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empowering communities



25 Tips from 25 Years of Grantseeking Success

Mapping Your Path Forward in 2026

Today's Presenters



Christopher LaPage

Grants Office
Chief Services Officer



Shannon Day

Grants Office
Senior Grants
Development Consultant



Dr. Liz Shay

Grants Office
Senior Grants
Development Consultant



Ashley Schultz

Grants Office
Manager of Community
Engagement



Elizabeth Evans

Grants Office
Manager of Research
and Consultation

TODAY'S AGENDA

01 | Understanding the Funding Landscape

02 | Finding and Selecting the Best-Fit Grants

03 | Building Comprehensive Projects

04 | Fostering Collaboration

05 | Submitting Quality Proposals

06 | Q & A



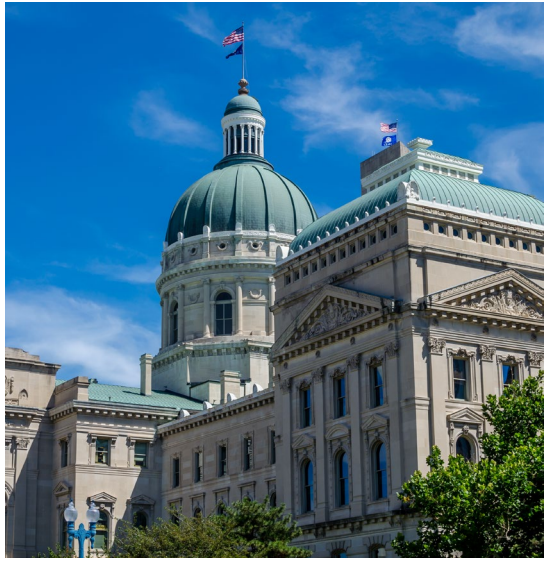
Understanding the Funding Landscape

tip # 1

Know the major sources of funding

- **Federal:** 26 grantmaking agencies administer grant funding through the annual federal discretionary budget
- **State**: States administer grant programs from their own budget, as well as federal pass-through funding
- **Foundations**: Private, corporate, and community foundations make grants at the national, regional, and local levels









tip # 2

Understand distribution methodologies

Flow of Funding

- Direct: Funding flows directly from the grantmaker to the end-recipient
- Pass-Through: Funding flows through an intermediary, such as a state entity

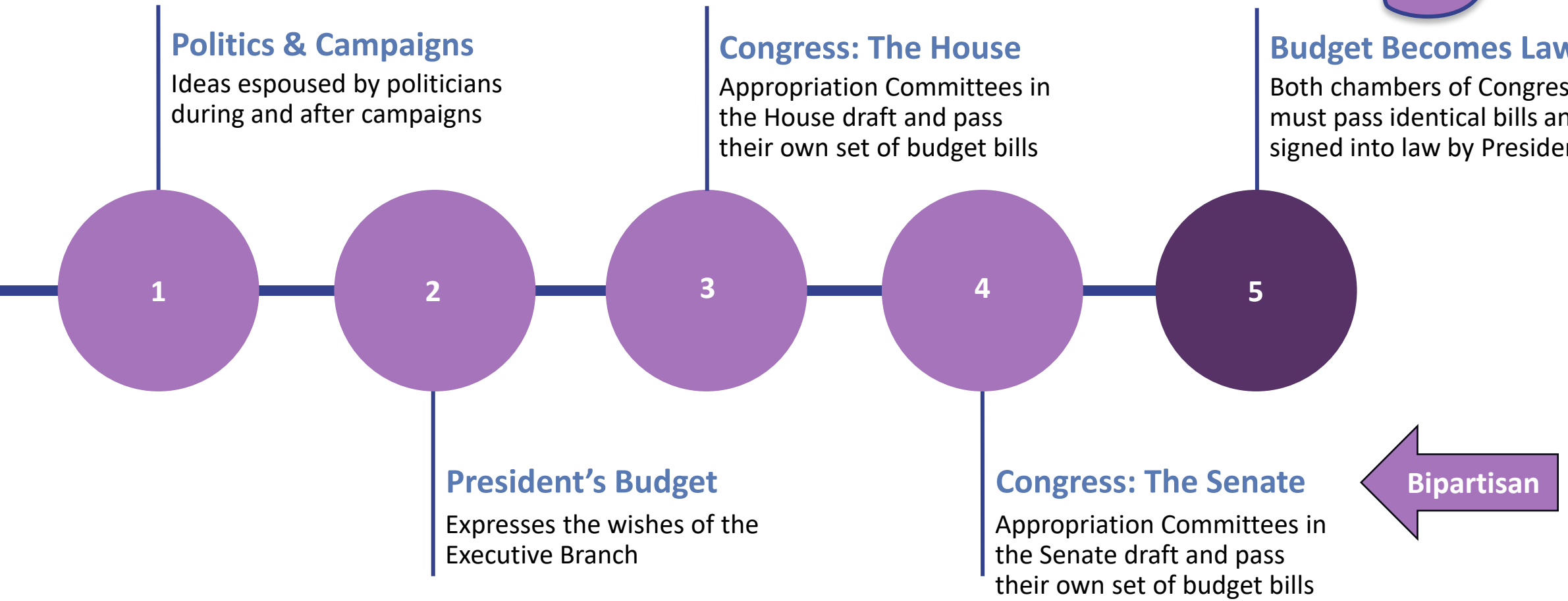
Type of Funding

- Formula: Funding is provided based on a methodology, such as population
- Competitive: Funding decisions are based on a scoring methodology



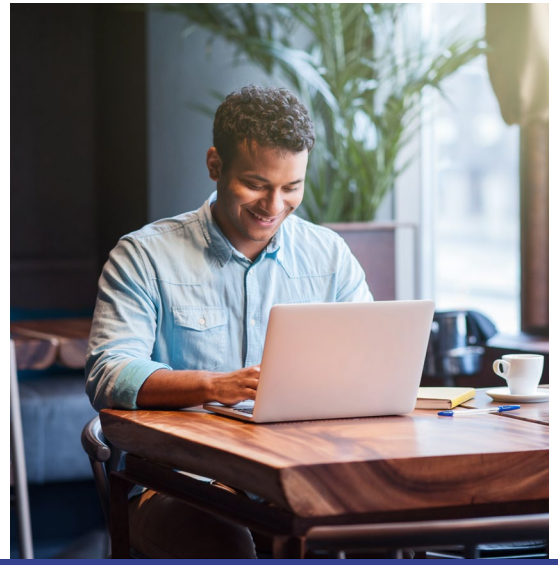
Track policy and funding trends

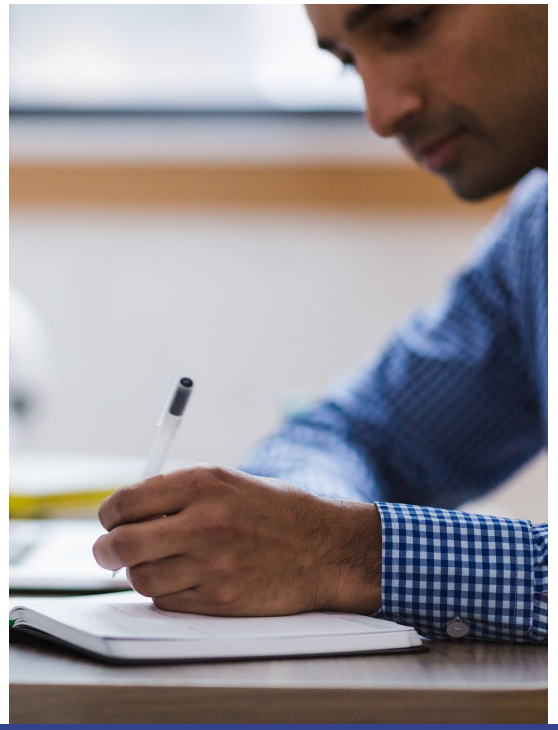
tip # 3











Uncover funder motivations

tip # 4

- Go beyond the NOFA/RFP/Solicitation to get a deeper sense of the funder's priorities and motives
- For public funders, look for agency strategic plans
- For foundations, look at their annual reports
- Turn your needs into grant-fundable projects

Watch our Guidance for Grantseekers video
Grantseeking from the Funder's Perspective



Build a sensible grantseeking strategy

tip #5

- Grantseeking plans should not be developed in a vacuum
- Align to long-term strategic planning process
- Align to your annual budget process

PRO TIP *Don't Say Yes to All Grants. Select the best fit for your project.*

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Understanding the Funding Landscape

Tip #1	Tip #2	Tip #3	Tip #4	Tip #5
Know major sources of funding from **federal**, **state**, and **foundation** grantmakers.	Understand **distribution methodologies.**	Track relevant **policy** and **funding trends**.	Uncover **funder motivations** and the basics of a **grant-fundable project**.	Build a **grantseeking strategy** that aligns with your organizational vision & processes.

Finding and Selecting the Best-Fit Grants

tip #6

Learn where to find grants

- Become familiar with research tools and grant search platforms
- Use correct search terms and embrace Boolean operators
- Don’t trust AI-generated results

PRO TIP *Make the grants come to you. Sign up to receive grant alerts from a variety of resources to ensure you don’t miss any opportunities.*

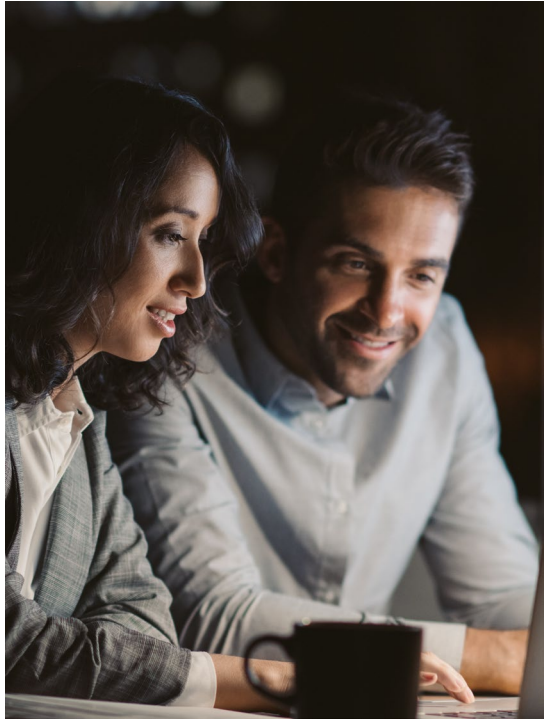
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tip #7

Evaluate any grant application requirements

- Do you have any registrations you need?
- Is the timeline attainable? Is the application deadline next week or next month?
- Do you have access to the data the grant requires?
- Do you have the capability to write a compelling narrative?









Check for post-award requirements

tip # 8

Can you meet reporting requirements?

Is there a cost share/match requirement?

Can you sustain the project?

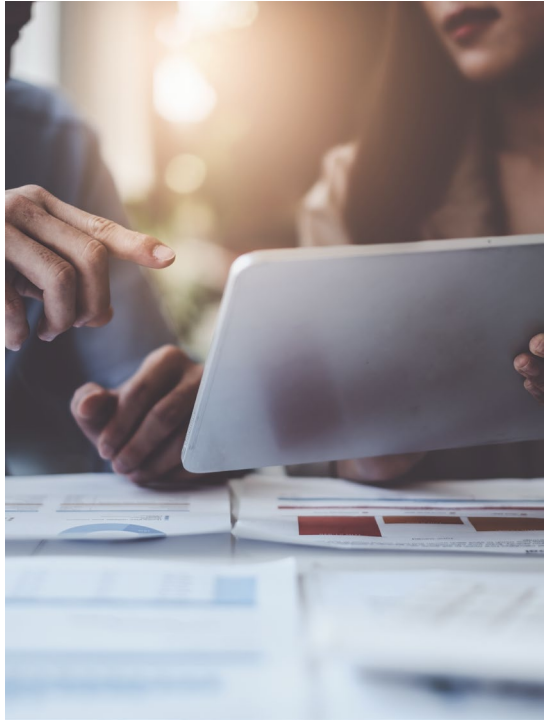
Can you meet federal or state mandates?

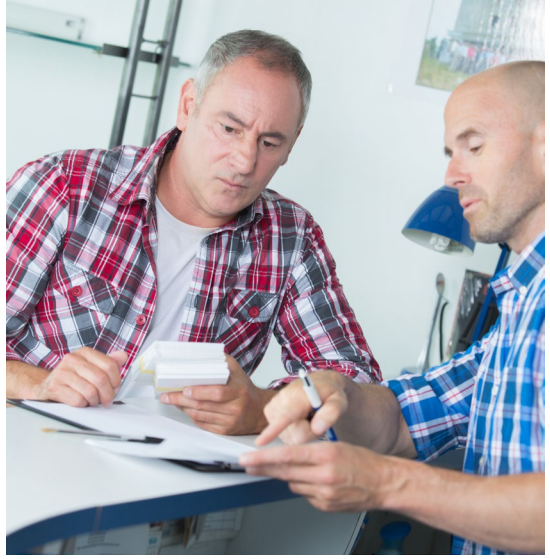


Review previous awards

tip # 9

- Check past recipients to see if they look like you
- Check past award amounts to see if funding will meet your needs
- Read project abstracts if available to see if awarded projects mirror your own
- Talk to previous awardees









Ensure the grant works for you

tip # 10

- Does the funder's mission align with your own?
- Does the grant program align with your goals?
- Are you trying to fit a square peg into a round hole?

PRO TIP ***Don't be afraid to start over! If the grant you initially selected no longer works, pivot. Your preparations will likely work for any grant.***

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Finding and Selecting the Best Fit Grants

Tip #6

Learn **where** to find grants, sign up for grant alerts, and don't trust AI search results.

Tip #7

Evaluate and prepare for **application requirements** and **align** your needs with the funder's goals.

Tip #8

Make sure you can meet the funder's **post-award expectations**.

Tip #9

Check if your needs and organization are similar to those of **past awardees** through **abstracts** and **conversation.**

Tip #10

Ensure your **mission and needs are aligned** with the funder.

Building Comprehensive Projects

tip # 11

Craft an effective Needs Statement

- **Need:** What gaps do you have in fulfilling your mission-driven goals? What data do you have that can help illustrate this need?
- **Solution:** What are you going to do to meet this need?
- **Impact:** Who is currently impacted by the need? Who will benefit from the solution?









tip # 12

Quantify activities to identify your goals

- Every goal must have 1+ activities associated with it and vice versa
- Consider the scope your project and your resources
- Don’t forget about required goals from your grant program!

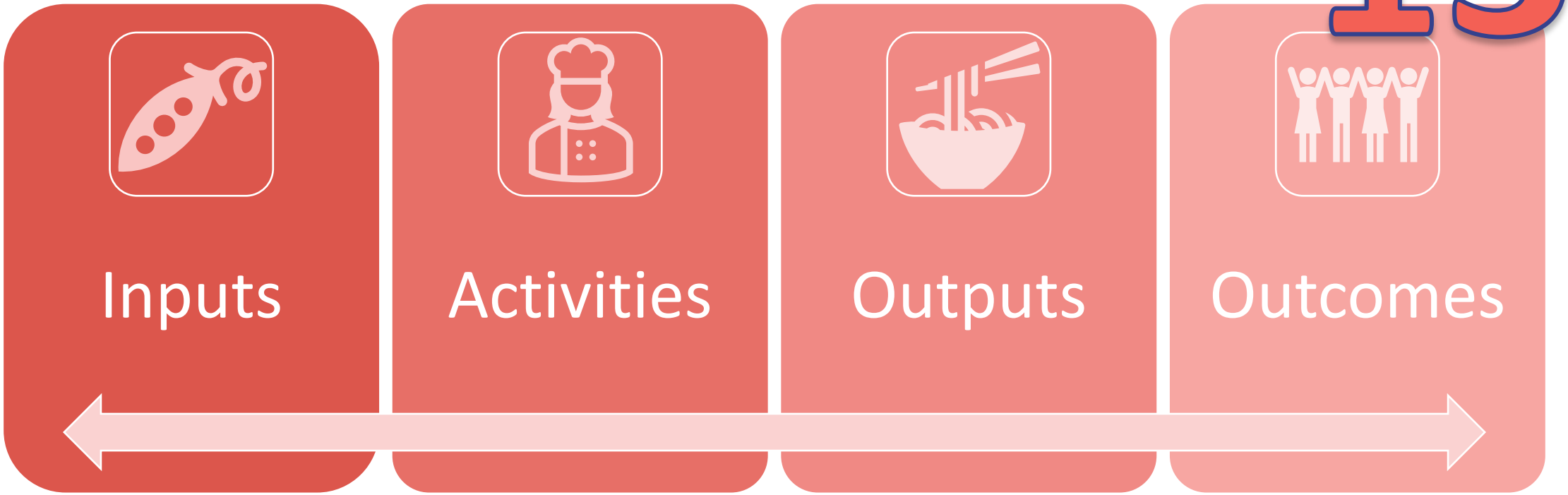
Read our article

Back to Basics: Creating SMART Goals



Use logic models strategically

tip # 13

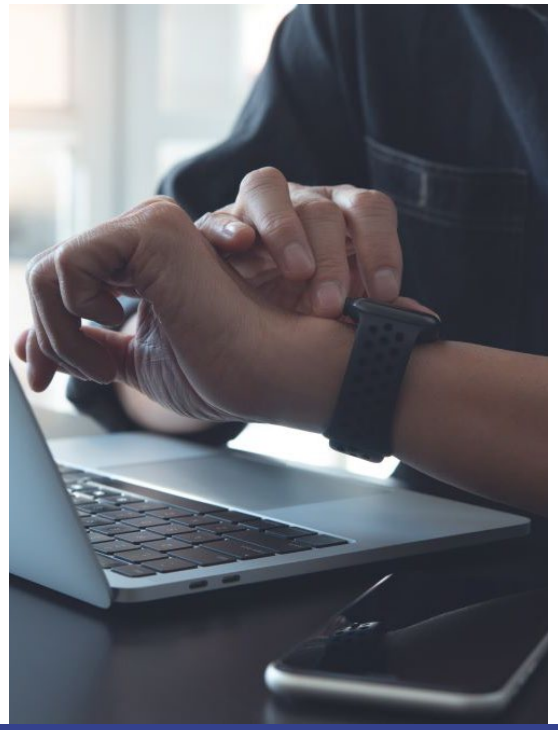


Read our article
Developing a Logic Model for Your Application









Document your project plan

tip # 14

- Details of every component
- Who, what, when, where, why, and how
- Timeline (at least monthly for project period)

PRO TIP *Build a shared resource site for all members of the team. Include all the project resources and a shared calendar with deadlines to keep your project on track.*

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Build out your full budget

tip # 15

- Ensure you account for every component of your project
- Consider all necessary resources: personnel, equipment, supplies, travel, consultants, etc.
- Get quotes and product/service descriptions to have accurate information

Building Comprehensive Projects

Tip #11	Tip #12	Tip #13	Tip #14	Tip #15
Craft an effective needs statement – need, solution, and impact	**Quantify activities to identify your goals** – make sure they're SMART!	**Use logic models strategically** – visual your project	**Document your project plan** – break down all the components, building from your logic model	**Build out your full budget** – consider every aspect of your project plan

Fostering Collaboration

tip # 16

Decide when & how partnerships enhance your project

- Gain access to a larger variety of funding opportunities
- Build well-rounded projects with a range of skillsets, expertise, and awareness
- Get additional consideration (or even bonus points) from application reviewers
- Leverage economies of scale – e.g., buying in bulk from a vendor

Read our article

Beginner's Guide to Forming Partnerships with Institutes of Higher Education









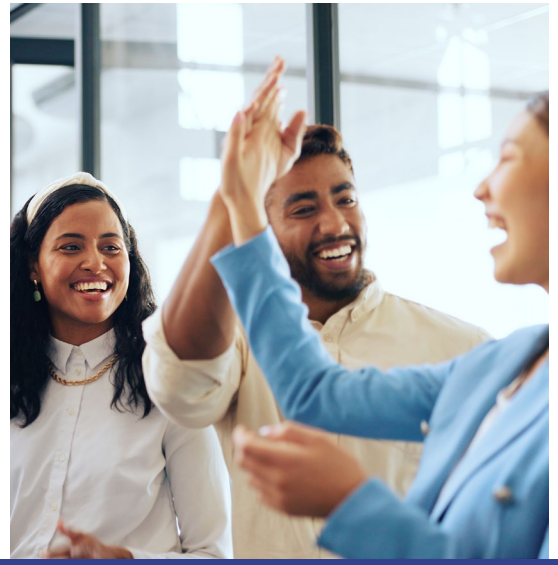
tip #17 Select good partners

- Start with people you already know.
- Look for new partners with complementary goals, interests, and geographic footprints.
- Check to ensure any partner (new or existing) has the time and dedication needed for a successful collaboration.











Onboard partners early

tip # 18

- Allow your project to benefit from the range of skillsets, expertise, and awareness you're bringing to the table
- Increase buy-in from your collaborators
- Leave space in your timeline for bureaucracy – e.g., attending multiple board/council meetings to gain approval for local match requirements

Document your partnerships

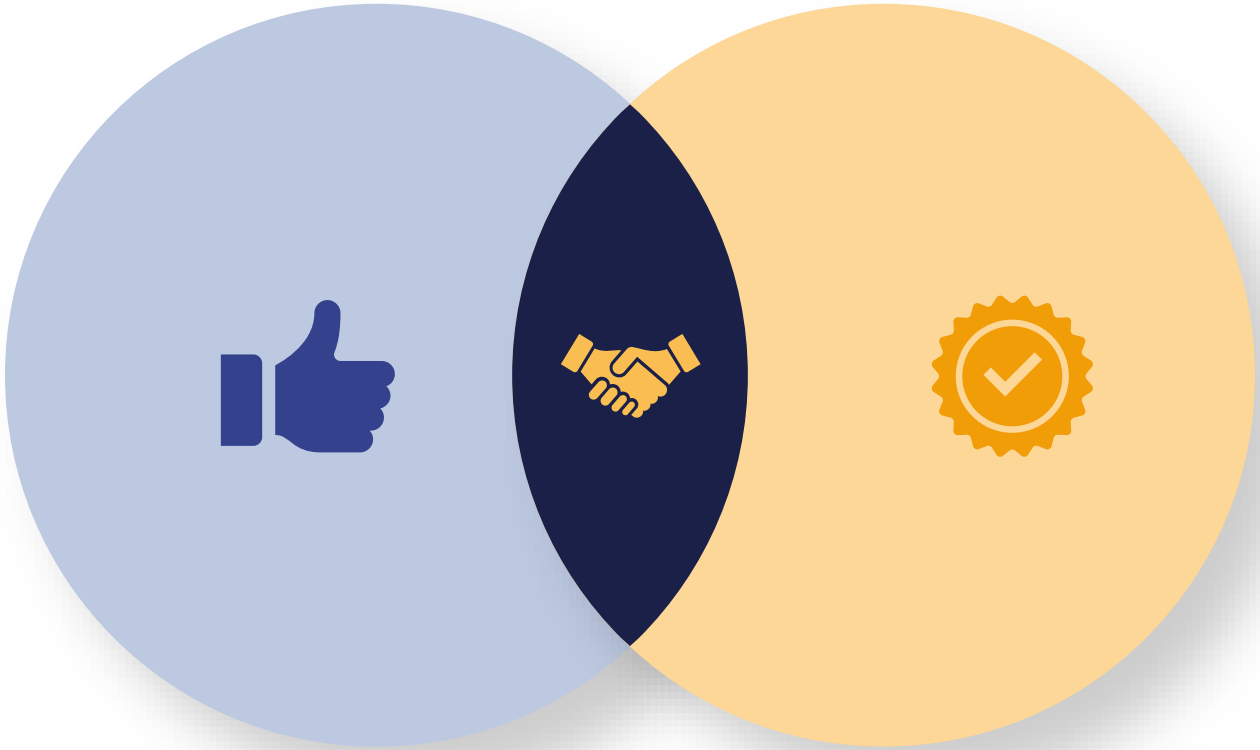
tip # 19

Letter of Support

Informal approval to provide limited, indirect assistance

Written in the form of a letter to the lead applicant

Offers words of commendation for the project



Memorandum of Understanding

Formal, legal agreement of commitments

Prepared by lawyers and signed by leadership from all partners

Place to spell out exchanges of money, staff time, spaces, and stuff



Commit to each other

tip # 20

- Schedule regular stakeholder meetings
- Use these meetings to establish mutual expectations and lay out action steps
- Create shared digital workspaces so everyone can access documents
- Celebrate victories (even the small ones)

PRO TIP *Add regular stakeholder meetings to your grant application calendar so reviewers can see just how committed your team is to long-term collaboration!*

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Fostering Collaboration

Tip #16

Decide when and how **partnerships will enhance your project.**

Tip #17

Select good partners – including those who are already working with you, or those with complimentary goals, interests and geographic coverage.

Tip #18

Onboard your partners early in the grantseeking process.

Tip #19

Document your partnerships with Letters of Support and/or Memorandums of Understanding.

Tip #20

Commit to each other through regular stakeholder meetings, shared digital workspaces, and clearly defined roles.

Submitting Quality Proposals

tip # 21

Make a plan for proposal writing & submission

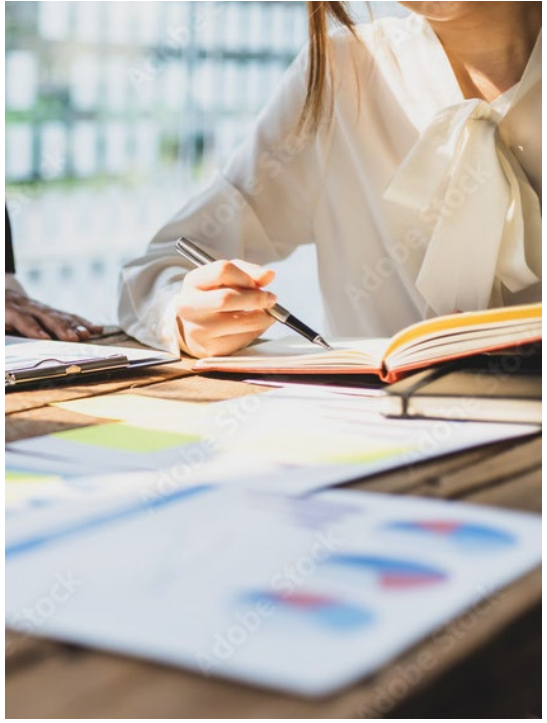
- Select one person to be the “Project Manager” of proposal development efforts
- Outline communication channels and expectations
- Commit to a regular check-in cadence
- Establish a repository for all brainstorming notes and other documentation for your proposal drafting efforts

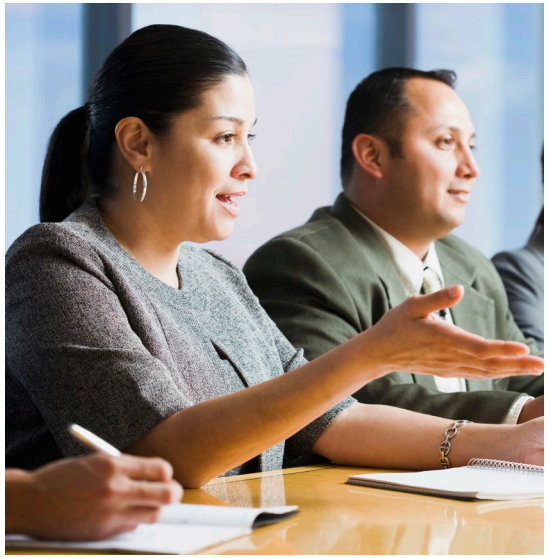


tip # 22

Assemble your team

- Who should be at the table?
  - Proposed Project Initiators
  - Proposal Development Project Manager
  - Finance Team Representation
  - Org Leadership Representation
  - IT Team Representation, if relevant to proposed efforts
- Remember to include representatives from external partnerships as well!





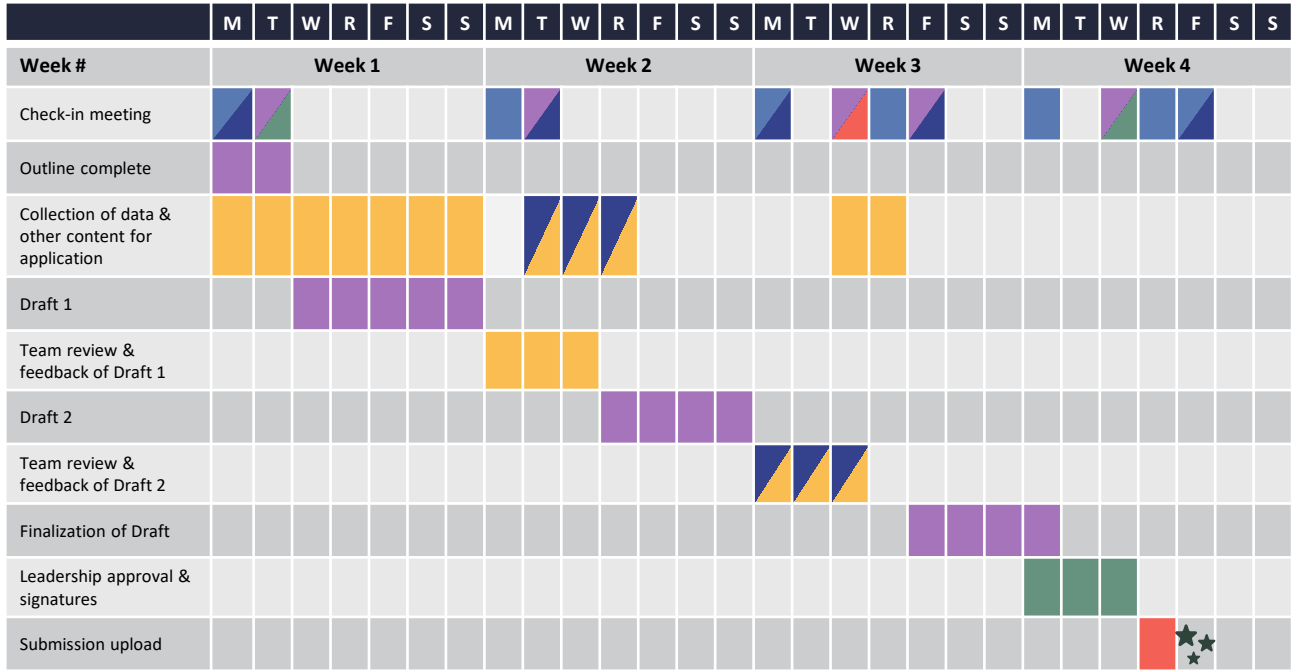




Give Yourself Plenty of Time to Prepare

tip # 23

Draft a proposal development calendar.



Know when members of your team will be unavailable.

Work backwards from the due date to establish key milestones.

Don't forget to budget time for the submission process!

All Org. Parties

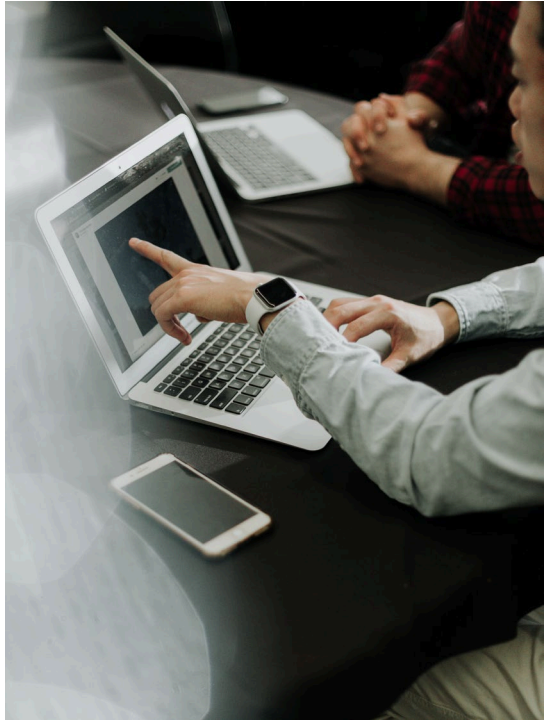
External Partners

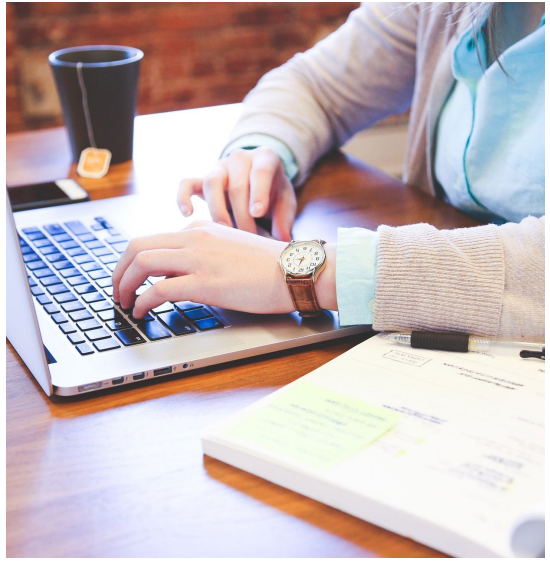
Org. Grant Writer

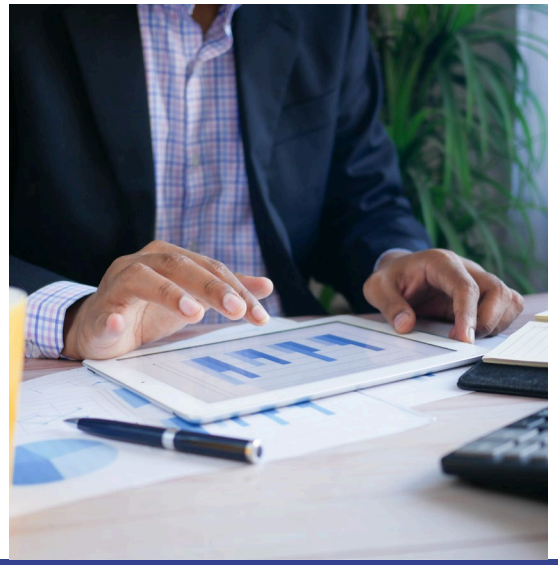
Org. C-Suite

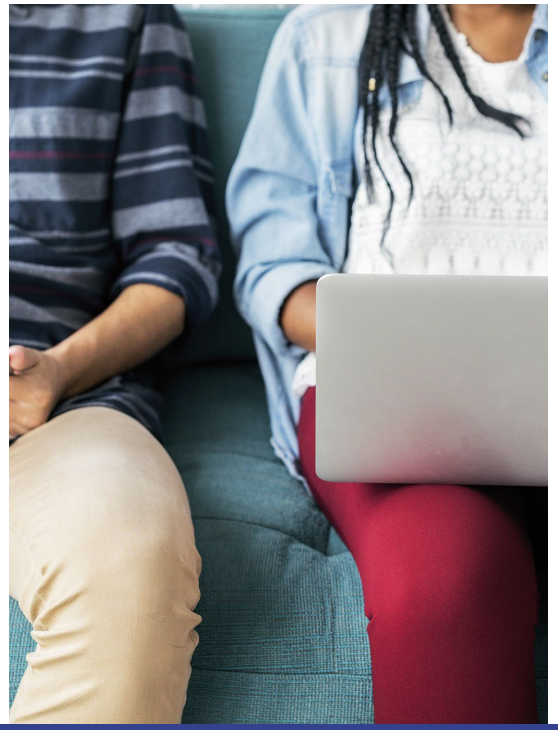
Org. Meetings

Org. CFO









Read the guidance and follow directions

tip # 24

Common reasons for rejection:

- Fit (eligibility, scope, misaligned goals)
- Required Content (missing details, over page/word/character limits)
- Formatting (font, margins, images)
- Structure (headings, graphics, file type)
- Attachments (missing requested files, including irrelevant documents)



Have someone proofread your work

tip # 25

Ask them to point out:

- Spelling & grammar issues
- “Word Salad”
- Unexplained insider knowledge
- Gaps in logic or assumed understanding

Read our article
Grant Proposal Editing and Review:
A Step-by-Step Guide

Submitting Quality Proposals

Tip #21	Tip #22	Tip #23	Tip #24	Tip #25
Plan ahead for the proposal development process.	Proposals are not developed in a vacuum; ensure you have a team to assist.	Create a calendar the team can follow for completion of proposal development milestones.	Ensure your application won't be denied for an avoidable reason.	Have some "outside eyes" check your work.

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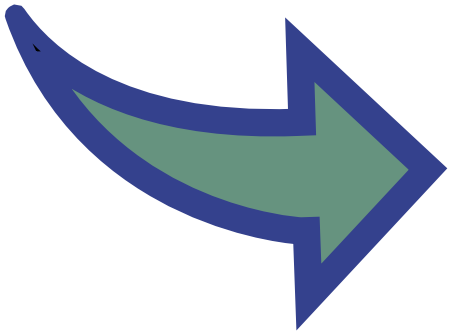
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Track your grantseeking KPIs.

bonus tip # 26

- Most common **Key Performance Indicators**:
  - Number of proposals submitted
  - Percent of proposals awarded
  - Cost per grant dollar raised
  - Funder retention rate & upgrade rate
- Adjust your agency's grantseeking strategy accordingly

PRO TIP ***Track data by funder type (federal, state, and foundation) so you can better understand and react to your KPI results.***

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Questions?

25 Tips from 25 Years of Grantseeking Success

Learning

Know the major sources of funding

Understand distribution methodologies

Track policy and funding trends

Uncover funder motivations

Build a sensible grantseeking strategy

Finding

Learn where to find grants

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Building

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Quantify activities to identify your goals

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