



# Grant Writing Basics

**Yani Mason**





# Hello!

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*I am* **Yani Mason**

I am here because I love helping people do good better.

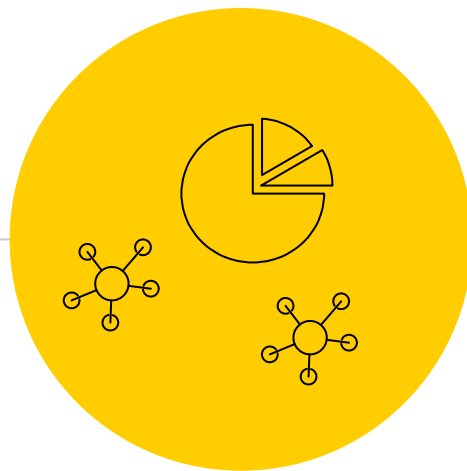
Connect with me on **LinkedIn**

# 258,500,000,000

Contributions by individuals to nonprofit organizations in 2014

Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics





# Diversification

Donations from individuals comprise the single largest share of charitable contributions to nonprofits

*Diversity means that you have as many people as you can **coordinate**, raising money from as many sources as you can manage.*

“

Kim Klein

# 1,500,000

Registered nonprofits in the United States

# 35,473

Illinois nonprofits

# 53%

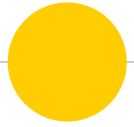
Of the 73% of Illinois nonprofits that experienced an increase in services that had the funding to meet the demand



*People don't buy what you do; they  
buy **why you do it.***

“

Simon Sinek



# Overview of the Process





## Grant Writing Process

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**Research**



**Action**



**Communicate**



**Evaluate**



# Getting Started

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## Common Terms

Request for proposals

Request for applications

Letter of inquiry/interest

501(c)3 organization

Fiscal sponsor

Unsolicited proposals

In-kind contributions



## Getting Started

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### Types of Funding Available

Capital improvement  
General operating  
Programmatic

### Types of Grants Available

Competitive vs. non  
Public (federal/state/local)  
Private foundations  
Single vs. multi-year  
Reimbursement vs. matching



## Getting Started

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### Documentation

Federal Employer  
Identification Number (FEIN)  
Tax exemption letters  
Financial statements and  
budget  
History, mission, and vision  
statements  
Public relations materials

### Support (Buy-In)

Board of directors  
Executive leadership  
Program staff  
Community members  
Volunteers



# Misconceptions

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## Free Money

Nothing in life is really free..

## It's Easy

This work is not for the fickle or faint of heart.

## \$ for Corporations

You might have better luck finding a unicorn.

## Copy and Paste Everything

Boilerplate information may be reused infinitely.

## Automatic Win

Competition is steep.

## Win Once, Win Every Time

There are considerations



## Basic Components

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**Be sure to carefully read the instructions for all funding opportunities.**

Project/program summary

Project/program and organizational history

Purpose statement

Program description

SMART goals and objectives

Timeline of activities

Personnel

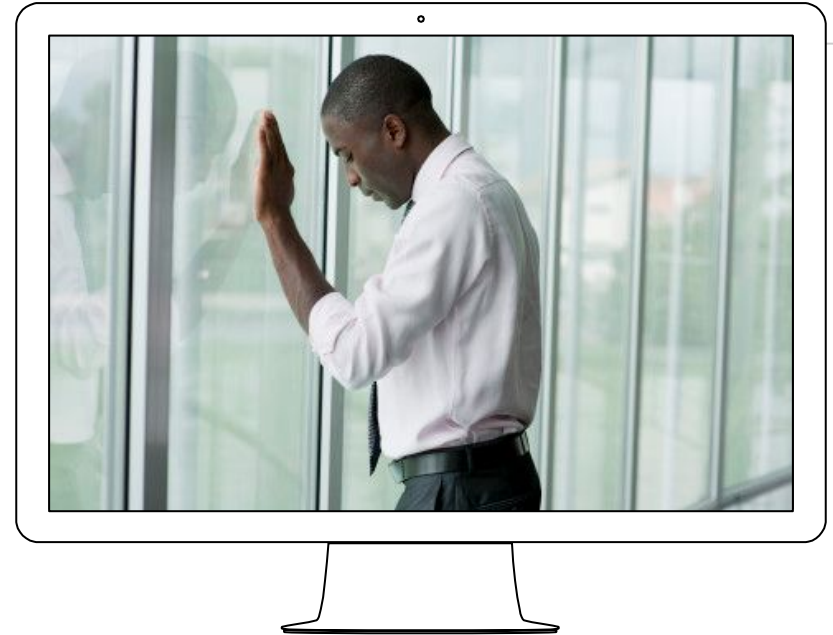
Evaluation and sustainability plans

Budget (with justification)



# 10 Ways Grants Drive You Crazy

1. Long wait
2. Long shot
3. Rejection
4. Lack of permanence
5. Restrictions on funds
6. Lack of control
7. Capacity
8. Neglect
9. Dirty money
10. Opportunity cost

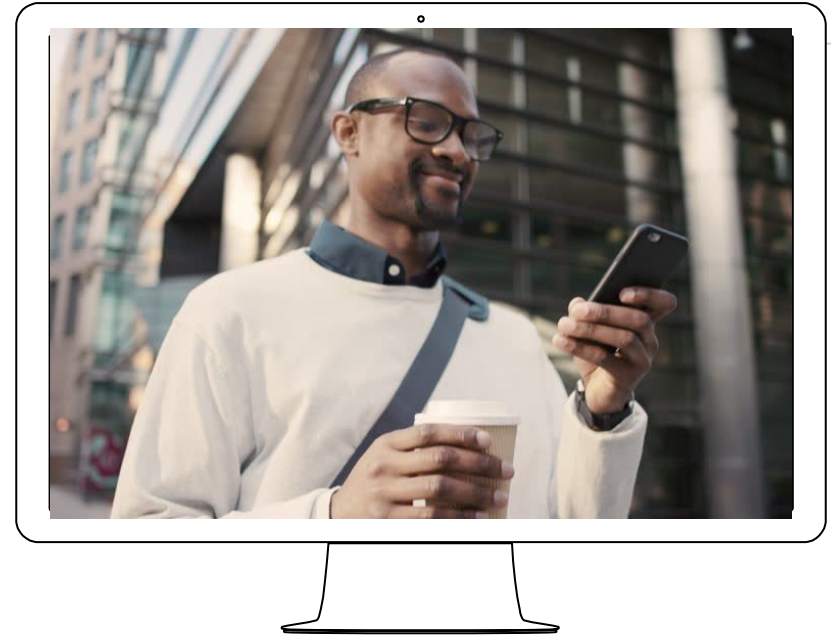


Source: Robinson (2004), Grassroots Grants (Second Edition).



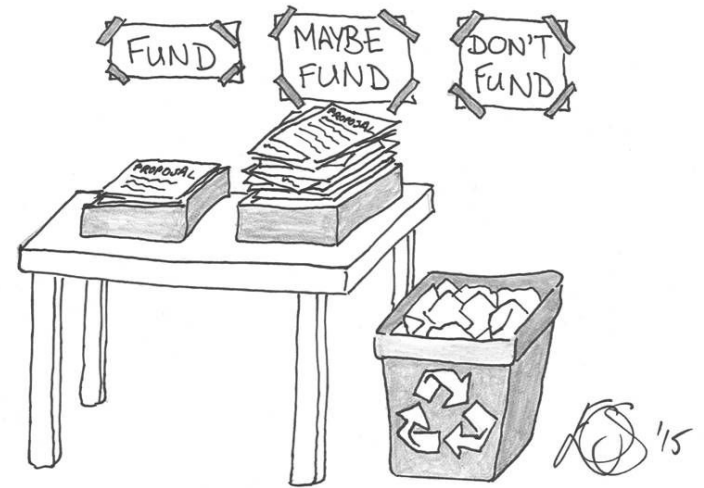
## 10 Ways Grants Benefit Your Work

1. Getting funding (of course)
2. Tons of opportunities
3. Forced organization
4. Credibility
5. Large amounts of money
6. Seed money
7. Diversification of funding
8. Preparation for major donor campaigns
9. Leverage to raise more money
10. It's fun

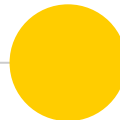


Source: Robinson (2004), Grassroots Grants (Second Edition).







*Review panel categories.*







## 8 Reasons Why You Won't/ Will Get the Grant

		
<b>1. Directions</b>	You didn't follow directions.	You carefully read and followed instructions.
<b>2. Deadline</b>	You missed the deadline.	You met the deadline and turned your materials in on time.
<b>3. Fit</b>	Your proposal doesn't align with the funder's priorities.	You did your research and made sure your proposal was aligned with the funder's interests.





## 8 Reasons Why You Won't/ Will Get the Grant

		
<b>4. Argument</b>	Your argument doesn't make sense.	Your argument is logical.
<b>5. Passion</b>	You just want to do good.	You understand the problem, have a solid plan, and intend to produce results.
<b>6. Data</b>	Your proposal is based on beliefs and assumptions.	Your proposal is based on facts.



## 8 Reasons Why You Won't/ Will Get the Grant

		
<b>7. Proven Results</b>	Your proposal sought support for your latest idea.	Your approach was based on data, experience, and best practices.
<b>8. Meeting the Need</b>	You focused on your organization's need for money.	Your proposal focuses on the people your organization serves.



## Increase Your Odds

1. Identify champion(s)
2. Financial sustainability
3. Programmatic sustainability
4. Partnerships
5. Highlight your skills and capacity
6. Relationships





## Collecting Your Data

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The data that you include should justify your need for funding.

- On your population
- On the strategies and/or programs that you will use to serve them



## Finding Data

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Data you include should be from credible, reputable sources.

- Census Bureau
- CityData.com
- Diversity Data Kids
- Peer-reviewed journals and articles



## Looking for Funding

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Oftentimes, we find out about grant opportunities through a few primary methods

Searching databases

Subscribing to e-newsletters

Word of mouth (ED)

- Get Ed Funding
- Grants.gov
- Grant Gopher
- Grant Watch
- Guide Star
- Norris Consulting





## Researching Funders

Organizational funding priorities  
and interests

Types of funding support  
available

Whether unsolicited proposals  
are accepted





## Researching Funders

The number of grants that will be awarded

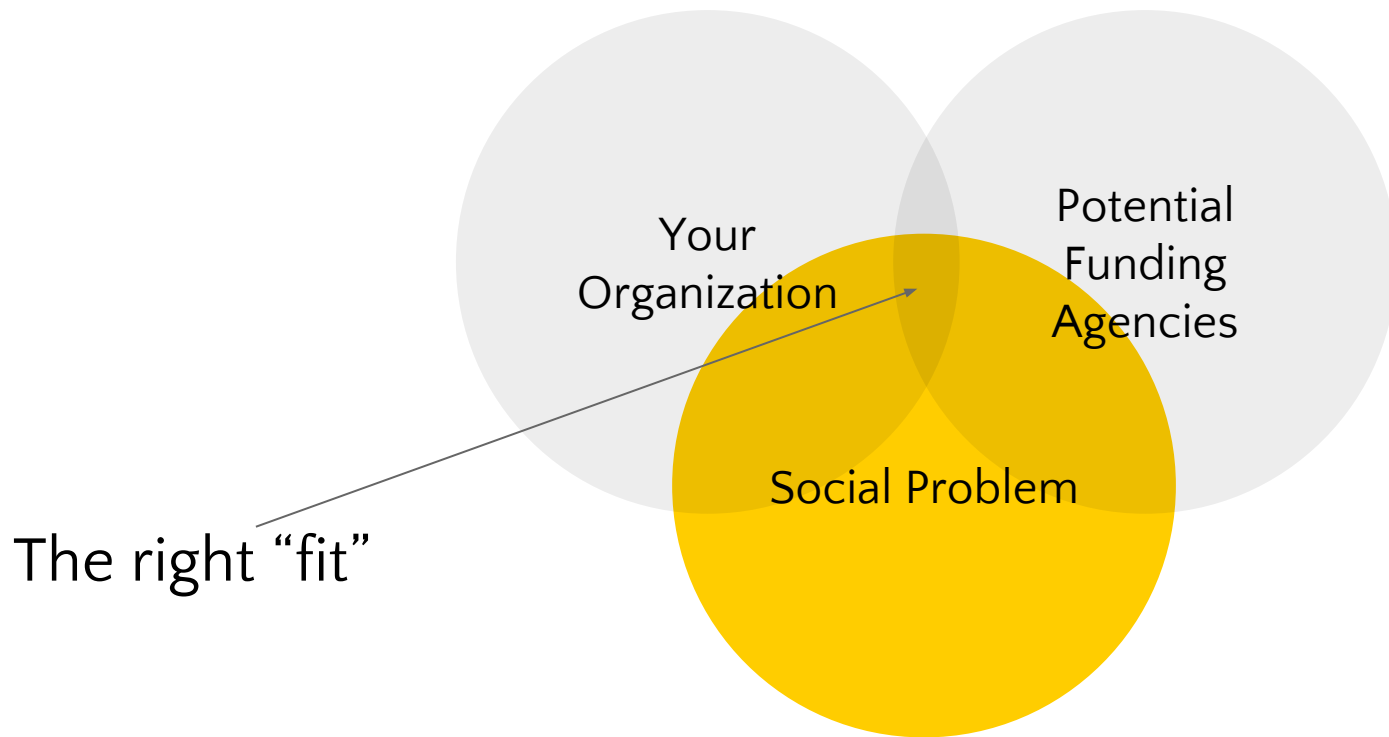
The range for each award

Past recipients and their projects





## Keeping Things in Perspective



*When something can be read  
without effort, great effort has  
gone into its writing.*

“

Enrique Jardiel Poncela



# Documenting Your Need

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## Paint the picture

What is the problem? How is this problem impacting your community?

## Why

Why should this problem be addressed now?

## What

What is the cause of this issue?  
Can it be resolved?

## Positioning Statement

How is your organization uniquely positioned to address the issue?

## Methodology

What evidence-based strategies will your organization use?

## Impact

What will happen as a result of your efforts?



# Letter of Inquiry

## What is it?

Letter of introduction to a funding agency (typically foundations)

## Elements

### First Paragraph

- Hook and Introduction
- Purpose and Need

### Second Paragraph

- History of your org/project
- Alignment with funder

### Third Paragraph

- Summary
- Optimistic closing

Sample:

[Inside Address]

Dear Mr. Person:

Subject: Letter of Inquiry

Please accept this letter of inquiry regarding our interest in submitting a proposal to develop a project that will focus on [state problem and how we plan to solve it.]

Normandale Community College serves the Southwest metropolitan area of the Twin Cities. More than 11,000 students attend the college annually. [Include specific information about the department or program that will benefit from this project.] A fact sheet about the college is enclosed.

Our project will include [list potential activities.] [Write about Goals, Objectives, Timelines, and Benefits – consider using a bulleted format.]

The total budget for the project will be \$xx,xxx. We are approaching your agency with a request to fully fund the project. [If there are partner organizations, state that we are also seeking monetary and personnel support from others. List any that have already committed money or resources. We may ask this funding source to only partially fund the project].

We believe that this project fits in well with your agency's vision and mission and would like to submit a full proposal. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

6/03 - Office of Grant Development - Normandale Community College



## Highlights from LOIs

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### Salutation

Make it personal.

### Hook

Reel 'em in.

### Need

Make them care.

### Request

Get to the point.

### Closing

Be optimistic.



# Creating a Winning Application

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## Body

*Follows directions*

Demonstrates need

Uses evidence-based practices and/or research

Clear and succinct

Easy to understand (acronyms, language)

Tells a compelling story

## Format

*Follows directions*

Uses bullets, highlights, italics

Flows logically

## Design

*Follows directions*

Neat

Attractive

Consistent





# Thanks!

*Any* **questions** ?

Email me at [dr.yani.mason@gmail.com](mailto:dr.yani.mason@gmail.com)