



# Grant Guidance

Thomas-Forbes & Kester, LLC

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“The skill of writing is to create a context in which other people can think.”

—Edwin Schlossberg

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## Contact us!

**Cheryl Kester, CFRE**  
[ckester@cox.net](mailto:ckester@cox.net)  
(479) 582-1053

**Melanie Palmer**  
[melanie@tfkgrants.com](mailto:melanie@tfkgrants.com)  
(479) 582-4602

[www.tfkgrants.com](http://www.tfkgrants.com)

## Congratulations on Another Grant Won

Congratulations to [John Brown University](#) (AR) on their second National Endowment for the Arts Challenge America grant! This grant will once again support JBU's February arts festival, *Giving Voice*, and allow high school students from low income districts to participate.

## What we Learned in 2010 — Passing It on to You

If your 2010 was as busy as ours, you may have found it difficult to carve out time to attend as much professional development as you would have liked.

Here are some of the top things we learned this year. During an Arkansas Grant Professional Association (formerly AAGP) event, a representative from the WalMart Foundation gave tips for applicants.

Two important things: 1) every state has a State Giving Program. Watch the WalMart Foundation website after January 1 for the deadline and guidelines. Apply early in the year if possible.

2) Every single WalMart store and Distribution Center can make gifts of up to \$1,000 to organizations in

their community. Apply at the Customer Service desk. Again, earlier in the year is better. You can go to every Wal-Mart in your town! Limit applications to once per year.

At the national GPA conference, an excellent session by two grant writers shared how they submitted 200 proposals in one year! These two pros are organized. They shared lots of sample forms and processes.

There is a good chance they will give this session again at the 2011 conference, so we hope you are able to attend the 2011 GPA National Conference in Las Vegas, October 5-8.

In the meantime, watch our website for more grants office resources to be posted for your use.



“Formatting your proposal strategically can help reviewers find and understand complex information quickly.”

## Formatting for Success

### by Melanie Palmer

We don't often think of formatting as an essential component of a grant proposal. However, formatting your proposal strategically can help reviewers find and understand complex information quickly—making your organization look more organized and attractive to funders accustomed to digging for information in large stacks of proposals. Here are some tips on using formatting in your favor.

1. **Follow the funder's formatting guidelines.** As with all aspects of proposal preparation, follow the funder's directions. If the guidance states that proposals should appear in 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced with 1 inch margins, then do just that—this is not the time to get creative. Pay particular attention to spacing or font size requirements for tables and charts, as these can sometimes differ from requirements for the narrative. Remember not to exceed the page limit!
2. **Use headings from the guidance.** If the funder's guidance asks for several points (e.g. organizational background statement, need statement), use these points as headings for the different sections of your proposal (be sure to set the headings apart with bold, italicized, or underlined font). Use the funder's language in these headings. This will make information easy for the reviewer to find and demonstrate that your proposal is responsive to the guidance.



### Quick Tips

1. *Follow the funder's formatting guidelines*
2. *Use headings from the guidance*
3. *Use tables to present complex information*
4. *Double check formatting in PDF files.*

3. **Use tables to present complex information.** Often, using a table in addition to the narrative will make information easier to understand for the reviewer. For example, present statistical information on the need for your project (poverty rates, educational achievement levels, etc) in a table, and then use the narrative to point out what you want the reader to understand from the data (e.g. that poverty rates in your service area exceed state or national rates). If you are proposing a complex project, using a table to present different activities, staff responsibilities, and timelines can make the project clearer as well. Use shading and bold font to make your table title and headings distinct.
4. **Double check formatting in PDF files.** Many funders require you to submit your proposal in PDF format. Even if you are not required to do so, PDF formatting can be a convenient way to combine many files into one package. However, occasionally formatting issues arise when converting a Word document to PDF format. Examine your PDF file carefully before submission to ensure that your proposal appears the way it should.

Taking the time to format your proposal effectively can make reviewers' jobs easier and make your application stand out.

## End of the Year Self-Evaluation for Grants Professionals

The professional life of a grant seeker often feels much like a pendulum always swinging toward the next proposal deadline. We click “submit” on one proposal, heave a little sigh of relief, and then launch to work on the next project.

While this pattern is an integral part of our job, the end of the year is often the ideal time for us to step out of pendulum-mode long enough to assess the progress we have made during the year and determine what improvements we can make for next year. Here are some questions to ask yourself to guide your efforts in 2011.

### **Did I submit as many proposals as I planned?**

Take a careful look at your record of proposals submitted this year. Have you submitted as many proposals as expected? If not, consider how you might change your methods to meet your goals for next year, or what steps you need to take to identify more funding prospects in 2011.

### **Did I submit proposals to both new and current/previous funders?**

Consider whether or not you submitted to funding agencies who have not funded you before, as well

as those who have. An effective long-term grant-seeking strategy includes seeking new partnerships with grantmaking organizations as well as maintaining relationships with existing funders.

### **Did the projects we proposed reflect our organization’s strategic priorities?**

This is an essential question to ask to ensure that your organization does not fall into the “chasing money” trap. While it can be tempting to throw together a project only to fit a funder’s priorities, this is ultimately unhealthy for the organization.

### **Was my time allocated well?**

If you find upon reflection that most of your time this year was spent in frantic spurts of work to meet deadlines, consider how you might rearrange your time next year to avoid the last minute scramble.

Can you begin working sooner on some proposals, even before the guidance is released? Can you space out proposals with rolling deadlines? Create your grants calendar for 2011 to keep you on track. Taking care of yourself and managing your stress level will make you more productive in the end.

## Grants Questions Answered

**Q.** My organization is putting together a grant proposal on an extremely short deadline. What can we do to make sure we finish the proposal in time?

**A.** First, assemble everyone you will need to help you get the proposal together—the program manager, budget officer, data specialist, those providing letters of support, etc. Make sure everyone is aware of the fast-approaching deadline and is committed to putting in a large amount of time to get the proposal together. Second, get the guidelines and any other information from the funder up front so there are no last-minute surprises. Designate someone to lead proposal development who will maintain the “master” copy of the most current proposal and who will follow up on everyone else’s assignments. Get the ball rolling immediately on items that will take time, like compiling the budget, gathering data, and getting signatures from executives or commitments from partners. Aim for an even shorter internal deadline to give yourself some breathing room before it has to go out the door!



Have a question?  
Send it to Melanie  
to include in next  
month’s newsletter!

**Thomas-Forbes & Kester, LLC**  
Grants Consultants  
Fayetteville, AR 72704  
(479) 582-1053  
[info@tfkgrants.com](mailto:info@tfkgrants.com)  
[www.tfkgrants.com](http://www.tfkgrants.com)

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Codes of Ethics of :



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Please visit our website for more information: [www.tfkgrants.com](http://www.tfkgrants.com).

You may request to be removed from our newsletter mailing list at any time by sending an email to [melanie@tfkgrants.com](mailto:melanie@tfkgrants.com).

## Upcoming Grant Opportunities

### General Mills Champions for Healthy Kids

Contact: Beth Labrador  
Tel: 1-800-877-1600 ext. 4821  
[blabrador@eatright.org](mailto:blabrador@eatright.org)  
Grant Range: \$10,000  
Deadline: December 15, 2010  
*Giving to programs that help youth develop both good nutrition and fitness habits*  
For more information and to apply, visit the [Champions for Healthy Kids program](#) online.

### NAMM Foundation Wanna Play Grants

5790 Armada Drive  
Carlsbad, CA 92008  
Tel: 760-438-8001  
Grant Range: \$1,000—\$5,000  
Deadline: none  
*Giving to schools and community organizations to provide instruments for music programs*  
For more information and to apply, visit [NAMM Foundation](#) online.

### IBM Smarter Cities Challenge

[www.smartercitieschallenge.org](http://www.smartercitieschallenge.org)  
Grant Range: value of approx \$400,000  
Deadline: December 31, 2010  
*Giving assistance to cities to enhance their capacity to collect, analyze, and act upon information*  
For more information and to apply, visit [IBM Smarter Cities Challenge](#) online.

### Avon Foundation Healthy College Dating Peer Educator Program

1345 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, NY 10105-0196  
Tel: 866-505-AVON  
[info@avonfoundation.org](mailto:info@avonfoundation.org)  
Grant range: \$10,000  
Deadline: December 3, 2010  
*Giving to U.S. colleges to fund or establish a network of Dating Peer Educators on college campuses*  
For more information and to apply, visit the [Healthy College Dating program](#) online.