

Grantwriting 101

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"There is no grantsmanship that will turn a bad idea into a good one, but there are many ways to disguise a good idea." - Norm Braverman, NIH



What keeps us from applying
for grants?

Did You Know...

- only 1 proposal in 5 is turned down because the idea wasn't good enough
- A rejected proposal is worth about \$10,000 of free advice
- the success rate is higher for proposals turned in a second time
- the success rate on a third submission is almost 1:1

Not Enough Time

Writing is like an Olympic event

- needs constant practice.
- Write everyday at a regular time in the same place.
20 minutes
- If you don't sit there every day, the day that it would have come -- well, you won't be there.

The grant process is never wasted

- Can't get a grant unless you write one
- Professionally fulfilling
- Requires you to focus your thoughts
- Armed with reviewers comments the second proposal is always stronger

Recycle your Rejected Proposal

Success means having one in three grants funded

- A rejected proposal does not always mean the idea was rejected
- Obtain reviewer comments
- Call the program officer
- Rewrite, revise, resubmit

Keys to Success

Innovation and Creativity is important

Looking for new solutions to old problems

How do you create creativity?

Calling the Program Officer is one of the most important elements

85% of all successful grant seekers have had contact with the program officer

11 Reasons Why Proposals Fail

- Deadline not met
- Guidelines not followed
- Nothing intriguing
- Did not meet priorities
- Not complete
- Poor background or demonstration of need
- Appeared beyond capacity of municipality
- Implementation plan weak
- Unrealistic budget
- Cost greater than benefit
- Poorly written

5 Tips for Successful Grantwriting

- Create an interesting, innovative idea to attract funding
- Work as a team; seek feedback
- Contact the funding program for feedback and to establish a relationship
- Create a checklist (if one is not already included in the funding program materials)
- Know the players and the process

Developing your ideas

- Commit your ideas to paper
- Thoroughly describe your program
- Create a concept paper
- State the goals and objectives of your program
- Construct a timeline
- Estimate costs for staff, materials, and equipment
- Plan for an evaluation of your program
- Write job descriptions for project staff

Is it the Right Grant?

Federal/State

- Are you eligible?
- Can you match?
- How many funded?
- How much money/Range?
- Can you meet guidelines?
- Who do they fund?
- Type of project?
- Interest, but no grants

Geographic Spread

You have to Play by the Rules

GET the guidelines

READ the guidelines

FOLLOW the guidelines

Appropriate Writing Style

- Write to the funding source
- Write in the correct language of the field
 - but no unnecessary jargon
- **Never** write in 1st person
- Clarity
- 5 W's
- Write to inform
 - Don't use language that is biased
- Write to persuade
 - data from reputable source
 - use current data
 - establish credibility
 - No unsubstantiated opinions

Parts of a Grant Application

- **Cover Page**
- **Table of Contents**
- Abstract/Summary
- Demonstrating Need
- Goals and Objectives
- Quality of Key Personnel
- Measure of Success
- **Budget & Narrative**
- Staff/consultant backgrounds
- Supporting Documents
- **Forms, Certifications and Assurances**

The Title

The title is important

It should convey what the project is about.
The title is your 'elevator speech'

No!: Local Waterfront Revitalization in the village of Littleville

Yes!: Creating a creekside Live/Work/Play district in downtown Littleville

Abstract/Summary

- Should be able to stand alone
 - it may be all the reviewers read
- Publishable quality
- Clear, concise, single space
- Avoid 1st person
- Do not refer to proposal in the abstract
- Cover all key elements in order

Words that paint a picture

“Better, greener stormwater practices will improve this community.”

“Closed businesses, damaged roads, water and mud in homes are all regular spring occurrences in the Town of East Nowhere.”

Writing in Plain English

- Grant Writing is a form of technical writing
- Put sentences in logical sequence
- Use action verbs
- Use lists when you have several items
- Use the active voice
 - avoid “to be”
 - subject first
- Avoid noun strings
- Go on a “which” hunt
- Avoid openers with There is, There are, and It is - try”ing”

A Readable Style

- Scannability
- Make sure that all pages are not just solid text
- Use bulleted items
- Use graphics where appropriate
- Use headings and subheadings, bold and underline
- Look at each introductory sentence of a paragraph, it is the most important part, it is all they may read
- Use a readable type face
- Block justify

Editing your Grant

- After you have finished your draft:
 - set it aside for a day
 - revise
- Have someone else read it without taking notes
- Have them tell you what your project is about
- Edit for clarity and conciseness

Where to Look

Federal grants

- www.grants.gov

NYS grants

- Check the specific state government agency
- CFA: <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/>

Foundation grants

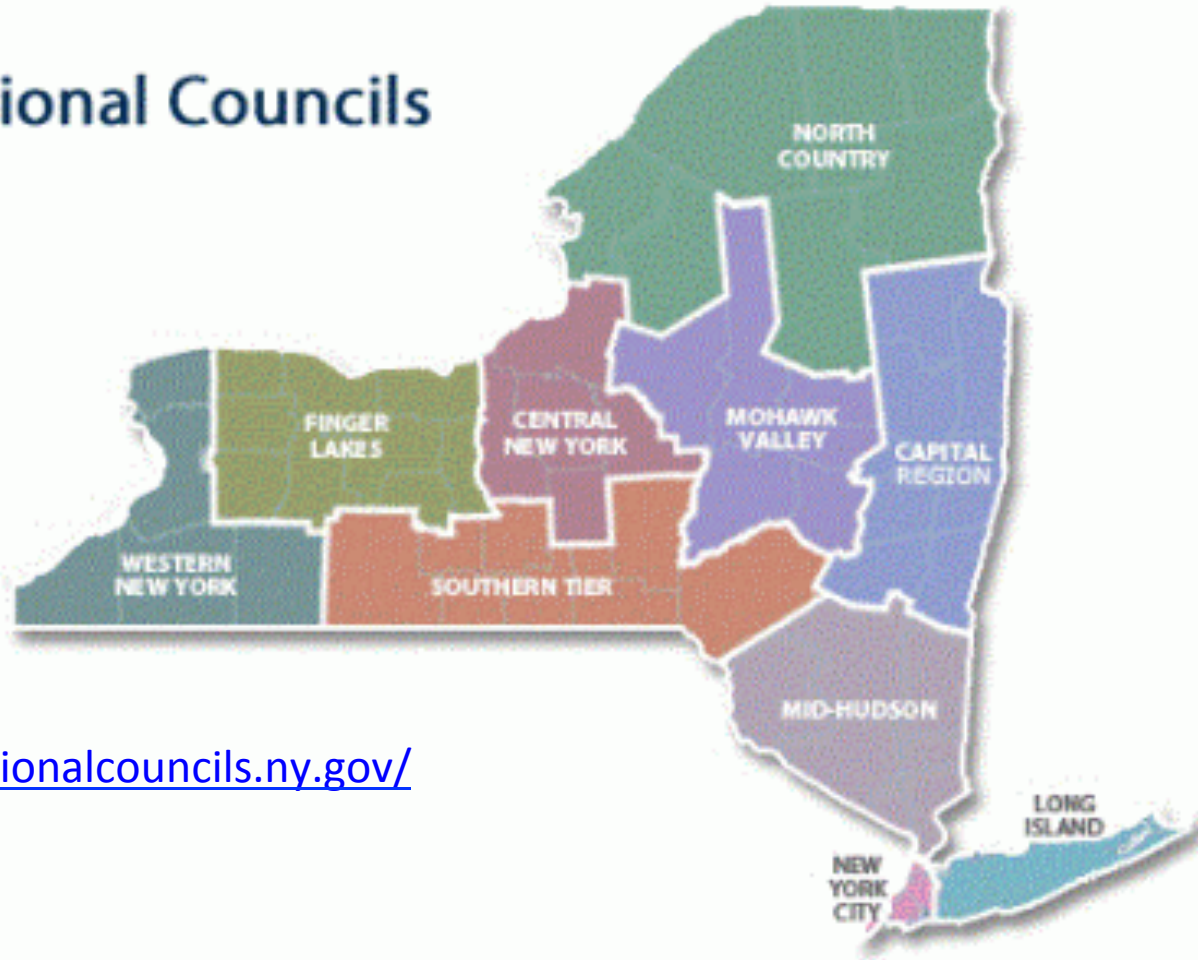
- The Foundation Center
- GrantStation
- Fundbook

Some popular funding programs

- USDA Rural Development
 - Water/wastewater
 - Community Facilities
 - Distance Learning Telemedicine
 - Housing Loans/grants
- Community Development Block Grant
- NYS DOS
 - Local Government Efficiency
 - Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Northern Border Regional Development
- NYSERDA
- NYS Dept. of Envi. Conservation
 - WQIP
- NYS Ag/Markets
 - Ag district planning grants
- NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation
 - water/wastewater
 - GIGP

NYS Regional Economic Development Councils

Regional Councils



<http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/>

We're here to help...

- Khris Dodson

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