

5 Grant Writing Myths
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Is your organization interested in exploring grants as a potential income stream to fund your lifesaving work? Grants can be an excellent addition to your yearly budget but can also be intimidating and confusing when starting out. Here are some common myths about grant writing and what you need to know as a grant seeker.



1. Grants are free money.

While it is true that grants do not have to be paid back like loans, they will require you to allocate various resources (time, money, or both) at several points in the process. Earning grants for your organization typically involves becoming grant-ready, researching potential grants, building a grant pipeline, writing the grants, implementing earned grants, and reporting. All these steps take the time of your current staff or anyone you engage to help with grants. That's not to discourage any organization from going after grants! However, knowing the entire process and the commitment required is essential.

2. You have to be a great writer to earn grants.

This is not just a myth; it is also harmful if it stops your organization from going after grants. Of course, writing ability is important on some level for grants and all other aspects of running your organization. A grant writer should be able to implement standard spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Here are some qualities of grant writers that are much more important than writing ability:

- Ability to convey passion for your mission and vision and tell your organization's story
- Deep understanding of your programming and budgets
- Relentless adherence to deadlines
- Willingness to work with others and receive feedback
- Skill in managing systems and workflows
- Persistence and positivity

When looking for a grant writer within or outside your organization, focus on the skills above, not just perceived writing ability.

3. There are no grants for animal-related nonprofits.

It is true that in yearly grantmaking surveys, animal welfare (usually lumped into the environment category) often has less grant-making than other areas, such as cancer research. However, millions of dollars of grant funds are still given to animal welfare organizations every year, including federal and state grants, corporate grants, community foundations, and private foundations.

4. Grants are the answer to your sanctuary's financial problems.

Grants can be an amazing part of a diversified income stream for any nonprofit. In animal welfare, it's generally safe to set a goal to cover 10-25% of your annual operating budget with grants. This is a

generalization, and there are animal-related nonprofits that cover larger percentages of their budgets with grants. However, it's essential to recognize that grants complement other income streams and usually support specific projects or programs. They do not take the place of different systems or funding streams. In addition, many grants take 3-9 months to get awarded, so they rarely solve immediate problems (disaster grants are an exception).

5. Small grants are a waste of time.

If your nonprofit is just getting going with grants, it might be tempting to look at a \$500, \$1,000, or \$2,500 grant as too small. After all, you're probably hoping for support along the lines of \$25,000, \$50,000, and \$100,000!

However, if you have yet to earn a grant, small grants are a great place to get your feet wet. Applications for these grants are short and straightforward. At the same time, they will show you what kind of information you are going to need to have on hand for most grants.

As you apply for smaller grants and get either awards or declinations, you will see what programs are most attractive to funders and what applications are most successful. This will help you refine your grant strategy. In addition, once you prove yourself to a funder by successfully earning and reporting on a grant, that same funder could offer you a larger grant.

Finally, large grantors want to see a history of successful grant implementation and financial management. The more grants you have implemented and reported on, the more attractive you are to funders.

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Grants 4 Animals LLC is excited to partner with GFAS to provide more resources and support to its members in the coming months. We look forward to hosting an Introduction to Grant Writing Webinar during the GFAS Sanctuary Awards Week in October 2024, where we will discuss tools, strategies, and resources for sanctuaries that want to explore adding grants as an income stream.

Grants can be a great way to grow and sustain your work; it is never too early or too late to start. To learn more about earning grants for your organization, check out the many resources at [Grants 4 Animals](https://www.grants4animals.com), including the free [monthly newsletter](#) featuring grant opportunities for animal-related nonprofits.

A promotional graphic for Grants 4 Animals. It features a pink background on the left with white text and buttons, and a photograph of a woman in a white sweater and blue jeans standing in a grassy field on the right. The text on the pink background includes the logo 'Grants 4 Animals', a list of services: 'Free Monthly Newsletter', 'Grant Writing Courses', 'Nonprofit Consulting', 'Tools and Templates', and 'Grant Writing'. Below the list, it says 'All designed for animal-related nonprofits!' and 'www.grants4animals.com'.

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