

Grantwriting and Fundraising Written Materials

More Than You Probably Wanted to Know

Successful “grantwriters” have the same sort of ‘mystique’ as witch doctors, CIA operatives, magicians, brain surgeons, used car salesmen, and rocket scientists. **All** those skills *are indeed* used by a grantwriter, plus a little bit of Shakespeare and a drop of P. T. Barnum! Grantwriting requires skills and techniques that are foreign to many other types of writers. The *normal* rules for proper book authoring, screenwriting, journalism and business communications... are abandoned and broken often in grantwriting.

I worked as the grantwriter for a small homeless/housing supportive services charity for nearly three years. Although the agency did not have a shelter, beds, or a food bank, I was able to write approximately **\$1.5 Million** in successful funding proposals for their “human services” programs. Thanks to the opportunity given to me by Executive Director Nicole Pagourgis, I developed the ability “to compel the reader to action”, which meant writing a check. My funding proposals succeeded with Federal, County, City agencies, Corporate and Private foundations. My work won a \$900,000+ federal housing pilot program, one of only five proposals selected in the country. I now offer **freelance grantwriting services** on a hired gun outsource basis for selected (worthy) non-profit organizations.

Before contacting me regarding grantwriting services, please understand that real grantwriters **do not** accept a percentage of the grant as payment.

The grantwriter puts your organization in the **best possible light** for the specific funding guidelines or program chosen. The grantwriter writes and edits the proposal so it makes your organization look its best for *that* particular request, and makes sure your organization’s proposal meets the requirements of the grant funding guidelines. A good grantwriter makes the most **compelling** case possible for the funder to give you the money. The grantwriter (if also hired to do so) makes sure the proposal, the required attachments, and any backup materials are submitted on time and correctly. At that point, the grantwriter’s job is **done** and paid for.

Whether *they* agree that you’re worthy of their money, or whether *they* want to support your *specific* kind of program at this time, does **not** affect whether the grantwriter has earned his or her money. The grantwriter doesn’t want to wait months to find out if and when the customer has been awarded funding, and doesn’t want to be a bill collector.

In most cases it is also not allowed, and possibly fraudulent, for the grantwriter to get a percentage of the grant funding. If a foundation gives you money to feed the hungry, and you just slice off 15 or 20 % of that money to pay the grantwriter, you are more than likely in **violation** of the grant contract, and possibly guilty of “fraudulent use of charitable funds”.

I don’t want any part of that and neither should you!

However, I am glad to make my grantwriting services as inexpensive as possible, by **not making you pay me** for the tasks the charity can do by itself. Your volunteers or less expensive staff can do the following tasks *every bit as well* as I can, saving you money:

- **research** which foundations or government agencies give money to causes like yours
- **send away** for the all-important “grant guidelines” from the foundations
- **keep track** of when each funding source does and does not want to receive proposals
- **assemble** all the “attachments” and supporting paperwork to complete the package
- **deliver** the proposal, on-time / uphill / through the snow and rain
- **keep track** of “reporting requirements” and remembering when to re-apply

Congratulations, you just saved **30 to 50%** on grantwriting, and still had a *bona fide* expert do the expert part!

In contrast, here’s a funny (but very relevant) example of how a lot of grantwriting job listings look to an experienced grantwriter:

Brain Surgeon position available at Good Intentions Hospital. The Brain Surgeon will be responsible for performing all brain surgery functions including doing the brain surgery, changing the bed sheets, patrolling the parking lot at night, washing the floors, billing the insurance companies, answering the phones, and cooking meals for patients.

They *think* they’re saving money by having one person do several different jobs, but that means **the expert is spending less time doing what he does best**. If the hospital wants to save money, they should only pay the brain surgeon for doing the actual surgery. Paying expert money for anything else is 1) a *waste* of money, and 2) your brain surgeon winds up *doing less* brain surgery every day!

Not many hospitals pay the surgeons to cook the meals, not many airlines pay the pilots to load the baggage, and not many baseball teams have the ball players sell the hot dogs. **Save money** by using the money more efficiently for each specific task.

I’m available to have a phone conversation with your organization’s Executive Director or Development Director free of charge, to offer advice and to determine whether your organization would *really* benefit from spending money on a grantwriter or not. If you’d be wasting money by hiring me, believe it or not I’ll tell you. I have no need to mislead, rob, or whitewash a worthy charitable organization to make a few bucks.

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