

Grant Readiness Checklist

This list is intended to guide you in gathering all of the information that is most commonly asked for by grant funders. Having these items organized in one safe place online will save you time and energy in the future when you are applying for grants.

Must Have ✓

- Tax Status Letter (501c3)** - dated letter from the government that proves you have nonprofit status
- 990's** - almost every grant is going to ask for a copy of the past two years
- Profit and Loss Statements** - past two years
- Balance Sheet** - current year
- Annual Operating Budget** - Covers all actual income and expenses for the previous year as well as the projections for the up-coming year
- Special Project Budget(s)** - Total from this budget should be a line item in your annual budget. A project budget is helpful to have when you are applying for a grant that will specifically fund a particular area of a project/program.
- Timeline for your project** - Detailing what milestones you will reach and when. Larger projects can be broken down into phases.
- List of Board of Directors and Staff** - Make sure that you have a list of board members that includes their name, profession, board title, term limit, and contact information.
- Evaluation Plan** - It is important to have measurable outcomes for your project to show funders the impact your project will have within the community.
- List of other funding sources** - If you're working with The Dotted i, this is tracked in your *Funding Matrix* and should be easily accessible for each grant. Having this information is a great way to prove to funders that you have additional financial support for your project/organization.

Additional Notes:

Occasionally Requested ✓

- Budget Narrative** - This is a “must have” in our book, but it’s only occasionally requested from funders. It is a great way to clearly articulate what each of your budget line items are intended for.
- By-Laws**
- Board Meeting Agendas and Minutes**
- Articles of Incorporation**
- Proof of Matching Donor Funds** - Award letter or written agreement that proves matching funds are available for your organization.
- Resumes of Board and Staff Members** - We mentioned in the “must have” section that you’ll need a list and basic information and this takes it a step further by having resumes for each key team member. Many grant funders request resumes or qualifications for the individuals who will be leading projects.
- Preliminary Architecture or Preliminary Engineering Reports** - Typically for large scale projects that include infrastructure improvements and are usually required by federal funders.
- Grants.gov, SAM’s and DUNS number** - This is required if you are applying to any federal or large state grant. The process is free, but can be time consuming so we recommend getting it handled beforehand.

Extra Credit ✓

- Cost Estimates for Upcoming Work or Equipment** - Shows donors that you actually crunched the numbers and are spending their money wisely.
- Business and/or Strategic Plan** - This is not your fundraising plan, this is the foundation of your internal operating structure and is very important in setting up the foundation of your organization.
- Letters of Support for your Project** - Demonstrates community buy-in; funders like to see proof that other people also believe in your mission and goals.
- Newsletters** - Having samples of your newsletters helps show how you are communicating with your supporters and community.
- Recent Audits** - Not every nonprofit will be required to conduct an audit, but if you have one it is good to keep on file.
- Organizational Chart** - This shows the internal structure of your organization and the reporting/relationship hierarchy.
- Logic Model** - excellent way to impress your funders; it’s a visual representation of your program design and function which can help you prioritize your funding goals.

Funders Also Check For...Online Presence ✓

- ❑ **Clear and inviting website** - You want your website to be easy to navigate so that potential funders can learn more about your mission, goals and those that you serve.
- ❑ **Guidestar Profile** (recently combined with Foundation Center to become Candid) - Funders check this for financial transparency, so it is important to keep up to date!
- ❑ **Social Media Platform(s)** - A quick and easy way for funders to learn about your organization and how you are engaging in the community.

Additional Notes:

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Best of luck! If you have any questions about any of these items as you go through the checklist, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can schedule a free 30-minute phone consultation with us through our website or you can email me at breanna@dottedifundraising.com.