

# The Art of Grant-Writing Using AI

Presented by Cheryl Smith, CEO  
Dewlyn Nonprofit Services

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Making a Difference in the Community

**SCORE**   
FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR BUSINESS

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# Meet Cheryl Smith

CEO | Dewlyn Nonprofit Services

Cheryl is a nationally recognized nonprofit consultant, trainer, and grant writer with over 25 years of nonprofit experience. Cheryl helps small organizations start, grow, fund, and sustain their mission.


Connect with Cheryl at <https://Dewlyn.com>



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## You're in the right place if...

- You manage a charitable program.
- You haven't reached funding goals.
- You want to use ChatGPT for efficiency



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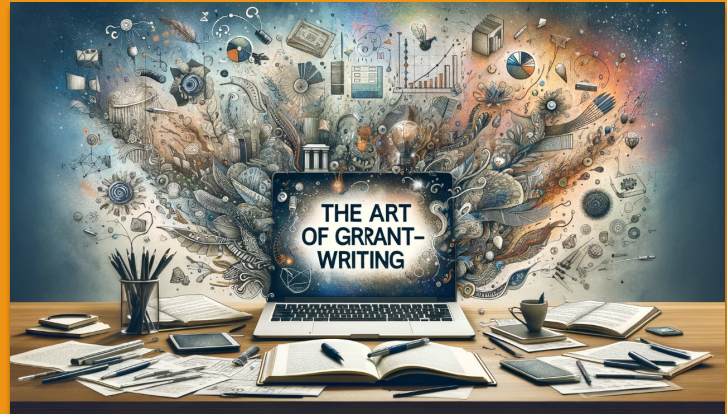
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**Agenda**

1. The purpose of a grant proposal
2. Key proposal sections
3. AI mini proposal prompt and demo
4. Funder Expectations: Mission and Alignment
5. Grant proposals vs grant submissions
6. Applying the mini proposal to submissions

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# Grant Proposal Purpose



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## The Purpose of Grant Proposals

1. Grant-Proposals are used to pursue funding for a specific purpose.
2. Grants are often used for operations, programs, capacity, and research.
3. Grants represent a significant source of revenue for nonprofit organizations.
4. A barrier to grant-writing is the "writing" itself!

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# Key Sections



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## Grant Proposal Sections

1. Organizational History
2. Problem Statement
3. Program Description
4. Target Population
5. Goals and Outcomes
6. Measurement and Evaluation
7. Sustainability Plan
8. Budget

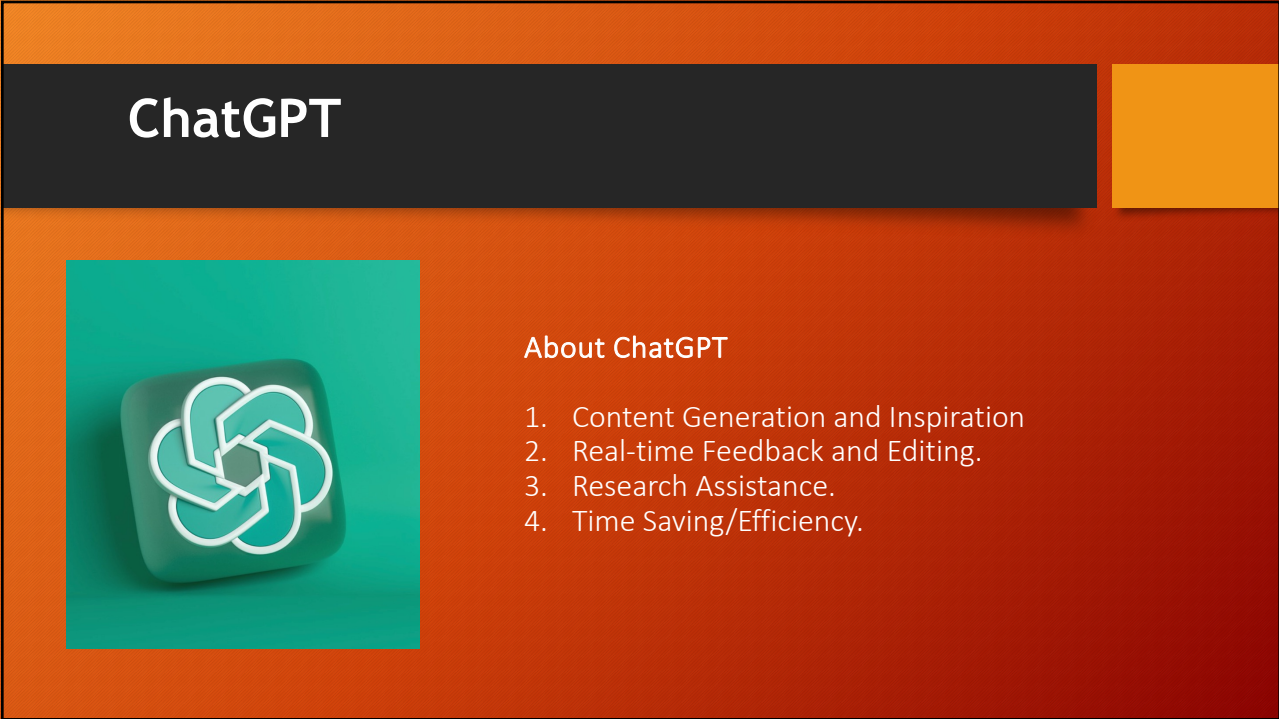
### Today's Demonstration

1. Problem Statement
2. Program Description
3. Goals and Outcomes
4. Sustainability Plan
5. Budget

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## Five Recommendations When Working with AI

1. Role: Gets the AI into the right mindset.
2. Task: Sets the specific job.
3. Context: Gives the raw material to work with.
4. Format: Shapes the final product.
5. Guardrails: rules for delivery.

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## Recommendations Examples

1. Role: You are a professional grant writer.
2. Task: Draft a program description.
3. Context: Our nonprofit runs an after-school arts program for 120 K-5 students in Atlanta. We offer weekly art classes, museum trips, and student-led exhibits.
4. Format: Write in plain first-person language, 300 words max, paragraphs only.
5. Guardrails: Do not make up data. Use factual information only.

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## ChatGPT Prompts



### Prompts

ChatGPT prompts are questions or instructions that you enter to get a response. ChatGPT then predicts an appropriate response to the prompt.

### Context

Detailed content to help the ai understand key information regarding the request.

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## ChatGPT Prompt: Develop Mini Proposal

AI Role: -  
You are a professional grant writer.  
Task: -Draft grant content for five sections: -Problem Statement (max 200 words) -Program Description (max 300 words) -Goals & Outcomes (SMART goals) -Sustainability Plan (financial, partnerships, longevity) -Line-Item Budget (expense name, amount, description) Organizational Context (ask me for these before drafting): -Organization legal status: [name, year established, 501c3 (y/n), headquarters] - Mission: [placeholder] -Who We Serve: [placeholder: target population] -Geography: [placeholder: service area] -Service Model: [placeholder: services, frequency, hours] -Staffing: [placeholder: roles responsible for delivery] -Scale: [placeholder: # served] -New Nonprofit? (y/n). If yes, apply Key Adjustments for a New Nonprofit. Key Adjustments for a New Nonprofit (if applicable): -Emphasize founder/staff expertise when organizational track record is limited. -Highlight community partnerships and collaborations to demonstrate credibility and support. -Focus on quick, measurable wins and near-term outcomes. -Ensure the budget is lean, reasonable, and well-justified.  
Requirements: -Use plain, professional first-person voice ("we..."). -Write in paragraphs, bullets only for logical lists. -Independently source factual data and cite in APA format. -Do not fabricate data. If data is unavailable: -Insert explicit placeholder inline (e.g., [LOCAL STAT SOURCE NEEDED]) -List the same placeholder in the assumptions list. -Provide each section separately with word/character count and assumptions list.  
Guardrails: -No unverifiable claims, invented data, or disallowed expenses. -Stop after producing the draft.

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## Ask ChatGPT to Self-Analyze

### Please:

- Analyze your response and identify three weaknesses.
- Rewrite to improve.
- Automatically repeat this cycle four times.

### Confidence Rating:

After optimization, for each claim, rate confidence as:

- Virtually certain (95%+)
- Highly confident (80-95%)
- Moderately confident (60-80%)
- Speculative (<40%) ...and explain why.

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## Let's Practice

This is an interactive activity where you use ChatGPT to draft a section of your proposal.

### Access ChatGPT:

<https://chat.openai.com>

1. Please create an account for ChatGPT.
2. Login.
3. Follow along using your own organization's information.
4. Or follow along as I demonstrate.

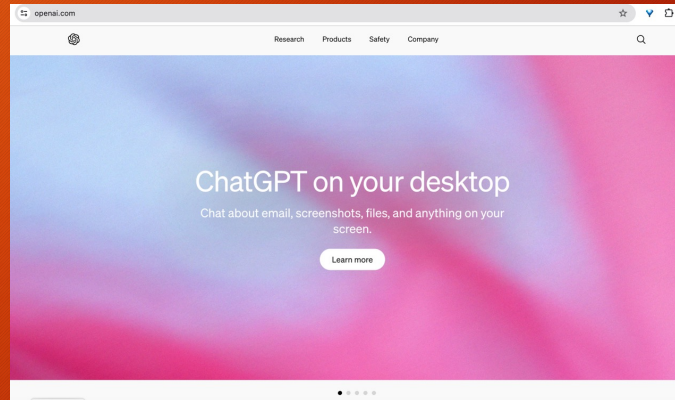


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# Open ChatGPT

Get Started with 3 Simple Steps:

1. Go to openai.com
2. Scroll down and click on "ChatGPT"
3. Click on "Start now" and sign up or sign in.



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# Proposals vs Submissions



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## Grant Proposal vs Grant Submission

### Grant Proposal = Your Story

- You write it once
- It is evergreen

### Grant Submission = Your story in someone else's format

- Comparable to filling out a job application
- You the pieces of your story based on questions asked

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## Funder Expectations



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## Bright Futures Foundation

### Community Arts Grant Application

The Bright Futures Foundation is a private family foundation based in Atlanta, Georgia. Established in 2005, the Foundation supports programs that enrich the lives of children and youth through education, arts, and cultural experiences. The Foundation believes every child deserves access to creative opportunities that inspire learning, confidence, and connection to community.

#### Grant Program Overview

**Program:** Community Arts Grant Program

**Purpose:** To support nonprofit organizations that provide arts and cultural programming for underserved children and youth in metro Atlanta.

**Grant Size:** Up to \$25,000 per organization

**Grant Type:** Project/program support (not general operating)

**Grant Term:** One year, renewable by invitation

**Eligible Applicants:** 501(c)(3) nonprofits operating in metro Atlanta with annual budgets under \$1 million

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### Grant Guidelines

- Programs must primarily serve children and youth ages 5–18.
- Priority is given to programs that increase access to arts and culture for students from low-income families.
- Applicants must demonstrate measurable goals and outcomes.
- Collaborations with schools, community organizations, or cultural institutions are encouraged.
- Funding may be used for supplies, instruction, field trips, and program-related events. It may not be used for debt repayment, endowments, or political activity.

### Submission Instructions

- Submit your completed application via the Foundation's online portal at [www.brightfuturesfoundation.org/apply](http://www.brightfuturesfoundation.org/apply).
- **Deadline:** October 15, 20xx, 5:00 p.m. EST.
- **Notification:** All applicants will be notified by December 15, 20xx.

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## Application Questions

1. What is your organization's mission?
2. Describe your organization's history. (Write in paragraph format. Max 1000 characters)
3. What is the name of your program?
4. Describe the program for which you are seeking funding. (Write in paragraph format. Max 3000 characters)
5. How does the program address a specific community need or gap? (Write in paragraph format. Max 1000 characters)
6. Describe the target population served by the program. (Write in paragraph format. Max 1000 characters)
7. What are your program goals for the current fiscal year?
8. What are the anticipated outcomes of this program? (Write in paragraph format. Max 2000 characters)
9. Explain your process for measuring and evaluating your program. (Write in paragraph format, using bullets only when necessary. Max 3000 characters)
10. What organizations do you collaborate with for this program?
11. What is the total program budget?
12. If awarded, how will you leverage the funding received? (Write in paragraph format. Max 2000 characters)

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## Submissions Demo



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## Reviewing and Editing with ChatGPT

Example prompt for feedback on clarity, conciseness, and impact.

1. Please expand on...
2. Is this information factual?
3. Please check my content for grammar, punctuation, and flow.
4. Is there another way of phrasing this content?



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## Common Pitfalls to Avoid

Discussing common mistakes in grant writing when using ChatGPT.

1. The information is not infallible.
2. Content may exaggerate what you actually do.
3. Always a good idea to have others review the proposal content with you.
4. Do not rely on ChatGPT alone. There's lots of AI tools available!



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## Additional Resources

In addition to ChatGPT, here are resources that may be useful for grant writing:

1. Dalle E (Photos)
2. Deepseek.com (content creation)
3. Perplexity.ai (Research)
4. Jenni.ai (Research)
5. EasyPeasy.ai
6. Grammerly (Content development)
7. Grantmakers.io (Open-source grant database).



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## Awesome Grant Databases

### **Grantmakers.io**

- Free access to thousands of grant-making funders. Visit: <https://www.grantmakers.io>

### **Foundationcenter.org**

- Free access to Foundation Center database and resources at a location near you at no cost. Visit: <http://https://fconline.foundationcenter.org>

### **GrantGopher.com**


- Free Search Available: Yes. Visit: <https://grantgopher.com>

### **HelloAlice.com and USChamber.com**

Business grants, loans, and other resources for small business owners.

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I don't want,  
and I don't hope.  
I intend.



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<https://Score.org/memphis>

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Cheryl Smith, CEO  
Dewlyn Nonprofit Services  
National Nonprofit Trainer & Coach

## What I do each day...

1. Establish nonprofit organizations
2. Establish U.S. DOL Apprenticeship Programs
3. Grant proposal-writing
4. Strategic Planning
5. Group coaching and training



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# Thank You!



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