

Fundraising

Writing a Grant

A grant is a type of financial support that's awarded to an organization or individual. Grants are often given to organizations that undertake charitable activities or provide a community service. Usually, foundations ask these organizations to write a document—a *grant proposal*—explaining why they should receive the foundation's money. Below are a few things you should be aware of as you are preparing to write a grant.

Research grant writing. There are several standard components to most grant proposals that you should be familiar with if you intend to write a grant. Before you write a grant, it is a good idea to read a grant writing tutorial. Here are some online resources that might be helpful:

- The Foundation Center (<http://fdncenter.org>) offers grant-writing tutorials that are useful and straightforward.
- Youth Action Net (<http://www.youthactionnet.org/toolkit/fundraise.cmf>) offers resources to help identify donors, write grant proposals, and plan fundraising events.
- Minnesota Council on Foundations (<http://www.mcf.org/mcf/grant/writing.htm>) offers a free online tutorial to writing a successful grant proposal.
- Fundsnet Services (<http://www.fundsnet.com/grantwri.htm>) links to several helpful grant-writing resources on the Internet.

Read the guidelines carefully. Because every funder is different, there are different requirements for each grant application. It's important to get a copy of the grantmaker's guidelines and make sure that you meet all the funding criteria. It's a waste of everyone's time and energy to apply for grants whose requirements you don't meet.

Give them what they ask for. Give the funder the information they want in the format that they want it. Understand and comply with all of the grant requirements (i.e. read the fine print). This means giving them the required information, meeting the submission deadline, having the correct number of pages, and submitting the proper forms and attachments.

You may need a fiscal agent. Frequently, foundations will not give funds to individuals or to organizations without 501(c)(3) tax status. If you encounter this obstacle, find a youth-friendly non-profit organization to act as your fiscal agent. Fiscal agents will receive the grant check and pass the money on to you. Sometimes they charge a fee for this service. **Note:** If you are interested in registering as a nonprofit and applying for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, read Youth Venture's tip sheet "**Registering as a Nonprofit.**"

Don't get discouraged. Remember that even if you submit a perfect grant proposal, foundations have limited resources, so your project may not receive funding. If you meet the funder's guidelines, apply again later. You may be successful on a later try.

Follow up. Always write thank you notes to foundations, even if your grant proposal is not accepted. Also, if you're unsure why your proposal was not accepted, it's ok to follow-up and ask for more information on why.