



Keys to Making Your Grant Application Stand Out... In a Good Way!

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Want a copy of the PowerPoint

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□ Email me at sarah@npsuccess.org

□ Download it at:

<http://www.npsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/PPT.pdf>

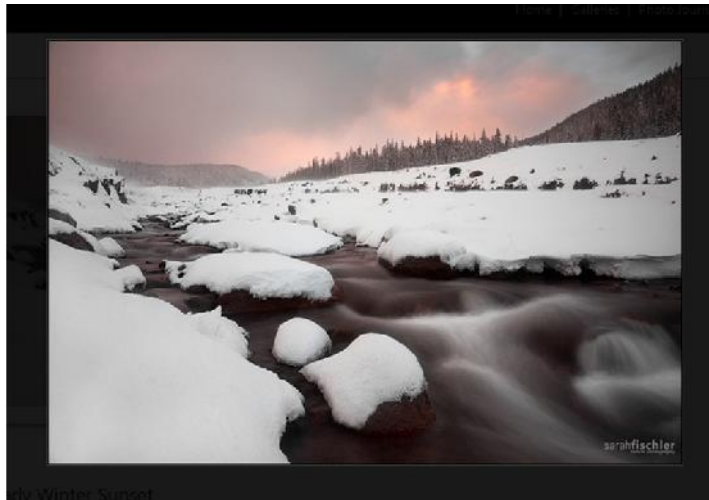
Welcome

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- Who is in the room?
 - Grantwriting experience?
 - 1 – I am brand new
 - 3 – Some experience
 - 5 – I could help teach this session

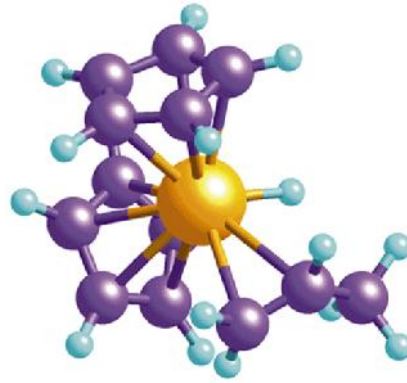
What does photography have to do with fundraising?

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Art and Science of Fundraising

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www.ColoradoCommonGrantForms.org

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The screenshot shows the website for Colorado's Common Grant Forms. On the left, there are navigation menus for 'COMMON GRANT APPLICATIONS (CGA)', 'COMMON GRANT REPORT (CGR)', and 'ADDITIONAL INFORMATION'. The main content area features a header image of a mountain landscape, followed by the title 'Colorado's Common Grant Forms' and a welcome message. A list of services includes 'Common Grant Application (CGA)', 'Common Grant Application for Capital Campaigns (CGA-Capital)', and 'Common Grant Report (CGR)'. A paragraph explains that these forms allow Colorado grantmakers and grantseekers to work from a common set of questions that reinforce solid nonprofit practices. The website also includes logos for the Colorado Common Grant Association and the Colorado Common Grant Report. The bottom of the screenshot shows a Windows taskbar with various application icons and the system tray.

What is the CGA?

- Common template for grantseekers and grantmakers
- Set of tools
 - Colorado Common Grant Application (CGA)
 - Colorado Common Grant Report (CGR)
 - Colorado Common Grant Application for Capital Campaigns (CGA-Capital)
 - Two comprehensive user's guides
 - Website:
www.coloradocommongrantforms.org

Elements of the CGA

- Checklist
- Cover Letter
- Summary Sheet
- Narrative Questions
- Financial Attachments
- Other Attachments



CGA Questions

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- Organizational background
- Goals
- Current programs
- Project and Program requests
- Evaluation
- Collaboration
- Inclusiveness
- Board/governance
- Volunteers
- Planning
- Options

Attachments

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- Financial attachments
 - Financial statements
 - Diversity of funding sources
 - Major contributions
 - In-kind
- Other attachments
 - Board
 - IRS determination letter
 - Anti-discrimination statement
 - Key Staff
 - Evaluation results

Grantmakers...

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- Use all of this information to decide whether or not to fund your organization
- Seek to understand WHY funders ask for items and HOW they use it
- CGA User's Guide:
 - Rationale
 - Things to Consider

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Writing a Successful Grant

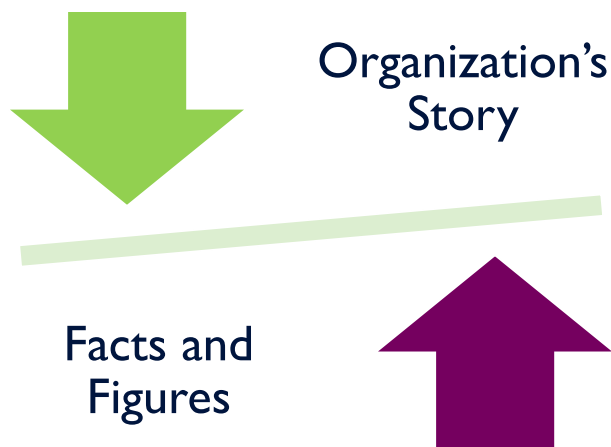
Is so much more than writing a grant!

Role of the Proposal in the Application Process



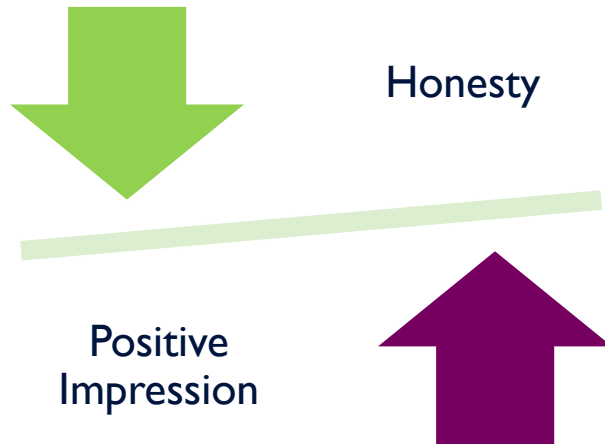
Take a Balanced Approach

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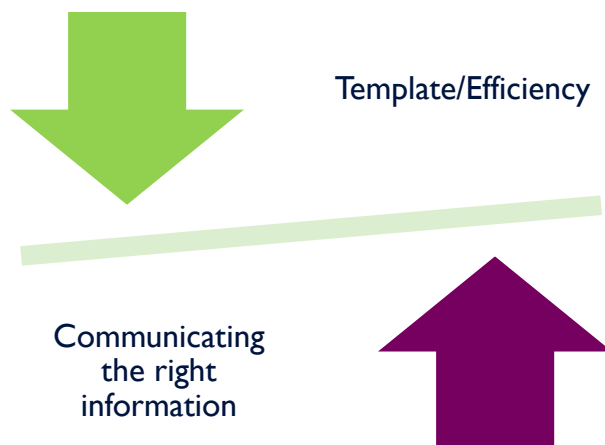
Take a Balanced Approach

15



Take a Balanced Approach

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Create a Compelling Case

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- What will be different because of grant?
 - Increased sustainability?
 - Ability to grow services or serve more people?
 - Specific outcomes will be achieved?
 - Best practices model will be tested in Colorado?
- **Results, impact and effectiveness are most important**

Some Basics

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- **Your proposal is an indication of how your organization is operated!**
- Follow directions
- Carefully review guidelines
- Submit a complete proposal
- Respect deadlines
- Be clear, concise, and consistent
- Be realistic in your request

Questions for the Group

What common problems do funders see in grant proposals?

What makes an application stand out and make a great impression?

Strategy for Success – I

Pitfalls

- **Incompatibility with grantmaker priorities and guidelines**

Peaks

- **Could be an interesting, impactful investment for grantmaker**

When calling a funder...

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Most Private Funders Are Like This...

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Tips for Success

- Do your research before applying
- Target your grant proposals carefully
- Look for the best match and **be willing to move on:**
 - Funder priorities and interests
 - Geography
 - Type of funding
 - Grant size
 - Timing

Strategy for Success - 2

Pitfalls

- **Not inspiring interest**

Peaks

- **Telling an effective story and painting a picture**

The best proposals...

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- Make me want to learn more!
- Paint a picture of an organization
- Do not leave a lot of unresolved questions

Tips for Success

- Think like a funder. Why would they want to invest in your work?
- Balance facts and figures with the human side of your work
- Include at least one story somewhere in the application, especially if your work is complicated
- Demonstrate thoughtfulness and vision
- Do not get too far into the weeds
- Do not avoid questions

Strategy for Success – 3

Pitfalls

- **Lack of organizational direction and intended results**

Peaks

- **Strong goals, understanding of intended results, and track record of outcomes**

Tips for Success

- CGA and CGR are capacity building tools
 - ***If you are having issues answering questions, the issue might relate to your organization and not the question***
- Clearly explain what your organization and programs are trying to accomplish, not just what you are doing
- For the evaluation question:
 - Follow the directions carefully!
 - Funders are interested in your intended results, not just numbers

Strategy for Success – 4

Pitfalls

- **Unclear or confusing financials**

Peaks

- **Complete, clear financial information**

Tips for Success

- Financial information tells a story. What story does it tell?
- Financials should demonstrate an understanding of nonprofit financial management basics
 - Budgets and financial statements
 - Separation of program and admin expenses
 - Ability to track restricted funding
- Include notes as necessary
- Again, include notes as necessary

Strategy for Success – 5

Pitfalls

- **Indications of financial instability**

Peak

- **Indications of sustainability and diversification**

Tips for Success

- Healthy organizations:
 - Have some reserves
 - Do not have significant budget variances
 - Have a diversified base of support
 - Have financial statements that demonstrate effective financial management
- ***If financials reflect challenges, significant reserves, or other issues, include a financial narrative!***

Strategy for Success – 6

Pitfalls

- **Boilerplate marketing tone**

Peak

- **Authenticity**

Tips for Success

- Application's content is customized for each proposal and each grantmaker
- Application mixes emotional and analytical information to communicate organization's story
- Organization demonstrates orientation towards learning, adaptability, and maintaining relevance
- Application does not read like fundraising or website copy

Avoid Some Common Mistakes

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- ❑ Obvious mismatch with funder priorities
- ❑ Forgetting that the final questions are equally important
- ❑ Board responses are incomplete
- ❑ Program evaluation = more than numbers
- ❑ Inclusiveness is not just having an anti-discrimination statement
- ❑ Not painting a picture of your work
- ❑ Confusing financials
- ❑ Too analytical or too fluffy

Don't get the grant?

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- ❑ Seek feedback
- ❑ Listen to the funder's input

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Thank you!

Time for Questions and Discussion