

BIG MAMA'S BASICS ON HIRING A GOOD GRANT WRITER

Grant writing is more than just putting words on paper! This work requires a nuanced understanding of the funding landscape. A good grant writer knows how mission alignment, building relationships, and societal trends can impact funding. A good grant writer has the ability to extract complex ideas and relevant data into clear, compelling narratives that tell a story. A good grant writer should have a deep appreciation for the mission and goals of the individual or organization they represent, not just write a grant to make a dollar! Consider these fundamental skills:

- **Research Skills:** A good grant writer must be adept at identifying potential funding sources. Understanding the priorities and criteria of different funders is crucial.
- **Writing and Storytelling:** Grant writing is about storytelling. A good grant writer weaves your mission, vision, and needs into a compelling narrative.
- **Attention to Detail:** Grants often have stringent guidelines and requirements. Although mistakes can happen, missing a single detail, whether it's a formatting rule or a required document, can result in disqualification.
- **Proposal Planning:** Effective grant proposals are grounded in well-conceived projects with clear goals, measurable outcomes, and realistic budgets. Good grant writers work closely with the grant seeker to ensure that proposed project is viable.
- **Persistence and Resilience:** Rejection is inevitable in grant writing. Good grant writers don't get discouraged by temporary setbacks. Instead, they view rejection as an opportunity to refine their skills and look for ways to improve future proposals.

Tips on How to Choose the Right Grant Writer

- **Check References:** Always ask for and follow up on references. Speaking with previous clients can provide valuable insights into a grant writer's skills and reliability.
- **Review Writing Samples:** Request samples of previous grant proposals. This will give you a sense of the grant writer's style and proficiency.
- **Look for Experience:** While everyone has to start somewhere, an experienced grant writer will have a proven track record of securing funding. Look for someone who has successfully written grants for similar types of projects or organizations.
- **Assess for Fit:** A good grant writer should understand and be passionate about your organization's mission. They should be able to articulate how your goals align with potential funders' priorities.
- **Trial Projects:** When considering a novice grant writer with limited experience, start with a smaller project or a trial period to evaluate the grant writer's performance before committing to a long-term contract.

No matter the outcome, think of the grant writing experience as a WIN, or a LESSON or BOTH!