

# PET PROGRAM: WRITING A STRONG GRANT PROPOSAL

To increase the likelihood of a self-sustaining a pet program, writing a quality grant application is critical. This document will explain how to define your program and highlight why, what and how it will make a difference in the community.

## STEP ONE

### **Do your research.**

Finding the right grant to apply to is an important first step. Look in national websites for charitable organizations where you can search by interest, location and mission. Search for a potential funder that will support your programs. Many funding organizations are listed in the following two websites:

- [Charity Navigator](#)
- [Guidestar](#)

## STEP TWO

### **Establish relationships.**

Prior to requesting a grant, use conferences, office hours and LinkedIn connections to introduce yourself to potential funders.

## STEP THREE

### **Understand all funding parameters.**

Look for grants where you match the criteria. Don't attempt to fit a square peg in a round hole. Save your time and resources to apply for grants that fit what you are doing.

- Research an organization's past grants - Google them!
- Read all FAQs, funding focus and guidelines.

## STEP FOUR

### Answer all the grant's questions.

If the application asks, “Describe the population to be served, how they were identified, their demographics, and geographic area of focus,” make sure you hit all of those points with quantifiable data. Quantifiable data is usually numeric and answers questions like “How many?”, “How much?” and “How often?”. Generalities and assumptions are rarely funded.

- Be sure to upload all required and supporting documents in the correct form.
- Never say “follow this link” for more information.

## STEP FIVE

### Review before submitting.

Ask a friend to read before submitting or find someone who has experience in nonprofit grant writing to verify your application has a professional narrative.

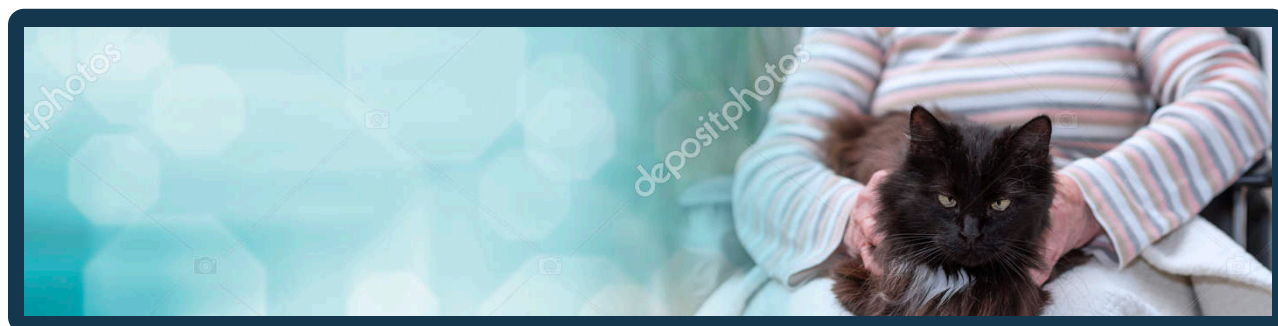
- The grant application should explain everything you are requesting and why it needs to be funded to a completely uninformed reviewer. If your friend doesn't understand completely, go back and rewrite for more clarity.

## STEP SIX

### Submit on time.

Don't wait until the last minute to apply. Things happen. Deadlines for grants are nearly always set in stone.

- It's a numbers game. The industry average for all philanthropic grant acceptance is 1 in 10 applications will result in awards. It's even less for national organizations.
- Understand that even good grants get declined due to lack of budget.
- Try again. Use relationships to understand how to submit a more competitive application.



# A CHECKLIST FOR A STRONG GRANT APPLICATION:



## 1. A detailed description of the program.

- Let the funder get to really know your program. Always assume that they know nothing about the program when you start and know all about it by the end of the application.
- Tailor your proposal to the organization or individual you are seeking.



## 2. Why the program is needed.

- Explain the connection between feeding pets and helping seniors stay well fed and healthier at a lower cost.
- Engage your clients. Client-driven programs are more likely to get funding. Survey your clients on what services they want and need. Ask them how they would like to receive them. Do your clients have the desire or capacity to contribute to the cost of the care? Do your clients need care at home or are they able to travel to a clinic?
- Meals on Wheels programs know their clients better than anyone - show that!



## 3. How the program will operate.

- Show a well-defined population: quantifiable number of clients and pets and a proven demand for services.
- Describe any collaborative partnerships and who takes responsibility for each service.
- Show how your collaborative partnerships will minimize your program for maximum impact.
- Explain how your partnerships address the assessed need.
- An MOU is the gold standard partnership.
- Consider if any other local human services organizations could help you expand services.



#### **4. What impact the program will have.**

- Use a strong mix of data and powerful stories.



#### **5. How the program will continue into the future beyond the funding being requested.**

- Be honest about anticipated delivery and sustainability.
- Show how your program supports an efficiency of costs and has a sustainability plan with a variety of funders, both in-kind and contributed.
- Do not state “Continue to fundraise” as your development plan.
- Discuss which local funding mechanisms and existing community networks may participate to reduce cost/logistics/outreach requirements.
- Does the program aim to alleviate pet-related issues which should reduce over a period of time if regular service is provided? Will the program require less resources over time?
- National funders want applicants to be sustainable in their own communities. They want to know their gift will build your longevity and capacity so they can move on to other areas.