

THE ULTIMATE GRANTS TOOLKIT:

*Essential Worksheets, Blueprints, and Step-By-Step Planning Guides
to Help You Build Great Grant-Funded Projects!*

NOTE: Your *Ultimate Grants Toolkit* includes all of the following worksheets, checklists, templates, etc. in both the hard-copy binder and in electronic file form on the companion CD.

(Please see the end of this file for sample pages!)

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SAMPLE PAGES

The following six sample pages will give you an idea of the diversity and nature of the planning tools and worksheets contained in The Toolkit – as well as a taste of the explanatory text that accompanies them.

Page 12:

A4. The Mission-Vision-Values Tree

PURPOSE: When you're playing "The Grantsmanship Game," everything begins with *mission*. At GrantsUSA, our definition of *mission* is simple and straightforward:

Your organizational mission is a deeply held, common understanding of who you are as an organization . . . what your work is in the world . . . and why that work is important.

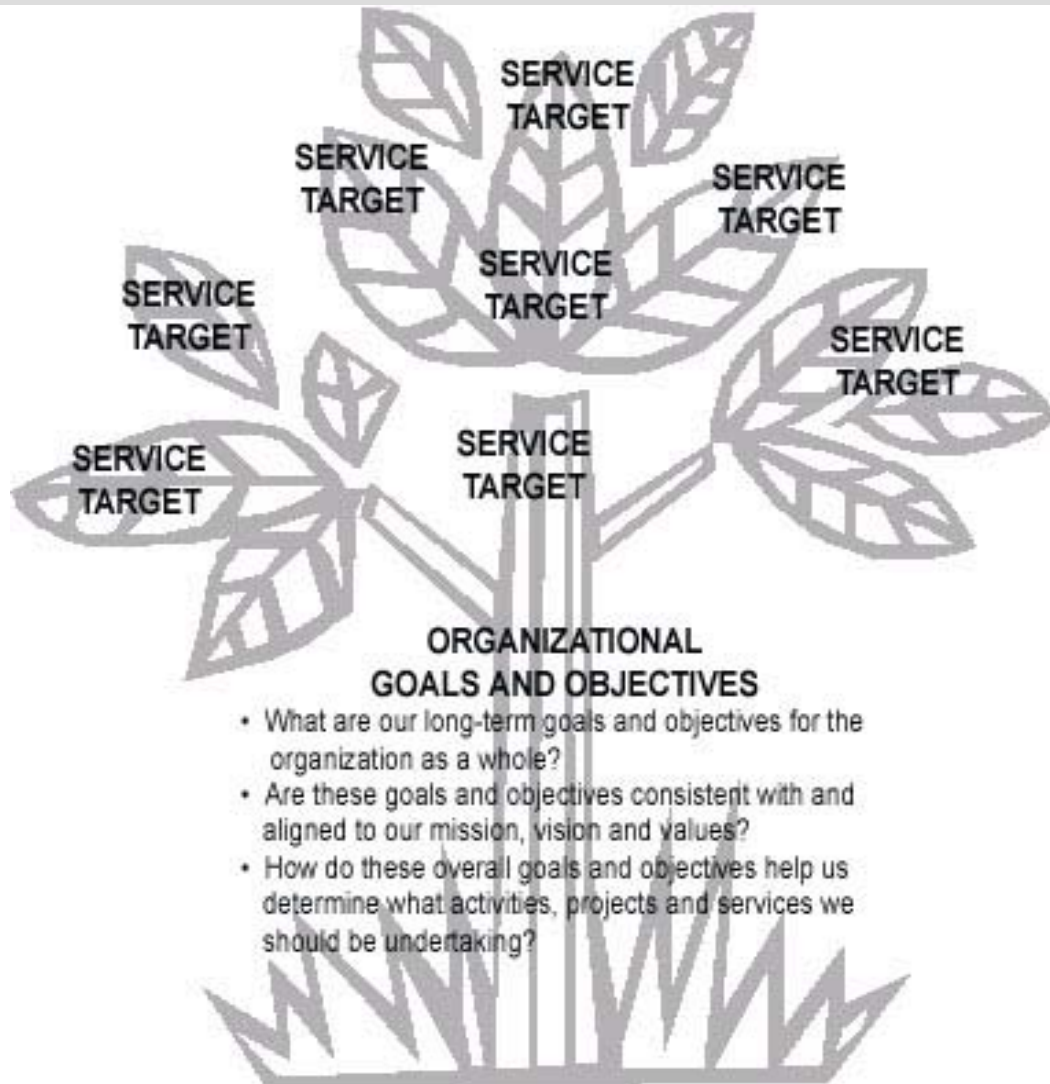
"A4. The Mission-Vision-Values Tree" is intended to depict in simple graphic form how mission, vision, and values ideally should work within your organization. The visual image is that of a flourishing tree, busily producing its fruit (your *service targets*) from a healthy, supportive central structure (your *organizational goals and objectives*).

Meanwhile, beneath the surface is the part of the tree that the rest of the world seldom sees or even thinks about – the root structure, your *mission, vision and values*.

Just as the purpose of the tree's roots is to support the tree's growth and serve as a channel for its deep nourishment, your organization's *mission, vision, and values* support the growth and nurture the health of your organization. And everything that your organization produces by way of services and programs grows from and is an essential reflection of your core mission, vision, and values.

USING THE TOOL: "The Mission-Vision-Values Tree" is a great conceptual tool to illustrate the importance of staying firmly rooted in and connected with the deepest understanding of your organization's role in the world. It can help tremendously in those times when an enthusiastic board member, for instance, suggests pursuing grants for a terrific new project . . . and you can refer to "The Mission-Vision-Values Tree" and have a good discussion about whether that proposed project is in fact in alignment with and a natural outgrowth from the organization's mission, vision, and values.

A4. THE MISSION-VISION-VALUES TREE



- What are our long-term goals and objectives for the organization as a whole?
- Are these goals and objectives consistent with and aligned to our mission, vision and values?
- How do these overall goals and objectives help us determine what activities, projects and services we should be undertaking?

MISSION

- Who are we? Why do we exist?
- What do we do best?
- Who do we serve?
- What are our unique contributions to the world?
-

VISION

- Where do we see ourselves in five years? Ten years? Fifty years?
- If we were doing exactly what we are meant to do in exactly the right way, what would we be doing, and how?

VALUES

- What's important to us about the way we:
- Conduct business?
 - Serve our clients and constituents?
 - Work with other community members?
 - Work with our colleagues and staff?
 - Present ourselves to the world at large?

A41. Is This Opportunity Right for Us? – Evaluating Funders and Funding Opportunities

PURPOSE: More than a few grant practitioners around the country have told the GrantsUSA team that this next worksheet, “A41. Is This Opportunity Right for Us?,” is one of the most important and helpful that we offer. We can’t prove it, but it’s likely that these grant practitioners have felt themselves beleaguered by those constituents (board members, executive staff, and so on) who, in their enthusiasm for the services offered by their organization, can’t understand why the grant practitioner can’t just “go out and get a grant” for Project M, Project R, or Project X.

Those of us who have been at this for a while know that this is what we call “chasing the dollars” – the very antithesis of mission-centered grantsmanship. Developing the plans and the relationships and the proposals necessary for success in grantseeking takes time, lots of it. And not all funding opportunities are equal in terms of their potential payback for the time invested.

“A41. Is This Opportunity Right for Us?” helps us maintain that all-important mission-centered, clear-eyed and clear-headed stance toward our grants research and the grantmakers with whom we choose to invest our valuable resources of time, energy, and connection.

USING THE TOOL: Our simple recommendation: Once you’ve identified a promising funding opportunity (or had one brought to your attention), look at it closely through the lens of the questions on the “Is This Opportunity Right for Us?” worksheet. Be honest! If there are any areas where your honest answers cause concern, don’t ignore those concerns or brush them under the table: *Deal with them, right now, up front*. Sometimes “dealing with them” may mean saying “No, thank you, this won’t work for us” and walking away. If your organization is truly mission-centered, you and your team will know when walking away from a seemingly attractive funding opportunity is the best, most empowered choice.

A41. IS THIS OPPORTUNITY RIGHT FOR US? Evaluating Funders and Funding Opportunities

- ___ 1. Is the purpose of the funding opportunity compatible with our mission? vision? values?
- ___ 2. Is something similar to this already part of our long-range or strategic plan?
 - If so, how high a priority has it been given?
 - If not, is it something we should consider incorporating into our strategic plan?
- ___ 3. Is our organization eligible to apply?
 - If not, can we partner with an eligible agency?
- ___ 4. Is the deadline a realistic one for us, given the resources and time available?
- ___ 5. Is the amount available through this opportunity compatible with our funding needs?
- ___ 6. Are we comfortable with the mission, vision, and values of the funding organization? Is there any potential ethical conflict between our mission, vision, and values and the source of this funder's philanthropic dollars? (This is an especially important question to ask when contemplating funding from a corporation whose products or services might not be in alignment with what your organization stands for.)
- ___ 7. How competitive will the funding process be?
 - If "low," is this an opportunity we want to pursue?
 - If "high," do we have the time and resources to invest in putting together a highly competitive – and speculative – proposal?
- ___ 8. How complex or involved are the requirements for supporting documentation?
 - Do we realistically have time and resources to meet those requirements?
- ___ 9. Are we prepared to live up to the terms of a grant award from this agency?
 - Periodic reports
 - Accounting/financial responsibility
 - Evaluation requirements
 - Certifications and assurances
 - Other

OVERALL:

- ___ How well does this funding opportunity fit with *our* mission, vision, and values?
- ___ Do we have the resources needed to prepare a technically qualified, highly competitive and timely proposal?

GRANTS READINESS: The Culture and Practices of Successful Grantseeking Organizations

B1. Grants Readiness Checklist

PURPOSE: A wise young person once said: “Just because you *can* doesn’t mean you *should*.” Certainly truer words were never spoken in the context of grantseeking and grantsmanship: Just because you *have the ability* to seek grant funding – to follow the process step by step, as outlined in “The Grantsmanship Game” -- doesn’t mean your organization *is prepared to be successful in securing and administering grants funds*. There’s so much more to good stewardship in the grants arena than simply knowing how to construct a proposal or identify prospective funders.

“B1. Grants Readiness Checklist” is taken from the GrantsUSA workshop entitled “Grants Readiness: The Culture and Practices of Successful Grantseeking Organizations.”

USING THE TOOL: The “Grants Readiness Checklist” was designed to help you (and your team) assess the degree to which the organization with which you’re working is positioned to *be successful at securing grant funding; to benefit from grant funding; and, finally, to be a good steward of grant funding* – on its own behalf, on behalf of the funder, and on behalf of those it serves in the community. Using the framework of “The Grantsmanship Game,” this checklist asks you to assess your organization’s status for each of the five “rules” in two distinct and equally important arenas. These are:

- **Culture and Infrastructure, which includes:**
 - The underlying operating paradigms of your organization
 - What your leadership models to staff
 - How your organization *walks* -- no matter how it *talks*
 - The administrative and operational structure
 - Reporting hierarchies
 - Respective roles and responsibilities
 - Communication systems and networks (formal and informal)
 - The “stories” members tell about themselves and the organization – your shared history

- **Resources and Documentation, which includes:**
 - The specific tools that are available to your organization to do its work
 - Tangible resources: Financial support, adequate equipment, appropriate and timely supplies, adequate space, available transportation, etc.
 - Intangible resources: Readily available leadership support, deep subject-area expertise, exceptional good will in the community, etc.
 - Documentation resources: Reports, history, recordkeeping systems, planning tools, records

B1. GRANTS READINESS CHECKLIST				
READINESS COMPONENT	COMPLETE AND AVAILABLE	IMPROVEMENT NEEDED	RESOURCES NEEDED	NA
Rule 1: KNOW YOURSELF – Culture and Infrastructure				
Visionary leadership				
Continuity of vision regardless of leadership				
Solid board support; clear board roles and responsibilities				
Clear lines of decision-making within the organization				
Solid reputation in the community				
Credible track record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational accomplishments AND/OR • Credentials of key individuals (board members, key staff, consultants, partners, etc.) 				
Focus on long-term change, not short-term fixes				
Effective ongoing communications – formal and informal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal (audiences?) • External (audiences?) 				
Clearly stated policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical principles for marketing and fundraising • Donor rights • Grants management, reporting outcomes and results • External communications • Gift solicitation • Gift acceptance • Gift management 				
Rule 1: KNOW YOURSELF – Resources and Documentation				
Mission statement				
Vision statement				
Values statement				
Case statement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization history • Program descriptions (needs, priorities, clients, services, location, staffing, etc.) • Future goals and strategies 				
Prioritized wish list				
Completed “concept papers” (Project Profile worksheets) for each planned project				