



## **Why are experienced and professional grant writers so important?**

**FACT:** In 2010, nearly 980,000 public charities were registered with the IRS, a 42% increase over the decade. More than 366,000 of them reported \$25,000 or more in gross receipts. All of these organizations are competing for public and private funding, including grants, to help them meet their missions.

**FACT:** "Key Facts on U.S. Foundations" by the Foundation Center states that \$54.7 billion was donated to nonprofits by over 86,000 private, corporate and community foundations in 2013. This is an increase of more than 80% over the past decade.

**FACT:** And while government funding to nonprofits has been slowly declining, the "National Survey on Nonprofit-Government Contracts and Grants" by the Urban Institute states that U.S. nonprofits received \$137 billion from local, state and federal governments in 2012.

**The vast majority of these awards were the result of well planned, well written and well packaged grant proposals.** Ones that matched the mission of the organization to the focus of the funder. Ones that portrayed a compelling needs statement, demonstrated the expertise of the nonprofit in meeting those needs, and included a strong evaluation plan. Renewed awards incorporated meticulous grants management plans and strong reporting mechanisms.

**Grant writing is a skilled craft** - One that anyone can learn, but one that requires much more than just being able to write well. Strong grant writers, no matter their job title or position, have developed and continually polish a set of skills that help them position their organization for success, including:

- Grant Readiness
- Familiarity with Organization/Mission
- Identifying, Researching & Prioritizing Opportunities
- Building Relationship with Funders
- Internal & External Collaboration and Planning
- Strong Writing & Organizational Skills
- Ability to Address Sustainability
- Budget Creation & Planning
- Evaluation Planning & Analysis

- Compiling Outcomes & Financial Reporting
- Ability to Track & Meet Deadlines

**Preparing grants takes time and expertise** - Often grant guidelines can be confusing and complex; applying for a grant requires a serious time commitment to fully understand the requirements, as well as the organization's ability to carry out the grant-funded activities. Government grants are especially time-consuming, and a small oversight in the proposal can result in an application being disqualified from consideration. Often, the time spent researching and pulling together the information for the grant takes up more time than the actual writing of the proposal.

**Most grants are very competitive** - Having experienced grant writers who can identify the most appropriate opportunities and oversee the creation of strong proposals will increase an organization's chances of successfully being awarded a grant. Even so, many well-designed proposals are still not funded, and requests that are successful one year may be rejected the next. This is where relationship-building with funders can make a big difference.

**With foundations becoming more sophisticated in their giving, grant writers needs to be recognized and treated as specialized and skilled development professionals** - The nonprofit community needs to understand the important role educated and ethical grant professionals play in the overall health of their organizations. Membership in highly recognized and respected professional organizations, like the Grant Professionals Association, needs to be encouraged. Less experienced grant writers should seek to advance their knowledge through educational opportunities, professional conferences, networking and relationships with mentors.