

Grants Primer: Managing Grant Awards

The Art & Science of Competitive Grant Seeking

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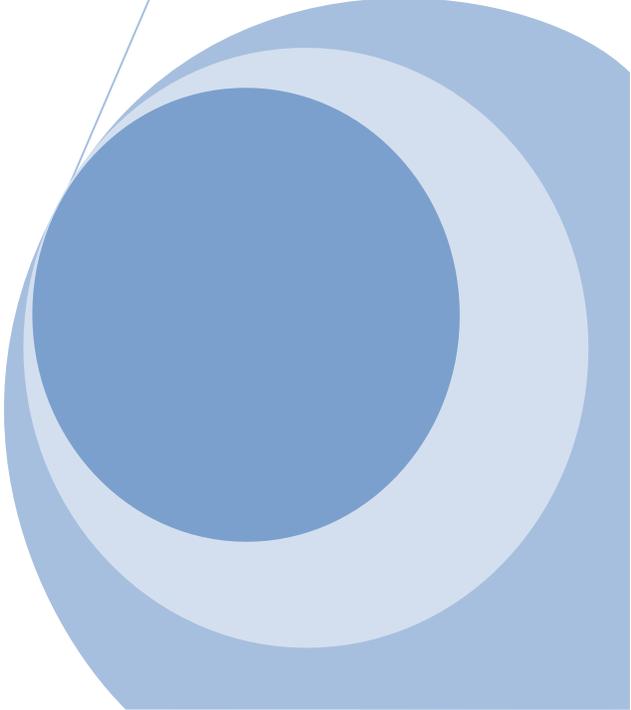
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GRANTS PRIMER: *Managing Grant Awards*

INTRODUCTION

Equally important as the preparation of a sound proposal is the responsible management of grant funds and grant-funded activities. Managing grant activities effectively and efficiently will demonstrate to grant makers that your organization is a good steward of the funds it is awarded and will pave the way to your success with future proposals.

Review the award contract and consider the following critical elements of our grants management activities:

1. Were you awarded the full amount requested? If not, what changes will you have to make to your proposed program project?
2. Is the timeline the same as what you proposed?
3. Did the funder ask you to make any modifications?
4. What is the reporting schedule?
 - a. Make note of any reporting deadlines and add them to your calendar and/or the calendars of staff which will be responsible for processes related to reporting.
5. What do you have to report?
 - a. Create a spreadsheet with the required reporting elements and relevant reporting dates (see example *Grant Report Summary Tool* at the end of the chapter).
 - b. Does your organization currently have processes in place to collect the information needed to complete reports or will you need to create new processes?



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MEET WITH YOUR TEAM

Schedule a meeting to bring all the key members of your organization together to review their roles in the implementation of the grant. This might include:

- Executive Director
- Finance Director
- Operations/Program Director
- Program Coordinator/Manager
- HR Representative (if new staff will be hired)

Prepare descriptions of the roles that are related to your grant implementation for each key staff member. Inform other staff in your organization about your plans. While they might not have a key role in implementing a new program, you should also meet with or inform front line staff, such as your receptionist, so that they can respond appropriately to inquiries from potential clients. Meet with key members of partnering agencies, if applicable. Answer the following questions:

- Who is the one person ultimately responsible for the success or failure of this project?
- Review roles and processes: who will be responsible for what and when?
- Review fiscal information: how will partnering agencies receive funds?
- Review reporting requirements: what records do they need to keep and/or report to you?



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IMPLEMENT COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES FOR NEW GRANTS

1. Send a personalized thank you letter to the grant maker (signed by the executive director).
2. Write and distribute a press release in local media markets and markets where the foundation is located (in accordance with the grant maker's preferences, if specified).
3. Write and distribute grant award messages through social media sources.
4. Identify upcoming organization newsletter or other paper publication where you can recognize the grant.
5. Establish a plan for publicly communicating results of the grant.



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MANAGING ESSENTIAL GRANT DOCUMENTS

A useful method for organizing essential grant-related documents is to maintain grant records in a multiple tabbed or pocketed file folder. The following documents are essential for record maintenance and may be required for auditing:

- Grant application
- Grant summary
- Grant report schedule
- Grant budget
- Award letter
- Contract with funder
- Requirements related to the grant (ex. eligibility criteria for clients)
- Correspondence with funder and records of site visits
- Reports submitted to the funder

The inclusion of a file cover sheet, such as the one on the following page, will help with the organization of the above documents and provide record for auditors of your internal records maintenance processes.

Questions your team must answer:

- Who will be responsible for maintaining these files?
- Is there an established process in place for reviewing files internally?

Refer to the *Grant Profile/File Coversheet*, *Audit Review Form*, *Grant Documentation*, *Grant Progress*, and *Other Management Requirements* forms to guide your internal review process (provided at the end of this chapter).



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REPORTING TO YOUR FUNDER

Review your funder's reporting requirements and organize using a spreadsheet or tool similar to the *Grant Report Summary Tool*, which contains the following information:

- What information does the funder require you to report?
- How often do you report to your funder?
- Does your funder have a required format or forms for reporting? If so, maintain those forms or format specification requirements in your grant file as well.

Develop a reporting strategy based on your funder's requirements.

- What data will you collect?
- How often will you collect data?
- How will you store or organize data?
- Who in your organization will be designated as the key contact for reporting and will be responsible for developing and submitting reports?
- How will you monitor reporting? Will reports be submitted to your Executive Director, your Board, and/or constituents for review?

Refer to the *Discretionary Grant Tracking Tool* at the end of this chapter as a guide to organizing your grant reporting information.



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FISCAL MANAGEMENT

To ensure you adequately manage grant awards and are able to report appropriately on allocated grant expenditures, attention must be paid to establishing grants fiscal management procedures. Answer the following questions:

- Are grants assigned activity or accounting codes by your organization?
 - If you use an accounting system that requires the use of a mix of grant codes, program codes and/or activity codes, you might want to develop a matrix to track this information and to have it available for key staff to refer to.
- How are purchases and/or property tracked?
- Are timesheets compliant with funder's requirements?
- What documentation is required by funder for purchases?
- Are there restrictions to the purchasing process? (Ex. no purchases with credit, no reimbursements to employees for purchases, no reimbursements for travel expenses, etc.)

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GRANTS MANAGEMENT

Having organizational policies in place to guide your grant-related activities will help you maintain efficient and consistent processes and will provide staff with direction. Below are grant-related processes that you should have policies in place for to support grants management.

Grant Seeking

- Who in your agency is responsible for seeking grants?
- Who has authority to apply for grants?
- What is this person's role in grants management?

Grant Budget Development/Fiscal Management

- Who in your agency is responsible managing grant funds and reporting finances to grant makers?
- Do you have programs that are supported by multiple grants and, if so, how are those different funds managed?
- Who determines and/or approves proposal budgets before submission to grant makers?

Grant Records Maintenance

- Who in your agency is responsible for maintaining grant records?
- Is there a central location for all grant records?
- Are all grant records readily available for review by auditors?
- Are all grant records in compliance with the grant maker's requirements?
- Do you have internal processes in place to review grant records?

Sample *Standard Operating Procedures* are provided at the end of this chapter.