



Grant Writing Q&A – SPN Meet-Up – Feb 12/24

Organizations represented: Art Gallery, DCC, BetterAtHome/SOS, Cortes Currents, Fire Department, CICF, FOCI, CCEDA, CHS, SCCA

In Appreciation for Sandra Wood & Kate Maddigan who shared their extensive knowledge and experience at the Mansons Fire Hall and on Zoom.

Grant Writing:

- The importance of language in grant-writing – be really mindful of technical details.
- No matter what skills you have, you can be a good grant writer. Gaps in skill can be filled by help from your board, friends, neighbours.
Skills you need are: creative or technical writing. You want a combination of business-sense and heart. If you don't have both, get help from somebody who can fill in the gaps.
- Partnerships are powerful when it comes to grants! Partnering with another organization on the island is attractive to funders.
- Always contact the granting organization to get feedback if you are unsuccessful in your application.
- Be persistent, be patient. Don't give up. Improve your application next time, and apply again.
- Community Gaming Grants – they are a bear. They're challenging, you have to follow the guidelines exactly. BUT they are a great source of program-oriented funding. Follow the instructions closely, read the granting guidelines carefully. If you have the opportunity to phone a program coordinator, do it! Get free feedback before you submit.

- This is dry work that's hard to focus on. Be kind to yourself, find a quiet place, go easy on yourself.
- Always have somebody read your work.
- Letter of Support – make contact with this person early, it takes time. Be prepared to write the letter of support yourself. Give them the option to just sign it, if they are busy.
- Financial statements – ask your treasurer for this early too! Takes time.
- There are lots of questions in grant applications about “why is this project important”. Have your community plans on hand, we've done so many public engagements on this island and that is *why* we do them – include evidence in your application! Make sure you use those.
- Include quotes, which can sometimes be challenging on Cortes. Often grants want more than one quote.

Grant Sources:

- Distinguishing between government grants (these are usually more technical) and foundation grants (harder to find, you often need to sell your idea with some creative writing/heart and have value alignment)
- SRD has annual Grant-In-Aid that can range from \$1,000-20,000 that everybody on Cortes can apply for.
- UNBCM puts out a list of grants that are available every two months. Worth checking.
- Also look into foundations! Vancouver Foundation, Victoria Foundation, Campbell River Foundation, Cortes Foundation. Worth checking out.
- Feedback Sandra has been given for why her grants have been turned down: Most common: they just don't have enough money. Another common: we didn't have a compelling enough answer for things like community need. Not enough evidence, couldn't prove that it would make a difference, couldn't guarantee success, or even measure success.

More Tips!

- *Question: How to decide how much \$ to ask for?* It's a strategic decision that you and your team have to make. You obviously want as much as possible, but you absolutely have to justify it. It's really based on the budget of the project.
- The success of your grant will be greatly increased if you can bring other money to the table. If you have other confirmed grants, absolutely include that. Even if you have unconfirmed grants, itemize them and include them as potential sources of revenue.
If you get confirmation of another grant, update the one you're still waiting on: "we got \$15k and now all we need is your \$10k to make this project happen!"
- Kate always asks the funder if they can spend some time with her to go over the complete draft – she's had a lot of luck with this.
- *Question: Do you break the GST out and show it as an income on the grant in the summary report?* Email the grantor and ask. Put the GST from the grant back in the bank account you use for the Gaming Grant.
- Interim and Final Reporting – so important!!! If you don't do them, you will never be funded by that organization again.
- *Question: Are there any circulating documents about holes in our community? (Engagement data) Where do we access that?*
Kate: We had a public engagement for the Village Commons. LEAP Report points to the need for infrastructure needs. Community engagement for the Village Commons, there's a report on that. If the proof doesn't exist, then create it. Go to somebody who can use their personal story to show the need. Get testimonials, create the evidence, be creative.
Sandra: LEAP Report, Official Community Plan (OCP 2012), CHS has tried to put all reports and studies and surveys on their website.
Andrea: Cortes Foundation (CICF) is starting to do Vital Signs which will provide access to helpful data for grant applications
- *Question: Can you tell us more about the Community Gaming Grants?*
Sandra: It's targeted towards things like the fire hall, safety, FOCI has one that's geared towards the environment and youth programming

- *Question: Sometimes there's a feeling of scarcity and grant-guarding on the island because maybe a granting org might fund only one Cortes project. How do you create a collaboration in this environment?*

Sandra: It's Challenging. Everybody has very different mandates, different priorities. It's worth looking at the bigger picture! The Building Healthy Communities grant is a great example (Manson's trails in collab with SCCA, CHS, and CCEDA). They secured \$100k for this project!

Kate: There's money out there! Funders want to see that your project has community support, so it will just make it stronger to support each other's applications whether that's collabs, partnerships or letters of support.

- *Question: How do I balance my Love Fest application budget if I am asking for a brand new chunk of money for a new paid position*

Sandra: Easy! Say that money is going to come from the grant you're applying for! Then the budget will be balanced.

- Sandra Tip: Add budget option for CONTINGENCY (unexpected things, things you've forgotten, inflation): if you can, always do this! If you can't – hide your contingency by making every line item 10% higher than you think it is. This should probably be 10% ish.

- Include a line for project administration. 10-15% to pay for a person to admin this project. Always use this.

- Be really realistic about how much it's going to cost and put it all in your budget!!!

- *Question: When a grant requires collaboration for the future – what kind of collaboration do they mean? The language has been vague*

Sandra: email the grantors and ask them to clarify what collaboration means to them

Kate: get testimonials/letters from active collaborators. Ask the grantors what they want.

- *Question: Are there grants for infrastructure for community use like renos for the Art Gallery?*

Kate: Look at tourism grants because it's the art gallery! Also the Capital Gaming Grant. The tourism one that HH got. Destination BC for tourism related grants.

Sandra: Gaming Grant has a special program for Capital Program funds, this

could really work. Can Old Schoolhouse Gallery qualify as a heritage building? Grants relating to upkeep of heritage buildings.

- *Question: Is there a transportation report that we can use?*

Kate: Yes, she will send some reports. There's one for Cortes that came out in 2017, one in 2021, and for all rural areas on Vancouver Island recently! There's a new project (that just got funded) for passenger transportation that will run this summer.

- Tip! Get documents early, plan ahead, get resolution from board early if you need it, have those docs on your computer for the next time.
- Tip! Collect photos so that you have before and after photos. You need photos of the decay and disrepair to prove that the deck needs to be replaced (for example). And then get the after photos of how beautiful it looks! Great for reporting.