

LOS ANGELES REGIONAL



Fighting Hunger. Giving Hope.

# Introduction to Grant Writing

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Los Angeles Regional Food Bank

All Agencies Conference

September 2022

# Presenter: Denise Polka, Grants Manager

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- My name is Denise Polka and I'm the Grants Manager at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. I've been in this role for over three years, and writing grants for ten years.
- My day is spent writing grant proposals and reports, responding to questions and requests from funders, communicating internally to gather information from staff across the organization, researching funders, and managing all of the details related to grants, which we track in a database called Raiser's Edge.
- In my free time, I love to read, watch movies, and go to art shows and live music.





# Overview of Today's Session

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- Introductions
- Terminology
- Steps in Applying for Grant Funding
- Sections of a Grant Proposal

# Grant Terminology

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**LOI (Letter of Inquiry or Letter of Intent):** A brief letter outlining an organization's funding request. Some grantmakers require an LOI as a first step before they will accept a full grant proposal.

**RFP (Request for Proposals):** A funder may release an RFP to solicit grant applications to address a specific issue. Philanthropy News Digest is a good source for RFPs.

**Common Grant Types** Note: This terminology is also used to describe **all types of donations** – not just grants.

- **General Operating/Unrestricted:** Unrestricted/Operating grants fund the ongoing expenses of the organization.
- **Programmatic:** In contrast with general operating grants, program grants support specific programs. A program grant is considered **Restricted**, meaning the funder has designated it for a specific purpose.
- **Capacity Building:** These help organizations expand an existing program or launch a new one. Capacity grants may fund the purchase of equipment, the hiring of new personnel, building renovations or other concrete steps that expand services.
- **Research:** Typically found in academia and research-oriented nonprofits.
- **In-kind:** Provide non-monetary help, such as equipment, property, or other tangible donations.



# Steps in Applying for Grant Funding

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These steps are completed by an organization seeking a grant:

1. **Identify a need.** This is a problem in the community – not in your organization.
2. **Develop a plan** for addressing that need, including goals, activities, resources involved (such as personnel and equipment) and costs.
3. **Research and identify grantmakers** that are aligned with your organization.
4. **Funder relationships are key.**



5. **Write and submit a grant proposal or LOI, depending on instructions.**

6. **If funded, immediately thank the grantmaker.**

7. **Execute the grant activities.**

8. **Submit a mid-year progress report and a final report.** Always follow the funder's guidelines.

After reporting, repeat beginning with step four.

# What Goes into a Grant Proposal?

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The exact sections of a grant proposal vary by funder. Be sure to follow their instructions. Common grant proposal sections are:

1. **Cover Letter**
2. **Introduction and Organization Description**
3. **Statement of Need**
4. **Program Description, Goals and Key Personnel**
5. **Evaluation**
6. **Sustainability Plan**
7. **Conclusion**
8. **Budget and Attachments**





# Cover Letter

- A **Cover Letter** provides a big-picture view of your grant proposal. Be sure to include:
  - The request amount
  - The purpose of the request
  - A brief snapshot of the need
- Tip: Write the cover letter last after writing the proposal. This will make it easier to summarize.



# Introduction

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**Introduction:** The first paragraph of a grant proposal offers a brief summary of the request. The first sentence of the proposal should include:

- Your organization name
- The request amount
- The purpose of the request

Example: The XYZ organization respectfully requests a \$100,000 grant from The Foundation Name for the *Senior Dinner Program*, which provides nutritious prepared meals to food insecure seniors in Los Angeles County.



# Organization Description

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**Organization Description:** This section provides a high-level overview of your organization, including:

- Mission statement
- Brief history, including year founded
- Primary activities, programs and services
- Target population served, including geographic area



# Statement of Need

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**Statement of Need:** This is the problem statement. Describe the need with a sense of urgency.

- Include quantifiable data, such as statistics, to help describe and justify the need.
- Explain why this is important. What are the repercussions of this problem?
- Remember: The need is a problem in the community – not in your organization.

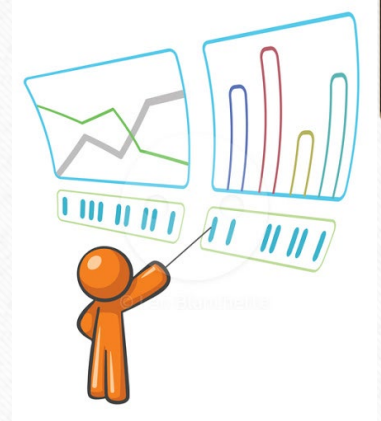


# Including Data in a Need Statement

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Compare these two examples. Which is more powerful and convincing?

1. “Hunger is widespread in our community.”
2. “Hunger is widespread in our community: One in five people in Los Angeles County are food insecure.”



# Program Description and Goals

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**Program Description:** This section describes the program in detail. What are the **specific activities** you will undertake to **address the need** you identified?

**Program Goals:** Must be measurable. Funders look for **SMART** goals:

- **Specific:** Well-defined, clear, and unambiguous
- **Measurable:** Quantifiable
- **Achievable:** Does your organization have the resources needed to achieve this goal?
- **Realistic:** Within reach – a reasonable goal for the time period.
- **Timely:** With a clearly defined timeline, including a start and end date.





# SMART Goals

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Compare these two examples:

1. “With your generous support, we will reduce hunger.”
2. “With your generous support, in calendar year 2022 the Food Bank will distribute 134 million pounds of food to individuals and families facing hunger in Los Angeles County.”



# Evaluation, Key Personnel and Sustainability

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**Evaluation:** How will you measure the program's success? The answer needs to be specific and quantifiable. Reference the SMART goals.

- Describe 1) What information you will collect and 2) How you will collect it.

**Key Personnel:** Provide short bios highlighting the experience of organization leaders and/or the staff who will be implementing the program.

**Sustainability:** How will you sustain the program beyond this grant funding? Show that you have other donors and a plan to sustain funding.



# Conclusion and Attachments

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The **Conclusion** restates the request.

- Convey a sense of urgency.
- Restate the ask amount.
- If the funder has donated previously, this is a good place to thank them for their past support.

**Attachments:** These are additional supplemental documents submitted with your proposal. The requirements vary by funder. Common attachments include:

- IRS Determination Letter/ 501 (c )(3) Letter
- Organization Budget
- Board of Directors List
- Audited Financial Statements

# Budget

- The funder may have a specific budget form. Always follow the guidelines and use the required format.
- Budgets may show income and expenses for the entire program, or simply how the grant will be spent.
- Typically a budget is limited to one page.
- The budget **must be consistent** with the proposal.





# Grant Writing Tips

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- Specificity is essential.
- Use data.
- Avoid jargon.
- Be concise.



# Questions and Contact Information

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