A SURVIVOR'S GUIDE TO
MUSEUM GRANT
Writing

RACHAEL CRISTINE WOODY

"I dedicate this book to every museum professional who has elected to learn and attempt grant writing for their museum. Grant writing is not for the faint of heart and those who pursue it do so out of their love and commitment to the museum field."

FOREWORD:

I was very pleased to be asked by Lucidea to write a foreword for this important book. Museum expert and consultant Rachael Cristine Woody is a regular guest author for Lucidea's Think Clearly blog, and I greatly look forward to her posts, knowing that I will always be inspired by them and learn a thing or two. Now, about this book, *Survivor's Guide to Museum Grant Writing:* grant writing is an extremely important area for museums, increasingly so, and yet it often falls by the wayside due to understaffing, lack of professional development ...and ironically, underfunding.

As an expert on the grant acquisition process, Ms. Woody writes persuasively about the importance of grant writing, and offers pragmatic strategies and advice that apply to all stages of the process. It's wonderful that she sees each grant application as an opportunity to solve a problem, describes failures as chances to learn and improve, and most important, takes the mystery out of the endeavor by describing common scenarios, offering frameworks and templates and breaking the stages down into manageable parts. You'll learn a lot!

Although this book is written from the perspective of museums, the lessons and insights here are applicable to our partners in the wider GLAM sector – galleries, historic sites, zoos, science centres, libraries and archives. We are the culture sector and we make a measurable difference in our communities and people's lives.

Ms. Woody explores the foundations here and I hope you'll subscribe to her blog posts, attend the Lucidea webinars, and choose to attend her workshops to gain deeper skills and have a direct impact on your institution's success.

Those of you who know me realize that I value advocacy, and yes, cheerleading— supporting and encouraging information professionals in libraries, knowledge centers, archives and museums. This book provides evidence that Ms. Woody is a cheerleader too; she seeks to empower museum professionals to build skills that help to ensure the survival and vitality of their institutions. Read on. I guarantee you'll find it compelling.

STEPHEN ABRAM, MLS,
Principal of Lighthouse Consulting, Inc.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

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Introduction

Museums routinely struggle to secure enough funding to reach their full potential. Funding from foundations and granting agencies is repeatedly sought to fill budget gaps—e.g., in order to hire staff, buy supplies and technology, and execute projects. In 2006 the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) conducted a study[1] to determine the amount of state and public financial support for the museum sector. The IMLS study captured the operating income, revenue, and sources of support across all museum types within the United States. The study identified four main categories of museum funding: private donations, earned income, institutional investments, and government contributions. The private donations category encompasses non-government grant or foundation funding, and government contributions include government agency grants. According to the study, the average percentage of outside funding for museums receiving private support was 24.4%, and government support was 19.7%—for a total of 44.1% of outside funding collected by the average museum. While the exact amount of grant contributions can't be teased out of the 44.1% of outside funding, it can be inferred that for many museums the reliance on grant funding is significant.

Since 2006, the United States experienced what is now known as the Great Recession of 2008. Subsequently, in the last ten years, museum reliance on outside sources of support has increased while budget numbers decreased. Even a museum giant such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art[2] has entered a financial crisis and made the difficult decision to decrease staff in order to

keep the museum afloat. The number of museums applying for grant funding and the number of applications each museum is producing have steadily grown as unmet financial needs have grown. However, funding opportunities have decreased, as funding agencies have also suffered from the effects of the recession.

Lack of proper funding is one of the top three issues museums grapple with on an annual basis and relief isn't in sight. What's more, funding agencies (both grant organizations and foundations) are reporting higher-than-ever levels of applicants requesting money—even though the majority of agencies haven't been able to significantly grow their funding pool in the last decade. Though some museums may be large enough to dedicate one or more employees to fundraising, the truth is a majority of museums can't afford the staff needed to support a robust fundraising strategy. If tough decisions have to be made regarding staffing within the development department, donor cultivation is habitually prioritized over retaining a grant specialist. This is because donor cultivation is seen as high yield for a small amount of work, whereas grant acquisition can be more work with an uncertain payoff.

> *While there is a bit of an art to grant acquisition, it is a skill that can be learned.*

Many museums are without a grant specialist. If any grant writing occurs it's usually within the executive, curatorial, or collections management departments. These departments are made up of very specialized individuals who don't necessarily have an affinity for grant acquisition strategy. They also don't have time to do all the work required to successfully create a winning grant project idea, apply, and manage the award. This is the reality for the majority of museums. While there is a bit of an art to grant acquisition, it is a skill that can be learned.

Museum professionals who seek out grant workshops, classes, and other self-education methods do so because it is necessary. Securing external funding in the form of grant or foundation awards is too frequently the only way an

important project can be done. If it wasn't for these funding agencies, research and innovation in the history and heritage industries would cease, and the museum field as a whole would quickly become outdated, irrelevant, and more easily dispensable.

For newcomers to the grant acquisition process it's important to note successful "grant writing" isn't just about writing. Just as much work, if not more, goes into grant strategy, project construction, and award management. Grant acquisition is a holistic, multi-part process that must have an equal amount of focus on each category. This book is for anyone who wants to delve into the grant acquisition process and confidently apply for grant funding. The sections lead the reader through the phases of a creating a grant application, including the foundational work critical to constructing a compelling grant project idea. The content is designed to empower readers by laying out a methodical process to go from zero ideas to a winning proposal. Finally, the author shares tips for building a bulletproof proposal and secrets on how to navigate common grant pitfalls. In addition, the Resources section contains exercises and examples museums can use repeatedly to craft one winning grant proposal after another.

Once a museum has harnessed the grant acquisition process, staff will feel less stressed and can begin to leverage the knowledge shared in this book. They will no longer be intimidated by the grant acquisition process, will know how to create a compelling grant proposal, and will have a clear path forward for grant application. At the end of the process, the museum will be able to successfully apply for grant funding without fear of wasting valuable time and resources.

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1. Institute of Museum and Library Services, "Exhibiting Public Value: Government Funding for Museums in the United States," December 2008, https://www.imls.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/MuseumPublicFinance.pdf, accessed September 14, 2018.

2. Robin Pogrebin, "Metropolitan Museum of Art Lays Off 34 Employees, *The New York Times*, September 28, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/29/arts/design/metropolitan-museum-of-art-layoffs-34-employees.html, accessed September 14, 2018.

Identifying Funding Roadblocks

Before moving forward it's worth reviewing why things are stuck. Self-reflection, outside assessment, and solicited expertise are invaluable whenever a personal or professional roadblock comes up. In order to circumnavigate the roadblock, museums that aren't currently applying for grants or haven't been successful in their application must understand why not. This helps hone in on areas in which the museum needs additional help, and is a necessary first step before practical education can begin.

> *Museums that aren't currently applying for grants or haven't been successful in their application must understand why not.*

The following prompts are intended to provoke uncensored, free flow answers in an attempt to uncover any and all roadblocks pertaining to the museum's grant endeavors. Some may find it effective to use the "5 Whys" technique[3] in order to get to the root of the problem. The exercise starts with asking "Why?" and each iterative "Why?" builds on the last answer, to be repeated a total of five times.

For example, begin with:

Why am I not writing grants?

ANSWER: *Because I don't know where to begin or what information to include.*

Why?

ANSWER: *Because I don't know what project is the best to put forward for a grant.*

Why?

ANSWER: *Because I don't know what makes a good grant project.*

Why?

ANSWER: *Because I'm not familiar with museum grants and what they like to fund.*

Why?

ANSWER: *Because I've not done the research or sought help to learn which grants are appropriate for the few projects I have in mind.*

This example exercise helps get to the root of the problem. In this case the person has a few project ideas but doesn't know where to apply for grant money because they're not familiar with the funding opportunities available. If the museum invested time into researching grants they would eventually be able to move past this roadblock.

Here's another example:

Why am I not writing grants?

ANSWER: *Because I feel overwhelmed.*

Why?

ANSWER: *Because there are so many problems/needs to be addressed and I don't know where to start.*

Why?

ANSWER: *Because I'm not sure how to construct a project that will encompass most of our needs <u>and</u> be attractive to grant funders.*

Why?

ANSWER: *Because I don't know how to construct a grant project.*

Why?

ANSWER: *Because I've never done it before and don't know where to begin.*

This example reveals that the person has never constructed a grant project before. This person needs help with the first part of the process, which is to evaluate museum needs to reveal solutions (i.e. project ideas), and then move to the second part of the process (where they may need assistance from an expert) to construct a project that will deliver the identified solution.

For those who wish a more direct approach, try answering these guided questions:

1. Why aren't you writing grants?

2. What's stopping you from going after grants?

3. What grant areas do you need support with?

4. What circumstances are you currently dealing with where writing grants could help alleviate the pressure?

5. What aspects of grant writing make you cringe?

6. What grant skills do you want to strengthen?

While not all-encompassing, these prompts are an attempt to inspire museum staff to analyze either:

1. *Why haven't they attempted grant writing before? or*

2. *What areas of grant writing are they uncertain about that could be causing their current grant failure?*

The solutions are dependent upon the answers. Sometimes museum professionals are excellent at grant writing but struggle to find an ideal grant project. Others may have multiple grant project ideas but struggle to

find appropriate funding sources to which they can apply. Here are the main roadblocks typically found when grant writing has stalled:

1. Museum staff don't know how to do the foundational work required before a grant application can be written.

2. Museum staff don't know how to break down a grant project into feasible timelines and costs.

3. The museum doesn't have a person on staff who can convey the grant idea effectively and in a manner that grant reviewers can understand and appreciate.

4. There are no deliverables identified and no communication about how project success will be measured.

5. Museum professionals aren't familiar with the various grant application intricacies and fail to fulfill all application requirements.

6. The museum doesn't have a person on staff who can manage the project.

7. Museum leaders don't learn from previous grant rejections and keep trying the same approach.

8. The entire grant acquisition process is a mysterious anomaly that no one on staff knows how to tackle.

One or all of these roadblocks can be present when a museum is first attempting to engage in grant acquisition. What's important is that these roadblocks are revealed and dealt with before moving on to the subsequent grant acquisition phases. While some of these roadblocks can be addressed in-house, others may require outside assistance, or even a consulting grant specialist to help guide the museum. This isn't to say museums will always need to hire a specialist when engaging in grant work—however, an expert *can* expedite roadblock removal and get the museum up to speed quickly and efficiently.

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3. The 5 Whys technique was developed by Sakichi Toyoda and used at the Toyota Motor Corporation.

How *Not* to Apply
for Grants

If approaching grant funding is new to the museum or if the museum is reconsidering its grant acquisition strategy, it's worth reviewing the inappropriate ways in which to approach grants. For many who are new to grant work, it can be easy to slip into inappropriate grant application strategies and, consequently, bad grant project ideas. For example, museums cannot have an application strategy that revolves around funding operational necessities. The majority of funding agencies won't fund items that *should* be covered by the museum's operating budget. Meaning that funding permanent staff, utilities, and the building lease by cobbling together grant awards is not an acceptable grant strategy. Similarly, if a project idea relies heavily on actions a museum is mandated to perform as part of its mission, funding agencies will wonder why basic functions of the museum are not already financially supported. This is a red flag to funders as it can appear the museum isn't financially sound enough to deliver the basic functions it's required to provide. Both bad strategies and bad project ideas must be avoided in order to ensure the museum's grant acquisition effort is a successful one.

Many museums rely on grant funding to supplement their annual budget and it can be a difficult line to walk when applying for grant funding. Museums must be able to cultivate a steady stream of income that supports yearly activities while also meeting basic building and staff needs, albeit spartan. Those are identified as necessary funding items that must be supported by the operating budget. However, an acceptable grant strategy can include the funding of additional (temporary) staff, improved supplies and technology, updated software systems, and special projects. While these aren't primary

needs, they are items critical to maintaining a healthy museum, meeting stakeholder demands, and encouraging new and repeat visitors.

As long as there's a scarcity of reliable operating funds, museums must apply for grants and therefore are subject to an unpredictable funding scenario. Being dependent upon grant funding is an unfortunate and common reality for the majority of museums. The pervasive feeling of being overwhelmed often coexists in this situation. No money, too many needs, and no development person indicates the need for a better grant acquisition strategy. However, museum staff are often so overwhelmed with meeting financial needs they struggle to approach grant funding strategically—and fail to craft winning grant ideas. This state of overwhelm is unfortunately normal. It's a difficult environment for staff to be in and it often hampers their ability to create a successful strategy. When museums are in this state of overwhelm and are just beginning to speak about grant acquisition, these phrases are usually the first things stated:

- **"We'll apply for any money we think we can get."**

- **"We just need one proposal that we'll submit to all grant opportunities."**

- **"We need money to keep the lights on."**

- **"We have a dozen or more ideas and will apply for all of them to see what sticks."**

Grant funding needs a strategic approach with well-defined parameters in order to be competitive.

The phrases are common but reveal a systemic misunderstanding of how to optimally apply for grant funding. Grant funding needs a strategic approach with well-defined parameters in order to be competitive. Furthermore, the ideas need to be "in addition to" basic museum funding, not the only museum

funding. Finally, shopping the same idea to multiple funding agencies will be noticed and will hurt the application's chance of success. Here's specifically why each phrase is dangerous:

"We'll apply for any money we think we can get." This phrase reveals the applicant is not thinking clearly due to the level of financial pressure experienced. **Museums shouldn't apply for any funding opportunity thought possible.** For the best chance of success museums need to strategically approach grants through a series of stakeholder conversations, evaluate and prioritize their needs, and find appropriate funding opportunities. Funding agencies are very specific with who they serve and what they choose to fund. A museum can waste a lot of time and money applying for whatever it thinks it can get—which is a terrible waste of limited resources.

"We just need one proposal to submit to all funding opportunities." This is a classic mistake akin to submitting a generic cover letter with every job application. **Grant proposals need to be individually compiled so they are crafted with the granting agency's funding mission and requirements in mind.** In addition, funding agencies talk to each other; if the museum has been identified as one that indiscriminately applies everywhere with one proposal, then it will quickly be dismissed from the application pool. Even if this approach were to work, what happens when the museum lands two grants for the same proposal? It would be unethical for the museum to accept duplicative awards and it would have to turn one down—a move that doesn't look good no matter how well it's handled.

"We need money to keep the lights on." Funding agencies won't fund items that should be paid for with the museum's operating budget. Grant applications need to be unique and stand apart from the museum's current operations in order to be competitive. **If a museum can't keep the lights on or meet other basic needs then the funding agency is going to view the museum as a financial risk.** Grant funding is rarely an option if the museum is trying to acquire money for basic functions; other avenues should be explored.

"We have a dozen or more ideas and will apply for all of them to see what sticks." Having too many ideas is a wonderful problem to have, but

problematic if the museum plans to pursue grant funding. Much like the first phrase *"We'll apply for anything we can get."*, this phrase reveals the museum has yet to go through a strategic process to focus its vision and set it up for grant application success. **Pursuing grant funding needs with a scattershot approach shows a lack of thought on the museum's part, and funding agencies will notice.** Moreover, applying for any idea possible is unsustainable both in terms of application and award, as it would be irresponsible to try and implement multiple ideas at the same time simply because the funding came in.

When a museum begins a grant funding conversation, pay attention to the phrases used as they can indicate whether the subsequent strategy is a competitive or weak one. If any of the four typical phrases above are used, it's symptomatic of a larger problem that must be addressed before the museum can successfully apply for funding. The upcoming sections and exercises are designed to guide a museum through this process. Afterwards, if museum staff are still struggling to craft a successful grant acquisition strategy and compelling grant project ideas please refer to the *When & How to Engage a Grant Writer* section at the end of this book.

Top Ideas for Funding

In the previous section, *How Not to Apply for Grants*, we reviewed detrimental grant acquisition strategies and bad project ideas. While the best grant ideas come from a combination of the museum's current situation and future vision, it can be helpful to review the types of successful grant project ideas currently being funded. In this section we'll review the top four types of projects regularly funded by both private and municipal funding organizations. It's important to note that funding trends evolve and while certain project types and topics are in the zeitgeist one year, they will change over time. For a real-time account of grant funding trends, it's important to keep up to date with the history of grant awards made by the agency to which the museum is planning to apply.

> *It's important to note that funding trends evolve and while certain project types and topics are in the zeitgeist one year, they will change over time.*

IDEA 1: BEHIND THE SCENES PROJECTS

Many museums, modest to prestigious, have a need for more storage, cataloging, and technology to make day-to-day processes more efficient and productive. While funding agencies shy away from funding work the museum should be doing anyway as part of the regular operating procedure, they are interested

in helping museums make their daily work more time and cost efficient.

For example: Best practices would have a museum catalog their objects using collections management software for controlled inventory and digital accessibility purposes. However, acquiring a faster scanner and updated software can go a long way to making the job easier and increase the number of museum objects described online. The museum can state it's putting space, personnel, and computers towards the project, but it needs additional funds for upgraded technology. Funding agencies will agree. Upgraded technology will enable museum staff to catalog objects more quickly—saving on personnel costs in addition to providing online access to more objects than previously possible, leading to increased user engagement.

TIP: Have clearly defined deliverables and results, including how much time and money will be saved. The more a museum can show "bang for the buck" the more attractive the proposal will be.

IDEA 2: MUSEUM PROJECTS WITH THE COMMUNITY

Funding agencies and private donors are very interested in museum projects that involve communities who participate in larger cultural movements. Race and lack of diverse representation are current political issues playing out across the Western world and in museum spaces. Museums that engage in this dialogue are garnering a reputation for integrity of service to the communities whose collections they represent—coming to the attention of both funding agencies and donors.

For example: A local historical society museum is in a city where increasing civic engagement is happening. The museum has collections from the civil rights movement in the late 1960s to early 1970s and wants to document the current movement by collecting oral histories and artifacts from modern-day community leaders. The museum needs funding for recording equipment and wants to hire a consulting oral historian in order to professionally capture oral histories. Funding agencies will be impressed by how the museum is taking an active role in engaging its local community, and will realize this is a special project beyond the museum's daily work. Further, funding agencies are

currently very focused on supporting collection and exhibit projects that aim to be truly diverse and representative.

TIP: When documenting a community that has historically been oppressed and disadvantaged, it's imperative to approach the project respectfully. For the grant application, a museum must include letters of support from the community and have a plan for community members to be involved in all aspects of the project.

IDEA 3: MAKE THE MUSEUM (MORE) DIGITAL

In 2018 it's hard to forgive a museum that doesn't have an online presence for its objects and exhibits. We've reached a stage where technology-savvy museum goers are the majority of the museum audience and are unequivocally the museum's future. Providing online access to museum objects and exhibits is becoming a mandatory part of a museum's regular function. Unless 100% of the museum's objects and exhibits are online, there's room for growth. While finances, staff training, and the overwhelming nature of changing technology are often cited as barriers, funding agencies are increasingly requiring an online presence as part of the project they fund. The good news is, there are plenty of grants out there to help catch up.

For example: A small, rural museum has secured enough volunteer interest to digitize a portion of their collection; however, the cost required to digitize, catalog, and publish objects online is prohibitive. They recognize that if they share the cost of acquiring software, they will be able to move forward on their project. Funding agencies see collaboration, shared costs, and funding multiple museums in one proposal as win-win-win and will award more points when vetting the proposal.

TIP: Be thoughtful and communicate how the museum will build online work and access into a sustainable practice.

IDEA 4: COLLECT & DISPLAY NEW THINGS

Museums are not naturally static or stationary. By collecting artifacts from contemporary sources such as new industries, cultural movements, and

artistic expressions, the museum ensures a more accurate and representative future collection. "The Present is the Future's Past", and there's no time like the present to make sure museums are on point with current acquisitions. While funding agencies typically don't fund object acquisition, they are very interested in funding fresh exhibit ideas that tap into things people are currently doing, experiencing, and care about.

For example: The Portland Art Museum launched an exhibition[4] for local animation studio Laika[5]. In addition to their more traditional art exhibits, they chose to push beyond convention and include a current form of appreciated art. While it would have been easy for the art museum to focus only on the artistic aspects of the Laika films, it instead chose to include the science, technology, and history Laika films have drawn upon for their film's inspiration. The museum tapped into the excitement and enjoyment surrounding Laika from multiple perspectives (art, science, technology, history)—and the tremendous funding support they received for the exhibition proves it was a lucrative idea.

TIP: Convey potential exhibit impact by demonstrating how the proposed museum exhibit is relevant to contemporary interests.

These top four funding ideas can be applied to almost any museum type and funding situation. In order to prioritize which idea to start with review the merits of each, the museum's ability to take on and execute the idea, and the interest or needs that may be met by the museum implementing the grant idea. Once a particular idea emerges as a leader in potential, begin pulling together specific details for the project, have conversations with potential collaborators, and begin searching for a funding agency that matches the museum's project idea. If none of these ideas seem to fit the museum's needs for its current situation, please continue to the Working Museum Problems to Find a Funding Solution section.

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4.   "Animating Life: The Art, Science, and Wonder of LAIKA," on show October 14, 2017 – May 20, 2018, portlandartmuseum.org/exhibitions/animating-life/, accessed March 2, 2018.

5.   Laika website, www.laika.com/, accessed March 2, 2018.

Working Museum Problems
to Find a Funding Solution

Museums know they need money, but are often so overwhelmed they can't put ideas on paper. While it may seem counterintuitive to focus on the museum's problems, this is exactly what should be done in order to identify the museum's funding needs. The following section offers a thought exercise that can be conducted by a one-person staff or with a team of staff. While the idea of delving into the museum's problems may be uncomfortable, it is a necessary component to effectively craft a grant funding strategy. Successful grant acquisition strategies are ones based in the museum's current reality, with a clear grasp of what the museum's problems are, and a unified staff vision for what problems need to be tackled. When these key elements are in alignment the museum can then progress into problem-solving mode and create solutions (i.e. project ideas) that directly address the museum's problems.

While the idea of delving into the museum's problems may be uncomfortable, it is a necessary component to effectively craft a grant funding strategy. Successful grant acquisition strategies are ones based in the museum's current reality, with a clear grasp of what the museum's problems are, and a unified staff vision for what problems need to be tackled.

This thought exercise is not only helpful for identifying a grant funding solution, it also helps the museum staff articulate the museum's problem, need, and solution within the grant application—making the application clear and effective. Stating the problem, identifying what the museum needs and why, and describing how the museum intends to solve the problem must be done articulately, clearly, and concisely for grant and foundation reviewers to understand and support the museum's application for funding.

SETTING THE STAGE

A template for this exercise is in the Resources section, with a page each for: "Problem", "Need", "Solution".

If this exercise is done with a team, stating the intention and expectations for the conversation should be done before the thought exercise takes place. For example, "The purpose of this thought exercise is to help us get creative and strategic about museum problems in order to find possible funding solutions." Caution staff against delving too deeply into the negativity that can emerge when focusing on problems and cultivate a safe space to explore articulated problems together. Finally, commit to staff that there will be no judgement or repercussions for sharing their thoughts.

EXERCISE

Set aside 1-hour to complete this exercise.

Start with listing all the museum's problems—specifically, problems that would be alleviated if the museum had more funding. Here's a bad example: "Problem: The Board of Directors don't support the museum in the way they should." This problem is an important one to address, but isn't one that can be addressed by applying for grant funding. Problems such as not having enough staff to execute a special project, needing preservation supplies, or not having an online presence can all be addressed or alleviated with additional funding, and are the types of problems museums can and should explore during this exercise. The next steps in this exercise help elaborate on what is needed and brainstorm possible solutions.

EXERCISE PART 1: IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS

Set aside 15 minutes for this portion of the exercise.

List all problems on a white board and let it flow without censorship. A few problems may make it on the white board but are later determined ineligible for a grant funding solution—that's OK. The point is to spend a set amount of time to think about and articulate museum problems. Many of the problems will coalesce into groupings; this is an indicator that they are ripe for solution development.

EXERCISE PART 2: WHAT ARE THE NEEDS?

Set aside 15 minutes for this portion of the exercise.

Next, outline needs each problem implies. This can be as simple as:

- *Problem:* The museum doesn't have enough staff to meet the mission, projects, commitments, objectives, etc.

- *Need:* More staff.

Or, it can be more nuanced:

- *Problem:* Stakeholders are disgruntled because there are no museum objects described online.

- *Need:* Digitization equipment, a collections management system, staff, and training are needed before museum objects can be published online.

EXERCISE PART 3: WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOLUTIONS?

Set aside 15-20 minutes for this portion of the exercise.

Now it's time to find solutions for the museum's list of needs.

A multifaceted approach may be required, as is the case with the example problem: "We have nothing online". The need in this case is: digitization equipment, a collections management system, staff, and training. A funding solution would be to apply for a grant that could supply technology and money

for temporary professional staff to digitize a discrete portion of the collection, catalog it in a collections management system, and publish the newly digitized collection online.

- *Problem:* Stakeholders are disgruntled because there are no museum objects described online.

- *Need:* Digitization equipment, a collections management system, staff, and training are needed before museum objects can be published online.

- *Solution:* A grant project that supports the acquisition of digitization equipment and collections management software, and a budget to hire temporary, professional staff to catalog and publish museum objects to the web.

Take a moment to observe how a museum's listed needs and possible solutions can address multiple problems. Pick the problems with the greatest synergy of needs and solutions and outline them. Some preferred methods of doing this include using a linear grid format, or a more visual mapping exercise. Use the Problem | Need | Solution Grid available in the Resources section to get started. Whatever the preference, the document will be required for the next step in this process, which is in the Constructing a Project by Breaking it Down section.

Though this exercise can seem daunting, the more museum staff become comfortable working problems to find a solution, the more easily good ideas will flow. In fact, this is an exercise to consider performing annually in order to check-in and anticipate a problem before it metastasizes. In doing so, museums can identify what types of resources are needed and strategize possible solutions to address the problem before it becomes a PROBLEM.

Bonus: Going through this exercise will provide a way to thoroughly identify and list in the grant application all the needs that must be addressed in order for the museum to function at a healthy capacity. If museums aren't comprehensive in identifying and detailing needs in the application, the funding agency will wonder if the museum has a full grasp of the problem set and what it will take to solve it.

Remember: Problems are vehicles to express needs. When needs are listened to, possible solutions are found. When solutions are found, museums have the power to break out of the overwhelm and solve problems.

Constructing a Project by Breaking it Down

Whether the museum is undertaking a grant-funded project or a project being done in-house, project management principles should be applied. Most museums and historical organizations don't have a project manager on staff, and the idea of project management can seem immense. This section will introduce a basic and foundational element to successful project management: the project break down.

A typical project cycle is 12 months. Starting from the end (12 months) and working backward to the beginning (1 month) is typically easiest and more accurate. Use the exercise below to identify the museum's project timeline, establish major project elements, reveal resources needed, and account for staff time. Use the *Solution Break Down Exercise* found in the Resources section as a template. Having an example can assist with inspiration, so there is a digitization and cataloging project example for each section.

EXERCISE

12 months

This is the conclusion of the museum's project. While it can seem odd to start at the end, many find this approach easier as they know what needs to be completed, versus where they should start. Here are examples of questions to answer in order to fill out this section:

- What will the finished product be?

- What will it look like?

- What specific items will be achieved by the end of this project?

Example:

- 1000 items will be digitized, cataloged, and published online

- Fully implemented digitization workflow

- Fully implemented catalog workflow

- Trained staff and a finalized set of instructions

9 months

This is the penultimate portion of the project. Based on the answers given for 12 months, think about where the museum will need to be at 9 months in order to reach the objectives stated above. Or, another way to think about it is: *Where will the museum be when the project is 75% done and there are 3 months left to finish?* Here are examples of questions to answer in order to fill out this section:

- What does 75% finished look like?

- What items will be achieved?

- What items are in-progress?

- What, if any, items need to begin at this stage?

Example:

- 500 items will be digitized, cataloged, and published online

- Finish troubleshooting workflow and software issues

- Make any last improvements to workflow and instructions

6 months

The project is halfway done! In order to achieve what the museum set out at 12 and 9 months, what needs to happen or be in-progress at 6 months? Or, another way to think about this is: *Where will the museum be when the project is 50% done and there are 6 months left to finish?* Keep in mind any pieces that may

need to be refined and any issues that may still need to be solved. Here are examples of questions to answer in order to fill out this section:

- What does 50% finished look like?

- What items will be achieved?

- What items are in-progress?

- What items need to begin at this stage?

Example:

- Fully functioning digitization technology and software

- Self-sufficient and fully operational staff

- Published initial items online

- Review work so far, identify and work to resolve any issues

- Improve workflow and instructions as necessary

3 months
This period of time in the project is typically when the rubber meets the road. Resources have been identified and acquired and now it's time to implement technology, workflows, and other project pieces. This is where unanticipated issues will crop up. As a result, give museum staff enough time to implement new equipment, software and workflows. Here are examples of questions to answer in order to fill out this section:

- What does 25% finished look like?

- What items will be achieved?

- What items are in-progress?

- What items need to begin at this stage?

Example:

- Implement and test digitization and catalog software

- Implement technology (servers and scanners)

- Create a digitization workflow and test its efficiency

- Craft instructions for project workers

- Begin to train staff, volunteers, and interns

0-1 month
This is the beginning of the project, an area most struggle with because they're not confident of where to begin. However, now that the museum knows where the project will be during months 3 through 12, this part should be easier to fill out. What needs to be done at the very beginning in order to start the project? Often, it's acquiring resources: equipment, people, and knowledge. Here are examples of questions to answer in order to fill out this section:

- What resources need to be acquired?

- What items must be initiated from the beginning?

- What items will be started and in-progress?

Example:

- Research and vet digitization technology

- Research and vet catalog software

- Make selection and purchase technology and software

- Acquire staff, volunteers, and interns who will work on the project

Inevitably, there will be project pieces that don't clearly fit within the project timeline. Feel free to create an odd marker if it's known that the item has to happen at 7 months, for example. Or, if it's an item that is independent and can happen at any time, that's OK too. If that's the case, create an additional section in the project break down to capture these independent project items and keep track of them as the project moves forward.

As a final note, project break downs aren't set in stone and most projects will need to be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances. Try to anticipate these as well as possible (such as a software implementation issue) and build in

project time to troubleshoot these issues. If a problem wasn't anticipated, don't worry. The unanticipated is a normal part of project management. Plan, adapt, and be flexible and the museum's project implementation will be successful!

Define Project Success and Measure It

Museums are filled with experts in collections care, display, and education, but they aren't always filled with experts in project management. A critical element of project management is the ability to define and measure project success. Knowing how to determine, articulate, and measure project outcomes is necessary for achieving a successfully completed project. It's also necessary for grant applications. There are several reasons why museums should practice defining success and measuring it. Here are the top three:

1. By defining project success, the museum shows its commitment to conducting the effort with integrity.

2. Outlining the ways in which the museum will measure a project's success shows willingness to be held accountable, learn, and improve.

3. Legal, ethical, grant award requirements, and project management best practices dictate a project must have clearly defined indicators of success and methods by which to measure them.

Knowing how to determine, articulate, and measure project outcomes is necessary for achieving a successfully completed project. It's also necessary for grant applications.

Don't worry! Museums don't need a project manager on staff in order to tackle this aspect of effective project management. Outlined below are the areas in which museum projects tend to be measured. The answers a museum provides for project success measurements will be a blend of qualitative and quantitative elements. Here's a refresher on what qualitative and quantitative mean:

Quantitative information or data is based on quantities obtained using a quantifiable measurement process. In contrast, qualitative information records qualities that are descriptive, subjective or difficult to measure.

The questions for each area are meant to prompt the museum to identify project success elements and brainstorm how they can be measured. Create a free-form list to get the ideas flowing if museum staff aren't used to this aspect of museum projects or are having a hard time defining successful project deliverables. This section completes the "Measurables" column in the *Problem | Need | Solution Grid Exercise* located in the Resources section.

QUESTIONS TO HELP IDENTIFY MEASURABLE SUCCESS ELEMENTS

AREA: Community Impact

- Who does the museum project touch?

- Who are the stakeholders?

- In what way will stakeholders be impacted?

- Can impact be captured in both qualitative (testimonials) and quantitative (number of uses/visits) ways?

AREA: Cost Efficiencies & Money

- Will the museum save money as a result of implementing this project?

- Will the museum save by decreasing staff time, or cut costs due to project efficiencies?

- Will the museum be able to afford something previously unattainable?

- If outside money was provided will it trigger the donation of additional funds either directly or indirectly?

AREA: Awareness

- Will this project raise awareness for cultural, community, and/or contemporary issues?

- Will the project raise the profile of the museum? In what way?

- Will there be media coverage?

- Will museum staff use the project as the basis for articles or present project findings at conferences?

AREA: Collaboration & Sharing

- Will this project include other museums as partners?

- Will benefits of the project be shared with other museums and professional organizations?

- What will be shared, how, and when?

AREA: Acquisition of Technology

- Will this project implement new technology?

- Will the technology improve the work of the museum?

- Will professional standards be met or improved upon with the use of this technology?

- Will the technology allow the museum to do projects that were otherwise impossible?

- Will the technology be state of the art, cutting edge, or otherwise impressive?

The above outlined areas are intentionally broad and can be used in almost any museum project instance. While the areas are not specific to the project's

direct outcomes, they are areas where outcomes will naturally occur. These outcomes should be captured in order to holistically document the project's true impact. With that said, there will need to be an analysis of what success looks like for the specific project. For this, think of the following questions:

AREA: Project Specific

- What are the objectives of the project?

- How will the museum prove the objectives have been met?

- Do some of the objectives have varying levels of success that can be achieved?

- Are there timelines or production numbers that need to be met?

- Will the project have an influence over other museum functions?

- What other aspects specific to the project will need to be measured in order to determine success?

Last, it's important to revisit the grant requirements for funded projects. These can vary greatly so it's important to become familiar with and incorporate the funding agency's requirements into the grant project. If there are specific qualitative and quantitative elements required it's important to call those out within the application and describe how the museum intends to meet them.

Defining a museum project's success doesn't need to be a laborious process, but it is a process that should be undertaken with the same level of commitment other project aspects receive. By following the prompts provided here, museums can create a holistic view of success with a blend of both qualitative and quantitative measurements. It's a well-rounded and thorough approach to defining project success and measurement, and one that will meet legal, ethical, and other imposed requirements.

How to Find the Best Funding Opportunity

One of the hardest aspects of the grant acquisition process is finding appropriate funding opportunities that match the museum's proposed project. While many facets of the grant acquisition process can be taught and replicated, conducting grant prospect research is an area that will change each time a new project needs funding. Funding opportunities are fluid. Some are well established and consistent in their requirements and timing while others can change every few years. It will depend on what funding they have and what issues they want to help support. There are also several different funding agency types with each having their own set of eligibility requirements. Furthermore, a museum's grant project idea will change from year to year dependent upon what the museum's needs and interests are. Due to all of these variables it can be incredibly difficult to know where to begin prospect research, and what worked last year may not work this year. For these reasons, each time the museum begins the grant acquisition process, staff should set aside time to conduct prospect research where they find and vet appropriate funding opportunities for the current grant project idea.

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The "How" of finding the best funding opportunities includes a "Where" and a "What". Where do museums look to find appropriate funding opportunities and What do they look for to ensure the opportunity is a match for their grant project idea?

WHERE TO LOOK

If a museum is starting from the beginning or if they're seeking a new strategy, there are a few methods to use for locating a funding opportunity. A museum may wish to employ one or more of these methods at a time as they aren't mutually exclusive.

Method #1: There are databases and online search portals that are free or subscription based. This can be a good place to start if the museum is new to applying for grants because the databases can provide a good overview for most funding agencies. Many databases have a search tool where results can be narrowed by type of institution and project. Similarly, internet search engines can and should also be used. Museums can build a search query that captures museum, grant and foundation agencies, and project specifics for the current grant project idea. A rough internet search can be more helpful as it connects the museum directly with funding agency websites and doesn't skew the search based on potentially outdated information or pay-to-play subscription schemes.

Method #2: Review who has funded the museum in the past (if applicable) and who has funded projects at peer museums. If a funding agency has awarded grants to the museum or peer institutions in the recent past then they are likely candidates to fund the museum's current project. Check out peer projects in-person or online to see who awarded funding, or reach out to colleagues who have received funding awards in the past and ask which agencies they would recommend.

Method #3: Attend conferences, webinars, and other events where funding agencies who are aligned with museums will be. Many funding agencies attend museum conferences for two reasons: 1. To make sure the agency is relevant and meeting the evolution of museums as it occurs; and 2. To engage in outreach with museum staff in order to raise the profile of their funding

agency. Agencies will usually have vendor booths at conferences where they encourage museum staff to come ask questions and pitch grant project ideas to determine if the agency is a good match. Both private and public funding agencies also offer webinars and workshops (virtual and in-person) in order to assist museum staff with the application process and ensure competitive grant applications. These are all great opportunities to ask direct questions and learn more about the agency and their current funding focus. The interactions will provide inside knowledge, a clearer understanding of requirements, and an agency contact to whom the museum can reach out for any additional application support.

Any of these methods provide a good place to start and receive basic information, but more in-depth vetting will be needed before a museum can dive into the application.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Over time the museum may develop a list of funding opportunities that generally fit the museum's work. However, it's always best to review these opportunities and examine any changes in requirements or funding focus, and confirm a match with the current grant project idea. Here are the top seven areas to research and vet in order to determine if a funding opportunity is a strong prospect for the museum.

1. Is the funding agency still active and regularly distributing funding? Consistent and reliable funding can be an issue for both private and municipal funding agencies. Verifying if the agency is still actively funding projects should be the first thing to check.

2. What types of organizations are allowed to apply? There are the usual criteria to meet (such as being a nonprofit organization) but there can also be requirements regarding what type of museum, its geographic location, etc. A museum applicant must fit these requirements otherwise none of the other criteria matter.

3. What types of projects are allowed to apply? Even if a museum fits the desired organization type, the project must also be a fit. Funding agencies will post descriptions of which types of projects are eligible for funding, or they may refer to their mission statement in order to provide insight into desired projects.

4. What are the eligibility requirements beyond museum and project type and can they be met? All funding agencies will have a stated museum and project type as part of their eligibility guidelines. After that, many agencies choose to provide further eligibility guidelines in order to narrow their scope of applicants and ensure they receive grant project ideas that are suitable to their mission. This is an area that can be overlooked in a museum's enthusiasm to apply, but if the museum is a mismatch for even one of the stated eligibility criteria the application will be rejected.

5. What projects have received awards in the past and for how much? This can be the area that offers the most insight when researching a funding prospect. It can sometimes be difficult to interpret what a funding agency is looking for as far as desirable projects; seeing a list of what has been previously funded can offer some very valuable input. If the museum's proposed grant project is similar to the awarded projects then the museum knows this funding source is worth applying to. All municipal funding agencies are required to post previous awardees whereas private funding agencies are not required, though many do. If the museum doesn't see an awardee list, staff should contact the agency to request additional information.

6. What is the award amount and is it enough (**no more, no less**) **to fund the proposed project?** It can be very tempting to apply for funding opportunities where award amounts are much more than the proposed project will require. Similarly, museums may feel pressure to apply for any and all funding, even if it isn't sufficient to successfully complete the project. Applying for too much funding will weaken the application as the museum won't be able to prove why it needs the excess in award. A museum may choose to add onto the project in order to legitimize the request, but it should only do so if it's feasible and relevant to the project. Applying for too little funding will mean that the project won't be done at the scale it was originally created. Sometimes a small scale-down is possible, or a museum may be able to pair it with a matching

award, but in most cases applying for too little funding should be avoided. Funding agencies will see that the award isn't enough to successfully complete the project and will reject the application.

7. When is the deadline and is it feasible for the museum to attempt an application? Finally, the last item to vet is the deadline. If the museum project can wait, the sweet spot for finding a funding opportunity is three months prior to the application deadline. Three months is typically enough time to leisurely gather the materials needed for application. Having a deadline sooner than that, especially if it is less than one month to the deadline, can put a tremendous amount of pressure on staff and it will increase the chances of submitting a sub-par application. If the deadline is more than three months out, and the museum can wait, then make sure to mark the calendar for when the museum should revisit the funding opportunity and begin application construction.

Once a funding opportunity has made it through the seven vetting areas it can officially be included in the museum's prospect list. A template to record funding opportunities and the details that need to be known for a successful grant application should be created. At the end of each review, direct staff to record their evaluation on the strength of the museum and funding opportunity match. If there are notable strengths or weaknesses to the application this should also be captured in the report for future reference.

Create a Bulletproof Proposal

Grant writing can be a complicated and intensive process. Each grant application will have a different emphasis and process to follow, and if grant writing is a new endeavor for the museum, it can be intimidating. While all grants are different, there are aspects to proposals that remain the same. The following section will identify and define eight areas of a grant application that will aid the museum in creating a bulletproof funding proposal.

1. MATCH THE MISSION

If the museum is just starting to look at grants the number of funding opportunities can be overwhelming. For a museum funding proposal to be successful it's critically important the museum state a specific mission or goal for the proposed grant project. Once that's identified, evaluate each foundation or granting agency's mission in order to ensure alignment. If the museum submits a proposal that lacks a goal for the grant project, or worse, the grant project goal doesn't match the funding agency's mission, the museum's application will be disqualified.

TIP: This is an area where alignment with the funding agency's mission can be highlighted by using keywords from the agency's mission statement in the proposal narrative. Repetition of the words will aid in providing a clear signal to grant reviewers that the museum's application is in line with what the funding agency is looking for.

2. DEMONSTRATE PROOF OF CONCEPT

Funding agencies look for information that indicates whether a proposed project will be successful. Indicators of a successful project are often looked for within the proposed project setup, timeline, and budget; these areas are evaluated to determine if they seem feasible. However, there is one additional area that is frequently overlooked by museums: providing a proof of concept. To demonstrate a proof of concept, point to a related project. Perhaps the museum staged a pilot project to sample and test portions of the workflow and outcomes, or a peer museum underwent a similar process and has shared their setup and workflows. In either case, demonstrate ways in which the museum has evaluated and tested portions of the project in order to determine the best way to set it up—thereby creating a proof of concept. This demonstration of the project's feasibility and the assurance that the project is set up for success will help persuade reviewers that the project should be funded.

TIP: If the museum references a prior project, it should clearly identify what parts of the previous project are being replicated and which are not. If the project was successful in some areas, these should be highlighted as proof of why they're being replicated. If some elements of the previous project weren't successful, that's OK too. Briefly discuss why those facets of the project didn't work—and how this project is set up to avoid or solve those problems.

3. CLEARLY DEFINE THE PROJECT TIMELINE & COST

Whether the project is discrete and straightforward or one with many phases, make sure to break down each area with a clear explanation of what the work entails. The more clearly articulated the workflow, staffing needs, time, and costs, the more feasible the proposal will be. Grant reviewers are not always museum specialists or familiar with the type of projects a museum proposes, so the clearer the timeline and costs (with an explanation of how those numbers were derived), the more likely the proposal will be accurately interpreted as achievable.

TIP: Make the timeline as clear as possible by using bullet points for each major milestone of the project and the work it takes to get there. (Use the information created in the *Constructing a Project by Breaking it Down* section). Similarly,

identify major budget areas and provide real numbers for technology and staff elements. Solicit bids for items that will be contracted out. In order to prove the feasibility of the project and legitimacy of the timeline and costs, provide a brief explanation for how the museum reached the numbers it did.

4. COLLABORATE & DELIVER MORE BANG FOR THE BUCK

Resources are always an issue and funding agencies find themselves increasingly in demand to support museums. To stand out, a museum must either work with peers and/or commit to sharing the project outcome publicly. Working with collaborators and therefore having multiple beneficiaries of a grant application is an excellent way to differentiate an application. Often, collaborating museums can contribute their own in-kind funding and can share in the workload if the project is moderately to ambitiously sized. Having multiple museums work on the same project also allows an opportunity to test how project workflow functioned at different locations, make additional discoveries, and more broadly disseminate the benefits of the project to a larger audience. If the museum is unable to bring on peer collaborators, a stated commitment to freely sharing all of the project information within the museum field is another way to strongly meet this criterion. If the museum chooses to go this route it should be prepared to share all information about the project—including setup, methodology, workflows, cost, technology, outcomes, and lessons learned. By committing to one or both of these avenues, a museum's application will be irresistible because it offers the opportunity to support multiple museums and positively impact a larger audience.

TIP: Choose museum collaborators that specialize in slightly different topical areas or geographic areas in order to provide a large demographic spread. This will aid in providing diversified information resulting from the project, while also widening the types of audiences who will benefit from the grant.

5. LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Letters of support can be optional or required when applying for a grant. Sometimes funding agencies specify who they want the letters of support from, while others leave it open. When in doubt: provide 2-3 letters of support. If collaborating, letters of support from collaborators will be required. If there aren't collaborators, letters of support from stakeholders will help demonstrate that project outcomes will be appreciated and widespread. For a

competitive edge, request letters of support from the museum's competitors and peer institutions. If they can agree on the value of the project, its strength and broad applicability will be undeniable.

TIP: Provide a draft to the people from whom a letter of support will be requested. If they can easily edit and sign an already written letter they're more likely to say yes to supporting the project and turn in the letter on time!

6. MONEY ATTRACTS MONEY

Many grants require support from museums in the form of matching or in-kind money. The more money or non-monetary assets the museum can provide as evidence of investment in the project, the better value the funding proposal will have. Be sure to include the cost for space, supplies, and technology used, in addition to staff time and volunteer time donated to support the project. The more museum and community investment are demonstrated, the more attractive the proposal will be. Remember: money attracts money.

TIP: Even if the funding agency doesn't require matches it is still recommended that museums identify their own investment in the project. This illustrates the museum's commitment to the grant project's success and is an attractive quality to add to the grant application.

7. LIMIT THE JARGON

Museum proposals are often created by highly specialized professionals. While it's important to use the correct professional terms, it's equally important to limit professional jargon whenever possible. Application reviewers aren't always specialists, so a clear project proposal with plain language will have a better chance of being fully comprehended and appreciated.

TIP: If professional terms or concepts must be used, introduce them at the beginning with a layman's definition of what they mean. Then, keep the wording consistent by not switching to related-but-different terms or phrases.

8. BE SUSTAINABLE

Ensure the proposal addresses sustainability, especially if the proposed project continues past the grant-funded phase. Clearly state if it's a self-contained project. If the intent is to evolve past the grant-funded phase then speak

directly to how the museum will ensure continuation. Funding agencies won't fund proposed projects that may die prematurely. They want to see projects live on and evolve. If the proposal isn't clear on how it will be sustainable past the grant-funded phase, agencies will be reluctant to provide funding.

TIP: Sometimes a museum intends to continue with a project after the grant-funded phase, but hasn't yet identified how. While that's not an ideal answer, it is a real one. Be honest in the application; acknowledge that a succession plan isn't yet identified, but the museum is committed to exploring and building one during the grant-funded phase.

While it cannot be stressed enough that all grant applications are different, museums will find these eight areas present in a majority of them. When reviewing a funding opportunity, make sure the museum staff are familiar with requirements and application sections. If it appears that the application form lacks one of the eight areas above, make sure to briefly address it in a relevant area. Funders may not ask for all eight of these areas, but they will appreciate the museum proactively addressing them as long as content requirements and character limits are being adhered to.

Grant Pitfalls – Know and Avoid Them

I n the previous section, we reviewed eight universal proposal elements and provided tips on how to write a strong grant application. This section will review the seven most common mistakes made on an application and detail why they should be avoided. For grant writers, editors, and reviewers, there are a list of common mistakes that even experienced grant writers can make. Often these mistakes stem from a lack of distance from the project being proposed. While the purpose of the project may seem clear and the project benefits undeniable, a failure to articulate either aspect is a common misstep. In addition, museum professionals who contribute to the grant application process often communicate in a language and tone pertinent to their area of expertise. This doesn't translate well when put in a grant application for reviewers with different knowledge backgrounds to read and understand. Become familiar with these seven pitfalls and learn how to avoid them in the museum's next grant application.

For grant writers, editors, and reviewers, there are a list of common mistakes that even experienced grant writers can make. ...While the purpose of the project may seem clear and the project benefits undeniable, a failure to articulate either aspect is a common misstep.

MISTAKE #1: LENGTHY, JARGON-FILLED TITLES

The title is an introduction to the grant application and sets the tone for reviewers. The title should convey importance, catch attention, and be easy to understand. Many museum professionals and grant writers alike have fallen into the trap of really long, jargon-filled titles that are three lines long with colons and commas. While such a title may convey a lot of information, it sets a less than enthusiastic tone for the grant reviewer.

EXAMPLE: From the Cradle of Civilization: Preservation using Multi-Dimensional Digitization of Squeeze Impressions in the Ernst Herzfeld Collection.

WHY IT'S A MISTAKE: The title has jargon, a colon, and is way too long to comprehend on the first read through.

HERE'S HOW IT COULD BE BETTER: *Preserving Ancient Civilization Materials with 3D Imaging.* The title is clear in intent and concise—and the reader can fully comprehend it from the first read.

MISTAKE #2: NO CLEAR SOLUTION

Stating the museum's needs in a grant application is usually easy. Articulating a clear solution for those needs? Not so easy. For an application to be competitive a stated need must be followed with a well thought out and sustainable solution. Merely stating a museum need and asking for money to fix it is unattractive to reviewers because it comes across as entitled. There are serious questions left unanswered as to "why and how" the proposed project will be successful. Additionally, it shows little commitment from the museum in terms of implementing a permanent solution.

MISTAKE #3: NO EVIDENCE

Museums unfortunately take for granted that what's obvious to them is not obvious to others. A grant application stating a museum need with no evidence to legitimize that need will immediately disqualify the application. Reviewers want to see documentation of the need, evidence of the negative consequences of not having the need met, letters of support from related stakeholders—anything that will help substantiate the case. **Bonus:** If evidence of the need

can be tied into larger cultural movements and national context the application will be elevated in importance, deemed genuine, and found memorable.

MISTAKE #4: **NO ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES**

Most grant applications do a decent job stating the need, solution, and evidence for why the need should be met. Where many fall short is in describing how the museum will measure success of the implemented solution (i.e. grant project). This is the most commonly overlooked area on an application. How does the museum plan to measure success? Stating a solution with no way (or intention) of measuring its success will severely impact the soundness of the grant application. Think about what success looks like. Was the need solved? Were there other benefits, both tangible and intangible? Think of qualitative and/or quantitative metrics to use and communicate those metrics in the grant application. Review the *Define Museums Success and Measure It* section for how to identify project measurables.

MISTAKE #5: **NO REASON TO CARE**

This is the most pervasive museum pitfall. Every museum has wonderful collections that are unique and impactful. Too often I see museums rely on "specialness" to convey importance in the grant application instead of directly addressing why people should care about the museum's stated need within the grant application. At best this can be interpreted by the reviewers as laziness on the museum's part. At worst, it can be perceived as entitlement. If the museum is having a hard time articulating why the need and proposed project outcome matters, conversations with stakeholders should take place in order to illuminate matters.

MISTAKE #6: **MADE UP BUDGETS AND TIMELINES**

It's usually obvious to grant reviewers when museums make up budget numbers and timelines. The first clue is when a museum doesn't provide any explanation for how they arrived at those numbers. For example: A museum plans to run a digitization project and has requested funding for temporary staff to digitize and catalog. The museum will need to figure out how long it will take to digitize each item, perform corrections, catalog, and upload in order to determine staff time and therefore, cost. Experienced reviewers will expect to see an equation for how the museum arrived at the staff time

it wants funded. If they don't see an equation to justify the cost and/or the number of hours appear to be misinformed, they will be extremely hesitant to recommend the grant project for funding.

MISTAKE #7: NO REASON WHY THE MUSEUM SHOULD EXECUTE THE PROJECT

Not anchoring the project in a way that demonstrates why the museum is the best for the job can be a major pitfall. Museums are filled with professionals who have education, skills, and experience in very niche areas. Use those facts to make the pitch for why the museum should be awarded and run the project versus another peer museum. Clearly show the museum's expertise and ability and point to related projects where the museum established itself as successful in the past. Museum projects are often very similar and there can be a dozen different flavors of the same grant project presented to reviewers. In order to be successful, the museum needs to make the case for why it in particular should be selected for the award.

Avoiding these common mistakes can mean the difference between funded and rejected. There will be few questions left in the minds of reviewers, and the application can be elevated based on its merits versus its weaknesses. If the museum can avoid these grant application pitfalls it will be a much more competitive applicant.

What Happens if You Fail?

Failing to win a grant the museum applied for can feel very personal. It's natural to have feelings of sadness and frustration, and wonder what went wrong. This section will help museum professionals move past the rejection letter and learn from failure to strengthen future funding applications.

When a museum fails to win a grant there are actions that should be taken next. Here are the six steps museums should follow to turn present failure into future success.

1. LISTEN INTO THE REVIEW SESSION, IF POSSIBLE.

Some funding agencies offer listen-in sessions during the application review process and these are often recorded. The review session will include the presentation of the grant, the reviewers' comments upon the strengths and weaknesses of the application, and raise any questions or concerns. The review is typically listen-only, so the museum isn't able to answer or clarify the application during this process, but it is incredibly valuable to hear how the application is interpreted by professional, external reviewers. The museum may also learn a lot by listening in on other museum applications. Just as much can be learned from the review of a peer's application and the additional information will help to serve the museum's future work. Check in with the funding agency to see if listen-in sessions are a part of their process and if they offer recordings.

2. IT'S NOT PERSONAL.

Failing to receive an award the museum's worked very hard on can cause staff to wonder if that particular grant was even right for them. It's important to make sure the grants the museum applies for are appropriate and applied for correctly. However, sometimes it has nothing to do with the museum's application. Funding opportunities can be highly competitive and even if the museum's application met all the criteria and made a compelling case, there's not enough money to go to every worthy museum applicant. Another likely scenario is that the funding agency has decided to focus on a niche area of their mission, which is not something they typically broadcast. If this is the case, the museum's application could very well fit their needs next year and the museum will be encouraged to apply again. A phone call can help clarify this.

3. SPEAK WITH SOMEONE.

Calling to ask for feedback is a critical part of successfully navigating the failure process. Funding agencies will note which museums follow up for feedback regarding their rejected applications and will mentally earmark them for future consideration. Much like following up on an unsuccessful job interview, museums should request feedback from funding agencies on how they can improve their application. This signals to the agency that the museum is sincere and committed in seeking an award. A phone call should be made versus a request via email. A phone conversation allows staff from the agency to provide candid feedback and suggestions. Takes notes on the feedback as it can help with any future applications the museum writes—implement what feels appropriate.

4. REQUEST REVIEWER NOTES.

If there isn't a recording of the application review session, and even if a staff member can speak with someone from the funding agency, requesting the reviewer notes is a vital part of the process. Reviewer notes contain a wealth of information that can be used to make the museum's future funding applications even stronger. Funding agencies should always have reviewer notes. Some may share all their notes with full transparency, others may only be able to provide a summary. Ask for whatever form of notes are available. Sometimes the notes verify the museum application hit all the marks but shows the proposed

project didn't fit the agency's focus for that year (see tip #2). Other times the critiques can offer invaluable insight into how the museum's application can be strengthened.

5. APPLY NOTES TO THE NEXT DRAFT.
Take all of the feedback acquired from following steps 1-4 and assess it to see if it feels valid. Brainstorm on how the museum might address the critiques and make decisions on how to apply the information to future grant applications. Ask fellow staff members to review the feedback and assist in the assessment process. Once a new draft is written, check back in with previous grant critiques to ensure known mistakes aren't being made again.

> *Harnessing a past failure to become a stronger applicant is a smart move for museums to make—one that will greatly increase the chances of future grant applications.*

6. RESUBMIT!
It's time to get back out there! Applying for funding is a vulnerable process, but it's a process that museums can get better at with practice. Harnessing a past failure to become a stronger applicant is a smart move for museums to make—one that will greatly increase the chances of future grant applications.

So, turn failure into an advantage and get back on the grant writing horse!

When and How to Engage
a Grant Specialist

There are several scenarios that can occur in which a museum should engage a grant strategist, writer, and manager. Taking grant writing workshops, attending funding agency webinars, and reading grant writing tips can be incredibly helpful, but sometimes a museum needs a little extra help in the form of a grant specialist.

A grant specialist is not just a grant writer, they're an expert in leading a museum though the entire grant acquisition process. The grant acquisition

> *A grant specialist is not just a grant writer, they're an expert in leading a museum though the entire grant acquisition process. The grant acquisition process includes: cultivating a grant project idea, constructing a grant project framework, finding the right grant opportunities to apply for, writing the application, and managing the entire process to ensure the project construction and application are done successfully.*

process includes: cultivating a grant project idea, constructing a grant project framework, finding the right grant opportunities to apply for, writing the application, and managing the entire process to ensure the project construction and application are done successfully. Many grant specialists will also deliver

grant project management services once the project is awarded, as there are funding agency requirements to meet as well as a project to manage toward specific milestones and outcomes.

The following are the top five scenarios in which a museum should hire a grant specialist:

SCENARIO #1: The museum has no grant experts on staff and has no idea where to begin. The museum can't get out of "overwhelm" mode to begin the necessary strategizing to move forward and begin applying.

While this book and many other resources are out there to help museums craft grant project ideas, it can still be a difficult process. There are two main issues that arise in this type of scenario:

1. *The museum is unable to craft any grant project ideas that match up with the museum's overall mission while also substantially meeting a museum need; or*

2. *The museum has a grant project idea, but isn't able to evaluate whether the grant project idea is a winning one.*

If the museum isn't familiar with grant work, it's sometimes hard to brainstorm grant project ideas that meet museum needs while also being an attractive project to outside funders. Furthermore, if museum staff aren't well versed in the grant acquisition world it can be hard to effectively evaluate the museum's project to determine if it's compelling and competitive. When a museum lacks confidence in the project idea it's produced, it's hard to justify the staff time and effort it will take to apply for a funding opportunity.

In this scenario, a museum needs to employ a grant specialist who can lead the museum through the critical foundation work necessary in order to create a mission-aligned, compelling grant project that solves a direct need. Even when museums attend similar workshops with a grant specialist they may still need specific one-on-one focus where grant work can be workshopped internally with all relevant staff in attendance. Having a grant specialist lead a museum through this type of foundational work can be transformational, and greatly

impact the museum's future success in grant acquisition.

SCENARIO #2: The museum lacks a development department and there's no one on staff with experience in successfully finding and applying for grants.

This scenario assumes the museum has done some of the critical foundation work needed to construct grant project ideas, but lacks the expertise to confidently seek and apply for funding. In this case the issue is:

The museum thinks it has a good grant project idea, but doesn't know where to find appropriate funding opportunities.

There are many databases (free and subscription) that claim they'll make finding the perfect grant an easy process. While being able to search a database for funding opportunities can be a great place to start, the database can't do the critical thinking or assessment necessary to evaluate whether the museum and its grant project idea are a strong enough fit to warrant applying for grant funding. Additionally, databases can potentially match a museum with so many seemingly good opportunities that it can be near impossible to vet each one to determine the best fit for the museum.

If the museum can make it through the finding and selection of grant opportunities they are then faced with having to quickly become familiar with the funding agency and opportunity requirements. Every opportunity will be different with different requirements, forms and information needed, and language used. A grant specialist can cut down on significant staff time and angst by providing the museum with a grant prospect report that identifies strong funding opportunity matches while also verifying that the museum and its project idea meet the funding opportunity's eligibility requirements. Having a specialist assist with providing funding opportunity matches can help a museum accelerate its grant acquisition timeline because it can confidently apply for the right grants the first time.

SCENARIO #3: The museum has a development department but the department lacks a grant specialist or someone experienced in writing and submitting grant applications for museums.

There are many museums who have a development department but lack a grant specialist. This is often because the museum's previous focus has been on donor and corporate sponsorship and there wasn't an interest in developing grant acquisition practices. In this case the issue can be a combination of the previous two scenarios in addition to not having support during the grant writing and application process.

The museum has a development department, but doesn't have a grant specialist on staff to lead the museum through the foundational work nor support the museum in grant seeking and application.

The grant writing and application phase of grant acquisition is the most well-known challenge, and it's most common for museums to seek out a grant specialist for this stage. Museums may be able to sufficiently craft a winning grant project idea—and may even be able to find suitable funding opportunity matches. However, they frequently aren't able to write a compelling funding proposal nor navigate the often-esoteric grant application systems in order to successfully complete each application requirement. Because they are familiar with the variety of application processes and requirements, having a grant specialist can help the museum morph their proposal into a compelling application and increase familiarity with grant application systems.

SCENARIO #4: The museum has a development department with a grant writer on staff, but has been repeatedly unsuccessful in acquiring grants.

This scenario can be a tough one as it can be incredibly sensitive to navigate. None the less, it's common and can be addressed by bringing in outside expertise. Often, the issues that arise in this situation are:

The museum's grant writer isn't familiar or up to date with museum funding trends and professional standards that should be employed in projects, or there is another unknown factor that can be revealed by outside assessment.

Funding agencies, regardless of the field they support, will follow trends that are either purposefully cultivated or that they naturally gravitate towards. Staying on top of funding trends and researching funding agency award histories is a necessary part of the job when it comes to grant acquisition

strategy. This is an area that can easily slip and museums can lose touch or misjudge funding trends—especially if the grant writer is not experienced in grant work specific to the museum field. Agencies that fund museums will have museum experts as application reviewers. They will be evaluating applications based on merit and whether or not museum industry standards are being followed. If museum standards aren't mentioned or if the project presentation is perceived as amateur, the reviewers will reject the proposal. If neither of these is the case, it's difficult to know why the museum has been unsuccessful thus far. An outside specialist should be hired to assess previous grant work and provide professional feedback.

SCENARIO #5: The museum has a grant, but has no one with the capacity to manage the grant project to a successful completion.

In this scenario, the museum has received a grant award but is unsure how to properly manage the grant project to a successful completion. This is an unusual situation as typically museums have a professional qualified to take on the task of grant project management. The museum has an issue if:

The museum is short-staffed or lacks a credentialed project manager with experience in grant funded projects.

Awards from funding agencies will each have their own set of requirements for how the grant project is executed and how project outcomes must be reported. Much like the application process, funding agencies will all vary on requirements, methods, and reporting frequencies. Many museums believe that acquiring the grant is the hard part. While that may be true, the next, equally hard part is ensuring the grant project is conducted in a way that meets the funding agency's requirements and that doesn't violate any terms of the grant that could void the award.

Even if the project is managed successfully, there is still a reporting component that is important to get right as it can impact the museum's ability to receive additional awards in the future. Not just from that agency, but from any other agency who hears of the museum's reputation for having failed a grant report. Failing to meet project and reporting requirements is a colossal *faux pas* and news of a museum who breaches the terms of a grant and fails to execute

the project successfully will create a bad reputation. Working with a grant management specialist to manage the project will ensure that the museum has the expertise it needs to execute the project successfully and as dictated by the terms of the award. This will help guarantee that the grant project is successful, and that the museum sustains a good reputation for future grant acquisition work.

CONCLUSION: If the museum is stuck, it's important to hire a grant specialist who has experience working with museums.

There are many grant specialists out there who specialize in a particular portion of the grant process, and a specific sector in which they have experience. For the museum field, funding opportunities are highly specialized and are often overseen by funding agencies within the history and heritage arena. As a result, the grant specialist needs to be fluent in both the grant application process and museum special projects. Though this may seem like an incredibly narrow niche, there are plenty of grant specialists who work within the museum and heritage industries. If a museum has made the decision to invest in a grant specialist it is very important the museum select a specialist familiar with the museum field. Otherwise, working with the wrong professional can waste time and money the museum doesn't have.

Museums can find grant specialists via consultant directories maintained by history organizations and nonprofit management agencies. Grant specialists will each have their own preferred method of working with museums, though it's recommended that the museum seek to develop a relationship with one grant specialist who can support the museum through all phases of the grant acquisition and management process. There is a significant amount of work both the museum and the grant specialist will need to go through to get up to speed and do the foundational work necessary to create a great grant project. The more times the museum and grant specialist work together, the easier and more seamless the grant acquisition process will become. Consider it a very worthwhile investment in the museum's long-term financial wellbeing.

Conclusion

Grant writing is both a science and an art form. The writing aspect specifically does employ the art of words to make a persuasive case. However, it also requires extreme accuracy and discipline as many of the required narratives are confined by very limiting character counts.

The grant acquisition process as a whole requires the museum to lay itself bare and frequently evaluate its weaknesses to an external audience. The process requires the museum to be vulnerable as it solicits funds for projects that can have very real consequences for the museum and community if not funded.

But there's much more to it than that. The grant acquisition process as a whole requires the museum to lay itself bare and frequently evaluate its weaknesses to an external audience. The process requires the museum to be vulnerable as it solicits funds for projects that can have very real consequences for the museum and community if not funded. When a museum is rejected (and they all have been rejected at some point) it can be incredibly personal for the staff involved because it appears as if their work and proposed project was deemed to be not as valuable as others. When taken all together, it's understandable why many museums are reluctant to invest time and energy in a process

that is nothing but uncomfortable (until an award is given). Some even find the process so untenable they decide as a strategy not to apply for funding opportunities, rejecting the process before the process can reject them.

With that said, there's a catharsis that can be found in grant writing. Grant acquisition can (and should) be seen as a way to solve a problem, and grant writing is a way to express problems and needs that are acutely felt by staff on a daily basis. Just the act of applying for a grant can help shake off lethargy surrounding atrophied aspects of the museum. It places the museum in a proactive role and while it may be difficult to get going at first, the momentum will help to carry subsequent grant acquisition efforts. Though the threat of rejection can be hard, doing nothing can be harder—and it's certainly more dangerous for the long-term health of the museum.

> *Grant acquisition can (and should) be seen as a way to solve a problem, and grant writing is a way to express problems and needs that are acutely felt by staff on a daily basis.*

A healthy approach is one where the museum incorporates grant acquisition as a part of its larger funding strategy. Though it takes time to do the proper identification and prioritization of potential grant projects and match them to known funding opportunities, a museum can schedule in time and effort for grant writing. This is a much more sustainable approach than waiting until a financial crisis occurs or a last-minute project comes up. Being able to anticipate grant deadlines, fully understand grant application requirements, and have the time and space to dedicate to grant writing removes the frenetic component from the process. In its place a confident, methodical grant practice can be implemented.

As with any process, it will take several iterations and fine-tuning with each attempt. Approach each grant application as an opportunity, reflect and move on from inevitable failures, and seek help from members of the Board or

consultants if the museum is struggling with the grant acquisition process. Grant acquisition as a practice can provide valuable financial sustenance to the museum and if implemented sustainably, grant work doesn't have to negatively impact staff. By applying a systematic, common sense approach, museum staff will have the skills they need not just to survive the grant writing process, but to thrive within it.

Resources

The *Resources* section provides exercise worksheets to complement book content. These exercises can be used each time the museum wishes to write a grant.

Survivor's Guide to Grant Writing Checklist

☐   Has the museum reviewed its grant writing roadblocks?

☐   Has the museum defined its Problems, Needs, and Solutions?

☐   Has the museum broken the project into clearly defined and feasible steps?

☐   Has the museum determined what project success looks like and how to measure it?

☐   Has the museum reviewed the tips provided in *Create a Bulletproof Proposal and Grant Pitfalls – Know and Avoid Them?*

☐   Does the museum know how to evaluate and select appropriate funding opportunities?

If the checklist is complete then the museum is ready to actively apply for funding opportunities offered by foundations and granting agencies. If the museum is struggling to meet some of the check marked areas or wishes to strengthen its grant acquisition approach, then soliciting and finding a consultant is likely the next step.

Problems Exercise

PROBLEMS ARE VEHICLES TO EXPRESS NEEDS.

List all of your problems at work even if they don't appear to be easily solvable by receiving money. List anything you're not getting done, anything that makes you feel guilty, anything that your boss keeps nagging you about, anything researchers keep asking for, anything that's made you think: "My life would be so much easier if *this* happened."

Needs Exercise

WHEN NEEDS ARE LISTENED TO WE FIND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS.

All of the Problems you just listed? They express an underlying need. Take a look at your Problems list—what do they tell you? What do you need more of? What technology do you need? What supplies do you need? Do you need more staff? What other resources do you need?

Solutions Exercise

**WHEN SOLUTIONS ARE FOUND WE HAVE THE POWER
TO BREAK OUT OF THE OVERWHELM.**

You've just listed Problems and identified the Needs they represent. Take a moment and answer your Needs. For example: "A Solution for my Problem of not having enough staff would be to acquire more staff!" Or, "A solution to not having anything online would be to invest in digitization technology and pilot an efficient workflow to make the project doable." Give it a try:

Problem | Need | Solution Grid Exercise

Once you've completed the Problem, Need, Solution free flow exercises as described in the *Working Museum Problems to Find a Funding Solution* section and identified measurables as described in the *Define Project Success & Measure It*, use this grid to capture information needed for the grant application. Choose up to three of the museum project ideas that emerged with the most synergy and that best match the museum's vision and needs. Place the bullet points generated from each section into this grid so that you can reference the project elements in a linear fashion within the grant application.

PROBLEM	NEED	SOLUTION	MEASURABLES

Solution Break Down Exercise

Directions: A typical grant cycle is 12 months, choose one (1) solution from your Problems|Needs|Solutions grid and break it down as described in the *Project Break Down Template* section. Use this exercise to identify your project timeline, establish major elements of your project, reveal resources you need to do the project, and account for staff time to work on the project.

12M	What does your finished product look like? What specific items will be achieved by the end of the project?

SOLUTION BREAK DOWN EXERCISE CONTINUED

9M	What does your project look like at 9 months? What items will be achieved or in-progress?

6M	What does your project look like at 6 months? What items will be achieved or in-progress?

SOLUTION BREAK DOWN EXERCISE CONTINUED

3M	What does your project look like at 3 months? What items will be achieved or in-progress?

1M	What does your project look like at 1 month? What items will be started and in-progress?

SOLUTION BREAK DOWN EXERCISE CONTINUED

Not sure where a project element should go? Write it down here:

Template Essentials

If part of the roadblock to grant acquisition is the grant writing, being familiar with universal grant application sections will help. The below elements will be required in most applications or proposals and gathering the information ahead of time can help ease the roadblock to writing.

TITLE: keep it creative and/or concise

ABSTRACT: briefly explain need and solution, the highlights of your project (500 words or less)

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND: the usual burb that describes the establishment and mission of your organization (500 words or less)

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE: a much longer narrative of the project. Include:

- Proof of the need (state the problem, provide statistics, photos, letters of support, stories)

- Solution with (measurable) objectives

- Significance

- Plan (project break down and timeline)

BUDGET & BUDGET JUSTIFICATION: budget for the project as well as other financial or in-kind support

MEASURABLES: how are you measuring project success? Bring back the objectives listed above and outline what success looks like (qualitative and quantitatively)

PERSONNEL: resumes or CVs to establish your credentials for executing this project

SUPPORT: letters of support from stakeholders/people touched by this project

Sample Template

Directions: Construct your next grant by filling out these universal template sections. Refer to *Template Essentials* for guidance on what to capture in each section. This exercise is meant to jump start your mind and allow you a place to write down the information you want in each section. I encourage you to write thoughts down, use bullet points, and even draw pictures. By writing all the information down in these sections you'll make it easier on yourself when you're ready to type it into a grant application. This will also help you to prioritize the information you want to include—which will come in handy as almost every application will have character limits, forcing applicants to be very clear with the information they wish to convey.

In the future, if you're doing this exercise with a specific grant in mind it's important to pay attention to character or word count limits, any information requests, and format restrictions. If you fail to follow any of the format and information guidelines it can lead to your application being rejected.

TEMPLATE BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE

Template

Title:

Abstract:

Organization Background:

Proposal Narrative:

Include: Need Statement, Solution, Significance, Project Plan & Budget.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Measurables:

Who is working on this project? What are their credentials?

Who can write you letters of support? Who are your stakeholders and people positively impacted by this project?

What other information do you need to convey?

What additional evidence or documentation do you need to provide with this application?

Is there anything else?

Rachael is the Owner of Rachael Cristine Consulting, and provides services to museums, libraries, and archives. She specializes in grant acquisition for museums, history, and heritage organizations and is the creator of *Zero to Winning with Grants!*, a workshop that tours nationally. Previously she was at the Freer|Sackler Museum of the Smithsonian Institution and the Oregon Wine History Archive at Linfield College, where she was able to launch multiple special projects due to her repeated success in grant writing. Rachael is active in Northwest Archivists and the Society of American Archivists, and is an alumna of the Archives Leadership Institute, a National Historical Publications & Records Commission (NHPRC) program. She is also a popular guest author for Lucidea's *Think Clearly Blog*.

Lucidea is a leading global knowledge management, collections management and library automation software company, helping clients navigate the ever-expanding universe of information, turning it into actionable knowledge and delightful user or visitor experiences. They achieve this by providing tools that accelerate access to knowledge and multimedia content resources, while simplifying their management. Through products such as Argus, ArgusEssentia, ArchivEra, ArchivEssentia, Eloquent Archives, CuadraSTAR Knowledge Center for Archives, SydneyEnterprise, Inmagic Presto, GeniePlus, DB/TextWorks, LawPort, and LookUp Precision, Lucidea fulfills their mission of enabling clients to optimize delivery of knowledge, information and content while achieving financial and operational goals—and to help ensure that information management is tied to organizational strategy.

In addition to offering products and services that help ensure the sustainability and success of their clients, Lucidea is committed to offering a program of professional development options for museum professionals, archivists, special librarians, knowledge managers and other information professionals. The program includes webinars delivered by internal and external experts, the Think Clearly blog, conference presentations and panels, and now the third in their lineup of offerings from Lucidea Press.
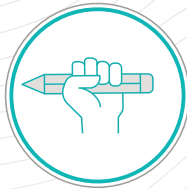
Survivor's Guide to Museum Grant Writing offers advice from Rachael Cristine Woody, a seasoned museum expert and consultant specializing in grant acquisition, with significant experience in museum, history and heritage organizations as both a practitioner and advisor.

This book is for anyone who wants to delve into the grant acquisition process and confidently apply for grant funding.

It takes a pragmatic approach to such topics as seeing each grant application as an opportunity, learning and moving on from inevitable failures, using grant acquisition to provide valuable financial sustenance to the museum without negatively impacting staff, and applying a systematic, common sense approach that builds the necessary skills to survive the grant writing process and thrive within it.