Strategic communicators built a lifetime career around the art of persuasion. Whether it's an advertiser convincing a buyer to make a large purchase with strong storytelling or a public relations professional persuading the public to have strong value with the company, communicators rely on persuasion for every part of their career. Learning how to write effective grant applications from the analyzed strategies teaches communicators how to become even better in their roles—whether or not they work for a non-profit.

## 02 FOR THE PROFESSION

Since its beginnings with P.T. Barnum and Buffalo Bill's use of the press agency model of public relations, the industry has faced its own image crisis. Though the Public Relations Society of America releases ethical guidelines and advertisers have begun focusing on corporate social responsibility efforts, the world continues to distrust the profession. Using persuasion to raise funds for a good cause can help restore trust in the profession and improve its national image.

## 03 FOR THE COMMUNITY

Finally, writing strong grant applications has numerous implications for the local communities writers live in. Bringing money from other areas of the country to the city helps everyone in that community thrive and become more likely to achieve a higher quality of life.

# For the Communicator

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## *The most important skill*

From interviews conducted with nineteen non-profit leaders, grant writing is the most important skill a potential non-profit communicator can learn. For non-profits, grant writing is the source of many funding and initiatives. Without grants, the non-profit wouldn't be able to achieve its mission or help its shareholders. On average, grants compose about 10% of a non-profit's budget, a significant portion (CITE). Because strong grant writing is such an important and covetable skill, non-profit communicators must possess it before applying to jobs with significant communication components. Grants fund special projects, enable innovation, and create paths to enrich the local community.

## *The art of persuasion*

Even for communicators who don't begin a career in non-profits, learning how to write grants offers powerful growth for persuasive writing. As mentioned earlier, persuasion is the heart of all strategic communication. A public relations professional who can't persuade someone to believe in her brand is useless. An advertiser who can't convince someone to buy a product, service, or idea has failed. Learning how to write compelling grants according to the strategies given earlier teaches professionals how to communicate clearly, concisely, and convincingly.

Strategic communication relies on the blend between art and practicality. The best campaigns, like British Airways #lookup campaign or the Quebec government's anti-jaywalking campaign, combine art and science to create beautiful pieces of media that provoke and inspire cultural discourse. So too does grant writing teach communicators to combine narrative and numbers both within the organization and beyond it.

## *The generosity over purchase challenge*

As Wilson mentioned, writers must remember that all grant applications are a professional platform to beg for money. Writing fundraising campaigns and persuasive appeals for grant applications poses a significant challenge for communicators. Where most advertising campaigns can center the value a product, service, or idea gives to the target audience, the most compelling factor of non-profits is the work it does for people other than the funder. Asking people to donate to a cause without any potential personal gain represents a unique communication challenge. Practicing with this challenge can strengthen a writer's skills and make them more capable in their roles, regardless of their business sector.

## *Improving writing skills*

Acting on the strategies and techniques presented earlier in the research analysis teaches professionals how to improve their written communication. Effective communicators can keep reports to a page, highlight important information simply, and pitch an idea in five words or less. Applying business practices, relationship development, and precision-oriented technique can help all forms of writing achieve their strategic intents.



### *Comprehensive communication*

Further, learning to write grants gives all communicators an opportunity to expand their perspectives. In a world increasingly reliant on social media advertising and digital catchlines for new products and services, writing for non-profits offers a nice change of pace for even experienced communicators. Learning how to write grants gives professionals another opportunity to hone their skills broadly, engaging multiple disciplines in their evolution as a strategic communicator.

### *Beyond non-profits*

Finally, learning how to write non-profit grants helps communicators write other kinds of grants as well. Though grants for original research and medical exploration differ significantly and require other forms of reporting and ethics analysis, the fundamental principles behind the strategies given in this thesis have many shared applications. A good writer can be recognized anywhere, and someone who keeps attention to details, storytelling, and problem solving will thrive in all forms of persuasive writing.

### *Summary*

Ultimately, grant writing offers tremendous benefits for professional communicators exploring the different options available to them in the world of non-profits and communications. Beyond improving their natural writing and communication skills, it teaches them the art of persuasive writing and how to develop a new skillset. It provides a unique challenge for even experienced communicators due to the difficulty and alternative benefits. Most of all, grant writing is a core necessity all people interested in a career in the non-profit world should add to their toolboxes.



# For the Profession

## *Public relations for public relations*

Public relations has had an image crisis since the 1800s, when P.T. Barnum created the industry. Using trickery, falsehoods, stunts, and other elaborate advertising techniques, he created the PR model of press agentry. Public relations and advertising has since been associated with its creator as a form of deceit, manipulation, and trickery. However, in a modern world transitioning to a two-way symmetrical model, PR and advertising have cleaned up their act and focused their attentions on truthful communication. Corporate social responsibility has become a necessity for every organization, not just non-profits. Yet learning to write grants for non-profits can offer a public relations boost to the profession, showing outsiders that communication is a skillset that can accomplish and empower great good in service to local communities.

## *Public relations for public relations*

Non-profit communicators have the unique position to see tremendous good come from the work they do. For instance, a writer might create a grant application for a miniature food bank program. If the grant is received, they can start the program and know that the people who now can eat dinner have been directly benefitted by the work the writer did. This direct tie to good outcomes can create powerful leaders in communication, those who want to see the greatest good occur from

every piece of created work. Communication leaders can then show other advertisers how to produce the greatest good from their work as well. Communication professional Dr. William Greenhill states, "At the end of every campaign, the world should be a better place. If it isn't, you failed." The direct philanthropic focus of grant writing can remind the PR and advertising professions of their ultimate purpose and direction.

## *PRSA code of ethics*

The PRSA ethics guide serves as the leading ethical guideline for the strategic communication profession. It champions six key values: advocacy, honesty, expertise, independence, loyalty, and fairness. From these values, creatives should draw all behaviors. Advocacy, the central purpose for non-profit grant writing, leads the list. Learning to write grants teaches these values as a necessity for all organizations and communication. Every form of communication for a non-profit ultimately comes down to advocacy. Not only is the organization advocating itself, it is advocating a need that must be met. Whether the need is for football safety gear or new bedding for a homeless shelter, the grant writer must champion and advocate for that need.



# For the Community

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## *Tangible good*

Well-written grants provide the community with tangible and measurable benefits. When working with foundations or corporations headquartered in other counties or states, effective grant writing brings funding to areas in need. This process maximizes the region's funds while providing the greatest good to the people living nearby. For local foundations and corporations, the process provides a streamlined, effective, and need-based way for people seeking to do local good to give back to their own communities. Further, grant writing helps meet immediate issues, because it typically relies on project-based aid, like building a community garden or providing safety gear to athletes. The good it accomplishes is unique and measurable, a necessary feature for every communication campaign.

## *Comparable benefit*

Though corporations enrich communities and provide employment opportunities for many of its members, communicators must evaluate the result of their efforts for the region. When evaluating the greatest good, a campaign that sells a lot of Louis Vucci bags may not produce as much good for the world as a persuasive application to fund a community garden in a food desert. Grant writing can therefore help provide a greater path and way to give back to local communities.

## *Restoring trust in non-profits*

Building relationships and connections with community shareholders also helps restore trust to the non-profit world. A profession often damaged by financial scandals across the world, grant writing can show local investors that the non-profit is trustworthy and genuinely wants to do the most good for its community.

## *Making dreams possible*

Again, grant writing brings money and aid into the community and streamlines generosity towards pressing needs. When an individual's fundamental human needs are met, it enables them to strive forward and help others. Often, the aid of non-profits can help individuals experiencing homelessness find a place to survive. As in the example of photographer Troy Phoenix, ensuring survival then gives the individual a platform to grow and contribute to the community. Phoenix, for instance, became homeless and was housed by the Horizon House shelter in Paris, TX. To thank the community for its generosity to him, he began taking high-quality photography of residents for free. In the process, he created a portfolio for his photography business and managed to give back to the community. That was possible thanks to Horizon House, a non-profit funded almost entirely by grants.

## *Duty to the community*

Finally, deontological ethics argues that all who have the ability to help someone should do so. When used to enact and evoke change, effective communication can become one of the most powerful tools to enact change. Advocating for a cause draws attention and funding to it, better enabling it to reach its goals and work with the people it serves.



## Conclusion

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Examining the best practices of grant writing led to many conclusions. From studying the structure of an effective application to curating effective strategies and learning the importance of strong storytelling, strategic communicators can write successful grant applications. Winning these grants will empower and enable community non-profits, allowing tremendous good to happen in the communities the writer lives within.

Grant writing must center more than a budget or an interesting story. Rather, it must blend the pathos and logos of its organization to create effective persuasion and ultimate good. Combining numbers and narrative gives grant writers a leg up over the competition, equipping them to deeply enrich and benefit the organizations they write for.

Even one person learning to write in a business-like, relationally motivated, and precise manner can transform individuals, the PR profession, and local communities. In the hands of a talented communicator, grant writing becomes a tool capable of facilitating great degrees of good.

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# Appendix A: Participants

## **FULL INTERVIEWS:**

- Dede Fasken, RAM Foundation
- Jason Macchia, Boys and Girls Club
- Jenny Wilson, United Way of Lamar County

## **PARTIAL INTERVIEWS:**

- Sheena Record, ATCOG/Paris Metro
- Rebecca Peavy, Children's Advocacy Center
- Allan Hubbard, Downtown Food Pantry
- Judy Martin, Habitat for Humanity
- Bob Hundley, Lamar County Child Welfare Board
- Shelly Braziel, Meals on Wheels and Horizon House
- Kelly Hamill, RSVP
- Majors Guy and Dolores Watts, The Salvation Army
- Dr. Ron Pitcock, Texas Christian University
- Sharon Eubanks, CASA
- Taylor Sandoval, Tailored Rides
- Derald Bulls and co., City Square
- Guille Seigler, Red River Valley Baptist Association

# Appendix B: Strategies

## KEY STRATEGIES (ABBREVIATED):

- **Let's Get Down to Business**
  - Treat it Like a Business
    - Give them what they want
    - Accurate financials
    - Strategic planning
    - Contingency funding
  - Tracking
    - Be transparent with funding sources
    - Track important documents like meeting minutes or financials
    - Keep track of reporting documents and each expense
    - Be aware of grant requirements
  - Research
    - Study other grant applications
    - Conduct research
    - Apply to a variety of grants
  - Build the Skill
    - Start small and stay local
    - Understand your target audience
    - Get used to asking for money
    - Get some wins under your belt
- **Reputation Matters**
  - Build Rapport
    - Stay in contact
    - Send pictures
    - Follow up timely and appropriately
  - Cooperate with Others
    - Don't duplicate services
    - Don't make false claims
  - Maintain Strong Character
    - Be knowledgeable
    - Be honest
    - Be trustworthy
    - Stay transparent
    - Work hard
    - Stay humble
    - Show gratitude

# Appendix B: Strategies

- **Precision at all Costs**

- Attention to Detail
  - Be concise
  - Dot your "i's" and cross your "t's"
  - Don't copy and paste
  - Know what you applied for
  - Make sure you're eligible
  - Get it right the first time
  - Double check the requirements
- Be Conscious of the Artistry
  - Craft excellent narratives
  - Stories sell



# Appendix C: Research Questions

- What are the terms of a grant? What kinds of grants exist? How does someone find grants to apply for? What should grants be used for? Are there certain projects or financial needs that are more likely to receive grants?
- Why are grants important for non-profits? Do certain types of non-profits rely on them more than others?
- How do non-profit leaders apply for and win grants? Are there commonalities in successful applications?
- What techniques lead to successful grant applications? Which are not successful?
- What does the long-term grant recipient process look like?
- How can compiled techniques be best applied in a real-world context?
- How do grant applications vary among non-profits of similar types? Different types? How is it the same?

# Appendix D: Conversation

Though many grant-writing resources do exist, most target health professionals and academics and can be expensive. Few provide niche, understandable information for non-profit leaders, especially in an affordable capacity. Overworked and underpaid, few non-profit leaders have the time, energy, or money to read or buy a long research book to learn how to improve their grant writing skills. By studying the current literature, I will create a unique “guide to grant-writing” that non-profit leaders can understand easily and use speedily. I will also simplify the knowledge from numerous resources into one document and attempt to make it interesting to read.

Grant-writing is one of the most important skills a non-profit communicator can develop, driving a significant portion of funding, especially in rural areas. As a May graduate planning to enter non-profit communications, learning how to win grants will be a critical skill development and teach me how to better enrich the organizations I work for. My research will also provide non-profit leaders opportunities to learn from each other and together find and implement better grant-writing practices.