Yay you got the grant! Now what?

The grantseekers' guide to post-award grant management

FOUNDANT technologies + 1832 COMMUNICATIONS

Introduction

You worked on the application for hours, editing numerous times to ensure your answers fit in the character count. You rejiggered your budget because the foundation uses its own budget form and it is different than every other funder.

You submitted the application and patiently waited for an answer.

Ten weeks later, you got the email you were hoping for: The funder has accepted your grant application and will be funding your organization for the next year!

WOOHOO!

You raise your hands in the air, take a deep breath and feel great satisfaction in a job well done. Your boss will be happy, and you'll have a smile on your face for the rest of the day.

Of course, there's tomorrow and this is when the real work begins: managing the post grant award process. There are potentially a lot of things to put in place and prepare.

Keeping track of funds, programs, impact, data and more is important for building a relationship with each funder. Many funders ask for reports explaining how the grant award was used, who was impacted, what programs and services produced the final results.

To be ready, your organization has to be able to answer the W questions of the post grant award process. On the coming pages you'll learn what those questions are. Your next job is getting answers to the various questions to ensure you're organized prior to receiving the funds.

As a former grant writer, I know how important it is to get everything lined up prior to beginning whatever programs or services you've committed to in the grant. Your goal is to track everything, document all the processes and produce reports which demonstrate your capability to accomplish what you said you'd do in the original application. This is critical to the relationship with the funder because...

As a former Director of Communications for a global family foundation, I know that reporting from grantees is crucial to the foundation's overall efforts. Reports produced by grantees can be used as part of reporting the foundation has to provide to its internal stakeholders. The more organized the grantee is the better the reports. A win-win for both sides.

Go through this eBook and see what you should prepare after receiving notice that the funder will fund your organization. Doing this helps ensure the successful completion of the grant and could lead to further funding.

You got the grant? Go you! Now for the next part. Good luck!

Ephraim Gopin
Founder, 1832 Communications

Who

Whether you're a two-person shop or one with departments and plenty of staff, it is important from the outset to know who is responsible for the various parts of the post award management process.

To help you, here are some questions you need to answer:

Who oversees communicating with the funder?

This isn't just to say thank you. As you'll see in the "why" section, it is important to have an ongoing dialogue with the funder (unless they specifically request not to).

This could include:

- Who will share periodic updates and impact?
- Who is the point person when the funder has questions?
- Who is responsible for sharing potential bad news with the funder?

In some organizations, all of the above could be the same person (e.g. grant writer) and sometimes it could be different people (the first two are managed by the grant professional but bad news would be shared by the CEO).

Who is responsible for the financial aspects of the grant?

Your grant proposal may have included a request to help pay salary for personnel. Who at your nonprofit will track the time worked of those specific personnel?

Additionally, who in your organization is allowed to spend the funds received through the grant? Not only do you need to know this in advance, but someone has to be in charge of tracking the funds spent.

Who is in charge of program information?

The funds are being used. Programs are taking place and people are being impacted. That information eventually needs to be relayed to the funder. Who will collect all the information about the programs so they can be passed to the person in charge of reporting?

As you’ll see in upcoming sections, post award management includes a lot of tasks.

Before you even begin to consider them, you need to decide who oversees each task- and then make sure to let them know their specific role in the post award management of the grant.

Planning this in advance helps each person know their role and will ensure that the information, data and stories needed by the funder will be passed along in a timely fashion.

What

Let's look at a bunch of questions your team needs to know the answers to:

1. What are the grant terms and conditions? You must know this (and tell the relevant staff members) before you can start spending the funds.

2. What internal policies or processes do you have or need to create in order to
   - Comply with the funder's conditions
   - Meet the reporting requirements
   - Prevent using the funds for unallowable costs
   - Document everything
   - Produce effective financial reporting
   - Track activities
   - Determine program sustainability at the end of the grant term

3. What system will you be using to manage this project and all its related tasks?
4. What system will you be using to track the financial side of the grant (budget, expenses etc.)?
5. What data do we need to collect? (See the "how" section for more)
6. What metrics will best show the impact of the grant? And at the same time...
7. What metrics are important to the funder?
8. What is considered project success? And does that match up with the funder's definition?

Receiving a "yes" for your grant application isn't the end. It's just the beginning.

If you've done this before, you probably already have answers to most or all of the above questions.

But if this is your first grant request that was approved or first time working with this specific funder, you're going to have to really think about all the above questions (and other questions in this eBook) and be prepared with answers.

Your internal processes will have external outcomes, such as whether you'll receive a second grant from this funder. Be sure you're prepared internally so the entire post grant award process is seamless.

Where

Program reports, time and fund tracking, stories, data, pictures, images, testimonials.

There's a lot of documentation you'll be filling in and storing. And the question is:

Where will you store everything needed as part of the post award management process?

Here's what not to do: Have each person in charge of specific tasks store it on their individual computer. Know what happens if that person leaves the organization before the end of the grant and no one asks them for the necessary documents?

It's not good.

All grant- related documentation should be kept in order and stored in one central place.

For example, a shared folder in Google Drive. Before the grant is to begin, create a folder in Google Drive and let every single person who has tasks related to the grant know about it. Tell them that all documentation has to be uploaded to that folder and properly labeled.

Another option: Make someone on your team the point person for collecting all documentation. Everyone tied to the grant must share with that person any relevant documentation and that person will manage it all.

A grants management solution helps you manage funder information, including documents.

**Foundant's GrantHub Funder profile view*

Additionally, the grants management software you use may offer an option for storing all documentation. You'll have a specific folder for each funder. In there you can upload and store relevant information.

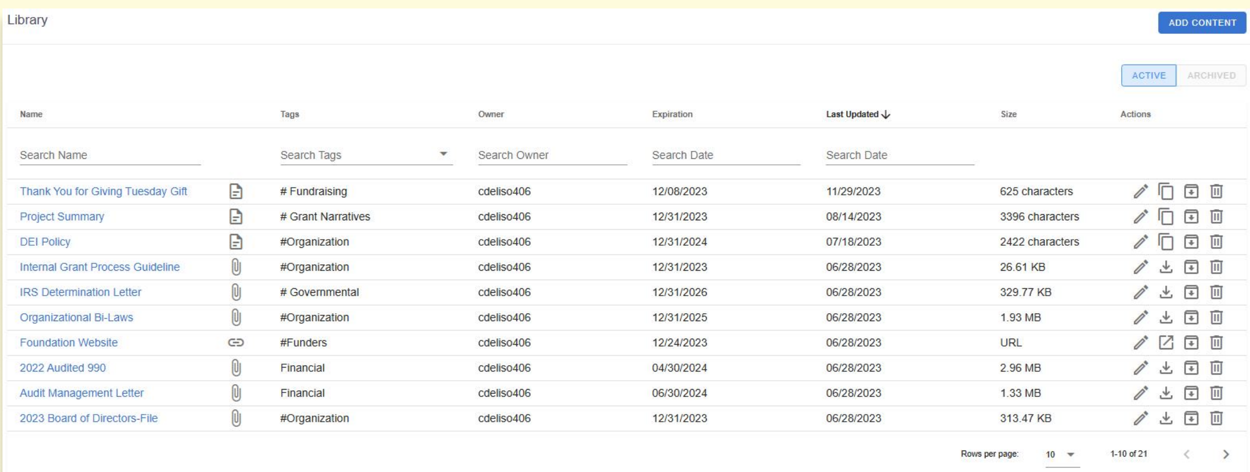
Being organized means that if the funder should be in touch and ask for something, you know where to find the information and you can get it to them quickly.

PRO TIP

Your nonprofit should have a “content bank” in the cloud. All of your pictures, stories, letters, campaigns, images, blog posts, data, testimonials and more should be stored in one central place. For example, you’re working on your upcoming eNewsletter and need a picture of a specific program.

Instead of having to chase after program staff, you simply go into that shared folder, find the picture you need and put it in the newsletter.

Your nonprofit produces a lot of content over time. Create a place where people have access to the information when they need it. It’ll save everyone a lot of time!



Name	Tags	Owner	Expiration	Last Updated	Size
Thank You for Giving Tuesday Gift	# Fundraising	cdeliso406	12/08/2023	11/29/2023	625 characters
Project Summary	# Grant Narratives	cdeliso406	12/31/2023	08/14/2023	3396 characters
DEI Policy	#Organization	cdeliso406	12/31/2024	07/18/2023	2422 characters
Internal Grant Process Guideline	#Organization	cdeliso406	12/31/2023	06/28/2023	26.61 KB
IRS Determination Letter	# Governmental	cdeliso406	12/31/2026	06/28/2023	329.77 KB
Organizational Bi-Laws	#Organization	cdeliso406	12/31/2025	06/28/2023	1.93 MB
Foundation Website	#Funders	cdeliso406	12/24/2023	06/28/2023	URL
2022 Audited 990	Financial	cdeliso406	04/30/2024	06/28/2023	2.96 MB
Audit Management Letter	Financial	cdeliso406	06/30/2024	06/28/2023	1.33 MB
2023 Board of Directors-File	#Organization	cdeliso406	12/31/2023	06/28/2023	313.47 KB

**Foundant’s GrantHub Library*

A grants management solution helps you keep all your content in a single location.

When

As you research funders you'd like to connect with and request funding from, you come across the deadline date when each funder will accept applications (except those that accept year-round). You create a calendar so you can stay on top of the various deadlines.

You should be doing the same for each successful grant! Once you receive word that you will be receiving funds, you may also receive instructions from the funder regarding reports, site visits and more.

All of that should be calendarized.

Build out the timeline

For each grant you should create a simple timeline and add relevant dates to your personal and organizational calendar.

This calendar can include

- External reporting deadlines (when the funder wishes to receive reports)
- Internal reporting- getting tasks done
- Date of site visits
- Special programs and/or events related to the grant

The importance of establishing a strong relationship with each funder (see more in the "why" section) includes making sure you hit all your deadlines.

In fact, don't just submit reports on time. Submit them ahead of the deadline!

Show the funder that you are organized and a nonprofit that they can trust. Each funder has to create reports about the grants they've distributed. Handing in your report early helps the funder as well.

But what if I miss a deadline?

Please don't!

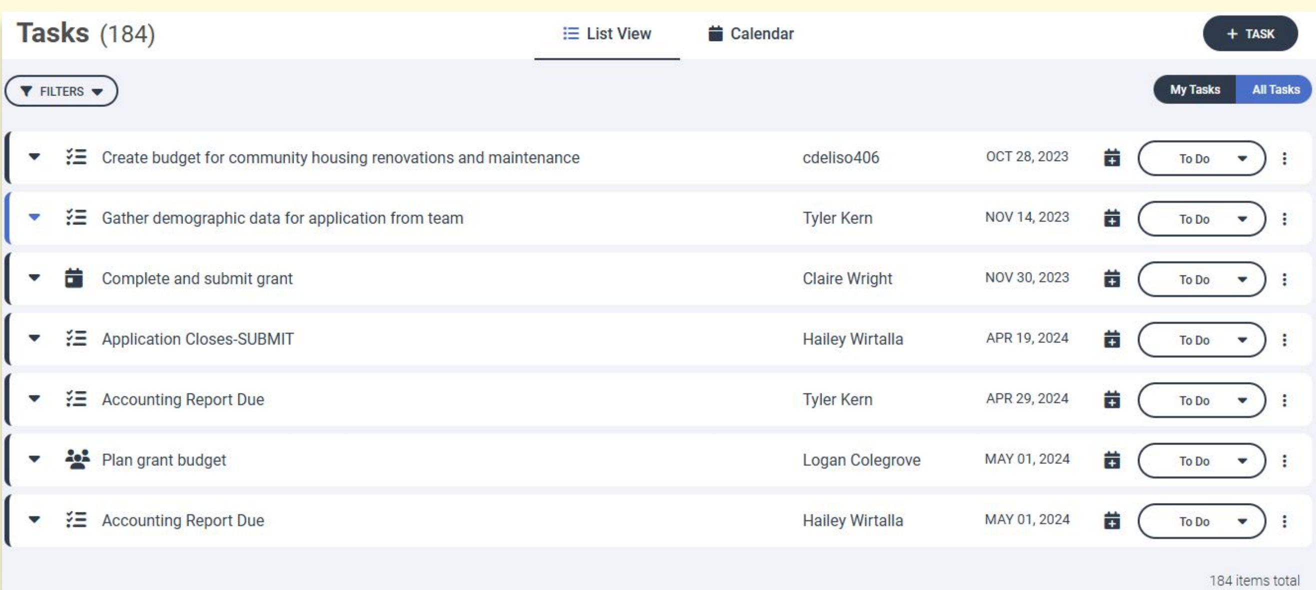
But let's say a deadline is approaching and you won't have the material ready for submission. The best policy here is honesty.

Be in touch with your contact at the funder's organization, explain to them the reason for the delay and kindly request to submit the report a few days late. People understand that you are swamped with work, someone was out sick or whatever the reason. Things happen.

Be honest and be up front. Don't wait till the last minute to realize you won't have something ready. If something won't be ready on time, phone your contact at the foundation and let them know ahead of time.

This is why calendarizing the process is so important.

A grants management system helps you manage tasks.



**Foundant's GrantHub Task View*

How

"How Will I Know" was a great song by Whitney Houston. (Shoutout Xers!)

When it comes to knowing how to manage your post grant process, there are a few "how" questions you have to know the answers to.

How much have we spent?

Part of your reporting to the funder will be a financial accounting. Which is why the person in charge of the financials should always know

- Which costs are allowed and which aren't
- What's the burn rate (how much you've spent and how much you have left to spend)

You want to make sure you have all the current and relevant info before you go showing your books to the funder.

How can I get the data I need?

You want to share data about impact and progress with your funder. Here are a few ways to collect data:

- Survey
- Questionnaire
- Case studies
- Observation
- Interviews
- Program and service data

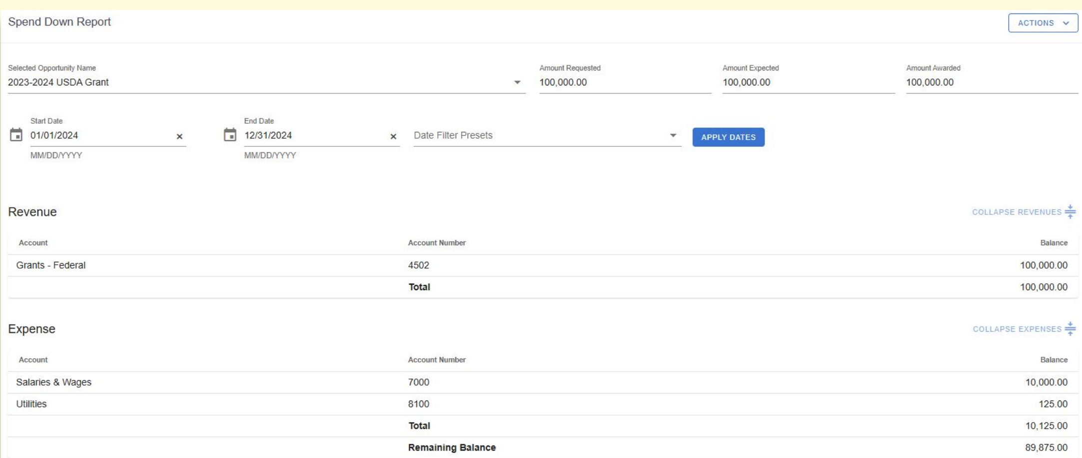
How should I present the data?

Each funder is different. Some want reporting to go through a portal in their internal online system. Others ask for a one-pager of activities. Others leave it up to the grantee.

One thing to consider: The funder may end up using some of your report when they craft their own internal reports for their stakeholders. Therefore how you present data is very important.

Our suggestion would be to use data visuals- graphs, bar charts, pie charts etc.- to help demonstrate the impact their funding is having in the community. When a page is full of numbers, it can easily be glossed over.

Create interest in the data by using visuals that stop readers and encourages them to pay attention to the data.



*Foundant's GrantHub spend down report

A grants management system helps you manage funder information

Why

Until now we've shared a bunch of tasks your organization has to perform in order to properly report to the funder how their grant was used. Which leaves one big question to ask: Why do all of it?

Yes, each funder has their reporting requirements. But the real reason you should WANT to collect information and share it?

Relationship building.

Building relationships sits at the heart of fundraising and marketing. It's not about the money. It's about creating a connection with a funder and then strengthening it.

Let's look at how reporting can do that and why it's critical to the funder-grantee relationship:

- **Build credibility with a funder:** Your organization may be a first-time recipient of a grant from funder X. They don't know you and the onus is on you to build credibility with the funder. By showing how your organization used their funds, you demonstrate responsibility and impact.
- **The highs and the lows:** A report allows you to highlight achievements associated with the grant but also any difficulties that arose during the grant period. The funder is interested in what works and what doesn't. By sharing lessons learned (even if they're not all positive) and submitting a true reporting…
- **You may get a further grant:** The funder likes what they see (their money was well spent and had maximum impact). Just like you they want to impact the community and do good in the world. And when they find the right partner to accomplish that…

Keep in mind that foundations also have people they answer to. It could be family members, Board members, donors and community leaders. They rely on your reports and feedback to determine the efficacy of their giving. If they feel they're getting good bang for their buck, then they'll want to partner up with your nonprofit again.

Part of building a connection is letting the funder know right away if there's a significant setback. If there's a chance for a site visit, you should invite the funder. If you have questions, pick up the phone and call.

Each touchpoint is another way of strengthening the relationship. Engaging the funder builds the connection.

Conclusion

Your post-award processes are critical to your long-term success and relationship building with funders. As part of this, the technologies you use play an important role and should turn each touchpoint into a strong opportunity to build upon those relationships.

As a software vendor in the nonprofit and philanthropic space, Foundant works with all types of nonprofits AND funders. As a team dedicated to your success, we prioritize building long-lasting relationships so we can understand your pain points and address internal inefficiencies together as partners.

We do this through constant feedback loops with partners and clients and through our Idea Lab, where clients submit product feedback. In 2023 alone, we implemented 455 Idea Lab items. In addition, we hold focus groups, user groups, Coffee Talks, and sector education webinars to further integrate the client voice and layer your needs on top of our day-to-day work.

We look forward to further supporting your initiatives and helping you achieve your mission with greater efficiency, less manual tasks, and more time to connect with your community.

Post award grant management checklist

To help you out, print and fill in this checklist for each successful grant you receive. This will allow you to make sure you stay on top of the post grant award process.

Who

- [ ] Who oversees communicating with the funder?
- [ ] Who is responsible for the financial aspects of the grant?
- [ ] Who is in charge of program information?

What

- [ ] What are the grant terms and conditions?
- [ ] What internal policies or processes do you have or need to maintain compliance?
- [ ] What system will you be using to manage this project and all its related tasks?
- [ ] What system will you be using to track the financial side of the grant (budget, expenses etc.)?
- [ ] What data do we need to collect?
- [ ] What metrics will best show the impact of the grant?
- [ ] What metrics are important to the funder?
- [ ] What is considered project success? And does that match up with the funder's definition?

Where

- [ ] Where will you store everything needed as part of the post award management process?

When

- [ ] But what if I miss a deadline?

How

- [ ] How much have we spent?
- [ ] How can I get the data I need?
- [ ] How should I present the data?

1832 Communications

Ephraim Gopin, a fundraising and marketing expert, is the founder of 1832 Communications, an agency which partners with nonprofits to help them build more relationships so they can raise more money, serve more people and have more impact in their community.

Ephraim crafts custom strategies so your nonprofit is in the best position possible to fundraise from your target audience.

The goal? Stabilize revenue and provide sustainability for programs.

The organizations Ephraim partners with move from survival to thrival mode and experience growth.

🌐 : 1832 Communications website

📨 : Contact Ephraim

Foundant Technologies

Foundant's mission is to **maximize the impact of the philanthropic community** through innovative software and exceptional client experiences designed to meet the unique needs of grantmakers, scholarship providers, community foundations, and nonprofits. Our easy-to-use cloud-based solutions streamline day-to-day tasks, create connections, and enable collaboration—making your work easier and freeing up capacity to focus on your mission. Dedicated to your success, we partner with philanthropy to empower change-makers to make the world a better place for all.

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