

Grants and Grant Writing as a Rhetorical Activity

Call for Proposals

Approximately 1.56 million nonprofits were registered with the Internal Revenue Service in 2015 and the nonprofit sector contributed an estimated \$985.4 billion to the US economy in 2015, composing 5.4 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). In 2017, total private giving from individuals, foundations, and businesses totaled \$410.02 billion (Giving USA Foundation 2018), an increase of 3 percent from 2016 after adjusting for inflation.¹ Individual donors give approximately 78% of all donations. As a result, most of the research on charitable giving has focused on individuals, donations, and fundraising via organized events such as a capital campaign or end of the year campaigns.

Grants and grant writing, on the other hand, have all but been ignored as an area of inquiry. The Science of Philanthropy Initiative conference, the only conference devoted to empirical work on philanthropy, did not have a single panel connected to grant writing in 2018 and, in 2017, had one that focused on how state laws affected giving. Research coming out of The Lilly Family School of Philanthropy focuses exclusively on donor-based giving patterns (<https://philanthropy.iupui.edu/research/current-research/index.html>). The Foundation Center's research focuses on trends in the philanthropic field.

Similarly, Writing Studies and Professional, Technical, and Scientific Communication has failed to address grant writing as an area of possible research. In 2009, *TCQ* published "System Mapping: A Genre Field Analysis of the National Science Foundation Grant Proposal and Funding Process." (vol 19 issue 1). CCCC had a grant focused panel in 2015 as well as a single presentation focused on the performativity of grant writing and a grant writing workshop in 2019. The ATTW book series contains one chapter "Teaching Proposal Writing: Advocacy and Autonomy in the Technical Communication Classroom" by Diane Martinez in *Citizenship and Advocacy in Technical Communication*. Two textbooks—both in the now defunct Allyn & Bacon Series in Technical Communication—have been published in publishers devoted to *Writing Studies* or *PTSC*: *Grant Seeking in an Electronic Age* by Victoria Mikelonis, Signe T. Betsinger, and Constance E. Kampf and *Writing Proposals* by Richard Johnson-Sheehan.

Given the impact of grant writing on our GNP and the fact that writing studies and professional, technical, and scientific communication students often go into grant writing or non-profit work, this area is ripe for exploration and development. Grant writing is an extremely high-stakes game for those involved: for small organizations, grants are often a significant portion of a non-profit's budget; for the foundations, awarding money puts their reputation on the line; and for the writer, it can mean continued employment and existence of the organization. Yet, we know hardly anything about grant writing as a rhetorical activity.

We invite you to help fill this gap in our research. Possible topics might include:

- Grant writing and reading as rhetorical activity
- How is audience conceptualized during grant writing and /or reading
- The performativity of grant writing/reading
- Collaboration during the grant writing process
- Grant writing and social justice
- Grants and Intersectionality
- Theory and grant writing
- Grant writing and the PTSW curriculum

This collection is specifically aimed at helping us understand grant writing and reading as a rhetorical activity.

Please send proposals (500 words or less) to

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Deadline for Proposals: November 15, 2019. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

ⁱ The Nonprofit Sector in Brief 2018: Public Charities, Giving, and Volunteering.
<https://nccs.urban.org/publication/nonprofit-sector-brief-2018#the-nonprofit-sector-in-brief-2018-public-charities-giving-and-volunteering>