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# Before You Go: How To Prepare Your Nonprofit for its First or Next Grant

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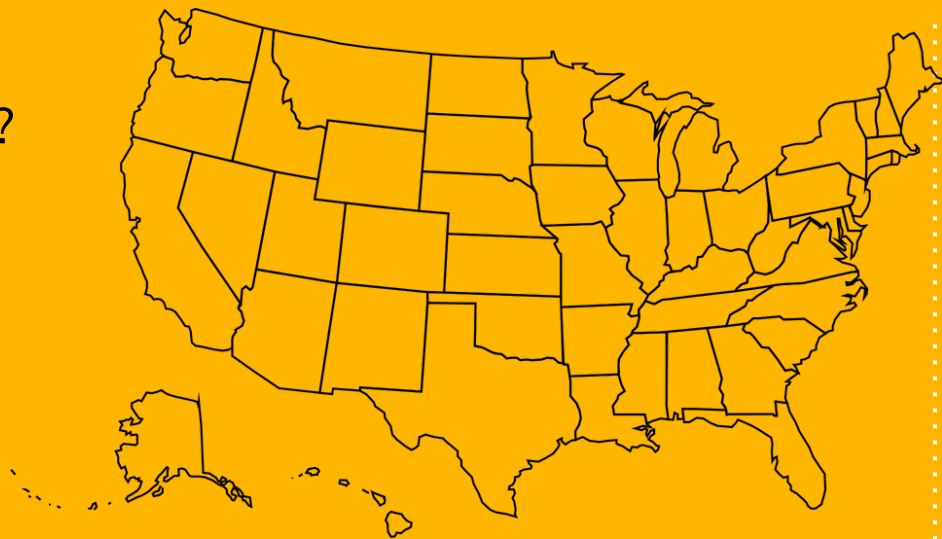


# Before We Start...

- Grab a pen & paper to take notes
- Limit distractions
- Get ready to participate

# About You

1. Where are you “Zooming” from?
2. Have you applied for (and won) nonprofits grants?
3. I am here to today because...





# Hello!

I am Lesa-Kaye (she/her/hers)

- Grant Professional Certified (GPC)
- Nationally Approved Grant Trainer
- Grant Strategist
- Lover of all things grants





# What We'll Cover Today

- Quick intro to grants
- Stages of the grants process
  - Critical steps to move through each stage
- Top reasons why grants get rejected
  - The #1 thing that you need to increase your grant success
- Signs you might be are ready for your grants
- Key steps to get ready for grant success
- Discussion & Q&A



# Grants 101



# What Is A Grant?

[grant]

VERB

- agree to give or allow (something requested) to.

NOUN

- a sum of money given by an organization, especially a government, **for a particular purpose.**
- **non-repayable** funds or products disbursed or given by one party, often a government department, corporation, foundation or trust, to a recipient, often (but not always) a nonprofit entity, educational institution, business or an individual

*Definition by Merriam-Webster; The Grant Professional Association*



**Grants are an opportunity to  
bring people together to work  
on solutions.**

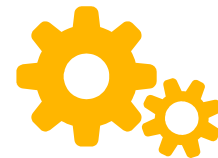
*What is a grant? Definition by Lesa-Kaye*



# How To “Get” Grants

- A grant is awarded (won) as a result of a grant proposal (also referred to as an application)
- Only eligible organizations can apply
- Application process, deadlines, requirements, and eligibility is determined by “ who” is giving the grant
- A competitive process that requires more than writing and filling out an application





# The Stages Of The Grants Process



READINESS



RESEARCH



RELATIONSHIPS



WRITING



**REPORTING**  
(YAY, YOU WON A GRANT!)



**START GAME**

The image shows a quiz game interface. At the top center is a blue rectangular button with a white sunburst icon. Below it is a large dark blue rounded rectangle with an orange border. Inside this rectangle, the question "Why do grant applications get rejected?" is written in white. Below the question are three horizontal bars, each containing an answer label ("ANSWER 1", "ANSWER 2", "ANSWER 3") and a small blue square on the right. To the left of the central rectangle is a blue button with a white double right arrow, and to the right is a blue button with a white double left arrow. At the bottom center is a dark blue button with the text "TIMER: 10". The background is dark blue with a white grid of dots.

Why do grant applications get rejected?

**ANSWER 1**

**ANSWER 2**

**ANSWER 3**

TIMER: 10

A top-down view of a desk. In the top left corner is a small potted plant with green leaves. Below it is a lined notebook with a black pen resting on it. To the right of the notebook is a portion of a light-colored computer keyboard. Overlaid on the notebook is a yellow rectangular box containing the title text.

# Top Reasons Why Grant Proposals Fail

# 3. Unclear project/program plan resulting in an unclear grant proposal and application

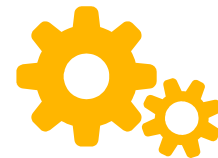
#2. Organization, program, project does not fit with the funder's interests or requirements

#1. Organization, program, project is not grant ready



*The solution*

**Grant success is 80% planning and  
20% writing**



*You need to a plan for every stage of the process*

# The Stages Of The Grants Process



READINESS



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(YAY, YOU WON A GRANT!)



# **5 Steps To Prepare for Your First or Next Grant**

# Step 1. Assess Your Grant Readiness

How to prepare for your first or next grant



# What Does It Mean To Be Grant Ready?

- Grant readiness = nonprofit's ability to win and keep grant funding
- Readiness is one of the most important factors for success
- Speaks to your ability to do good work, effectively manage money, and deliver results



A grayscale background image of a person's hands holding a smartphone, with a laptop and a coffee cup on a desk in the background. The image is framed by a dashed white border.

# Myths, Half-Truths, & Down-right Lies!

Let's debunk some myths and set the record straight



**We have our 501 (3) certificate so  
we're definitely ready for grants!**

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**HALF-TRUTH**



**Our nonprofit has been operating for years so  
we're ready to compete for grants!**

---

**DOWN-RIGHT LIE**



**We just need to hire a grant writer who  
can guarantee us results.**

---

**DOWN-RIGHT LIE**

# Grant Readiness

## Three Things You Need To Know

- Eligibility vs Competitiveness
  - More than gathering your organization's paperwork and information
  - Government grants require next level readiness
- Age is sometimes just a number
  - 0-3 year old nonprofits usually are not quite ready for grants
  - Mature nonprofits are often not grant ready
- Continuous and intentional effort
  - Not a one and done
  - Not an overnight process







# Sign You Might Be Grant Ready

- Strong community engagement
- Strong leadership, staff, & board
- Strong financial records, legal, and business registrations
- Strong financial standing
  - Existing revenue and fundraising
- Strong relevant and result-producing programs/services
- Strong credibility in the community
- Strong clear vision and strategic plan

*Here's The Thing:*

# **Grant ready nonprofits don't appear overnight.**

You can improve your grant readiness and boost your  
competitiveness for funding

# Common Areas to Address

- Most grant and funding problems are not actual funding problems
- Improve your grant readiness by focusing on these areas:
  - Governance aka building and managing an engaged Board of Directors
  - Clearly defined mission statement
  - Programs that produce results (with plans and budgets)
  - Developing an annual organizational budget
  - Developing and growing existing funding sources
    - Individual donors, earned revenue, etc.



## Step 2. Gain clarity on your community and nonprofit's priorities and needs

1. Create a list of needs
2. Determine budget items and amounts
3. Share the list with program and project descriptions with Board members and other staff



## Step 3. Create an outreach and cultivation plan for each potential grant funder

- Brainstorm together how will you establish a line of communication with the funder's staff and board members?
- Decide who on your team should be involved in starting and building the relationship with the funder.
- How will you engage (i.e. invite them to events, programs, phone calls, emails, share stories of success/impact) them so that they understand more about your work?



# Step 4. Get organized!

## Gather, organize and save in an electronic folder

- ☐ Articles of incorporation
- ☐ Nonprofit status recognized by your state
- ☐ 501 (3) letter of determination from the IRS
- ☐ An EIN number
- ☐ By-laws
- ☐ Annual organizational budget, including revenue and expenses
- ☐ At least 3 years of financial statements
- ☐ A copy of your most recent Form 990 (tax documents)
- ☐ Program results and budget
- ☐ Description of key partners

## Step 5. Create your “go-to” template

- Write the common grant application sections ahead
  - This is not a writing exercise
  - “One cannot write about, what does not exist”
  - Uncover gaps in your organizational and program readiness



# Let's Recap - Steps To Prepare for Your First or Next Grant

- Step 1. Assess Your Grant Readiness
- Step 2. Gain clarity on your community and nonprofit's priorities and needs
- Step 3. Create an outreach and cultivation plan for each potential grant funder
- Step 4. Get organized! Save key documents electronically
- Step 5. Create your “go-to” template

“

Failing to plan is planning to fail



# Questions?

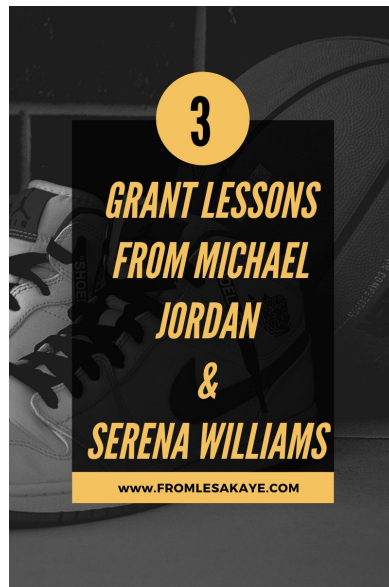
from Lega-Kaye

GRANT PROFESSIONAL CERTIFIED.  
APPROVED GRANT TRAINER. GRANT STRATEGIST.  
THE REAL DEAL.



# Weekly Action-Packed Articles

A Few Must Reads →





# Free Resources

- The Finding Funders Starter Kit
- The Proposal Starter Worksheet
- The Grant Strategy Checklist
- And more!



# How I Can Support You



01

ONLINE PROGRAMS

**Basics & Beyond**



02

WORK WITH ME

**Clarity Sessions**



03

GROUP TRAININGS

**Live Learning**

## SOCIAL



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CURRENT & PAST TRAINING PARTNERS INCLUDE:



**FOUNDANT**  
technologies



**THURSDAY NETWORK**



the





Questions?

Thank you.

“ There is no magic wand, just intentional action.”

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