

# Grant Writing

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR GRANT WRITING SUCCESS

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1

*So you want to write a grant proposal....*

2

## OUTLINE OF TODAY'S TALK

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- The Reluctant Grant Writer's Survival Guide
- What comes first, the idea or the grant?
- How to Write a Grant
- Start with the Basics: Eligibility & Guidelines
- Now Let's Actually Write a Grant!
- The Case for Data
- How to Evaluate your Project
- More Tips to Keep in Mind
- Q&A

3

## ABOUT ME

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- MLIS from Louisiana State University
- Non Profit Management Certificate from UNH
- Grant Coordinator for CAFCP
- Grant Coordinator for 21CCLC
- \$111,000 in Grant Awards for NDPL since September 2021

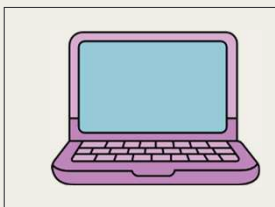
4

## THE RELUCTANT GRANT WRITER'S SURVIVAL GUIDE



### *Step 1*

**You have a great idea!** Naturally, you procrastinate aggressively. *Today* is not the day to write a grant. *Today* is the day to organize your paperclip drawer.



### *Step 2*

**Panic and Google "How to Write a Grant. Open 27 browser tabs with conflicting advice. Briefly consider faking your own disappearance.**



### *Step 3*

**Type something.** Anything. Even if it's just "I have no idea what I'm doing, but please give us money." Keep going until your brain melts. Then edit it until it sounds semi-professional.

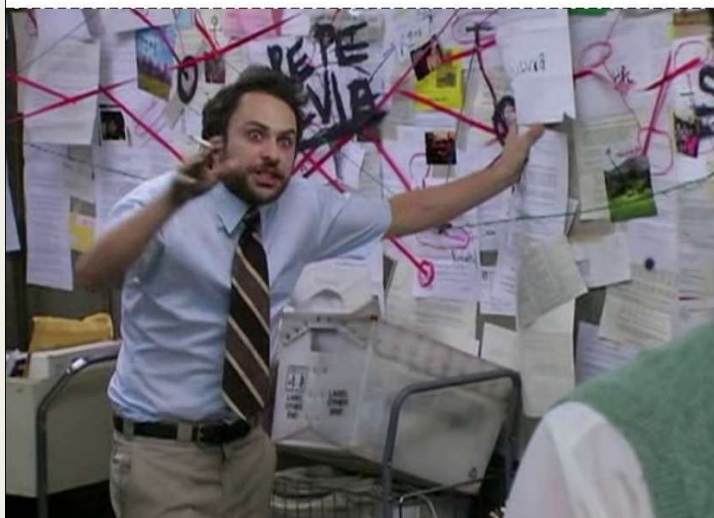


### *Step 4*

**Hit submit with the confidence of a raccoon stealing food from a picnic. Assume you won't get it. But hey, you \*barely\* survived the process! Celebrate with some snacks.**

5

## Me trying to explain to funders how our missions are aligned



6

## HOW TO WRITE A GRANT



### *Step 1*

**Accept that your idea needs funding before it becomes a reality, and so the grant writing has to be done. You don't have to love it, but you do have to do it. Remind yourself why the funding is important.**



### *Step 2*

**Read and re-read the application guidelines and make notes so you don't miss anything. Collect all the information you need, like project details and budget estimates.**



### *Step 3*

**Write the ugly first draft. Then edit and edit again. Upload your supporting documents**



### *Step 4*

**Double check all requirements, proofread, ensure everything is attached, then submit. Celebrate with snacks.**

7



8

## WHAT COMES FIRST, THE IDEA OR THE GRANT?

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This is dependent on the grant and on the idea.

### *Example #1*

**What does the library intend to spend the \$500 on?** Are there any special circumstances that would make the application especially urgent or compelling, such as budgetary constraints, special programs that require funding, or a lack of library materials in a subject, format, or for a select audience? Please be sure to make your answers specific and compelling. This is your chance to make your case for why your library should receive the We Love Libraries \$500 grant. Winners of the \$500 award must use the funds to purchase library materials or for public programming. The grant money can't be directed to the operating budget.

This grant is specific. You **must** use funds to purchase library materials or to put on a program.

### *Example #2*

We seek out programs that benefit New Hampshire women and girls by:

- Promoting Economic Security
- Supporting Health, Wellness, and Safety
- Enhancing Leadership, Education, and Empowerment

This grant is vague. As long as it serves women & girls and can be applied to one of these categories, you can do what you want.

9

Your idea is not going to be thought out.  
It will sound terrible.

And that's okay.

10

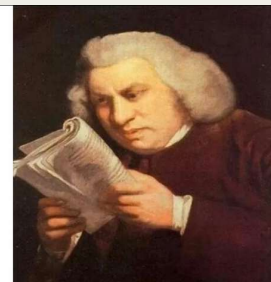
## START WITH THE BASICS

Eligibility = who can apply for this grant

Guidelines = how you can apply and what you can apply for

Requirements = what you have to do in order to get the funding

Reads the RFP carefully



Still unclear of the guidelines



11

### Eligibility

- Applicants must have a membership with either the [American Library Association](#) OR the Association for Rural & Small Libraries.
- This opportunity is open to all types of libraries in the U.S. and U.S. territories.
- Only complete and eligible applications that are received by the deadline will be reviewed.

## ELIGIBILITY

#### Eligible applicants

- 501c3 non-profit organizations and other federally tax-exempt entities including, but not limited to: universities/colleges, school districts, public libraries, tribal organizations, museums, and community service organizations.
- Organizations located within the United States, US Territories, and the Native Nations that share this geography.
- Arts and cultural organizations in any arts discipline (literature, performing arts, visual arts, traditional arts, multidisciplinary arts, etc.) or nonprofit organizations that provide arts programming (social service agencies, etc.)
- Organizations that do not have overdue reports or funding moratoria with Arts Midwest.
- Organizations with or without a UEI number from SAM.gov, though applicants will need to have a UEI number on file by late April 2025 in order to receive grant funds. Apply for a free UEI at [sam.gov](#).

#### Eligibility

1. A political subdivision, agency, or instrumentality of a State, including an agency of a State that is responsible for administering or supervising adult education and literacy activities, or for providing public housing, in the State.
2. An Indian Tribe, an Alaska Native entity, or a Native Hawaiian organization ("Native Entity").
3. A foundation, corporation, institution, or association that is
  1. a not-for-profit entity, and
  2. not a school.
4. A community anchor institution.
5. A local educational agency.
6. An entity that carries out a workforce development program.
7. A partnership between any of the entities described in paragraphs (1) through (6).



12

**How do I apply?**

You must apply [online](#).

**What is the minimum grant amount that TD Charitable Foundation will approve?**

The minimum amount is \$5,000. You may apply for full or partial funding of a program.

**How many times may I apply for a grant?**

Your organization may apply as many times as you'd like, but only one grant will be awarded to an organization during a twelve-month period.

**Is there an application deadline?**

We accept regional grants applications on a bi-monthly basis. Please see the funding calendar in the application section

**When do you notify applicants?**

Applicants are notified according to the fu

# GUIDELINES

## Eligible Expenses

Peggy Barber Tribute Grant funds are restricted to program related expenses. Eligible expenses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Program supplies
- Promotion and publicity
- Purchase of collection materials
- Library staff time
- Payment to project partners for reimbursement or direct funding of services and support provided (e.g. presenters, childcare providers, translators, instructors, co-facilitator, etc.)

Grant funds may not be used to support indirect costs (e.g., general library administrative expenses) or as donations to other organizations.

13

## Requirements

The selected libraries make the following commitments:

- Appoint one staff member as the project director of the project.
- Carry out evaluation and measure outcomes of the project.
- Submit any significant variance to proposed plans in writing to ALA.
- Submit a comprehensive final report to ALA with project accomplishments, evaluation of funds within 30 days of the project end date.
- Present the project either as a webinar or written program model for [ProgrammingLibro](#) Public Programs Office.

# REQUIREMENTS

**In addition to the application questions, the following documents are required (in PDF or Word format) for your funding request to be considered.**

- A list of your organization's board members including their employer, job title, and board position
- Last available audited financial statement or a copy of filed tax form, if the organization does not have an audit performed. Acceptable financial documents include:
  - A full financial audit
  - Completed tax return
  - 990EZ return—we will not accept the 990N or Postcard

## Reporting Requirements

**Outcome-based reports are required from the grantee at the end of the project, and interim reports are very welcome.** The reports are meant to be simple, not onerous, and will include amount of the grant spent and how it was spent, the numbers of readers served, the number of hours spent by staff, and other simple figures to give Believe in Reading a snapshot of how your program is progressing.

Photos are appreciated as well. [Here is the report form](#). Please download the form, fill it out, save it and send it as an attachment to [admin@believeinreading.org](mailto:admin@believeinreading.org).

14

Now let's actually write a grant!

15



WRITE DOWN YOUR IDEA

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toddler  
makerspace

16

## LET'S BRAINSTORM: TODDLER MAKERSPACE

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*What is this program?*

**A STEM focused program for ages 2-5.**

*What do I need to put this program on at my library?*

**Money for supplies, maybe money for staffing hours.**

*Why do I want to do a toddler makerspace?*

**We have a large group of infants and toddlers, and not a lot of activities (besides storytime) that are geared towards this age group.**

*Anything else related to this age group?*

**We don't have a large collection of board books, so it would be cool to add to it. And also we have take home toys and STEM kits for a lot of ages, but not toddlers. So it would be fun to have something like that for them.**

17

## WRITING A COMPELLING NARRATIVE

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Let's answer some questions!



18

### Primary Audience

Describe what part(s) of the disabled community will be the primary audience for your project. Why did you choose to focus on this audience? How, if at all, do you currently serve this audience? What are your plans for outreach efforts to engage this audience throughout the project? What are your overarching goals for engaging this audience with your project?

**PLEASE SUMMARIZE PROJECT OBJECTIVES (What will be accomplished with the funding requested? How does this project further your organization's mission? State in three sentences or less):**

1. **Need** (250 words): Please describe the need or opportunity (community or organizational) for your proposed work. How is the current climate (relative to targeted attacks, policy changes, federal funding, etc.) impacting your organization, your programs, and the communities you serve?

19

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We will work with local programs that help young children with disabilities, special education teachers, and parent support groups to make sure families know about and feel welcome in the makerspace. We will also ask parents, therapists, and teachers for ideas on how to make the space work well for kids with low mobility. To spread the word, we will share information at community events, on social media, and by reaching out directly to families who might need a space like this but don't always feel comfortable in typical library programs.

20

Our outreach efforts will include collaboration with local early intervention programs, special education services, and parent support groups to ensure that families know about and feel welcome in the makerspace. We will seek input from caregivers, therapists, and educators to design an environment that truly meets the needs of children with cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis and other low-mobility disorders. Additionally, we will promote the makerspace through community events, social media, and direct outreach to families who may benefit from the space but feel hesitant about traditional library settings.

21

Our outreach efforts will include collaboration with Headstart, an early learning center located 3 blocks from our library. The special services director from the New Durham School will be posting flyers in the school and letting our target families know about this free program. There is a special needs parent support group that meets monthly at the library and we will send a library representative to speak at the next session to ensure that families know about and feel welcome in the makerspace. We will also engage with caregivers in the support group, emphasizing the value of their feedback in ensuring our makerspace effectively meets the needs of neurodivergent children. Additionally, we will collaborate with our Parks & Rec Department to promote the makerspace through both of our upcoming community events, our social media channels, and direct outreach to families who may benefit from the space but may be hesitant to participate in traditional library programs.

22

2. **Project Description (250 words):** Briefly describe the project/proposed work, including major activities, timetable, staff qualifications related to the work, and number of people impacted.

Our project is to create a toddler makerspace designed to support toddlers. This space will include hands-on activities that encourage creativity, problem-solving, and social play in a calm and welcoming environment.

We plan to set up the makerspace over the next six months. Library staff will lead the project, working with educators, therapists, and parents to make sure the space meets the needs of young children. Our team has experience running early childhood programs and sensory-friendly activities, making them well-qualified for this work.

We expect this makerspace to serve dozens of families each month, providing a space where young children can learn and grow while caregivers connect with helpful resources and support.

23

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24

## *Example of a Funding Calendar*

Decisions Communicated By	
Application Deadline: Friday, October 11, 2024	Middle of December
Application Deadline: Wednesday, November 27, 2024	End of January
Application Deadline: Friday, January 31, 2025	End of March
Application Deadline: Friday, March 28, 2025	End of May
Application Deadline: Friday, May 30, 2025	End of July
Application Deadline: Friday, August 1, 2025	End of September

25

Our project aims to develop a toddler makerspace specifically designed to support children ages 2-5 with autism and sensory processing needs. This space will feature hands-on, developmentally appropriate activities that foster creativity, problem-solving, and social engagement in a structured yet flexible environment tailored to neurodivergent learners.

The project will be implemented over a six-month timeline. In July, when funds are released, we will purchase materials and equipment needed for our monthly activities. In September we will begin promoting our makerspace program with a start date of October 8th. The educators and professionals from Headstart and the school will use their professional experience to help us understand how to make this program as accessible as possible. Our children's librarian, who holds a master's degree in education and has 15 years of experience working with children — first as a teacher and now as a librarian — will lead this program. She will be supported by another staff member with four years of experience working in our library, directly engaging with the children and families this makerspace is designed to serve.

This makerspace program will serve 14 or more families each month, providing children with meaningful opportunities for hands-on learning while offering caregivers a supportive community and access to valuable resources. Through this initiative, we aim to establish the library as a leader in inclusive early learning experiences within our community.

26



*Define everything, and get creative with your definitions.*

27

## THE CASE FOR DATA



28

Incorporating data at the beginning of your narrative demonstrates to grantors that you can provide measurable evidence of the grant's potential success and impact.

29

## THE CASE FOR DATA

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### **Data helps to strengthen a narrative.**

#### *Example*

Our patrons have expressed interest in more programs that target toddlers.

VS

A recent community survey highlighted that 51% of our patrons are seeking more programs geared towards ages 2-5.

### **Data helps to paint a picture.**

#### *Example*

A lot of our programs are geared towards seniors, and we need to do more for our kids. Especially since our we have a lot of young families with young kids in the town and we need to have more programs for them to come to.

VS

Currently, 61% of our programs are designed for teens and adults, while only 14% serve children under the age of 5. However, this does not align with our community demographics, where 25% of residents are 5 or younger. To better serve this population, we need to expand our programming, but additional funding is essential to make this possible.

30

## HOW TO EVALUATE YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT

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### PROJECT EVALUATION AND OBJECTIVES:

- *Describe how you will measure the success of the project*
- *What do you expect to accomplish with your project?*
- *How and when will you know you have succeeded?*

Almost every grant will ask a question along the lines of project evaluation and objectives.

Don't make answering this question harder than it needs to be.

31

## HOW TO EVALUATE YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT

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### Qualitative

Refers to information that describes qualities, characteristics, or attributes, rather than being expressed numerically or quantifiable. It's often collected through methods like interviews, observations, and focus groups.

*We will assess the success of this program by gathering qualitative feedback from parents and caregivers through conversations, surveys, and informal discussions about their experiences and the program's impact on their children.*

### Quantitative

Refers to information that can be counted or measured and represented with numbers

*The success of this program will be measured quantitatively through attendance data, with an initial goal of engaging 5% of the local toddler population in the first session. Over a 12-month period, we aim to achieve a 5% increase in monthly attendance and a 5% growth in the number of toddlers visiting the library.*

32

## MORE TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND

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### Be specific.

- Give numbers when you have them.
- Give percentages when you have them.
- Don't use a tone that implies hope.
- Use the key phrases and words the grant wants you to use.

### Use all the word count.

- Write in a word document and keep track of the word or character count.
- Be brief in your statements, so that you can add detailed fluff.

### Upload all the extras.

Any time a grant has an option to upload an extra material, do it.

- Detailed budget spreadsheet
- Letter of support
- Photo or video

### Save your demographics paragraph.

The first question will always be about demographics. Write a template that you can use over and over.

### You don't have to start at #1.

Start at the question that you find is easiest to write. That gives you confidence to keep going on.

### Collaborate with another department.

If there is any chance you can partner with another town department or organization on a grant, do so.

### Answer every part of the question.

If you don't know every detail, be vague about some parts and over explain the others.

### Use ChatGPT to help.

Gone are the days of the thesaurus. If you're trying to make a sentence sound more professional, plug it into ChatGPT and ask it to reword it for you.

33

# Thank you!

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**NEW DURHAM**  
**PUBLIC LIBRARY**

34