



GRANT WRITING GUIDANCE AND TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION

Grants come from a variety of sources such as a foundation, a corporation, or a government agency, but most require similar information. Grants are funds that do not have to be repaid. However, organizations must complete all deliverables and obligations including reports to remain in good standing with the funder and receive funds.

There are at least three different types of proposals:

Letter of Inquiry: A Letter of Inquiry (LOI) usually goes to a foundation and is meant to pique a funder's interest in your project. An LOI is typically two or three pages that summarize your project. With the LOI, you and the funder explore whether your idea is of interest. If it is, you will move on to the full proposal. Some funders prefer to receive an LOI as the first step toward funding to quickly assess whether your project is a good fit for them.

Full Proposal: A full proposal is what usually comes to mind when we think about grant proposals. It follows a standard format that includes a cover letter, a summary of your project, and the amount of money you are requesting from the funder. Proposals can range in page length which is typically outlined in the funding announcement.

Letter Proposal: Corporations who grant funds often want a letter proposal rather than a long, formal proposal. This may require you to write a corporate foundation requesting a monetary gift or proposing a sponsorship or cause marketing program to the marketing or advertising department at the corporation. A letter proposal, like an LOI is usually

short in length, three to four pages. The letter should describe your project, describe your organization, and include the monetary request or set out your sponsorship proposal. It is important to note that in the letter proposal, you are requesting funds. However, in the letter-of-inquiry, you are only introducing your idea to the funder to see if there is interest.

This resource focuses on the full proposal and provides guidance and examples of the various components of a full proposal.

MAKING THE CASE FOR GRANT WRITING

Fundraising is a crucial part of sustaining placemaking and health equity in the built environment community-led efforts. Applying for federal, state, local, and private grant opportunities help to plan and implement placemaking projects. Grants, to be successful, should be part of your overall fundraising plan, be included in your annual timeline, and a dedicated grant writer, either on staff or contracted.

IMPLEMENTATION

This boilerplate grant writing guidance and template can be used by Vermont communities and municipalities as a starting point to secure grant opportunities for Vermont community-led design placemaking health equity projects. Please note that you should customize this template according to the specific requirements and guidelines of the grant opportunity you are applying for.

Here are the most common sections of grant proposals, and the information you should include. Even if the proposal you write is not the standard proposal, you will likely need much of the information that does make up the full proposal, but in an abbreviated form.

GRANT SECTION GUIDANCE

Cover Letter

The cover letter is typically one of the last components completed in the grant writing process. It is important to note that it is still critical pieces of

the grant application. The cover letter serves as the first impression to your application. As the saying goes, you only have one chance to make a first impression!

In the cover letter, you'll want to address your letter to a particular person, briefly state what your proposal asks for, and summarize your program. Keep in mind that this will be your first opportunity to connect with the people who can fund your program, project, or service. It is here where you make them care about your mission. See the example *Cover Letter* at the end of this resource to assist you in developing your own.

Executive Summary/Abstract

The executive summary briefly states the problem, significance, objectives, method, and anticipated outcomes. The typical length is 150 to 250 words. Keep in mind that this may be one of the first and/or only thing(s) a reviewer reads. Write this last and with enthusiasm!

Narrative/Project Description



Cover Page

If the grantor does not provide a cover form or format, create a simple cover page. Include the grantor's name (and any special program name or number), applicant organization, submittal date, project title, proposed project period, amount requested, and the project director's name and signature.

Table of Contents

Guidelines often do not mention a table of contents, but it is helpful to grant reviewers to include one. Omit this if your proposal is very short, or under five pages, which typically happens in a pre-proposal or some proposals to private foundations. Include the major sections, but do not make the contents so detailed that the information is hard to find.

Introduction

In the introduction section, you should briefly introduce your organization and express your interest in the grant opportunity. Mention the specific grant opportunity you are applying for (e.g., [Grant Opportunity Name]) and the name of your community or municipality in Vermont (e.g., [Your Community/Municipality Name]). Emphasize your commitment to improving the well-being of your community.

Significance (also called Problem Statement)

In this section, you will discuss the condition you wish to change. Give evidence of the problem and explain why solving the problem is important to the grantor, the applicant, and your community. You can also list a

subpopulation or population of focus as well. Be sure to include data to justify why this issue is significant. Data can be found on national websites like the [US Census website](#) while more locally-relevant data may exist within a local health department or university such as Vermont's [How Healthy Are We? Data Resources](#) and the [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#).

Methods, Strategies or Program Design

This section describes the activities that directly support the achievement of the objectives and who will perform these activities. In doing so, it is important to explain how this project aligns with the goals and priorities outlined in the grant opportunity's guidelines and the issues highlighted in your Significance section. A timeline may be included in this section as well (a *Work Plan* template has been provided in this resource). You should also defend your choice of activities. Why are they the best approach? Are they evidence-based?

You may want to discuss the specific aspects of placemaking and health equity that your project addresses, such as:

- The current challenges or inequities in health and well-being within your community.
- How equitable placemaking can contribute to addressing these challenges.
- The significance of community-led initiatives in achieving health equity.

Project Goals and Objectives/Specific Aims

It is here that you can expand on the project's goals and objectives to provide a clear understanding of what you aim to achieve. For each objective, provide specific details and context.

Here are some additional details and context that can be provided as you write for grants that are focused on health equity and placemaking. You find example language in the *Template* portion of this resource.

- **Promote Health Equity:**
 - Describe the health inequities or issues your community faces.

- Explain how improving access to safe and healthy outdoor spaces will address these inequities.
- **Community Engagement:**
 - Detail your equitable community engagement strategies, such as public meetings, town halls, surveys, focus groups, and workshops.
 - Explain how community input will shape and directly inform the project's design, planning, and implementation.
- **Placemaking and Design:**
 - Describe the specific locations or areas within your community that will undergo transformation and how the transformation will begin and evolve.
 - Discuss the design principles that will be applied to create inclusive, accessible, and vibrant public spaces.

Personnel and Facilities (also called Organizational Capacity)

Grantors want to know that you have existing capacity to perform the activities outlined in your Methods or Program Design sector. They also want to know that you have the capacity to manage funds, if received. Describe in detail the qualifications of key project personnel and describe the facilities already available or promised for carrying out the project. State existing or past funds received and any outcomes that were achieved.

Sustainability

It is important to have a future plan for how the work supporting in the grant proposal will continue after funding ends. Funders want to ensure that their efforts are not wasted. Outline the environmentally sustainable, equitable, accessible, and community-led design features you plan to incorporate. Explain how these features will enhance the resilience and long-term sustainability of the project.

Partners and Collaboration

Working in silos creates challenges in achieving program/project success. It is important to leverage resources and capacity through partnerships and collaboration. Grantors not only want you to have the organizational capacity to successfully implement your program or project, but they also want to know how you are maximizing their dollars and your efforts. Describe the support and collaboration you've received from various

stakeholders within your community, local organizations, and government entities. Mention the specific entities or individuals who have expressed support for your project. Include letters of support or collaboration from these stakeholders in the Attachment section of your application to demonstrate their commitment.

Conclusion

In the conclusion, reiterate your enthusiasm for collaborating with the granting organization and emphasize the alignment between your project and their mission and goals. Convey your commitment to responsible and equitable financial management and stewardship of the granted funds. Ensure that your contact information is accurate and up-to-date so that the granting organization can reach out to you with any questions or requests for clarification.

Budget



Provide a detailed breakdown of the project budget, specifying how the requested grant funds will be utilized. Include line items for materials, labor, community engagement efforts, and ongoing maintenance. Be sure to:

- Provide cost estimates for each budget category and/or line item.
- Explain why each expense is necessary for the project's success.
- Highlight any in-kind contributions or matching funds, if applicable.

A *Budget* template has been provided in this resource.

Vita (also called Resume or Biographical Sketch)

In addition to the Personnel and Facilities section of the Narrative, additional details about your staff's capacity and expertise can be shared by including vitae. Include vitae for the project director and key personnel. Make certain they indicate expertise related to the proposed project/program. Some grantors have a specific format and may specify a page limitation or request that only relevant publications should be included. If no guidelines are mentioned, keep the vitae short, two to five pages.

Appendices (also called Attachments)

Depending on the format for the main part of the proposal, some of the components described above may be included as appendices. Possible appendices include: vitae, project, letters of support, illustrations, letters of commitment.

Appendices often include material not allowed in another section, but you wish to make accessible to the reviewers. However, some grantors do not allow appendices and/or make limitations on their length, so be selective.

SEEKING GRANTS

Identify grants from sources like the [Vermont Arts Council](#), [Vermont Community Foundation](#), and federal agencies. Review their guidelines and eligibility criteria to ensure alignment with your project goals. For example, the [Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development](#) offers grants for downtown revitalization projects. An The [Waterbury Revitalization Initiative](#) received funding for streetscape improvements and green space development.

Other grant opportunities can be found at:

- [AARP Community Challenge Grant](#)
- [IOBY](#)
- [KABOOM! Grants](#)
- [National Association of Realtors](#)
- [National Endowment for the Arts](#)
- [Preservation Trust of Vermont](#)
- [Project for Public Spaces](#)
- [Vermont Agency of Transportation](#)

- [Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets](#)
- [Vermont Community Garden Network](#)
- [Vermont Community Foundation](#)

IN CONCLUSION

Please ensure that you carefully review the specific grant application guidelines and requirements for the grant you are applying for and make any necessary adjustments to this template to meet those criteria. Review Vermont-state, regional planning commissions, local and federal plans and policies to align your community-led placemaking project with its broader health equity goals. Good luck with your efforts to secure funding for your community-led design placemaking health equity project in Vermont!

WANT TO LEARN MORE

- [Community Toolbox: Applying for Grants](#)
- [Center for Rural Health's Grant Writing Toolkit](#)

REFERENCES

Fritz, J. (2021, May 11). *How to write a winning grant Proposal*. LiveAbout. <https://www.liveabout.com/how-to-write-a-grant-proposal-2501980>

Stockton University (n.d.) *Key Elements of a Complete Proposal*. Retrieved December 16, 2023, from <https://stockton.edu/research-sponsored-programs/documents/proposals/KeyElementsofaCompleteProposal-rev09-2-3.pdf>

GRANT WRITING TEMPLATES AND EXAMPLES

Cover Letter

[Organization's or Community's Name, Coalition Letterhead]

[Date]

[Grant Reviewer's Name, Title]

[Granting Organization Name]

[Address] [City, State, ZIP Code]

Dear [Grant Reviewer's Name],

Introduction

We are writing to express our sincere interest in the [Grant Opportunity Name] and to seek financial support for our community-led design placemaking health equity project in [Your Community/ Municipality Name], Vermont. Our organization/coalition, [Your Organization/ Coalition Name], is deeply committed to improving the health, well-being, and quality of life for all residents of our community.

Project Overview

Our project aims to achieve the following objectives [include further project-specific goals and objectives that align with the community's needs, your project desires, and the grantmaker's expectations]:

[Promote Health Example] To reduce health inequities by improving access to safe and healthy outdoor spaces, particularly in underserved neighborhoods [specify underserved neighborhoods by demographics with disaggregated data support from local government agencies, regional planning commissions, and by Census tract, geography, and unique circumstances, such as language barriers], our project will [include how your community-led placemaking health equity in the built environment project will reach this goal].

[Community Engagement Example] We will actively engage community members, partners, and subject-matter experts (by lived experience and by training) in the design, planning, and implementation process to ensure the project's success and long-term sustainability by [describe in detail your equitable approach].

[Placemaking and Design Example] We will transform underutilized areas within our community into vibrant, safe, and inclusive public spaces that foster social connections, physical activity, holistic access, improved mental health, green infrastructure, and a sense of belonging by [describe in detail your equitable approach].

Sustainability

We will implement environmentally sustainable design principles to enhance the long-term resilience of our community by [describe in detail your equitable approach].

Budget Summary

Attached to this application, you will find a detailed budget breakdown for our project, demonstrating how the requested funds will be allocated equitably. We are seeking [Amount Requested] to support the successful implementation of this project, including materials, labor, community engagement efforts, and ongoing sustainable maintenance.

Community Support

We have garnered significant support from our community members, local organizations, and government entities, all of whom are enthusiastic about the positive impact this project will have on our residents' health and overall well-being. Letters of support and collaboration from these partners are included in the attached documents.

Conclusion

Thank you for considering our proposal. If you require any additional information or have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [Your Email].

Closing

With gratitude,
 [Your Name]
 [Your Title]
 [Your Organization Name]
 [Your Address]
 [City, State, ZIP Code]
 [Phone Number]
 [Email Address]

Work Plan

Objective 1:				
Activity	Priority/Target Audience	Process Measure/Milestone	Lead	Completion Date

<i>[What do you plan to do?]</i>	<i>[Who do you plan to reach and how many?]</i>	<i>[How will you know you have accomplished this activity?]</i>	<i>[Who within your organization is responsible for completing the activity?]</i>	<i>[When will be activity be completed?]</i>
Objective 2:				
Activity	Priority/Target Audience	Process Measure/Milestone	Lead	Completion Date
<i>[What do you plan to do?]</i>	<i>[Who do you plan to reach and how many?]</i>	<i>[How will you know you have accomplished this activity?]</i>	<i>[Who within your organization is responsible for completing the activity?]</i>	<i>[When will be activity be completed?]</i>

Budget

Contact Name			
Organization			
Staff Salary and Wages			
<i>Name and Position Title</i>	<i>Annual Salary</i>	<i>Annual/ Budget Amount</i>	<i>Amount Requested</i>
		FTE %	
<i>Total</i>			
<i>Justifications, include roles and responsibilities and identify how it relates to the program objectives</i>			
Fringe Benefits			
<i>Name and Position Title</i>	<i>Salary Amount</i>	<i>Current Rate</i>	<i>Amount Requested</i>

<i>Total</i>			
Equipment			
<i>Item Description</i>	<i># of Units needed</i>	<i>Unit cost</i>	<i>Amount Requested</i>
<i>Total</i>			
<i>Justification- Provide justification for the use of each item and relate it to specific program objectives and how it will be used. Maintenance or rental fees for equipment should be shown in the "Other" category.</i>			
Supplies- "Staff General Office Supplies", Software-License and Technical support			
<i>Item Description</i>	<i># of Units</i>	<i>Unit cost</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Total</i>			
<i>Justification- Provide justification for the use of each item and relate it to specific program objectives, how it will be used, period of performance/duration. Maintenance or rental fees for equipment should be shown in the "Other" category.</i>			
Other			
<i>Item</i>	<i># of Units</i>	<i>Unit cost</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Other- subtotal</i>			
<i>Justification- Include purpose of the item and how it relates to the program objectives or activities.</i>			
Contracts/Grants			
<i>Agency/Organization</i>			<i>Budget Amount</i>
<i>Total</i>			

<i>Justification-Refer to "Contract Justification" guidance</i>			
Total Direct Costs			
			Total
Overhead/Indirect Costs			
<i>Indirect rate</i>			
<i>Overhead rate</i>			
	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Basis Amount</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Indirect rate</i>			
<i>Overhead rate</i>			
Total Budget Amount			

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