



## Appendix B: Grant Toolbox



# INTRODUCTION

**G**rant writing is not a tricky or technical skill. Anyone can write a grant. You do not need to take a class beforehand, nor do you need extensive experience working in non-profits before you are able to write a grant. However, grant writing is time intensive and a detail-oriented process. And, like any other skill, the more practice you have writing grants, the easier it is to do.

There are a lot of resources available that can help you learn how to write a grant. Websites, videos, classes and instructional books all provide information about how to be a successful grant writer. This grant toolbox outlines the basic steps necessary for applying to any type of grant. However, we encourage you to use other resources to advance your grant writing skills. Community colleges frequently offer grant writing classes and seminars. You can glean important information from books. Larger non-profits or state agencies may also provide grant assistance for Cascade Locks projects – it never hurts to ask for help or advice!



Grant funding can provide equipment and material for volunteer trail building.

*(Photo: Northwest Trail Alliance)*

## FUNDING OPTIONS



Grants could fund pedestrian and bicycle improvements on Forest Lane. (Above and below)



**T**here are three main types of funding assistance that non-profits or local governments typically apply for. Some programs offer “technical assistance”, which may provide assistance with marketing, developing or amending policies, or other services. Other programs offer loans or financing assistance, often with better interest rates than are available in the private market. Grants - or funds that do not need to be repaid - are typically the most commonly sought assistance. This toolbox focuses on grants, but many of the tips may be relevant for other kinds of applications.

Grants may be available to fund the majority of a project, but it is more common that grants fund different pieces of a project. Some grants are available for planning processes, while others fund construction or materials. It is important to fully understand the basic requirements of the grant you are applying for. Small companies may offer grants through social marketing competitions which only require a paragraph of narrative and a photo; larger foundations or agencies may require a formal and extensive application process.



# FINDING THE RIGHT GRANT

**T**here are a multitude of grants available through government agencies, non-profits, faith-based organizations and private corporations. There are two ways to approach acquiring grant funding. One way would be to find a grant and then develop a project to fit the requirements of the grant. For this strategy, you should pick a grant for which Cascade Locks would be competitive. The more traditional method is to select a project and find a grant to fit the project. The better the fit the more likely the grant will be awarded. Identifying appropriate grants for project types has been simplified for you with the accompanying grant matrix. This matrix has been developed specifically for the types of trail and business development projects that have been recommended in *Connect Cascade Locks*. The matrix identifies potential grant sources and also identifies what type of organization is eligible (non-profit, school, or a governmental agency, for example). Make sure to read through the grant in detail and confirm that your project adheres with the grant's guidelines and specifications.

If the grant matrix does not address a particular project, a variety of online databases can provide further grant resources. All of these databases operate differently and may require varying the search criteria. Grant funding databases include the following:

- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance: [www.cfda.gov](http://www.cfda.gov)
- Foundation Center: [www.foundationcenter.org](http://www.foundationcenter.org)
- Federal Grants Wire: [www.federalgrantswire.com](http://www.federalgrantswire.com)
- National Grant Database: [www.grant.gov](http://www.grant.gov)
- National Trails Training Partnership: [www.americantrails.org/resources/](http://www.americantrails.org/resources/)
- Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Grants Programs: [www.oregon.gov/OPRD/GRANTS/trails.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/OPRD/GRANTS/trails.shtml)
- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy: [www.railstotrails.org/ourwork/trailbuilding/toolbox/informationsummaries/funding\\_financing.html](http://www.railstotrails.org/ourwork/trailbuilding/toolbox/informationsummaries/funding_financing.html)
- Rural Development Assistance: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD\\_Grants.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD_Grants.html)
- Safe Routes to School: [www.saferoutesinfo.org/funding-portal](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/funding-portal)
- Steps to a Healthier US Initiative [www.nifa.usda.gov/business/business.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/business.html)
- US DOT Federal Highway Administration: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/discretionary/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/discretionary/)

Once a grant has been selected you should download the application materials or contact the grant program to request a grant application kit.

You should also review the grant provider online and understand the organization's mission, the grant requirements and goals, and review



# FINDING THE RIGHT GRANT

previously funded projects to get a clear sense of the types of projects they sponsor. Make sure you understand the following aspects of the grant program:

- Program descriptions and objectives
- Available funding
- Application timeline
- Past projects that have received grants from program

It is important to take this time to research the grant and understand the organization to ensure your project is compatible. Researching the organization's background will help you highlight how your project's goals and objectives overlap those of the grant provider. The more you know about the grant, the better you can draft your proposal and the more competitive you can be as an applicant.

Once you have selected a grant and project to pursue, make sure to read all of the requirements and follow the instructions as closely as possible. Selection committees will appreciate grant applications that follow the guidelines, instructions and application date.

Next, meet with the organizations that will be partners in executing the awarded grant, and coordinate with these organizations in the grant application effort. These organizations may have material that you can use to supplement the application.

Also, this is a good time to walk through the project you are pursuing and identify any risks, red flags or challenges that this project may encounter. While grants may be considered 'free money' to some, they can be time intensive in the amount of documentation they require, or restrictive in the types of work that can be done with the funding. They may also require matching funds or staff time that one or several of the partners will have to provide. Be sure that all partners understand the grant restrictions and support the grant application. A grant may require that the project partners sign an affiliated agreement prior to releasing funding to ensure all members are aware of the grant requirements and project development. Project partners should also be identified early on so their resources can be leveraged later on in the project. Non-profits or academic institutions can provide technical services while volunteer groups can provide manpower or organizational assistance.



Grants can help improve existing facilities and help construct new ones.

# DEVELOPING A PROPOSAL

Once the appropriate grant and project have been selected, it is time to sit down and write the grant. The first step in writing a grant is to read the full application very carefully. Highlight all of the questions you need to answer and all of the material you need to include. Identify key words in the grant criteria that you should highlight in your grant application. Begin brainstorming by identifying the strongest aspects of your project and your organization. This will help you develop a clear description of the proposed project. The proposed project should fulfil the mission or vision of the grant applicant. Ask yourself: How does this project support the mission of our organization? What need does it fill? Has this project been identified as a need in any adopted plans? Why is this project a necessity for this organization? This information will form the basis of your proposal. Developing a clear connection between the organization's mission and the project is crucial in having a good grant application, as everything else will build on this basic information.

*Make sure the proposal includes:*

- *Who your organization is*
- *What your project is*
- *How much money you are requesting*

Once the initial and base proposal have been clearly defined, revisit the proposal and refine it to include:

- **Project Description:** Goals, needs, and anticipated outcomes
- **Project Process:** Who will lead the project? Who will design it? Are there needed permits? Are there environmental regulations you will need to meet? Who will construct it?
- **Timeline:** What are the deadlines for the proposed project?
- **Performance measures:** How will you evaluate the project's success?
- **Staffing needs:** existing staff, new hires or volunteers
- **Preliminary budget:** Proposed project expenses

If you are having difficulty developing the proposal by yourself, call someone to talk through the proposal. Talk about your project objective, your goals, and how the money would be used. Sometimes it is easier to brainstorm a project with other people than by yourself. In addition to talking it out, go through each section and each question and write down each answer in a list. Then begin to form sentences and paragraphs from that list.



## DEVELOPING A PROPOSAL

This is the most time-intensive part of the process, but it will be the most useful in project implementation. Once the initial proposal has been developed, multiple grants can be pursued for the proposed project using this base proposal. It is important to flesh out these details early in the grant writing process, as they will guide the rest of the grant development. Developing a strong proposal also helps in developing the project.

When you have finished writing make sure to proofread the document, send it to someone else to proofread, and read it out loud to see how it sounds.

If you have developed a project summary you may contact the organization that is awarding the grant to see if they will review your project proposal. This is not always appropriate, so you must check with the organization to see if this is an approved part of their process. If they do allow for an initial review of the project summary, you should send it to them to ensure your project fits the criteria of their grant application. They may be able to help you discover solutions you had not considered. If the project does not fit within their criteria, it is appropriate to request recommendations for other places to apply for the funding. A personal visit to the agency or foundation office may be helpful as well to discuss the grant in more detail with staff. This can allow you to share additional project information with the

individuals who are selecting the grants without including all of the background information in the grant application.

Most grants will require the following questions in an application:

**Credibility Statement:** Who are you and why are you exceptional?

**Problem statement or assessment of need:** What measurable problem or need are you focused on?

**Budget:** How will you spend the money?

**Measurable objectives:** How much impact on the problem or need will you have?

**Methods:** How will you accomplish the impacts?

**Evaluation plan:** How will you evaluate your methods and impacts?

*-Colorado State Trails Program*

# BUDGET

**E**ach grant application will require a certain level of detail. Some will require personnel costs, material costs, match funding, direct and soft funds, etc. Whatever the application requires, the most important thing is to provide detailed and comprehensive information. Sometimes it is easiest to first start the grant application with the budget form, as it is the engine that drives the application. The budget format should be clear and simple to understand. Each budget section should be in outline form with line items listed below major items. The grand total should be clearly listed at the end. Use a simple grid table to outline all of the costs of the project.

Ensure that the budget corresponds with the proposal narrative. The expenses that are listed should also be mentioned and justified in the narrative section of the proposal. Be realistic about how much you will need to spend. Also make sure to be specific: a budget for \$4,568 looks more thoughtful and accurate than a request for the maximum amount of \$5,000. Convince the selection committee that you will use the money wisely: you will achieve the project goals by applying the awarded funds. Make sure to highlight if there is an opportunity to leverage funding to positively affect other projects.

Some grants can require a match, which can be

either hard (direct funds) or soft (staff or volunteer time). Always make sure to track volunteer hours (who, what, where) to keep as evidence for the matching hours you may need for a soft match. When developing your project proposal, you should also begin to estimate costs. The more costs that can be defined, the easier it will be to track grant funds once the grant is administered. Budgets may be hard to modify once the grant has been awarded, so it is important to hash out the details in the application.

Developing the budget will also help you determine the size of the match that will be required. The budget can also help you scope the size of the overall project to determine how many grants you will need to apply for and the likely contribution needed from community and project partners.

*Items that may be requested in the budget include:*

- *Material costs (raw materials, office supplies, etc.)*
- *Consulting fees*
- *Permitting fee*
- *Staff time (salaries)*
- *Training costs*
- *Volunteer time*
- *Food / beverage costs for events*
- *Contingency costs*



# BUDGET

## Additional information on creating project budgets can be found below:

- Budget and Proposal Packing  
[www.fundsforngos.org/how-to-write-a-proposal/budget-and-proposal-packaging/](http://www.fundsforngos.org/how-to-write-a-proposal/budget-and-proposal-packaging/)
- Budget Information, Instructions and Forms  
[www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/pdf/BudgetInstructions.pdf](http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/pdf/BudgetInstructions.pdf)
- Community-Developed Initiatives (small grants)  
[www.first5la.org/docs/Funding/FundOvr\\_CDI\\_SmallGrantBudgSamp.pdf](http://www.first5la.org/docs/Funding/FundOvr_CDI_SmallGrantBudgSamp.pdf)
- Developing a Grant Budget (University of Central Florida)  
[www2.cohpa.ucf.edu/documents/DevelopingaGrantBudgetCOHPA-BH.pdf](http://www2.cohpa.ucf.edu/documents/DevelopingaGrantBudgetCOHPA-BH.pdf)
- Developing Grant Budgets (Ohlone College)  
[www.ohlone.edu/org/grants/grantbudgets.html](http://www.ohlone.edu/org/grants/grantbudgets.html)
- Proposal Budgeting Basics  
[www.foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/prop\\_budgt/index.html](http://www.foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/prop_budgt/index.html)
- Sample Budget Detail Worksheet  
[www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/budgetws.pdf](http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/budgetws.pdf)
- Sample Budget for Program Grant Proposals  
[www.bushfoundation.org/apply/ProgGrantSampleBudget.htm](http://www.bushfoundation.org/apply/ProgGrantSampleBudget.htm)
- Sample Budget Justifications  
[www.seagrant.noaa.gov/other/greenbook\\_doc/budget\\_justification\\_info.pdf](http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/other/greenbook_doc/budget_justification_info.pdf)
- UWRF Grants Office: Budgets (University of Wisconsin)  
[www.uwrf.edu/grants/budgets.htm](http://www.uwrf.edu/grants/budgets.htm)
- Writing your Proposal Budget (Ferris State University)  
[www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/vpoffice/grants/budgets/writingbudget.cfm](http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/vpoffice/grants/budgets/writingbudget.cfm)

Your budget should also include a narrative describing what will happen once the grant has been spent. Explain how the materials will be maintained or how the program will be continued.

Mention any future plans for additional fundraising. Explaining future maintenance and program funding will demonstrate a long term commitment to the project.

## GRAPHICS & MEDIA COVERAGE

**G**rant applications may call for designs, engineering drawings or images to accompany the request.

This will depend on the type of grant you are applying to and the project itself. Graphics do not need to be detailed or elaborate. At a minimum, include photographs in the grant application to give the evaluation panel a feeling for the community context and the proposed project location. Make sure to label each photo with a title that accurately reflects the image you are trying to communicate. Only feature photos that are relevant to the project in the grant application.

Media articles that highlight the project or community work will also strengthen the application as they indicate past work has already taken place on the project.

A photograph can substitute plans or design diagrams to demonstrate your intent.



Include photos in your application showing the group the project will serve or the volunteers that will help build the project.





## LETTERS OF SUPPORT

**A**cquiring letters of support helps to demonstrate that the proposed project has support from community members and other agencies. There is no set number of letters of support that you need to acquire for each grant. However, you should always aim to supplement the grant with letters of support from partnering agencies or organizations. For example, if you are requesting funding to develop a trail hub in downtown, you should at least get a letter of support from the City, the volunteer group that is helping build and maintain the hub, and any other affiliated committees or organizations. Certain grants require letters of support that detail the role of the supporting organization in the project process. In-kind, volunteer or financial commitments can be highlighted in letters, especially if they are part of the grant requirement. If organizations balk at writing a letter of support due to time constraints you can write the letter for them and have them review, finalize and sign the letter.

The sample letter of support on the following page is written from the city's Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee in support for a request for grant funding to develop wayfinding signage to outdoor amenities in the downtown area.

It highlights the supplemental work that the committee has done on its own and explains how this proposed project will further advance their work. If grant committees learn that work is already being done and this project will support ongoing projects, they are more likely to support the grant, as it is a piece of a greater vision and effort being led by the community.

The following letter is a sample, and should be revised for each grant application to ensure it supports the proposed project and the role of the organization that is writing the letter.



[DATE]  
[GRANT NAME]  
[GRANT SELECTION COMMITTEE NAME]  
[GRANT OFFICE ADDRESS]

Dear Members of the [GRANT NAME] Committee

The Cascade Locks Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee (DRSC) wholeheartedly supports the Port of Cascade Locks’ application for funding to develop wayfinding signs for the downtown area of the city. This project has been identified as a top priority in *Connect Cascade Locks: a Recreational Trails plan for Economic Development*, adopted in 2012.

The DRSC was formed in 2011 and has been hard at work in the past year to develop projects that will enrich the community fabric and revitalize our main street. We have hosted citywide clean up days to plant flowers along WaNaPa Street, paint the old firehouse and landscape overgrown bushes and shrubs. The DRSC sees its role in the community as a key player in working to enhance the livability of the downtown area for the residents and tourists alike. Future projects for the DRSC include promoting cultural and musical events with the city’s Tourism Committee, working with business owners to update their landscaping and business facades and advocating for business development downtown.

The DRSC has invested considerable time in helping develop and refine the recommended projects in the *Connect Cascade Locks Plan*. Obtaining funding for wayfinding signs in the downtown area will help inform people of the multiple outdoor recreational opportunities available to residents and tourists. The signs will comply with the National Scenic Area design guidelines and will enhance and beautify the downtown area. Outdoor recreation has been identified as a section of the city’s multi-faceted economic strategy, and improving the wayfinding will leverage existing amenities and will help draw tourists to the area, boosting the economy of the city.

Many citizens, agencies and non-profit organizations have collaborated in the last year to revitalize Cascade Locks. The city has a new vision plan developed by the DRSC and the citizens of Cascade Locks. We are enthusiastic and positive that Cascade Locks has a lot to offer its residents and visitors and we hope to capitalize on this through improved wayfinding and signage. With continued support of partners from both the public and private sectors, we will have the resources to further revitalize downtown Cascade Locks. We look forward to providing its residents and visitors with a livable city and the chance to appreciate the natural beauty and plethora of outdoor recreational activities in the area. The wayfinding system is an important piece of this vision, and the installation of beautiful and informational signs will only help enhance the experience of outdoor recreationists.

Regards,

[SIGNATURE]

[FULL NAME], [TITLE]  
City of Cascade Locks Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee



## NEXT STEPS

### **B**efore mailing

Before you mail the grant make sure to complete the following steps:

- Re-read the instructions and ensure that your grant application includes all of the necessary information.
- Create a cover letter to summarize your grant request.
- Proofread the full application. Again.
- Make a copy of the application to keep for your files.
- Ensure that your mailing option will deliver the application before the deadline.

### **After mailing**

- Confirm that the application was received.
- If there is a major success for your project (you begin doing community work to further the project while you are waiting to hear from the grant) make sure to send the grant organization a letter or press coverage to let them know about the success.

### **Post-selection period**

If you are awarded a grant - congratulations! Now it is important to track the use of the grant funding and document the progress of the project. If you were not selected to receive a grant you should email the grant evaluation committee to request an explanation for why you were not selected. This will

help you learn which areas you need to improve upon before applying for the next grant.

### **Future grant writing**

Consider enrolling in a grant writing workshop. Mt. Hood Community College or the Gorge Community College offer low cost grant writing training. Also look for trainings offered by the Chambers of Commerce or the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District.

The more grants you write the simpler the process becomes. Practice, practice practice! Do not get discouraged if you are not awarded a grant! Review the application and learn from your mistakes. Ask friends and family to review your work before you submit the grant. Request help from City staff or Port staff. Get as many people to review the grant as possible! Grants are fantastic resources because they provide funding for projects but they are not easy to obtain. There are no short cuts. Hard work and persistence will help you succeed and practice makes perfect.

Good luck!

# GRANT WRITING RESOURCES

**Additional grant writing resources can be found in the following online sources:**

- All About Grants Tutorials (National Institutes of Health)  
[www.niaid.nih.gov/ncn/grants/default.htm](http://www.niaid.nih.gov/ncn/grants/default.htm)
- A Guide for Proposal Writing (National Science Foundation)  
[www.nsf.gov/pubs/1998/nsf9891/nsf9891.htm](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1998/nsf9891/nsf9891.htm)
- Common Grant Application (National Network of Grantmakers)  
[www.nng.org/cga.html](http://www.nng.org/cga.html)
- EPA Purdue University Grant-Writing Tutorial (Environmental Protection Agency)  
[www.purdue.edu/envirosoft/grants/src/msieopen.htm](http://www.purdue.edu/envirosoft/grants/src/msieopen.htm)
- Examples of Grant Applications (Access to Recreation)  
[www.bywaysonline.org/grants/examples/recreation](http://www.bywaysonline.org/grants/examples/recreation)
- Funding Sources and Ideas for Grant Writing (American Trails)  
[www.americantrails.org/resources/funding/index.html](http://www.americantrails.org/resources/funding/index.html)
- Grants and Grant Proposal Writing (St. Louis University)  
[www.eweb.slu.edu/papers2/grant01v32e.pdf](http://www.eweb.slu.edu/papers2/grant01v32e.pdf)
- Grant Proposal Writing  
[www.grantproposal.com/](http://www.grantproposal.com/)
- Grant Proposal Writing Tips (Corporation for Public Broadcasting)  
[www.cpb.org/grants/grantwriting.html](http://www.cpb.org/grants/grantwriting.html)
- Grant Training Manual  
[www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/pub/GrantManual.pdf](http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/pub/GrantManual.pdf)
- Grant Writing Resources  
[www.cnr.ncsu.edu/rrs/grant\\_writing\\_resources.html](http://www.cnr.ncsu.edu/rrs/grant_writing_resources.html)
- Grant Writing Tips Sheet  
[www.grants1.nih.gov/grants/grant\\_tips.htm](http://www.grants1.nih.gov/grants/grant_tips.htm)
- Grant Writing Tools for Non-Profit Organizations (Non-Profit Guides)  
[www.npguides.org/](http://www.npguides.org/)
- Guide for Writing a Funding Proposal (Michigan State University)  
[www.learnerassociates.net/proposal/](http://www.learnerassociates.net/proposal/)