



# GRANT WRITING & AI FOR NONPROFITS

Kristal Frazier, Principal and Founder  
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## KRISTAL FRAZIER

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Principal & Founder, FundJoy® LLC



### Professional Background

Experienced nonprofit consultant, fundraising expert, and federal & foundation grant reviewer with over \$200 million raised collectively with clients.



### Specialization Areas

Fundraising curriculum development, grant writing, public speaking, speech writing, donor development, communication, and leadership training for nonprofits, universities, and grantmakers.

# About This Workshop

## Grant Writing & AI for Nonprofits

A practical 3-part system to help you:

- Find funding that fits your mission
- Write narratives that get funded
- Use AI ethically to work smarter

**FIND IT**

**WRITE IT**

**POWER IT**

**Find It**

# Know Your Funding Landscape

## PRIVATE FUNDING

Family, community & corporate foundations

More flexibility in requirements

Letter of Inquiry (LOI) often required

Relationship-driven, know the program officer

Foundation Center / Candid for research

Education-focused foundations are a strong fit

## PUBLIC / FEDERAL FUNDING

Federal, state, and local government grants

Strict eligibility & compliance requirements

Grants.gov, SAM.gov for federal opportunities

Longer timelines and reporting requirements

Reviewer criteria are publicly available

Title programs, and education-specific funds

# Types of Funding Sources to Explore



## Federal Grants

Grants.gov, DOE, ACF, DOL, DOA, etc.



## State & Local Programs

TEA grants, state education agency funding, local school authority grants



## Corporate Philanthropy

Corporate foundations, employee giving programs, education-focused Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives



## Community Foundations

Example: Communities Foundations of Texas, Musk Foundation, Beacon Fund, Noggin Educational Foundation, Brave Roots Foundation

# Public vs. Private Funding: What to Expect

ELEMENT	PUBLIC / FEDERAL	PRIVATE / FOUNDATION
Typical Grant Size	Large, often six to seven figures	Smaller, typically five figures
Proposal Length	Extensive requirements; complex applications	Often shorter and more flexible
Technical Assistance	Federal agencies often provide TA resources	Foundation officers may assist
Flexibility	Strict guidelines; limited customization	More open to unique needs and approaches
Risk Factors	Changing political trends affect funding availability	Funder priorities can change without notice
Reviewer Profile	Favors established applicants with track record	Relationship and mission alignment matter

# Evaluate Before You Apply: Qualifying Checklist



## Mission Alignment

Does the funder's priorities match your foundation's programs and initiatives?



## Eligibility

Do you meet ALL stated eligibility requirements?



## Capacity

Can you deliver the program and manage reporting?



## Funding History

Has the funder previously funded education foundations or similar work?



## Relationship

Is there an existing connection with a program officer?



## ROI

Is the award amount worth the staff time investment to apply?

# The Grant Research Process

1 Identify Priorities

2 Search for Aligned Funders

3 Read Funder Guidelines

4 Contact the Program Officer

5 Document & Qualify

# Reading Funder Guidelines: What to Look For

Every RFP and LOI tells you what the funder wants. Read it carefully before writing a single word.

## 01 Eligibility

Does your organization qualify?

## 02 Funder Priorities

Align your proposal with their stated goals and focus areas.

## 03 Deadline

When is the application due?  
Plan your timeline backward from that date.

## 04 Submission Process

How do you submit an application/proposal? Know the format requirements and page limits.

## 05 FAQ

Check the FAQ section for answers to common questions.

## 06 Ask a Question

Reach out to the funder's contact person. They want to help you submit a strong application.

A glowing lightbulb with a purple and blue hue, symbolizing an idea or activity. The lightbulb is the central focus, with its filament visible and glowing. The background is dark, making the lightbulb stand out. The word "ACTIVITY" is written in white, outlined letters across the middle of the lightbulb.

ACTIVITY

# Funding Research & Prep Process

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## **Decision: Why do you need funding?**

Consider the core reason your project requires funding. What specific gap or opportunity are you addressing that can only be achieved with financial support? Make sure to communicate why this funding is essential for meeting your mission or advancing your impact, highlighting what would be accomplished with these resources.

# Funding Research & Prep Process

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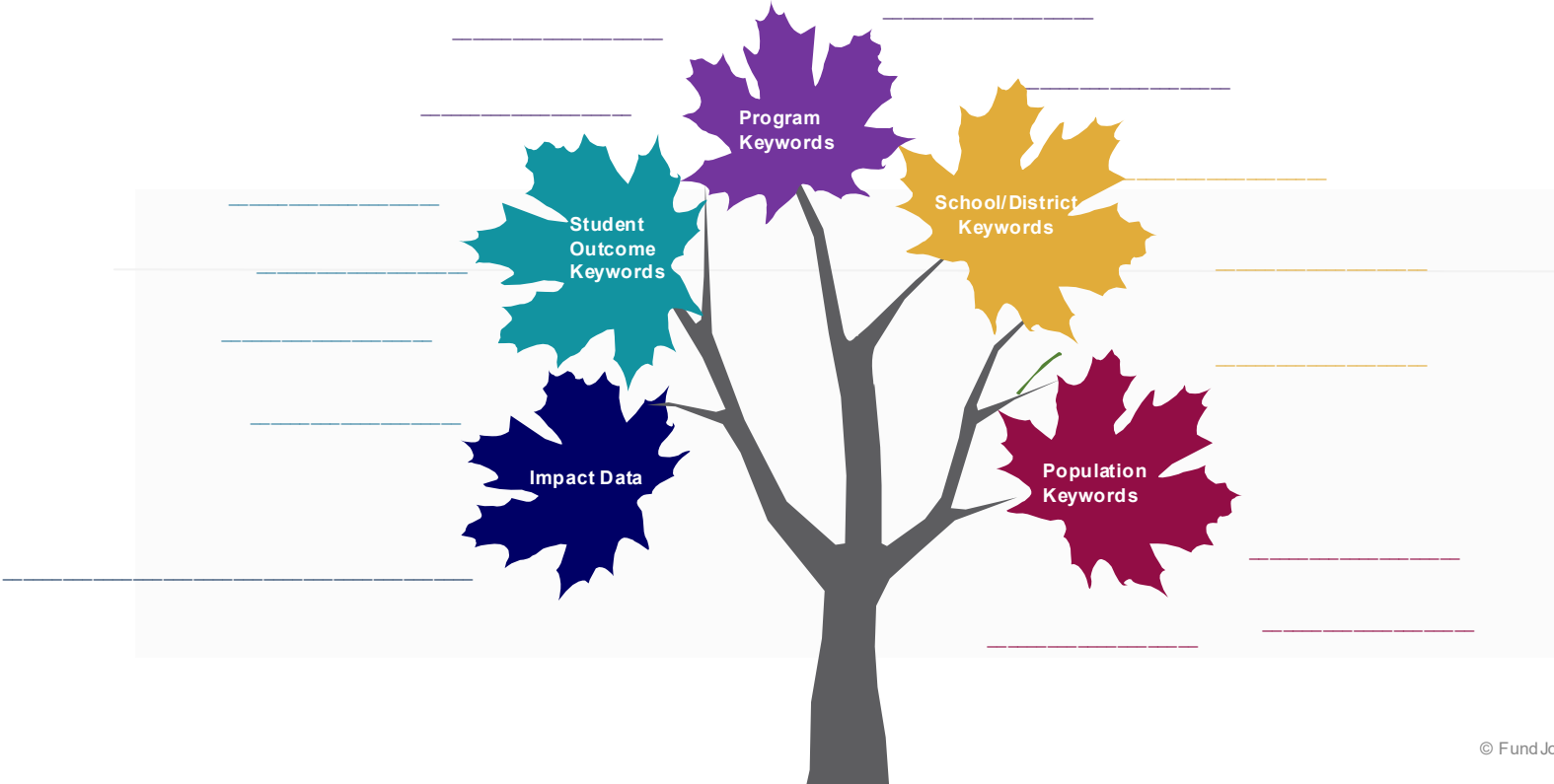
## **Action: List several keywords to describe your grant request**

Think of impactful keywords that capture the heart of your request. For example, words like “community development,” “youth empowerment,” “sustainable impact,” or “educational access” can help convey your project’s focus quickly and powerfully. These keywords should reflect both the immediate goals of your project and the long-term benefits for your target audience.

# FundJoy® Funding Research Tree Template

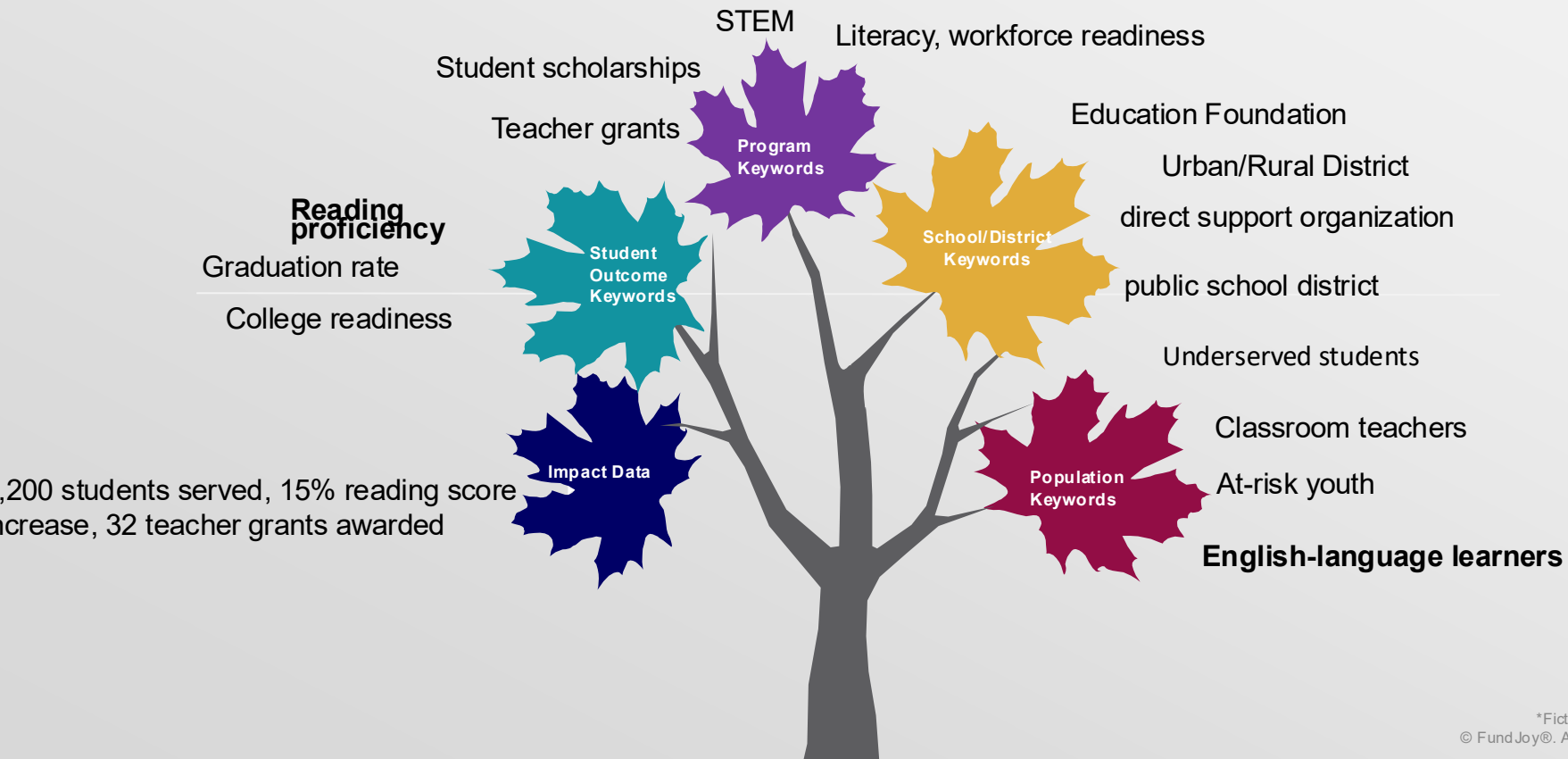
Instructions:  
Fill the tree with words that describe your organization, program and potential results.

Education Foundation Name: \_\_\_\_\_



# FundJoy® Grant Research Tree Example

Name: NorthSouthEastWest Texas Education Foundation



Share



**Write It**

# Grant Writing Best Practices



Avoid acronyms. Keep language clear and accessible.



Missing details can disqualify your proposal.



AI can support the process but should never replace your expertise.



Customize each proposal.



Explain the budget thoroughly with a budget summary (if you have space).



Make a connection with the funder's mission and priorities.



Be authentic and honest.



Have two people review the application for clarity and errors.



Keep outcomes realistic and measurable.



Double-check all deadlines and submission requirements.

# Grant Proposal Components: Part A

1

Executive Summary - Who. What. Ask.

2

Needs Statement / Problem – Prove the problem.

3

Goals & Objectives - What does success look like?

4

Program Description - Activities. Timeline. Team.

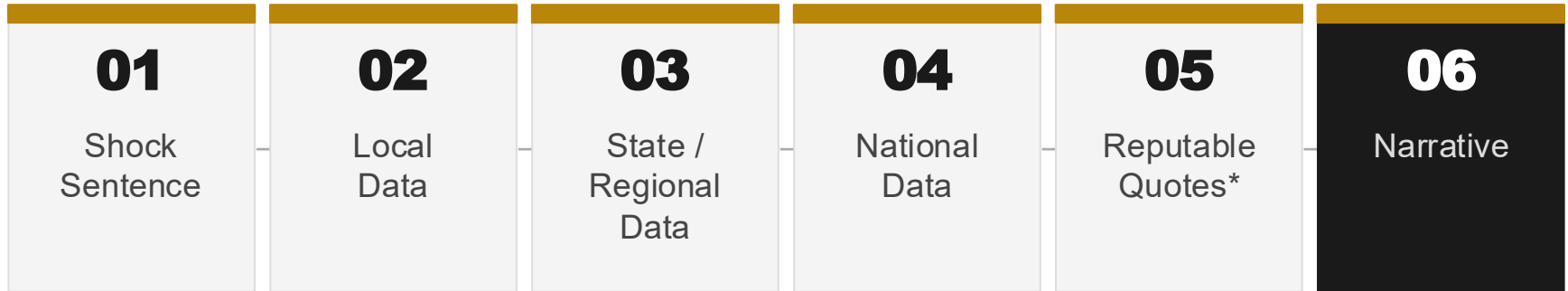
# Grant Proposal Components: Part B

- 5 Evaluation Plan - Measure the impact.
- 6 Budget & Summary - Every dollar must trace back to your program description.
- 7 Organizational Capacity - Track record, leadership, partnerships, and financial stability.
- 8 Sustainability - Plan beyond funding.

# The Needs Statement

The needs statement is the **2nd most important section** to a reviewer. It answers: ***Why should this funder care about this problem right now?***

## BUILD IT IN THIS ORDER



\* optional

# Writing the Shock Sentence

**Why Focus Here?** It sets the tone for the reader, shows reviewers you understand the problem, and avoids the common mistake of talking about your program or outcomes too early.

The Formula:

## STAT

A number applicable to your demographic. Best guess or check your website.

## CLIENT KEYWORD

Who you serve. Look at your Funding Research Tree population/demographic keywords.

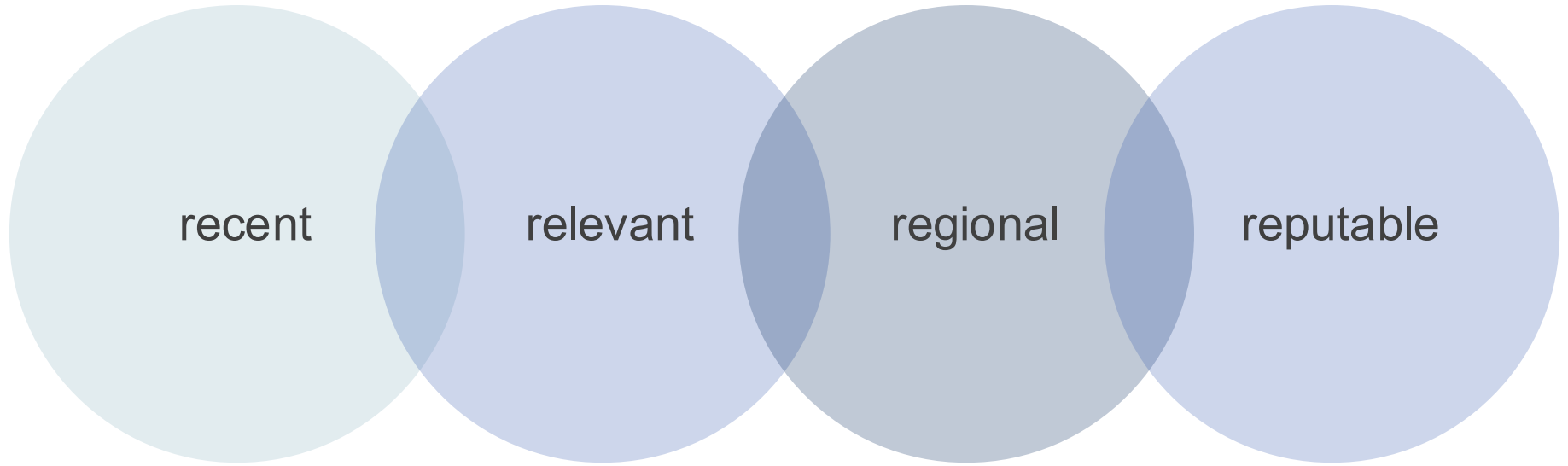
## PROBLEM

The opposite of your outcomes, the reason your organization exists.

Examples:

"In the last two years, ten client families in our district have been affected by texting while driving."

"One in four children in our community goes to bed hungry every night."



## THE FOUR Rs' OF USING DATA IN GRANT PROPOSALS

# The Four R's of Using Data in Grant Proposals

## RECENT

The funders want to know the problem you present is currently affecting the community.

## RELEVANT

Ask yourself whether the data specifically addresses your topic. If it doesn't connect directly, find data that does.

## REGIONAL

Local data helps present a solid case in the proposal. Use data that focuses on the area of the project and the students you serve.

## REPUTABLE

Government agencies provide community, state, and national statistics that are considered reputable..

# Goals vs. Objectives: Definitions & Examples

## GOAL

What will be accomplished by a project.

"To reduce food deserts among elderly residents in a three-county area of east Texas."

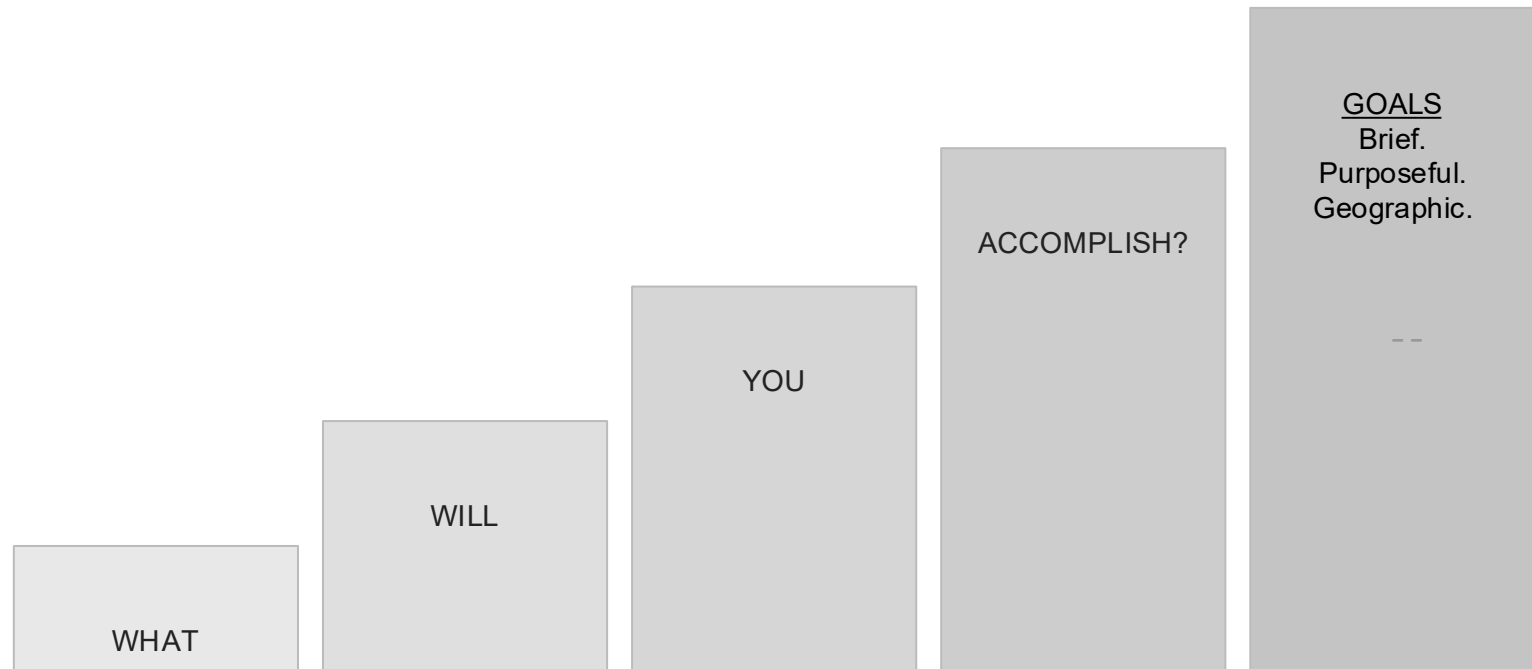
## OBJECTIVE

Reflects the goal and provides details about potential project results.

"By the end of the funding period, community members who participate in the healthy art initiative will have 50% increased access to healthy food."

# Writing Goal Statements

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# Budget & Summary Best Practices

## Budget

✓ Justify every line item and connect it to a program activity

✓ Use exact figures

✓ Never inflate the budget hoping to negotiate down


## Budget Summary

✓ Give reviewers a snapshot of totals by category, not line by line

✓ Keep it transparent, realistic, and tied to your project goals

✓ Don't ask for 100% from one funder if leverage is expected

# Budget Summary Example



“If granted this funding, XYZ Foundation will purchase electronics and software for the Bridge the Gap Program. We will purchase ten HP computers and ten HP tablets to use as part of the learning stations for participants. We will purchase three copiers and one desktop computer for the Executive Director and volunteer staff to use to run the program. As part of our mission to provide a family-friendly environment, we will purchase two Screenflex freestanding portable partitions. The partitions will be used to provide a quiet place to use the learning stations for our clients and parents. We will purchase one LifeCubby Childcare Software for the staff to use as part of their communication to parents and the daily lesson plans.”

# Evaluation

## How You Will Evaluate

- 1 Explain the methods you'll use like surveys, data tracking, or focus groups to measure your project's success and outcomes.

## When You Will Evaluate

- 2 Specify key points in the project timeline, such as milestones or quarterly reviews, to assess progress and make adjustments if needed.

## How You Will Report Results

- 3 Outline how you'll share evaluation findings with funders, using clear reports, presentations, or data summaries to demonstrate impact.

# Sustainability Example



“XYZ Nonprofit agrees to take primary responsibility for continuation of this project, including analyzing metrics, increasing membership and accessibility of the mobile and internet applications. Several organizations have agreed to support the continuation of this project for at least the next five years. The organizations are Forbes CZ, Boston Consulting Group CZ, Multimedia company MAFRA, Czech Chamber of Commerce, Am Cham, Government of the Czech Republic, Association of Social Responsibility. With this community support we shall continue this project into the near future. (Please see letters of commitment in the appendix.)”

# Dissemination Example

To increase transparency among the media outlets and organizations, XYZ Nonprofit enthusiastically commits to disseminate the successes and challenges of this project with potential partners supporting our project across the Czech Republic and United States that might be interested in conducting similar projects. We want to do everything we can to bring awareness to corporate social responsibility.

Dissemination efforts will include sharing information about this project using the following:

- 1 Conferences
- 2 Think-tanks
- 3 Presentations to government entities
- 4 Presentations at local media outlets
- 5 News releases to local and national newspapers
- 6 Social media outlets

# Tact, Tone & Timing™ in Funder Communications

## TACT

Sensitivity in dealing with others or with difficult issues.

Consider how world events, pandemic, social unrest, economic shifts, donor priorities, affect your funder conversations. Lead with empathy and awareness.

## tone

Your tone of voice and word choices control funder conversations, influencing the level of engagement.

## TIMING

Asks have higher success rates at certain times of the year. Think about the “fundraising year”.

# A Grant Reviewer's Perspective

Reviewers assess each application with a focus on specific criteria set by the funder.

The goal is to identify the most impactful, feasible, and mission-aligned projects.

Reviewers look for alignment with mission and funding priorities.

Proposals should demonstrate potential for measurable outcomes and sustainable impact.

Reviewers often read dozens of proposals. Clarity and direct language stand out immediately.

Strong need statements, backed by local data, stories, letters of support, make a real difference.

Power It

# Understanding AI

## Prediction Engine, Not a Search Engine

AI learns patterns in text, associations between words, phrases, and concepts. It predicts what word comes next, not what is true.

## Learning the "Vibe," Not Just Facts

AI has scanned massive amounts of writing to learn patterns of communication. It understands how words and concepts usually hang together.

## No Built-in "Truth" Filter

AI doesn't verify if its response is factually true. Its primary job is to be helpful and conversational, not to verify facts.

# Why Is AI So Convincing?



AI Models learn from professional, factual, and expert writing, so they copy how knowledgeable people write.



Detailed, well-organized answers create an illusion of deep understanding, even when the content is wrong.



AI mimics the authoritative tone of trusted sources, making inaccurate claims sound certain and credible.

# What Leads to AI Hallucinations?

## HALLUCINATION:

When AI generates false information that sounds believable but isn't true.



### Vague Prompting

Unclear requests cause AI to guess and invent details to fill gaps. The more specific your prompt, the more accurate the result.



### Too Helpful

AI prioritizes sounding confident and helpful over admitting uncertainty. It may fabricate details rather than say "I don't know."



### Complex Tasks

Small mistakes in complex reasoning compound into larger inaccuracies. Always verify AI-generated data against real sources.

# AI Terms

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS	SIMPLIFIED
Prompt	What you type	The instruction or question you give AI
Response / Output	What AI gives back	The result you receive
Input	The information you provide	Can be text, files, data, and more
Interaction	One back-and-forth	Prompt + response together
Hallucination	AI-generated false content	Sounds believable but is not true, always verify

# What Is an AI Foundation?

The setup that helps AI understand your foundation's unique mission, values, and context, so it generates accurate, relevant outputs tailored to your organization while reducing errors and hallucinations.

1

## Define Your Voice

Set AI's tone and style upfront so it generates content that sounds authentic to your organization.

2

## Define Your Mission & Vision

Share your foundation's mission and values so AI keeps all content aligned with your priorities.

3

## Add Resources

Share your documents and web pages so AI references the right details about your work.

4

## Define Your Audience

Describe who you're writing to, demographics, motivations, and communication style.

5

## Common Use Cases

Tell AI what you need most so it delivers the right format and level of detail.

6

## Non-Negotiables

Define what AI must always include and must never say, protect your values and voice.

# AI Foundation: Language & Voice

## Organizational Voice

How your foundation sounds, formal or approachable, data-driven or story-driven, urgent or steady.

## Preferred Terminology

The words you use (and don't use) to talk about your work and the students and families you serve.

## Tone Consistency

Keeping the same attitude and energy across everything AI writes for your foundation.

## Mission Alignment

Making sure AI's tone stays true to your foundation's mission, vision, and values across all content.

# Defining Your Mission & Vision for AI

When AI knows your mission and values, it stops generating generic nonprofit content and starts writing specifically for your foundation's students, donors, and community.

## YOUR MISSION

- › What problem you're solving for students
- › Who your foundation serves
- › What programs and strategies you use
- › How you measure success and impact

## YOUR VISION & VALUES

- › The education outcomes you're working toward
- › The change you want to see for your community
- › Why this work matters now
- › What principles guide your foundation's decisions

# Adding Resources to Your AI Foundation

## Step 1

### List What You Already Have

Mission statement, donor profiles, past successful grants, program descriptions, annual reports, case studies, communication templates. Brainstorm first, don't organize yet.

## Step 2

### Pull Your Public-Facing Content

Visit your foundation's website and copy 2-3 key pieces: your About Us, program descriptions, and recent stories. ***AI only sees the home page if you don't give specific URLs.***

## Step 3

### Gather Core Resources

Program descriptions (1-2 sentences each), donor profile, communication style notes (formal/casual, words you use/avoid), common funding asks, most recent annual report.

 Refer to your organization's policies on AI, confidentiality, and document sharing before adding any sensitive materials.

# Define Your Audience for AI

Describe who you're writing to so AI creates content that speaks directly to them.

## Example Audience Description:

"Our typical major donors to the education foundation are community leaders and business owners, ages 45-65, who believe strongly that public education is a cornerstone of a thriving community. They give because they want to see measurable outcomes for kids, not just programs, but results. They respond to data paired with student stories. They prefer personal outreach over mass emails and want to see exactly how their gift makes a difference in local schools. Most give \$1,000-\$10,000 annually and appreciate recognition that is sincere, not transactional."

The more specific your audience description, the more targeted and effective AI's output will be.

Include: demographics, motivations, communication preferences, giving patterns, and what success looks like to them.

# AI Foundation: Non-Negotiables

Define what AI must always include and what it should never say.

## ALWAYS INCLUDE

Use 'students' not 'clients'

Always reference specific program outcomes

Include student impact numbers when available

Cite local data alongside national statistics

Keep language accessible and jargon-free

## NEVER USE

AI clichés: 'delve,' 'robust,' 'leverage,' 'game-changer,' 'tapestry'

Words like 'underprivileged,' 'at-risk,' or 'giving back' (if your program targets at-risk, that's an exception).

Guilt-based language that shames the reader

Deficit-based language about students or communities (ex. what students lack)

Em dashes or overly academic phrasing

# How to Use Your AI Foundation

You've built the foundation. Now put it to work. Every time you use AI, follow this two-step process:

## Step 1

### Share Your Foundation

Paste your full AI foundation prompt at the start of each new conversation. This gives AI your voice, mission, audience, and non-negotiables.

Premium accounts: Use the Projects feature in Claude or ChatGPT to save your foundation once, no need to paste every time.

## Step 2

### Assign the Task

- › Research grants for after-school literacy programs in Texas for education foundations
- › Draft a needs statement for our summer reading program
- › Write a thank-you letter to a donor who gave \$2,500
- › Review this grant narrative for clarity and alignment with the RFP

The Foundation teaches AI WHO you are. The Task tells AI WHAT to do.  
Together, they produce results that sound like you.

# Funding Research Prompt Structure

Here's how to ask AI for grant research after you've shared your AI foundation:

1 Act as my grant researcher.

2 Research grants for [education program/cause] in [location]. Include government, corporate, and foundation opportunities that match our mission.

3 Prioritize funders who have supported [peer organizations, similar education programs, or organizations serving our student population].

4 Provide deadlines, eligibility, award amounts, application requirements, and giving patterns for each opportunity.

Remove the brackets and replace with your foundation's specific details before submitting to AI.

# AI Your Org: Managing Your Online Reputation

Funders are researching your foundation using AI tools before they respond to your proposal. Know what they see.

**1** AI scans your website, social media, news articles, and review platforms to see what people say about your foundation.

**2** AI reads the tone of online mentions, positive, neutral, or negative, and tracks patterns over time about your organization.

**3** AI flags negative comments, misinformation, or recurring complaints that could influence funder perceptions.

AI scans: Social media · News & press · Google reviews · Charity Navigator · GuideStar · IRS 990 data · Public databases

# Manage Your Reputation

## Both Reputations Matter

Your foundation's AND yours as its leader. Funders research the organization and the person leading it.

## Handle All Feedback

Respond to praise, mentions, thanks, and complaints in alignment with your foundation's policies.

## Highlight, Highlight, Highlight

Share stories, stats, testimonials, and program updates to reinforce your foundation's credibility. Feed AI positivity.

## AI Your Org: At Least Twice a Year

Search your foundation and your own name using AI. Ask: 'What does the public know about [Your Foundation Name]?'

# AI & Ethics



Use AI to Draft, Then Revise in Your Voice



Verify All AI-Generated Facts & Stats



Disclose AI Use When Funders Require It



Keep Your Foundation's Story Central



Use AI for Efficiency, Not Replacement

## Navigating AI Ethics: Risks to Avoid

- ✘ Never Submit AI Output Without Review
- ✘ Don't Let AI Invent Data
- ✘ Don't Lose Your Organizational Voice
- ✘ Don't Ignore Funder Disclosure Requirements

# The Three-Part System

01



## Find It

### Identify & Evaluate

- › Know private vs. public funding
- › Qualify before you write
- › Use research tools effectively
- › Activity: Funding Research Tree

02



## Write It

### Compelling Narratives

- › 8 essential components
- › Goals & objectives
- › Grant Reviewer strategies

03



## Power It

### AI for Productivity

- › Build your AI foundation
- › Reusable 4-step system
- › Grant research prompts
- › Ethics & best practices

# April 2026 Action Plan

1

Start Your AI Foundation

Draft your org profile prompt with mission, programs, audience, and non-negotiables. Use your worksheet.

2

AI You & Your Foundation

Search your foundation's name in an AI tool. Search your name too.

**Survey Time!**



A portrait of Kristal Frazier, a Black woman with dark, wavy hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a black sleeveless top and a gold chain necklace. Her hands are clasped in front of her.

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# Kristal *Frazier*

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