As a professional grant writer, there are many active professional development opportunities available to help gain new skills related to the field. There are the traditional workshops, conferences, and peer meeting groups. Opportunities for professional development that are more passive, but are much more budget friendly include reading professional publications including journals, newsletters, and articles.

I have had the privilege of presenting workshops in my local community as well as presenting webinars for both CharityChannel and the Grant Professionals Association. All have been very rewarding experiences that I continue to enjoy. It was only in the last six months that I have joined the Grants and Foundations Review contributing author list and begun to consider my voice for professional education through articles as opposed to workshops and webinars.

I will be honest, it took me a few months of contemplation about whether or not to apply to be a contributing author before I made a move, so I can hear some of the common objections, as trust me, they ran through my head, including:

- I am not an expert;
- I am not sure what to write about;
- I am not sure that I will have time to write the articles amongst the many actual grant application deadlines I am responsible for; and
- What if no one reads my articles.

Perhaps that last objection is my own personal issue to deal with…but I imagine you are likely nodding your head at least at some of those objections as you think about contributing to Grants and Foundations Review.

Well, I did address each of my own personal objections, and I took the leap to apply to become a contributor - a very easy process through CharityChannels website: http://charitychannel.com/articles/sign-up-to-be-a-charitychannel-contributor. I am happy to report that this is one of the most exciting and professionally rewarding things that I have taken on. Writing for Grants and Foundations Review is pushing me beyond my normal comfort zone since writing for the Review feels “different” than writing a grant narrative or need statement. Below I have outlined what I consider the key benefits of writing for Grants and Foundations Review and that I have experienced personally since joining as a contributor. I think these benefits would apply to most if not all the professionals that contribute CharityChannel articles.
1 – Taking a moment to pause and ponder

In the midst of a 40 page federal narrative, or the logic model for a state application, it is easy to get caught up in the constant running calendar of deadlines – to roll with your grant writing skills without stopping to pause for a minute and reflect on the work that you are producing. Stopping for an hour to write an article for *Grants and Foundations Review* is a wonderful opportunity to reflect professionally on specific area of expertise you have, or a particular part of an application document or process that you feel you have mastered and have key experiences and knowledge to share with your peers.

2 – Connections with colleagues

As a grant writer, we are often one of the only, if not the only person with our skill set and job description within an organization. That can make for a lonely peer network within our workplace. Sure, we are close with the program staff we write applications for and often fund development staff adopt grant writing staff, but there is something to be said for the support of a grant writer peer network. You likely agree if you are already a member of CharityChannel or Grant Professionals Association. Being a contributor provides you access to a group of like minded colleagues to bounce ideas off of and network with.

For one of my previous articles that I wrote about utilizing outside evaluators I loved using the article as an opportunity to connect and discuss the topic with a colleague that I had previously enjoyed collaborating with. We both walked away from the conversation and published article happy with the product and with a stronger understanding and appreciation for each other’s specific sets of expertise within the grant field.

3 – Professional advancement

Publishing articles through CharityChannel is a wonderful opportunity to become involved in having professional articles published and to become familiar and comfortable with having an editor to answer to. Having an editor go through your article with track changes feels much more personal than having a team member go through your grant narrative with track changes, and experiencing that in itself is a great growth opportunity. Having your articles published is a wonderful opportunity to make your professional voice heard in the grant writing community. It is also a wonderful opportunity to consider if publishing is something that you would like to pursue further through CharityChannel publishing by collaborating on a book or through other professional avenues.

4 – Your name in lights...

Okay, not really in lights, but in bold in an e-newsletter. It truly is exciting to see your name come through as the contributor for an article in CharityChannel’s weekly newsletter; or to have a colleague ask for permission to reprint an article on their blog/website or to hand out a copy at a training.
So why am I writing for *Grants and Foundations Review*? For all of the above benefits that I have experienced and grown to appreciate. And also because, I hopefully serve as a resource for my colleagues and provide them with thought provoking articles that further their professional development.

My question for you is why aren’t you writing for Grants and Foundations Review yet? If you enjoy reading the CharityChannel Grants & Foundations Review articles when they arrive in your inbox, I encourage you to stop and consider your own voice as a potential author and to apply to become a contributor! I think the experience will be one that you will benefit from immensely as well those of us that get to read your articles.

To learn more about becoming a contributing author, please go to: [http://charitychannel.com/articles/sign-up-to-be-a-charitychannel-contributor](http://charitychannel.com/articles/sign-up-to-be-a-charitychannel-contributor).