



Philanthropy Massachusetts Common Grant Application Language

Instructions for Use

Introduction

Thank you for using the Philanthropy Massachusetts suggested language for grant application questions.

Philanthropy MA's Common Grant Application Language is a tool for democratizing philanthropy that we created in concert with other Philanthropy Serving Organizations across the country. Our goal in providing common language for grant application questions is to reduce the burden on nonprofits seeking grants. If an applicant could fill out one application that many funders accept, or find questions worded the same way across applications, it would save hours of wordsmithing to address slight variations in questions.

To create this Common Grant Application Language, we worked with a cohort of six funders and six nonprofit representatives to develop agreed upon wording. This document can be used as a complete grant application, or individual questions can be adopted by funders within their existing applications. These fields and questions can be added to applications in grants management platforms such as Submittable, Foundant and others; or grant partners can edit and submit the document as presented on our site.

Notes for Funders

Adopting the common grant language signals to nonprofits that you value their time and exemplifies your commitment to democratizing philanthropy.

Please feel free to use any of the suggested grant application wording for the fields/questions in your own applications or let grantees know they can use this template. This template recommends a five page limit but please let applicants know if you prefer a lower page limit.

To reduce the burden on grantees, we recommend:

- using the language provided
- using only the questions you need
- avoiding or limiting the use of additional questions

We encourage using resources such as [impala](#) or [GuideStar](#) to collect information for basic fields (e.g. address, EIN) as well as demographic/financial data on a prospective grantee. If your foundation wishes to automate the process and lessen the burden on potential grantees, Candid (the maker of GuideStar) offers [APIs that can import information directly from GuideStar into many grants management platforms](#).

Philanthropy Massachusetts also offers a [Demographic Data Form](#) on our website that funders can use to collect this data from grant applicants. We welcome its usage and ask that those requesting it are transparent about how the data will be used and why it is being collected. Additionally, we sought to be comprehensive in identifying demographic types to be collected but acknowledge that not all categories are helpful or necessary for all funders. For that reason, we suggest collecting only the demographic data pertinent to your organization.

Notes for Applicants

- Before you apply to any foundation, make sure your organization is a good match for that foundation. To learn about how to research foundations, contact us at rcp@philanthropyma.org.
- Once you have found a grantmaker that seems to be funding the type of work you do, make sure they accept proposals. If they do, confirm that they will accept the Philanthropy Massachusetts Common Grant Application Language questions.

- To ensure that funders can view your demographic data through [Demographics via Candid](#), claim and update the demographic data section of your [Candid profile](#).

Philanthropy MA has also created a **Budget Form**, a **Report Form**, and a **Demographic Data Form**, for any funders who may ask for these items. These other forms can be found [here](#). If you need assistance with the **Common Grant Application Language** please email us at: rcp@philanthropyma.org.