

What it means to be Grant Ready

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Relationships, Research, and wRiting – Important, But Not Necessarily the First Step

Building relationships with funders, knowing where to find grant opportunities and how to prepare applications is important. But even more important is for an organization to be what many in the industry term *grant ready*.

Given the increased competition for funding, limited staff to prepare an application or proposal, and short submission timeframes, it is imperative that organizations take the time to prepare for future grant submissions.

Be Prepared

Being grant ready is like having a disaster supply kit at home. When a storm hits and the power is out, you don't want to be searching through your house in the dark for D batteries to power the lantern. Nor do you want to travel to a store only to find that any battery that could even remotely power any type of illuminating device sold out days ago. As those of us in New Jersey discovered in 2012, the time to get batteries, a generator or gas is not after the storm hits. It's before.

The same goes for organizations you're working against a typically your focus needs to be on the proposal, you do not have the time annual report, your list of officers be outdated), your bylaws, or any part of the submission package.



applying for a grant. When tight submission deadline and content of your application or to waste searching for your (which given Murphy's Law will other document you will need as

These things and others--including an established track record--comprise your organization's grant readiness kit.

New Organizations Have Extra Work to Do

New nonprofit organizations should take the time to create a solid organizational foundation before they start approaching funders. A lot more than a 501(c)(3) IRS determination letter is needed to be successful when seeking grant funding. Many representatives from new nonprofits come to me thinking a grant will get their organization off the ground, or worse, provide some sort of sustaining operational funding. Your organization has to be able to stand on its own first. In other words, the organization needs to have an established track record.

The Foundation Center offers a free course, [Before You Seek a Grant: A Checklist for New Nonprofits](#) designed for organizations with very little experience in grantseeking. Check the link for upcoming course dates, including both a 45-minute webinar and classroom training. The course will help new organizations learn about increasing their credibility through the development of:

- a clear mission,
- capable leadership (governance and management),
- high quality programs and services,
- efficient operations,
- solid finances with diverse sources of revenue, and
- a good track record.

Learn More

The Grant Professionals Association also has information about grant readiness. [Getting Your Organization Grant Ready](#) contains a *Checklist for Success*. Review the list and make sure you know where to obtain the documents listed should you need them when submitting an application or proposal. The time you put into getting prepared will be worth it in the end.