

## 10 TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL GRANT WRITING

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# Overview

- **APPLY FOR THE GRANT CORRECTLY**
  - 1. Read the application and directions carefully
  - 2. Make sure to answer the question
  - 3. Plan for implementation
- **COMMUNICATE WHY THIS WORK IS IMPORTANT**
  - 4. Know your vision/story
  - 5. Write a core description
  - 6. Have your elevator speech ready
- **UNDERSTAND THE AGENCY AND UNDERSTAND YOUR CAPABILITIES**
  - 7. Communicate with the funding agency
  - 8. Find relevant examples
  - 9. Plan for grant administration
- **EDIT, RE-EDIT, REPEAT**
  - 10. Edit carefully!

# 1. Read the Application and Directions Carefully

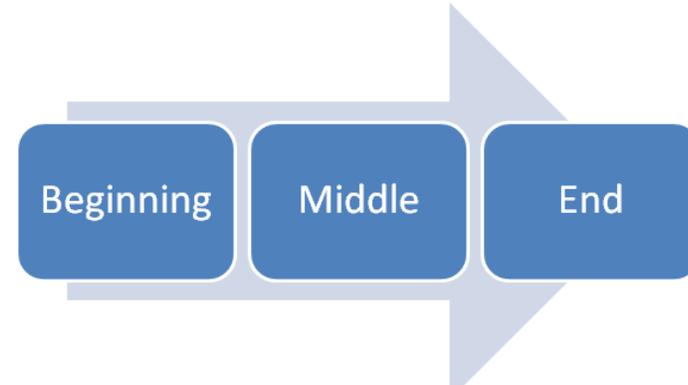


READ  
CAREFULLY!  
(even if you  
have ADHD)

## *2. Answer the Question*



# 3. Plan for Implementation



*understanding*  
*your* **AUDIENCE**  
IS THE KEY TO  
*Your* **SUCCESS!**

## *4. Know Your Vision/Story*

Are you a perfectionist? If you are, grant writing might not be for you.

- Your best asset is you know your project better than anyone else
- Start writing your vision in rough form – you will have plenty of time to edit
- Ask other people you know for their input on your project
- After you are satisfied with your narrative, ask someone who knows nothing about the project to read your description and then ask them what they think you are doing. You might really be surprised at their answers

*Sometimes you think you are describing this*



*But people are reading this*



# *5. Have a Core Description Ready to Go*

## Describe

- Who are you?
- Where are you?
- What do you have that you are trying to improve?
- What do you want?
- Why do you need it?
- When will your project take place?

The City of Perfect, located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains with a resurging downtown is seeking \$25,000 to purchase 18 shumard red oak trees to be installed along Main Avenue. The trees will enhance the beauty of the downtown, attract more people downtown, and increase foot traffic and sales of the local merchants. The City intends to plant the trees in early spring 2021.

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### Describe

- Where are you?

The City of Perfect, **located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains** with a resurging downtown is seeking \$25,000 to purchase 18 shumard red oak trees to be installed along Main Avenue. The trees will enhance the beauty of the downtown, attract more people downtown, and increase foot traffic and sales of the local merchants. The City intends to plant the trees in early spring 2021.

## *5. Have a Core Description Ready to Go*

### Describe

- What do you have that you are trying to improve?

The City of Perfect, located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains with a **resurging downtown** is seeking \$25,000 to purchase 18 shumard red oak trees to be installed along Main Avenue. The trees will enhance the beauty of the downtown, attract more people downtown, and increase foot traffic and sales of the local merchants. The City intends to plant the trees in early spring 2021.

## *5. Have a Core Description Ready to Go*

### Describe

- What do you want?

The City of Perfect, located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains with a resurging downtown is seeking **\$25,000 to purchase 18 shumard red oak trees** to be installed along Main Avenue. The trees will enhance the beauty of the downtown, attract more people downtown, and increase foot traffic and sales of the local merchants. The City intends to plant the trees in early spring 2021.

## *5. Have a Core Description Ready to Go*

### Describe

- Why do you need it?

The City of Perfect, located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains with a resurging downtown is seeking \$25,000 to purchase 18 shumard red oak trees to be installed along Main Avenue. The trees will **enhance the beauty of the downtown, attract more people downtown, and increase foot traffic and sales of the local merchants.** The City intends to plant the trees in early spring 2021.

## *5. Have a Core Description Ready to Go*

### Describe

- When will your project take place?

The City of Perfect, located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains with a resurging downtown is seeking \$25,000 to purchase 18 shumard red oak trees to be installed along Main Avenue. The trees will enhance the beauty of the downtown, attract more people downtown, and increase foot traffic and sales of the local merchants. The City intends to **plant the trees in early spring 2021.**

*Once again, remember you see this*



*Others are reading this*



# 6. *Have Your Elevator Speech Ready*

Once you get your project defined and refined it is time to develop have your “elevator speech.”

Elevator speeches are tricky because you have to communicate a lot of information in a short amount of time. And, no, speaking faster does not solve this problem! Instead, you need to craft an interesting and compelling narrative that leaves them asking to learn more about your project.

It is not much different than your core description, but this needs to have passion. You want any potential funder to be as excited about the project as you are.

- **Keep it short:** It’s easy to go on and on about a topic that you’re passionate about, but you need to respect the people you’re talking to and give them enough information to spark interest. Hopefully they’ll start asking you questions and you can elaborate through further conversation. Remember, you don’t want to be that person who’s holding the “close door” button on the elevator to keep your audience captive so you can tell them more!
- **Know the goal:** The goal of your elevator speech is not to convey every last bit of information about your project. The goal is to spark interest. You want what you say to be memorable and interesting so that they are asking you to tell them more. The end goal is to make connections, get a meeting, and get permission to explain your project in more detail.
- **Know your audience:** Depending upon whom you are giving your speech to, you’ll want to tweak the details so you’re providing information that matches your audience’s knowledge and interests.
- **Be persuasive:** You want them to be nodding along, thinking, “Yes, this is a really well thought out idea, and I would like to help make it happen”.

Practice on friends (or enemies) so it rolls off your tongue --- not to sound rehearsed, but so that you are comfortable to discuss your project anytime you get the opportunity.

# *7. Communicate with the Funding Agency*

Common resources from funders include:

- Grant announcements (they can either be short or extensive)
- Webinars
- Press on previously funded projects if applicable

If you can, find out who will be reviewing the application and try to speak with one of the reviewers. The transparency of the grant reviewers can vary widely among the funding source

- Federal (e.g., Natl. Park Service, USDA, Dept. of Commerce)
- State (e.g., Department of Commerce, Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources)
- Nonprofits (e.g., National Trust for Historic Preservation)
- Corporations (e.g., Duke Energy)

## *7. Communicate with the Funding Agency*

- Even if you cannot find out who will be reviewing the application, connect with the funding agency via [email](#) or [phone](#).
- There will always be contact information associated with a grant announcement and/or the webpage for the organization.

## 7. Communicate with the Funding Agency



# IT'S IN THE SYLLABUS

This message brought to you by every instructor that ever lived.

[WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM](http://WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM)

- **TIP:** Phone calls can often result in more detailed information about what the organization is looking to fund.
  - Do your homework before you call.
  - Don't ask questions that are clearly lined out in the instructions.

## 8. *Find Relevant Examples*

If applicable, acquire copies of applications that were recently funded by the agency.

- Ask the funder. Sometimes they can offer examples.
- Use networks to connect with others that have previously applied for the funding opportunity.
- Scour the internet to determine what projects have been funded.

## 9. Plan for Grant Administration



- Plans and ideas are **NOT** the same as implementation.
  - Successful grants demonstrate that your organization has the **capacity** to execute the proposed work.
- Grant Administration needs to be considered at the **earliest planning stages**, before you submit an application.
- Identify **who** in your organization will administer the grant.
  - Can any of your staff take on the work?
    - Do they have time? Are they qualified?
  - If not, will you hire help (new staff, contractor, etc.)?
  - NOTE: Some applications will require you to submit a resume for your grant administrator.

## 9. Plan for Grant Administration



- Understand timelines, milestones, and reporting requirements for the grant.
  - **Progress reports**
    - Grant activity, budget activity
  - **Publication and press requirements**
    - Acknowledge funding source
    - Updates on related press
  - **Project change requirements**
    - How to obtain approval and document changes
  - **Carryforward requirements**
    - What is permitted? What is the process?
  - **Closeout requirements**
    - Invoices, reimbursements
  - **Record-keeping requirements**

## 9. Plan for Grant Administration



- **Consequences for failing to adhere to administration standards can include:**
  - Decreased funding
  - Forfeit of funding (either nullification or returning funds)
  - Suspension for future funding
- **Once you are funded, abide by the timeline:**
  - Do not assume that the funding can be carried forward if you need an extension.
  - Talk to the funder as soon as you see a potential issue.

# 10. *Edit Carefully!*

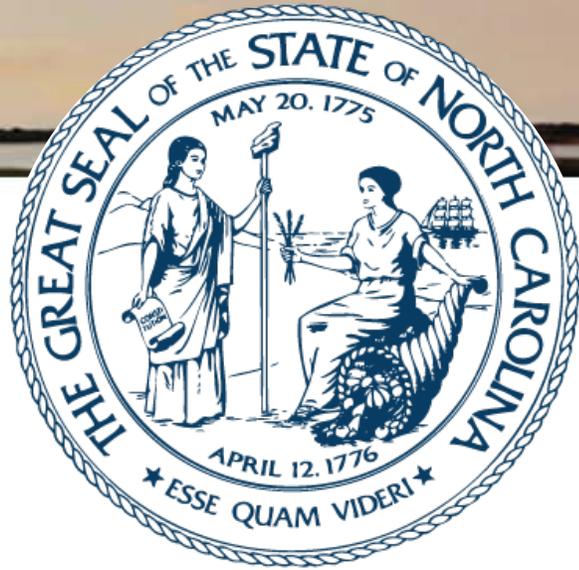
- The importance of editing and proofing CANNOT be overstated.
- **Editing**
  - Make sure that the content is clear, organized, suitable and properly impactful.
  - Get a second, third and fourth opinion!
- **Proofing**
  - Start early and leave enough time and space for several other people to read the text.
  - Grammar and spelling rules are clear and well-defined on the internet.
  - If **you're/your** not sure about a spelling or word choice, **than/then** Google it. The **affect/effect** of a polished application is significant.

# *Some Potential Funding Options for NC Main Streets*

Accion  
AARP  
American Institute of Architects  
American Planning Association  
Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts  
Appalachian Regional Commission  
Bank of America Charitable Foundation  
BB&T  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC Foundation  
Blue Ridge Energy Members Foundation Grants  
Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership Grants  
Citizens' Institute on Rural Design  
Civic Federal Credit Union  
Coco-Cola Foundation  
Duke Energy Foundation  
ElectriCities  
Farm Aid  
Fiskars  
Foundation  
Golden LEAF Foundation  
Home Depot  
Independent We Stand  
Hydro Flask  
Kabbage  
KaBOOM!  
Keep America Beautiful  
Kresge Foundation

Lendio  
NC Housing Finance Agency  
Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation  
National Association of Realtors  
National Endowment for the Arts  
National Endowment for the Humanities  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Natural Capital Investment Fund  
NC Arts Council  
NC Department of Commerce  
NC Dep  
NC Department of Environmental Quality  
NC Department of Information Technology  
NC Department of Transportation  
NC IDEA  
NC Forest Service  
NC Parks & Recreation Trust Fund  
NC Recreational Trails Fund  
NC Rural Center  
NC State Historic Preservation Office  
NC Urban Forest Council  
Norfolk Southern Foundation  
North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund  
North Carolina Community Foundation  
North Carolina Electric Cooperatives  
North Carolina Small Business Network  
North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission

OnDeck  
PayPal  
PeopleForBikes  
PNC Foundation  
Powell Bill Funds  
Rural Advancement Foundation International  
Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation  
Self-Help  
Slow Money NC  
Small Business and Innovative Research (SBIR) Program  
Southeast Sustainable Communities Fund  
State Farm Good Neighbor Citizenship Company Grants  
Surdna Foundation  
The 1772 Foundation  
The Cannon Foundation  
Tourism Cares  
Transporting Health Food Grant Program  
U.S. Department of Agriculture (Rural Development)  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
U.S. Department of the Interior (National Park Service)  
U.S. Department of the Treasury  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Walmart Local Giving Program  
Waste Management Charitable Giving  
Wells Fargo  
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation



# QUESTIONS?

