

# Templates for Writing Grants Policy Statements

*By Henry Flood*

Most of the critical functions within an organization require a set of written policies. Good governance, for example, is based on well-crafted by-laws. And good employee relations are based on an up-to-date personnel manual.

Good grant program administration also starts with a set of written, organization-wide policies. Unlike a statement of "procedures," which specifies how to perform particular tasks, a policy document lays out the broad parameters for carrying out established processes. It defines administrative structure, vests authority in individuals by title, prescribes areas of responsibility, directs certain actions, and prohibits other actions (usually on the basis of law or ethics).

An organization-wide policy on grant administration is especially important for larger organizations that have many divisions or departments. The receipt of major funding can skew such an organization's overall priorities, produce internal friction and even cost money if management does not have a coherent plan in place. An organization-wide policy helps to ensure that necessary grant functions are appropriately organized, coordinated, controlled and evaluated.

A sound grants policy statement will:

- Clearly define the basis of authority for grant applications.
- Specify who may sign grant applications and award documents.
- Identify persons, areas and functions covered (with exceptions duly noted).
- Define how grant functions are to be coordinated and tracked.
- Identify proposal-writing functions.
- Determine how grant applications are to be filed and how grant funds are to be accepted.
- Provide for grant financial accounting.

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- Define the role and responsibility of separate departments in conducting the grants process.
- Make special provisions for departments that are semi-autonomous or that might have they own, separate grant program staffs (e.g., police departments and community development agencies).
- Provide for internal audit of grant operations.

The model grants policy statements that follow are intended as a starting point for drafting such a document within your own organization.

## **A Model Grants Policy Statement for City and County Government**

### ***I. Purpose and Authority***

The purpose of this Policy Statement on Grant Administration is to establish policies for the administration of grants in the [City of \_\_\_\_\_, County of \_\_\_\_\_]. The authority to issue policies and procedures on grant administration is founded on Section \_\_\_ of the [City, County] Charter and Section \_\_\_ of the [City, County] Code.

### ***II. Persons and Areas Affected***

This is a [City, County]-wide Policy Statement affecting all departments that research, apply for, or administer grants.

### ***III. Policy***

#### **A. Authority to Apply for Grant Funding**

Only the [Mayor, City Manager, County Manager] or an authorized designee may sign and submit grant applications on behalf of the [City, County] of \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **B. Coordination of Grant Policy and Grant Operations**

The [City, County] of \_\_\_\_\_ must be able to track and manage grants at all stages of the grants process from funding research through project closeout. To accomplish this policy requirement, the Office of Grants Policy is hereby established within the Office of the [Mayor, City Manager, County Administrator, Department of Management and Budget]. The Office of Grants Policy shall be responsible for:

- (1) Developing, revising and distributing the official grants policies and procedures of the [City, County] of \_\_\_\_\_.
- (2) Coordinating the tracking of grant applications, awards and major project management decisions associated with awarded grants.
- (3) Assisting departments with the interpretation and application of city, county, state, federal or other grants policies.
- (4) Assisting with the resolution of disputes between the [City, County] of \_\_\_\_\_ and funding sources.
- (5) Offering grants training and technical assistance services.

### **C. Acceptance of Grants**

All approved grants must be accepted by ordinances that simultaneously accept the grant and appropriate the funding. Prompt acceptance of grant awards either by regular or emergency adoption is essential in order as to expedite the execution of awarded grants by the [Mayor, City Manager, County Manager] or an authorized designee. To ensure that grants are promptly accepted by the [City, County] the following shall be observed by all departments:

- (1) Grant acceptances shall be accomplished through an ordinance that formally accepts the grant and appropriates the funding at the same time. Appropriations language must clearly indicate that the funding is Special Revenue Funding.
- (2) In cases where a local or other match is required, the ordinance shall specify the source of funding by account name, project code, title, or other identifying characteristics.
- (3) In circumstances where a funding source demands that a grant be accepted within 30 days or less, and a waiver from the funding source is unlikely, the grant acceptance shall be accomplished by an emergency ordinance.
- (4) In those circumstances where local or other match appropriations are committed but not yet firmly in hand, the grant shall be accepted by resolution and followed by an appropriations ordinance as soon as possible.

#### **D. Office of Proposal Development**

The Office of Proposal Development, located within the Office of the [Mayor, City Manager, County Manager, Department of Management and Budget], is an organization-wide point of contact for funding research and the preparation of grant proposals. The role of this office is to:

- (1) Research appropriate funding opportunities.
- (2) Inform all departments about relevant funding opportunities.
- (3) Write grant proposals.
- (4) Upon request, review proposals written by other departments.
- (5) Offer training and technical assistance in proposal writing.

Departments are strongly encouraged to develop and share their own expertise in grant proposal writing and to use the services of the Office of Proposal Writing when needed.

#### **E. Departmental Responsibility for Grants**

Department heads and key technical staff are responsible for generating funding ideas, helping to identify funding opportunities, participating in program planning and proposal writing, and managing the day-to-day functions associated with a successful grant award.

The director of every department is accountable for all grants within his or her departmental jurisdiction. In cases where more than one department is responsible for a grant, a lead department shall be designated for accountability.

Each department director shall:

- (1) Appoint a grants liaison for the department.
- (2) Designate a project manager for every grant awarded to the department.
- (3) Implement awarded grant projects according to the terms and conditions of each grant award.

- (4) Ensure that the designated grant liaison for the department tracks grant awards and consults with the Office of Grants Policy on a regular basis.
- (5) Ensure that the designated grants liaison and all project managers know how to designate project expense codes, complete grant drawdown forms, and monitor project funding using prescribed procedures.
- (6) Ensure that requests for grant funds are promptly submitted to minimize the advance use of [City, County] funds. All drawdowns of grant funding must conform to funding source and [City, County] policy pertaining to the receipt of grant funds.
- (7) Ensure that project reporting requirements and deadlines for submission are observed.

#### **F. Finance Department Grant Functions and Responsibilities**

The [Director of Finance, Chief Finance Officer] shall:

- (1) Have exclusive authority to deposit all grant funding received by the [City, County] into appropriate accounts designated by finance departmental personnel.
- (2) Establish appropriate account code assignments for charging costs to grants. (Account code assignments must not conflict with the items of cost contained in the approved grant budget.)
- (3) Record revenues and expenditures associated with approved grants.
- (4) Ensure that the accounting system of the [city, county] is capable of tracking revenue and expenditures associated with every grant award regardless of how grant funding is appropriated.
- (5) Issue regular reports on the status of grant-funded projects to operating departments and issue special reports when needed to the Department of Internal Audit and the Office of Grants Policy.
- (6) Counter-sign grant drawdown requests, whether on an advance or reimbursement basis.

### **G. Administration of CDBG and Employment Grant Funding**

Overall coordination and administration of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding shall remain within the Department of Community Development. However, the Department of Community Development shall participate in the [City, County] grant tracking system established by this policy and implementing procedures. The Office of Grants Policy shall review and certify that the system of grant administration maintained within the Department of Community Development is comparable to that prescribed for other [City, County] programs and complies with applicable funding source rules concerning program management, grant administration and other provisions of law and policy that raise compliance issues.

### **H. Administration of Police Department Grant Funding**

Overall coordination and administration of Police grant funding shall remain within the Police Department. However, the Police Department shall participate in the [City, County] grant tracking system established by this policy and implementing procedures. The Office of Grants Policy shall review and certify that the system of grant administration maintained within the Police Department is comparable to that prescribed for other [City, County] programs and complies with applicable funding source rules concerning program management, grant administration and other provisions of law and policy that raise compliance issues.

### **I. Internal Audit of Approved Grants**

Section \_\_\_\_\_ of the [City, County] Code charges the Department of Internal Audit with the responsibility for conducting grant compliance audits. All grants awarded to the [City, County] of \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to the possibility of a compliance audit in accord with the most currently approved audit plan of the Department of Internal Audit. The [Mayor, City Manager, County Manager] may request a special internal audit of any grant awarded to the [City, County] of \_\_\_\_\_.

### ***IV. Policy Implementation***

The Office of Grants Policy shall be responsible for implementing this Policy on Grant Administration through procedures or other guidance documents.

### ***V. Status of Previous Policies and Procedures***

This Policy Statement supersedes all previous policies on grant administration adopted by the [City, County] of \_\_\_\_\_. Any existing procedures shall be amended to conform to this Policy Statement. This Policy Statement [replaces, amends] Policy Statement # \_\_\_\_\_ dated \_\_\_\_\_.

## **A Model Grants Policy Statement for Nonprofit Organizations**

### ***I. Purpose and Authority***

The purpose of this organization-wide Policy Statement on Grant Administration is to establish policies for the administration of grants at \_\_\_\_\_. The authority to issue policies and procedures on grant administration is founded on Section \_\_\_ of Board Resolution # \_\_\_\_\_ dated \_\_\_\_\_ and duly approved by the Board of Directors of \_\_\_\_\_.

### ***II. Persons and Areas Affected***

This is an organization-wide Policy Statement affecting all departments that research, apply for or administer grants.

### ***III. Policy***

#### **A. Authority to Apply for Grant Funding**

Only the [Board President, Executive Director] or an authorized designee may sign and submit grant applications on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **B. Coordination of Grant Policy and Grant Operations**

\_\_\_\_\_ must be able to track and manage grants at all stages of the grants process from funding research through project closeout. To accomplish this policy requirement, the Office of Grants is hereby established within the Office of the [Executive Director, Department of Management and Budget, etc.]. The Office of Grants Policy shall be responsible for:

- (1) Developing, revising and distributing the official grants policies and procedures of \_\_\_\_\_.
- (2) Coordinating the tracking of grant applications, awards and major project management decisions associated with awarded grants.
- (3) Assisting departments with the interpretation and application of city, county, state, federal or other grants policies.
- (4) Assisting with the resolution of disputes between \_\_\_\_\_ and funding sources.
- (5) Offering training and technical assistance services.

### **C. Submission of Grant Applications**

All grant proposals submitted to a funding source must first be authorized for submission by a resolution of the Board of Directors. Only the [Board President, Executive Director] may sign grant applications.

### **D. Acceptance of Grants**

The [Board President, Executive Director] or an approved designee are the only persons authorized to sign and accept grant awards.

### **E. Proposal Development**

The Office of Proposal Development located within the office of the Executive Director is an organization-wide point of contact for funding research and the writing of grant proposals. The role of this office is to:

- (1) Inform all departments about funding opportunities.
- (2) Assist with proposal writing.
- (3) Review proposals written by other departments upon request.
- (4) Offer grants training and technical assistance.

Departments are strongly encouraged to develop and their own expertise in grant proposal writing and to use the services of the Office of Proposal Development when needed.

### **F. Departmental Responsibility For Grants**

Department heads and key technical staff are responsible for generating funding ideas, helping to identify funding opportunities, participating in program planning and proposal writing and managing the day-to-day functions associated with a successful grant award.

Department heads are accountable for the grants within their departmental jurisdiction. In cases where more than one department is responsible for a grant, a lead department shall be designated for accountability.

Each department head shall:

- (1) Appoint a grants liaison for the department.
- (2) Designate a project manager for every grant awarded to the department.

- (3) Implement awarded grant projects according to the terms and conditions of each grant award.
- (4) Ensure that the department's grant liaison tracks grant awards and consults with the Office of Grants Policy on a regular basis.
- (5) Ensure that the department's grants liaison and project managers know how to assign project expense codes, complete grant drawdown forms and monitor project funding using prescribed procedures.
- (6) Ensure that requests for grant funds are promptly submitted to minimize the advance use of internal funds. All drawdowns of grant funding must conform to internal policy as well as to policy prescribed by the funding source with respect to the receipt of grant funds.
- (7) Ensure that project reporting requirements and deadlines for submission are observed.

#### **G. Finance Department Grant Functions and Responsibilities**

The [Director of Finance, Chief Finance Officer] shall:

- (1) Have exclusive authority to deposit all grant funding received by \_\_\_\_\_ into appropriate accounts.
- (2) Establish appropriate account code assignments for charging costs to grants. (Account code assignments must not conflict with the items of cost contained in the approved grant budget.)
- (3) Record revenues and expenditures associated with approved grants.
- (4) Ensure that the accounting system of \_\_\_\_\_ is capable of tracking revenue and expenditures associated with every grant award regardless of how grant funding is appropriated.
- (5) Issue regular reports on the status of grant-funded projects to operating departments and issue special reports when required by the [Board President, Executive Director].

- (6) Counter-sign grant drawdown requests, whether on an advance or reimbursement basis.

#### **H. Internal Audit of Approved Grants**

Section \_\_\_\_\_ of Board Resolution # \_\_\_\_\_ charges the Department of Internal Audit with the responsibility for conducting grant compliance audits. All grants awarded to \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to the possibility of a compliance audit in accordance with the most currently approved audit plan of the Department of Internal Audit. The [Board of Directors, Executive Director] may request a special internal audit of any grant awarded to \_\_\_\_\_.

#### ***IV. Policy Implementation***

The Office of Grants Policy shall be responsible for implementing this Statement of Policy on Grant Administration through procedures or other guidance documents.

#### ***V. Status of Previous Policies and Procedures***

This Policy Statement supersedes all previous policies on grant administration adopted by \_\_\_\_\_. Any existing procedures shall be amended to conform to this Policy Statement.

This Policy Statement [replaces, amends] Policy Statement # \_\_\_\_\_ dated \_\_\_\_\_.

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