



ILCO GRANTWRITING 101

- ▶ Know yourself. Everyone has different approaches to how long a grant submission can take, especially if you're new at this.
- ▶ Give yourself some slack - the success rate on grant submissions is 1 for every 5
- ▶ It's an unusual skillset to write a grant:
 - ▶ Capable persuasive writer is a good start
 - ▶ There are documents that you should have in a folder because you will have to attach many of these, maybe not all, with your grant application
 - ▶ Total number of enrolled kids, your TEP, # of graduates, etc.
 - ▶ Book bill totals from month to month and projected numbers based on predictable growth
 - ▶ Annual budget / balance sheet
 - ** Often it is preferred to insert a graph into the body of the grant for your budget.
 - ▶ 990 from previous tax filing
 - ▶ Anti-discrimination policy
 - ▶ Board bylaws
 - ▶ Board Member names and board responsibilities , contact info, current employment
- ▶ Make it part of your weekly practice to do research and drop the grant details into a tracking spreadsheet that is deadline driven.
- ▶ Until you get the rhythm of grantwriting down, and have had success in receiving grants, then a realistic timeline from research to submission must be identified.

RESEARCH

These website are available to "shop" what grants may be a good fit for your affiliate:

Grant Station

Big events in your area hosted by nonprofits - see what companies have sponsored the event and add them to your list of those to research

Mission: do they support early childhood education or daycare, literacy, libraries, first to attend college, etc.

if you think it might be a fit, but you're not sure, please feel free to send it to ILCO

Geographic: Many foundations support programs in specific geographic locations.

Always confirm that your area is included.

[if you learn that it is not, and you know that affiliate contact for the area it does, send it along to them - or us]

Focus: This is a little more murky. If your affiliate is in an agricultural area, perhaps there is a specific focus that is unique to your families that wouldn't be true of a more urban area. Sometimes, a little creativity doesn't hurt.

Not Sure: There are some variables that are unclear, feel free to contact the foundation to ask the question, often this is the first step once the foundation has been identified.

THE FOUNDATION (the entity that is offering the grant application)

Learn about the history of the foundation

- How long have they been in operation
- What type of work have they historically supported
- Look up their last few tax filings - 990's to see where their funds have been distributed
- Who is on their Board?
 - Does anyone in your circle (Board, friends, neighbors, etc) know any of the Board members personally?

THE STORY YOU CAN TELL

Data

ILCO's work with Colorado Evaluation & Action Labs

- Children enrolled in ILCO scored 0.125 standard deviations higher on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment at kindergarten entry compared to non-participants in the same schools.
- ILCO participants were 16–24% less likely to score “well below benchmark” on DIBELS, reducing the need for costly remedial reading support.
- Benefits were seen broadly across student groups, with no significant differences for multilingual learners or children from low-income families. This increase is substantial, particularly given the low cost of ILCO implementation. This can set students on a positive reading trajectory and reduce the system, district, and school resources needed to make up early gaps.
- What is a recent (within 12 months) occurrence in your community that may effect families, kids 0-5 in an adverse way that could be improved by books in the home
- Bilingual books - this addition helps adults as well as children (learning English or learning Spanish)

*Start/meet with a group of other nonprofits, or affiliates that checks in monthly about tips and tricks for grant writing.

Once you have collected all of these assets, and the narrative, make sure your digital files are well labeled so they are ready for the next grant.

Your first few grants will take the longest, after a handful, you will be able to flow through the process much more easily

LETTER OF INTENT

- ▶ This is typically a one-page letter that shares a little about DPIL, your affiliate in particular, and the community you are trying to reach
- ▶ Find alignment in the community you identify and the community the Foundation serves.
- ▶ Ask respectfully for their consideration

NARRATIVE

- ▶ The research you have done should illuminate what KEY ORGANIZATIONS this Foundation works with
- ▶ Can you write a persuasive narrative to allure this Foundation to Imagination Library?
- ▶ Your narrative should include hardships that young kids / young kids families are experiencing that this Foundation may not be aware of currently.
 - ▶ Perhaps an increase in cost of living, inability to get to the library, parents / caregivers having to work several jobs = threats to these young readers not having access to age-appropriate books that have been proven to give them a leg-up once they enter Kindergarten

APPLICATION

- ▶ Create a log in and see what the application portal looks like
- ▶ Sometimes you can download the questions that will be asked, sometimes you can't
- ▶ Often you can log in as many times as you want - but, confirm this before you accidentally submit a incomplete application
- ▶ ALWAYS - take a screen shot of your submission before you hit "submit" because you may not get confirmation from a submitted application