

# Sara Roach-Lewis'

## Top 10 Tips for Grant Writing

- 1 Align your Budget to Your Activities.** Think about your budget through the whole process – it should never be an afterthought. Make sure your budget aligns with your activities. It needs to be realistic and make sense in relation to the project.
- 2 Build a Relationship with the funder.** This can't be repeated enough, especially if you are applying to a new fund. Read their website, strategic plans, and the application guide. Attend webinars or information sessions. Ask questions. Seek their feedback on your application.
- 3 Practice. Practice.** Proposal writing can be challenging – it takes time to figure out how to clearly communicate your vision in small boxes or constrained word counts. Volunteer to help the grant writer(s) in your organization – many minds & hands create great proposals.
- 4 Find a Mentor.** I am a much better proposal writer because of the people I've worked with over the years. A former ED patient explained the difference between a goal, an objective and an outcome more than once over the years. Read their successful applications.
- 5 Start Small.** Find a micro-grant programs. Look for smaller pots of money. Not only is it a good idea to start small for proposals, it's great to start with small projects for managing them. Make as many mistakes as you can on the small ones where the stakes aren't as high!
- 6 Pay attention to the details.** There are many important details – know when the proposal is due. Be sure you can clearly communicate your idea. Be concise in your writing. And make sure that every part of the proposal is filled out.
- 7 Don't get discouraged.** You do everything right. You came up with a brilliant idea that fits all the funding criteria. You have solid partnerships, organizational capacity and a reasonable budget. And yet, sometimes it's just not your turn.
- 8 Figure out what you're good at & get help for the rest.** Despite my many years of grant writing, there are still pieces I never write. If a Performance Measurement framework is required, I contract an evaluator to do that piece.
- 9 Focus.** In small organizations, grant writing tends to be done off the side of our desk because it's not our full-time job. You need to give it the time and attention it deserves. For many organizations, it why we continue to exist and yet, it is often an afterthought.
- 10 Have fun!** Grant writing is an exciting opportunity to imagine new possibilities and stretch your organizational capacity. Even when you are writing for similar funding, it is a good opportunity to evaluate what's working and how to improve your organizations & its services.

Want to learn more?  
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