

FAQ's and Grant Myths

Frequently Asked Questions

- ***I'm not sure I am able or have the time to write a grant?***

The Grants Office often helps in the writing process with everything from consultation and editing support to writing full applications. The Grant Administrator relies on your expertise to communicate your knowledge to the differing audiences that will be reviewing your proposal to ensure the best possible response.

- ***What is the most important part of the grant application?***

The instructions are the most important part of the grant application. Thousands of grants are disqualified each year because the application did not conform to the funder's guidelines. Any submission must adhere to the specified parameters like length, style, formatting, attachments, etc.

- ***How do I find out what grants are available to me?***

There are several sources. The Grant Administrator is available for prospect research and questions. CoxHealth Foundation periodically posts grants of interest in the Connect Daily email. There are also several free online resources for grants like the Library Center's subscription to one of the largest funding databases in the world.

- ***Can I get funding for equipment?***

Yes, but there are additional challenges associated with this type of funding that make it more difficult to secure. First, funders typically want to contribute to a program that is responsible for specific kinds of outcomes that are of interest to their board, founders, or benefactor. As such, it is better to request equipment as part of a larger programmatic request.

Secondly, an equipment only grant is considered a capital request. Generally speaking, local funders that are familiar or invested in the community are more likely to donate for this kind of request, which limits the pool of possible funders. Additionally, funding for capital projects is less common among granting agencies.

Lastly, an equipment request needs to include a specific needs statement and strong outcomes that provide a basis for funding. This can be difficult as it concerns different types of equipment that do not directly contribute to a patient outcome.

- ***Can I get grant funding for my degree, a conference, continuing education?***

Grants for education or continuing education are not available through CoxHealth Foundation (CHF). Individual foundation grants are available through outside agencies. CHF recommends using the Library Center's resources to perform personal research.

Conferences and continuing education are limited in availability. CHF endeavors to track relevant opportunities but does not provide services in this area.

- ***How important is collaboration in getting a grant?***

Depending on the project, collaboration can make the difference. There are times that funder want to know that your organization is working to make the community better and not just building your brand. It is common for a funder to request information or even copies of agreement that describe the nature of the collaboration in the project.

- ***What kind of information is needed for a grant?***

The information needed for a grant application varies based on the nature of the application and the project. There are typically certain business documents that are requested that serve to verify the size, scope, and nature of the organization that is applying. These items are typically available through the Foundation. Additionally, there is supporting data, statistics, and other information that are the basis of the case for funding. The Grant Administrator can help identify these needs during the development process.

- ***What are the chances I am funded?***

This is a difficult question to answer because of all the factors involved in submitting a proposal. That said a good winning percentage for grants is 1 in 3 proposals submitted when a solid proposal matches a funder's interests. However, good preparation and research can increase these chances.

Grant Myths

There are many myths around grants like they are “free money for doing good” and that anybody can get them if they can write a proposal well. While not all myths are 100% wrong, there are some considerations to bear in mind when seeking grants:

- ***Grants are “free money” and “anybody can get them” if they write well enough.***

This is a common misconception that grant writers face. Author Betsey Northrup says, “grants are difficult to secure...success is almost wholly dependent upon the quality and validity of the proposed project and the ‘goodness of the fit’ that exists between the project and the funder.” It is vitally important to develop a sound proposal that addresses all the issues that concern the funder. They are trusting you with their money and that trust is based largely on the written proposal.

- ***A sustainability plan is for AFTER the grant is awarded***

Grants are best used as seed money to fund a new self-perpetuating idea. While this isn’t the only kind of funding, those that give away their money in grants want to know that they are leveraging their monies for the future so their money continues to do good for years to come. Most all funders ask about the plan to sustain the project after

- ***Grants do not distinguish between Operating, Capital, or Project/Program requests.***

While there are grants to fund many types of needs, certain funding types are much more competitive. Capital requests are generally more difficult to get secure. Funders can see General Operating requests as unsustainable because the need is not satisfied; rather, only covered for a time. Project/Program requests are requests that have a direct, definable outcome during the project period and are usually in greater supply.

- ***Everybody else is getting funding for my project, so I will too.***

Funders want to know that the projects they are funding are both needed and innovative. For example, if there are five different children’s homes in the area running under capacity and you propose to build a sixth, your proposal is not likely to be funded. Similarly, if you are responding to a need with old strategies or the research does not support your interventions, then it may be difficult to secure funding. Grant funding is about connecting successful interventions to demonstrable need.

- ***My project is a good idea and is worthy of funding so it will be funded.***

Unfortunately, one of the questions grant writers must ask is “does your need evoke a strong philanthropic reaction (i.e. child abuse, homelessness, etc.)?” Think of it as the market for your need. For example, there are much fewer grants to rehabilitate impoverished drug addicts than to support early-childhood learning. Right or wrong, there are market realities in fundraising.

- ***My project will not be funded because there are so many other great programs that need funding.***

Yes, the need for funding far outweighs the money that is available, however, funders make their choices based on their own prerogatives. There are often cases where a funder wants to fund something new and interesting as opposed to projects that have been around for a long time. It should be noted that it is just as likely that a funder will fund the “same old project” year after year but that just means that your project needs to become that “same old project.”

- ***We just need to think “outside the box” to get funding.***

Author and Grant Writer, Betsy Northrup, says this is a myth that many people have about grants. She says, “In-the-box thinking is integral to the grant process. Requests for Proposals are focused and demand an equally focused response that fits within the parameters of the funding opportunity.”

- ***I am a good writer so I will be a good grant writer.***

While much of grant writing is about strong writing ability, much of it is about good grant communication skills. The person reviewing your application may not be familiar with your field of expertise and so issues like jargon, vernacular, and other barriers can play a role in making a case for funding. This is where a grant writer can be important. They do not play the role of content experts, rather, serve to translate the proposal to a broader audience so the grant reviewer understands your message regardless of their experience and background.