
GRANTS FOR LIBRARIES

A How-To-Do-It Manual

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Pamela H. MacKellar

***HOW-TO-DO-IT MANUALS
FOR LIBRARIANS***

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To Bruce and Alex MacKellar, and Marian Herd
Pam MacKellar

To Patrick Gerding:
My dream of publishing this book would not have been possible without my husband and his endless love, encouragement, and housework.

To Caroline Rawlins:
My mother has said that if she were not so hard on me, I never would have accomplished as much as I have. I agree and thank her for the strength, example, and love she has given me.
Stephanie Gerding

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FOREWORD

Perhaps there were halcyon days of well-funded library and cultural institutions that predated my 35 years in the workaday world. Certainly, libraries have had patrons: Carnegie, Mellon, and Bill and Melinda Gates, to name just a few whose financial investment in our institutions has impacted our work in very real and meaningful ways. Since the early 1970s, libraries, along with their sister cultural and other community and nonprofit organizations, have not received adequate funding to do the work that their communities need and desire.

Each of the cultural professions, certainly librarianship, has professional training that is often required of practitioners by local and state authorities. Library schools and other professional programs across the country strive to prepare individuals for the realities that must be faced in the workplace on the first day, in the first decade, and throughout a career that may span many decades. It is not realistic to assume that any academic program of even 2 year's duration can prepare one for all circumstances or requirements, including knowledge of grant project planning and proposal writing.

That is what makes *Grants for Libraries: A How-To-Do-It Manual*—written for practitioners, by practitioners—is so very critical to the continuing education in our profession and those of our cultural partners. Most of us have struggled with fund-raising and grant proposal writing. There are so many ways to do it incorrectly, to sabotage, albeit unwittingly, one's effort. There are time-tested techniques, procedures, plans, and processes that are helpful—this book brings many of the best practices and models into one place. *Grants for Libraries* is one of the most useful conveyances of information yet developed and a crucial aspect of continuing professional development.

I hope when you read this book, you will find the help you need and succeed with its lessons. Please let us know your stories. We all share a love of our institutions and our work. What helps one helps all.

I am very grateful that Stephanie chooses to spend her work time with the Arizona State Library. My thanks to both Stephanie and Pam for the time and effort—and for the caring—evident on every page. My thanks to Neal-Schuman for their entire “How-To-Do-It” series. As State Librarian

of Arizona, I am proud to recommend this particular “How-To” to the library community.

GladysAnn Wells
State Librarian
Arizona State Library
Archives and Public Records

PREFACE

Grants are always important to libraries—and in times of budget cuts and shortages, they are increasingly essential to fund new initiatives and sustain services. Unfortunately, library schools don't usually teach Grant Writing 101, and it's rare for a book on this subject to specifically take a library-centric approach. As a result, many grant applications are poorly written. We have read applications that are so unclear that it is impossible to determine what the project is and what exactly is being proposed. We hope *Grants for Libraries: A How-To-Do-It Manual* solves your writing problems, rewards you with approved proposals, and generates new sources of funding for your initiatives.

Librarians and information professionals are often surprised to learn that they possess many of the skills necessary to be successful grant writers. They already benefit from the ability to research, synthesize, package, and summarize information; a commitment to reach out and assess community needs; and a cooperative, collaborative professional attitude. What is needed is the synthesis of these skills and the practical knowledge of the grant process cycle. *Grants for Libraries* provides all the tools and instruction you will need to win financial awards for your institution. The text features worksheets, examples, templates, and checklists presented in an easy-to-follow, step-by-step grant process cycle.

PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

We created this manual for anyone interested in grants and libraries. Our expertise stems from experience in every aspect of grant work. Each of us has been involved with both receiving and donating funds and each has both authored and evaluated proposals. We have worked for library nonprofits and state library agencies, and have received grant funding from government and private agencies. We presented workshops around the country and found that our process works for public, academic, and school libraries.

PERSPECTIVE AND ORGANIZATION

The foundation of *Grants for Libraries* is unique because it emphasizes strategic planning and goal setting. This not only simplifies the work and effort you have to put into the process but ensures that your work is directly linked to your library's larger mission and vision.

The material is arranged in three consecutive pieces. Part I features a full review of the grant process, complete with filled-out worksheets, examples, templates, and checklists. Part II features real-life success stories that demonstrate the process in practice and will motivate you to employ Part III as a workbook to create your own grant proposal. All of the tools at the end of the book are reproduced on the CD-ROM.

Part I thoroughly examines "The Grant Process Cycle."

Chapter 1, "Making the Commitment and Understanding the Process," outlines the steps necessary to successfully obtain grants. This chapter also provides an overview of the commitments that must be made by a library that is seeking these funds. You cannot consider grants just as free money. Acquiring them requires planning, resources, accountability, and sustainability. Grants also bring in more than funds—they establish valuable partnerships, resolve community needs, and increase community support.

Chapter 2, "Planning for Success," demonstrates why it is essential to have a strategic plan and community involvement in place before beginning grant work. We help your library get on track with guidance to develop a successful plan and furnish a sample from the Exemplar Library, the fictitious library we use to show our process throughout the book.

Chapter 3, "Discovering and Designing the Grant Project," covers one of the most creative and enjoyable parts of the process—developing the project. By developing worthwhile projects that implement your strategic plan and solve community needs, you can prove to funders why you should receive a grant. We show you how to develop project ideas and goals, outcomes, objectives, action steps, timelines, budgets, and evaluation plans. The included Project Templates will be invaluable when it is time to begin writing.

Chapter 4, "Organizing the Grant Team," helps you form a team of key individuals who will share the workload while increasing the likelihood of success. We share our thoughts on what makes a successful grant writer. Too many libraries fail to apply simply because they feel they don't have staff with the necessary skills. We explain how many of the everyday library skills can be leveraged in the grants process. There is also valuable information on using volunteers and professional grant writers. To get your team off to a solid start, we provide the basics for your first meeting.

Chapter 5, "Understanding the Sources and Resources," pulls together a wealth of information that will help you explore, locate, and select grant opportunities. This chapter explains the basic types of funding sources, including those specifically earmarked for libraries. It also looks at online and print resources you can use to research options or keep current on announcements.

Chapter 6, “Researching and Selecting the Right Grant,” guides you in the selection of the right funder for your project. You will learn how to assess the awarding institution and identify those whose purpose most closely matches your library’s project. A useful Keyword Selection Template uses your strategic plan’s goals and objectives as a starting point in your search, and the Funder Summary Worksheet keeps your research findings organized.

Chapter 7, “Creating and Submitting the Winning Proposal,” integrates the planning and research components with the actual writing process. Many applications request the same basic structure and elements—cover letter, proposal summary, organizational overview, statement of needs, project description, methodology, budget, evaluation, and appendix. We explain these components and provide planning and proposal templates that will allow you to easily adapt, modify, and replicate content for multiple grants. We also cover how to tell the story of your target audience and grant concept. We provide checklists to ensure that you have a thorough and clear proposal, which could make the difference between a winning proposal and a rejection letter.

Chapter 8, “Getting Funded and Implementing the Project,” explains what happens after you send off your proposal. Find out what to do next, whether your proposal was accepted or rejected. We include an explanation of the most common reasons grants are turned down, details on customary grant report requirements, and steps for beginning your project implementation.

Chapter 9, “Reviewing and Continuing the Process,” helps libraries evaluate their process and improve their plan for the next grant. Repeating the cycle will be easier as your experience grows and will be more rewarding as you learn from your previous attempts. We include questions to facilitate a review session and ways to keep your grant skills up-to-date through professional development and other collaborative opportunities.

Chapter 10, “Answering Five Essential Questions,” lists the top five questions that your library must be able to answer to be successful with grant seeking. The five topics are (1) organizational capacity, (2) fulfillment of a community need, (3) sustainability, (4) relationship building, and (5) evaluation. This assessment will help you and your institution determine your potential for success.

Throughout the chapters you will find references to the *Grants for Libraries* Tool Kit and CD-ROM, which includes checklists, worksheets, and templates for you to examine and complete. We provide completed versions throughout; you will also find blank, reproducible versions in Part III and on the CD-ROM.

Part II, “Library Grant Success Stories,” features sixteen examples of funded projects. If you need a little help with brainstorming creative ideas or want to get advice from other librarians who have weathered the storm, we have compiled inspiring stories from different types of libraries of various sizes from around the country. These selections include best practices and help bring together what you have just learned in the ten-step process. Photographs of grant projects in action are also included.

Part III, “The Grants for Libraries Tool Kit and CD-ROM” contains checklists, worksheets, and templates for you to examine and complete.

- Tool A includes a Grant Partnership Agreement worksheet and a Making the Commitment Checklist.
- Tool B contains a Library Planning Checklist and links to sample Library Strategic Plans.
- Tool C features six templates and a worksheet that will prove invaluable for discovering and planning your grant project. Templates for Project Action Steps, Project Timelines, and Grant Budgets are included.
- Tool D consists of a Keyword Selection Worksheet helpful for researching grants, a Funder Summary Worksheet for keeping track of funder information, and links to Funding Resources for Libraries.
- Part of Tool E, due to its length, is only available on the companion CD-ROM. It provides a Grant Proposal Template, a final checklist, and a variety of Example Requests for Proposals and Grant Announcements. We also include several proposals for successfully funded grant projects. These will prove invaluable for modeling, evaluating, and improving your own submissions.
- The complete *Grants for Libraries* Bibliography and Glossary are replicated on the CD-Rom.

All these are reproduced as Microsoft Word documents on the companion CD-ROM. You can complete the templates on your computer and save them as your own or print them out and fill them in by hand. Having these materials electronically will also facilitate your team’s use of the tools.

GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN!

We know that grant work can seem intimidating, and our hope is that *Grants for Libraries: A How-To-Do-It Manual* will make it less of a mystery and more of an enjoyable adventure. Your journey may include a little fear but remember that writing a successful grant is achievable and that our Grant Process Cycle is easy to follow and will set you up for success. We believe that as librarians, we are ahead in the grant process—we know how to research; we are experts at partnering and collaborating; we are aware of our

communities' needs; and we have a wealth of creative ideas for serving our users and furthering the pursuit of knowledge. When you put these pieces together in the right context of a grant proposal, you are sure to find success.

We wish you the very best of luck! Please let us know about your successes at librarygrants@earthlink.net. We'd love to include your story in our next book.

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PAM MACKELLAR

Thank you to Dr. Sherry Allison, who was a mentor to me as I learned to write my first large federal grant proposal. She was always available to provide guidance and advice when I needed it the most. Thanks to Patty Wolfe Hasselbring, who taught me more than I ever imagined there was to learn about proposal writing and who I can still hear saying, “It’s all about the people, not the money.” My sincere thanks to those who submitted grant success stories for this book. You have made a great contribution, providing real-life stories that will inspire others. Many thanks to Stephanie Gerding, who played a large part in creating the opportunity for me to coauthor this book with her. Your friendship means a lot to me.

STEPHANIE GERDING

Thank you to Pam MacKellar for writing this book with me and dealing with my constant torrent of new ideas, which she agreeably terms creativity. Most of all thank you for your friendship; it means a lot to me, too. I’d also like to thank the technology that made this book so much easier to write. Thank you, laptops, Internet, and fast printers! One last thank-you to all the librarians who submitted their grant success stories to us. They were a joy to read and will be helpful to many aspiring grant writers.

