



Welcome to

Writing Winning Grant Proposals

To join the audio portion by phone, please dial: 888-483-1644
Passcode: 2007913

While you wait, share in the chat box: "What experience do you have writing grants? If no experience, what do you expect to be doing?"



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Tips for Participating

- Phones are muted
- To share comments and ideas, use the Chat panel. Send to "All Participants".
- To ask questions, use the Q&A panel. Send to "All Panelists".
- Links and recording will be available after the session
- Closed Captions can be viewed in the Media Viewer panel



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Welcome to

Writing Winning Grant Proposals



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Today's Team



Dennis Norris
VISTA Resource
Development Course
Instructor



Sarah Jordan
Schwartz
VISTA alum 2014-2015
Children's Museum of the
Lowcountry – Charleston, SC

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Session Goals

By the end of the webinar, you will be able to:

- Distinguish between a grant and a gift.
- Draft an effective letter of inquiry.
- Appeal to grant reviewers by including information that makes your grant proposal exceptional.
- View each proposal submission as a learning opportunity.

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Chat Question

What is your fundraising goal as a VISTA?
How much are you expected to raise?

Click this button
if you don't see
the chat panel.



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Gifts vs. Grants



Gifts

- Most come from **individuals**
- Made in response to an **“ask”**
- Also known as a **donation** or contribution



Grants

- Most come from **foundations**
- Made in response to a **proposal**
- Also known as a **contract** or agreement

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More about Gifts vs. Grants

Gifts

- Donor information is owned by the nonprofit and is **not public** information
- Donor gets at least a **thank you** letter with information on the **tax benefits** of the donation

Grants

- Information on funding organizations is **public** information
- Recipient receives a binding **legal contract** with instructions on how to report progress and how to account for every single penny

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Examples of good language:

Gift

- The greatest casualty of war is being forgotten.

Grant

- Soldiers returning from war face problems ranging from government bureaucracy in receiving health benefits, to family and friends who do not have the proper tools to recognize or deal with depressive or addictive behaviors.

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What Makes Grant Reviewers Smile

- The absence of fundraising language.
- Concise, business-like writing that describes a business relationship.
- Proposals that are well-structured.
- Realistic programming that can be implemented with the available funding.
- Proposals showing a strong understanding of the problem to be solved.



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Grant Research

- There are many resources available for locating grant funders.
- Your goal is to locate the funder whose philanthropic goals match the content of your project.
 - If it is a good match, and they are interested in funding you, then you will be asked for some very specific things.



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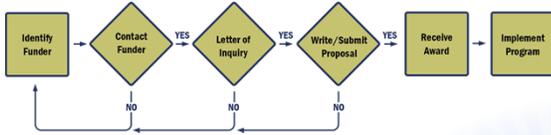
Project C.R.O.A.K.!

- Creeks, Rivers, Oceans and Kids
- Proactively researched funders interested in environmental education
- Process began with a letter of inquiry (LOI), using business language that aligned the project goals with the funder's philanthropic goals



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The Application Process



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Letter of Inquiry (LOI)

Expected

- The first sentence states:
 - This is who we are and what we do.
 - This is what we want.
 - This is what we want it for.
- The rest supports all of that and touches on measurable objectives.
- It is a letter, so address it properly and sign it.

Exceptional

- 1-page letter is full of crisp, clear sentences; very easy to read.
- The primary focus is on the measurable objectives, which are really the ROI for the funder.
- The letter requests the opportunity to write a full proposal.

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Guest Speaker



Sarah Jordan Schwartz
Campaign Coordinator
Children's Museum of the Lowcountry in
Charleston, SC
VISTA alum 2014-2015

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Sarah Jordan's Tips – Prep and LOI



- Reviewed previous grants
- Hear from grant reviewers
- Researched grantors past giving and requirements
- Make initial contact with a person at funding agency
- Use LOI as outline
- Use language of grantor to describe program



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What if the funder simply says, "write a proposal"?

- A. Submit a Letter of Inquiry.
- B. Write a narrative about your project.
- C. Submit a standard proposal format.
- D. Send an email to the funder and ask what they want.



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A Standard 10-Page Proposal

- Executive Summary [1 page]
- Introduction [1 page]
- Goal Statement and Objectives [½ page]
- Needs Statement [1½ pages]
- Methods [3 pages]
- Evaluation [1 page]
- Existing and Future Funding [½ page]
- Budget and Budget Narrative [1½ pages]



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Executive Summary – 1 page

Expected

- Good summary of entire proposal
- Gives more info than LOI on measurable objectives and methodology
- Includes the amount requested and what it will be used for
- *The first thing read by a grant reviewer, and often the **only** thing read for the first round.*

Exceptional

- Flows seamlessly from
 - first informative paragraph to
 - a brief need statement (para. 2) to
 - objectives and methodology (para. 3-4), to
 - the summary paragraph.
- Comprehensive, yet compact with crisp and clear writing that shows the program fits the funder's goals.
- *You should be able to reconstruct your proposal using the Executive Summary.*

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Introduction – 1 page

Expected

- Introduce your organization in terms relevant to the grant opportunity.
- Establish credibility and illuminate your accomplishments.
- Provide mission and vision statements.

Exceptional

- Use demographic or socioeconomic data to show why your organization exists.
- List relevant awards received.
- Expand on mission and vision statements to bring them to life.
- Overlap your project goals with the funder's goals.

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Goal Statement / Objectives – ½ page

Goal

The overall desired result.

Objectives

Smaller-scale outcomes that lead to the goal.



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Goal Statement / Objectives



Expected

- A goal that is ambitious but achievable.
- SMART objectives that lead to your goal.
- At the end of your project, objectives tell you the degree to which you were successful.

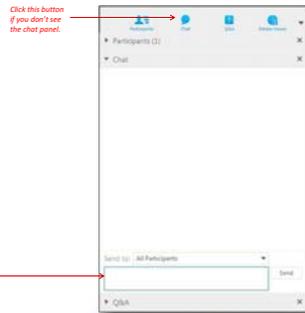
Exceptional

- An exceptional proposal has 3-5 strong objectives.
- An exceptional objective describes *who* is going to do *what*, *when* they are going to do it, and *how* it will be measured.
- Exceptional objectives do a good job of measuring.

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ACTIVITY

Be sure to have your Chat panel open for the next activity.



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ACTIVITY: Goals and Objectives

The goal of the SIGNALS Project is to address the lack of science curriculum in middle schools for at-risk girls.

Objectives:

1. increase class offerings in biology, chemistry, and physics by 10% each year, over a 3-year period.
2. instill a love of science among middle school girls.

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Relevant
Time-Bound

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Needs Statement – 1 ½ pages

Expected

- Is realistic – doesn't try to solve the world's problems.
- Makes funder confident you understand the problem.
- Shows importance, but doesn't convey unsolvable gloom and doom.

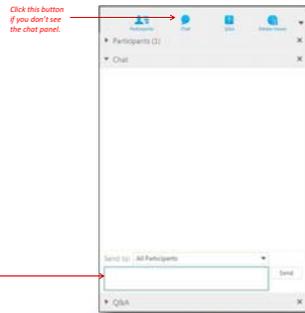
Exceptional

- Needs statement quotes valid and up-to-date research.
- Shows the problem on a wide scale and then shows how it affects your clients.
- The objectives are directly related to the need.

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ACTIVITY

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ACTIVITY: Needs Statement

In his speech to the United Nations in 2015, President Obama stated that "childhood hunger is our nation's number one priority." Following that declaration, the state of Indiana committed \$50 million toward programs fighting childhood obesity, and mandated that soda machines be removed from all elementary and middle school cafeterias. In the Indianapolis Public School systems soda machines were removed from all schools and student blood pressure was monitored throughout the 2015-2016 school year. The result was a lowering of blood pressure for over 55% of the student body.

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Methods – 3 pages

Expected

- Explains the activities you will use to achieve the objectives.
- Includes day-to-day responsibilities, who performs them, timelines, facilities and resources needed, and how the clients are selected.
- Should be a complete roadmap of your program.

Exceptional

- Methods used are economical and achieve objectives in the most cost-efficient manner.
- Sufficient division of labor so that no one individual is burdened with the bulk of the work.
- Periodic measurements built in to gauge progress.

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Evaluation – 1 page

Expected

- Valid methods are used to evaluate progress toward objectives.
- Ties into the Needs Statement so that results can be used to further understand the problem.
- Includes a plan for disseminating the results.

Exceptional

- Evaluation techniques are both valid and creative.
- Designed by someone with evaluation expertise.



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Future and Existing Funding – ½ page

Expected

- Lists others sources of funding for your program
- Lists methods for seeking additional funding
- Shows that you understand the importance of sustainability

Exceptional

- Shows investment by others or by your own organization
- Includes in-kind contributions as well

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Budget & Budget Narrative – 1 ½ pages

Expected

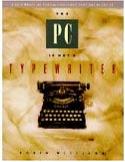
- Accurately reflects your project
- Avoids large amounts under vague categories like “Contingency” or “Miscellaneous”
- Separates personnel from non-personnel costs

Exceptional

- Clearly shows what the funder will provide, and what you and others will provide
- Is easy for non-financial people to read
- Explains the budget with clear descriptions of revenue and expenses

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Tips for Grant Submission



- Follow any instructions provided
- Submit ahead of the deadline
- Follow standard format and page limits
- Use a readable font
- Follow desktop publishing basics

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Sarah Jordan's Tips – Proposal & Response

- Consult resources to help you write
 - shapingoutcomes.org
 - networkforgood.org
 - *Complete Book of Grant Writing*
- Get “fresh eyes” on your proposal
- Develop a strong sustainability plan
- Send photos, examples of work, quotes from participants
- If denied, ask for feedback
- Library!



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If you are funded. . .

- Read grant agreements carefully before signing. Make sure they reflect your proposal.
- Re-negotiate the terms, if necessary.
- Come to agreement and determine when/how your funds arrive.



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If you aren't funded. . .

- Thank the funder for the opportunity and ask to review the evaluations of your proposal.
- Ask if you may resubmit your proposal with changes.
- Never complain about not being funded; not even to friends, family, or staff.
- Learn from the experience, adjust your proposal if necessary, and seek another funder.

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Resources

VISTA Campus

- Researching Grants Tutorial
- Webinar – “Researching Grants: Finding the Right Opportunities for Your Project”

Online Elsewhere

- Foundationcenter.org – online database, tutorials, articles, tools
- Grantspace.org – Foundation Center’s learning community
- Guidestar.org – Information about non-profits including 990s
- GrantsAlert.com – education grants
- Grants.gov – federal grants

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Next steps...

1. Write the introductory paragraph for an LOI, using grant language.
2. Identify data sources you can use for a Statement of Need.
3. Draft a Goal Statement and several objectives for the project you want to get funded.



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Evaluation

- Please take a few moments to share your feedback through the quick poll on the right side of the screen.
- How can we improve these sessions? What topics should we include in future webinars?
- Thank you very much for your time and participation!

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Questions ?

- To ask a question verbally, call in using the number on this slide and press *1
- To ask a question electronically, use the Q&A feature located in the bottom right corner of the screen. Please ask "All Panelists"



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Thank You for Your Participation!

If you have further questions or for more information, contact us:
VISTAwebinars@cns.gov

Upcoming webinars:

Exploring Implicit Bias and Perception, Pt 1 – November 10, 2016
High Impact Volunteer Recruitment – November 15, 2016
2:00 pm Eastern

*Visit the Webinars for VISTAs page on the VISTA Campus
for a complete schedule of VISTA webinars*

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