Winning Grants

A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians®

Second Edition

Stephanie K. Gerding and Pamela H. MacKellar
Foreword by Susan Hildreth

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Foreword

I am honored to have the opportunity to provide the foreword for this exciting publication, *Winning Grants: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians*. During my career, I have been involved in the full spectrum of grant activities, from preparation to review and final funding decisions. This publication serves as a highly effective road map in the journey of developing a successful grant proposal.

The world of fundraising, particularly pursuing grants, can be daunting. Yet these alternative sources of revenue are critical for the success of our twenty-first-century libraries. Although library funding has stabilized somewhat since the Great Recession of the late 2000s, public revenue is always at risk and we know that economic busts and booms will continue to occur, particularly as the global nature of our economy becomes more and more pervasive. Having a diverse revenue base for our libraries is a wise protection against changing funding situations.

Libraries cannot rely on grants for stable funding, but grant funding can often support the creation of an innovative service program or the development of a new facility that will ultimately create enhanced services and an ongoing revenue stream for the library. Grants can provide the venture capital that libraries can use to move from providing traditional services to serving as the key convener in their communities.

I know many library staff are hard-pressed to find the time to focus on grants since they are busy putting out the fires of everyday public service management. But I would encourage you to try to find the time. The initial effort does not have to be a detailed or complicated proposal. Start small, possibly with a local community or family foundation. Pick a project that is feasible and can make a difference in your community. Identify a small team of people who are interested in the effort. Consider including volunteers or those in your community who may have grant-writing skills and are willing to contribute those skills to the success of the library. Then get started with this publication, as it will provide you with an excellent approach to the grant development process.

Don't be disappointed if your first attempt is not successful. Get back into the game again! I have found that once you've planned for a new service, program, or facility, you will be able to revise and submit new proposals to other funders. Also, if community members are involved in this process, they become very excited about this opportunity and often bring together new or different funders than the ones you initially had considered. Be flexible and ready to take advantage of a variety of funding opportunities.

Collective impact is a common theme among funders today. It is a framework to tackle deeply entrenched and complex social problems. It is an innovative and structured approach to making collaboration work across government and business entities,

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philanthropic and nonprofit organizations, and individual citizens to achieve significant and lasting social change. Libraries can play a key role in this collective impact work. Librarians are the conveners in our communities and can bring together many parties that are all trying to address challenging problems but need a unifying entity or platform to bring them all together. In prioritizing grant opportunities, I would strongly encourage you to consider partnerships with other public service providers to demonstrate that librarians are leveraging the investment of public funds in a variety of sectors to make a difference in their communities.

I am delighted that *Winning Grants: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians* will be available for our library community. This manual provides great advice for every step in the grant process and the worksheets, checklists, and forms are amazing. Best of luck on your grant proposals!

—SUSAN HILDRETH

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Preface

When the previous edition of *Winning Grants* was published, our nation was facing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Library budgets were being cut across the board, and librarians had to devise ways to fund programs and services that communities needed more than ever. Librarians have worked hard in these difficult economic times, and thankfully most libraries are surviving and achieving success. Some states and regions have enjoyed an economic recovery in recent years, whereas others have been slow to rebound. Some areas in our country are currently in an economic decline due to falling energy prices, and there are predictions that the nation could be headed for another recession. We cannot predict the future, but it is safe to say that librarians should not count on increased funding in the foreseeable future. It is more important than ever for librarians to master the skill of grant work and build it into their everyday jobs.

There is also more to gain from grant work than a boost to the library budget. Grants can make a huge difference in a library's ability to meet identified community needs, build strong community partnerships, establish new connections, and increase the sustainability of the library itself. Winning a grant is a great accomplishment, and people want to be associated with successful operations. Even small grants can be worth the effort, as they may be easier to obtain and may better fit the scope and intent of a library project. A small grant can also be a good way to test out an innovative service. Many library staff find that one grant leads to others and, thus, results in increased support from community officials.

Where can library staff charged with writing grant proposals under time and economic pressures turn for help? Library schools do not normally offer courses in grantsmanship, and it's rare for a book on grants to take a library-centric approach. This updated edition of *Winning Grants* aims to keep you current and help you hone your grant skills. We designed *Winning Grants: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians* as a one-stop tool with both how-to advice and successful examples that can help anyone associated with library grant work. *Winning Grants* is written in easy-to-understand language with helpful advice that you can apply immediately. Inside you will find worksheets, examples, checklists, and an easy-to-follow, step-by-step Grant Process Cycle—all intended to help you prepare a winning proposal.

Applying for a grant can seem overwhelming and difficult. Librarians and information professionals are often surprised to learn that they possess many of the skills necessary to successfully win grants. They already have the ability to research, synthesize, package, and summarize information; a commitment to reach out, assess community

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needs, and find solutions; and a cooperative, collaborative professional attitude. This manual provides the necessary tools to create a well-written proposal that describes a worthwhile project planned to benefit your community.

Purpose and Audience

Winning Grants is for anyone interested in learning about grants and writing proposals to fund all types of library programs and projects. Our knowledge stems from experience in every aspect of grant work—as grant writers, grant evaluators, and grant project managers. We have worked for library nonprofits, universities, school libraries, public and special libraries, and state library agencies and have received grant funding from both government and private sources. We present workshops online and around the world and consult with libraries, and we have found that our process works for all types and sizes of libraries. *Winning Grants* provides a step-by-step Grant Process Cycle you can follow that will not only save you time and energy but also bring you success in getting the grants you and your communities want and need.

Good Luck and Have Fun!

We know that grant work can seem intimidating, and our hope is that *Winning Grants* will help your library as you create successful proposals and generate new sources of grant funding for your initiatives. We also hope the grants process will become less a mystery and more an enjoyable adventure. Your journey may include a little trepidation, but remember that writing a successful grant is achievable. Our Grant Process Cycle is easy to follow and will set you up for success.

Librarians have distinct advantages in the grant process: we know how to research, attract partners and collaborators, and discover our community needs, and we have a wealth of creative ideas for serving our users and furthering the pursuit of knowledge. By showing the passion you have for your work in the context of a grant proposal, you are sure to find success.

Grant projects come in all shapes and sizes, in all kinds of libraries, serving diverse communities. With inspiration from others and by using the worksheets and checklists provided, you will be well prepared to seek grants for your own library's projects. There will be nothing holding you back, no reason to hesitate. We wish you the very best of luck! Please let us know about your successes at winninglibrarygrants@gmail.com. We would love to hear from you. Don't forget to visit our *Library Grants* blog (http://librarygrants.blogspot.com) for new library grant opportunities and ALA's Web Extras page (www.alaeditions.org/webextras) for worksheets, checklists, and forms you can use.

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Introduction

Winning Grants is unique from other grant books because the focus is on libraries and on the use of strategic planning and goal setting as the foundation of grant work. This not only simplifies the work involved but also ensures that your efforts directly support your library's larger mission and vision and the actual needs of the community.

The material is arranged in three parts. Part I, "The Grant Process Cycle," features eight chapters that cover the five phases of the Grant Process Cycle. Easy-to-follow examples demonstrate successful implementation. Part II, "Library Grant Success Stories," features real-life success stories that demonstrate the process in practice and provide motivational tips from successful library staff. Part III includes helpful tools, such as checklists, forms, and worksheets, for you to copy and incorporate into your own grant work.

Part I, "The Grant Process Cycle," which details the grant process in eight chapters, begins with chapter 1, "Understanding the Grant Process." This chapter explains the phases of the Grant Process Cycle by outlining 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 grant funds. Grants are not just free money. Acquiring them requires planning, resources, accountability, and sustainability. Grants involve more than bringing in money; they establish valuable partnerships, resolve community needs, and increase community support.

Chapter 2, "Planning for Success," covers the basics of strategic planning and demonstrates why it is essential to have a strategic plan and community involvement in place before beginning grant work. We help your library get started by showing you how to review your library's mission, priorities, goals, and objectives as stated in the plan. We furnish a sample plan from Premiere Community Library, the fictitious library we use to depict our process throughout the book. This chapter stresses the importance of assessing and prioritizing community needs prior to strategic planning and reinforces the idea that the purpose of grant work is to meet community needs.

Chapter 3, "Discovering and Designing the Grant Project," covers one of the most creative and enjoyable parts of the process—developing the grant 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 explain different teams and their roles in the grant process and the importance of partners and collaborators. We show you how to develop project ideas and goals, outcomes, objectives, action steps, timelines, budgets, and evaluation plans. The included worksheets will be invaluable when it is time to begin writing your grant proposal.

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Chapter 4, "Finding Library Funders," explores how to find a funder for your grant project. It covers the different kinds of funding sources—private and government—and includes information about many resources where you can find grant opportunities specifically geared toward libraries.

Chapter 5, "Researching and Selecting the Right Grant Opportunity," shows you how to research grant opportunities in private and government resources. You will learn how to assess and identify those organizations whose purpose most closely matches your library project's goals. An example Keyword Selection Worksheet shows how you can use your project plan's goals and objectives as a starting point to increase your search results, and the Funder Summary Worksheet in part III will help you keep your research findings organized. The section Top Resources for Finding Grant Opportunities, as well as the Winning Grants Sources and Resources Handout in part III, will help you as you do your research. Included in this chapter are research tips and information about how to stay current on grant announcements.

Chapter 6, "Creating and Submitting the Winning Proposal," integrates all your planning and research into the actual writing of the grant proposal. Many applications request the same basic structure and elements—cover letter, table of contents, proposal summary or abstract, organizational overview, statement of needs, project description, timeline, budget, evaluation, and appendix. We explain these components and provide planning and proposal templates (in part III) that allow you to easily adapt, modify, and replicate content for not just one grant but multiple grants, saving you time and money. 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 that could make the difference between a winning proposal and a rejection letter.

Chapter 7, "Getting Funded and Implementing the Project," explains what happens after you send off your grant proposal and what to do next, whether your proposal was accepted or rejected. We include discussion of the most common reasons grants are turned down, details on customary grant report requirements, and first steps for implementing your project.

Chapter 8, "Reviewing and Continuing the Process," helps you evaluate your experience with the grant process and improve for the next grant. Repeating the cycle will be easier as your experience grows and 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. We stress the importance of keeping your strategic plan, community assessment, and proposal components up-to-date. By building grant work into your job, you will be prepared to apply for the next grant opportunity that comes along. We also offer eleven Tips for Grant Success to help improve your potential for winning grants.

Part II, "Library Grant Success Stories," includes six real-life examples of grant projects that were funded. If you need a little help with brainstorming creative ideas for your project or want to get advice from other librarians who have completed grant projects, check out these inspiring success stories from libraries around the country. These selections include best practices and offer you a chance to see how successful programs have been developed, funded, and implemented. There is nothing like a "real-life story" to give you inspiration, spark some grant project ideas, illustrate successful partnerships, demonstrate innovative programs, provide best practices, and teach you about what pitfalls to avoid.

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Part III, "Worksheets, Checklists, and Forms," contains valuable tools that you can copy and use as you work through the grant process. These tools are also available as Microsoft Word documents and PDFs at www.alaeditions.org/webextras. This enables you to complete the forms with your own information and share the materials with your teams. The following resources will help you stay on track, keep you organized, and take you through the Grant Process Cycle, starting with your library goals and finishing with a successful grant proposal:

- Making the Commitment: A Checklist for Committing to Library Grant Work
- Library Planning Checklist
- Grant Partnership Agreement Worksheet
- Strategic Plan Worksheet
- Project Planning Worksheet
- Project Action Steps Worksheet
- Project Timeline Worksheet
- Personnel Budget Worksheet
- Nonpersonnel Budget Worksheet
- Project Budget Worksheet
- Evaluation Plan Worksheet
- Keyword Selection Worksheet
- Funder Summary Worksheet
- Winning Grants Sources and Resources Handout
- Questions for Funders Checklist
- Grant Proposal Worksheet
- Grant Submission Checklist
- Debrief and Review Checklist

Following part III, this manual ends with a glossary full of useful library grant terms as well as a bibliography of resources mentioned in the book and additional ones for further reading and study.

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Part I

The Grant Process Cycle

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1 Understanding the Grant Process

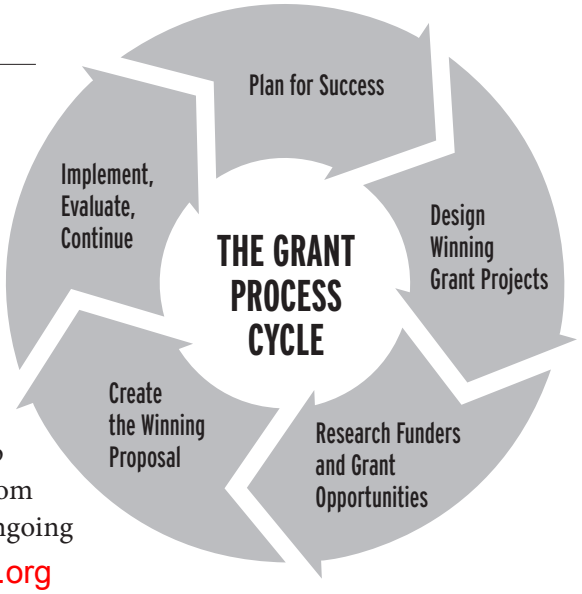
Successful grant work is the result of planning, organizational capacity, fulfillment of community needs, sustainability, relationship building, and evaluation. Grants are not free money that will magically solve your library's budget problems. This book covers proposal writing and grant research but also focuses on the planning process necessary to have a successful project and a justly awarded grant. Grant work is a holistic process that must include all facets of the library's planning and as much staff and community involvement as possible. It is also a rational process based on project management principles. We will cover the entire grant process and help you develop core grant proposal components that are useful for all grant applications.

We provide examples along the way to show you the concepts in action and practically applied. In part III, you will find blank worksheets you can copy and use as you go through this process in your library. The part II stories from real libraries where grant projects were successfully implemented reveal some important tips and practical advice you can use. These real-life examples will help you envision innovative and successful grant projects and gain advice from other librarians who have effectively completed the grant process. This selection of best practices offers you a chance to see how award-winning programs have been developed, funded, and implemented while providing a great view of the big picture of the grant process.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- ✓ Phases of the Grant Process Cycle
- ✓ Making the Commitment
- ✓ Gathering Knowledge

Phases of the Grant Process Cycle



In this book, we have divided the grant process into five easy-to-understand phases. Visualizing the grant process in sections or phases will make it easier for you to understand and approach this kind of work. Breaking down the process into smaller phases also makes it easier to explain to others. Many people avoid grant work because they think it is too difficult or too complicated. This is usually because they misunderstand the nature of grant work and what it involves. There is a misconception that applying for grants is one huge monstrous job that you have to take on all at once. You may think you will need to drop everything else to apply for a grant. This could not be further from the truth. As you will find out in this book, grant work is an ongoing

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process that takes place in phases across a span of time and involves many activities you are probably already doing. When you follow this process, you will be ready with the information you need when it is time to apply for a grant.

Phase 1: Plan for Success

Throughout the grant process, we encourage you to refer constantly to your library's strategic plan. If your library doesn't have a plan, make it a priority to develop a planning process before applying for grants. If this isn't possible, your library should at least have a written mission statement that can be used as a basis for project development decisions. A strategic plan provides the framework that is needed for the grant process to be effective. Having a plan in place will help prevent mission creep—or creating poorly designed or unneeded projects for your library only because grant funding is available. If you develop every grant project from the goals and objectives in your library's plan, this will eliminate the possibility of creating projects or programs that aren't relevant to your library's mission or your community's needs. A plan also answers many of the questions that are found in the requests for proposals (RFPs) that charitable organizations rely on to determine their grant awards. A library with a strategic plan is a more dependable and organized applicant. A plan demonstrates to a funder that fund money will be used responsibly and not wasted on a hastily developed new idea.

Your library must also know the compelling issues in your community before applying for grants. Discover the true needs of your community and what will make your library's efforts meaningful and important. This will be very helpful when you begin to develop your project ideas and when you demonstrate need in a grant proposal. Chapter 2 covers the importance of strategic planning and methods for needs assessments in more detail, including a sample strategic plan for the Premiere Community Library, the fictitious library we use to demonstrate our process throughout the book.

Phase 2: Design Winning Grant Projects

Chapter 3 covers a step-by-step method for developing grant projects. This is often one of the most creative and enjoyable parts of grant work. Every project should be a worthwhile solution to a community need identified in the planning process. Whether you want to build a new library or create a program for teens, your project design consists of the actual activities you will perform based on your library's plan. Project planning teams discover and design viable projects that fulfill a need in your community. This team may include representatives from library leadership, community advisors, partners, staff members, and subject matter experts. The size of your project planning team will correlate with the size of your library. Large libraries may have project planning teams that focus on designing projects to meet specific needs.

Projects are the implementation arm of your strategic plan and should be designed before beginning to research funders and grant opportunities. The slickness or length of an application is seldom a critical factor in determining who will receive a grant. Rather, it is the project that counts. And when projects are based on community needs, funders can understand the reasons why the project is important and relevant for

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funding. If funders can't determine why you are developing a project, they will not be willing to support it. We show you how to plan your project by developing goals, objectives, outcomes, action steps, timelines, budgets, and evaluation plans. The project planning worksheets in part III will be invaluable when it is time to begin writing your grant proposal (see pp. 170–194).

Phase 3: Research Funders and Grant Opportunities

Once you have a project design, you may realize that the library does not have adequate funding. This is when your project turns into a grant project and you decide to look for grants to fund the project. Chapter 4 explains how to locate applicable and viable grant funders for your specific project. It covers the two major types of funding sources (government and private), including where to find current library funding opportunities in both online and print formats. Selecting the right grant necessitates knowing what a funder is interested in supporting and knowing how closely the funder's mission matches the purpose of your project.

Once you know where to find grant opportunities, you are ready to do the research and select the right grant. This step of the cycle, covered in chapter 5, is often a straightforward one for librarians as it involves something librarians are experienced at doing—research. Learn how to increase your search results with the Keyword Selection Worksheet (see part III, p. 182) that uses your strategic plan's goals and objectives as a starting point. Keep your research findings organized with the Funder Summary Worksheet (see part III, p. 183). Our *Library Grants blog (http://librarygrants.blogspot.com) is a helpful free website to use in your research.*

Phase 4: Create the Winning Proposal

Once you reach this part of the grant cycle, your planning work will be complete and writing the proposal will involve refining your ideas into the stipulations requested by the funders. Chapter 6 guides you through creating a proposal using the plans and information you already have compiled. Most grant proposals have the same basic structure and requirements. The common components are these: cover letter, table of contents, proposal summary or abstract, organizational overview, statement of needs, project description, timeline, budget, evaluation, and appendix. Some parts of the proposal are narrative and involve telling the story of the grant project and the people it will serve. We provide checklists to ensure you have a thorough and clear proposal that could make the difference between a winning proposal and a rejection letter.

Forming a grant team will help minimize the workload while increasing the likelihood of success. If you are working in a small library, you can still have a team, especially with the addition of community volunteers. We explain the qualities necessary for an ideal grant writer. Some libraries are reluctant to apply for grants due to the misconception that they have no employee with the necessary skills. You may be surprised to find that many of the needed abilities are ones that are developed in everyday library work. Library staff excel at many of the skills necessary for grant work. Librarians who are adept at researching, connecting with the community, creating justifiable and

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well-planned projects, and effectively writing and communicating can be successful with the grant process. Grant work is really about four things librarians are great at doing:

- Conducting research
- Answering questions
- Building relationships
- Serving the community

We also cover the responsibilities and skills of all team members, including the grant coordinator, and how to successfully organize grant team meetings.

Phase 5: Implement, Evaluate, and Continue

Chapters 7 and 8 cover what happens when your project gets funded, implementing your project, evaluating the success of your project, and continuing the process. It may be weeks or months before you receive notification that your grant application has been accepted. The funder may contact you with questions or requests for more information. Whether your proposal was accepted or rejected, you need to know what to do next. Included in this chapter is an explanation of the most common reasons grant proposals are turned down. If your project gets funded, the implementation process begins. You will need to revisit your timeline and budget and make any appropriate updates. Project management is an important aspect of implementing a grant project. We include details on customary grant report requirements. Don't forget to celebrate this great accomplishment with the entire grant team and library.

Grant work is an ongoing process, so the cycle should be repeated. This is the time to look back and then move forward with the knowledge you've learned from your first completion of the Grant Process Cycle. Facilitate a review session with your grant team using our Debrief and Review Checklist (see part III, p. 197) and keep your relationships with partners and funders thriving. Remember to thank funders and follow up with any reporting requirements. Keep in contact with them and let them know how your project is progressing. Many professional development opportunities are related to grants for libraries, so keep up-to-date by attending workshops, subscribing to electronic discussion lists, networking, and researching new opportunities.

Making the Commitment

One important requirement for success with grants demands a strong commitment throughout the entire process from library leadership, staff, and grant coordinators. They must be committed to each step of the process: planning, partnering, research, project development, writing, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up.

This book will give you a firm foundation in understanding the grant process, but your library must be responsible for making the necessary commitments. Can your

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library really commit to the grant application and implementation process? The library leadership (director, board, trustees) and any staff who will have responsibilities tied to the grant or grant project should be involved in the decisions. Most grants will have benefits, but also obligations, and in some cases maybe even specific constraints or drawbacks that you need to consider. If your project does not fulfill the funder's guidelines, you are wasting your library's time and funds by preparing a hopeless grant application. And, of course, you are also wasting the funder's valuable time. This is not the best way to build a relationship with a potential funder.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to applying for and receiving grants. Sometimes it may not be worth the effort and requirements necessary to apply. There may be too many hoops to jump through, you may not be able to fulfill the stipulations requested in the RFP, or your library may not have the support necessary for implementation. The funding must be worth the time, effort, and resources needed. These resources include not just the staff time spent planning a project and writing a proposal but the time to be spent in implementing and evaluating the project as well.

All grants have costs for the submitting library. Sometimes these are obvious, such as matching funds or staff time, but other considerations include the impact of assigning key staff members to the duration of the project, the building space and supporting materials needed, the time needed for meetings and communication with everyone involved, and the impact of neglecting existing essential activities while focusing on the new project.

Depending on the type of library you work with, applying for a grant may include working with other departments or meeting requirements set by your local authorities, system, or development office. This is especially true in university settings, so make certain you understand the local stipulations that will affect your library's grant work.

Although there are a lot of considerations to weigh, grant money can also make a huge difference in your library's ability to provide service for your community. Even small grants can be worth the effort as they may be easier to obtain and may better fit your project scope and intent. One grants officer said she would love to give huge grants, but sometimes smaller grants are more appropriate for certain projects and libraries.

Numerous small grants are available from local funders, and many have fewer strings attached than do those from larger private or government agencies. You could also apply for several small grants that in combination could provide for all the facets of a larger project.

Ask yourself the following questions before you begin a grant proposal:

- Does the funder have restrictions or requirements that would shape or affect our grant project in an unacceptable or undesirable way?
- Can we continue the project if grant funds are discontinued? What would be the effect on our clients or organization if the project were stopped abruptly?
- Should we propose a new project when we really need money for existing programs?
- Would this project take too much time and attention away from core library programs?
- Is this the right grant for this project?

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Specific Commitments

The Grant Process Cycle is ongoing, which means the commitments continue as well. Some of these commitments should be made before the library decides to pursue grant funding. Others cannot be made until you have designed your grant project and researched and selected the appropriate funder's grant. At that time you should revisit these commitments. Your library must be able to commit to accountability, effective

FIGURE 1.1

MAKING THE COMMITMENT: A CHECKLIST FOR COMMITTING TO LIBRARY GRANT WORK

The following questions will help you determine if your library can really make the commitment to apply for a grant.

COMMIT TO ACCOUNTABILITY

- ☐ Will the grant project definitely support your library's vision and mission?
- ☐ Will your library leadership support the project?
- ☐ Will the library director commit the necessary resources to the project/grant?
- ☐ Will the library staff have the time needed to complete the application process and to implement the project?
- ☐ Will the grant team have the necessary supplies, equipment, services, and space?
- ☐ Can the library follow through on the agreements made in the grant proposal?
- ☐ Will the library spend the funds as specified and keep accurate accounts?
- ☐ Will you make sure there are not other organizations in your community already doing your project and filling the need?
- ☐ Can all deadlines be met and grant reports be filed on time?

COMMIT TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- ☐ Will your proposal be as clear, concise, and honest as possible?
- ☐ Will your goals, objectives, and activities be clearly identified and understandable?
- ☐ Will you be able to convey that your library and the project are important?
- ☐ Will you ask the funder for what you really need?
- ☐ Will all the library staff, board members, leadership, partners, and volunteers be continually informed about the grant?
- ☐ Will you ask the funder if the library's grant project clearly fits the funder's interests?
- ☐ Will you communicate with all your contacts?

COMMIT TO MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

- ☐ Will your library identify the needs of your community?
- ☐ Will your analysis include enough information to educate and inspire the funder?
- ☐ Can statistics be used to quantify the problems identified?
- ☐ Can you use stories and cases regarding specific patrons or programs to illustrate the needs?
- ☐ Will your grant project focus on solutions to meeting community needs?
- ☐ Will you identify a target audience for your grant project and involve representatives in the planning process?

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communication, meeting community needs, planning, partnerships, evaluation, sustainability, and following the grant guidelines. The Making the Commitment checklist (see figure 1.1) will help you determine if you are ready and able to make the commitment to doing grant work. This checklist is also available in part III (see p. 165) for you to copy and use in your library as you go through this process. If your library has made these commitments, you are now ready to continue the Grant Process Cycle.

COMMIT TO PLANNING

- ☐ Does your library have a strategic plan? Will you review it before writing your grant?
- ☐ Will you have a project plan that includes goals, objectives, and activities and is based on your strategic plan?
- ☐ Will you set deadlines?
- ☐ Will you organize your materials (research, grant materials, etc.)?
- ☐ Will you have a budgetary goal?
- ☐ Will you have a method to track tasks and contacts?

COMMIT TO PARTNERSHIPS

- ☐ Will you cultivate a strong relationship with your grant funder?
- ☐ Will you develop the appropriate collaborations to leverage resources, share expertise, and support the project?
- ☐ Will you determine what groups in your community share your library's vision and goals and approach them as partners?
- ☐ Will you invite community members to focus groups and planning sessions?
- ☐ Will you complete a partnership agreement outlining goals, responsibilities, and benefits?

COMMIT TO EVALUATION

- ☐ Can your library clearly identify success in respect to the grant project?
- ☐ Will you have an evaluation plan and/or logic model to determine if your project has met its goals?
- ☐ Will you be able to identify what impact your project achieves or what difference the project makes?
- ☐ Will you identify outcomes for the project? Will your project have meaningful results that cause a change in people's behavior, attitudes, skills, condition, or knowledge?
- ☐ Will you have a benchmark plan designed to measure each outcome?

COMMIT TO SUSTAINABILITY

- ☐ Will your project be completed?
- ☐ Will your project be supported by leadership after grant funds are depleted?
- ☐ Will you plan a funding strategy to continue your project after grant funds are depleted?
- ☐ Does your project involve more than just one person?
- ☐ If your project involves hiring new staff members, will their positions be maintained after the grant period ends?

COMMIT TO FOLLOWING THE GRANT GUIDELINES

- ☐ Will you check and double-check all instructions?
- ☐ Will you answer all questions and complete any required narrative sections?
- ☐ Will you compile all allowable attachments, including letters of support?
- ☐ Will you obtain all the required signatures?
- ☐ Will you submit the grant on time?

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Gathering Knowledge

Hopefully, this long list of commitments hasn't made grant work seem too daunting. It is a process, and once you've gone through it the first time, it really does get easier. If you are a novice to grant work, here are some tips for finding out more about the process:

- Ask other librarians to share their grant proposals. (See the part II success stories, pp. 141–161.)
- Become a grant reviewer or talk to grant reviewers. This is a great way to find out how difficult it can be to give money away! You will learn exactly how grant decisions are made, which can help you immensely.
- Contact your state library for help. Some state libraries offer free classes, and consultants often know which libraries in the state are expert grant seekers that you could contact for advice. Many state libraries also provide grants to libraries through LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) funding and state grants-in-aid.
- Find out if potential grant funders will share successful proposals. Not all funders will do this, but it is worth asking. Many funders' websites list the organizations they have funded in the past and may also showcase successful grants.
- Tell everyone about your grant project ideas and get input. You never know who may know of a good lead or what opportunities may develop.
- Talk to the leaders in your community to find out about local grant funding.
- Contact other nonprofits and community organizations in your area. Do they know of funders? Are they applying for grants? Are they looking for partners?
- Discover the professional development opportunities available in your area. Foundations will often offer seminars for free or low cost. Some online educational sources are covered in chapter 8.

Once you complete the Grant Process Cycle, you may find that you have achieved more than you had expected. There are often additional benefits beyond the grant funds. If you follow the guidelines in this book, you will increase community support and find new partners and collaboration opportunities. You may even see an increase in the library's local budget and an increase in library use.

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