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*“get in yo bag!”*

# Grant Writing 101

Facilitated by  
Carlton V Bell II “cj” - they/them

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# A Little Bit About Me . . .



pronouns: they/them

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Cultural Movement Worker + Producer/Director of stage & screen.

Local to Birmingham, AL by way of Bayou La Batre' AL.

Co-founder & Director of Development of Birmingham Black Repertory Theatre Collective.

Program Associate for the Sex Worker Giving Circle at Third Wave Fund.

In Addition to my work as an artist, I work as a disruptor & space-maker for marginalized people in artistic spaces nationally, regionally, & locally.

**Before we start;** feel free to utilize the chat for questions, or you can email me directly. Because this is workshop is being recorded we will also hold all questions until the end. I will not be code-switching, and using a lot of culturally specific language, slang, and phrases from street-economics to frame this presentation/work.



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What first comes to mind  
when you hear the word  
“philanthropy”?

*Let's use the jamboard!*

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# WTF is Philanthropy

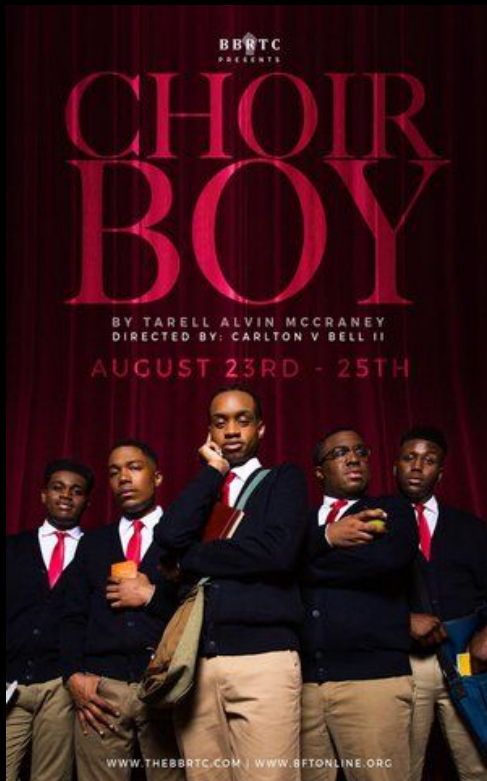
From the latin “phil-” - humane, good + “anthropos” - (hu)mankind

Really just means doing something good/generous/kind for the world and/or giving money or something else of value in support of a worthy cause.

## Quick Timeline of Philanthropy Industrial Complex as we know it now:

- 1916: 16th Amendment creates federal income tax
- 1917: Charitable income tax deduction law created (aka tax shelter for the wealthy)
- 1954: Creates non-profit tax codes - 501(c)3
- 1969: Regulations for family foundations, including minimum 5% grant distribution

**Philanthropy is fueled stolen from BIPOC people land and labor. Anyone of any class status has the power to participate in philanthropy and most likely already does!**



Poster for BBRTC's production of "Choir Boy" by Tarell Alvin McCraney, BBRTC is a FSP of National Performance Network

## What are the types of Nonprofits

**501(c)3:** a tax status for an organization working in the public interest/public good which reinvests some or all profits back into their organization.

**Fiscal sponsorship:** when a 501(c)3 org lends their tax-exempt status to an org without that status. 501(c)3 org is the **fiscal sponSOR**, and the sponsored group is the **fiscal sponSEE**.

**501(c)4:** tax status similar to 501(c)3 but allows for electoral organizing, lobbying etc. Has stricter regulations & donation limits.

# Types of Foundations Grantmakers



BILL & MELINDA  
GATES *foundation*

ben & Jerry's  
foundation  
greening the grassroots since 1985

**Public foundation:** funded by the public (a range of sources instead of a single person or business)

**Private foundation:** funded by a single person, family, or families. May use a **Donor Advised Fund** instead, which allows tax-deductible charitable grantmaking without their own foundation

**Corporate foundation:** funded by a portion of a corporation's profits, sometimes supplemented by Board members

# How Can I Get in My Bag?

*To Get In Your Bag - Learning the  
“5 R’s” of Grant Writing.*

Readiness

Research

W(r)iting

Relationships

— Reporting



## The Five R's of Grant Writing - Readiness

A crucial part of your grant writing process is researching the funder. Spend the time to find the right funders. Those who are actually interested in what you are doing. Your job is to make sure they are interested.

- What are their funding priorities?
- **Which organizations have received grants from your would-be funders in the past?**
- What is their average grant amount?
- When is the grant application due?
- **Who are the people making the decisions on your application?**

**“If Stay Ready, You ain't never got to get ready!”**

## The Five R's of Grant Writing - Research

Before applying, make sure that you are familiar with the funder's expectations, the requirements, and what documents need to be included with the proposal.

This could include details like your organization's tax info, history, mission statement, budget, HR-specific information, and project-specific information.

This might also include **researching data, or on the ground participatory research with your communities** if applying for a project specific grant, or programmatic grant.

**Capacity Building + Multi Year General Operating Funds is the name of the game**

**Pro Tip:** Create a Grants Calendar to help you track your ongoing applications, including deadlines, actionable to-do's, funds received, and reporting requirements.

# The Five R's of Grant Writing - W(r)iting

*OK, it doesn't really begin with an "R," but close enough. :)*

## A. Your writing should be clear, concise, and compelling

Just like we have the “5 R’s”, we also have the three C’s: **Clear, Concise, and Compelling**. A grant application should tell a story and, within that story, prove to would-be funders how the grant will be used effectively to achieve your and the funder’s goals. You can do this by ensuring your proposal is:

1. **Clear:** The objective and goals of your project or program should be easy to understand and measurable.
2. **Concise:** Watch your word count. Your proposal should include relevant information that directly answers the questions posed by the funder.
3. **Compelling:** Grant writing is an opportunity to share your organization’s unique story. The passion that caused you to begin this journey should come through in your writing. You can start with a **compelling mission statement**.

# The Five R's of Grant Writing - W(r)iting

## B. Apply Data-driven Storytelling Techniques

1. Getting noticed in a giant stack of proposals can be challenging. So how can you set your story apart from the droves of other applicants? **The secret lies in data.**
2. While a warm story might encourage someone to donate \$50, a foundation looking to grant \$50,000 can't base their decision on their heartstrings alone. You need to focus on your impact and include the numbers to back them up.

## C. Review Your Program's Budget

3. Remember: Funders make decisions based on your proposal. **If the budget doesn't match the project outline, your application is most likely getting rejected. They're not going to call you to clarify, and they're just going to move on to the next application.** So, you need to make sure that your budget lines up with the amount you need and the impact you're looking to make.

## D. Get an External Review

4. Invite a nonprofit professional (*or anyone tbh*) who isn't a part of your organization to review.
5. While you live and breathe your mission, an external reviewer might be able to easily spot gaps in your proposal or get you to add more details to explain something you might think is common knowledge.

## The Five R's of Grant Writing - Relationships

Most organizations pin their success on their ability to build relationships within their communities. **Foundations grant funding to people not organizations** - Get to know them, invite them to get involved with your mission, and learn more about their goals and community initiatives. When reaching out to grantmakers, you should always be prepared with:

- Who you are, what you do, and why it matters!
- How do you think their funding specifically will impact your program (think 30-second elevator pitch)

**Soft Reminder;** *The Philanthropy landscape is ingrained into capitalism by design, the further into the “margins” you are, the more harm you can expect from this dance.*

*“Make that money, don’t let it make you.”* Players Club

**Most importantly, thank them! Don’t just take their money and run, or lose out on money and immediately fade away.**

## The Five R's of Grant Writing - Reporting

While this might be your least favourite part of the grant, it's likely your funder's favourite. They want to know their money is making a difference. Be diligent in your reporting and evaluation metrics.

Use your tools to help aid your reporting, it's 2024!

Utilize Technology and systems to increase your capacity for reporting (*If the raw data is already present, it's not there to generate - but it can organize!*)

**Get Creative! Reporting should be impactful, metrics driven, but engaging to a bunch of folks sitting in what's probably a board room looking at hundreds of applications with limited time to review.**

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# Grant Writing Worksheet

*Let's review the grant-writing worksheet together.*

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# Questions and Feedback

Feel free to reach out to me

[carltonvbell.com](http://carltonvbell.com)

*Thanks you for attending, hope this helps you get  
in yo bag!*

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