

Grantwriting: Are You Ready?

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Objectives

- Be able to determine if your organization is grant ready.
- Be able to make an informed decision about whether your organization should apply for a grant opportunity.



Overview

- I. Organizational readiness: Are you ready to be successful at grantseeking?
- II. Project/opportunity readiness: Should you apply?
- III. Case studies
- IV. Resources



I. Organizational Readiness

- A. Legal
- B. Financial
- C. Infrastructure
- D. Program
- E. External positioning
- F. Strategy



Legal considerations

- Have 501(c)(3) tax determination
- Registered with state as a charity
- Have understanding of requirements of running a nonprofit organization



Financial considerations

- Accounting system
- Existing base of funding
- Sustainability plan
- Ability to keep track of donors/grantors and donations/grants



Infrastructure considerations

- Board of directors
- Staff capacity
- Space and equipment
- Time



Infrastructure considerations, *cont.*

Board members should

- Understand their governance role
- Be educated about the organization
- Be educated about the issue(s)
- Have skills needed by organization
- Be well-connected in the community
- Make personal contributions to organization
- Help to make connections between organization and funding sources



Infrastructure considerations, *cont.*

Staff capacity

- Executive/administration
- Grantwriter
- Program implementation
- Evaluation and reporting



Infrastructure considerations, *cont.*

Space and equipment

- Office space
- Program space
- Furnishings and equipment
- Supplies

Time

- To create proposal
- To deliver program



Programming considerations

- Positive, proven track record
- Several years of programming
- Ability to prove program is making an impact—evaluation
- Ability to keep records of work and/or clients



External positioning considerations

- Have connections in community
 - Board members
 - Collaborators
 - Funders
- Know other organizations doing similar work
- Know other organizations sharing target population
- Known in community for helping to solve particular issue—experts



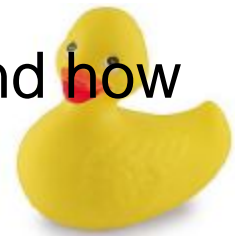
Strategy considerations

- Confidence that organization is not duplicating services
- Strategic plan
- Knowing where organization is going
- Adherence to mission, goals, vision
- Ability to change when needed
- Financial strategy for sustainability and change
- Understanding the mechanics of change
- Ability to do what you say you will do in a grant proposal



Portrait of an organization ready for grantseeking

- The organization has a clear mission and follows it.
- It has a track record of successful service.
- It has a clear strategy and vision for the future.
- The staff and board are experienced, knowledgeable, active, and mission-driven.
- The organization has researched and understands the needs of its community.
- The organization is flexible.
- It has financial, human resources, and tracking systems and procedures in place.
- It knows similar organizations in the community and how to partner with them.



II. Is this opportunity a good one?

- Often organizations pursue grant opportunities for the wrong reasons
- Consider your ability to prepare the proposal
- Envision what your organization will look like with the project funded and operating



Pursuing opportunities— good ideas



- You have a good idea
- Good fit with your organization's mission, vision, and goals
- You have time to write the grant proposal
- Sufficient expertise to successfully implement the project
- Organization has enough capacity to implement the project
- Natural fit with your organization's existing programs and strengths



Pursuing opportunities— good ideas, *cont.*

- You cannot develop the idea without external funding
- You understand the activities/methods needed for implementation
- You have researched the need for the program/project
- Your organization supports and endorses the idea
- Your community and partners support the idea
- You know how the project will be sustained after the grant period
- There is a prospective funder that would fund this idea



Pursuing opportunities—bad ideas



- Idea is not well thought out
- Chasing the money
- Mission drift
- Not enough expertise
- Not enough capacity: staff, space, time...
- Not enough time to submit proposal
- Too little funding—too much time to write proposal
- Funding will not cover true costs of implementing the program



Pursuing opportunities—bad ideas, *cont.*

- Your organization or your project does not meet the funder's requirements
- The funder's expectations are unrealistic
- Too much competition for too few grants
- You do not have the support or endorsement of your organization
- You cannot document the need for this project in your community or for target population
- There is no match with any funder



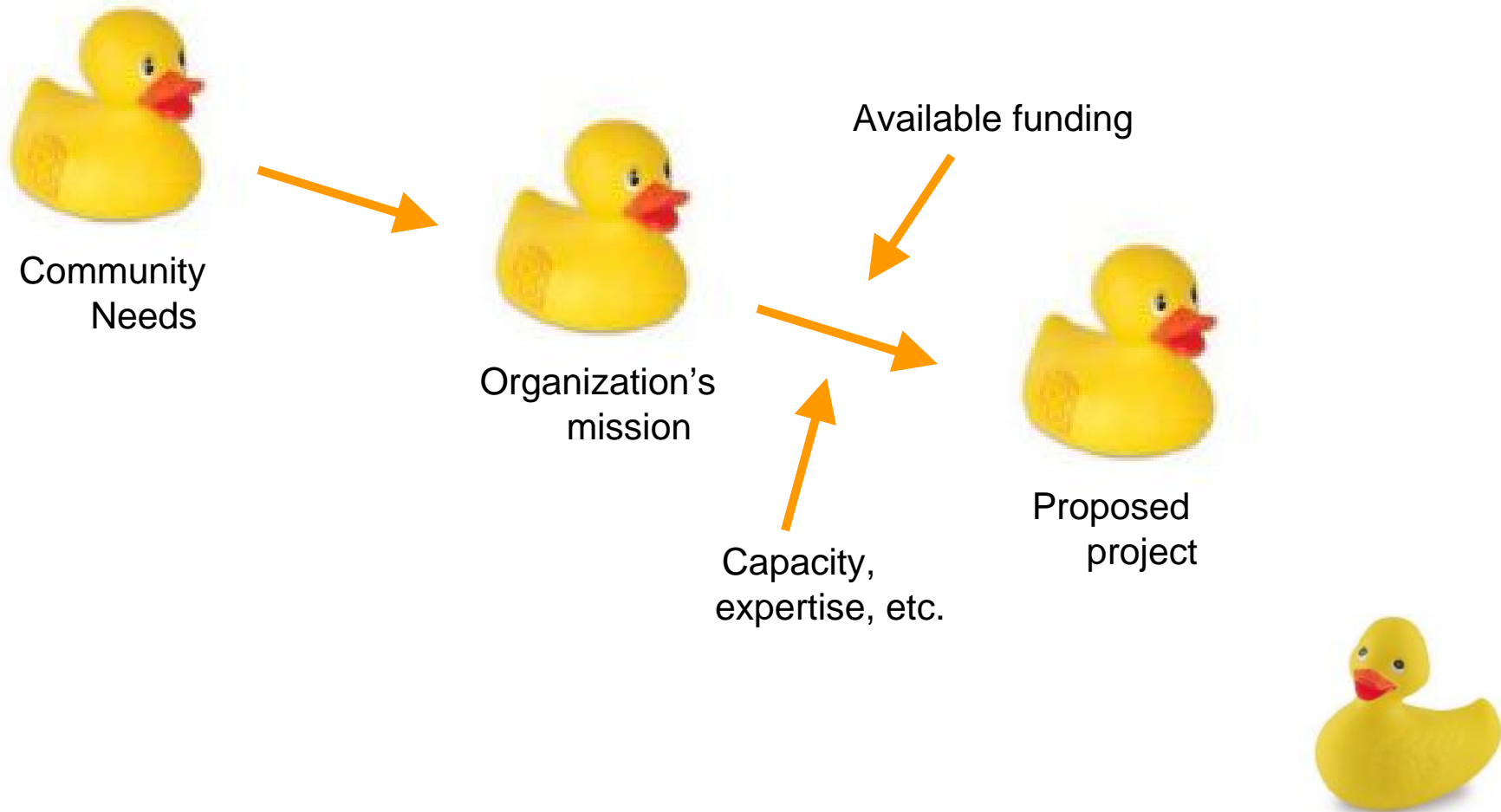
Pursuing opportunities—knowing the funder

Make sure you know

- Grantmaking history with your organization
- How many grants are being given
- The funder's giving range
- What the funder is looking for
- Details of funder's guidelines



Pursuing opportunities— the bottom line



III. Case studies

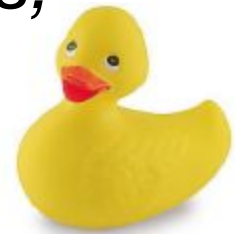
1. Welfare To Work
2. YouthAlive!
 - Should they pursue the funding opportunity?
 - Why or why not?
 - What should they consider?
 - Next step?
 - Would the organization need to make changes?
If so, what?



IV. Print resources

Books with information about grants readiness:

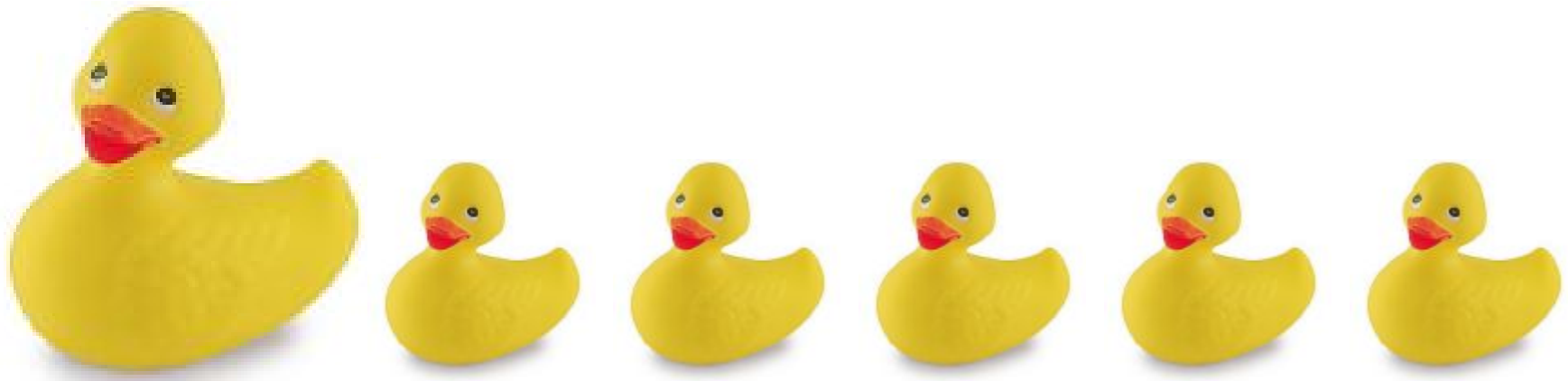
- Mary Hall & Susan Howlett, *Getting Funded: The Complete Guide to Writing Grant Proposals*, (4th edition), 2003 (Portland State University)
- Marilyn Boess, *The ULTIMATE Grants Toolkit: Essential Worksheets, Blueprints, and Step-by-Step Planning Guides to Help You Build Great Grant-Funded Projects*, 2006 (GrantsUSA)
- Cheryl Clarke, *Storytelling for Grantseekers*, 2001 (Jossey-Bass)



Internet resources

- “Grants Readiness: The Culture and Practices of Successful Grantseeking Organizations,” GrantsUSA, 2004:
<http://www.azgrants.com/mp/Checklist.pdf>





Thank you!

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