

9

For REALTOR® Associations

WRITING A COMPELLING GRANT APPLICATION

BACKGROUND

Local and state REALTOR® associations can request financial support from NAR for programs and activities that create housing opportunities for area residents. The Housing Opportunity Fund supports a wide range of housing programs with grants of up to \$5,000. These can be used for a variety of activities such as housing symposiums, homebuyer resource web sites and guides, counseling services, financial literacy efforts, homebuyer fairs, down payment assistance programs, and more.

Housing Opportunity Fund grants are awarded twice a year, in April and October. Grant criteria and information about previously awarded programs is available at: www.realtor.org/housingopportunity.



SUGGESTIONS

Here are a few tips for writing a winning proposal:

- **Be creative.** Think about the specific housing needs in your community (or state). Develop programs that take a fresh approach to addressing those needs.
- **Set S.M.A.R.T. goals.** Select goals that clearly state how the program will be evaluated. Goals should be:
 - Specific (well defined, clear to those working on the program)
 - Measurable (set benchmarks, use quantitative evaluation tools)
 - Agreed upon (key stakeholders should be in agreement)
 - Realistic (within the availability of resources)
 - Time-based (enough time to achieve the goal, set a date for accomplishing the goal)
- **Get REALTORS® involved.** Programs that involve a large population of the membership, not just a few members or association staff, have a better chance of receiving funding. Have members participate in the planning of the program and ask them to help promote it. Where appropriate, have them serve as greeters, instructors, moderators, etc.
- **Don't neglect the basics.** Make sure you understand the grant criteria and be sure you meet those criteria; fully complete the application; tell your story, i.e. paint a clear picture of what you plan to do, how you will do it, who you plan to serve, who you will work with, how you will pay for it, and how you will measure the success.
- **Ask questions.** If you need help developing your program idea or responding to an application question, contact NAR for assistance at: housingopportunitygrants@realtors.org.

WRITING A COMPELLING GRANT APPLICATION *(continued)*

- **Create partnerships.** Add strength to your program by partnering with organizations that share similar housing-related goals. Partners provide additional ideas, resources, and funding.
- **Make a financial commitment.** Show that the association is contributing money to the program and not simply asking NAR to fund the entire program.
- **Be clear and concise.** Read and answer each application question carefully. State your response in a simple and direct manner. Keep your answer long enough to provide a full response but short enough that the reviewer does not get lost in a sea of words.

LEARN MORE



Housing Opportunity Fund

NAR's Housing Opportunity Fund, created in 2006, supports a wide range of housing opportunity programs with grants of up to \$5,000. Local and state REALTOR® associations can request financial support for programs and activities that create housing opportunities for area residents.

National Association of REALTORS®

www.realtor.org/government_affairs/housing_opportunity/grants/housingopportunityfund

UP CLOSE GRANTS.GOV

Grants.gov is a single web site consolidating all federal government grants. It lists grant opportunities, provides a means for electronic application, and includes a status-tracking feature. Of particular importance to associations is a page of related links, including *Writing a Grant Proposal* and many similar resources. While your association may not be applying for federal grants, the general guidelines found here might nonetheless be quite helpful for other grant opportunities.

Learn more at:

www.grants.gov/help/relatedlinks.jsp

Apply for a Grant

This page contains instructions on applying for a HUD grant, but many of the details can be applied to other grant opportunities as well.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/i_want_to/apply_for_a_grant

Find Funders

A comprehensive listing of funders (98,000 grantmakers and more than 1.7 million grants) as well as audio, video, and webinar resources to learn more about recent trends in grantmaking.

Foundation Center

For funders:

www.foundationcenter.org/findfunders

For resources:

www.foundationcenter.org/events/archive/index.html

WRITING A COMPELLING GRANT APPLICATION *(continued)*

Grant-Writing Tools for Non-Profit Organizations

This site includes not only tips on writing grant proposals but also a number of sample proposals that can be used as guides.

Non-Profit Guides

www.npguides.org/guide/index.html

Writing a Successful Grant Proposal

This detailed and comprehensive site has an FAQ on grant writing as well as instructions on composing your grant application.

Minnesota Council on Foundations

www.mcf.org/mcf/grant/writing.htm