

Alliance Guide to Fundraising

Part Two: Anatomy of a Winning Proposal



Alliance for Biking & Walking

August 2012

Alliance Guide to Fundraising Series

1 Creating and Implementing an Effective Fundraising Plan

2 Anatomy of a Winning Proposal

3 Finding Local Funding Sources

4 Consulting and Contracts

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Introduction

Since 1996, the Alliance for Biking & Walking has worked to create, strengthen and unite bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations across North America. As agents of change on the ground, state and local advocates and their organizations are transforming their communities into great places to walk and bike.

Securing and maintaining sustainable and diverse funding streams is a key component of a successful advocacy organization — and fundraising is a top interest among Alliance members. In order to share knowledge, best practices and real-world examples, the Alliance is creating a five-part *Guide to Fundraising* beginning in 2012.

This guide serves as Part Two of the evolving series. As these guides are meant to be living documents, we invite your input and examples to strengthen and enhance these resources for all Alliance member organizations.

Please contact Brigid O’Keane, Advocacy Advance Program Manager, with any insight or contributions for this or future guides in the fundraising series:
Brigid@PeoplePoweredMovement.org.

Brigid O’Keane, Lead Author
Carolyn Szczepanski, Contributor
Jake Knight, Editor / Contributor

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In the first volume of the Alliance's Guide to Fundraising series, "Creating and Implementing an Effective Fundraising Plan," we noted that the most important aspect of sustainable fundraising is to diversify your funding sources. Foundation grants have the lowest rate of return of the major fundraising strategies. They are also among the least sustainable source of funding, and organizations are cautioned against building too many short-term grants into their budget.

So, why is the second guide focusing on the Anatomy of a Winning Proposal? Because, as non-profit organizations, we will all apply for grants. As small a piece of the fundraising pie that foundations represent, grants can give an organization a short-term capacity boost or fund innovative programs it might not otherwise be able to offer.

Also, proposal writing is one of the most valuable skills that a non-profit employee or volunteer can develop. It gives organizers the opportunity to think through and succinctly communicate how their mission and activities are aligned with the terms of the grant and how they will strategically use funds to meet their goals.

This guide summarizes the elements of a typical grant proposal for a project, provides tips for success, shares examples of good proposals (including one that has been funded through the Advocacy Advance Grant Program), and gives resources for bicycle and pedestrian grant funding.

Additionally, this guide couches the development of a good proposal within the larger process of seeking out funders, communicating with them and developing relationships along the way. Much of the work is done before you begin writing the grant proposal, as grantmakers generally fund organizations which have strong leaders, demonstrate a proven track record, and make important contributions in their communities.

Why focus on grant proposals?

It's important to remember that the grant proposal is only part of the process. It doesn't stand alone. If you haven't planned, haven't done good research on grants, and aren't in the process of developing relationships and communicating with grantors, then even a great proposal might not succeed.

- Foundation Center



Seeking grants: Do your homework

A visit to the Foundation Center can help you identify funders close to your community and to your mission:
<http://foundationcenter.org>

Research foundations to make sure your mission and activities are aligned with the terms of the grant. An extensive search can be made at the Foundation Center. Start your search with funders of organizations similar to yours or those similar to your current funders (preferably in your community). Build relationships with the staff and boards of potential funder organizations. You may have to establish contact with a letter of inquiry (see page 13).

It is extremely important to research funders before applying. Grant applications are very time-consuming. The grantmaking process — from initial research and contacting funders to drafting your proposal, following up and awaiting a decision — depends greatly on each grantor’s timeline. It can take several months — even years — so be aware of deadlines and plan accordingly.

All too often organizations chase after any income opportunity without making sure it is the right fit for your organization and your goals. This can result in a misuse of staff resources or even mission creep in the application itself.

It is helpful to document which potential funding sources align with your organization’s mission, goals, programs and projects. See our Grantseeking Worksheet (Example A on page 15) for a sample of how to track information on each potential funder.

Also, see Advocacy Advance’s list of funding sources (Example D on page 18) for a short list of potential grants for bicycle and pedestrian organizations. A future edition in the Fundraising Guide series will discuss community foundations and contracts in further detail.

Before you apply:

- Find a funding source that fits your mission. Beware of “mission creep” — straying from your organization’s mission to fit the criteria of the grant.
- Make sure your proposal meets the funder’s requirements, such as qualified activities and geographic scope.
- When possible, pitch your idea to a potential funder over the phone before you go to the trouble of writing a proposal.



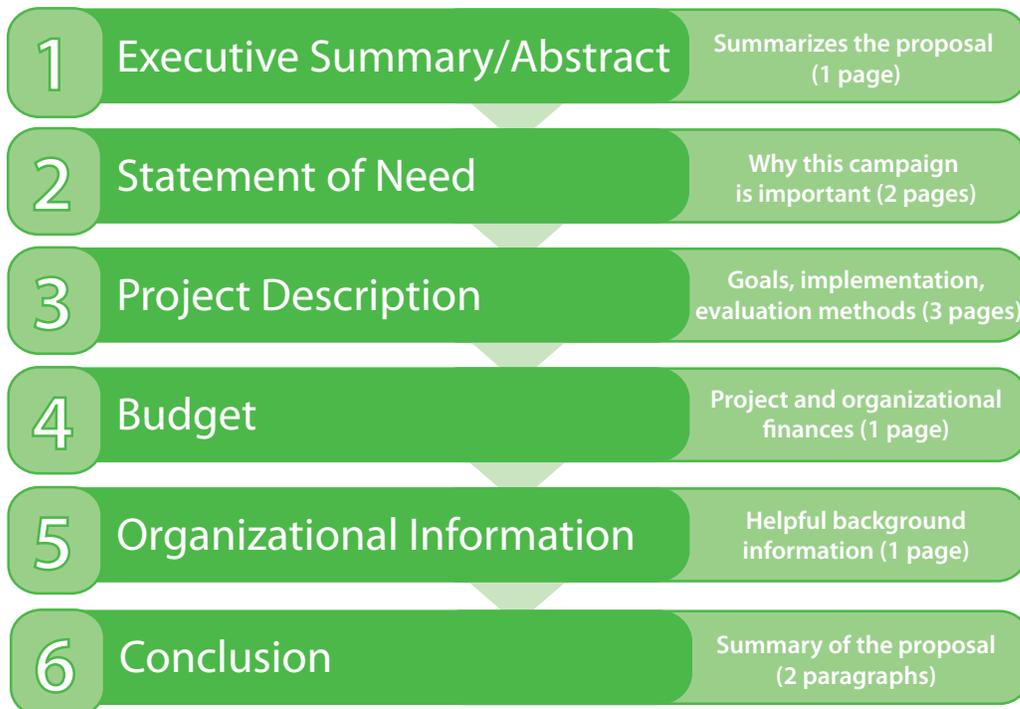
After you've planned for a particular project, set fundraising goals and identified viable funding sources, it's time to articulate your proposal.

The six parts outlined below provide a general guide to writing a proposal that succinctly describes the project you're proposing, the need it addresses, your request of the grantor and other organizational information that will help the grantor make a decision. Though this format is readily applicable to funding projects, it can be modified for general operating or startup funding requests. Also, it's important to note that you will probably not write the six parts of the proposal in order; for example, it will be easier to write your abstract after you have developed your full proposal.

Not all grants will require all six parts of this proposal, and some may have a particular format for you to follow. **Advocacy Advance** is an example of a funder that provides a proposal form for applicants to complete. For more information on Advocacy Advance grants, and for an example of a successful application and more tips, see pages 19-20. If the funder uses an application form, be sure to follow the instructions closely.

Anatomy of a Winning Proposal

A Winning Proposal in Six Parts





1. Executive Summary / Abstract

Your proposal should begin with an abstract that clearly summarizes the rest of the document. This is an opportunity to highlight the key elements of your proposal and how it fits the funding priorities of the grantmaker.

Keep your abstract to one page or less:

- 1-2 paragraphs to address the **need**;
- 1-2 paragraphs to briefly describe the **project** (the solution);
- 1 paragraph to review your **grant request** and how the money will be used
- 1 paragraph to describe why your **organization** is best suited for the project and your capacity to succeed

Remember to keep your executive summary short and focused. Write it after the rest of the proposal is complete.



2. Statement of Need

The statement of need is where you write in more detail about the issue faced in your community. Clearly state the problem that your organization seeks to address and show that you understand the problem and are the best group to address it.

Avoid circular reasoning. Don't describe the problem as the absence of your project. "We don't have an open streets initiative in our city" is not the problem. The problems are high rates of obesity, low rates of physical activity and a lack of public space in the community. An open streets initiative is a potential solution.

The statement of need should be two pages at most and include the following points:

- **What** evidence is there that this problem exists and what specific data and indicators can you provide to support your point? Be sure to keep the scope of the need relevant to the scale of your proposal.
- **How** have you identified this problem (e.g. surveys, public records, community outreach)? **Who** within the community are most affected and how does this problem relate to other issues within the community?
- Remember to **stay positive** – your proposal gives hope to solutions, so don't get too pessimistic when discussing the problems.

Tips from the Minnesota Council on Foundations:

- *Describe the situation in both factual and human interest terms, if possible.*
- *Describe your issue in as local a context as possible.*
- *Describe a problem that is about the same size as your solution.*





Goals vs. Objectives: An Example

Project Goal: By the end of the 2014-2015 school year, we will double the number of children biking and walking to school in our district.

Objective 1: By the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year, three new schools in our community will have Safe Routes programs in place.

Objective 2: In 2013, we will coordinate an in-school bike safety program with 50 classes taught to 1,500 students.

3. Project Description

As the bulk of your proposal, this section should be about three pages and address the project objectives and goals, implementation methods and evaluation process.

A. Objectives and Goals (1 page)

Begin this section with the vision for the project related to the need, the overall goal — the ultimate change the project will bring about — and then your specific objectives. Tell how the project goals align with your organization's mission.

Your project's objectives are measurable, achievable, specific and have a timeline. Clear, action-oriented, realistic objectives are essential in your proposal's success because they provide the steps and indicators to achieve your goals. Make sure your objectives stand out: bullets may be appropriate.

You may be asked to present different types of objectives, including:

- 1. Campaign:** What are the measurable outcomes that you seek through your proposed strategies? (e.g. completed downtown bike network)
- 2. Behavioral:** What social and community patterns will change as a result of your accomplished campaign goals? (e.g. 2% increase in bike/ped modeshare in 3 years)
- 3. Process:** The way you carry out your project can be an end in itself (e.g. involvement in the committee that creates and implements the Bicycle Master Plan)
- 4. Product:** A specific resource is created (e.g. Bicycle Master Plan)
- 5. Organizational:** What capacity-building outcomes are you seeking? (e.g. from 1 to 2 full-time paid staff; doubled membership)

Remember not to over-promise what you can deliver on or spread your organization too thin. Be clear about the anticipated outcomes and impacts of your activities – what will change about the identified problem as a result of your project. Be as specific as possible, even if the impact is difficult to measure.



B. Implementation Methods (1 page)

In this section, describe the activities of your project. This section can also be thought of as the action plan or work plan.

- **How** will you reach your objectives through specific, targeted actions? **How** will you involve the stakeholders?
- **What resources** will you use in your actions? **What potential barriers** will you face and how will you overcome them?
- **When** will each action start and end?
- **Who** is your primary audience? Key stakeholders? Decision-making targets? Current or potential partners? How will you reach / influence / include them? Also discuss what personnel and/or volunteers will be working on this project, and the skills and experience they have that will make it successful
- **Why** are you choosing to pursue the methods listed, and **why** do you think they would be successful?

C. Evaluation Process (1 page)

Explain how you will evaluate the processes of your program and measure the outcomes you are hoping to achieve. Build data collection, analysis and reporting into your plan. Think about the process and metrics will you use to evaluate the success of your project and share your results.

The results you seek will be different for various audiences, and so will your evaluation method.

- What is your organization's **internal** process and how will you grow or learn from the results?
- How will you involve the **community** in the evaluation of your project's success?
- How can the **movement** learn from your successes and challenges? How can your project serve as a model for **other organizations**?
- Finally, the **funder** must also share the results of their investment, so make sure that your evaluation method can be aligned in part with their metrics (but don't let that compromise your mission – if it does, it is not the ideal grant match for your organization).

Some projects have two audiences: the direct participants (e.g., bicyclists who ride on Main Street) and the indirect beneficiaries (e.g., businesses on Main Street that will get more people biking past their stores). If so, describe both.

- Minnesota Council on Foundations

Evaluation should occur throughout the grant, not just at the end. That way, it can help you continually revise and improve your work as you're doing it. Remember that both qualitative and quantitative evaluations are important.

- GrantCraft



Sketch out the broad outlines of the budget to be sure that the costs are in reasonable proportion to the outcomes you anticipate. If it appears that the costs will be prohibitive, you should then scale back your plans or adjust them to remove the least cost-effective expenditures.

- Foundation Center

Tips for Crafting Your Budget:

- Your budget is an estimate
- Don't exceed the total grant amount
- Write in flexibility to your budget
- Allow for contingencies
- Use specific numbers (e.g. avoid rounding)
- Your ask should fit your organization's budget

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

4. Budget

Make a concise one-page chart summarizing your organization's financial position and expected sources of income (including in-kind support and matching revenue) and expenses for your project. It may include a narrative summary and explanation of any line items if needed.

Be prepared to organize your budget according to the guidelines of the grant. Some foundations may ask you to attach your own budget; others may provide a format for you to fill in.

Make sure to include new costs as well as overhead and ongoing expenses. Some of these may be proportional. For example, if 20% of your executive director's time and 20% of overhead expenses will be spent on this project, indicate in dollars how much those percentages are worth.

You may be asked to divide your expenses into categories:

- **Personnel expenses** for all the people who will work on the project, including salary, benefits and payroll tax.
- **Direct project expenses** are non-personnel expenses you would not incur if you did not do the project.
- **Administrative or overhead expenses** are non-personnel expenses you will incur whether or not you do the project (rent and utilities, e.g.)².

Discuss in a budget summary – and include in the budget itself – what other funders have committed funds or been asked to support your project. If it hasn't been addressed yet, talk about the sustainability of the project – how will it be supported in the future, after the cycle of the grant you're requesting?

The most important thing about a project's proposal budget is that it reflects thoroughly the project description. Funders take into account a nonprofit's past history in providing the services they are proposing in a new project. A nonprofit with a modest budget and similarly modest program services may not be considered for a large grant for a program much larger than what they have previously run.

See Example B on page 16 for a sample budget format for a project proposal.



5. Organizational Information

In less than one page, or in an appendix, include additional information about your organization that can help support your request for funding. These supporting documents may include:

- **Organizational Budget:** This demonstrates your financial standing and history, and it can supplement your project budget.
- **Audited Financial Statement:** Some foundations may require this documentation.
- **IRS Determination Letter:** This proves that you are incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit public charity. If you apply for a grant as a 501(c)4, additional documentation may be required.
- **Board of Directors:** Who are your organization's leadership and what skills and expertise are they committing to the organization?
- **Key Personnel:** Provide summary of staff and / or key volunteers and their experience with the organization
- **Letter(s) of Support:** A letter from a partner organization or leader in your community can verify your organization's value and capacity, especially if it comes from someone who has a connection with the grantmaking organization or a board member. Letters of support should speak to collaboration and should be on the organization's letterhead.
- **Media:** This includes any external evidence highlighting your organization's role and successes. These could be news stories, blog posts or testimonials from those impacted by your work.

If you haven't sufficiently addressed it yet, this is the time to emphasize your organization's capacity to carry out the proposed project successfully. What is your mission? When was the organization established and how has it grown since then? What is your structure and what programs do you currently have? What are your past accomplishments? Why are you the perfect organization to implement this project?





6. Conclusion

In two paragraphs or less, summarize your grant proposal and highlight the key points that you want to leave the grant reviewer. Restate how the project addresses a critical need in your community, how it fits with your organization's mission and your expected outcomes.

When you've finished crafting your proposal and are ready to review it, use the Proposal Checklist on page 17.

Eight qualities that funders look for in exemplary proposals:

- 1. Energy.** *The proposal suggests a group of people who can barely contain their enthusiasm, urgency, passion, eagerness to begin working.*
- 2. Expertise.** *The proposal's authors know what they are talking about.*
- 3. Commitment.** *The organization is committed and the proposal reflects genuine priorities rather than being one of the many programs the organization is currently juggling.*
- 4. Clarity.** *The proposal is clear about what the organization wants to do.*
- 5. Collaboration.** *The grantseeker has formed alliances and the people served by the proposed project have participated in its planning.*
- 6. Benefits.** *The project's goals are indisputably worth striving for and the target group is appropriate.*
- 7. Comprehensiveness.** *The proposal reflects a comprehensive strategy, rather than a piecemeal approach.*
- 8. Effectiveness.** *The project has the potential for achieving a wider impact if it is replicated elsewhere in the future.*

- Council on Foundations



Letter of Inquiry (LOI)

Some funders may require a letter of inquiry before they ask you to submit a proposal. This should be a succinct document that shows applicability to the scope of the grant and funding priorities. It should include the following elements¹:

- Funder’s name, title, and address
- A salutation directed at the individual responsible for the funding program (i.e., does not begin “To Whom It May Concern,” “Dear Sirs,” etc.)
- Brief overview of the organization and its purpose
- The reason for the funding request
- The amount requested (if required by funder)
- The need the project intends to meet (including target population, statistics, examples)
- A brief description of the project
- Other prospective funders for the project
- A thank you and next steps to be taken
- Does not exceed two pages (one page is recommended)
- Name and phone number of contact at your organization
- The signature of the person who can speak with authority on behalf of your organization

Cover Letter

Unless the funder’s protocols specify otherwise, your proposal should always include a cover letter. Make sure to include a compelling hook to intrigue the reviewers and show relevancy to the funding priorities.

A cover letter should include elements similar to those of a letter of inquiry, but it should never exceed one page in length (three to four paragraphs). You don’t need to go into detail about the project since the letter accompanies your proposal.

In the first paragraph, introduce your organization and your project, and make your request. In the following paragraphs, take the opportunity to make or reinforce a personal connection to the funder, highlight how the project fits the funder’s mission and target areas and tell the funder what the partnership will mean for the target population. You can also indicate your board’s enthusiasm for and community support for the project.

Letters of inquiry and cover letters

¹Tips from Minnesota Council on Foundations



More tips for writing successful proposals



Ron Milam, Milam Consulting

- 1. Research the funder before you apply!** Make sure your proposal is a good fit for each specific funder.
- 2. Pitch the idea before you apply.** Call and ask to take five minutes of their time to run your proposal by them (unless they say don't call).
- 3. Have someone who isn't familiar with your work proofread the proposal.** This can not only correct typos, but can also let you know if you are clear in what you are proposing.
- 4. Allow extra time.** Don't wait until the last minute to finish up your proposal because there will likely be mistakes if you rush. Aim to finish the proposal a few days before the due date.
- 5. Make grant writing one part of a larger fundraising strategy.** It's a super-competitive environment to raise funds from foundations. Develop a diversified fundraising strategy and consider raising money from individuals.

GuideStar

- 1. Stay specific!** Don't provide ambiguous, lengthy information not specifically related to your proposed project.
- 2. Provide statistics and information relevant to your organization and local community.** Don't rely solely on national and statewide data.
- 3. Include Letters of Support / Memoranda of Understanding** that are current, on letterhead, relevant to your project, addressed to the appropriate recipient, and that explain the organization's involvement with your project.

Minnesota Council on Foundations

- 1. Don't assume** the funder knows much about your subject area. If your topic is complex, you might add an informative article or suggest some background reading.
- 2.** You may not know the answers to all these questions when you submit your proposal. You can continue to **submit updated information** to foundation staff almost until the date the board actually reviews the proposal. The more you know, the better the proposal will look.

Additional Tips

Funders may require additional information from your organization or different formatting. It's helpful to have a boilerplate proposal that is easily augmented or modified to any funder's particular requirements.

Take advantage of all available feedback. If your application is rejected, ask the grantmaker why and how you can improve your proposal next time.



Example A: Grantseeking Worksheet

Basic Information	
Foundation/funder's name and address	
Foundation's stated mission and purpose	
Contact person	
Contact person's telephone and email	
Names and titles of other staff members	
Names of board members and trustees	
Total grants made annually	\$
Eligibility Information	
Grant subject matter	
Grant eligibility requirements	
Geographical limitations	
Other limitations	
Minimum useful grant amount	\$
Maximum grant amount	\$
Funding duration	
"Good Fit" Indicators	
Other organizations that have received grants for similar work (name the organizations, list how much received and for what)	
Typical grant amount	\$
Limitations on overhead/administrative costs	%
Prospects for grant renewal	
Special considerations	
Application Process	
First steps	<input type="checkbox"/> Inquiry letter <input type="checkbox"/> Full proposal
Printed application form or guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/> Available <input type="checkbox"/> Obtained
Next application deadline(s) (if any)	
Board meeting dates	
Likely to hear answer by	
Research Trail	
Have checked	
<input type="checkbox"/> Website	
<input type="checkbox"/> Directories (name them)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Form 990	
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual report	



Example B: Project Budget

I. INCOME	
Grant Request	\$25,000
Other Foundation Grants	\$35,000
Government Grants and Contracts	\$0
Earned income (e.g. product sales)	\$2,500
Events	\$8,000
Membership dues	\$1,000
Donations	\$3,000
In-kind support	\$500
Total project budget	\$75,000

Provide any detail you have of confirmed or anticipated grants

II. EXPENSES				
Personnel expenses		Grant request	Funding from other sources	Total
Staff member	Time allotted to project (%)			
Executive director	25%	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$20,000
Program director	75%	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$30,000
Consultants and professional fees	100%	\$3,000	\$1,000	\$4,000
Total personnel expenses		\$18,000	\$36,000	\$54,000
Non-personnel expenses				
Training and conferences		\$800	\$500	\$1,300
Travel		\$1,200	\$1,800	\$3,000
Printing & publications		\$2,000	\$2,000	\$4,000
Equipment & supplies		\$500	\$2,700	\$3,200
Other expenses		\$500	\$1,000	\$1,500
Total non-personnel expenses		\$5,000	\$8,000	\$13,000
Overhead / indirect expenses				
Rent & utilities		\$1,500	\$5,500	\$7,000
Telephone & fax		\$100	\$300	\$400
Other expenses		\$400	\$200	\$600
Total overhead / indirect expenses		\$2,000	\$6,000	\$8,000
TOTAL PROJECT EXPENSES		\$25,000	\$50,000	\$75,000

Include benefits and payroll tax with the salary

- Factors used by funders to assess budgets include:*
- Can the job be accomplished with this budget?
 - Are costs reasonable for the market - or too high or low?
 - Is the budget consistent with proposed activities?
 - Is there sufficient budget detail and explanation?



Example C: Proposal Checklist

After you complete your proposal, double check to make sure you addressed all of the following questions:

What is your organization planning to do?

- State your goals.
- Explain how your proposed activities are likely to achieve these goals.
- Beyond the stated goals, you address other changes that are likely to occur by the project's end.
- The proposal clearly describes and justifies the project's ongoing activities.
- The proposal offers insights into how the project will be structured, staffed and managed.

Why are you proposing your project?

- It addresses a need.
- There is evidence that the needs exist.
- The needs are important.
- A variety of benefits will be derived from the project's implementation.
- You address any unintended positive or negative effects.

Where will your project take place?

- Your proposal explains reasons that the area was selected.
- The project will have influence or repercussions elsewhere.

When will your project take place?

- Your proposal includes a timeline for accomplishing the work.
- The timeline is realistic.
- Your proposal identifies any crucial deadlines that must be met.
- Your proposal shows that your organization is capable of keeping to the timeline and meeting your deadlines.

Who will participate in the project?

- Your proposal identifies who the program will serve.
- They are the right target group given the project's goals.
- Your proposal identifies who will provide the services.
- You indicate the capabilities of the person(s) that will provide the services.
- Your proposal identifies who will oversee the project.
- You indicate the qualifications of the person(s) that will provide the services.
- You identify anybody else who is attempting similar projects.
- You indicate whether a consultation, collaboration or alliance with other organizations is being considered and the reasons if not.

How will the changes of success be maximized?

- The project's approach is practical.
- Your proposal demonstrates an understanding of best practices in the field and references other organizations that have gotten results by using equivalent means.
- Your proposal addresses any anticipated challenges, similar programs that have run into serious problems in the past, and ideas for overcoming them.
- Your proposal includes the way(s) that success will be measured.

How much will the project cost?

- Your budget is adequate to carry out the program.
- Your budget doesn't include unrelated expenses.
- Your proposal identifies other funders that have committed their support to the project.
- Your proposal includes a plan for how the project will continue after the funding is over.

Source: Council on Foundations



Example D: Funding Sources

Now that you've honed the skills, where is the money? Below is a list of grant programs that have funded bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations. It is by no means a full list. Visit the **Foundation Center** – a great resource for grantwriting skills and funding opportunities – at field offices and libraries around the country. Many foundations like to fund projects and programs in their community.

Bikes Belong awards up to \$10,000 and will fund collaborations between non-profit organizations, businesses, and government entities on bicycle facility or advocacy projects. Fundable projects include paved bike paths, lanes, and rail-trails as well as mountain bike trails, bike parks, BMX facilities, and large-scale bicycle advocacy initiatives.

ClifBar Family Foundation Small Grants Program offers grants four times per year, with an average award of \$8,000. Their funding priorities include “Increase opportunities for outdoor activity” and “Build stronger communities.”

International Mountain Biking Association/USAC Trail Tune-Up Grants feature \$2,000 in funding and a follow-up visit from one of the Subaru/IMBA Trail Care Crews. The Crews will provide technical assistance for the grant winners' trail projects. Projects that create or improve trails used for mountain bike racing will receive the highest consideration, but funding can also be used to improve trails for race training and recreational riding. Applicants must be current members of IMBA, as well as USA Cycling member clubs/ race promoters.

New Belgium Environmental Stewardship Grants program awards small grants (\$500-\$5,000) for both program support and general operating needs for organizations in their geographic funding areas. One of their subcategories is Sensible Transportation and Bike Advocacy.

North Face Explore Fund supports non-profit organizations that are working to re-connect children with nature up to \$2,500. The Explore Fund will support organizations that encourage youth outdoor participation, focusing primarily on creating more connections of children to nature, increasing access to both front & backcountry recreation, as well as providing education for both personal & environmental health.

SmartWool Advocacy Fund focuses on organizations that identify and focus on long term social change. They fund projects \$500-\$5,000 that have effective leadership and strong grassroots characteristics like volunteer participation and citizen engagement. The Fund is especially focused on projects that promote active, outdoor lifestyles for youth to foster their engagement on environmental issues.

Specialized and Specialized Retailers are teaming up to be more involved at a community and local level by funding advocacy efforts are focused on four key areas: wellness on bikes; youth on bikes; access for bikes; and bikes as sustainable transportation. Inquire at your local Specialized retailer.

Surdna Foundation Sustainable Environment Grants fund high-level campaigns in its Transportation and Smart Growth sub-category. There is no application deadline for these rolling grants.



Example E: Proposals

Visit the following web pages for examples of winning proposals:

- http://www.pluggedin.org/tool_kit/sample_grant.html
- http://www.kurzweilededu.com/files/proof_resources_grant1.pdf

Example F: The Advocacy Advance Grant Program

Advocacy Advance, the partnership between the Alliance for Biking & Walking and the League of American Bicyclists, has awarded nearly \$800,000 to bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations since 2009 in the following funding categories:

- **Capacity Building Grants** support the development and professionalization of state and local advocacy organizations to increase rates of biking and walking.
- **Innovation Grants** help existing organizations take bold innovative steps to increase biking and walking and improve safety.
- **Model Grants** provide multi-year support to state and local advocacy organizations with efforts to significantly increase federal investment at state, regional, and/or local levels for biking and walking infrastructure and programs.
- **Rapid Response Grants** help state and local organizations take advantage of unexpected opportunities to win, increase, or preserve funding for biking and walking.

Follow the link for an example of a successful Advocacy Advance grant application from the [Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition](#).

Visit AdvocacyAdvance.org for information on available grants.



Example G: Tips from Advocacy Advance

In the past three years of the Advocacy Advance Capacity Building grant program, applicants have requested twenty times the amount we have available. Here are tips from the reviewers for organizations to avoid making common mistakes and to instead make their grant proposals as strong as possible in future rounds of funding.

- Propose 2-3 winnable **campaigns**. For more about choosing a campaign and the difference between a campaign and a program, review the Alliance's **Campaign Checklist**.
- **Introduce** campaigns that are new for your organization vs. expanding existing ones.
- Propose **model** campaigns that can be replicated in other places, and identify similar campaigns that have been successful.
- Have a **clear plan** with specific actions, outcomes and timeframes.
- Demonstrate the **political context** and opportunities
- Identify key **partnerships**.
- Explain how your campaign will involve and impact **diverse** communities.
- Focus on capacity building through strategic **staffing**.
- Demonstrate the distinction but also the relationship between organization and campaign **goals**.
- Indicate **diverse funding streams**. Don't grant yourself out of existence by relying on grant funds for all of your campaigns and staff salaries.
- Show how the **limited dollars** available will be maximized and go a long way.
- Identify diverse and realistic sources of **matching funds** that you will pursue after receiving the grant.
- Follow the **guidelines** and word limits.
- **Contact us** if you have any questions or to review draft proposals.



Conclusion

Through all stages of your organization's development, you will find yourself applying for grants. Although a small part of your overall fundraising strategy, honing your grantwriting skills can reap the reward of essential dollars for specific campaigns and more general programing.

Diligence in seeking appropriate funders, presenting a clear case for your proposed project, anticipating questions and concerns and addressing them in advance, and following through with your applications are some of the key elements of a successful grant proposal process.

References and resources

- **Corporation for Public Broadcasting grantwriting tips:**
<http://www.cpb.org/grants/grantwriting.html>
- **Elements of a Grant Proposal:**
http://www.hotwinds.com/Grant_Prop.html
- **Minnesota Council on Foundations resources:**
<http://www.mcf.org/nonprofits/resources>

Contact

Questions? Ideas?

Contact Brighid O'Keane, Advocacy Advance Program Manager at Brighid@PeoplePoweredMovement.org