**Best Practices for Effective Grant Writing**

* Do your research. Make sure your Special Olympics need (the project/event you are asking for support) is a "match" for the foundation's giving guidelines. The Michigan Foundation Directory ([www.michiganfoundations.org/directory](http://www.michiganfoundations.org/directory)) is a resource to contact and research for local foundations. Areas are encouraged to look at local community foundations in your area for support.
* Do an online research and/or call the foundation prior to writing the proposal. Sometimes a program officer or official representative will advise you on your proposed request. Be prepared to discuss your proposal in depth. This conversation will give you the support to pursue your grant or help you decide to look at other opportunities. Most often though private foundations do not take phone calls, their information is available online.
* Research (online, 990 Form) the foundation to obtain information on their giving and application process and guidelines. Learn everything you can about the foundation you are soliciting.
* Follow the foundation's application procedures exactly as outlined. This will save you time and only make a stronger case for your request.
* Write a clear, concise, and persuasive cover letter and proposal. Have others in your area proofread your grant proposal before submitting it to the foundation.
* Do not miss a DEADLINE! Plan to submit the grant proposal at least 10-14 days prior to the foundation's deadline.
* If possible, call to confirm that the proposal was received by the Foundation. Give this time. Some foundations do not mind you calling about this, others do. Know your foundation. Many automatically send confirmation letter and/or emails.
* Know when the foundation will make a decision and notify you on your grant proposal. Allow extra time and then contact the foundation if you have not heard from them.
* If your grant is not funded, try to contact the foundation (email, phone call) to inquire why the grant proposal was not funded. Ask for advice on what is needed, and future eligibility.
* If your grant proposal is funded, respond immediately with a thank you telephone call and/or a thank you letter. Continue to build a relationship with the foundation's staff and officers.
* If awarded a grant, make sure you submit any follow up information required by the foundation. This may include evaluation forms, written reports, financial statements, pictures, etc. Again, do this in a timely manner.
* Keep a foundation up-to-date on the project that they funded. Do this through written and oral communication. Invite members of the foundation to attend area events and introduce them at Opening Ceremonies. Acknowledge them in print – programs, brochures, signs, etc. Have them get involved in your area events as a volunteer. Invite them to be a part of your team in a variety of ways.
* Add the foundation to your newsletter mailing list, holiday card list, and any other mailing list to which you send out area information. Again, make the staff and officers of the foundation a part of your Special Olympics family.
* If you receive a grant from a foundation, and wish to resubmit the following year, follow the same initial procedure and do your research before applying. This will save you time and effort in the long run.

Below is a list of resources that will help in pursuing grants and grant writing. There are a variety of methods thought to be the most effective in writing your cover letter and proposal. Find one that fits your area and your writing style. A winning proposal has the right words and style of presentation to capture the attention of those making the decisions. Good luck!

**Council of Michigan Foundations** [www.michiganfoundations.org/directory](http://www.michiganfoundations.org/directory)

**The Foundation Center** [www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org)

**GuideStar** [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)

**Grantsmanship Center** [www.tgci.com](http://www.tgci.com)

**Chronicle of Philanthropy** [www.philanthropy.com](http://www.philanthropy.com)

**Candid**  <https://candid.org/research-and-verify-nonprofits/990-finder>

**Writing a grant proposal** <https://grantspace.org/resources/knowledge-base/grant-proposals/>

**Writing a letter of inquiry** <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/how-to-write-a-letter-of-inquiry-loi-to-a-foundation-2501958>

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