



# 10 Tips for Funding Great Projects

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PREPARED FOR *WHAT'S NEXT EKY?! COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS* – APRIL 21, 2022

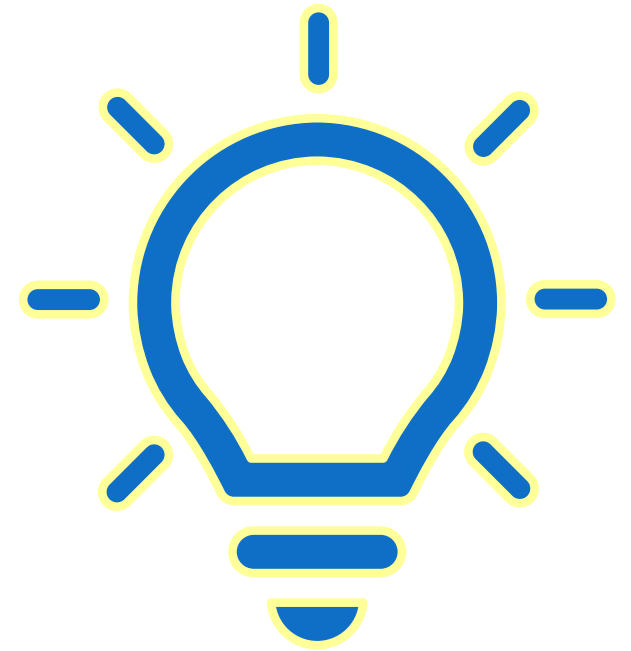
PRESENTED BY: RUTHIE CALDWELL, CHIEF CONSULTANT



# Let's discuss...

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- I. Tips for Developing a “Fundable” Project
- II. Finding Funding
- III. Tips for Crafting a Competitive Proposal
- IV. Tools & Resources





Proceed with Caution

# Warning!

- ❖ Grants are NOT free money
- ❖ Grants require time and energy to manage and report impact
- ❖ If there is any decent way to fund something without a grant...DO IT!

*“The hardest part is not getting a grant. The hardest part is spending the money after you get a grant.” –Anonymous Seasoned Grant Writer & Manager*



# Tips for Developing a Fundable Project

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1. Develop Your Team
2. Start Small
3. Draft a Work Plan
4. Develop a Funding & Financing Strategy
5. Draft a Brief Concept Paper



# 1. Develop Your Team

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Form a cognitively  
diverse team

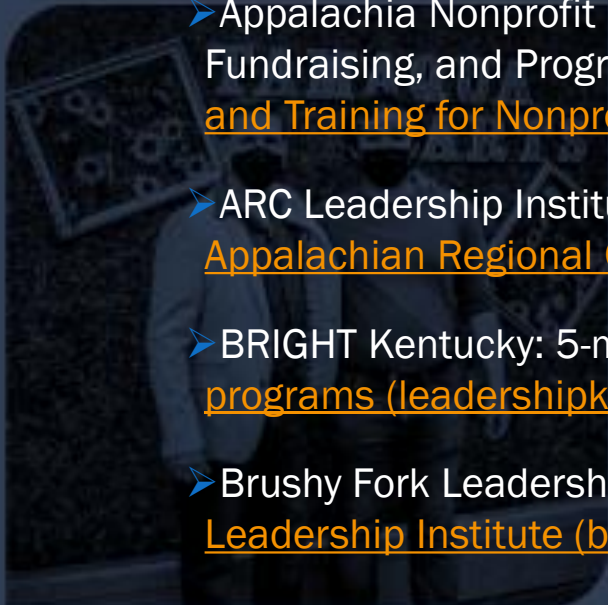




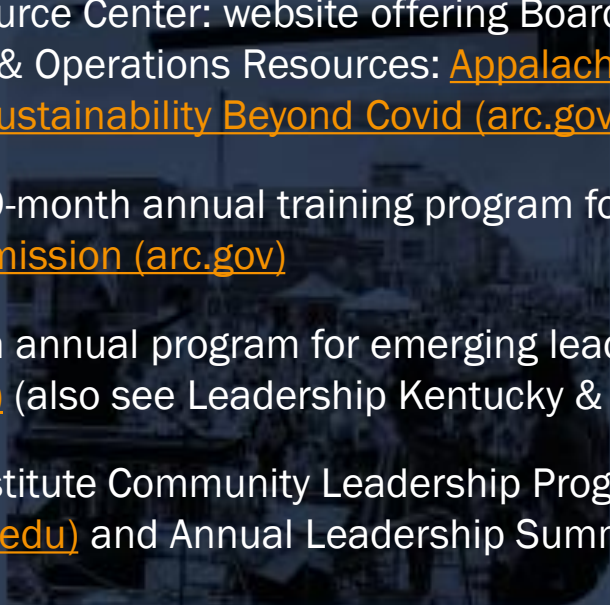
# Develop Leadership Skills

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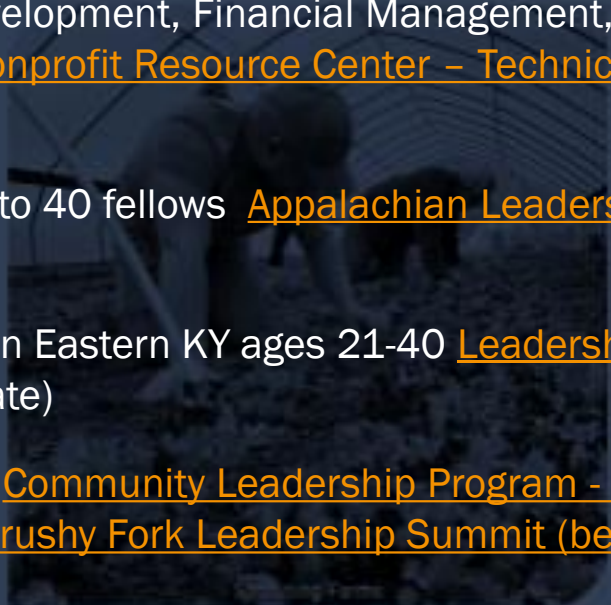
- Appalachia Nonprofit Resource Center: website offering Board Development, Financial Management, Nonprofit Fundraising, and Programs & Operations Resources: [Appalachia Nonprofit Resource Center – Technical Assistance and Training for Nonprofit Sustainability Beyond Covid \(arc.gov\)](https://arc.gov)
- ARC Leadership Institute: 9-month annual training program for up to 40 fellows [Appalachian Leadership Institute - Appalachian Regional Commission \(arc.gov\)](https://arc.gov)
- BRIGHT Kentucky: 5-month annual program for emerging leaders in Eastern KY ages 21-40 [Leadership Kentucky - programs \(leadershipky.org\)](https://leadershipky.org) (also see Leadership Kentucky & Elevate)
- Brushy Fork Leadership Institute Community Leadership Program: [Community Leadership Program - Brushy Fork Leadership Institute \(berea.edu\)](https://berea.edu) and Annual Leadership Summit: [Brushy Fork Leadership Summit \(berea.edu\)](https://berea.edu)




Financial  
Management  
Resources



Nonprofit  
Fundraising  
Resources



Programs &  
Operations  
Resources

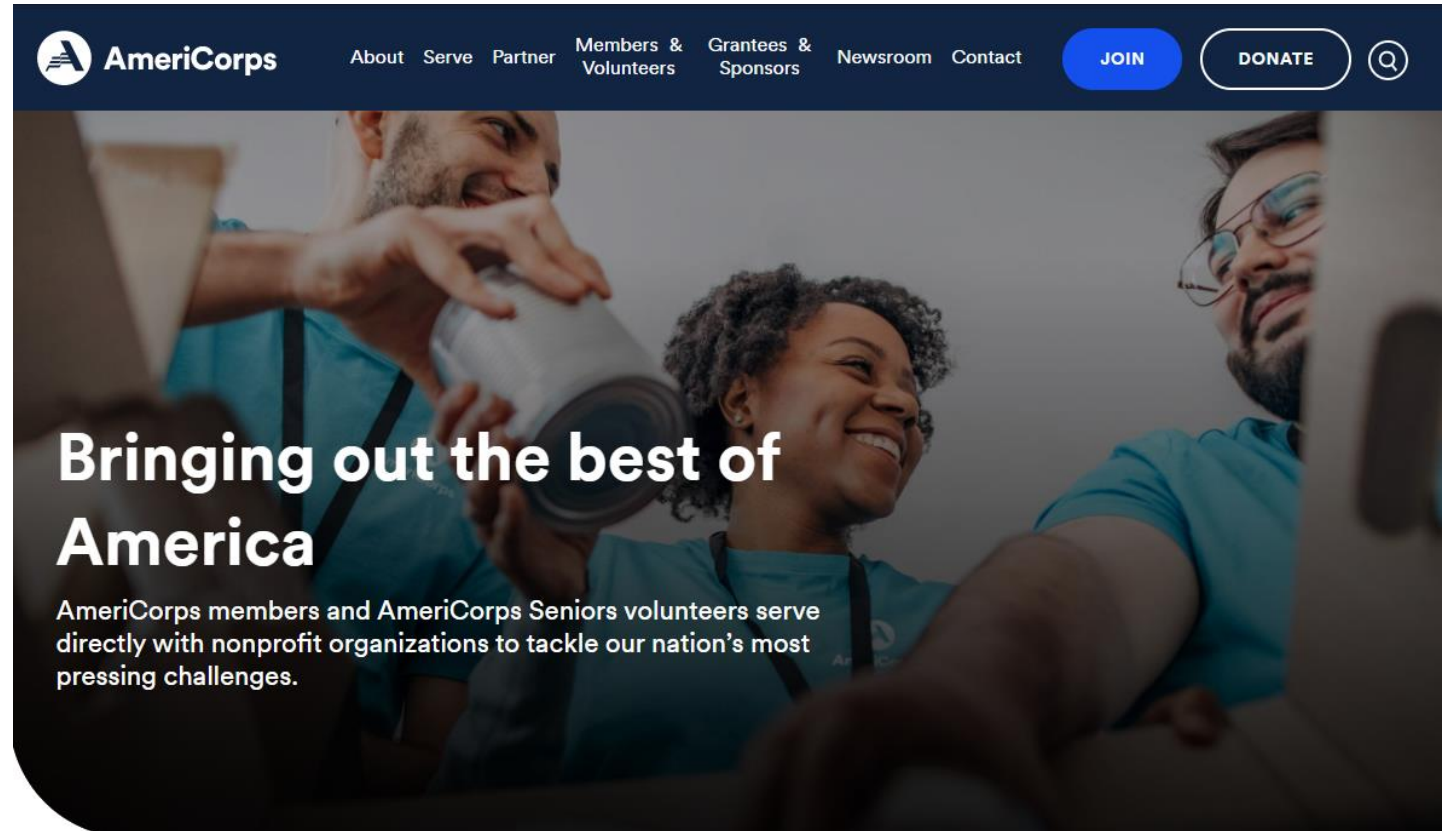


Board  
Development  
Resources

# AmeriCorps

Gain full-time volunteers to help fight poverty and food insecurity or build the capacity of your nonprofit organization.

- AmeriCorps Website: [Home | AmeriCorps](#)
- Kentucky Campus Compact Website: [Kentucky Campus Compact – Educating Citizens. Building Communities. \(kycompact.org\)](#)



The image shows a screenshot of the AmeriCorps website. At the top, there is a dark blue navigation bar with the AmeriCorps logo on the left. To the right of the logo are links for 'About', 'Serve', 'Partner', 'Members & Volunteers', 'Grantees & Sponsors', 'Newsroom', and 'Contact'. Further right are two buttons: a blue 'JOIN' button and a white 'DONATE' button with a search icon to its right. Below the navigation bar is a large hero image featuring three people in teal shirts. A woman in the center is smiling and holding a large clear water bottle. A man on the left is also smiling and looking towards the woman. A man on the right is wearing glasses and looking towards the woman. Overlaid on the bottom left of the hero image is the text 'Bringing out the best of America' in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below this headline is a smaller line of white text: 'AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve directly with nonprofit organizations to tackle our nation's most pressing challenges.'

## 2. Start Small

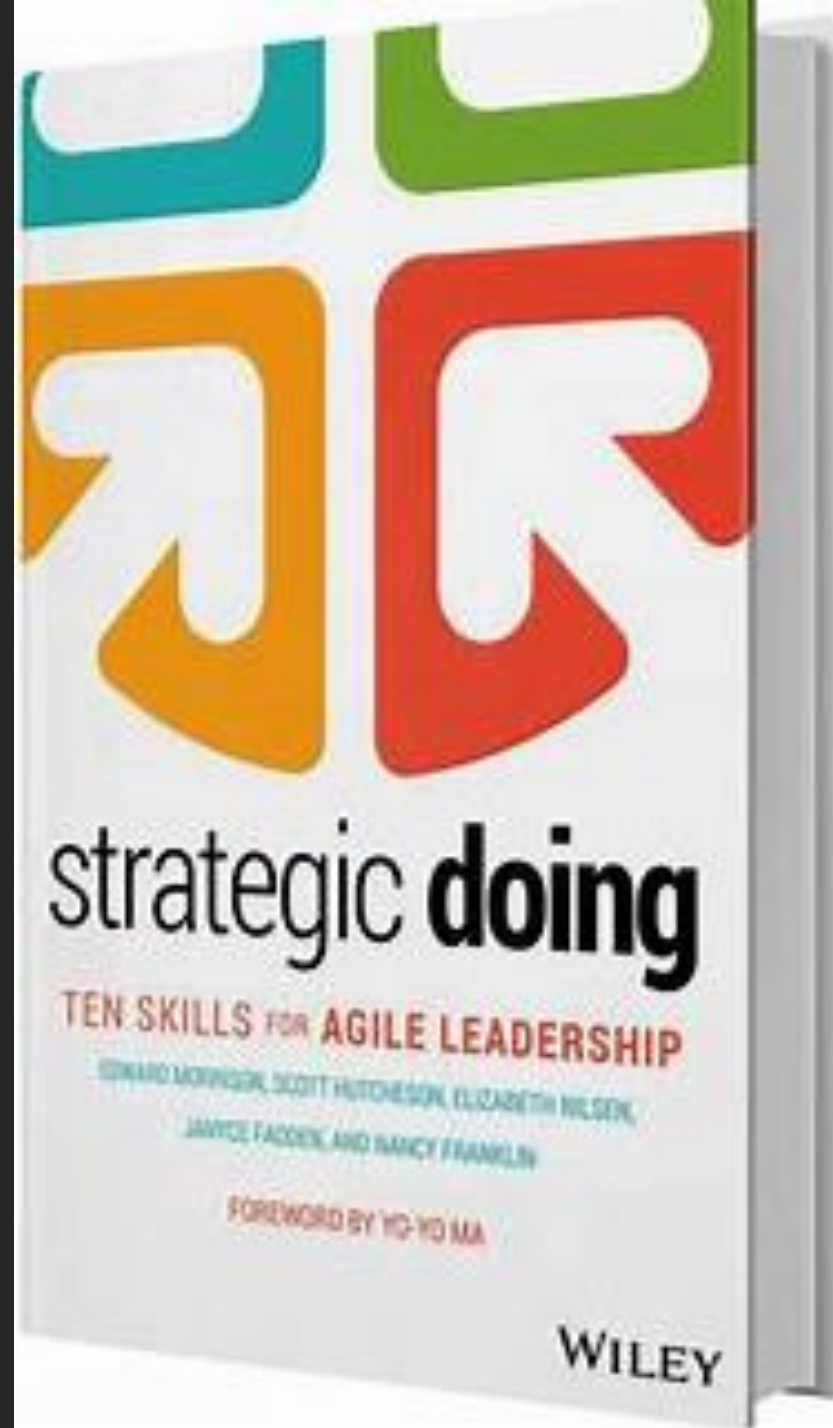
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start small - fail small -  
GROW TALL

Start now.

Don't focus on the things you  
can't do.

Focus on the assets you have  
and what you *can* do right  
now.



Copyrighted Material

# SCRUM

# The Art of Doing Twice the Work in Half the Time

←

**JEFF SUTHERLAND**  
Co-creator of Scrum  
**J. J. SUTHERLAND**

Copyrighted Material





### Project Work Plan

Date of Planning Session: XX/XX/20XX

# 3. Draft a Work Plan

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<b>Project Name:</b>			
<b>Project Leader:</b>		<b>Primary Team Members:</b>	
<b>Estimated Project Start Date:</b>	XX/XX/20XX	<b>Estimated Project End Date:</b>	XX/XX/20XX

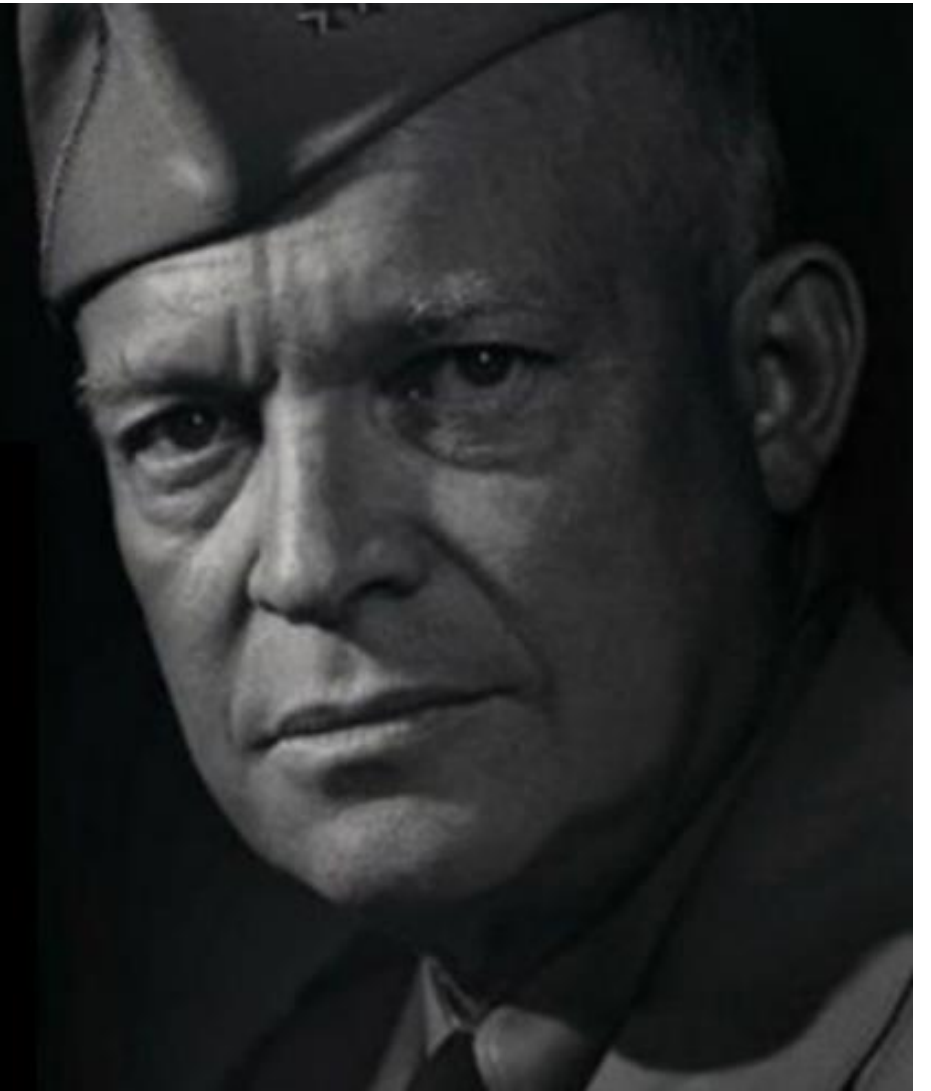
Before You Get Started: Important Questions to Answer	
1) <b>The Issue:</b> What problem or opportunities will this project or program solve or address?	
2) <b>The Solution:</b> How will your project or program address this issue?	
3) <b>Target Population:</b> Who is the target population?	
4) <b>Impact:</b> What potential impact can your project or program have (long and short term)?	
5) <b>Measuring Success:</b> How will you measure success during and after the project or program? What will success look like?	
6) <b>Innovation:</b> What makes this different/better/more innovative than other efforts?	
7) <b>Stakeholders:</b> Who do you need on your team to make this successful? Also who could keep this from being successful?	

Final Wrap-up: Important Questions to Answer Before Starting Your Project or Program	
8) <b>Communication:</b> What are the best ways to communicate with your team and stakeholders?	
9) <b>Risks:</b> Imagine your project is over and was not successful. What went wrong? These are issues you can plan to overcome before the project begins.	
10) <b>Sustainability:</b> How do you plan to sustain this project or program after initial funding ends?	

<b>Goal or Research Question 1:</b>					
<b>Objective 1.1</b>					
<b>Key Action Step</b>	<b>Timeline (important dates or length of time to complete)</b>	<b>Required Resources (personnel, data, supplies, travel, etc.)</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Objective 1.2</b>					
<b>Key Action Step</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Required Resources</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Objective 1.3</b>					
<b>Key Action Step</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Required Resources</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	<b>Comments</b>

In preparing for  
battle, I have always  
found that plans are  
useless but planning  
is indispensable.

– Dwight D. Eisenhower



# 4. Develop a Funding & Financing Strategy

Make Your Budget:

- ❖ Dream Budget
- ❖ Bare Minimum Budget

SIMPLE PROJECT BUDGET TEMPLATE				
Project Title:				
Project Lead:				
<b>Personnel</b>				
	Monthly Salary	%	Months	Total Cost
Project Lead	\$ -	0%	0.0	\$ -
	\$ -	0%	0.0	\$ -
	\$ -	0%	0.0	\$ -
	\$ -	0%	0.0	\$ -
	\$ -	0%	0.0	\$ -
	\$ -	0%	0.0	\$ -
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	\$ -	0%	0.0	\$ -
	\$ -	0%	0.0	\$ -
	\$ -	0%	0.0	\$ -
	\$ -	0%	0.0	\$ -
	\$ -	0%	0.0	\$ -
<b>TOTAL PERSONNEL:</b>				<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>	\$ -	0%		\$ -
<b>TOTAL PERSONNEL:</b>				<b>\$0</b>
<b>TRAVEL</b>				
In state travel	\$			-
Out of state travel	\$			-
International Travel	\$			-
<b>TOTAL TRAVEL:</b>	<b>\$</b>			<b>-</b>
<b>EQUIPMENT (over \$5,000)</b>				
	\$			-
	\$			-
	\$			-
<b>TOTAL EQUIPMENT:</b>	<b>\$</b>			<b>-</b>
<b>SUPPLIES &amp; MATERIALS</b>				
	\$			-
	\$			-
	\$			-
<b>TOTAL SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS:</b>	<b>\$</b>			<b>-</b>
<b>CONSULTANTS &amp; SUBAWARDS</b>				
	\$			-
	\$			-
	\$			-
<b>CONSULTANTS &amp; SUBAWARDS:</b>	<b>\$</b>			<b>-</b>
<b>OTHER (rentals, insurance, fees, etc.)</b>				
	\$			-
	\$			-
	\$			-
<b>TOTAL OTHER:</b>	<b>\$</b>			<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET</b>	<b>\$</b>			<b>-</b>



# 4. Make Your Strategy

(1) Long-Term Revenue Plan

(2) Startup Fundraising Plan

\*Capital Stack

- Big grant sponsors want to be the last money in
- Investigate financing, investors, tax credits, loans, equity, etc.
- Start small with Technical Assistance & Planning Grants, crowdfunding or event fundraisers like Show of Hands

## Capital Stack

**05** Equity

**04** Senior Debt

**03** Subordinate Debt

**02** Credit Enhancement

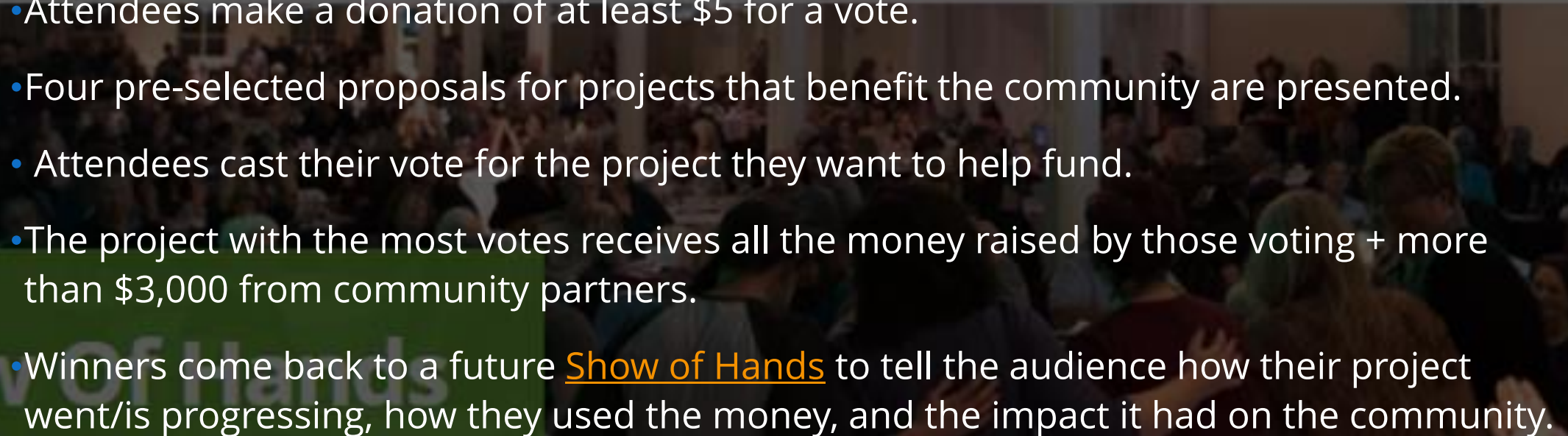
**01** Grant or Subsidy



# Example: Show of Hands

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## HOW SHOW OF HANDS WORKS:

- Attendees make a donation of at least \$5 for a vote.
  - Four pre-selected proposals for projects that benefit the community are presented.
  - Attendees cast their vote for the project they want to help fund.
  - The project with the most votes receives all the money raised by those voting + more than \$3,000 from community partners.
  - Winners come back to a future [Show of Hands](#) to tell the audience how their project went/is progressing, how they used the money, and the impact it had on the community.
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# Ideas for Matching Funds

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## Cash:

- **Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky L.I.F.T. Fund** (Leveraged Investment for Federal Traction) – Apply for technical assistance and \$25K-\$50K in matching funds.  
<https://bit.ly/CFGrantApp>
- **Just Transition Fund:** up to \$25K in federal grant matching funds [Just Transition Fund - Grantmaking Opportunities](#)
- **Local Sponsors & Corporations-** banks, utility companies, large employers, telecommunications companies
- **Other Grants** (sometimes): AMLER grants, AmeriCorps VISTA grants (ask the sponsor first!)

## In-Kind: donations provided instead of cash

- **Lease** of space or rental equipment, services, supplies, etc.
- **Volunteer Time:** published rate for that service -OR- national hourly volunteer rate: [Value of Volunteer Time – Independent Sector](#) as of April 2022: \$29.95/hour

*\*WARNING: you must track matching funds and often they must be spent FIRST*



# 5. Draft a *brief* concept paper

Include things like:

- Brief Summary
- Team Members & Partners
- The Need
- Project Description
- The Impact & Future Goals

*Far Far Away Kingdom University*



*The Rising STALK of Far Far Away*

**Magic Beanstalks for Prosperity**

**Introduction:** We are requesting 30 silver pieces and 1 monthly water ration from the King to fund *Magic Beanstalks for Prosperity*, an interdisciplinary research project developing a magic beanstalk that will grow to the giant's house overnight, so that Dr. Jackman can steal the magic singing harp one morning before the giant awakes. Our research questions include: 1) Based on growth rate and strength, which parent plant is best-suited as a magic bean prototype? and, 2) Will genetically engineered magic beans grow a beanstalk tall enough to reach the giant's castle and strong enough for Dr. Jack Beanstalk to climb? This research is vital because dozens of more conventional, non-magic approaches have failed. It is time to combine our modern science with ancient magic to finally regain the magic singing harp, end the drought, and bring back prosperity to our land before we all lose our minds and die painful, gnarly deaths.

**The Team:** The Principle Investigator is Dr. Jackman, a renowned Genetic Engineer specializing in legumes. He is supported by Co-Investigators Mr. Magician, the premier Professor of Magic at Merlin's School of Wizardry, and Ms. Merchant, who until the recent drought was a successful entrepreneur designing and owning more than half of the country's open markets. The Federal Farmer's Union is also consulting the team.

**The Need:** Research shows that extreme drought and poverty in our community has been caused by a thieving giant stealing our community's magic singing harp. We will solve this by developing a magic bean that grows a beanstalk tall enough to reach the giant's castle in the sky so we can reclaim our magic singing harp so that all the people of Far Far Away can rejoice and live long, prosperous lives. Without trying innovative approaches that combine science and magic, we will all be doomed to starvation. Other researchers have tried to build ladders or stair steps to the giant's castle in the sky, yet all have failed due to structural flaws. By developing a prototype of a magic beanstalk that naturally reaches to the sky for sunlight, we are building on previous research that proves the structural soundness, fast growth rate, and upward growing pattern of magic beanstalks. Recently, Mr. Magician has had great success using his patented Magic Quick Growth Serum on the few remaining morsels of food as a way to feed thousands of peasants; however, the last of the food is running out. Now by combining Mr. Magician's proven elixir with Dr. Jackman's expertise in thievery and genetically engineering legumes, we finally have a realistic and lasting solution to the drought.

**Project Description:** Over 2 weeks, we will host a number of simultaneous studies to: 1) identify the best suited parent plant for the magic bean prototype, 2) measure and record data on the height and sturdiness of parent plants produced, 3) analyze and evaluate data and select possible parent plants with most desirable attributes, 4) cross-pollinate and measure the height and sturdiness of resulting hybrids. During this 2-week study, unselected beans will be treated with the Magic Growth Elixir and fed to starving peasants. Then we will: 1) pilot test the prototype beanstalk for sturdiness and height, 2) select the most appropriate beanstalk, 3) grow the beanstalk overnight with the Magic Growth Elixir, and finally, 4) Dr. Jackman will climb the beanstalk before dawn to reclaim the magic singing harp.

**Future Goals:** After retrieving the harp, Mr. Magician will work with Ms. Merchant to market the Magic Quick Growth elixir to farmers so that gigantic food grown will feed more people. Dr. Jackman will continue his research on legumes including the health consequences of eating magically engineered legumes.

**Conclusion:** Overall, by combining the ancient art of magic with modern science, we can grow a magic beanstalk fast enough and sturdy enough to retrieve the magic harp from the sleeping giant before he suspects it is missing. This will bring back prosperity to Far Far Away and ensure our people live long, healthy lives far past today's average age of mortality. With the improved nutrition of peasants scavenging from this research, some peasants may even live to the ripe old age of 22. Imagine all the extra work they will do!

Contacts:

Dr. Jack Beanstalk, College of Agricultural Sciences, 403 Farmhouse Road



# Why make a concept paper?

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- ❑ This is a mini proposal to sell the importance and impact of your idea to:
  - ❑ Send to sponsors to see if it's a good fit **\*WARNING: First make sure the sponsor allows this!**
  - ❑ Send to potential partners/new team members
- ❑ Gain feedback regarding strengths and weaknesses of project
- ❑ Build a relationship with sponsor program officer/s
- ❑ Best use of your valuable time

# Concept Paper Tips

- **Keep it brief.** 1 page of text or better yet, 2 pages with graphics and pictures.
- **Tailor it.** NEVER share the same concept paper with multiple funders. Tailor it to align with the needs of each sponsor before sending.
- **Keep it simple.** You don't need to pay a professional marketing person to pretty it up. If you can pay for that, why are you asking for funding?



## The Texas State Black and Latino Playwrights Conference

**Introduction:** The Texas State Black and Latino Playwrights Conference promotes the arts and humanities by supporting the development and discussion of new work by diverse playwrights. Established in 2003, the conference fills a void in American theatre by optimizing support for minority playwrights to develop their new, unpublished and unproduced plays through an ambitious week-long workshop rehearsal process that simultaneously gives the public a rare opportunity to become part of the cultural discussion. The conference encourages the professional development of Black and Latino playwrights toward the crafting and analysis of their plays as they document their diverse heritage, traditions and history reflected alongside the current conditions of national life.

**Project Description:** Texas State University has a large, diverse campus with over 36,000 students, including 48% who classify themselves as a minority and 32% who identify as Hispanic. The university is designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution and has a nationally recognized performing arts department recently ranked as the #9 Performing Arts program in the country by BestArtColleges.com. Each year the conference receives over 100 submissions and two or three scripts are selected for development in a week-long (25-30 hour) workshop rehearsal process. Conference activities also include panels and discussions of playwrighting and Black and Latino Theatre history. Each selected script is assigned a professional director, a professional actor, and a dramaturg with remaining roles filled by university students. This process bridges the profession and the next generation of artists as university students polish their acting skills teamed with and learning from guest artists. The writers receive dramaturgical support helping them find clarity and truth in their storytelling in a nurturing and collaborative environment. The week-long rehearsal process culminates in public "script-in-hand" reading presentations followed by moderated "talk backs" as audience reactions help the writer gauge the impact of their work. More than one thousand audience members participate from San Marcos and surrounding communities including Austin and San Antonio.

Beginning in 2012, the conference added a Distinguished Achievement Award to recognize individuals for their sustained excellence and contributions to the development of American Theatre: our first honorees were Douglas Turner Ward (2012), founder of the Negro Ensemble Company, and Luis Valdez (2013), founder of El Teatro Campesino. This aspect of the conference provides both a historical perspective as well as a vision of the possibilities for the future. Overall, the conference brings together writers, artists, seasoned veterans, eager young talent, and the public to share and exchange ideas about the ever-evolving nature of theatre in an environment that celebrates diversity and inclusion. To date, the conference has earned two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, and has one application pending with the National Endowment for the Humanities. A number of the plays developed through the conference have subsequently earned professional productions, most recently in New York, Chicago, Sacramento, Austin, Dallas, Milwaukee and Washington D.C. In addition, the various guest artists (ex. Tony-winning director Kenny Leon, INTAR Artistic Director Lou Moreno) provide professional networking, both among themselves and with the students who will form the next generation of artists.

**Priorities:** The conference aims to strengthen and promote arts and cultural heritage, diversity and inclusion, artists and new work, the performing arts, exemplary higher education experiences, and the public value of the arts.

**Future Goals:** We currently have three goals as part of a five-year plan to expand the conference on a national scale: 1) grow the national presence of the conference by collaborating with arts and diversity groups, including the Theatre Communications Group Diversity & Inclusion Institute; 2) gain \$100k of donations over two-years as matching funds for a Humanities Access grant that will grow the humanities aspects of the conference; and, 3) create an initial \$500k endowment to ensure the conference continues annually, long past the tenure of founder Eugene Lee. Then over the next 10 years we plan to grow this endowment and apply for state matching funds to hire a Diversity Programs Coordinator who will continuously grow the arts and humanities programming and continue them throughout the year as a way to consistently engage the public with the performing arts, while encouraging diversity and inclusion, and supporting artists and new work.

Contact: Dr. John Fleming, Dean, College of Fine Arts & Communication, (512) 245-2308, [j18@txstate.edu](mailto:j18@txstate.edu)

## Attachment 1: Texas State Black and Latino Playwrights Conference 2015

**SAVE DATE**  
SEPT 7-13, 2015  
Distinguished Guest: Orlando Sells

**Black & Latino Playwrights Conference**

**Wednesday September 10:**  
9am Meet and Greet  
9:30am First Rehearsals for New Play Development workshop phase  
(Rehearsals continue until 5:00pm from Thursday, September 10th. All rehearsal sessions are open to students and public observation.)

**Friday September 12th:**  
10am-12pm "Script in Hand" (scripting) with Theatre Center Rehearsal Room  
12pm-1pm Meeting 1 (Public to Best Scripted Guest Orlando Sells to include presentation of script from his works followed by Q&A and presentation of award. First "Talk Back" opportunity in Theatre Center Lobby)

**Saturday September 13th:**  
10am-12pm Rehearsals in Theatre Center Rehearsal Room  
12:30pm First New Play Development Workshop Reading Presentation of Manuscript Audience Subtext Rehearsal/Scripting

**Sunday September 13th:**  
10am-12pm New Play Development Workshop Reading Presentation on Stage/Audience Subtext Understanding Audience

**2015 BLACK AND LATINO PLAYWRIGHTS CONFERENCE**  
All workshops and readings are open to the public

**Presentations of Scripts and Q&A with distinguished guest Orlando Sells**  
September 11 at 7:30pm  
THEATRE CENTER MAINSTAGE  
The Building Blocks of Drama and the 10 Minute Play Writers Workshop  
September 12 from 1:00 - 5:00 pm  
THEATRE CENTER Rehearsal Room  
Reading Workshop by Guest Laureate Reading Presentation  
September 12 at 7:30 pm  
THEATRE CENTER Rehearsal Room  
Through Andrew's Eyes by Oscar Cabezas Reading Presentation  
September 13 at 12:00 pm  
THEATRE CENTER Rehearsal Room

**Contact: Dr. John Fleming, Dean, College of Fine Arts & Communication, (512) 245-2308, [j18@txstate.edu](mailto:j18@txstate.edu)**

## 6. Finding Funding



RURAL LISC

## Rural eNews

April 2021

### Funding & Finance Opportunities

#### Arts

**National Endowment for the Arts Challenge America** program offers support primarily to small organizations for projects in all artistic disciplines that extend the reach of the arts to populations that are underserved. Challenge America features an abbreviated application, a robust structure of technical assistance, and grants for a set amount of \$10,000. **Deadline: 4/22/2021.** Click [here](#) for more information.

#### Community

**AARP COMMUNITY CHALLENGE**, is an opportunity that provides small grants to fund quick-action projects that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages. Applications are accepted for projects to improve public spaces, housing, transportation, civic engagement, coronavirus recovery, diversity and inclusion, and more. **Application Deadline: April 14, 2021.** Review application guidelines [here](#).

# Free Grant Finding Resources

- ❖ Rural LISC eNewsletter: a monthly newsletter with funding opportunities for rural areas <https://www.lisc.org/rural/>
- ❖ Philanthropy News Digest: a regular newsletter by the Foundation Center's nonprofit Candid that can be tailored to send you opportunities by topic <https://philanthropynewsdigest.org/>
- ❖ Grants.gov: federal grant listing <https://www.grants.gov/>
- ❖ Kentucky Department of Local Governments: state grant listing for local government applicants <https://kydlgweb.ky.gov/StateGrants/>

Subscribe to PND newsletters and alerts

Enter valid email address

Subscribe





# Top Picks Paid Subscription Services

Best Options for General Searches

- ❖ Kentucky Grant Watch: \$199 annually or \$18/week as needed

<https://kentucky.grantwatch.com/>

- ❖ Foundation Center Online Directory: about \$50/month

<https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/>



# Other Paid Subscription Services

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- University Research: Pivot Funding Database  
<https://pivot.proquest.com/session/login>
- Grantscape: \$29/month or \$348 annually (untested by VG)  
<https://www.thegrantscape.com/>
- Grant Station: \$699 annually  
<https://grantstation.com/>



*\*pro-tip: at [Tech Soup](#), nonprofits can sometimes get discounts on grant search databases and technology like hardware and software.*

# Some Technical Assistance Opportunities & Small Grants

Grant	Deadlines	Amount	Helpful Links
Mountain Association Business Support	Rolling. Most likely Fall 2022 next opening.	Varies. Technical Assistance grants for businesses or nonprofits (usually to pay consultants and build capacity)	<a href="https://portal.mtassociation.org/apply-for-support/">-https://portal.mtassociation.org/apply-for-support/</a>
Just Transition Fund	Rolling. Open now.	Up to \$25,000	<a href="#">-Just Transition Fund - Grantmaking Opportunities</a>
Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition	TBD (in 2021 it was May 21)	\$3,500-\$12,000 + technical assistance from Downstream Strategies	<a href="#">-Community Mini-Grants – Reclaiming Appalachia Coalition</a> (they provide technical assistance to turn viable abandoned mine land reuse concepts into viable re-use projects)
Appalachian Community Fund	TBD (in 2021 it was April 30)	Up to \$3,000	<a href="https://appalachiancommunityfund.org/grant/general-fund/">https://appalachiancommunityfund.org/grant/general-fund/</a> (for grassroots organizations in Appalachia tackling problems related to poverty and oppression)

# Some Annual Large Grants

Grant	Deadlines	Amount	Helpful Links
Abandoned Mine Land	April 1, 2022	N/A. Cost of the Project.	<a href="#">Abandoned Mine Lands - Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet</a>
ARC POWER	LOI: April 4, 2022 (5pm EST) Proposal: April 29, 2022 (5pm EST)	Planning: up to \$50,000 Implementation: \$400K to \$1.5M (or for Broadband-\$400K to \$2.5M)	<a href="#">-ARC's POWER Initiative - Appalachian Regional Commission</a> <a href="#">-2022 ARC POWER Grant Checklist: How to Prepare and Apply - SOAR (soar-ky.org)</a>
Recreational Trails Program	May 31, 2022	\$25,000-\$250,000	<a href="#">-Kentucky DLG - RTP Grants</a>
Land & Water Conservation Program	May 31, 2022	\$25,000-\$250,000	<a href="#">-Kentucky DLG - LWCF Grants</a>
CDBG Community Projects	September 1, 2022	Up to \$750,000	<a href="#">-Kentucky DLG - CDBG Grants</a>



# Tips for Crafting a Competitive Proposal

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**HOW TO**  
**A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO GRANT WRITING**

KENTUCKY LEAGUE OF CITIES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Kentucky League of Cities (KLC)  
100 East Vine Street, Suite 800  
Lexington, KY 40507  
Phone: 800.876.4552 (toll-free)  
Fax: 859.977.3703  
[www.klc.org](http://www.klc.org)

# Kentucky League of Cities Step-by-Step Guide to Grant Writing

[2020\\_HOWTOGRANTWRITINGGUIDEBOOK.PDF \(KLC.ORG\)](#)

# A competitive grant application starts here

## Download your copy of the Grants 101 Playbook

You have a great idea for a project and program. With this playbook, you'll have the resource you need to make it a reality. We're rooting for you!

DOWNLOAD THE PLAYBOOK →



# SOAR Grants 101 Playbook for Eastern Kentucky

[THE GRANTS 101  
PLAYBOOK FOR EASTERN  
KENTUCKY | SOAR \(SOAR-  
KY.ORG\)](https://www.soar-ky.org)

## 7. Ready to apply?

What are the first two things you should do?



1. Read the instructions.
2. Read the instructions AGAIN.





# 8. Talk with the Sponsor *\*if allowed*

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## Before Contact

- Read the grant guidance and instructions thoroughly
- Arm yourself with deliberate questions
- Write a brief concept of your idea
- Email concept and request a telephone appointment

## Potential Questions to Ask

- Am I talking to the correct Program Officer?
- Does my project fall within your current priorities?
- Does the project design use the right approach?
- Are there certain types of projects that are currently “trending” that are more likely to be funded?
- What would you recommend to improve my chances?
- Any alternative funding tracks for the project?

## Follow Up

- A personal thank you note
- Continue the relationship regardless of result



# 9. Convince Reviewers

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Show. Don't tell.



Ex1. We help increase economic development because we have the knowledge and experience to do it. We host big events that bring in lots of people. In turn, our events bring in more revenue for local businesses.

Ex2. Based on estimates from increased tax revenue collected by local counties, last year our organization held events that spurred \$3.2M in economic impact in 2 counties; and this grant will provide the startup funds necessary to host 10 more events that will spur an estimated \$8.9M in economic impact across 5 counties. Downtown shop owner Timmy Tackett said: “we nearly closed due to COVID, but the new customers we gained during these events saved our business.” This grant will expand our reach to serve 3 new counties and help more businesses.

## “Secret Sauce” Pro Tip

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**“Statistics raise eyebrows.  
Stories raise dollars.”**

To be competitive, you need *both* data and stories about real people.



# “Secret Sauce” Pro Tip

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Write like a pro.

Make your ideas “stick.”

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

Why Some Ideas Survive  
and Others Die

MADE

to

STICK

Chip Heath & Dan Heath

With ADDED MATERIAL (now extra sticky!)

# The SUCCESs Principles



READINGGRAPHICS  
ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS IN ONE PAGE



Simplicity



Unexpectedness



Concreteness



Credibility



Emotions



Stories



# 10. Submit Early

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DON'T PROCRASTINATE. SUBMIT AT LEAST **2-DAYS** BEFORE DEADLINE TO AVOID UNEXPECTED ISSUES. ALSO, BE AWARE SOME DEADLINES ARE AT A SPECIFIC TIME LIKE 5:00PM EST.



Failure  
does not mean  
the game is over.

It means try again with  
EXPERIENCE

# Denied? Learn. Try Again.

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- Ask for reviewer comments.
- Continue building a relationship with the sponsor:
  - Invite them to your events.
  - Send them success stories.
  - Ask questions.




# Helpful Templates & Resources

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TO KEEP IN YOUR GRANT WRITING TOOLKIT

# Template:

## Work Plan

  
**Project Work Plan**  
 Date of Planning Session: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Project Name:</b>			
<b>Project Leader:</b>		<b>Primary Team Members:</b>	
<b>Estimated Project Start Date:</b>		<b>Estimated Project End Date:</b>	

Before You Get Started: Important Questions to Answer	
<b>1) The Issue:</b> What problem or opportunities will this project or program solve or address?	
<b>2) The Solution:</b> How will your project or program address this issue?	
<b>3) Target Population:</b> Who is the target population?	
<b>4) Impact:</b> What potential impact can your project or program have (long and short term)?	
<b>5) Measuring Success:</b> How will you measure success during and after the project or program? What will success look like?	
<b>6) Innovation:</b> What makes this different/better/more innovative than other efforts?	
<b>7) Stakeholders:</b> Who do you need on your team to make this successful? <b>Also</b> who could keep this from being successful?	

©insert project Work Plan      \*Template developed by Ruthie Caldwell, Revised June 2019. Questions? Contact: [ruthie@visiongranted.com](mailto:ruthie@visiongranted.com)

Final Wrap-up: Important Questions to Answer Before Starting Your Project or Program	
<b>8) Communication:</b> What are the best ways to communicate with your team and stakeholders?	
<b>9) Risks:</b> Imagine your project is over and was not successful. What went wrong? These are issues you can plan to overcome before the project begins.	
<b>10) Sustainability:</b> How do you plan to sustain this project or program after initial funding ends?	

Goal or Research Question 1:					
Objective 1.1					
Key Action Step	Timeline (important dates or length of time to complete)	Required Resources (personnel, data, supplies, travel, etc.)	Milestones	Person(s) Responsible	Comments
Objective 1.2					
Key Action Step	Timeline	Required Resources	Milestones	Person(s) Responsible	Comments

# Template:

## Concept Paper



### CRAFTING A LETTER OF INTEREST (LOI), WHITE PAPER or CONCEPT PAPER

#### What is a LOI?

The term "LOI" can stand for many things: Letter of Interest, Letter of Intent, or Letter of Introduction. It may also be referred to as a concept paper, white paper, or abstract. Above all, the purpose of this document is to introduce your project to someone in a concise format that is easy for anyone (even lay people) to understand. LOI's should be tailored to the person or organization you are sending it to. Use always know your audience). Some funders require LOIs to be in a specific format, so check their website or other guidance. The majority of LOI's are most effective when they are kept to one-page, or two pages if they include pictures or visuals (even better!). However, LOI's for research projects to government agencies (like the National Science Foundation) should also include a list and description of your research questions and references.

From the funder's point of view, a LOI helps them determine if the proposed project aligns with their mission and strategic goals, is competitive for funding, and is likely to make an impact on the target audience.

From your point of view as someone in charge of a project, or "Project Lead," developing a LOI can save you hours of valuable time and help you connect with potential funders or collaborators. By sending a LOI to a potential funder, you will make personal contact with them and discover whether they are interested in your project before you go through the effort of writing a full funding proposal. When you send a LOI directly to a potential funder, you can find out valuable information to make your proposal more competitive. Plus, funding priorities often change each year and are not always published, so sending a funder a LOI before applying for funding gives you the inside scoop on whether your project is a good fit for their current priorities. When sending this to a sponsor, try to find the best contact, such as the Program Officer in charge of the specific funding opportunity that matches your project. If the funding organization allows it, your primary goal should be to set up a phone call or meeting with this person to learn more about the funding opportunity and begin building a relationship with him or her. Another great use for this document is to send it to potential people or organizations inviting them to join your team or collaborate on the proposed project. Either way, this short document will introduce others to your project, while the email or letter you send with this document will introduce them to you.

#### Instructions:

Delete this first page to use the rest of the document as a template. Replace the logo in the header with your organization's logo, and leave the title of each paragraph, but replace the content with your own. Change the footer to include your contact information, and if appropriate, the contact information of your supervisor.

\*Based on best practices from the Foundation Center's Proposal Writing Bootcamp 2016, this document was originally developed by Rummie Caldwell for Texas State University's C3 Research Center as a free public resource for faculty and community [accessible here](#) and has been updated since that date with current best practices. If you have questions about this document, please contact Rummie Caldwell at [Rummie.R.Caldwell@txst.edu](mailto:Rummie.R.Caldwell@txst.edu) or 855.876.1111.

CONTACT: Name/Project Director, Title, Organization, phone, email

<insert title of project>

**Introduction:** This "mini abstract" is the most important section of your LOI because it is the first thing the targeted funder will read. Be sure opening sentences are compelling and enthusiastic about your project's significance and impact. You want to "grab" your audience so they truly want to continue reading. Briefly summarize (1) the significant problem or need you will address and why it is important; (2) your research question(s) or inspiration, goal(s), and/or objectives; and (3) the significance and broad (grandiose) impact of your anticipated outcomes. If sending to a potential sponsor, include language to demonstrate you understand the strategic priorities of the targeted funding agency as well as the types of projects they fund. Make a *clear and strong link between their priorities and your good idea*. Remember, you want them to "buy" your project, so sell it by explaining how your project advances their cause. You can extract a relevant quote from the funder's strategic plan, and use words and phrases from other documents so the program officer literally sees their organization reflected in the description of your project. It's best to either keep the length of a LOI to one page, or add pictures, graphics, or diagrams to make it two pages.

**The Team:** Provide a brief description of the team and their expertise in one or two sentences. Additional information about each team member can be given later if you're invited to submit a full proposal.

**The Need:** The goal of this section is to answer four questions: 1) What is the problem your project will address? 2) Who is affected by the problem? 3) Is the issue compelling? 4) Will your project make an impact? A significant story and/or statistic will make this section memorable. Statistics gain the reader's interest, but stories often gain financial support. A popular saying is "Statistics raise eyebrows. Stories raise dollars." Finally, describe *why your project matters*. As you craft this description, keep in mind that most program officers or other staff at the agency are not as immersed as you are in the topic. Therefore, you must persuade them that they really should care about your project by linking the problem to their organization's funding priorities and describing the potential short- and long-term impact of your project.

**Initial Data Collected:** Only include this section if you have preliminary or pilot data.

**Project Description** (or "Plans for Continued Research"): Use the latter title if you have initial data collected. Concisely describe your project, including what you plan to do and how you plan to do it; who is involved in the project, and who will benefit, directly and indirectly. If it is a pilot project to collect preliminary data and/or refine the project methodology, be direct in saying this. Describe the *innovative aspects* to set your project apart from other projects the reviewer has seen. *Connect the description to The Need* presented in the previous section by indicating the extent to which your project fills in an existing gap or expands upon the literature and addresses a critical problem or need. Using information in your *Project Work Plan*, include a few major *milestones* and a *concise, general timeline* of what you will accomplish. Avoid the temptation to include the nitty-gritty details.

**Future Goals:** Describe future goals to expand the project after this initial phase is complete.

**Conclusion:** Restate why the project is important and how it is innovative; its goal(s), objectives, and expected outcomes; and how it adds new knowledge to your field. Then think in broad, grandiose terms and identify who benefits from the project, considering its impact upon your participants as well as your organization, community, the US, and/or the world.

End this section with a strong statement of how the project *aligns with the funder's strategic priorities* and the potential broader impacts of your findings or project outcomes.

**References:** (only include this if appropriate/necessary)

CONTACT: Name/Project Director, Title, Organization, phone, email

# Template

## BUDGET

DRAFT 3-YR Budget Template													
Organization Name or Grant													
Project Title:													
PERSONNEL	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Total Project
	Base	Effort	Mos.	Cost	Base	Effort	Mos.	Cost	Base	Effort	Mos.	Cost	
	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$0
	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$0
	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$0
	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$0
	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$0
	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$0
	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$0
	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$0
<b>Total Personnel:</b>				\$ -				\$ -				\$ -	\$0
Fringe Benefits (Personnel)		0%		\$ -		0%		\$ -		0%		\$ -	\$0
<b>TOTAL PERSONNEL:</b>				\$0				\$0				\$0	\$0
<b>TRAVEL</b>	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				
In state travel													\$ -
Out of state travel													\$ -
International Travel													\$ -
<b>TOTAL TRAVEL:</b>	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -
<b>EQUIPMENT (over \$5,000)</b>	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				
													\$ -
													\$ -
<b>TOTAL EQUIPMENT:</b>	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -
<b>SUPPLIES &amp; MATERIALS</b>	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				
													\$ -
													\$ -
<b>TOTAL SUPPLIES AND MAT</b>	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -
<b>CONSULTANTS</b>	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				
													\$ -
													\$ -
<b>TOTAL CONSULTANTS:</b>	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -
<b>SUBCONTRACTS</b>	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				
<i>XYZ Name</i>													\$ -
Amount													\$ -
Indirect Costs at XXX%	\$ -			\$ -				\$ -				\$ -	\$ -
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -
<i>XYZ Name</i>													\$ -
Amount													\$ -
Indirect Costs at XXX%	\$ -			\$ -				\$ -				\$ -	\$ -
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL SUBCONTRACTS:</b>	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -
<b>OTHER</b>	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				
													\$ -
													\$ -
<b>TOTAL Other:</b>	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -
<b>FACILITIES &amp; ADMINISTRATION</b>	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET</b>	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	\$0

# More Resources

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- ❖ **Non-Profit Resources:** Candid, formerly the Foundation Center, They provide nonprofits with information, data, and resources to do good in the world. <https://candid.org/>
- ❖ **Federal Grants:** Tips for using grants.gov to apply for federal grants: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>
- ❖ **Appalachian Nonprofit Resource Center:** <https://appalachianrc.arc.gov>
- ❖ **Kentucky Nonprofit Network:** <https://kynonprofits.org>
- ❖ **11 Simple Ways to Raise Money for Your Nonprofit:** [11 Simple Ways to Raise Money for Your Nonprofit \[2022\] \(donorbox.org\)](#)
- ❖ **Data:**
  - Eastern Kentucky Data: <https://kybtn.ca.uky.edu/content/eastern-kentucky-numbers-profiles>
  - Find your Area Development District and download the CEDS Report for local data. <https://www.kyatlas.com/kentucky-adds.html>
  - Appalachian Regional Commission: <https://www.arc.gov/research-and-data/>
  - Kentucky Health Facts: <http://www.kentuckyhealthfacts.org/>



Questions?

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