

Grant Writing Worksheet

Turn Your Grant Idea Into a Strong Application

Program Name: _____

Grant/Funding Opportunity: _____

Funder: _____

Application Deadline: _____

Amount Available: _____

Amount I Plan to Request: _____

Before You Begin

You do not need polished answers yet. Bullet points are fine. Messy ideas are fine. Use this worksheet to get your ideas out of your head and onto paper. You can refine your answers later when you begin the actual application.

PROJECT IDEA

What do you need funding for?
Start with the big picture. Don't worry about making it sound like a grant proposal yet.

My project idea is:

What would the funding allow you to do?
☐ Improve program quality
☐ Increase child care capacity
☐ Purchase equipment or materials
☐ Improve a learning environment
☐ Complete a facility improvement
☐ Support workforce development
☐ Improve health or safety
☐ Other: _____

Who will benefit from this project?

Why is this project important to your program right now?

My project in ONE sentence:

_____.

We are seeking funding to

_____.

So that

_____.

STEP ONE: MATCH THE MISSION

Before you spend hours applying, make sure your project actually fits what the funder wants to accomplish.

Funder/Organization: _____

What is the funder's mission?

What words or priorities keep showing up?

Write 3–5 keywords from the grant announcement:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

What does this funder appear to care most about?

How does YOUR project help the funder accomplish THEIR goals?

Complete this sentence:
Our project supports the funder's goal of

_____.

by

_____.

Mission Match Check
☐ Strong Match — I can clearly explain the connection.
☐ Possible Match — I need to strengthen the connection.
☐ Weak Match — This may not be the right grant.

STEP TWO: TELL THE STORY

Help the reviewer understand the people behind your application.

Who does your child care program serve?
Number of children: _____
Ages served: _____
Community/area served: _____

Tell us about your program.

What makes your program important to the children, families, or community you serve?

What are families experiencing?

Think about the real people behind the numbers.
How would this project make a difference for them?

Do you have a family or staff story that illustrates the need?

A quote or testimonial I may be able to use:
“_____
_____.”

Permission to use obtained? ☐ Yes ☐ Not Yet ☐ Not Needed

STEP THREE: PROVE THE NEED

Your story creates connection. Now support it with evidence. What specific problem or need will this project address?

What evidence do you already have?

Evidence
Current enrollment_____
Current capacity_____
Waitlist_____
Families turned away_____
Staffing information_____
Community data_____
Family survey results_____
Staff survey results_____
Other_____

What have families or staff told you about this need?

What community information could strengthen your case?

What research or data could support the need?

Write your need in 2–3 sentences:
Currently,
_____.

This affects
_____.

Funding would help us
_____.

STEP FOUR: SHOW THE PLAN

A funder should be able to clearly picture what will happen if they award you the requested funding.

What exactly will you do with the funding?

Project Action Plan

What Will Happen?	Who Is Responsible?	By When?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

When will the project begin?

When will the project be completed?

What will be different when the project is finished?

What could get in the way of completing the project?

How will you address that?

STEP FIVE: JUSTIFY THE BUDGET

Every dollar should connect directly to the project you have described.

Item	why it is needed	Estimated Cost $

Have I verified my costs?

☐ Quotes obtained
☐ Prices researched
☐ Shipping included
☐ Installation included
☐ Taxes/fees considered
☐ Costs are allowed under the grant

Explain your budget in 2–3 sentences.

Grant funds will be used to

_____

_____.

These expenses will allow our program to _____

_____.

Budget Alignment Check

Ask yourself:

If the reviewer read only my project description and then looked at my budget, would the two tell the same story?

☐ Yes
☐ Almost — I need to revise something
☐ No — I need to reconnect my budget to my plan

STEP SIX: EXPECTED OUTCOMES

What Will Change?
Don't stop at what you will buy or do. Think about what will be better because you did it.

Who will benefit?
☐ Children
☐ Families
☐ Staff
☐ Program
☐ Community
☐ Other: _____

What do you expect to improve?

Put a number on it when possible.

We expect to:
☐ Create _____ new child care slots
☐ Serve _____ children/families
☐ Reduce our waitlist by _____
☐ Improve _____
☐ Train/support _____ staff members
☐ Purchase/install _____
☐ Complete the project by _____
☐ Other: _____

Complete this statement:
As a result of this project, my program will: _____

by _____.

NOW PULL IT ALL TOGETHER

Your Grant Story at a Glance

1. Our Project:

2. It Matches the Funder Because:

3. The People We Serve Are:

4. The Need We Can Demonstrate Is:

5. We plan to:

6. We Are Requesting: $_____

7. The Result Will Be:

Your 30-Second Grant Pitch

Our program serves _____.

We are seeking $ to _____.

This project is needed because _____.

With this funding, we will _____.

As a result, _____.

GRANT APPLICATION FINAL CHECK

Before You Submit

Mission

☐ My project clearly aligns with the funder's priorities.
☐ I used language that connects my project to the funder's goals.

Story + Need

☐ I clearly explained who we serve.
☐ I explained why this project matters.
☐ I included evidence—not just opinions.
☐ My data is current.

Plan

☐ The reviewer can understand exactly what we will do.
☐ The timeline is realistic.
☐ Responsibilities are clear.

Budget

☐ Every expense relates directly to the project.
☐ My math is correct.
☐ My requested amount matches the application.
☐ I did not include expenses the grant prohibits.

Final Review

☐ I answered every question.
☐ I followed word/character limits.
☐ All required documents are attached.
☐ File names are clear.
☐ I proofread the application.
☐ Someone else reviewed it, if possible.
☐ I am submitting before the deadline.

One Last Question

If I were the funder, would I understand exactly what this program needs, why it matters, what they will do with my money, and what will change because of my investment?
☐ YES — I'm ready to submit.