

Professional Certificate in Grant Writing



Effective Grant Writers are Always in Demand

Grant writing is a lucrative, high-demand industry that's ideal for anyone with a passion for writing and public service. Nonprofits and tax-exempt institutions — including school districts, governments, nonprofit organizations, hospitals, charities, and arts institutions — are always looking for grant proposal writers who can get results.

With SDSU's online Professional Certificate in Grant Writing, you can learn the skills necessary to jumpstart your career as a grant writer in as little as 10 weeks.

Designed For:

- New grant writers
- Employees from nonprofit organizations, city and county governments, chambers of commerce, education (private and public), public health, social work
- Independent consultants
- Grant writers who need CEUs

This program is not oriented toward research grants or grants for individuals or businesses.

2 Courses, 10 Weeks, 1 Certificate

Introduction to Grants and Funding Research

Learn how to research funding prospects, interact with those funders, and plan to write a grant proposal. You'll explore why grants are funded, what motivates a grantor to award a grant, and how to track, manage, and plan your grant proposals.

Cost: \$449

Grant Proposal Development

Learn what it takes to develop an effective grant proposal. Together, we'll learn about federal, state, and private foundation grant guidelines. We'll practice writing proposals and review example grant proposals for strengths and weaknesses with your classmates.

Cost: \$449

Nationwide Labor Analysis Fundraising Manager



Job Postings

22,108
Last 12 months



Projected Growth

+10.30%
Over 10 years



Salary Range

\$46,000–\$65,000

Burning Glass
Technologies, 2019

Want to Learn More?

For more information, please contact your Student Service Coordinator at grantwriting.ces@sdsu.edu.

Professional Certificate in Grant Writing FAQs

Q: What is the demand for grant writers?

There is demand for both full-time and freelance grant writers, but demand varies by market. Some cities have several nonprofits, while others have fewer. Normally, most clients will come from the local community. You may want to contact a few local nonprofits and conduct informational interviews to learn more about local demand. Search nonprofit job boards in your community to get a better idea of job availability. In San Diego, NPWorks.org provides job listings. National websites like indeed.com and monster.com also profile job listings.

Q: What skills do I need to be successful?

Grant writers are typically strong technical writers with a strong background in the nonprofit world. The best grant writers are those who understand nonprofit management and programming. Talented grant writers are also skilled at interviewing staff and volunteers to get the information they need. They also have a strategic understanding of why a grant is awarded because often, it has little to do with the actual proposal. Many successful grant writers have had some experience as staff members or are active volunteers with a nonprofit.

Q: What salary or compensation can I expect?

Using feedback from actual grant writers, Glassdoor identifies the national average base pay at \$53,806 for a fundraising manager. According to Burning Glass, the median nationwide salary is \$55,685. Those with 0-2 years of experience can earn an average of \$45,300 per year, whereas more experienced writers can earn over \$80,000 per year.

Q: How will the program help my nonprofit obtain grant funding?

Please be aware that some nonprofits struggle to obtain grants for several reasons. Funders closely examine each grant applicant's business plan, track record, outcomes, and financial statements. Some funders only award grants to organizations they know or have gotten to know. With our program, we examine the big picture of grant funding and identify steps that existing or new nonprofits may need to take before they are strong candidates for grant funding.

Q: What is the time commitment for these courses?

Both courses are 25 hours. The time per week will vary based on your experience with writing, nonprofit or community organizations, and critical thinking skills. Introduction to Grants and Funding Research likely requires approximately 3–4 hours per week. Grant Proposal Development likely requires 4–6 hours per week. This includes homework time. Some weeks have more demanding time requirements than others.

Q: Do these courses focus on research grants?

No. This is an introductory-level course open to everyone, including community members, undergraduate students, nonprofit organization staff, and others. Research grants are more complex than an introductory course allows for, which means that this certificate program is not oriented toward research grants or grants for individuals or businesses.

Q: Do these courses focus on funding sources based outside the United States?

Our program is more focused on writing grant proposals to U.S.-based foundations, corporations, and governments. Students in other countries have benefited from the program, but we primarily focus on U.S.-based funders.

Q: Are lectures at a specific time?

Lectures are prerecorded so that you can watch them on your schedule. However, each week begins on Monday and ends the following Sunday night. While courses aren't delivered live, you will have one-on-one interactions with the instructor via email and on the course discussion board.

Q: What do employers look for?

Employers look for both training and experience. The SDSU certificate program is a helpful start to give you a foundation of knowledge about the process of researching grant prospects, writing a proposal, and working to help nonprofit leaders strategically position their organizations to succeed. This is vital information to have on the path to a career in grant writing.

However, hands-on experience — whether paid or unpaid — is often the key to success. When contractors are hired, companies primarily look at their track record, as well as samples of their work. Grant proposal writing is different than developing a newsletter article or blog post, and employers want to see how well prospective contractors have mastered the craft. Companies also want to know their background and knowledge within the nonprofit world. There are opportunities to gain more experience, either paid or unpaid, depending on one's level of skill and readiness. Like any prospective career, building a strong network and making more contacts within the nonprofit world will help a prospective grant writer find work or contract jobs.

Want to Learn More?

If you'd like to learn more, please contact: grantwriting.ces@sdsu.edu.