

Communicate Your Vision to Funders

Building Strong Program Designs

Learning Objectives

- Clearly articulate program impact using data, storytelling, and relevant metrics in grant proposals
- Apply the SMART framework to craft objectives that align with funder priorities
- Structure a compelling budget narrative
- Integrate evaluation metrics for grant reporting post-award

Communicating Impact in Grant Proposals

Funders prioritize measurable impact—why?

- Demonstrates effectiveness and accountability of funded programs
- Helps funders justify their investments to stakeholders including the public

Storytelling + Data = Stronger Grant Applications

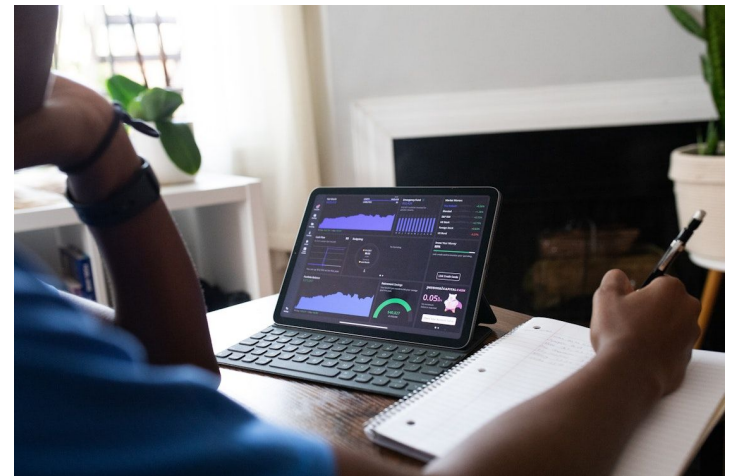
- Narrative appeals to emotions while data supports credibility
- Connects program impact to organizational mission and funder priorities

Breaking Down Program Needs

- Identifying key resources (e.g., personnel, facilities, technology)
- Budget justification and linking expenses to outcomes

The SMART Framework

- **Specific** – Defining clear goals that funders understand
- **Measurable** – Quantifying impact with key indicators
- **Achievable** – Aligning goals with available resources
- **Relevant** – Ensuring objectives align with funder and community needs
- **Time-bound** – Setting realistic timelines for success



Example: Before vs. After

Before:

- "We will increase food security in our community."

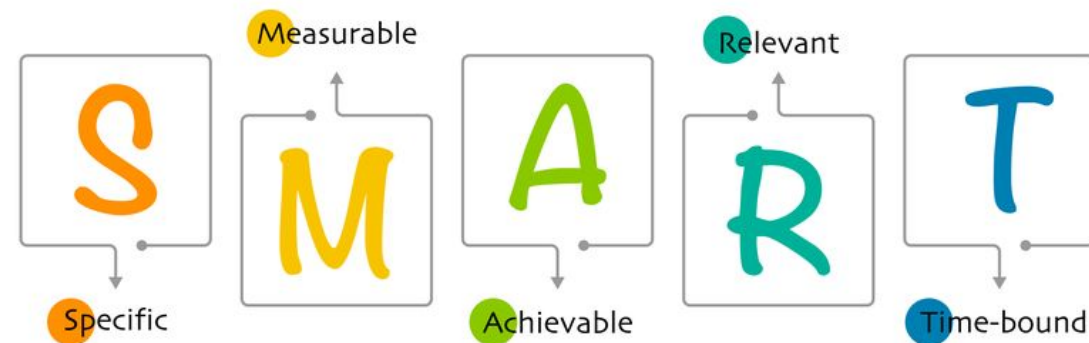
After:

- By December 2025, our food distribution program will provide 500 families in Camden with weekly fresh produce boxes, increasing access to healthy food by 30%

Integrating SMART Objectives into Proposals

Where to include SMART objectives:

- Needs Statement
- Program Description
- Evaluation Plan
- Connecting objectives to logic models and budgets



Communicating Long-Term Impact

Why Long-Term Impact Matters to Funders:

- Shows sustainability beyond the grant cycle
- Provides a pathway for scaling successful programs

Tracking Progress & Reporting Outcomes:

- Collect and analyze key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Share qualitative stories alongside quantitative data
- Align reporting with funder expectations



Common Mistakes in Grantwriting

- Vague objectives
 - I.e., not SMART
- Lack of supporting data
- Misaligned budgets
- Overpromising deliverables
 - Include the measurement of outcomes, if applicable



Reflection

Think about your current grant proposals and how you define success.

- Are your objectives specific and measurable, or do they need refinement?
- Do your proposed outcomes align with the funder's priorities?
- Have you clearly defined how success will be tracked and reported?
- Does your budget narrative justify program costs in a compelling way?
- What's one change you can make to improve your proposal's rigor and clarity?

Key Takeaways & Next Steps

- A well-designed program communicates both impact and resource needs effectively
- SMART objectives ensure clarity, feasibility, and accountability in proposals
- Funders prioritize measurable outcomes and sustainability plans
- Aligning budget with objectives strengthens funding credibility
- Effective evaluation frameworks increase future funding opportunities