

Grant Writing for Educators





Introduction

This course was developed by the NEA Foundation. The [NEA Foundation](#) is a public charity supported by contributions from educator's dues, corporate sponsors, foundations, and other sources. The NEA Foundation supports student success by helping public school educators work with key partners to build strong systems of shared responsibility.



Audience

You may participate in this course as an individual or as a partner with a team of colleagues from the same or different school districts. If you choose to participate as a team, we encourage you to include members who will not only be involved in any potential grant project, but who bring a range of experience and perspectives – teachers, administrators, union leaders, district finance officials, parents, and community leaders.

Course Overview

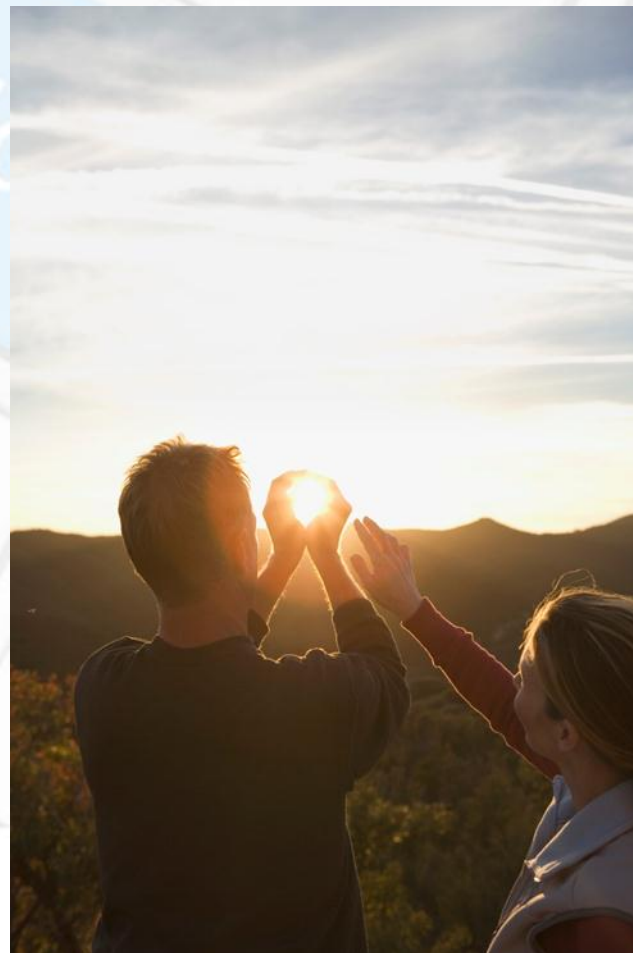
The five sessions of this module are:

1. Identifying Grant Resources
2. Assembling a Proposal Preparation Team
3. Writing a Winning Grant Proposal
4. The Grant Review Process
5. Grant Stewardship



Purpose

This course is designed to enable individuals and teams of educators to understand all facets of grant research, writing, and stewardship. Course participants will use this information to implement projects that positively impact student achievement and continued learning. Although course participants don't necessarily need a potential grant project in mind before taking this course, project-specific details will be helpful in completing some prompts and activities.





Learning Outcomes

As participants, either individually or in small teams, you will be able to:

- Identify online grant resources, as well as specific grant providers.
- Recognize the similarities and differences of varying types of grant applications used by different organizations.
- Identify prospective funders on the basis of their funding priorities as they relate to your work.
- Identify the persons and/or organizations that will be vital to you in preparing and submitting a grant (e.g. administrators, colleagues, finance professionals, community members).
- Discuss the role each member of the preparation team will play not only prior to the submission of the grant proposal, but during the course of the project.
- Recognize the components of a typical grant application.
- Identify successful grant proposals.



Learning Outcomes (Cont.)

- Write components of a grant proposal.
- Discuss the chain of funding decisions made in a typical organization.
- Recognize the motivations of different funders.
- Identify the link between proposal and reviewer rubric, and tailor subsequent proposals to appropriate rubrics.
- Identify the basic requirements of a grant report.
- Explain the differences in reporting requirements depending on the size and scope of the grant.
- Recognize the importance of communication with the funder in the event of project changes.
- Use feedback in the event of not being funded to improve your proposal for future submission.



Course Facilitation

The five sessions of the module are sequenced to move participants through the basic steps of grant research, preparation, writing, review, and stewardship. Each session, which includes a combination of preparation and activities, will last one to three hours, depending on how deeply you choose to explore. You may participate as an individual or with a team of colleagues. Whether you decide to participate individually or with others, preparation (e.g. reading, exploring websites) can be completed at your own pace. Directions will be provided for each of the activities.



Course Expectations

As many educators wrestle with budget cuts at the state and local levels, they find themselves in the position of looking beyond their schools for much-needed resources. Funding for things such as professional development, classroom technology, and larger-scale district improvements has become scarce, forcing many educators to spend precious time navigating the realm of education grants.

This course will be useful for anyone looking to improve their ability to locate and secure outside funding from a number of sources outside of the school, including PK-16 teachers, education support professionals, administrators, as well as union, district, and state leaders. It is designed to equip participants with the tools necessary to successfully secure grant funding and complete high-quality grant projects.



Participant Expectations

If you have never written a grant proposal before, the five sessions will acquaint you with all facets of the grant proposal writing process. If you have successfully written a grant proposal in the past, this course will provide information, insight, and resources to sharpen your grant writing abilities.

While you work through the sessions, you'll be prompted to reflect upon and share your thoughts in an [eJournal](#). This document will hopefully be helpful for you in documenting information and ideas throughout the course.



Course Reading and Materials

This course calls upon a variety of grant resources and sample proposals. The NEA Foundation has made every effort to make all materials available to all participants.

Digital Templates: This course provides a set of digital templates that you can use in responding to questions, both as you prepare for sessions and as you reflect on them. The [**“Grant Writing eJournal,”**](#) will allow you to track your progress and begin assembling the items necessary to write a winning grant proposal.

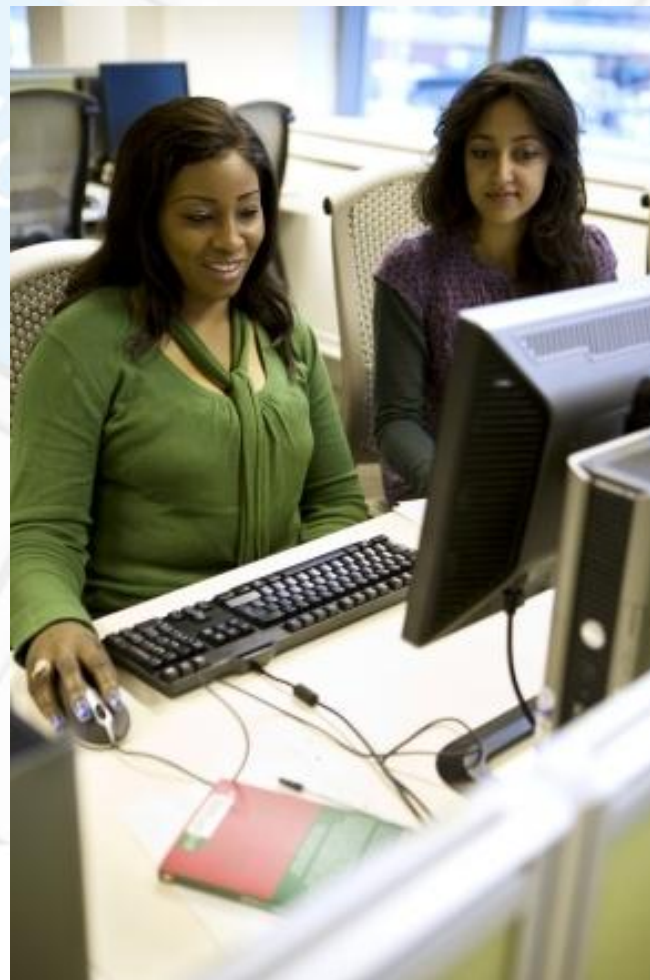


Session 1: Identifying Grant Resources

Estimated Time: 2 hours
15 minutes

Purpose

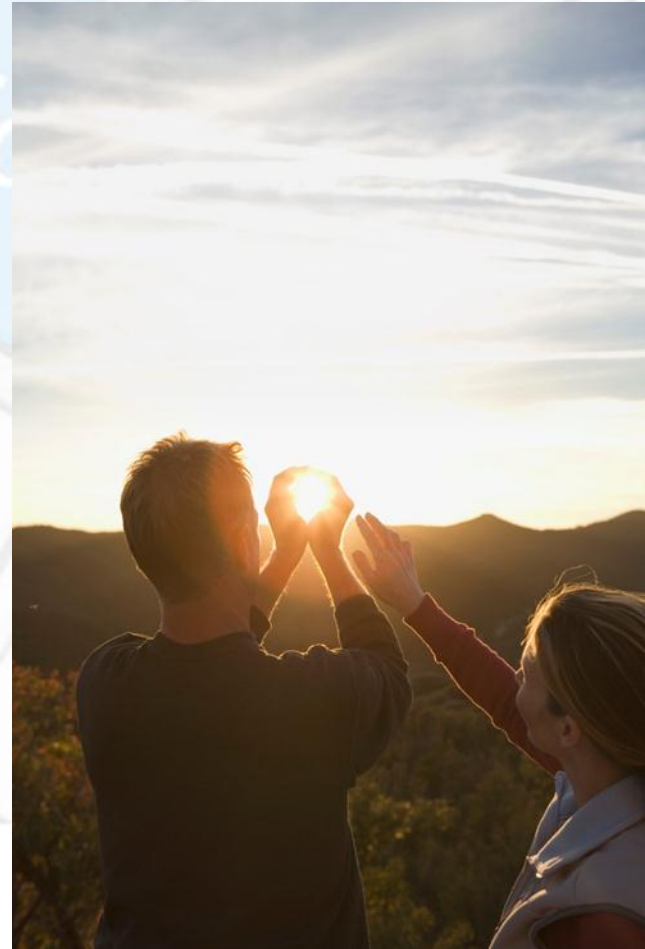
This session will assist you in locating relevant education grants that directly link to the size and scope of your proposed work. Grant opportunities from specific organizations will be featured.



Learning Outcomes

After completing this session, a participant should be able

- To identify online grant resource providers, as well as specific grant providers.
- To recognize the similarities and differences of varying types of grant applications used by different organizations.
- To identify prospective funders on the basis of their funding priorities as they relate to the participant's work.





Reflect: eJournal

Estimated Time: 20 minutes

When applying for a grant, it is imperative that you understand your exact purpose in applying. A grant proposal shouldn't merely be a request for funds; rather, it should act as an invitation to your prospective funder(s) to invest in your idea.

Task: In your [eJournal](#), reflect on one or all of the following questions:

1. *Who are you?* If you're applying as an individual or group of educators, briefly describe your professional history and credentials. If you're applying as a district, union, or state entity, describe your organization's mission, staff, and work.
2. *Why is this project important?* What will the work done with this grant funding accomplish? What are your project goals? Will the work be replicable in other sites? Who will benefit?
3. *Who might fund this project?* What type of organization might be interested in investing in your project? How do the organization's funding priorities align with yours?
4. *What changes do you expect to see from this work?* What are your desired outcomes? If you don't reach your goals, how will you adjust?



Review:

Your Reflections - Group or Team

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Group or Team: Compare your responses to questions #2 and #3 from the previous task. Did you raise similar or different points? Which of those points are strongest? Are your project goals aligned? Do you share ideas about the type of organization that might fund your project?



Discuss

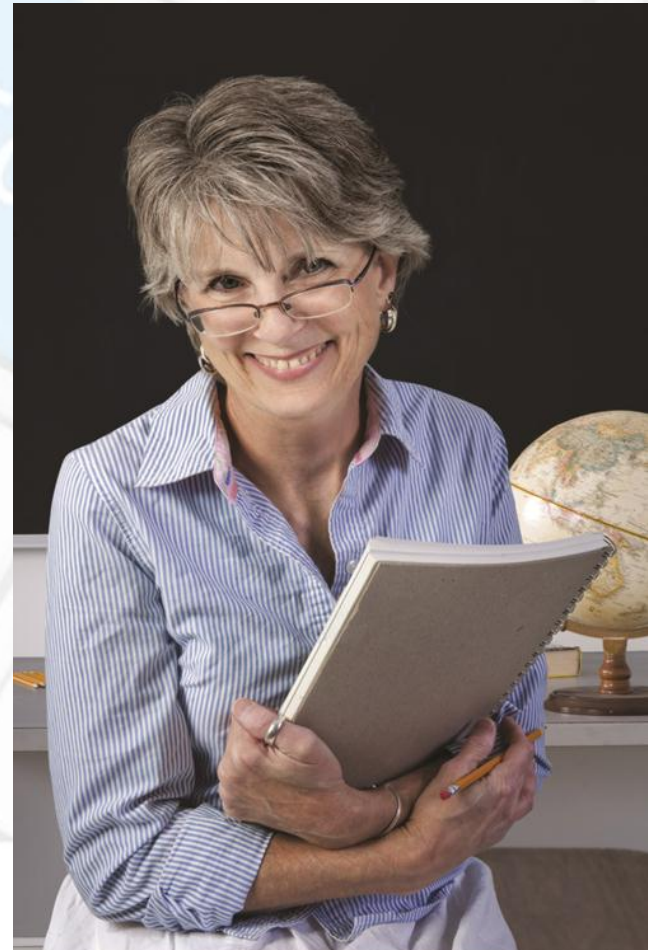


Review:

Your Reflections - Individual

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Individual: Did answering these questions help you visualize the project? Have you effectively articulated the work you wish to complete through your grant project? Was this the first time you've thought about what kind of prospective funder might align with your project goals?



Where to Find Grant Resources Online

Before you can request funding for your project, you'll want to know where to look for potential funding.

Fortunately, there are a myriad of organizations that actively fund educators. The resources on the following slide should provide a useful starting point when researching grant opportunities.





Online Grant Resources

- [Philanthropy News Digest](#) provides sortable links to hundreds of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) from organizations in all fields of grant making.
- [GrantsAlert.com](#) is a clearinghouse of hundreds of education grant resources.
- [The NEA Foundation](#)'s grant resources page provides links to education grant opportunities throughout the United States.
- Your best sources of funding are often from local organizations. [Regional Associations of Grantmakers](#) (RAGs) exist in many parts of the United States and focus on funding projects within their geographic regions.
- [The Foundation Center](#), in addition to having several locations throughout the United States, has a Funding Information Network of libraries, community foundations, and other nonprofit resource centers that allow users access to the Foundation Center's grant research tools free of charge.



Research and Reflect:

Grant Resources

Estimated Time: 1 hour

Using the information provided in the previous slide, try to identify five organizations that might fund your grant project. Take into account the criteria that make your project unique: grade level, subject area, geographic reach, timeline, etc.

In your [eJournal](#), list the five organizations and briefly explain how their funding priorities match the type of work you wish to accomplish through your project.





Proposal Types

When researching different grant resources, you may have noticed that organizations have different types of grant applications. This should come as no surprise, since an organization's funding priorities will dictate the information included in the application.*

To enable you to get a clearer idea of the varying types of applications you may encounter, we'll be looking at templates for three different types throughout this session. The application types will reflect:

1. A [classroom-based project](#) focusing on improved student learning.
2. A group [professional development endeavor](#).
3. A [larger collaborative project](#) between two organizations.

**Note: Some groups of grantmakers have adopted common grant applications, which allow you, the applicant, to produce a single proposal for a specific community of funders. For more information on common grant applications and participating Regional Associations of Grantmakers, please visit <http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/cqa.html>.*

Review and Reflect: Sample Proposals

Estimated Time: 30 minutes

Either individually or with a group of colleagues, spend some time looking at the three sample application types.

- What are the similarities between the three?
- What are the differences?

Use your [eJournal](#) to note your observations .



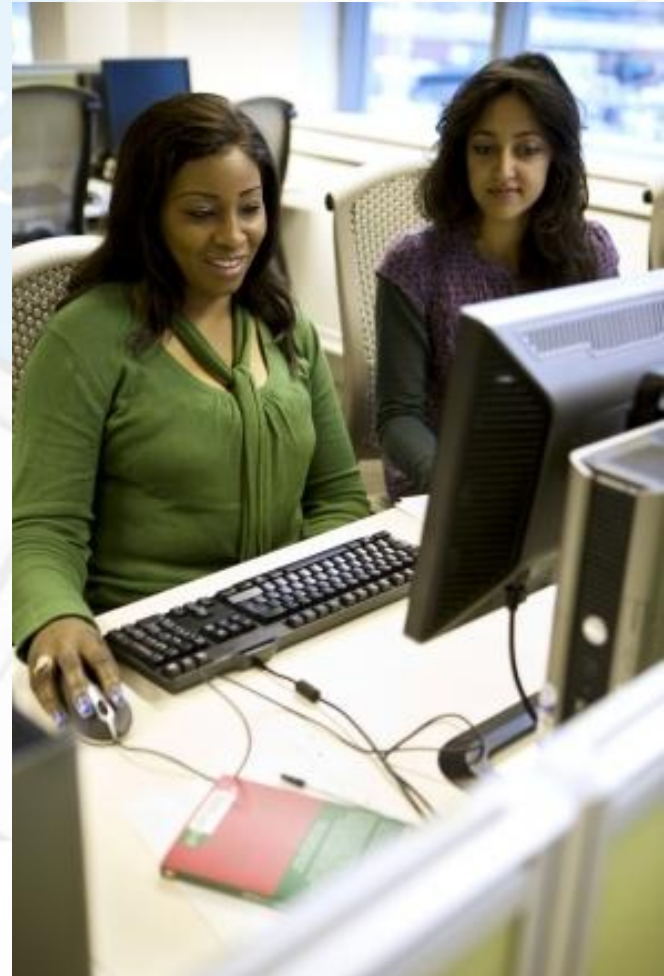


Session 2: Assembling a Proposal Preparation Team

Estimated Time: 1
hour

Purpose

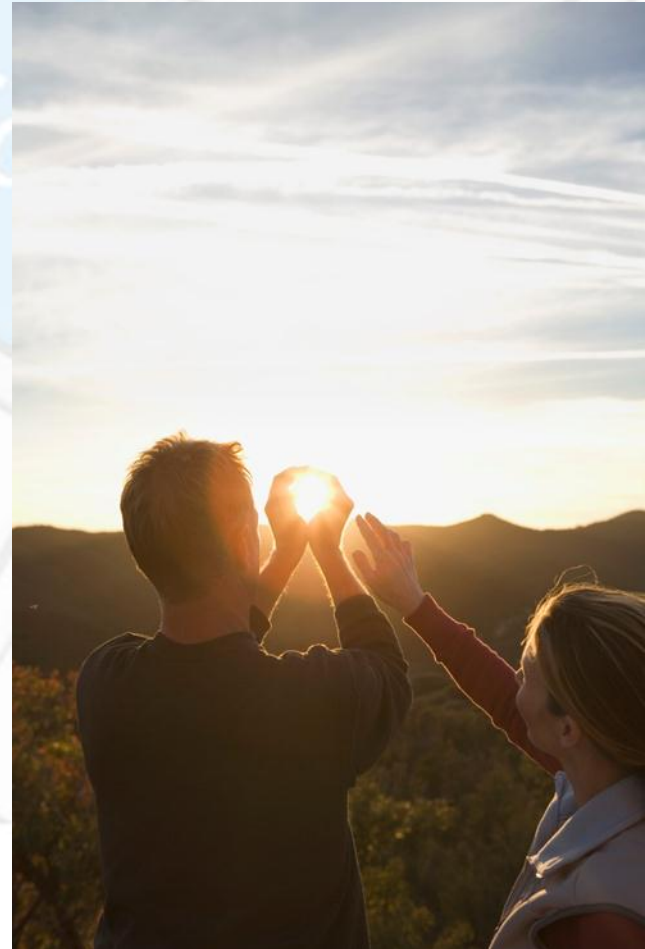
This session will enable you to identify the necessary parties to include in your [proposal preparation team](#). You will be able to recognize the individuals and organizations within your school, district, community, union, or state whose participation and assistance will be necessary in not only drafting the grant proposal, but in implementing and reporting on the project.



Learning Outcomes

After completing this session, a participant should be able

- To identify the persons and/or organizations that will be vital to the participant in preparing and submitting a grant proposal (e.g. administrators, colleagues, finance professionals, community members).
- To discuss the role each member of the preparation team will play not only prior to the submission of the grant proposal, but during the course of the project.



Reflect: eJournal

Estimated Time: 20 minutes

Using one of the three application types ([1](#), [2](#), or [3](#)) you examined in Session 1 (or of an application you may have discovered while researching organizations that might fund your project), think about the individuals or organizations with whom you will need to collaborate while writing your grant proposal.

- Does the application require that you work with administrators from within your district?
- Fellow classroom teachers?
- Leaders of your local union?
- A Parent-Teacher Association?
- A community nonprofit group?

In your [eJournal](#), list up to ten parties (individuals or organizations) whose assistance will be essential in completing your grant proposal .



Your Reflections - Group or Team

Estimated Time: 20 minutes

Group or Team: Compare your lists. What common stakeholders have you identified? Where were the differences in your lists? Are there any key parties the group may have neglected to include? How will you work to include these parties in the application process?



Discuss

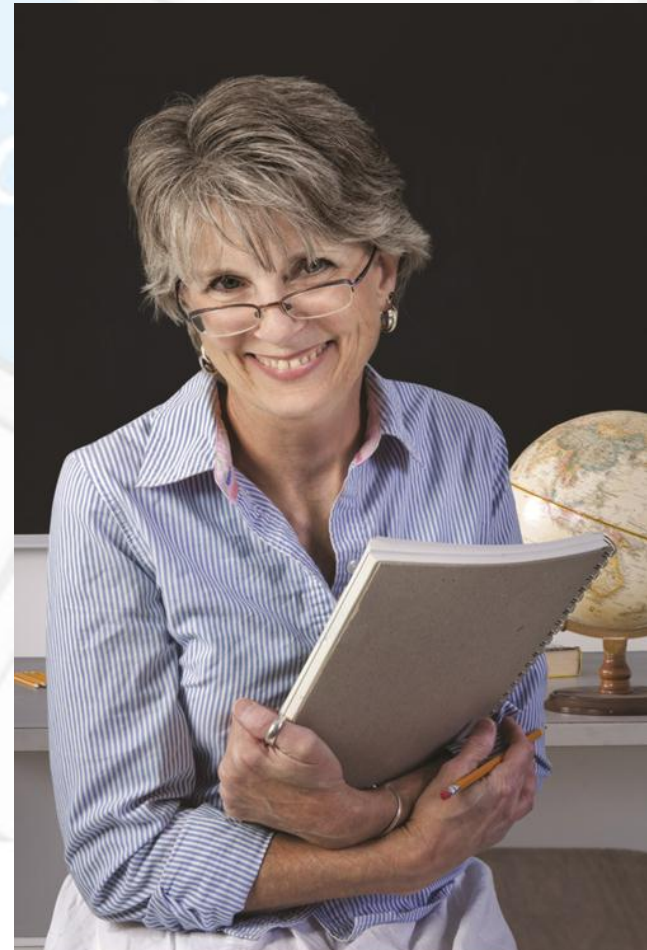


Review:

Your Reflections - Individual

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Individual: Think of the most effective ways to reach out to the individuals and groups you've identified. Who will be most closely involved in the application process? Who may be the most difficult to reach, and may require additional time to contact? Feel free to add these observations to the "Notes" section in your [eJournal](#).





Proposal Preparation Team

Depending on the size and scope of the grant, different individuals from within multiple organizations may be vital members of your proposal preparation team. Most grant applications will require the input of some key individuals. A list of those individuals has been provided on the next slide.





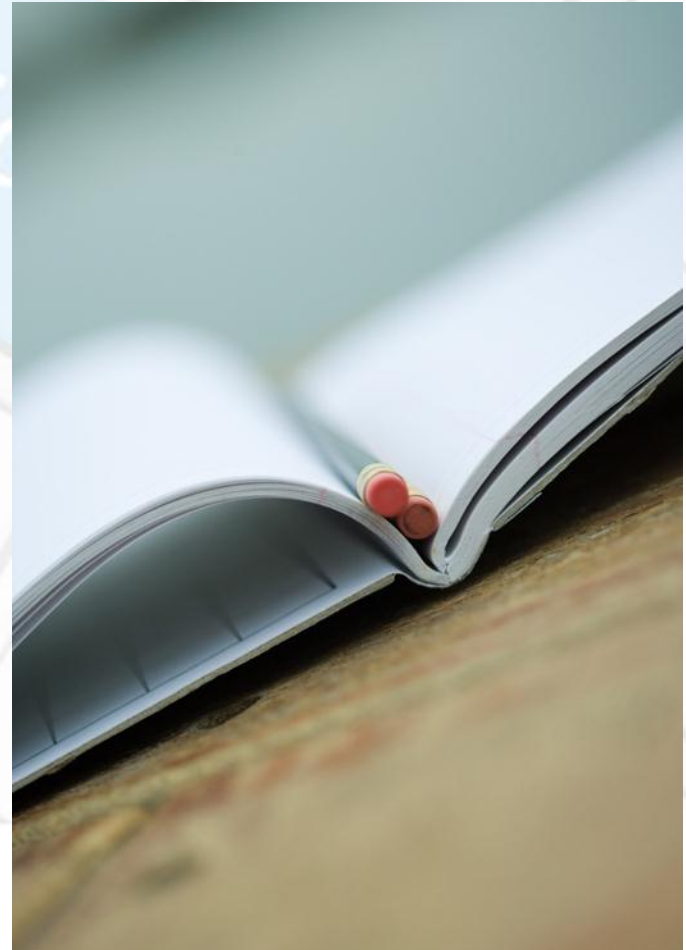
Proposal Preparation Team (Cont.)

- **Administrators** – Many education grants, especially those funding work that will take place within a school or district, will require some degree of participation by an administrator/administrators. Know exactly who these key individuals are prior to beginning your proposal.
- **Colleagues** – Which of your colleagues will directly assist in implementing the project? Who will be indirectly involved? Be sure to solicit feedback from them as you build your proposal.
- **Finance Professionals** – Who will serve as the project's [fiscal sponsor](#)? If an organization (e.g. your school, district, local union, community nonprofit, etc.) will be acting as the fiscal sponsor, you'll need to alert finance/accounting staff within the organization of your grant application plans, as they'll want to understand the grantmaker's reporting requirements.
- **Community Members** – Will you be working with your students' parents? Local nonprofit organizations? Elected officials? Loop these folks in during the early stages of your proposal writing to solicit ideas and feedback.
- **Program Officers** – The grantmaking organization to which you're applying likely employs a [program officer](#) to assist applicants. Don't be shy about contacting them with any questions or thoughts you have throughout the application process.

Reflect: eJournal

Estimated Time: 5 minutes

Now that you've spent a bit more time thinking about your proposal preparation team, feel free to return to your [eJournal](#) and add any essential parties you may have inadvertently missed the first time.



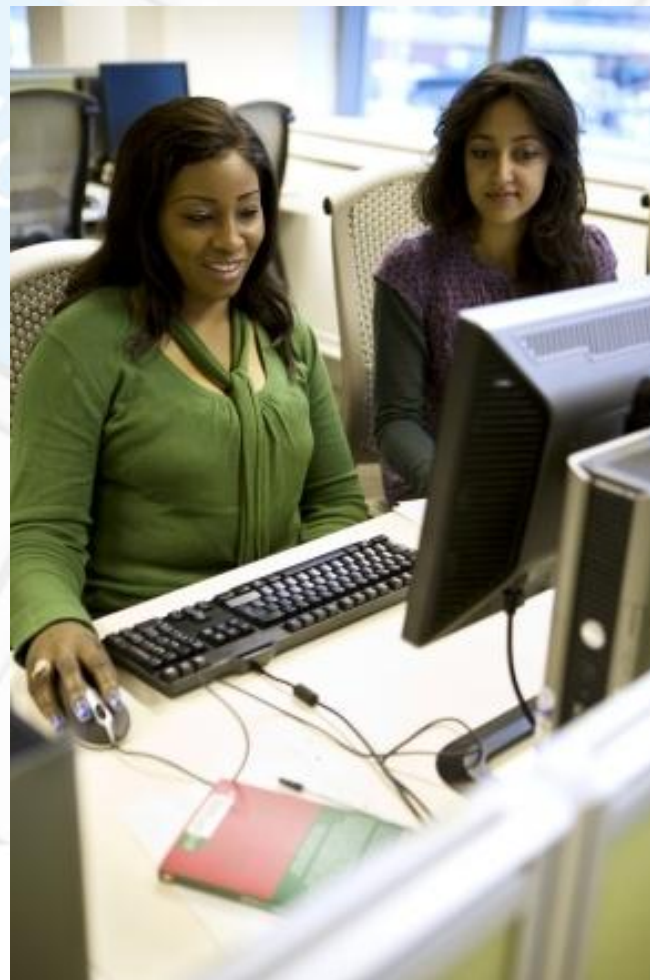


Session 3: Writing a Winning Grant Proposal

Estimated Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Purpose

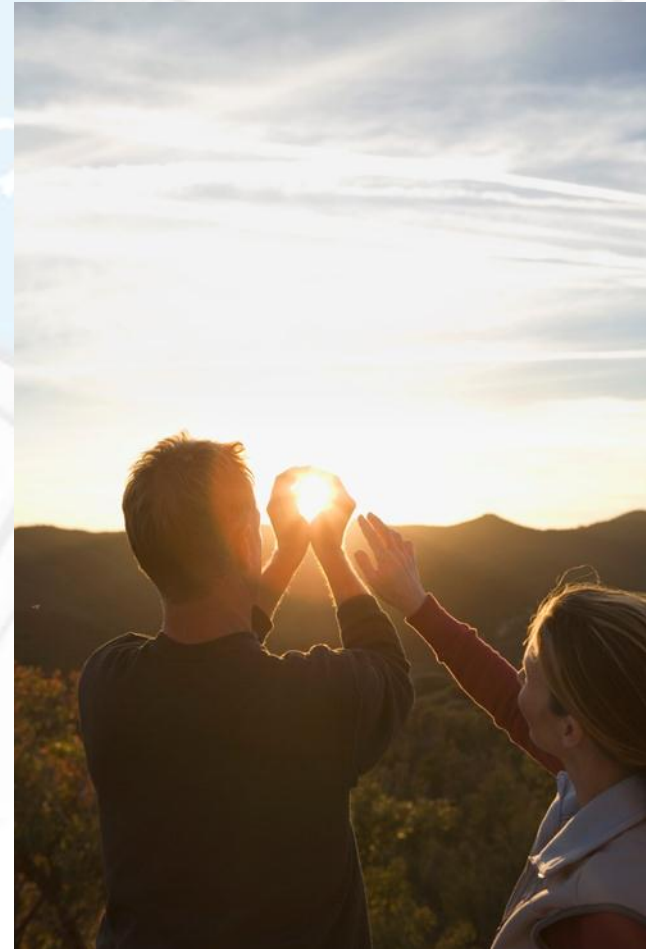
This session will allow you to walk through the entirety of the grant proposal writing process. You'll look at typical proposal components that appear in most standard grant applications, as well as specific components found in our sample applications. By the end of this session, you should feel confident in generating all parts of a grant proposal.



Learning Outcomes

After completing this session, a participant should be able

- To recognize the components of a typical grant application.
- To identify successful grant proposals.
- To write components of a grant proposal.

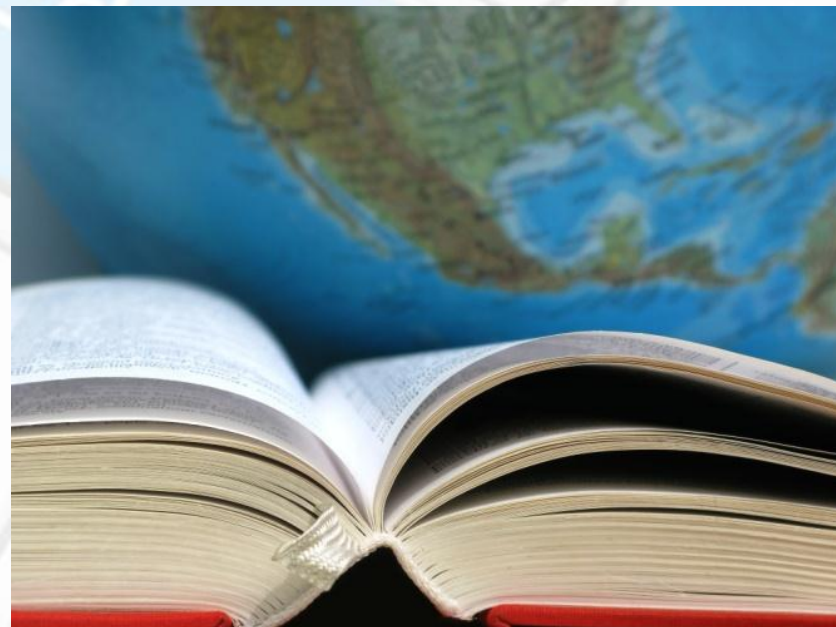




Read: Grant Writing Tutorial

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Prior to moving forward in this session, please take some time to read the [NEA Foundation's Grant Writing Tutorial](#), paying particular attention to the “Writing a Grant Proposal” and “Proposal Content” sections. It will provide you with the building blocks necessary to fully comprehend the following content. While reading, carefully consider how your proposed activities and outcomes align with reporting requirements.





Reflect: eJournal

Estimated Time: 30 minutes

Now that you've read the [NEA Foundation's Grant Writing Tutorial](#), use one of the sample applications from Session 1 ([1](#), [2](#), or [3](#)) or an application you've discovered via your own research to reflect on these questions in your [eJournal](#):

- Reason for Grant: What are the components of the project? How will you justify the requested funding? What are your long term goals and expected outcomes, and how will you evaluate them?
- Proposal Preparation Team: Referring back to your individual or group reflections from Session 2, solidify the individuals and organizations with whom you will be working when writing your proposal. Include any parties from whom you will need attachments (e.g. IRS documents, letters of recommendation, school district information, etc.).
- Time Needed: When is the proposal due? What is the availability of the members of your proposal preparation team? How will you fit the grant proposal writing process into your schedule?



Review: Your Reflections - Group or Team

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Group or Team – Were you able to come to a clear consensus on the reasons for your funding request and expected outcomes? Have you solidified your proposal preparation team? Have you created a timeline in which to complete all parts of the proposal?



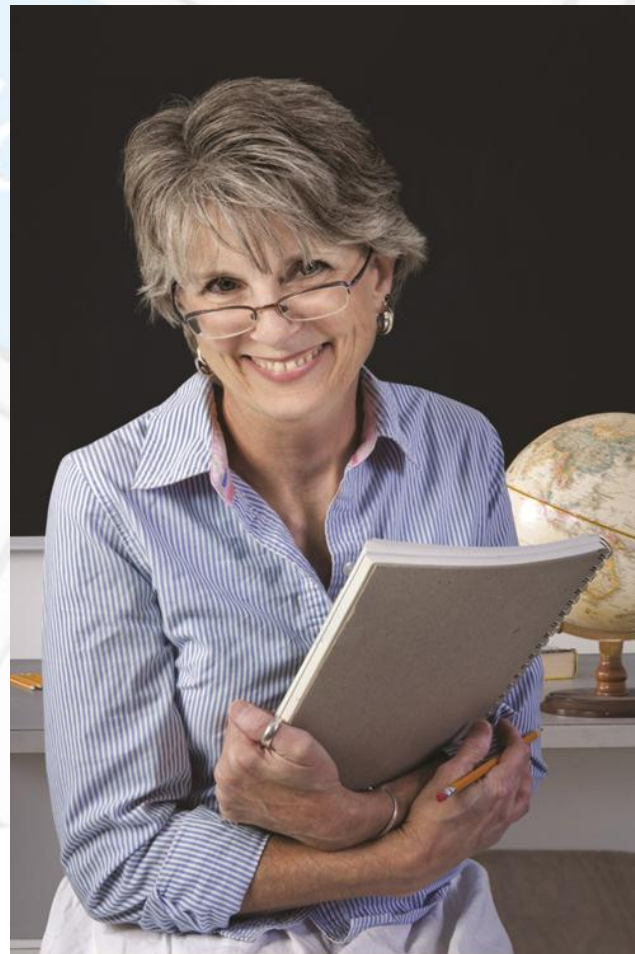
Discuss



Review: Your Reflections - Individual

Estimated Time: 5 minutes

Individual – Have you been successful in clearly articulating your funding request? Are you confident in your ability to reach out to members of your proposal preparation team in a timely manner? Have you created a timeline to complete all parts of the proposal?





Write:

Proposal Components

Estimated Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Now that you have familiarized yourself with the sample applications* and the [Grant Writing Tutorial](#), take some time to complete the following proposal components in your [eJournal](#):

- Summary
- Statement of Need
- Project Timeline
- Proposed Activities and Objectives
- Assessment
- Sustainability

When you have completed these components, please share with members of your proposal preparation team and someone not directly involved in your proposal team. The key is to get a fresh set of eyes on your work to ensure that it reads coherently to someone unfamiliar with your proposed project.

**Note: Feel free to use an application from a previously researched organization in this exercise.*

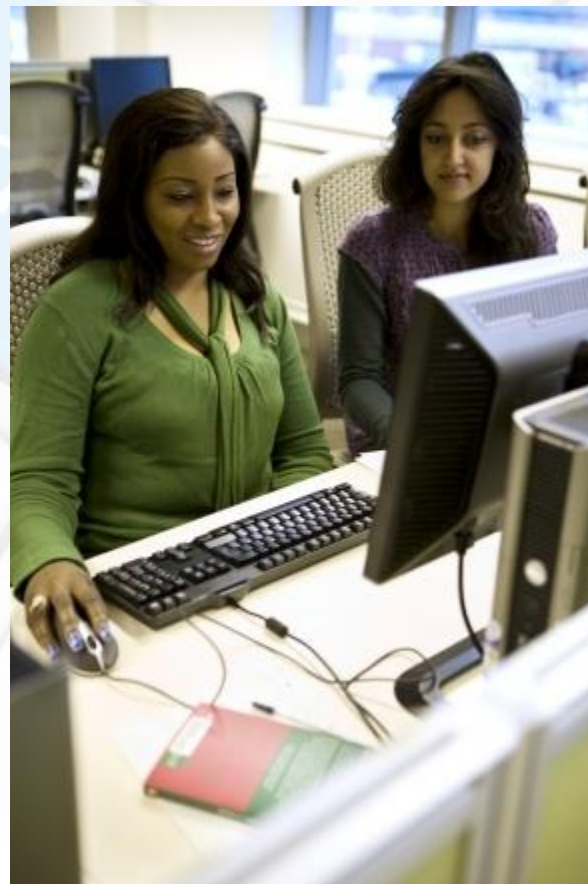


Session 4: The Grant Review Process

Estimated Time: 1 hour 40 minutes

Purpose

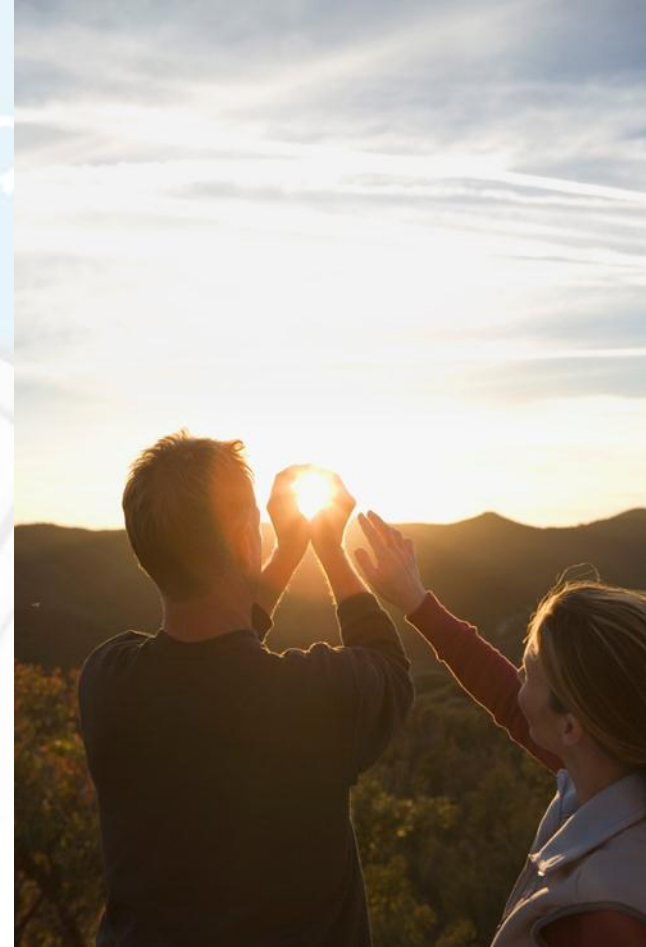
This session will provide you with a firm grasp of standard grant review processes. You'll be tasked with looking at sample rubrics and familiarizing yourself with the reviewing methods used by grantmaking entities.



Learning Outcomes

After completing this session, a participant should be able

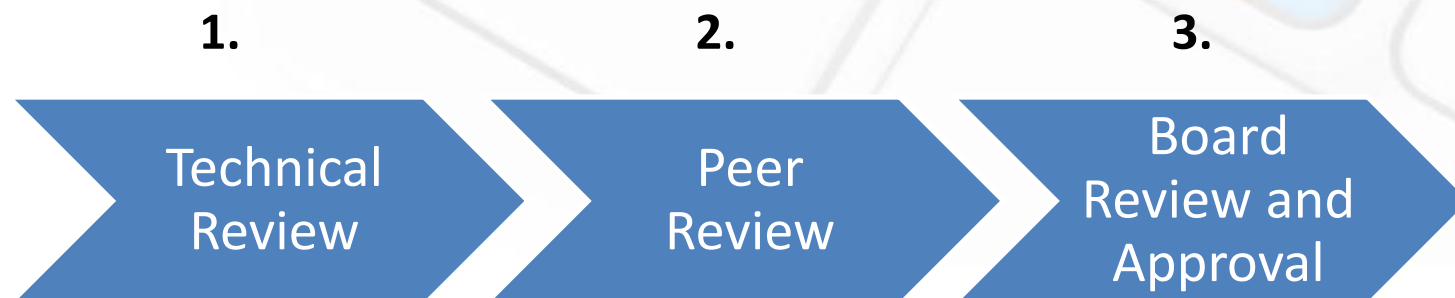
- To discuss the chain of funding decisions made in a typical organization.
- To recognize the motivations of different funders.
- To identify the link between proposal and reviewer rubric, and tailor subsequent proposals to appropriate rubrics.



Review Process Overview

It is important to know that review processes vary across grantmakers. However, many organizations follow the same basic process, which includes three steps.

Standard Grant Review Process



Review Process Overview: Technical Review

Technical Review, in which the grantmaker ensures that all application requirements have been addressed. Properly reviewing your proposal prior to submission to ensure that all requirements have been fully met (e.g. the narrative is complete, the budget is clear and concise, all required attachments are included, etc.) will ensure that your proposal is not dismissed during the technical review.

1.



Technical
Review

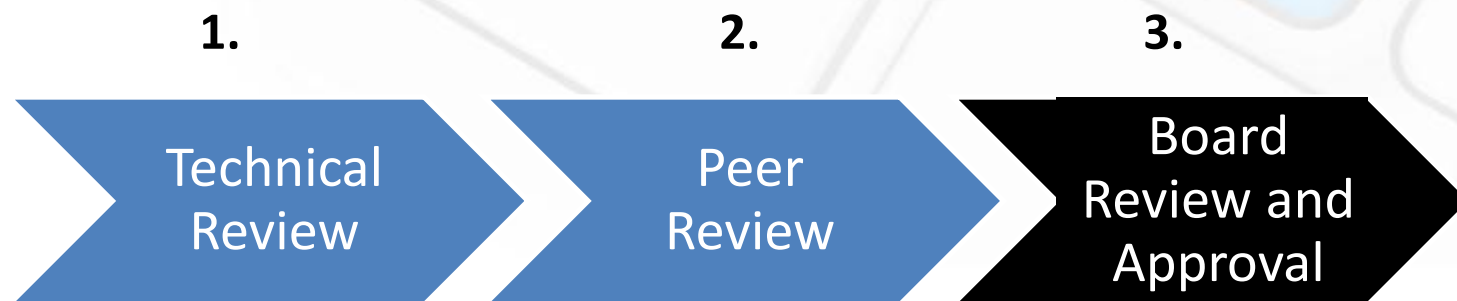
Review Process Overview: Peer Review

Peer Review, in which a committee of objective colleagues review proposals according to a uniform rubric. This committee, upon completing and scoring each proposal, will return the scored rubrics to the grantmaker and provide funding recommendations. (Note: this process, including the use of rubrics, varies by funder).



Review Process Overview: Board Review & Approval

Board Review and Approval, in which the board (and staff) of the grantmaking organization take into consideration the recommendations made by the review committee and determine which applicants will be funded.





Task: Proposal Evaluation

Estimated Time: 45 minutes

Now that you've familiarized yourself with the three sample grant applications ([1](#), [2](#), and [3](#)) from previous sessions, spend some time

1. Reading sample proposals for each of the applications (see next slide).
2. Comparing each proposal with its corresponding rubric (see next slide).
3. Using the rubrics provided, attempt to evaluate each proposal and assign it a score. *Before doing so, realize that grantmakers are very deliberate in creating rubrics.* When examining the proposal language, try to do so through the rubric lens. Enter your scores into your [eJournal](#).



Task: Proposal Evaluation Continued

Type: Classroom-based project focusing on improved student learning

Sample Proposal [1](#) & [2](#)

[Sample Rubric](#)

Type: Group professional development endeavor

Sample Proposal [1](#) & [2](#)

[Sample Rubric](#)

Type: Larger collaborative project between two organizations

Sample Proposal [1](#) & [2](#)

[Sample Rubric](#)



Review: Your Proposal Scores – Group or Team

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Group or Team: How did your scores compare for each proposal? Which proposals were most effective/persuasive and why? Which proposals could have used improvement? For those that could have used improvement, in what areas?



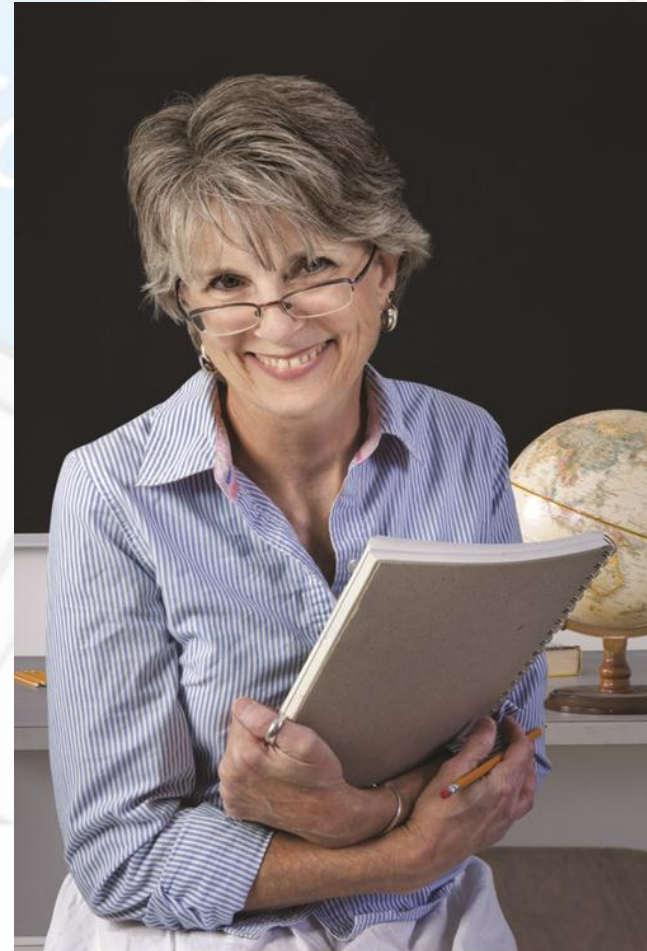
Discuss



Review: Your Proposal Scores - Individual

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Individual: How comfortable were you using the rubric? Were there proposals that were clearly stronger than others? What made some proposals more effective than others?





Research: Rubrics From Grantmakers

Estimated Time: 30 minutes

If you'd like, spend some time researching rubrics from different grantmakers*. They could belong to the organizations you've researched in previous sessions, or simply organizations to which you've considered applying. This activity will get you in the habit of aligning your proposals with each respective grantmakers' rubric.



**Note: Not all grantmakers make their rubrics public. Inquire with potential funders to confirm whether their rubrics are public.*

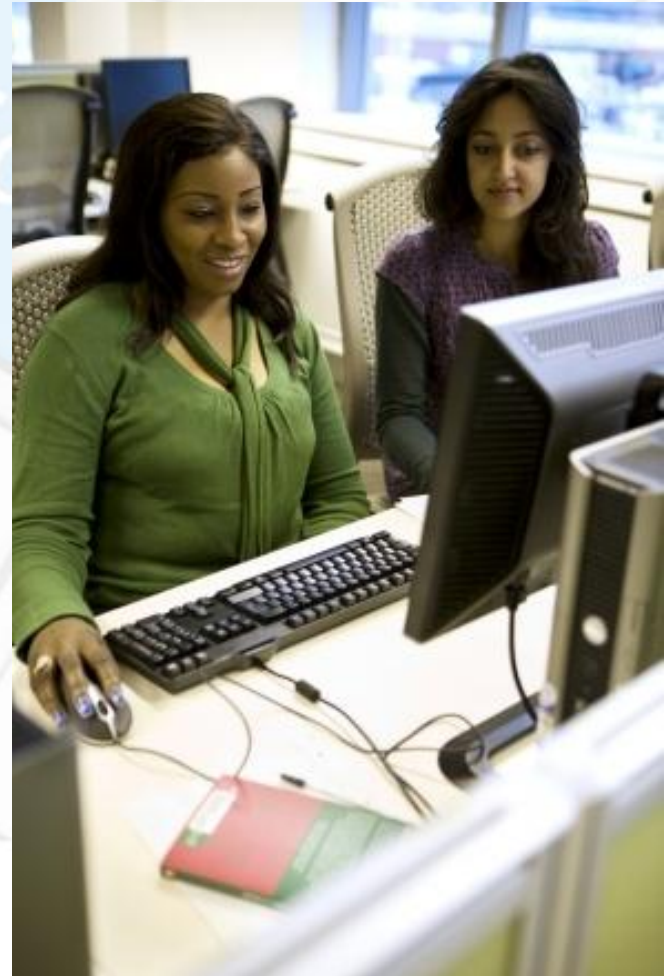


Session 5: Grant Stewardship

Estimated Time:
45 minutes

Purpose

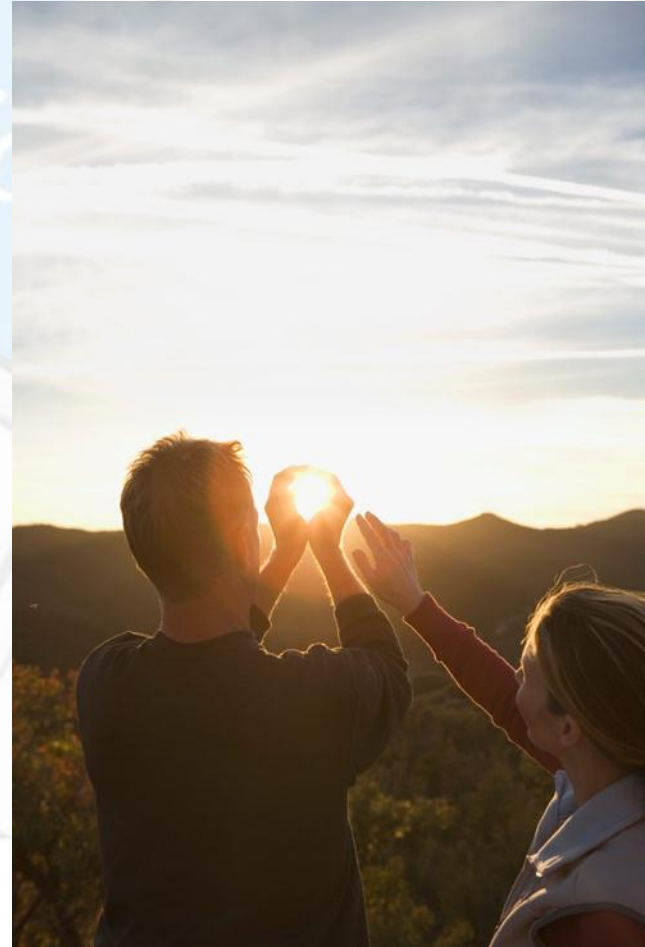
This session will provide you with an understanding of the responsibilities and requirements inherent in receiving a grant. You will examine examples of reporting requirements and understand the expectations between you and the grantmaker.



Learning Outcomes

After completing this session, a participant should be able

- To identify the basic requirements of a grant report.
- To explain the differences in reporting requirements depending on the size and scope of the grant.
- To recognize the importance of communication with the funder in the event of project changes.
- To use feedback in the event of not being funded to improve the participant's proposal for future submission.





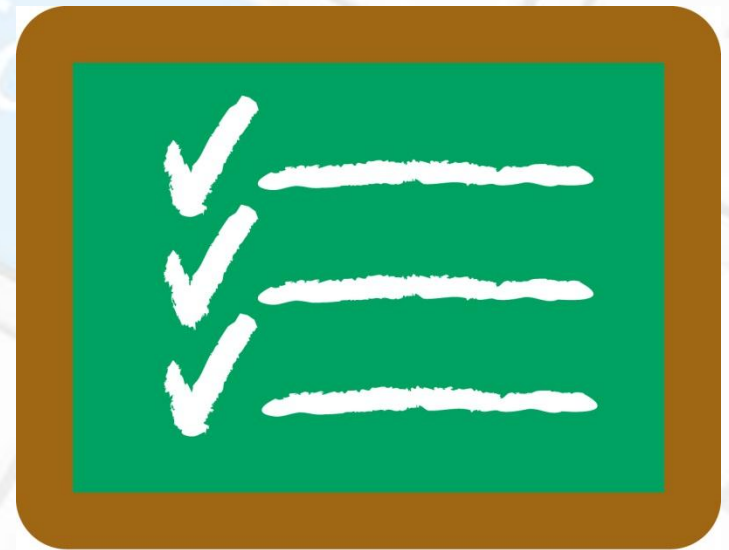
Stewardship Expectations

When you are awarded a grant, a set of requirements (which will be made explicit through a [grant agreement](#)) will be presented to you, including all reporting expectations. The funder will have a vested interest in the work you'll accomplish through your grant project, and they'll understandably want to know about your progress.

Reporting requirements will vary according to the grantmaker, but there are several general ways to ensure proper grants [stewardship](#), which are listed on the next slide.

Stewardship Expectations

- Document your project activities, outcomes, and expenditures, and relate them to those described in your proposal.
- Communicate with your grantmaker's [program officer](#) to alert them of any programmatic and budget changes, or of any problems that arise (many grantmakers require preapproval for these changes).
- Follow directions and timelines for submitting grant reports.



To Do

Reflect: eJournal

Estimated Time: 25 minutes

Take a moment to examine the final reporting requirements for the three sample applications introduced in previous sessions (see next slide). Then use your [eJournal](#) to record your thoughts.

- What are the standard budget requirements in a report?
- How detailed should you be in describing project achievements?
- How do reporting requirements differ according to the size of the grant? Why might this be? (Hint: The size of a grant may correlate with the depth of reporting requirements.)





Reflect: eJournal Continued

Type: Classroom-based project focusing on improved student learning

[Sample Reporting Requirements](#)

Type: Group professional development endeavor

[Sample Reporting Requirements](#)

Type: Larger collaborative project between two organizations

[Sample Reporting Requirements](#)



Unfunded Applications

The act of assembling a grant proposal represents a fairly large investment of your time, which can make it all the more frustrating when a proposal is not funded. In the event that your proposal does not receive funding, keep a few things in mind:

- Realize the rejection is not personal. Many grant writers experience rejection. In many instances, grantmakers simply don't have a large enough grant pool to fund all worthy applicants. Continue to look for future funding prospects. It's a competitive field; rejection will be part of the process, for better or worse.
- Seek feedback from the grantmaker. Program officers are oftentimes willing to provide feedback regarding your unfunded proposal, whether it is in the form of reviewer notes or tips on how to improve your proposal for future submission. Use this as a learning experience by soliciting this information.
- Shop your proposal around. Any grant proposal you write can and should be used as a template for future grant proposals. If there are other organizations funding similar projects, feel free to adjust your proposal accordingly and submit to them.

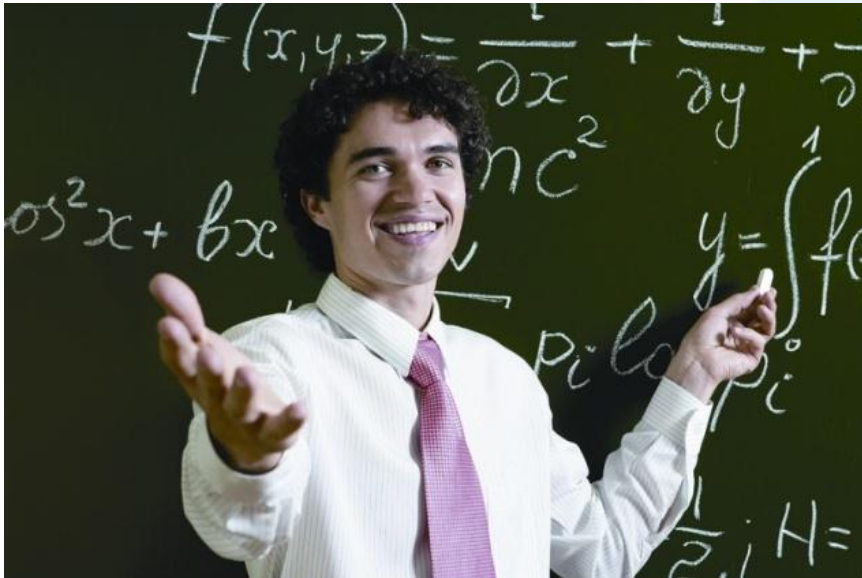


Write: Scenario and Reflection

Estimated Time: 20 minutes

Assume that the proposal you've submitted has not been funded. You've just receive word from the grantmaker that although your proposed project was clear and creative, they have chosen to go in a different direction. Use your [eJournal](#) to reflect on the following questions:

- How would you approach the grantmaker for constructive feedback? If and when you receive it, will you resubmit?
- How can you use this proposal as a template for future grant applications?
- What other organizations might consider funding this project? (Think back to the research you conducted in Session 1.)



Course Evaluation

Estimated Time: 15
minutes

Course Evaluation

Thank you for your participation. We hope that you found this course beneficial to your professional growth. Please take a few minutes to respond to the [course evaluation](#). This will allow you to weigh-in on the usefulness and quality of this course. Your feedback will help guide the NEA Foundation's next iteration of *Grant Writing for Educators*.