

PUTTING YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

# Tips and Strategies for Building Support for your Funding Request

CUMBERLAND VALLEY  
PENNSYLVANIA

Cumberland Area  
Economic Development  
Corporation



# Building a Strong Case for Grant Funding

01

Craft a compelling need statement

02

Structure a persuasive grant narrative

03

Highlight community impact

04

Engage key stakeholders

# Understanding the Funding Agency's Perspective

Solve defined problems

Provide measurable benefits

Reflect community needs and support

# Crafting a Compelling Need Statement



Define

Clearly define the problem



Support

Support with data:  
demographics, studies,  
testimonials



Describe

Describe the urgency for  
your project



Connect

Connect to agency priorities



# Need Statement Example

- **Before:** “Our community needs more outdoor recreation spaces.”
- **After:** “Over 8,000 residents in our township lack access to safe, walkable outdoor spaces. The nearest public park is over 3 miles away, and 42% of households do not have access to a vehicle. Since 2020, local demand for trails and green spaces has increased by 65%, yet our current infrastructure is outdated and insufficient. This project will create a new multi-use trail connecting three neighborhoods to the regional park system, directly addressing mobility, health, and equity gaps identified in the county’s recreation plan.”

# Structuring a Strong Grant Narrative



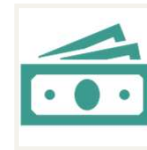
Need  
Statement



Goals &  
Objectives



Project  
Description



Budget &  
Timeline



Evaluation &  
Sustainability

# Highlighting Community Impact

1

Quantify  
outcomes

2

Define  
beneficiaries

3

Use storytelling  
and  
testimonials



# Impact Statement Examples

- “This trail will help people get outside more and enjoy nature.”
- “The new trail will connect neighborhoods to the park system and encourage more outdoor activity. It will reduce car trips and promote healthier lifestyles.”
- “The construction of a 2.5-mile multi-use trail will connect over 2,000 residents, primarily youth and seniors, from three underserved neighborhoods to the regional park system. We anticipate a 40% increase in trail usage and a 25% reduction in vehicle trips for local recreation. The trail will also support environmental education programs for local schools and serve as a catalyst for future green infrastructure investments, aligning with the county’s sustainability and equity goals.”



# Engaging Stakeholders for Support



Who:

- Residents
- Elected officials
- Community partners

How:

- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Support letters
- Joint programs/projects

# Building Advocacy & Support



Align  
stakeholder  
interests



Identify  
champions



Use one-  
pagers, social  
posts, op-eds



# Final Tips for Success

1

Start early

2

Tailor each  
application

3

Learn from  
past proposals

4

Ask questions

# Bonus Tip: Using AI in Grant Writing

Examples of how AI can help you write grants:

- Drafting summaries or project descriptions based on bullet points
- Rewriting for clarity or tone (e.g., making language more funder friendly)
- Creating checklist or templates for grant planning
- Brainstorming outcomes or metrics for evaluation sections
- Formatting budgets or narratives based on your input

AI won't know your community like you do. It can't replace your relationships, your vision, your understanding of local needs. But when used thoughtfully, it can save time and help you focus on the parts of grant writing that require human insight.

# Questions



# Thank You

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