Grant Writing: Knowing When NOT to Apply -

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A good grant writer not only knows when to apply for a grant opportunity but also when *not* to apply. How? They invest time in researching a grant before starting an application. They closely read the funding program's guidance documents and application materials, then read through the application itself several times to become familiar with it. They attend application workshops that might be offered by the funder. They study the requirements for the funding, if awarded, to better understand what the grant administration will entail. They research information like past awards to help build an understanding of what makes a successful, competitive, and fundable application. They may reach out to the program staff of the funder to introduce the project to determine if the grant opportunity is a good fit and the project would be competitive; staff can often be very helpful in offering advice on how to strengthen a prospective application. The hours spent researching for a grant application may be many more than the hours spent actually writing it. After all that work, a grant writer might determine that an application in that particular round isn't a good idea – whether because the timing isn't right, or the project isn't quite ready, or the fit is wrong, or the funding is just too difficult to use for the amount funds being sought. However, if the go/no-go decision results in a "go," then think of grant writing as marketing your project and the funder as your investor. If you want the funder to give you their money, then you have to demonstrate the value and return on their investment.