

Writing Compelling Grant Proposals: A peer-to-peer learning cohort facilitated by John R. Killacky

Audience

- VT Dept of Health District Directors
- Community integrators
- Backbone organizations
- Community organizations

Overview

Every nonprofit organization's mission is fueled by contributions. Nonprofit organizations employ more than 61,000 Vermont workers who account for 17 percent of the state's workforce in nonprofit libraries, shelters, food banks, affordable housing, hospitals, schools, churches, theaters, museums, libraries, and social service agencies.

Grants can be awarded to nonprofits for any (legal) purpose and to any entity, for amounts from a few hundred dollars to many millions of dollars. In our workshops we will focus on writing applications for small-to-medium grants for your nonprofit organization to sustain the work in your community.

Grant writing is not synonymous with "fundraising." We will briefly consider other fundraising activities -- individual donor cultivation, grass-roots fundraising, legislative appropriations -- but these workshops are primarily about *grants*.

Activities

Activities will occur through workshop instruction, discussion, and peer-to-peer learning.

There will be a strong focus on research to help foster an understanding of a) the larger landscape of grant writing: types of grants, sources for grants, types of giving and receiving organizations, range of activities funded, research resources for grant writers, etc. and b) the structure of grant applications, the tone and style of narrative sections, the format for project budgets, and project management tools.

Each workshop participant will do web research, as detailed above, and draft grant applications to appropriate foundations. We will evaluate each other's work in our learning cohort in peer-to-peer breakout rooms each session. Short written and oral presentations will be shared on specific topics researched. There will be some writing done outside of workshop time to hone the writing skills needed for effective proposals and successful grant applications. Each week, individualized feedback sessions can be scheduled with instructor.

Learning Outcomes

By the conclusion of these workshops, participants will be able to:

- Articulate the missions of their nonprofit
- Identify funding needs for programs

- Become more aware of area nonprofits and their leaders
- Research appropriate philanthropic sources
- Build grant budgets for grant requests
- Prepare a letter of interest to funding agencies
- Evaluate grant letters of interest according to criteria

Workshop Descriptions and Dates

Tuesday, July 11, 10am -12pm

- We will learn about the nonprofit landscape & philanthropic trends: foundation & corporate grants, individual donors, grass-roots campaigns, and/or legislative appropriations, as well as research tools to identify funding needs.
- Workshop assignment: Write a short summary of your organization’s funding needs and research appropriate foundations.

Thursday, July 13, 10am -12pm

- One-on-one support sessions are available. These must be scheduled in advance.

Tuesday, July 18, 10am -12pm

- We will learn about goals and timelines, cultivation and solicitation plans, components of a full proposal including needs, programs, target populations, budgets, sustainability, and evaluation, in addition to sharing out on funding needs and foundation research.
- Workshop assignment: Draft a two-page letter of intent for a ‘to be determined’ foundation with peer-to-peer support and comments from John.

Thursday, July 20, 10am -12pm

- One-on-one support sessions are available. These must be scheduled in advance.

Tuesday, July 25, 10am -12pm

- We will learn about donor retention strategies, hold mock peer panel reviews of final letters of intent, as well as have time for group discussion. Workshop evaluations will be provided.

Thursday, July 27, 10am -12pm

- One-on-one support sessions are available. These must be scheduled in advance.

FAQ

- **Who can attend? And how does registration work?**
 - These workshops are open to all VT CHEP partners statewide.
 - Please note that registration is limited and closes on **Friday, June 16, 2023, 5pm.**
 - Please coordinate with your local groups to register no more than 3 people from your district.
 - The VT CHEP will follow-up to confirm registration. Please [use this link to register.](#)

- **What if registrants cannot attend all three of the workshops?**
Ideally, registrants attend all three workshops, but if you cannot, the expectation is that you watch the recorded session and complete the assignment before the next workshop.
- **Are there other times John is available other than what is scheduled?**
Other times can be set up on a case-by-case basis, rather than what is being offered (Thursdays, 10am - 12pm).
- **What if I need more help than 15 minutes for my one-on-one session with John?**
A longer session can be set up on a case-by-case basis with John, as needed.
- **Will the Tuesday workshops be recorded?**
Yes, the workshops will be recorded and posted on the VT CHEP's Learning Management System through the New England Public Health Training Center (instructions are [here](#)).
- **Will there be work in between the Tuesday workshops?**
Yes, to make this time as productive as possible, there will be pre-work before the workshop sessions, some writing work, and research between the weekly sessions.
- **What product will we have at the end of this workshop series?**
You will have drafted a letter of intent that has been reviewed by peers and can be used for future funding opportunities.

Learn more about John

John R. Killacky served two terms in the Vermont House of Representatives. Previously he was executive director of Flynn Center, program officer for arts and culture at San Francisco Foundation, executive director of Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and curator of performing arts for Walker Art Center. Other past positions include program officer at Pew Charitable Trusts, general manager of PepsiCo SUMMERFARE, and managing director of the Trisha Brown and Laura Dean dance companies. He also taught arts administration and grant writing at University of Minnesota, Temple University, Burlington College, and Champlain College

He received the First Bank Award Sally Ordway Irvine Award in Artistic Vision, William Dawson Award for Programming Excellence from the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, Dance USA's Ernie Award as an unsung hero, Fan Taylor Distinguished Service Award for Exemplary Service to the Field of Professional Presenting, and Vermont Arts Council's Kannenstine Award for Arts Advocacy.

Killacky has served as a panelist, lecturer, and consultant for a broad range of arts and funding organizations. He has written numerous publications on the arts and written and directed several award-winning short films and videos. His videos have been screened in festivals, galleries, museums, hospitals, and universities world-wide and are in the collections of numerous libraries and universities. He co-edited the Lambda Literary Award-winning anthology, "Queer Crips: Disabled Gay Men and Their Stories" and published a compilation of his writing, "because art: commentary, critique, & conversation."