



# GRANT WRITING GUIDE

Overview of the Grant Writing Process

Bristol Bay Native Association

P.O. Box 310

Dillingham, Alaska 99576

(907) 842-5257

[www.bbna.com](http://www.bbna.com)

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## WHAT IS A GRANT?

This guidebook is an overview on how to write a “proposal” to get a grant. Grant-makers give grants to solve problems; our proposal must convince them that we have the capacity to solve the same problem in our community that the grant-maker is willing fund.

Definition: grant (noun) “something granted, as a privilege or right, a sum of money, or a tract of land.” (Dictionary.com, © Random House, Inc. 2013)

Wikipedia: “Grants are non-repayable funds disbursed by one party (grant-makers), often a government department, corporation, foundation or trust, to a recipient, often (but not always) a nonprofit entity, educational institution, business or an individual. In order to receive a grant, some form of "Grant Writing" often referred to as either a proposal or an application is usually required.” (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grant\_(money))

## WHOSE MONEY IS IT?

It is their money, so they make rules. You must comply with the grant-makers’ requirements for proposals, submission, and grant management.

- ❖ Follow all their requirements.
- ❖ Use grant funds for the purpose they were granted.
- ❖ Keep records and report on expenditures and progress throughout the grant.
- ❖ Acknowledge the grant-maker on finished products.

*You and your organization get recognition for doing the work . . .*

*The grant-maker is acknowledged for funding it.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The goal of this guide is to be an overview, not a thorough study of grant writing. This overview will contain helpful examples, resources, and links you can use for more in depth self-study.

Many people are intimidated by grant writing, but if you like writing, can follow directions, and enjoy researching and paying attention to detail, it will be straight-forward process for you. Being well-organized helps to keep track of all the important details. Submitting a proposal that is missing important elements hurts your chances of being funded. Working step-by-step and prioritizing tasks, can help keep you from becoming overwhelmed.

Your “tools of the trade” in grant writing is **information**. Even before you start looking for funds you can begin gathering standard information that you can cut-n-paste into numerous proposals. You will need to understand your organization’s mission and activities; your community’s profile and demographics; and your potential partnering programs and organizations. If you have a passion to help your community, and you like pulling up your sleeves and getting work done, you will enjoy grant writing.

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

### IDENTIFY A NEED - DEVELOP A SOLUTION

Work with your supervisors, co-workers, and community leaders using public meetings, surveys, and focus groups to identify a need or problem. Then check to see if it is mentioned in a Community Plan (like a local or regional Comprehensive Plan or Strategic Plan). If your “need” is identified in a plan, it has already received the support you need to move forward on the project. It will also have more chances of success in a shorter amount of time.

The solution you and your partners come up with is your project. Brainstorming sessions can help to identify innovative ways to approach persistent problems to achieve results.

### SHOULD YOU PURSUE THE PROJECT?

- ✓ Is the project identified as a priority in a local or regional Plan?
- ✓ Do you have staff with the expertise and motivation to carry out the project?
- ✓ Does it have organizational support (Board or Council)?
- ✓ Do you have partnerships that can help ensure a successful project?
- ✓ If this project will become an ongoing program, how will you fund the project when the initial grant is gone?

*Get input  
from others*

*Questions  
to ask  
yourself*

## PREPARE TO APPLY

### REGISTER

If you will be going after Federal grants, your organization needs to be registered in [Grants.gov](#), [DUNS](#), and [SAMS](#). Once they are registered, you need to register yourself on [Grants.gov](#), ask your organization's E-Biz POC (Point of Contact) for approval. Once approved you will be able to submit grants on behalf of your organization or work with an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). For some federal grants you will also need to register in agency grant management systems like [FedConnect](#), [Grants Online](#) or [GMS](#), when they are required (see solicitation or award for instructions on registering). It takes time and an internet connection to register – start early!

*Register  
early*

### FIND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Online is the best place to search for funding opportunities. Start by searching at sites like [Grants.gov](#) for federal grants or [GuideStar](#) for private funds. You can also sign up for email notifications from [State of Alaska Public Notices](#), [Grant Siren](#), [RAC Online](#), [The Trust E-Newsletter](#), [Senator Begich's Newsletter](#), or [BBEDC's eNewsletter](#). You can go directly to grant-maker websites to learn about their grants and timing of their announcements. There are services you can purchase such as [Grant Station](#) or [CD Publications](#). Free online services can give you all the information you need, so don't feel compelled to purchase a service unless they are providing you with other value.

*Free online  
resources*

### REVIEW THE SOLICITATION

Once you have found a potential funding source, download and study the solicitation. Other names for solicitations are **RFP** (Request for Proposals), **NOFA** (Notice of Funding Announcement), and **FFO** (Federal Funding Opportunity). The solicitation is your guide to a successful proposal. Follow it closely. On your first look, find and understand:

- ✓ **Eligibility Requirements** (Is your organization eligible to apply?)
- ✓ **Funding Levels** (How much will it fund?)
- ✓ **Matching Requirements** (Cash? In-Kind? Where will you get it?)
- ✓ **Deadlines** (Is there enough time to complete a proposal before the deadline?)

*Links can  
be found at  
the end of  
this guide*

*Review the solicitation closely*

*Start early to get support*

*Build Partnerships*

*Create a checklist*

*Give high scoring sections extra attention*

## PLAN AHEAD FOR TIME CONSUMING ELEMENTS

If the grant looks like a good fit, begin collecting background data and information, and sketching out projected expenses. Some solicitations require specific technical data, mapping, and written agreements that will take extra time. Check the grant requirements for items that will take you extra time:

- ✓ **Obtaining Resolutions**
- ✓ **Forming Partnerships**
- ✓ **Collecting Letters of Support**
- ✓ **Collecting Specific Data**
- ✓ **Entering in to Memorandums of Agreement/Understanding (MOAs or MOUs)**

Identify people and stakeholders in your organization, community, and other organizations to talk to for ideas and support. Develop those partnerships that can help with portions of the project that you might not be able to do alone. Include contacts with possible partners that can provide in-kind and cash matching funds, if required.

Plan to get support early to avoid scheduling trouble with meeting dates. Getting resolutions and letters of support can mean waiting for the boards’/councils’ next meeting date. Getting requests out early can save you from missing the meeting date.

Build a foundation for the project with the background information you collect from partners and the community. There will be more on data collection later under the **Statement of Need** section of this guide.

## ORGANIZE YOUR WORK

Organizing and planning your work from the beginning will help you keep track of the many requirements and elements of your proposal.

- ✓ Create a checklist or outline directly from the proposal scoring criteria of the solicitation.
- ✓ Reference page limits in your section headings, and strictly comply with page limits. Reviewers will not read pages beyond the page limit.
- ✓ Give high scoring elements extra attention to achieve a higher score.
- ✓ Name your sections using the terminology in the solicitation so reviewers can find them easily.
- ✓ Set up electronic and physical files to help keep everything organized.
- ✓ Name electronic files in a way that allows you to find them easily.
- ✓ Try using the “working order” in the following section of this guide to help with workflow.
- ✓ Set up your working documents with the page size, font, font size, margins, and other formatting conditions prescribed in the solicitation.

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## ELEMENTS OF A PROPOSAL

Each solicitation has its own unique instructions as to the required proposal elements. Always follow the grant-maker's requirements. They will often tell you which elements to include, what order they want them, how long each section should be, and what format they want to use. There are typical elements that are in many solicitations.

## TYPICAL ELEMENTS

1. Cover Letter (Signed by Organization's Authorized Signatory)
2. Title Page
3. Executive Summary
4. Statement of Need or Needs Assessment
5. Project Narrative
  - a. Organizational History
  - b. Approach or Project Design
  - c. Goals and Objectives
  - d. Timetable
  - e. Management and Staff
6. Budget and Budget Narrative
7. Evaluation Plan
8. Sustainability Plan
9. Attachments
10. Submit



## WHAT IS WORKFLOW?

It is suggested to work on the elements of the proposal in an order that flows from one element to another, and then reassemble the proposal in the order prescribed by the solicitation (or the order shown above, if there are no guidelines).

The workflow uses the preceding elements to develop the following ones.

*Ideas must flow from one section to the next*

*Stray ideas hurt your credibility*

*Workflow helps you move from one element to the next*

## WORKFLOW

1. Statement of Need
2. Goals and Objectives
3. Project Narrative
  - a. Task List
  - b. Timetable
  - c. Approach or Project Design
  - d. Organizational History
  - e. Management and Staff
4. Budget
5. Budget Narrative
6. Evaluation Plan
7. Sustainability Plan
8. Executive Summary
9. Title Page
10. Cover Letter
11. Attachments

*Let's Review the Elements. . .*

## WRITING THE PROPOSAL

### STATEMENT OF NEED

The Statement of Need describes the problem that you are trying to solve. Gather existing background data that supports or substantiates the needs or problems your project will address:

#### Existing Data

- ✓ Demographics
- ✓ Surveys
- ✓ Studies
- ✓ Maps

#### Gather More Data

- ✓ Interview Key Informants
- ✓ Hold Focus Groups and Community Forums
- ✓ Surveys
- ✓ Studies
- ✓ Maps
- ✓ Statistical Analyses

*Amount of data should be in scale with the scope of your project*

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Write a Statement of Need to present the facts and evidence that supports the need for the project. A good Statement of Need shows that your organization knows the situation and can readily address them. Make sure that the data you present is accurate and detailed enough to make your argument. Describe the problem in terms of people or the community and the grant-maker's priorities.

*Link need and grant-maker's funding priorities*

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### Goals

Goals are broad statements of what you want to accomplish. You normally will have only one goal for the project unless it's a very large, complex project.

*Goals are broad, conceptual and more abstract*

#### Examples:

GOAL: *To end substance abuse and domestic violence in the Bristol Bay Region*

GOAL: *To preserve our cultural heritage and incorporate it in our community activities and programs*

### Objectives

Objectives are the outcomes of your project. The goal is abstract, while the objective is much more specific. You can use the memory aid "SMART" as a reminder of the elements of well-written objectives. With high competition for grant dollars, well-articulated objectives are essential to your proposal's success.

*Objectives detail planned outcomes*

#### SMART Objectives

<b>S</b>	<b>Specific</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>Measurable</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Achievable</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Relevant</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Time-bound</b>

#### Example:

GOAL: *Our after-school program will help children read better.*

OBJECTIVE: *Our after-school remedial reading program will assist 50 children in improving their reading scores by one grade level as demonstrated by standardized reading tests administered after participating in the program for six months.*

*Well-articulated objectives are essential to your proposal's success*

Use types depending on your project

Format so objectives stand out

Narrative tells your story

---

## Four Types of Objectives

1. **Behavioral** — A human action is expected.  
*Example: Fifty of the 70 children participating will learn to read better.*
2. **Performance** — A specific timeframe that a behavior will occur, at an expected proficiency level.  
*Example: Fifty of the 70 children will learn to read better within six months and will demonstrate improvement by taking standardized tests administered by the school district.*
3. **Process** — The manner in which something occurs is an end in itself.  
*Example: We will document the teaching methods utilized, identifying those with the greatest success.*
4. **Product** — A tangible item results.  
*Example: A manual will be created to teach reading skills to this age and proficiency group.*

You will use one or more of these types of objectives, depending on the scope of your project. Be realistic in setting objectives that you can accomplish. Do not promise anything you cannot deliver during the term of the grant with the resources that will be allocated to the project. Format objectives very clearly in your text by using numbers, bullets, **bold**, underlines, and/or indentations.

## PROJECT NARRATIVE

The Project Narrative defines the approach or program design and tells the grant-maker what you will accomplish by telling the when, how and why. Your story enables the reader to visualize the implementation of the project. It should convince the reader that your organization knows what it is doing and helps to establish its credibility. Begin by making a Task List.

## TASK LIST

The task list is a systematic account of what you will do to accomplish the objectives. Describe the order and timing for tasks to sum up the project steps that you will use when you make the timetable, write the Project Narrative, and develop the budget. There should be harmony between the task list and the elements of the proposal.

Although the task list is often not included in your proposal, it will help you generate the timetable, narrative, and budget. Developing a task list tool will ensure that the project coordinator will start the program in a comprehensive and organized fashion once the project is funded.

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## Example: Task List Worksheet

Detailed Task List	Who's Responsible	When
1. Review 3 curricula to use	John	October 2019
2. Select curriculum to use	John/Annie	November 2019
3. Provide written analysis to the Partnership Committee	John/Annie	January 2020

*Task List is a planning tool, usually not included in your proposal*

## TIMETABLE

**When:** Next prepare the timetable using the task list as a reference. Summarize the action items on the task list in the timetable (also known as a timeline), stating the amount of time that will be dedicated to each item. Most of this information can be obtained directly from the Task List worksheet you just completed. **Organize the Timetable by objective.**

## Example: Timetable with Action Steps

**Objective #1:** To establish and advertise a comprehensive and contemporary education program that focuses on strengthening and supporting families with young children. BBNA will reach a minimum of 15% of the population, or approximately 1,114 people, through this outreach effort.

Action Steps	Who's Responsible	When
Design contemporary outreach program	Children's Services	May–June 2014
Expand community collaboration	Director	March-ongoing
Coordinate the with other departments	Children's Services	May–June 2014

*Timetables are often required*

## Approach (or Project Design)

**How:** Describe in narrative form what will occur from the time the project begins until it is completed. Your approach should match your previously stated objectives, task list, and timetable.

**Why:** Defend your approach, especially if it is new and different. Explain why your approach will most effectively lead to the outcomes you anticipate. Use comments from experts and contrast your project with other projects describing what works, what doesn't, and why.

*Weigh the pros and cons of different approaches*

*Make  
credibility or  
"bragging"  
file and keep  
it up to date*

*A strong  
manager can  
sway a  
positive  
response to  
the  
application*

## Organizational Background

There are documents that you can collect and reuse for multiple proposals. Retain and update this information to often.

- ✓ Vision statement
- ✓ Current mission statement
- ✓ Most recent strategic plan
- ✓ Historical Narrative of the organization
- ✓ List of previous grants
- ✓ Current projects and programs and who benefits

Describe the distinct resources that your organization has to make the project successful.

- ✓ Staff with specialized expertise
- ✓ Partnerships with other organizations
- ✓ Experience with particular populations and geographical locations

Include outstanding accomplishments of your organization:

- ✓ Awards
- ✓ Special media coverage
- ✓ Commendations by professional associations
- ✓ Published Articles
- ✓ Testimonials from clients
- ✓ Community involvement (show how your organization has had a positive impact on your community through the programs it provides or support it has provided to other organizations or government entities.)

## Management and Staff

Describe your organization's ability to carry out the program, manage it administratively, and provide experience with similar projects. Describe your plans for administering the project. This is especially important in a large operation, if more than one agency is collaborating on the project, or if you are using a fiscal agent. It needs to be clear who is responsible for financial management, project outcomes, and reporting. Things to include:

- ✓ List of Board or Council Members
- ✓ Key Management Staff with short biographies
- ✓ Organizational Chart
- ✓ Number of staff needed
  - Paid staff (full-time or part-time on the project?)
  - Staff Resumes and Bios
  - How will the time of an already fully deployed individual be freed up?
- ✓ Job descriptions for positions to be recruited specifically for the project

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Salary and project costs are affected by the qualifications of the staff. Define the practical experience you require for key staff, their level of expertise and educational background. If an individual has already been selected to direct the program, summarize his or her credentials and include a brief biographical sketch and/or resume in the appendix

## DEVELOP THE BUDGET

Budgets require Two Parts - the **Line Item budget** and the **Budget Narrative**. Demonstrate a clear and strong relationship between the stated objectives, project activities, and the budget. The solicitation will describe allowable costs categories. For federal grants, you will need [SF-424A Non-Construction or SF-424C Construction Forms](#). For the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200) (OMB Super Circular) for more information on cost issues and budgeting for federal grants, [https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200\\_main\\_02.tpl](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl).

## LINE ITEM BUDGET

### Example:

Cost Category	Grant funds you are applying for	Other State or federal funds	Local cash contributions	In-kind contributions
Personnel	140,000	137,438		277,438
Fringe Benefits	74,200	72,842		147,042
Travel / Per Diem		1,607	2,146	3,753
Facility Expenses			12,000	12,000
Supplies	1,444	3,056		4,500
Equipment Rental			2,000	2,000
Contractual				
Insurance			2,100	2,100
Other				
Indirect Costs	34,356	35,057		69,413
Total	250,000	250,000	18,246	518,246

*Common  
Cost  
Categories or  
Budget Line  
Items*

## Personnel

Full Time Equivalence (FTE) is a number that represents how much more, or less, an employee is working when compared to a standard full-time worker. There are some variances in the equation since certain companies define 'full time' differently, but FTE hours is the way to express how much time an employee will spend on the project.

The first step in calculating FTE hours is to define what a full-time employee is. Most employers see this as 40 hours a week for 52 weeks per year for a total of 2,080 hours a year equals 1 FTE. Your organization may use 37.5 hours a week for 52 weeks per year, or 1,950 hours a year. For a 37.5-hour workweek, 1,950 would be 1 FTE.

### Example:

*If an employee is required to work 20 hours per week or 1,040 hours per year on the project, divide 1,040 by 1,950 and for .53 FTE.*

To get the dollar value multiply 1,950 hours by the hourly wage, say \$20 per hour for a total of \$39,000. Now take \$39,000 multiply it by .53 FTE, totals \$20,670, which is the amount you will add to the project budget for this employee. Calculate the FTE and Personnel costs for each employee that will work in the project.

## Fringe Rate

### Calculation by Addition

If your organization does not provide a fringe rate, list an employee's fringe benefits, including health insurance, retirement, life insurance, payroll taxes, unemployment, and other payments above the salary. Add these figures, and then multiply the salary by the total fringe benefits to get the Fringe Rate as a percentage of salary.

### Example:

*If you calculate 50% of the employee's annual salary is paid on fringe benefits, then multiply 50% x \$20,670 = \$10,335.*

Fringe in this example is high due to rising health insurance costs. Calculate fringe benefits for each individual employee that will work on the project using actual fringe benefit costs for the employee. This only works for very small organizations.

### Calculation by Percentage

To determine the fringe rate for the organization, divide the total fringe benefits by the gross payroll, which results in the fringe rate expressed as a percentage. Once you have this percentage, you can calculate all employees' fringe benefits by multiplying the salary by the percentage.

### Example:

*The personnel cost for an employee is \$20,670 with a 53% fringe rate will cost the project \$10,955 in fringe benefits.*

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Calculate the fringe benefits for each employee that will work on the project using the same organizational rate.

## Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are also referred to as "administrative overhead." These are costs of administering program activities that are difficult to link to a single program activity because they are shared among the programs and functions of your organization. Contact your financial officer or supervisor to find out if your organization has an indirect cost rate agreement. If not, expense as much of the costs as you can document with backup.

If your organization does not have an indirect cost rate, it can contact the USAID Overhead and Special Costs and Contract Closeout Branch (OCC) of the Office of Acquisition and Assistance. OCC has or can obtain information on indirect cost rates for all U.S. organizations that are under cognizance of other federal agencies. The Department of Interior is the likely cognizant for Tribal governments and organizations.

### Examples of administrative costs:

- Personnel Administration
- Finance
- Audit
- Purchasing
- Space
- Executive Management
- Insurance
- Legal

### Indirect Cost Calculation Formula:

$$\frac{(\text{Total Grant Amount} - \text{Indirect Cost Exclusions}) \times (\text{Indirect Rate})}{1 + \text{Indirect Rate}} = \text{Maximum Allowable Indirect Cost}$$

Description	Code	Amount
1. Total Allocation	TA	\$250,000
2. Total Allocation Minus Non-allowable Costs	A	(250,000 – 5,000) 245,000
3. Indirect Cost Rate	R	16.31% or .1631
4. Formula	$\frac{(R)(A)}{1 + R}$	$\frac{(.1631)(245,000)}{1.1631}$
5. Allowable Indirect Cost		34,356

Does your organization have an indirect cost rate?

Calculating indirect on maximum allocation amount

How much  
can you spend  
on your  
project?

The following calculation shows how to determine the total amount you can spend on direct costs. Take the total allocation, subtract the allowable indirect cost amount, and the remainder is the amount available for direct costs.

Total allocation	\$250,000
Indirect cost	- 34,356
Total direct cost funds available	<u>\$215,644</u>

To check the calculation, do the following:

Total direct costs	\$215,644
Exclusions (non-allowable costs)	- 5,000
Total	<u>\$210,644</u>
Direct costs minus non-allowable costs	\$210,644
Indirect rate	x .1631
Total Indirect Costs Allowed	<u>\$34,356</u>

## BUDGET NARRATIVE

The budget narrative explains and justifies the line items and their amounts. It explains what you are going to spend the grant funds on, how you arrived at the amounts for each line item, and the purpose of each line item. The budget narrative must be consistent with the line item budget and the project narrative. Follow items in the same order as the budget.

### **Example: Budget Narrative - Personnel Line Item**

*One (1) Full-time Project Coordinator (1 FTE) base salary calculated @ \$24.61 per hour X 5,850 hours for three (3) years = \$143,969 to manage and coordinate implementation of program goals and objectives; staffs the Prisoner Reentry Task Force; works with Tribal Justice Programs Management Team; collaborates on Training & Technical Assistance; assists with interviews, surveys and focus groups, performs grant reporting, manages information and generates and distributes meeting records; and assists with the strategic planning process and development of program policies and procedures and MOAs.*

*One (1) Part-time Cultural Programming Coordinator (.5 FTE) base salary calculated @ on \$24.61 per hour X 2,925 hours for three (3) years = \$71,985 to provide clerical support for development of Prisoner Reentry Task Force and strategic plan; manages flow of incoming/outgoing communications, and assist with planning workshops and other trainings and events.*

*One (1) Part-time Project Assistant (.5 FTE) base salary calculated @ \$21.02 per hour X 2,925 hours for three (3) years = \$61,484 to research, develop and tailor culture-based healing methods for target population of prisoners reentering the region, and works with wellness programs to incorporate indigenous justice practices into the treatment component.*

*Total Personnel: \$277,438*

Three  
employees  
working on  
the project

## DESIGN EVALUATION PLAN

Use the Evaluation Plan to determine the data you will need to collect during the project. The solicitation requirements, your program design, and objectives are used to design your evaluation plan. In your evaluation plan, describe how data about the program and participants will be collected and why those methods are important and suitable measures of program effectiveness.

- ✓ Explain who will collect the data, when, and how it will be collected.
- ✓ Explain how the data will be analyzed and reported.

## Two Types of Formal Evaluations

One or both of these evaluations types may be needed to evaluate your project.

1. Measures program outcomes
2. Analyze the process

## Do you need to hire an independent evaluator?

### You can probably complete the evaluation internally if:

1. Your grantor does not require a formal evaluation.
2. Your evaluation is intended to only determine whether you met the requirements of the grant.
3. If your evaluation will be used internally to discover changes you can make to improve your program by brainstorm solutions.

### You will need to hire an outside evaluator if:

1. Your grant-maker requires an independent evaluation (this is common in federal and some state grants)
2. You need to present the evaluation publicly or deliver it to government officials.
3. Your project's subject is highly charged emotionally, and an internal evaluation won't be acceptable to all parties; or
4. You're experiencing problems in the program or project and want input from an objective, third-party on how to improve it.

## Logic Models – An Evaluation Tool

<b>Inputs</b>	>	<b>Activities/Outputs</b>	>	<b>Outcomes/Impacts</b>
<i>What we Invest</i>		<i>What we do/Who we reach</i>		<i>Learning/Action/Conditions</i>
Staff		Stakeholder Planning Process		Meaningful Plans
Travel		Represent the Region		Address Tangible Concerns
Office		Monitor and Exchange Program		Better understanding of priorities,
Supplies		information with Stakeholders		needs, and regulations

*Evaluations measure project success and determine data you will need to collect*

*Use Excel spreadsheet to design Logic Model*

*Future  
Funding  
Plans for the  
Project*

*Summarize  
the Project*

*Cover Letter  
is often  
separated  
from the  
proposal  
when it  
reaches the  
grant-  
maker's office*

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## **PREPARE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

Future Funding also referred to as “sustainability,” focuses on what will happen to the program after funding ends. Use your Sustainability Plan to explain:

1. How this project is in line with your plans?
2. What is the Board’s (Council’s) level of support?
3. Identify staff that will work on the project and how you will free up time of already fully deployed staff?
4. Describe strategic partnerships that will support the project?
5. If this becomes an ongoing program, how will it be funded when this grant is spent?
6. Which parts of the program will end and which parts you will sustain through other funding sources.
7. Identify additional sources of potential funding or ways to generate funding support.
8. If the program will end when the funding period expires, explain why it will no longer be needed.

## **WRITE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The executive summary gives the reader an overview of what will follow in the proposal. The executive summary should be short, follow limitations in the solicitation.

1. Provide a brief statement of the problem or need.
2. Follow with a short description of the project, who will benefit, how and where it will operate, for how long, and the staff assigned to the project.
3. Explain the amount of grant money required for the project and plans to fund it in the future.
4. Provide a brief history of your organization and its capacity to carry out the project.

## **WRITE A COVER LETTER**

A cover letter may seem unnecessary after you have completed the executive summary, but it is considered a separate document. You will be using your best quotes and phrases, and it is acceptable to repeat words and phrases from the proposal in the cover letter.

1. Introduce your organization
2. Describe your project in one or two sentences, including the amount of money you are requesting from the grant-maker
3. A simple yet convincing explanation of why this project is important and timely
4. Refer to the goals of the grant-maker as they apply to your project
5. Describe how your problem or need complements the mission or goals of the funding source

# GRANT WRITING GUIDE

6. Remind funders of previous contact and changes you made based on their input (if appropriate)
7. Outline the need or define the problem as you see it, and cite one or two supporting statistics
8. Briefly describe your solution to the problem or need
9. Offer to answer questions
10. If you are writing to a grant-maker in another time zone, mention the time difference for telephone calls
11. Always submit the cover letter on your organization's letterhead
12. Have the board chair or top administrator sign the letter

Assume that your cover letter will be separated from the full proposal, so redundancy is not a problem. You can repeat elements of your proposal and executive summary in the Cover Letter.

## DESIGN A TITLE PAGE

You can add a custom-made title page to your Project Narrative with basic information about the proposal. Although the logo and/or photo are listed as optional, this is a good place to add a distinctive or unique image from your community. It can give your proposal personality and leave an impression with the reviewers.

1. Title of the Project with tag line
2. Amount Requested
3. Timeframe
4. Date of Submission
5. Name of Organization
6. Contact Person
  - a. Address
  - b. Telephone Number
  - c. E-mail Address
7. Logo and/or Photo (optional)

## COMMON ATTACHMENTS

Below is a list of attachments often submitted with proposals. Refer to the solicitation for the actual attachments the grant-maker requires.

- ✓ Grant Application forms
- ✓ Required assurances and certifications
- ✓ Proof of nonprofit status (IRS document)
- ✓ List of your board of directors (council members)
- ✓ Audits or financial statements
- ✓ Letters of support

*Personalize  
with photos  
and logos*

*Common  
Proposal  
Attachments*

- ✓ Partnership agreements (Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs))
- ✓ Staff Resumes
- ✓ Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

## COMMON MISTAKES

You can avoid common mistakes that grant-makers often see. Pay attention to these omissions.

- ✓ Failure to have the Grant forms signed.
- ✓ Failure to comply with all of the requirements.
- ✓ Failure to sell your organization or your program and demonstrate that it aligns with the grant-maker's mission.
- ✓ Failure to be concise. Make an impression early and often. Long, wordy, pointless or overly detailed sentences will alienate you from the reviewers. Check for run-on sentences. Use the fewest words necessary to have the greatest impact.
- ✓ Failure to proofread for spelling and grammatical errors. Do not depend on Spellcheck; have your proposal proofread by others in your organization.
- ✓ Failure to match the numbers in the budget to the budget narrative, and to match budget amounts with references to them in the project narrative and grant forms.
- ✓ Failure to write for your audience. Write as if the grant-maker knows nothing about your organization or program avoiding jargon and acronyms. Get proofreaders who are not familiar with your work who can ask questions to help you include the right detail. If they do not understand, a reviewer might not either.
- ✓ Failure to format the proposal according to the requirements. Double-check all requirements and guidelines (page limits, font size, margins, etc.)

## HELPFUL HINTS

- ✓ Read your text aloud. This tried-and-true method highlights circular logic, run-on sentences, and overstuffed paragraphs.
- ✓ Review your proposal against the solicitation to make certain you have not missed important elements.
- ✓ Follow all requirements and guidelines (page limits, font size, margins, line spacing, etc.)
- ✓ Using the fewest words has the greatest impact. Be concise and get to the point.
- ✓ Write as if the reader knows nothing about your organization or program. Clarify any terminologies and abbreviations in the text and add a definitions section, if needed.
- ✓ Have your proposal proofread and use proofreaders unfamiliar with your work to help you include the right detail.

*Revise,  
revise, revise*

*Find errors  
and in-  
consistencies*

## SUBMIT PROPOSAL

### BEFORE YOU SUBMIT:

- ✓ Double check that all required forms, documents and attachments are the final version you worked on.
- ✓ Convert documents that you created to PDF. (Generally, you do not convert Grant forms and templates that the grant-maker provided.)
- ✓ Assemble documents in order prescribed by the solicitation.
- ✓ Rename files as needed, so they are easily identified and kept in order. Make sure to comply with file naming requirements in the solicitation, if they specify file naming standardization convention.

### File Naming

Organization\_Grant-maker\_Solicitation Name\_Document#\_Document Name  
(The document number auto-sorts the files in order to be presented to the grant-maker.)

#### Example:

- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_01\_SF424 Federal Application*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_02\_ED-900 General Application for EDA Programs*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_03\_SF424A Budget Non-Construction Form*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_04\_SF424B Certifications and Assurances*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_05\_CD511 Certification Regarding Lobbying*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_06\_ED-900A Additional EDA Assurances*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_07\_ED-900B Beneficiary Information Form*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_08\_Attachment A-Scope of Work (required form)*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_09\_Attachment B-Authorized Staff Positions*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_10\_Attachment C-BBCEDS Steering Committee*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_11\_Attachment D-IRS EIN-501c3 Doc*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_12\_Attachment E-Indirect Cost Rate Agreement*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_13\_Attachment F-Certificate of Good Standing*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_14\_Attachment G-Board of Directors*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_15\_Attachment H-Staff Bios Resumes & Job Desc*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_16\_Attachment I-Supporting Resolution*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_17\_Attachment J-Letters of Commitment*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_18\_Attachment K-Letters of Support*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_19\_Attachment L-Audited Financial Statement*
- *BBNA\_FY2020-EDA\_20\_Attachment M-BBCEDS Update*

Name files  
for easy  
reference

*Submit  
early*

*Restart  
submission  
every 10  
minutes*

*Use for next  
funding  
opportunity*

*Get  
reviewer's  
comments  
or  
debriefing*

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## SUBMISSION TIPS

- ❖ Submit according to the grant-maker's directions.
  - Online
  - Email
  - Mail
- ❖ Submit EARLY in case you:
  - Encounter connectivity problems uploading files.
  - Forget something and need to send it before the deadline.
- ❖ For Online submission, submit and resubmit until you get a message that the grant was received.
  - Remember that generally after ten minutes the submission is timed out. Restart the submission after every ten minutes until you get confirmation.
  - If problems persist:
    - Contact your network administrator
    - Contact the grant agency's network administrator, for tips on submitting.

## MISSED DEADLINES

### It's Not the End of the World

If you miss the deadline, there is very little you can do unless there has been a major weather event or the grant-maker has a computer outage. Connectivity and computer problems on your end do not compel the grant-maker to make an exception. Your work is not useless; you can use it as a template for next opening of the funding opportunity or for proposals to other grant-makers.

## DENIALS

### Your Proposal Has Been Denied

If you submitted your proposal on time, but later get a denial notice, be sure ask for reviewer's comments, sometimes called, "debriefing." The reviewer's comments or debriefing will provide you with ideas on how to improve your proposal for the next funding opportunity. You can learn about elements and other details that are important to the grant-maker that you can use to improve your proposal. Keep this information in mind when doing other proposals as they may have applicability to other proposals you write. The granting process is competitive. Don't be discouraged by unfunded proposals. Keep trying until you get the award.

## GRANT AWARDS

### **Congratulations! Your Proposal Has Been Awarded!**

After you are notified of an award, the grant-maker will send you an award agreement. Read the award agreement, cover letter, and other attachments thoroughly so you understand the terms and conditions of the award. It will let you know the reporting requirements, start date, and other requirements that you must follow. Some terms can be negotiated, contact the grant-maker's grant administrator to inquire if a term can be changed.

Remember that you cannot start spending money until both your organization and the grant-maker sign off on the award documents. The start date is sometimes a set date, or it could be the date that the award agreement is fully executed (signed by both parties). Do not spend any funds until the start date, since the grant-maker will not reimburse expenses that are not within the term of the grant.

The award documents will tell you what documentation the grant-maker needs back from you to accept the award. Be sure to prepare all the documents that they require for your acceptance. Have the award documents signed by the authorized signatory for your organization, usually the Chief, President, CEO, or Executive Director. Make copies for your file, and return the acceptance package back in the manner they prescribe. If they require original signatures, the acceptance package will be returned by certified mail with a return receipt.

## SUGGESTED FURTHER STUDY

### **Grant Management**

Grant Management is a separate subject. Seek Grant Management courses, agency guidance, and online information to help you administer your projects.

**Good luck!**

*Don't spend  
money until  
the grant  
term starts*

*Follow  
acceptance  
procedures  
carefully*

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## SOURCES, RESOURCES AND LINKS

U.S. Department of Justice, Grants 101, <https://ojp.gov/grants101/>

The Foundation Center, Short Course, [http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/prop1\\_print](http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/prop1_print)

Compassion Capital Fund (CCF) Strengthening Nonprofits: A Capacity Builder's Library, "Acquiring Public Grants." <http://strengtheningnonprofits.org/>

How to Write a Grant Proposal, <http://nonprofit.about.com/od/foundationfundinggrants/tp/grantproposalhub.htm>

How to Make a Grant Proposal to a Small Family Foundation, <http://nonprofit.about.com/od/foundationfundinggrants/a/cultivatingfamilfound.htm>

7 Steps to Finding Funders for Your Grant, <http://nonprofit.about.com/od/resources/tp/grantinfo.htm>

How to Become a Better Grant Writer for Your Nonprofit, <http://nonprofit.about.com/od/foundationfundinggrants/a/grantwritingtips.htm>

How Does the 990-PF of a Foundation Help Find Grants? <http://nonprofit.about.com/od/foundationfundinggrants/a/grantfaqhub.htm>

What is a Logic Model? [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logic\\_model](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logic_model)

Grants.gov Form, <https://www.grants.gov/forms.html>

Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200) (OMB Super Circular), [https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200\\_main\\_02.tpl](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl)

Grant Space, <https://grantspace.org/>

The Chronicle of Philanthropy, <http://philanthropy.com/section/Home/172>

U.S. Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov>

American FactFinder, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis, <http://almis.labor.state.ak.us/>

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