



## 2018 Fund for Louisville Grants Program

### Grant Writing Tips and Sources of Community Data for Grant Writers

#### Overview

The information contained in this document is informed by four years of grant making to support nonprofit capacity building. The Community Foundation of Louisville hopes to offer general information and advice that may be helpful to your nonprofit organization as it considers investments in organizational capacity, or pursues this or other grant opportunities. At the end of this document, you'll find a listing of online resources for community and neighborhood-level data and information that may be helpful to grant writers.

Please note: This information is intended to be generic and applicable to general grant applications, but is informed by our experience at the Community Foundation of Louisville. Other foundations may have different rules/guidelines.

If you have questions, please contact Liz Alkire, Senior Program Officer, Community Foundation of Louisville: [liza@cflouisville.org](mailto:liza@cflouisville.org)

---

#### General Advice

- Follow directions, including providing the required documents in the format requested, sticking to the word/character counts, etc.
- Answer the specific question asked.
- Be very specific, particularly about goals. Offer numbers and percentages whenever possible.
- Use short sentences and clear, concise language.
- Avoid jargon (for example, words or acronyms that only people very familiar with your sector would know or understand).
- Clearly describe who you serve. Avoid words like “stakeholders,” and “clients” until you have first defined/described who those individuals are for your organization.

#### Step 1: Describing your Organization

##### Organizational Overview

- Make sure the completed application reflects answers to the following questions and helps grant reviewers understand who your organization is, what it does, when and where it does its work, and perhaps most important, why it does its work.
- Be prepared to define:

- The population you serve (age, demographic, socioeconomic).
- How frequently individuals receive your service / interact with your organization.

### **Describing your programs**

- Share the primary program(s) instead of a long list of efforts. Where does your organization shine? What are you most proud of? *(for purposes of the Fund for Louisville capacity building grants, what program(s) are transforming lives in the target zip codes?)*

### **Describing your impact/effectiveness**

- How do you know your programs/services are making a difference for individuals in the target zip code? What is better about people’s lives as a result of your service?

## **Step 2: Describing your Request**

### **Project/Request Overview**

- Imagine you are taking an elevator ride with someone and have to explain your request for project to them in 30 seconds. What would you say? *The project is X. We are doing this project because Y. We hope this project will do Z.*

### **Project/Request Objectives**

- Use short, concise statements that clearly answer the questions: “What will you do with the grant funds?” and “What do you hope to accomplish with this grant?”

#### *Examples (capacity building-specific)*

- Evaluate the feasibility of a merger with X nonprofit
- Improve the sales and communication skills of our staff
- *(with new software)* reduce staff time required to create electronic newsletters
- Design, develop, and implement a new approach to volunteer recruitment and retention
- Develop new marketing messages and strategies

### **Expected Project Outcomes**

- Please use short, concise statements. When possible, use numbers or percentages that define a “baseline,” or your organization’s starting point, and identify a goal that your organization can achieve once the grant objectives are complete.
- The following advice is specific to capacity building projects:
  - What will be different about the organization when the project is complete?
  - If you are requesting technology (new software or hardware; a new/updated website), please quantify the cost savings that will result (if possible).
    - For example, if you are requesting a new website, will you save time and money because staff members will be able to edit the site pages themselves (vs. paying a company to do it)? Will having video editing software in your office save time and money from having to hire someone each time your organization produces a video?
  - Please let us know how the new technology ties into your organization’s mission and/or fills a need that you’ve discovered. For example, this statement:

- “Our primary donors are increasingly younger millennials and men who access our information via YouTube. In order to secure their support, we need to post more and more frequent videos on YouTube. We need XYZ software and a computer to create and promote the videos, and need to send two staff people to a one day training to maximize this investment. This will save us \$X each time we want to make a video, and we make 8-10 videos each year.”

Is stronger, more compelling, more understandable than this statement:

- “Our organization needs video editing software to produce videos to reach potential donors.”
- If you are asking for a new website, offer metrics (for example, Google Analytics) about your current site and save a screenshot of your current site that you can submit with a grant report to show the "before and after."
- Numbers and percentages make a strong case for investment, but please do not make up numbers if you don't have them. Suggesting that new donor software will increase contributions 100% is not as strong as writing that staff spend X hours each week tracking information in spreadsheets or card catalogues, time that can be spent delivering programs/services.
- If you are requesting a grant for a new website or donor management software, please tell us your plans to promote the new site or how you will use the software to increase the number of or depth of relationship with donors. Or tell us how these new tools will save your organization time and money (and quantify those savings, as much as possible).

### *Examples*

- Once the staff leadership training is complete, we can promote from within to fill X# of expected vacancies/new positions, thereby reducing recruitment costs for new leaders, which typically run \$X/position.
- Staff spend X hours creating and distributing newsletters now; we anticipate staff will spend X% less time when this project is complete.
- Our organization will have X# more volunteers, and analysis of pre-and post-survey data will show that volunteers feel more connected to the organization as a result of this project.
- Our organization will secure accreditation that allows us to apply for funds from national and corporate foundations for the first time.

### **Project Budget**

- In the budget, be prepared to indicate what requested grant funds will support and indicate what other funding sources will support (other foundations, operating funds, etc.).
- Name staff, vendors/consultants who will lead the project (if known); name software/hardware purchases, using brand names (if known).
- Use the template provided or present your information clearly in Excel. If there is no template, format the budget document so that it will print nicely (consider margins, text size, etc.).

## Sources of Community Data and Information for Grant Writers

### American Factfinder

<https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

### Center for Neighborhoods' "Neighbor Map"

<http://www.centerforneighborhoods.org/neighbor-map>

### Community Commons

<https://www.communitycommons.org/>

### Greater Louisville Project

[www.greaterlouisvilleproject.org](http://www.greaterlouisvilleproject.org)

### Kentucky Kids Count

<http://kyyouth.org/kentucky-kids-count/>

### Kentucky State Data Center

<http://www.ksdc.louisville.edu/>