

Small Grants: Tips for Success for Grantees

How does my organization position itself for a small grant?

- ❖ Have a **clear mission and strategy**. This will allow you to gauge whether your organization is a good fit for a given grant opportunity once a request for applications is released.
- ❖ Partnership building takes time, so start early. Keep in close contact with donors and implementing partners to develop an understanding of each other's strengths and priorities.
- ❖ Keep abreast of funding opportunities through sources like FundsforNGOs and donor Twitter accounts.
- ❖ If you find a request for applications that looks like a good match for your organization...
 - Research the grant guidelines and application process. Read all documents carefully, paying special attention to eligibility requirements, terms of payment, and important dates.
 - If possible, pitch your idea to the donor to determine whether they might be interested.
 - Make a decision within your organization about whether you will apply for the grant.

How does my organization apply for a small grant?

- ❖ Assemble a proposal development team. At a minimum, the proposal development team should include a technical expert, a finance manager, and someone responsible for grant compliance.
- ❖ Develop and share a timeline for proposal development, working backward from the submission date. Include interim deadlines, like when drafts will be sent and when feedback is due. Note who is responsible for each item. Once the proposal development team has agreed to the timeline, stick to the deadlines.
- ❖ Think about what you want your project to accomplish. Keep in mind that small grants can be a good opportunity to propose an innovative or untested idea or build on an existing project.
- ❖ **Write for your audience.** Write concisely and limit jargon to terminology your donor will understand.
- ❖ Be realistic about what you can achieve. When developing your workplan, anticipate delays. Consider building in an inception phase to revisit the workplan if your proposal is funded.
- ❖ Store your submissions in a central place so you can draw on them for future proposal development.
- ❖ Consider what human resources will be required so you can hit the ground running if awarded.

How does my organization carry out and manage a small grant once awarded?

- ❖ Congratulations! Your proposal has been approved. Carefully **review all grant documents**, paying close attention to key dates, terms of payment, and reporting requirements. Consider holding a start-up meeting with the donor to clarify requirements and ask any questions.
- ❖ Assemble a grant management team, which might include a coordinator, a program manager, and a finance manager. Set up an initial meeting with those involved to review the timeline and confirm responsibilities.
- ❖ Continue to have regular check-ins with your grant management team to review progress on program activities and finances. Keep your team organized with a shared calendar to track important deadlines.
- ❖ Keep in close communication with the donor, updating them with any proposed adjustments to the workplan. Ensure all reports are submitted thoroughly and on time.
- ❖ Maintain files with important paperwork, deliverables, changes to the workplan, and notes from meetings and discussions with the donor. Good documentation is especially helpful in the event of staff turnover.
- ❖ **Mistakes happen!** Be transparent with the donor and use mistakes as an opportunity to learn.