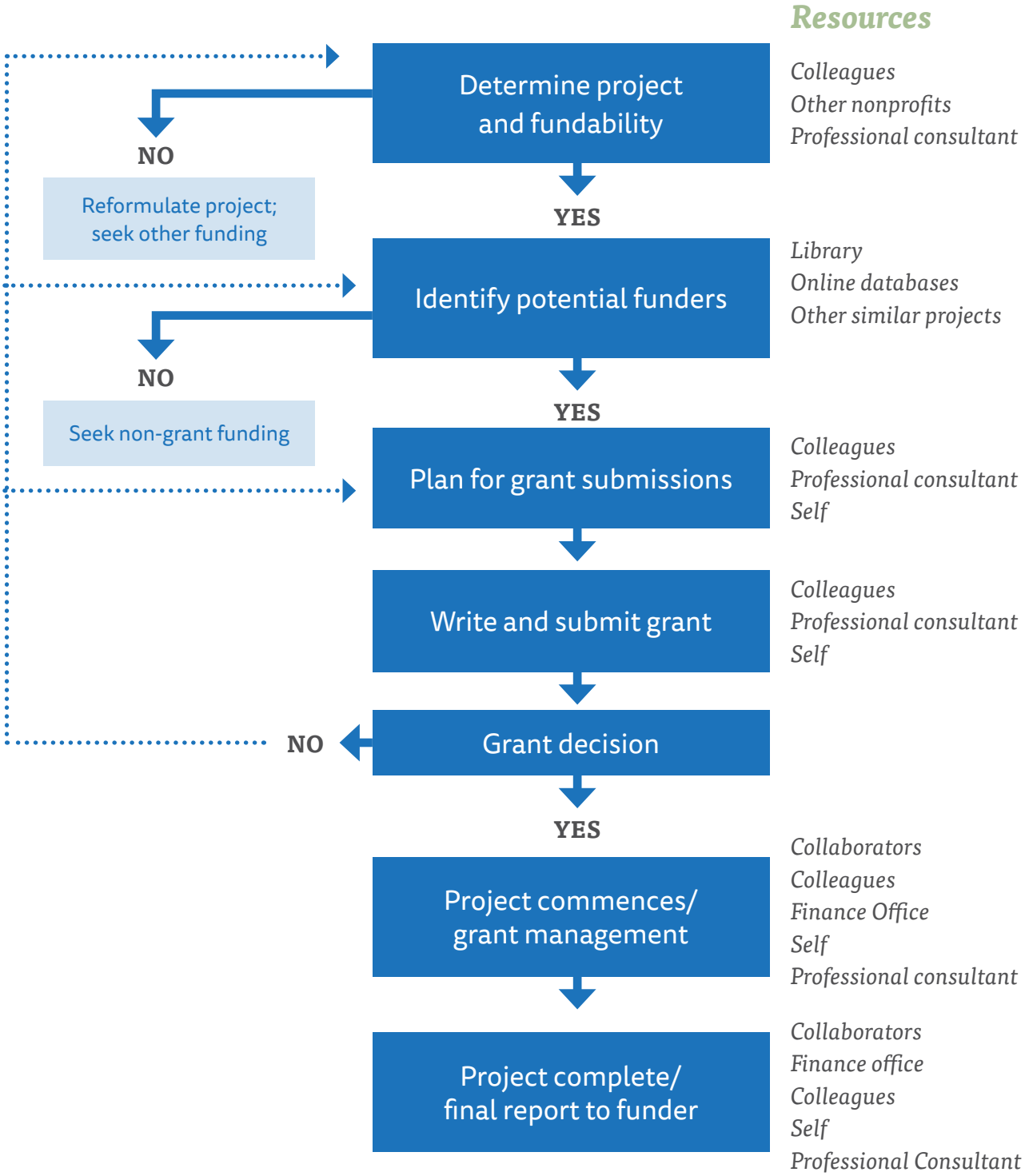
The Grant Seeking Process

AN OVERVIEW



Resources

Colleagues
Other nonprofits
Professional consultant

Library
Online databases
Other similar projects

Colleagues
Professional consultant
Self

Colleagues
Professional consultant
Self

Collaborators
Colleagues
Finance Office
Self
Professional consultant

Collaborators
Finance office
Colleagues
Self
Professional Consultant

Congratulations… you've completed the grant seeking process!

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Types of Granting Organizations

	Corporations	Foundations	State Government	Federal Government
Funding from	Profits, set-aside, marketing budgets	Donation from individual, family, organization	State or federal appropriations or budgets	Federal appropriations or budgets
Funding priorities	Set by company; generally within business interests	Set by donor; can vary widely	Set by state legislature or federal pass through; can be very specific	Set by Congress; can be very specific
Funding amounts	Can vary widely each year	At least 5% of assets by law	Set by appropriations	Set by appropriations
Projects of interest	Local; where company is located	Can be local or national	State-wide	National
Deadlines	Can be rolling	Generally 1-4 times per year	Generally annually	Generally annually
Advantages	• Good local source • Quick turnaround • Personal relationships • "Easier" application	• Personal relationships • Faster turn-around • Can be shorter application • Local foundations have local interest • Can have specific foci	• Less competition than national • Training available on how to apply	• Potential for lots of money • Application instructions very specific • Feedback on why not funded • Training available on how to apply
Disadvantages	• Lots of competition • Needs to meet business interest • Tend to fund in business locations so opportunities vary widely	• Often little or no feedback if declined • Can be "political" • Better opportunities in urban than rural areas	• Not well advertised • Funding varies depending on economy • Few funding competitions	• Lengthy application process • Long time to decision • Reporting requirements can create negative ROI

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Determining Funder Fit

Questions you will need to ask yourself when determining if a funder is a good fit with your project include:

YES	NO	
		Will the funder fund my type of organization? (Nearly all require a 501(c)3 designation; if you do not have one, can you partner with an organization that does and ask them to submit the application on your behalf as your fiscal agent.)
		Will the funder fund my type of project, e.g., equipment, program development, capital improvements?
		Will the funder provide funds in the monetary range that I need? Note the upper and lower limits to their funding; some funders prefer to make smaller grants, others only larger grants. If they fund less than you need, you can ask for grants from multiple funders to meet your overall goal; funders actually prefer to see that others have bought into this project. If they do not fund projects as small as yours, it indicates that they prefer to fund larger projects or projects with a broader reach than yours.
		Look at the funder's geographic reach. Does the funder provide funds in your state? In your city? Is another area impacted by your project? Think creatively about who the project impacts. Even if you provide services in one community, do you help people from another community?
		Can you meet the deadline? For some grants and well-developed projects, experienced grant writers may need a week or less to put together a good application. Other projects and applications may take several months. Honestly assess your own comfort and experience writing grants, the amount of time needed to fully develop the project, and the time you have available on your calendar before the deadline. Then double it.
		Will the funding arrive in time? Note not only the grant submission deadline, but also the time it takes for the funder to reach a decision and disperse funds. On average, expect a funder to make a decision before opening another round of grants. Federal grants may take 6-9 months or longer. When in doubt, call the funder and ask!

CONTINUED

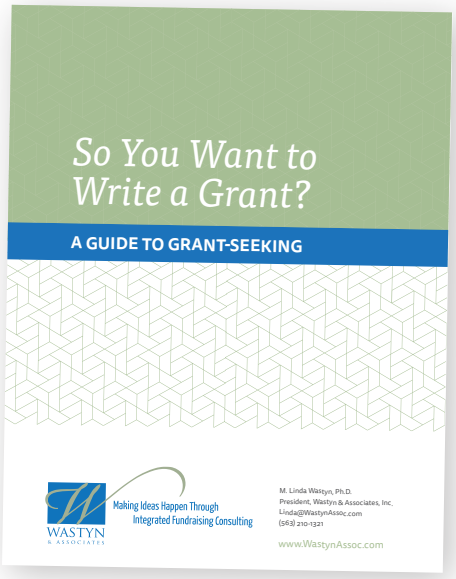
YES	NO	
		Have you made provisions to **meet any special requirements of the funder**, especially required matching funds? Funders increasingly want to partner in the funding process. Most, if not all, will want to see some institutional commitment to the project before they will provide funding. (After all, if your organization cannot demonstrate sufficient interest or confidence in the project to invest in it, why should they?) Note that your organization can invest in the project in non-monetary ways that can help you qualify. When developing the budget, think creatively about *all* of the things required to complete the project... space, oversight, telephones. These other items becomes in-kind contributions your organization may contribute without adding to the operating budget.

NEXT STEPS:

If you have answered **"yes"** to all of these questions, you have identified a funder worth pursuing and can proceed to Step 3: Planning the Grant Submission.

If you answered **"no"** to any of these questions, go back to the drawing board and decide if a viable funder exists for this project, you need to look harder for a viable funder, or you need to reconsider the project. Your project may, on its face, appear suitable for grant funding but funders may not have an interest in it or funders who will fund your community may have different priorities. For example, the funder may not see the project as innovative (e.g., computer labs) or it may be something that they feel your organization should fund. In some instances, you may find appeals to individuals rather than grant funding more appropriate, especially for ongoing operations.

DOWNLOAD MY E-BOOK ON THE GRANT SEEKING PROCESS TO LEARN WHAT TO DO NEXT.



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