

What Grant Officers Look for in a Grant Application



What Do Grants Officers Look for When Reviewing a Grant Application?

1. A complete application with every box filled in and every question answered
2. A clearly stated request that fits the granter's guidelines
3. Financial stability
4. A strong fund-raising history
5. Acknowledgement and follow-up in a timely manner
6. A professional, up-to-date website

What Do Grants Officers Not Want to See on an Application?

7. Questions left unanswered
8. Incorrect answers to questions asked (For example, if you don't understand what a succession plan is, ask!)
9. Messy, disorganized paperwork with lots of misspellings
10. Unprofessional language (vulgar or excessively emotive)
11. Requests that are outside grant guidelines (ask if there are exceptions before applying)
12. "Attitude"

Raising Funds: An Overview

There is no magic to fundraising, and there is no fundraising gene. Anyone can do it. All you need is time, determination, a commitment to the cause, and a few learnable skills.

But first, you need to answer some basic questions: *Who are you and why do you deserve support? Who does the community think you are and why do they think you deserve (or don't deserve) support? What resources do you have in place to run a successful fundraising program? What are the potential sources for funds in your community?*

Once you've answered these questions, you'll be ready to select the right fundraising strategies to meet your needs.

Annual giving/direct mail:

It can provide you with a steady income stream and a pool of donors to possibly upgrade. However it's impersonal, expensive, and everybody's doing it. A successful program demands you maintain your mailing list and craft memorable messages. Monthly sponsorships are very profitable. Individual donors are responsible for 75-80% of charitable giving.

Board participation:

Should be both a funding source and a fund-raising source. A strong commitment impresses funders. If they can't provide funding, they should at least be able to provide contacts that have money.

Major gift program:

Demands research, cultivation, and recognition. Major gifts generally come from those who already have some involvement with your organization. Cultivation takes place in person so it takes time more so than money.

Special events:

Raise awareness and may reach out to new donors, but are often very expensive and time consuming. Many don't make money the first year, but annual events get easier and more profitable in subsequent years.

Foundations and grants:

Usually fund specific programs/projects for a set amount of time. You must be able to pick up the costs from there. To search for potential funders and learn about grant writing, go to www.foundationcenter.org. ASPCA Equine Fund application can currently be found at www.aspca.org/equine.

Donor recognition:

Is essential in growing your donors' gifts. Thank everyone no matter the size of the gift. Your current donors are your best prospects for future donations. Do acknowledge gifts in writing for tax purposes, but a thank-you phone call by a Board member is very powerful for keeping and growing donors.

Additional resources:

The Association of Fund-raising Professionals www.afpnet.org
HSUS GUIDE TO FUND-RAISING FOR ANIMAL PROTECTION ORGANIZATIONS
PetSmart Charities free webinars on fund-raising

Making Plans to Make a Difference (ASPCA business guide)

Source: www.aspcapro.org