FREE GUIDE

Public Health Grant Planning Guide (Free PDF)

A practical planning guide with a fillable worksheet for a public health grant application, from the need and the evidence to partners, evaluation and a final check.

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> This guide helps you plan a public health grant application before you write it: the need, the people affected, the approach, the partners and how you will know it worked. It applies to public health funders in general and does not describe any one agency's rules. The funder's own notice and instructions come first, so read them before you fill in anything here.

Project snapshot

Project working title:

Funder and funding opportunity:

Health issue the project addresses:

Population and geography:

Deadline:

1. Frame the need with data and community voice

A public health need statement answers four questions: who is affected, how much, compared with whom, and why now. Numbers show the size of the problem. Community voice shows what it means and what people want done about it. A strong statement uses both.

- Use the smallest geography you can find reliable data for, then compare it with the county, state or nation.
- Give the source, year and geography for every figure.
- Say what community members told you and how you asked: a survey, listening sessions, an advisory group, interviews.
- Describe the gap in services, not your organization's budget.
- Use only figures you have looked up yourself at the source. Do not ask an AI tool to supply statistics.

What we need to show	Data point	Source, year, geography	What community members said
Size of the problem			
Who is most affected			
Comparison with a wider area			
What is missing now			

2. Write about health equity with respect

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Many public health funders ask how a project will reach the people who carry the greatest burden. Describe those people the way they would recognize themselves.

Instead of	Try
Labeling a group by its problem	Naming people first, then the condition or circumstance
Listing only what a community lacks	Naming its strengths too: trusted organizations, leaders, networks, knowledge
Blaming individual choices	Describing the conditions that shape those choices, such as access, cost, distance and language
Speaking for the community	Reporting what community members said, and how they helped shape the plan
Broad claims about a whole group	Specific, sourced statements about the people this project will serve

Community strengths this project builds on:

How community members shaped this plan:

Barriers the project will reduce (cost, transport, language, hours, trust):

3. Choose an evidence-based approach

Funders want to know why you believe this approach will work for this population.

1. Look for programs or strategies that have been evaluated with a population like yours. Federal health agencies and public health journals publish reviews of what works.
2. Read the source yourself. Cite only what you have read, and cite it accurately.
3. Note who the approach was tested with and where your community differs.
4. Describe any adaptation you plan, why it is needed and who advised on it.
5. If the evidence is limited, say so and explain what your evaluation will add.

Approach we plan to use:

Sources we have read that support it (author or agency, title, year):

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How we will adapt it for our community, and why:

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4. Partners

List only partners who have agreed to a role. A letter that states what a partner will do carries more weight than a general letter of support.

Partner	What they will do	Staff or resources committed	Agreement in place (letter, MOU, none yet)

5. Evaluation outline

Process measures show whether you delivered the project as planned. Outcome measures show what changed for the people you served. Plan for both, and keep the list short enough that you can collect every item.

Type	Question it answers	Examples of measures
Process	Did we do what we said, for the people we meant to reach?	Sessions held, people reached, share of participants from the priority population, completion rate
Outcome	What changed as a result?	Change in knowledge, change in a behavior, change in a screening or service use rate, change in a health indicator

Objective	Process measure	Outcome measure	Data source or tool	Who collects it, and when

Baseline we have now, with source and date:

How we will share results with the community:

If the project collects personal or health information, ask your organization who must review and approve the data collection before it starts, and follow the funder's instructions on data protection.

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6. Final planning checklist

- [ ] We have read the full funding notice and confirmed we are eligible
- [ ] The health issue and population match the funder's stated priorities
- [ ] Every statistic has a source, year and geography, and we have seen the source
- [ ] Community members were asked, and the proposal says how
- [ ] The population is described with respect, including its strengths
- [ ] The approach is supported by sources we have read
- [ ] Any adaptation is explained
- [ ] Every partner named has agreed to a specific role
- [ ] Each objective has a process measure and an outcome measure
- [ ] We know who collects each measure and when
- [ ] The budget pays for the evaluation and the partner roles described
- [ ] Any program name, requirement or deadline we cite was checked on the funder's own website

> **Want help with this?** The Complete Grant Architect is a free 16-week grant writing course, and you can hire a grant writer for your next proposal. Both are at subthesis.com.

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