

# How to Get the (Next) Grant: 6 Tips for Successful Stewardship

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Good news: your grant proposal to a new funder was successful and a cheque for \$20,000 has arrived in the mail. But if you think the grantwriting is done, think again! Receiving a grant marks only the beginning of a long-term partnership. At this point, it's time for you to start thinking about the stewardship of your grant: a process that takes as much time as proposal writing to get right.

Organizations that focus solely on finding new funders hurt their long term fundraising potential. How much can funder retention suffer from bad stewardship? According to the [AFP Fundraising Effectiveness Project \(FEP\)](#), retention rate for new donors (that give over \$5000) is at a lowly 40%. Here are some tips to ensure you're entering into a long term relationship with a new funder rather than a first date.

## 1. Don't wait to say thank you

Thank the funder as soon as you receive notification of a successful application. Show that you value their commitment and support by personalizing the message. For example, have a board member or your Executive Director write a hand written thank you card.

## 2. Involve the grantmaker

Funders will be interested in how your project progresses, so keep them in the loop. Send them your newsletters and invite them to your events. If possible, arrange a site visit so the funder can meet the people benefitting from the grant. Offering a chance to be involved will help transform your grant into a genuine (and long term) partnership.

## 3. Write a grant report (whether or not it was asked for)

Just like grant applications, expectations for grant reports differ widely by funder. Some funders, like the Counselling Foundation of Canada, will provide you with a helpful [reporting template and sample grant reports](#), while others may not explicitly ask for a grant report at all. In these cases, it is still recommended that you prepare a report, as [grantmakers will appreciate this effort and take it into account when evaluating your future applications](#).

## 4. Share your results: the good and the bad

Funders are most interested in whether you achieved what you set out to do in your grant proposal. Be honest. Funders understand that not everything will go according to plan, so don't be afraid to explain how and why things

went differently. If your project is long-term and the outcomes are not yet clear, you should highlight [intermediate findings](#). Make sure to also include your financial statements and account for any deviations from your proposal budget. If you suspect early on that original outcomes are not achievable, don't wait until the grant report to discuss this with your funder. Be frank about the changing circumstances, and if applicable, amend expected outcomes in writing.

## 5. Emphasize lessons learned

Share the lessons you learned during your project, particularly those stemming from unexpected challenges. Try to include how you think these lessons are relevant to your field as a whole. Grantmakers are eager to maximize their overall impact and this feedback will allow them to give advice to organizations similar to yours. A funder may also ask for [feedback on its own processes and procedures](#), so be ready to provide constructive commentary.

## 6. Outline your next steps

The final grant report is also a wonderful opportunity to share your next steps. If your project is ongoing, explain how you plan to make it sustainable and list the funding sources that will make this possible. If your project is complete, discuss whether you intend on doing a similar project in the future or whether you will be switching gears and why. By presenting a clear vision of your next steps, you will be enticing the funder to partner with you again in the future.

*Looking for more insights on successful grantseeking? Written by Devon Hurvid and Paul Anderson, this blog post was featured in Grantseeker Monthly, the e-newsletter of Grant Connect. [Subscribe to this newsletter for monthly fundraising tips!](#)*

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