



Becoming a Grant Writer: Things to Consider and How to Get Started

So..... you're thinking of becoming a grant writer. One of our missions at GPLH is to encourage and help individuals who want to enter the grant writing profession. This publication is designed to give you some guidance on things to consider and steps to take.

Some things to think about before getting started:

Is grant writing a good fit for your personality?

- Do you like to write? Can you write fast?
- Do you have a good command of grammar and vocabulary?
- Do you like to write factually and concisely, as opposed to creative writing?
- Do you have the ability to create/make up copy (e.g. program details, program reports), sometimes with little input?
- Are you comfortable living your life deadline-to-deadline?
- Are you organized enough that you'll never miss a deadline?
- Can you take criticism? Bosses and clients will want to "tweak" the copy.
- Can you handle losing? You will not always win every grant you submit. In fact, a 10% success rate is considered good.
- Do you enjoy research? You'll need to research facts for needs statements as well as researching potential funding opportunities.
- Are you good at relationship building? (e.g. making friends with funders.)
- Are you detail oriented? (e.g. making sure you've included all of the seven required addendums.)

Do you have any experience?

- You need to be a solid writer.
- It is recommended that you have some professional writing experience (e.g. development department, PR, social media.)
- Consider volunteer writing for a favorite charity to gain some experience.
- Join GPLH's internship program where you'll gain experience and be mentored by a seasoned grant writer. Learn more on the [programs and services page](#) on our website.

Do you have any grant writing education?

While there is no degree in grant writing, there are a number of ways you can obtain education:

- [The Foundation Center](#) offers courses.
- Westchester Community College offers a 4-week evening class in grant writing.
- There are numerous online grant writing boot camps.
- Check out the [grant writing education page](#) on the GPLH website. You'll find more info on these and other learning opportunities. You'll also find educational PowerPoint presentations, developed by GPLH members, which are strongly suggested as valuable learning tools.
- Join the [Grant Professional Association](#) (GPA) to have access to a myriad of pre-recorded webinars, monthly webinars, and a daily blog that posts all sorts of informational questions.
- Join GPLH. Attend our quarterly webinars/seminars; Grants Connection calls; networking events; etc.

You should also think about the following pros and cons to being a grant writer:

On the "con" side:

- It can be disheartening when you find out a grant has not been approved.
- You will have to live deadline to deadline.
- You will be asked regularly to handle last minute grant submissions.
- Applications for state and federal grants, and even some foundation grants, can be very tedious.
- Self-employed grant writers need to:
 - Pay for their own benefits.
 - Take care of their own taxes.
 - Spend time finding and securing clients.
- If you become a consultant, your time is not your own. You'll be contacted when you're on vacation. Like any business owner, the buck stops with you.

On the "pro" side:

- You can use your skills and expertise to help causes you care about.
- It is exhilarating to win a grant that you know will impact other peoples' lives.
- The work can be interesting, and you can meet inspiring people.
- You'll have the options to work as a consultant or an employee, full time or part time.
- You will learn about many industries (if you are a consultant working for several clients).
- You can write even into your old age (for pay or as a volunteer) and keep your mind sharp.
- It is tremendously rewarding to write for nonprofits and the populations they serve.

We're here to help! [View our website](#) for additional information, including details on how to reach out to ask questions or to set up a professional consultation with one of our Board members.