



Maui United Way



HAWAI'I COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

GRANT WRITING DO'S AND DON'TS

Building stronger grant proposals for community impact

Presented by:
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Our Time Together

Introductions + Disclaimer

Key Roles in Grant Processes

Aligned Impact

Identifying the Need

Following Grant Structure

Breaking Down Financials

Reasons for Denial

Writing to Scale

Trust Building

Final Tips

Questions + Discussion



Introductions



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Senior Program Officer**

**Jeeyun Lee, MUW
Director of Impact**

Disclaimer + Purpose

Disclaimer: Following these do's and don'ts does not guarantee that your grant application will be approved, as funding decisions are ultimately at the discretion of the grantor.



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Key Roles in Grants Processes



Grantee: Responsible for delivering outcomes and achieving deliverables.



Grantor: Provides funding to projects that align with their mission.



Program Officer: Acts as a “matchmaker” between funds and applicants.



Donor: The source of the financial support; expects accountability and results.



Creating Aligned Impact



What Impact Are You Seeking to Make in the Community?

- Focus on outcomes that align with both the funder's mission and community needs.
- Emphasize long-term change and measurable success.

Identifying the Need



What Informed the Need for This Project?

- Sources of Information: Community feedback, formal asks, past performance and other verifiable data.
- Questions to Answer:
 - Is this a “need-to-have” or “nice-to-have”?
 - What justification do you have for this need?
- Pro Tip: Use data and stories to illustrate the need.

Following Grant Structure

1. Organizational Description:

- Tell us about the organization, briefly.
(Mission/Vision/Service Area)
- What do you do, primarily?
- Who works there?
- Major accomplishments or wins.

2. Program Need:

- Data-supported problem statement.
- Specific SMART goals (e.g., Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?).
- Avoid vague narratives. Use concise, impactful sentences.

3. Process & Timeline:

- Outline specific actions: Weekly, monthly, daily engagements.



Breaking Down Financials

- **Operating Budget:** Total yearly budget.
- **Personnel:** Hourly rate, number of hours, and roles.
- **Administrative Costs:** Accountants, other overhead.
- **Value of Budget Narrative:** Clarify and justify costs.
- **Pro Tip:** Align funding requests with the funder's limitations and guidelines.
- **Budget Review Example**



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Reasons for Denial

Common Reasons for Grant Denials:

- Misalignment with funder priorities.
- Incomplete or non-compliant applications.
- Unrealistic budgets or timelines.
- Lack of demonstrated impact or data.
- Overreliance on one funding source.
- Poor organizational capacity.

Note: Denials are not personal; denials reflect funder priority areas, risk analysis and budget restrictions.

Writing to Scale

1. Start Small, Scale Gradually:
2. Don't overreach: Start with partnerships or fiscal sponsorship.
3. Tailor requests to match your organization's capabilities.
4. Build trust with funders over time.



Trust Building



Weaving Trust Building Into the Application:

- 1. Be transparent, consistent, & accountable.**
- 2. Demonstrate collaboration & how your work avoids duplication.**
- 3. Be specific about what you've done and what you plan to do.**
- 4. Develop strong relationships with your community through communication and trust that you can speak to.**



Final Tips for Grant Writing

- **Assume the reader has no prior knowledge of your work.**
- **Be concise: Every sentence must add value.**
- **Provide specific examples of impact.**
- **Follow-up after a denial for feedback and learning.**

Remember: There is no guarantee of funding, but strong proposals increase your chances.

Strategies for Success



Coaching and Mentoring

Ask for help! See if anyone will mentor you, let them see a grant they've successfully written, or review each other's proposals!



Resources

Know what resources are out there. Utilize existing support structures, and share with us where the gaps are.



Development Tracker

Have a cloud based drive with all of your attachments and grants available and organized. Create a google sheet or excel spreadsheet with deadlines, amount requested, and success rates.



Sharing Knowledge

Partner with other organizations! Grantors love collaborations and that you've done due diligence on what the needs are and who else is working within that space alongside you.



Ask Questions!

Develop rapport with the granting organizations before, during and after grant cycles.

Organizational Strategy

✓ What is your why?
Ensure you have a strategic plan that is written out on what your mission, vision and values are, as well as what you're trying to achieve in the next 3-5 years.

✓ Who is on your team?
Have a clear idea of the leadership you have as well as those who will be able to support the work you want to do for this project.

✓ How will you execute and track your progress?
Have a clear sense of timeline and what metrics/goals you will have accomplished along the way.

Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Relevant	Time-bound
S	M	A	R	T
G	O	A	L	S
What <i>exactly</i> are you trying to achieve?	How will you know when you've achieved it?	Is it genuinely possible to achieve it?	Does it contribute to your agency's revenue growth?	When do you want to achieve this by?



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Grantwriting Resources



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1. **Programmatic Budgets**

- Operations v. Capital Grants
- Admin/Fringe Caps
- Nonprofit v. For Profit v. Fiscal Sponsorship (Piko, Grants Central Station)

2. **Where to look for and learn about grants**

- Hawaii Alliance for Nonprofit Organizations
 - Navigating Grant Resources
 - Kukulu Switchboard
- Hawaii Community Foundation (Nonprofit/Fiscal Sponsorship)
- Grants.gov
- POL
- Ohana Center for Excellence workshops
- Social Media
- State, County
 - Office of Economic Development
- OHA
- Kamehameha Schools
- CNHA
- State Capital Grant In Aid GIA/operations/programmatic
- Maui Office of Economic Development OED handbook

3. **Goals/Objectives/Outcomes Info Sheet**

4. **Grants Technical Assistance Support GTAS**

5. **Starting a Nonprofit**

6. **AI usage!**



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Questions + Discussion

Maui Recovery Funders Collaborative

- <https://mauirecoveryfunders.org/>

Let's collaborate and share:

- What challenges have you faced?
- What successes can you build upon?



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