

The following material is excerpted from the Colorado Nonprofit Insider, prepared by Colorado Grants.



We have helped Colorado nonprofits raise \$100 million over the past ten years.

**Contact Jay Katz at jkatz@coloradogrants.org or 303-800-5452
For more resources, visit our website, www.coloradogrants.org,**

Quick Takes from The Denver Foundation

On preparing your grant proposal:

- Target your proposal appropriately to the guidelines. “Some applicants use their existing information from the Colorado Common Grants Application format and just apply that information in their proposals. We spend a lot of time on guidelines to really get what we want, and really want applicants to follow our guidelines closely.” Some applicants will forget to remove the name of the funder that previously received the request, creating an embarrassing situation.
- Be realistic about your request size to the foundation. Keep your request in scale with your budget.
- Make sure you follow the guidelines precisely. That will make the program officer’s job easier, and give them a positive impression of your organization. “We can tell when someone has read the guidelines and clearly understands what we’re asking for.” If you’re a new applicant, carefully identify and explain how what you do matches up with The Denver Foundation’s priority areas.
- Prepare and turn your application in early. Foundation staff say that sometimes applicants get stuck in traffic the afternoon the proposal is due, missing the deadline.

Quick Takes from The Daniels Fund

On preparing your grant proposal:

- **Don't be afraid to call a program officer.** Noah Atencio of the Daniels Fund advises if you are in doubt about whether or not your request fits the Daniels Fund's areas of funding, contact a program officer to discuss your program. You may also call a program officer if your previous proposal was declined to learn more about why that decision was made.
- **Apply if you match up with the Daniels Fund's guidelines.** According to Noah Atencio, "If you believe your organization's purpose is aligned with our grant guidelines, submit a proposal. We're going to work to get the information we need."
- **Fiscal capacity:** Funders encourage potential grantees to demonstrate the potential to continue operation after grant making is complete. Often grant makers, no matter how much they like an organization, cannot provide continuous support. Noah Atencio recommends grant seekers create multi-year cash flow plans that take into account different foundation's rules about multi-year funding.
- **Board member support:** Organizations seeking funding should have 100% giving by their board of directors based on each board member's capacity to give.

Writing the proposal:

- **Communicate clearly.** Noah Atencio says, "What impresses the Daniels Fund in a proposal is the ability to communicate what your organization is about, and how you're accomplishing your work or your mission. I've seen grant requests that were two pages that covered everything, and it was clear that whoever wrote the proposal understood how to effectively communicate what they were about, what they were doing, and where they were heading."
- **Help the Daniels Fund program officer present the case for your organization to our board of directors, which makes the funding decisions.** When talking to Daniels Fund program officers, help them understand your organization and what can be accomplished with the funding you hope to receive. Program officers are looking for organizations whose programming matches our donor's intent. They are liaisons to our board members and responsible for presenting them with clear and concise information.

Grant Reporting

- **Report the good, bad, and ugly on a previous grant.** Noah Atencio says that "the purpose of the final report is to explain why goals and objectives were or weren't met. Even if it's brutal information about the organization, such as 'we had to fire our staff, change our board and executive director.' We're going to learn about these changes in the future. It always works in favor of the applicant organization, rather than us trying to explain what may have gone wrong and what steps are being taken to fix any problems that may have occurred."