

Report Preparation and Writing Tips

Setting up systems when you receive a grant award to report both quantitative and qualitative data will make the process much smoother once report due dates are near. Usually, funders require a final report after the completion of the project and/or funding period and may require an interim report mid-way through the funding period.

Reporting data:

Most often, in a contractual agreement, an organization commits to measuring the impact of its program on the population served or in affecting an issue. To demonstrate progress, organizations must create an evaluation plan and set up a system to measure that change in behavior, knowledge, skills, or other attributes. Organizations may use pre-and post-surveys, focus groups, or other methods to collect data and demonstrate what change has occurred as a result of the funded activities.

Two primary types of data can support an organization's efforts to show its impact:

- Quantitative data **can either be counted or compared on a numeric scale**. There are many ways to collect quantitative data, with common methods including surveys and questionnaires.
- Qualitative data can be observed and recorded. This data type is non-numerical in nature. This type of data is collected **through methods of observations, one-to-one interviews, conducting focus groups, and similar methods**.

Data is collected at key points and then analyzed to identify patterns and tell the story of why this program is effective, any unexpected results, or other findings.

Report writing tips:

A report is an opportunity to engage funders as partners in your success, build a relationship, and set up your organization for continued funding by highlighting what worked well, and the work that lies ahead.

The following tips will help make the report writing process easier as you prepare throughout the funding period.

- Tell the story you want to tell! Help funders understand the work you do to support your community, clients, and organization.
- Take notes along the way to document milestones or shifts important to include in a grant report.
- Engage your team in what they think is important.
- Plan for data collection and use – what platform will you use, e.g., excel document, database if you have one?
- Plan for client voice and perspectives – how will you collect quotes, photos, or other modes to capture input?
- Plan and organize ideas before writing – create an outline with the key points you want to include to help guide the report narrative.

- Respond to the right time horizon (new since the last report? Annual summary? End of project summary?)
- Have a colleague proofread for clarity and grammar.
- No surprises! The report should not be the platform to share major changes or shifts from what was included in the grant or contract. You should be communicating those with the funder throughout the grant period or setting up a time to speak with them and not use the report to communicate any big issues.

Sample report questions

The following questions are commonly included in a grant report.

- 1. Please provide a summary of your program or activities during the grant period.**
 - a. What progress was made toward the goals identified in your original proposal and what did you learn?
 - b. Where did you adapt your original plans, and what external factors influenced these changes?
 - c. What were some of the biggest takeaways from your work?
- 2. Please share progress associated with the outcomes you hoped to achieve.**
 - a. What progress has been made based on the key indicators or outcomes identified in your original proposal or others that emerged over the course of the work?
 - b. What challenges have you encountered over the course of the work and how have you responded to these challenges?
- 3. Please provide examples of how your work improved the lives of the group(s) you intend to support.**
 - a. Please specify group(s) and share more details, including any specific examples or stories.
- 4. Please describe, if applicable, partnerships or collaborations that played a role in your work over the grant period.**
 - a. Please specify partnerships or relationships that helped to advance your goals.
- 5. Budget report:** May be required to include a budget report with a summary of actual revenues and expenditures during the grant period and/or a budget narrative explaining any significant changes between anticipated and real costs/revenues and the impact, if applicable.