



DEBUNKING GRANT MYTHS

Like Sasquatch, mermaids, or the Loch Ness Monster, grants seem to be a mythical enigma for many organizations. Opinions range from grant opportunities either sounding too good to be true or seeming on the same level as the fountain of youth — a wellspring that solves all problems.

In actuality, grant funding is somewhere in between. Here at Morrison, we've talked through a number of grant myths with clients, and with millions of dollars in successful grant applications under our belt we consider it an honor to serve as myth busters for the for trade groups, governmental organizations, and for-profit companies we work with in our grants business.

If you find yourself wondering if there really is that pot of gold of a grant program behind the rainbow, check out some of the regular myths we bring clarity to!

MYTH: GRANTS ARE ONLY FOR NONPROFITS, CHARITIES, AND ACADEMIA.

There are plenty of those, and for worthy causes. But nonprofits and universities don't have a monopoly on worthy causes. There are a wealth of grant opportunities available to assist for-profit companies and associations serving for-profit businesses in their worthy endeavors as well. We've written successful proposals to buy new equipment to improve energy efficiency, to cover the slotting fees for the launch of new products that will bring increased jobs, to create marketing materials for a promotional campaign encouraging healthy eating, and even to bring in a world-renowned speaker to an organization's annual meeting.

MYTH: A GRANT PROPOSAL IS JUST ANSWERING A FEW QUESTIONS, SIGNING A FEW FORMS, AND CHECKING BOXES, RIGHT?

There are indeed boxes to check and forms to sign, but a compelling story that meets the goals of the particular grant program is the key to success. Additionally, many of the grant programs we work with require a financial analysis to prove a worthy investment of grant funds. The unique backgrounds of our Morrison team — which includes a number of CPAs — allows us to accomplish this and convey a story of measurable success, but the process is much more involved than just a few checked boxes.

MYTH: GRANTS CAN LET US CONTINUE BUSINESS AS USUAL, AND WILL HELP US JUST PAY OUR REGULAR BILLS.

Grant programs have specific goals, and they are never just to keep the lights on. But grants will help you to improve business as usual! You'll rarely find funding to pay your electricity bill, but we can help you spend less of your own money on new endeavors to better free up funds to cover business as usual.

MYTH: FREE MONEY! LET'S APPLY FOR THEM ALL!

Grant programs don't have to be an exact fit, but going after every grant opportunity without a solid strategy could commit you to executing projects that aren't a priority or that don't make good business sense. A successful grant funded program still takes time, effort, and likely some of your own funds. Choose wisely.

MYTH: THERE MUST BE STRINGS ATTACHED.

OK, this one is true. Grant programs have reporting and recordkeeping requirements, and there are timeframes and deadlines. Some may require audits, and some require or give preference to some level of matching funds. Requirements for federal and state programs are readily available, and we work with applicants to know those strings before they apply for an opportunity, and can manage the administrative process after they are awarded grant funds.

MYTH: I JUST NEED TO FIND SOMEONE WHO WAS AN ENGLISH MAJOR TO HELP ME AND MY GRANT APPLICATION WILL BE SUCCESSFUL.

We love English majors here! But knowing the value of the Oxford Comma isn't enough. Our grant writers are more than just good writers — in our lives outside of Morrison, we sit on boards ourselves and review and approve multi-million dollar budgets. We stay up to date on everything from the price of steel to the consumption rates of California wine (we'd be great Jeopardy contestants). We know how the world outside the grant realm works. And we know you have to tell a compelling story. We also serve as independent reviewers on grant programs and use the insights gained to strengthen our grant proposals.

SO NOW HOW DO I FIND THAT UNICORN THAT WILL WORK FOR MY ORGANIZATION?

The most prudent way for an organization to pursue grant funding is to develop a grant strategy. We can work with you to identify your needs, match those needs to specific grant programs, determine your capacity to apply for and manage potential opportunities, and discuss the deal-breakers for you and your leadership that would keep you from pursuing certain grant options.

In the meantime, check out our grants blog (<http://www.morrisonco.net/blog/search/category/grants>) or contact us to be placed on our monthly grants newsletter list (email grants@morrisonco.net). We sift through hundreds of grant opportunities in a given month and share those that are most relevant to our client base.

Also feel free to give us a call directly to chat about grants—the opportunities are real!