GETTING TO THE MONEY

GRANT WRITING MADE EASY

PART ONE

Simmons
Leadership
Services

NMOST 2026

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Simmons Leadership Services, LLC

Simmons Leadership Services is a consulting agency that works to support and develop professionals and organizations across sectors including K-12 education, higher education, non-profit, out-of-school time , and more. Simmons Leadership Services is committed to cultivating and increasing the competency and confidence among professionals in a variety of areas.

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Agenda

1: Introduction

2: Planning for Grants

3: Researching Grants

4: Applying for Grants

5: Managing Grants

6: Questions

Objectives

Participants will...

- determine if their organization is prepared to conduct research and write grants;
- understand the key components of grant writing and details necessary for grant research;
- learn timesaving tips for grant research;
- identify upcoming national and statewide grant opportunities;
- and best practices and common errors centered on grant writing.

What is a Grant?

A sum of money offered by an organization to an applicant for the distinct purpose of carrying out a set of activities, whether that concerns research, training, educational programming, conference planning, fellowships, etc.

NOT A GIFT OR CHARITY

"As the number of applications submitted increases, so does the likelihood of winning at least one grant."

2025 State of Grantseeking

Your Experience?

What has been your experience in grant researching, writing, and management?

What image **best describes** your experience?

Why does that image represent your experience?

CHALLENGES IN GRANT WRITING

Lack of Time/Staff

Difficulty Identifying Aligned Opportunities
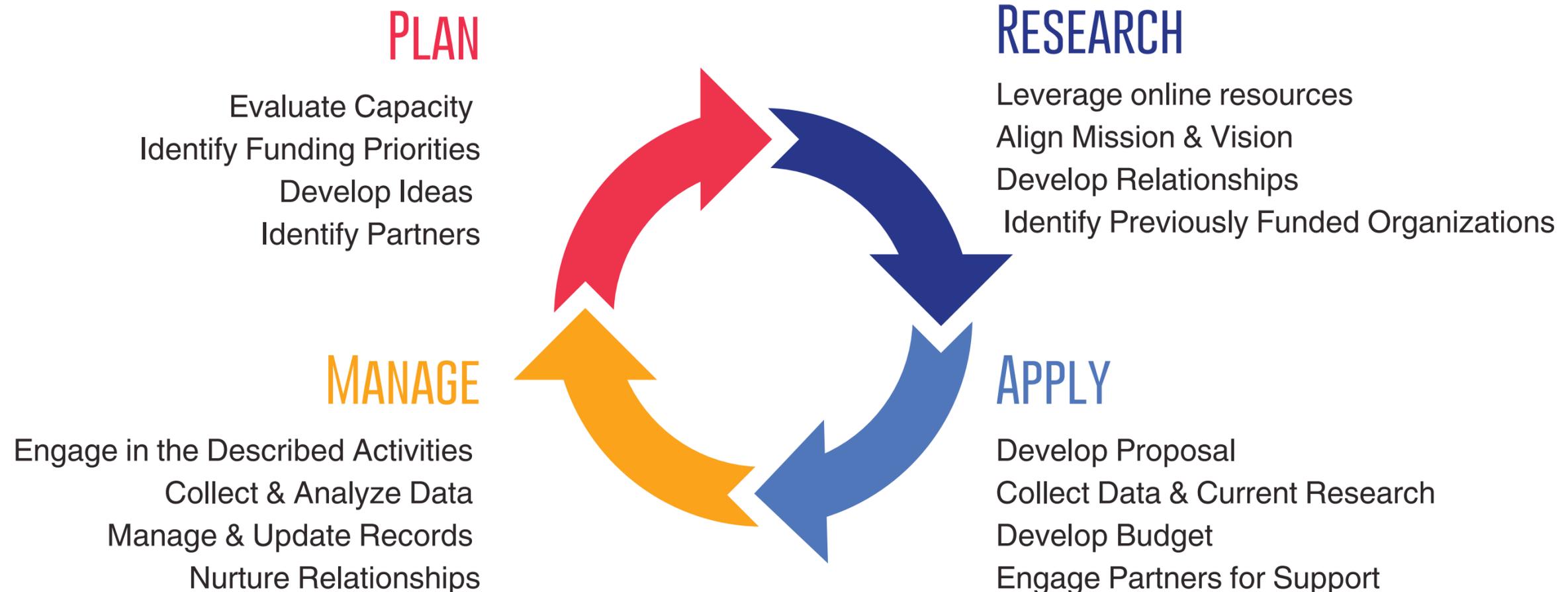
Funder Practices & Requirements

Too Much Competition

Building & Sustaining Funder Relationships

Internal Organizational Issues

2025 State of Grantseeking Report

GRANT WRITING IS A PROCESS

It is a continuous, ongoing process. Writing is not the first step.

PLAN

Evaluate Capacity
Identify Funding Priorities
Develop Ideas
Identify Partners

RESEARCH

Leverage online resources
Align Mission & Vision
Develop Relationships
Identify Previously Funded Organizations

MANAGE

Engage in the Described Activities
Collect & Analyze Data
Manage & Update Records
Nurture Relationships

APPLY

Develop Proposal
Collect Data & Current Research
Develop Budget
Engage Partners for Support

What stage does your organization spend the *least* amount of time on?

Asking the Right Questions

Who?

Assemble your grant writing team, roles & responsibilities, partnerships & collaborative opportunities.

Who is responsible for the grant (before, during, & after)? Who will do the work?

What?

Define the proposed project, alignment with strategic plan, & develop a timeline, establish goals & outcomes.

What is the proposed project for funding? What will you do to measure success of the project?

Why?

Describe the need for the proposed project. Identify data sources.

Why is the proposed project necessary for your community?

Vital Documents

Identify and compile any relevant documents & information for the grant

- Contact Information
- History of Organization (narrative)
- Year Established & Major Milestones
- **Mission, Vision, & Values Statements**
- Target Population
- **Current Programs/Services Descriptions**
- # of Target Population Served
- Staffing, Volunteers, & Board Members
- Articles of Incorporation
- Bylaws
- Board Roles & Job Descriptions
- **% of Board Giving Financial & In-Kind**

- Board of Directors (affiliations, titles, contact information)
- Organizational Chart
- **Strategic Plan**
- **Letters of Support**
- Partners
- Policies (Conflict of Interest, Social Media, Diversity & Inclusion, Anti-Harassment, etc.)
- Resumes & Biographies of Key Staff
- Vendors, Contracts, Subcontractor Agreements
- **Program/Project Schedules**

- Tax Documents (990, Tax Exempt, W-9, SAM Registration, etc.)
- **Top Donors (Financial & In-Kind)**
- Program/Project Budgets
- Funding Sources & % of Overall Budget
- **Detailed Organizational Budget (current & previous years)**
- Most Recent Audit, Review, etc.

Board Giving

Think about your Board of Directors. How are they **supporting** your organization?

- Personally Significant Contribution
- Tiered Giving Structure - Unrestricted Funding
  - $25 per month - Bronze Level
  - $50 per month - Silver Level
  - $75 per month - Gold Level
  - $100 per month - Platinum Level
- Conversion of Volunteer Hours
  - Identify how much each hour is worth
  - Request your BOD to volunteer "x" amount of hours per year
  - Ideas: Outreach, Event Support, etc.

Assess Grant Opportunities

Develop a way to track and assess potential grant opportunities

Delve into the details. Equip yourself with the necessary information to streamline your grant writing.

Basic Grant Information

- Name of Grant
- Link to Website
- Funder
- Funding Amount
- Submission Deadline
- Type of Grant
- Letter of Intent (LOI)?
- Invitation Needed?

Project Alignment

- Name of Project
- Awarded?
- Amount Requested?
- Amount Awarded?
- Grant Owner
- Reporting Deadlines

Additional Information

- How often can you apply?
- How many years of funding?
- How are funds disbursed?
- What are the other qualifying factors?

Other Tips

- Mark the application due date
- Define the project period
- May include partnerships, letters of support, etc.
- If using a platform, use a separate document
  - Link the document in the tracker
- Link any documents that will help your tracking of information

What is the stage? Submitted? Funded? Closed? Active?

Write the Grant Name & Insert the Link

What is the current status internally?

What is the priority level?

What is the deadline for the opportunity?

When did your organization submit the grant?

Pipeline Stage	ID	Grant Name	Funder	Funding Amount	Grant Type	Status	Priority	LOI?	Submission Deadline	Date Submitted
Prospect		OJJDP FY24 Community and Schools Youth Drug Prevention Program	U.S. Government	up to $10,000,000	Federal Government	Research	High	No	08/12/2024	
Prospect		The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation Grant Program	The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation Grant Program	$1,000 - $20,000	Private Foundation	Research	Low	No	Rolling	
Prospect		Roy Scrivner Memorial Research Grant	American Psychological Association	$9,000	Corporate Foundation	Research	Medium	No	11/27/2024	
Prospect		Local Grant Program	Cummings Foundation	$30,000 - $300,000	Private Foundation	Research	Medium	Yes	09/06/2024	
Prospect		Catalyst Fund	Blue Cross Blue Shield Massachusetts	up to $7,500	Corporate Foundation	Research	Low	No	09/05/2024	
Prospect		Strengthening Partner Capacity	Tower Foundation	up to $30,000	Private Foundation	Research	Medium	No	10/09/2024	
Prospect		Grant	Fuller Foundation	Varies	Private Foundation	Research	Medium	Yes	Rolling	
Closed		Anderson Foundation Grants	Boston Foundation	up to $12,000	Private Foundation	Research	Low	No	-	
Prospect		Off-Cycle Investments	New Commonwealth Fund	up to $10,000	Private Foundation	Research	Medium	No	06/30/2025	
Prospect		Grant	Bradley Foundation	Varies	Private Foundation	Research	Low	Yes	11/15/2024	
Prospect		Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	Varies	Private Foundation	Research	Low	No	10/01/2024	
Prospect		Grant	Agnes M. Lindsay Trust	Varies	Private Foundation	Research	Low	Yes	Rolling	
Closed		Mental Health Matters (MHM)	Lenny Learning	Varies	Corporate Foundation	Research	Low	No	-	
Closed		Grant	The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation	Varies	Private Foundation	Research	Low	No	07/15/2025	
Closed		Improving Youth Mental Health	The Cigna Group	Varies	Corporate Foundation	Research	Low	No	-	

Project Name	Date Awarded / Declined	Award Period Start Date	Award Period End Date	Amount Requested	Amount Rewarded	Grant Owner	Upcoming Task / Report Deadlines	Notes
							Quarterly Cycle	

What project will the grant support?

When were you awarded or declined?

What is the award period?

What did you ask for? What did you receive?

Who will manage the grant?

Are there any associated tasks or reporting deadlines?

Include any vital notes (i.e., waiting period, reimbursement grant, process to re-apply, etc.).

Strategic Engagement

If the opportunity exist, identify ways to strategically engage the grantor

01 Attend pre-application calls
The webinars are an opportunity to learn more about the funder and the grant.

02 Asset Map Connections
Identify individuals within your network, who can connect you to a potential funder.

03 Ask Appropriate Questions
When given the opportunity, ask questions aligned to the grant.

04 Appropriate Communication
Follow the RFP regarding communicating with a funder. DO NOT harass or solicit them inappropriately.

05 Remain Grounded
DO NOT assume an award, even if you personally know the funder.

06 Determine Invitation Status
Some applications require invite, if you were not invited, do not waste time applying.

Get To Know Your Funders

Alignment

Learn about the organization. How does their mission/vision align with your organization and the proposed project?

How does your work intersect with the funder's goals?

Previously Funded Opportunities

What have they previously funded? If it is posted on the website, it can help give you an idea of how your proposed project aligns.

Based on their previously funded projects, what are the common themes? How can you stand out among those projects?

Asset Mapping

Do you have any connections to this organization? Think about your Board of Directors, partners, etc.

Who do you know that can connect you with funding opportunities or provide insights about a funder?

Funding Priorities

What are their funding priorities? Do they focus on specific initiatives each year or do they change throughout funding cycles?

How do the priorities shift based on the needs of the community? What are your organizations' funding priorities?

Locating Grants

instrumentl

$299 to $899 per month (paid annually)

https://www.instrumentl.com/

GrantStation

Pricing Varies ($219 per quarter)

https://grantstation.com/

Catholic Funding Guide

$229 to $249 annually

https://www.catholicfundingguide.com/

GrantWatch™
Time to Apply

$22 per month to $249 annually

https://www.grantwatch.com/

Pricing verified on January 30, 2026. Pricing subject to change. Visit the website for updated pricing.

Locating Grants

GRANTS ARE EVERYWHERE

Locating Grants

MAJOR CORPORATIONS

American Express
Accion
Amazon
Autozone
Bank of America
Etsy
FedEx
Google
Intuit Quickbooks
Microsoft
Robin Hood
Verizon
Visa

GRANT REPOSITORIES

Hello Alice
iFundWomen
Nerd Wallet
Ladies Who Launch
Skip

State & City Grant Portal

New Mexico
Albuquerque
Sante Fe
Las Cruces
Southern New Mexico

ADDITIONAL DATABASES

Quick Google Search
Boost Cafe
The Grantsmanship Center
Candid PND Bulletin
SDCOE Grant Listing
We are Teachers - Grant List
Galaxy of Stars
Afterschool Alliance Database
Funding for NGOs
Grantmakers.io
Council on Foundations
United Philanthropy Forum
Grant Finder
Society for Nonprofits

Locating Grants

National Grant Opportunities

Dollar General Literacy Foundation - Varies
Believe in Reading - Rolling
Walmart Spark Good Local Grants - Rolling
Ben & Jerry's Foundation - Rolling
Ronald W. Burke Foundation - Rolling
Stellar Foundation - Rolling
Max & Victoria Dreyfus Foundation - Rolling
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation - Rolling
Costco Grants - Rolling
Creag Foundation - Rolling
Purdue Farms - Rolling
C.E.&.S Foundation - Rolling
Cisco - Rolling
Community Heart & Soul - Rolling
3M Young Scientist Lab - April 30, 2026
Blue Cross Blue Sheild (NM) - Rolling

Bridge Builder Grant - Rolling
Wells Fargo - Rolling
Costco - Rolling
Wegmans - Rolling
Farrell Family Foundation - Rolling
Lisa & Douglas Fund - Rolling
Victor C. Clark Fund - Rolling
Adult & Family Literacy - Rolling
CICF - Rolling
Aldi Grants - Rolling
Harry Chapin Grants - Rolling
Dell Foundation - Rolling
DanPaul Foundation - Rolling
American Electric Power - Rolling
Kauffman Foundation - Rolling
Morgan Stanley - Spring 2026

Hearst Foundation - Rolling
LabCorp Charitable Foundation - Rolling
Hansen Family Foundation - Rolling
Southern Partners Fund - May 2026
Cedar Tree Foundation - Rolling
Dow Promise Grants - September 2026
Blue Grass Community Foundation - Rolling
Old National Bank - April 16
Sundt Foundation - Rolling
Annuity Freedom
Breva Thrive Grant
Coach K Legacy Grant
Pop Culture Collaborative
Fruit Guys Community Fund
Workers Lab Innovation Fund

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

a

Time-Saving

Accelerates administrative and repetitive tasks, freeing up time for high-value strategic work, such as accelerating the drafting of boilerplate language, summarizing organization reports, etc.

b

Quality Control

AI has a documented tendency to produce convincing but false information. It lacks judgment, context, and political nuance. It generates options, not decisions. It requires human oversight.

c

The Power of Prompts

The quality of the output is directly proportional to the clarity and constraints of your input.

Vague Prompt

Yields generic, unusable content that can be a poor use of time.

Structured Prompt

Clearly defines the AI's role, task, audience, and the desired format.

Privacy

NEVER put personally identifiable information or confidential donor/client information.
Avoid connecting non-enterprise AI tools to proprietary drives (i.e., Google Drive, Dropbox, Microsoft Suite).

PROMPT BLUEPRINT

Role
Who is the AI acting as?
Grant Analyst, Program Director, etc.

Task
What is the specific job?
Draft a logic model. Revise this paragraph.

Constraints
Specify tone, length, and format.
SMART Objectives, 300 words or less, etc.

Context & Details
Provide program details, target audience, and funder requirements.

ACTIONABLE TIP

Always instruct AI to "ask follow-up questions, if needed" to test its understanding of your context.

Try to limit it to 3 to 5 questions.

AI is a tool, not a shortcut

USING AI IN YOUR PREPARATION

SUMMARIZATION

Summarize this RFP. What are the 3 main goals and the 3 biggest challenges?

COMPLIANCE CHECK

Extract all "must-have" information and submission requirements into a table.

ALIGNMENT CHECK

Based on our mission [insert mission], what are the 3 biggest gaps in applying for this grant?

TRY THIS PROMPT

Act as a senior grant consultant and provide (1) a summary of this grant application in 3 sentences; (2) maximum grant amount & deadline; (30 a list of required attachments; (4) eligibility restrictions; and (5) using our website and list of programs, explain which aligns best to this grant application.

AI TOOLS

WRITING RESOURCES

Chat GPT
Deep Seek
Claude AI
Gemini
CoPilot
Simplified

AI ASSISTANCE

Easypeasey.ai (marketing)
DeepL (translation services)

GRANT PROSPECTING

Perplexity
CharityGPT
Donor Search

GRANT AUTOMATION

Grantable
Grant AI
Grant Assistant
Vee

AI DETECTION

Grammarly
GPTZero

APPLY, WAIT, OR WALK

BRIGHT FUTURES LEARNING HUB

Bright Futures Learning Hub empowers elementary and middle school students in under-resourced communities by providing high-quality afterschool academic support, literacy enrichment, and social-emotional learning experiences that strengthen school success and family engagement.

Grant: <u>Dollar General Literacy Foundation</u>

NEXT LEVEL YOUTH

Next Level Youth prepares middle and high school youth for postsecondary success through leadership development, workforce readiness, mentorship, and career-connected learning that expands economic opportunity and community impact.

Grant: <u>Max & Victoria Dreyfus Foundation</u>

LITTLE STEPS AFTERSCHOOL

Little Steps Afterschool supports elementary-aged youth by offering safe, engaging afterschool programming that promotes academic growth, creativity, and healthy development while strengthening family and community connections.

Grant: <u>Kauffman Foundation</u>

ELEVATE YOUTH NETWORK

Elevate Youth Network advances equitable outcomes for elementary, middle, and high school youth through comprehensive out-of-school time programming that integrates academic enrichment, wellness supports, family engagement, and community partnerships.

Grant: <u>Morgan Stanley Mental Health Grants</u>

What makes the grant a clear apply, wait, or walk?

SURVEY STUDY SEEKS OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME (OST) PROFESSIONALS

You are invited to complete a 13 to 23-minute anonymous survey for a study titled: Relationship between demographics, social capital, work engagement, and job satisfaction in out-of-school time program professionals.

Seeking volunteers who meet these requirements:

- Currently (or in the last 2 years) have worked in an out-of-school time (OST) program in the United States;
- Have at least 1 year of experience working in an out-of-school time (OST) program in the United States;
- At least 18 years of age

The survey will be open until the end of April.

To complete the survey, please visit http://bit.ly/49beGGy

Questions should be directed to sheneika.simmons@waldenu.edu

Thank You!

QUESTIONS?

Reach out via email - info@simmonsleads.com

Reach out via text/phone call - 919-616-2741

To learn more, visit the website - www.simmonsleads.com

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Key Components of a Grant

01   Cover Letter or Letter of Intent

02   Narrative

03   Measures of Success

04   Sustainability

05   Budget + Budget Narrative

06   Post Grant Activities

COVER LETTER OR <u>LETTER OF INTENT</u>

May be required by some funders. It provides insight to assess if your organization and proposed project/program is a good fit *before* you write the full grant.

BE CONCISE

Provide a glimpse of the project, its purpose, and the need within the community

BE PERSUASIVE & LOGICAL

Ensure that the content makes sense and flows appropriately

FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES

Ensure that you are following the appropriate page numbers and other requirements

Describes the organization

███████████, located in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, offers a unique approach to education, blending traditional academic subjects with real-world experiences and opportunities for students, ages 6 to 13, to develop key social and entrepreneurial skills. The program focuses on fostering creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and problem-solving abilities in students, preparing them for success both in and out of the classroom. At the ███████████, students engage in project-based learning, community service projects, and leadership development activities to build their self-confidence, teamwork, and leadership skills. The program also includes mindfulness practices, character education, and social-emotional learning to support students' overall well-being and personal growth. In addition to academic support, the ███████████ provides afterschool programming and resources for families to further enhance students' learning experiences. By actively involving families and the community in the educational process, the ███████████ creates a strong support system for students to thrive academically and socially. **The ███████████ is seeking financial support of $75,000 from ███ to increase staffing capacity, build a strong intervention system, advance technological offerings, and purchase outdoor play space equipment for students.**

Describes the use of funds

Amount Requested

Please note that there was a word/character count

Cover Letter or Letter of Intent

Introduction of the organization & proposed project

→

I am pleased to submit a grant proposal, titled, "All In STEAM", for consideration of ███████████████████ grant. All In STEAM is an initiative designed to support out-of-school time (OST) programs, with limited funding and resources, to engage youth in high-quality STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) opportunities and experiences. In addition to high-quality experiential learning for youth, program providers are able to engage in free professional development centered on STEAM education.

Brief data to support proposed project. Summarize proposed project

→

Kaffenberger (2021) found that the three-month closure of schools beginning in March 2020 reduced long-term learning by an entire year. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a detriment to many youth, families, schools, and communities. However, OST programs have been instrumental throughout the pandemic by connecting youth and families to local resources, supporting academic enrichment and engagement, and fostering core skills that boost youth well-being (Afterschool Alliance, 2021). Unfortunately, many programs are unable to provide youth with innovative and engaging programming due to staffing capacity, limited funding, or lack of resources. ███████████████ seeks to support and empower all; no matter their socioeconomic background, race, ethnicity, or geographic location; to ensure they have a fair opportunity to access and engage in a variety of opportunities.

Amount Requested

→

███ requests $150,000 from ████████████████████ to support the development and implementation of All In STEAM initiative within programs across five North Carolina counties.

Include a brief recap of the proposed project. Describe intended outcomes. Include contact information.

→

We hope to make a difference in the lives of youth and program providers through the exposure and engagement of STEAM education. The All In STEAM initiative will enhance program quality, capacity, and effectiveness to support youth, families, schools, and communities as they address the lasting impacts of the pandemic. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact ████████████████ via email ███████████████████ or by phone at ███████████ Thank you for your consideration.

Please note that there was a word/character count

Writing the Narrative

This is your opportunity to **inform** the funder of your organization, the work you have done, and the work that you will do.

Why should they **fund** your organization?

Organization Overview

- Tell funders about your organization
- Who and why do you serve them? What data supports this?
- How does this project align to your organization's mission/vision?

Project Overview

- What is the project?
- What need does this project meet?
- What data supports this need?
- How does your project support this need?

Measuring Success

- How will you know the project is successful?
- What is the timeline for the project?
- What are the projected outcomes?
- What are the benchmarks that you will need to meet? (Goals & Objectives)

Sustainability

- How are you *currently* sustaining?
- How will you sustain *after* the funding?
- Who is represented on your Board of Directors? How will they support this project?

Frame the Need

After reading your narrative, the funder should have a clear idea of your program, community needs, and the correlation between those needs and your project.

01 Highlight the Significance
Establish your issue's importance on a local, state, and national scale

02 Unravel the Layers
Address multiple issues that stem from the issue or need

03 Use Data to Support
Cite relevant studies, literature, or research that aligns that can support the need for your program

04 Visualize the Data
Employ statistics, infographics, and charts for impact and enhanced comprehension

05 Ensure Clarity
Keep the titles and labels on visuals legible and easy to interpret

06 Funnel the Information
Start broadly and then narrow the data down

How can we fix this statement to effectively frame the need?

"Youth and families cannot access community resources."

Identifying Data Sources

- Afterschool Alliance
- The Wallace Foundation
- National Girls Collaborative Project
- United States Census Bureau
- Education Commission of the States
- National Center for Education Statistics
- Save the Children
- National League of Cities
- Comprehensive Center Network
- American Institute for Research
- Search Institute
- The Learning Agenda
- Every Hour Counts
- NPS - Decade of the Child

- State Department of Education
- Local Police Departments
- Local Department of Health & Human Services
- State Department of Commerce
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- National Network for Youth
- American Youth Policy Forum
- Center for Disease Control & Prevention
- Youth.Gov
- National Council of Nonprofits
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- Kids Count Data
- Mental Health America
- NAMI National

Framing the Need

With a grant of $80,000 over two years from the ~~[redacted]~~ will be able to expand access to high-quality literature and social-emotional skill development for families in need of support.

According to the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), globally, one in six children will experience a mental disorder. Consequently, failing to address mental health issues can lead to long-term impairment of physical and mental health and limit the ability to lead a fulfilling life as an adult. The COVID-19 pandemic has inflated these issues. The isolation, disruption in routine, and other increased stressors have contributed to the rise in mental health challenges for youth. Additionally, there has been a shortage of school psychologists, social workers, and educators that can help mitigate the impact of mental illness in youth. The National Association of School Psychologists ([NASP](#)) found that in the 2021-2022 academic school year in Arkansas, the ratio of students for every one school psychologist was 4,331 to 1, compared to the national average of 1,227 to 1. In Arkansas, there has been a great need to have increased access to mental health services, destigmatize mental health issues, and promote mental wellness awareness and educational opportunities. According to the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative: 2018-2019 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) data query, it was found that 28.5% of youth in Arkansas, ages 3 to 17, reported having one or more mental, emotional, or behavioral issues (Healthy Arkansas, [2021](#)). This data indicates that there is a high need to address mental well-being as early as pre-K to ensure youth have the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in and out of the classroom.

In addition to the growing need for mental illness support in Arkansas, there is a growing need to provide youth with literacy support. According to the Arkansas Department of Education ([2023](#)), more than 60% of students in Arkansas are reading below grade level. This statistic is also supported by the University of Arkansas ([2021](#)) that identified the Pulaski County Achievement Score in English Language Arts and Mathematics as lower than the national average in elementary, middle, and high schools in the area. Pulaski County school districts that have higher numbers of "at-risk" students have indicated lower Achievement Scores. This gap is further exasperated when evaluating the socio-economic status, race, and ethnicity of students that are identified as "at-risk".

Please note that there was a word/character count

Conclusion

End your report with a review of the highlights, and a renewed commitment to continue working on making the SDGs attainable by 2030.

Highlight 1

Summarize the key points here.
- Bullet points help!

Highlight 2

Summarize the key points here.
- Bullet points help!

Highlight 3

Summarize the key points here.
- Bullet points help!

A vision statement, call-to-action or quote from your leaders are powerful ways to conclude your progress report. Leave your audience inspired, and motivated to help your organization achieve its SDG-aligned goals!

GOALS

OBJECTIVES

Broad statement of what your organization intends to accomplish

Represents a step towards accomplishing a goal

Use Visionary Words - "Decrease, Deliver, Develop, Establish, Improve, Increase, Produce, or Provides"

Narrow, Precise, Tangible, Concrete, & Measurable

Linked to the Needs Statement

Aligns to a Specific Goal

Focuses on the Outcomes & Intentions

Sets Targets for Progress and Accountability

Example: **Increase student literacy rates**

Example: **By the end of October 2025, 22% of sixth graders will participate in the tutoring program twice per week.**

OUTCOMES

The result of the objectives by the end of the grant period

Example: Sixth graders will demonstrate 10% growth in their reading comprehension scores by the end of the school year.

Measuring Success

Evaluation Metrics

What are the specific indicators that clearly show a project's progress and impact? (Goals & Objectives)

What is the ultimate outcome of the metrics?

Evaluation Method

How will you collect and measure data, qualitatively and quantitively? Examples include collecting artifacts, quizzes, interviews, surveys, etc.

www.problem-attic.com; www.pearinc.org;

Data Management

How will you maintain records and convey the data?

afterschoolhq.com; ezchildtrack.com

Evaluation Requirements

- Grants under $20K have minimal evaluation needs
- $20K to $200K grants can vary and evaluations needs will increase
- $Over $200K grants will need a structured evaluation plan, often with an external evaluator

Evaluation Types

- Qualitative: Employ case studies, interviews, observations (subjective)
- Quantitative: Utilize surveys, test scores, administrative data (objective)

Best Practice

- Adopt a pre/post evaluation model (retrospective works too!)
- Leverage existing data sources
- Embrace evaluation as a tool for organizational growth and learning

Types of Assessments

Formative Assessments

Tracks Progress
Monitor progress and refine program implementation

- Exit Tickets
- Discussions
- Checklists
- Questionnaires
- Program Notes
- Interviews/Focus Groups
- Self-Evaluations
- Observations

Summative Assessments

Measures Impact
Evaluate outcomes and goal attainment

- Rubrics
- Final Exams
- Test Results (Standardized)
- Administrative Data (i.e., attendance)
- Written Reports
- Performance Tasks

NARRATIVE MAPPING

Program Snapshot

- This is what a funder should understand in the first 30 seconds.
- Program/Project Name:
- Youth Population Served (age, grade, key characteristics):
- Primary Focus Area (academic, workforce, SEL, wellness, etc.):

If you could only say one sentence to the funder, what would it be?

Community Need

Why does this program matter right now?
- Primary Need (specific, not broad):
- Who is most impacted?
- One data point that proves the need:
- (Local, state, or national - realistic, not perfect)

What would make a funder say, "Yes, this is a real and urgent issue"?

Program Activities

What will you actually do with the money?
- List 3 to 4 key activities:
  - Who leads it (staff, partners, volunteers)?
- How often does it occur?

Are these activities realistic with current staffing?

Outcomes & Evaluation

What will change because of this program?
- 1 Short-Term Outcome (knowledge, skills, participation)
- 1 Long-Term Outcome (behavior, achievement, access)

How will success be measured?
- Data source (attendance, survey, grades, etc.):
- Frequency (monthly, quarterly, end of program):

Could the organization actually collect this data?

You're not trying to write a perfect grant. You're trying to decide if this story is strong enough to fund.

Future Plans & Sustainability

Impact
How will this program/project make a lasting impact in your community, state, or nationally?

Partnerships
Who can assist in the continuation of the program/project? Who has assisted your organization in similar projects?

Continuation
How will you continue the project/program beyond the life of the grant? If you aren't funded, how will you sustain this vital work?

Support
Who, in your community, supports your work? How does their work align with yours?

FUNDING & SUSTAINABILITY PLANS

Since 2021, ███████████ has served as a pillar to local communities, schools, and out-of-school time programs. Their work has centered on activating the genius of youth, educators, program providers, and families with the goal of creating and sustaining equitable communities. ███ seeks to eradicate barriers that hinder the advancement of all youth, particularly those that are from marginalized communities. ███ accepted the charge to help cultivate youth into productive citizens who are culturally affirmed and liberated to be their fullest selves. With knowledge of this, ███ empowers others to take action and work collaboratively to eradicate barriers to establish educational equality and ensure that all youth are afforded the opportunity to learn in a safe environment.

To sustain All In STEAM, ███ has a dedicated Board of Directors with diverse expertise and investments in educational equity, youth empowerment, and the out-of-school time landscape required to launch a successful expansion of its initiatives. The Board of Directors is committed to this initiative's long-term success and sustainability through in-kind contributions and financial support. In addition to the Board of Directors, ███ has the support of local, state, and national partners including

List partners here

Through the support of those organizations, ███ has been able to host summits, annual golf tournaments, food truck rodeos, bike-a-thons, food festivals, days of service, and other ongoing initiatives. ███ hopes that ████████████████████ will be an ongoing partnership beyond the initial year of the All In STEAM initiative.

Please note that there was a word/character count

Describes history of engaging in this kind of work. Reinforces the mission and vision.

Describes Board commitment and support.

Describe partnerships and their role to sustainability.

Connection to the sustainability of other programming.

Budgeting

Direct Funds

Costs **directly** associated with the proposed project.

Indirect Funds

Costs that may not be associated with the proposed project but are necessary to the **operation** of the organization.

Budget Narratives

A written description/explanation of each line item provided in the budget.

Best Practices

- Do not over or under budget. If possible, provide exact costs for items related to the project.
- The funder determines if indirect costs can be funded.
- Include all personnel that will engage with the project and the percentage of their role that will be allocated to the project.
- Ensure all costs are allowable, review the RFP.
- The grant budget **must** align with the details of the project.
- If possible, include the calculations of your costs
- You may need to include additional funding sources, if any.
- If the project exceeds the funding amount, be prepared to explain

Expense	Description	Cost
	Direct Project Costs	
Personnel	up to15 Social Emotional Coaches Stipends $1,000 per Coach 1 Part-Time Program Coordinator $20 per hour .4 PTE (40%)	$21,500
Technology	Includes access to the online platform for families and platform maintenance	$5,000
Supplies	Supplies to engage families in the initiative, inclusive of teddy bears, access to the digital library, print and digital resources for families, etc. $70 per family (estimation)	$3,000
Assessment(s)	Holistic Student Assessments for participating families	$500
Event	Costs associated with the concluding celebratory event, including meals, certificates, decorations, etc.	$5,000
Total Direct Costs		$34,000
	Indirect Project Costs	
Indirect Costs (15%)	15% of the Project Costs	$6,000
TOTAL EXPENSES		$40,000

This is an example budget. This is not representative of the formats that funders may require.

Provides a quick description of the items associated with the line item

Each line item makes sense with the project narrative.

All of the direct costs are calculated to the correct subtotal.

Indirect funds are determined by the funder

All of the direct **and** indirect costs are calculated to the correct subtotal.

Budget Narratives

BUDGET NARRATIVE
YEAR ONE

(15% Indirect)

Personnel
The 10 to 15 Social Emotional Coaches will be primarily responsible for the initiative. Each coach will receive $1,000 for the duration of the initiative. The Program Coordinator will assist in the management of the initiative. The Program Coordinator is a part-time role.
= $21,500

Technology
Participating families will be able to access hundreds of free age-appropriate literature via the _____ online platform. This cost includes ongoing maintenance for the platform.
= $5,000

Supplies
Each family will receive one teddy bear, access to the digital library platform, print and digital resources aligned to social emotional wellness, mental health, and literacy. Costs are estimated to be $70 per family.
= $3,000

Assessments
_____ will leverage the Holistic Student Assessment (HSA) for each participating family. This also includes access to the online platform, Qualtrics, for _____ to collect and analyze data.
= $500

Event
_____ will host a culminating celebratory event for participating families. This event will include meals and decorations. Each family will receive a certificate of completion.
= $5,000

Provides a description of the line item

Includes the cost outlined in the budget

The math **must** make sense. If possible, include the calculations.

Each item in the narrative is appropriately reflected in the budget narrative.

BUDGET MATCH ACTIVITY

Use the program description to build a realistic, funder-aligned grant budget totaling $75,000. Select appropriate budget line items, assign reasonable amounts, and ensure each cost clearly supports the program activities described.

Pathways Afterschool is a community-based out-of-school time (OST) program serving 120 middle school students across two school sites in a mid-sized urban community. The program operates four days per week during the school year and focuses on academic support, social-emotional learning (SEL), and career awareness. Core program components include homework help and tutoring, weekly SEL small groups, monthly career exploration workshops led by community partners, and family engagement events held twice per semester.

Pathways employs one full-time Program Manager, two part-time Site Coordinators, and six hourly instructors. The organization has an engaged school district partner that provides free space and limited transportation support. The total annual organizational budget is $350,000, and Pathways is seeking a $75,000 one-year foundation grant to support direct program costs, staffing time, supplies, and evaluation related specifically to the middle school afterschool program.

What to do if awarded?

After you're awarded, the work will truly begin.
The immediate next step will be to reach out and say **THANK YOU!**

01 ## Build the Relationship
What are ways that you can build your relationship with a funder (i.e., invitations to events, etc.)?

02 ## Stay Organized
Keep documentation, data, etc. in a safe, protected place. Remember you can use it for other grant opportunities.

03 ## Follow Guidelines Precisely
Complete all reporting requirements and follow communication guidelines.

04 ## Proactive Communications
If there are issues that arise or adjustments that need to be made, it is essential to communicate those as soon as possible.

What are ways that you engage funders post award?

What to do if not awarded?

After you're notified of your declination, the work continues.
The immediate next step will be to reach out and say THANK YOU!

01 Do Not Be Upset!
It's not you. It's them. Keep applying for funding opportunities.

02 Keep Applying!
"Don't stop believing!" This is one of many, keep applying.

03 Identify Areas of Improvement
Getting declined is an opportunity to identify weak areas of a grant proposal. Reach out to the funder, if applicable.

04 Opportunities to Re-Apply
If you are able to re-apply in the future, identify timelines, etc.

COMMON REASONS FOR DENIAL

Guidelines Not Followed

- Not Eligible
- Deadline Not Met
- Did Not Answer The Questions

Poorly Written

- Poor Narratives
- Did Not Describe The Business Model Well
- Did Not Describe Use of Funds

Other Reasons

- Highly Competitive
- Funder Depleted Funds
- Didn't Apply

SURVEY STUDY SEEKS OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME (OST) PROFESSIONALS

You are invited to complete a 13 to 23-minute anonymous survey for a study titled: Relationship between demographics, social capital, work engagement, and job satisfaction in out-of-school time program professionals.

Seeking volunteers who meet these requirements:

- Currently (or in the last 2 years) have worked in an out-of-school time (OST) program in the United States;
- Have at least 1 year of experience working in an out-of-school time (OST) program in the United States;
- At least 18 years of age

The survey will be open until the end of April.

To complete the survey, please visit http://bit.ly/49beGGy

Questions should be directed to sheneika.simmons@waldenu.edu

Thank You!

QUESTIONS?

Reach out via email - info@simmonsleads.com

Reach out via text/phone call - 919-616-2741

To learn more, visit the website - www.simmonsleads.com