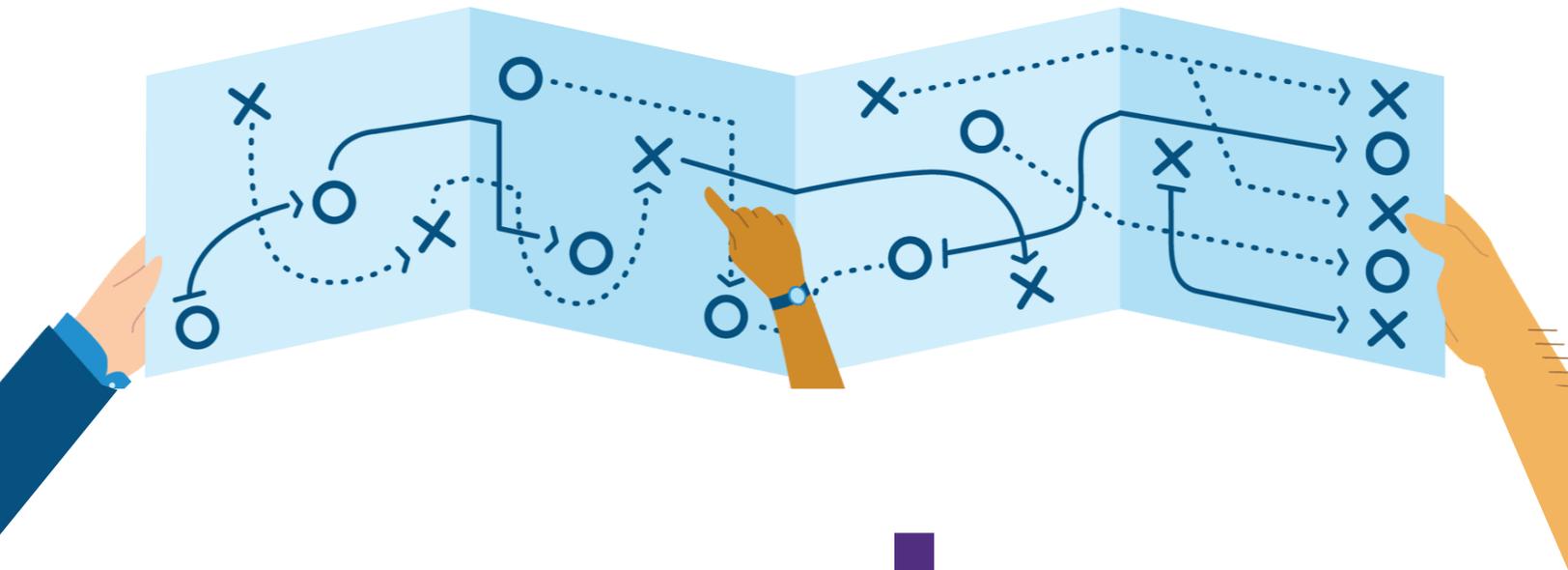


make it GIFT

The **Insider's Playbook**
To For Winning a GIFT Grant



ck community
knights
inspire.collaborate.impact.



A Note From Jennifer and Teresa,

We wrote this little booklet to shed some light on what we think everyone applying to the GIFT Grant should know. No, this booklet doesn't walk you question-by-question (that's what the workshops are for). This booklet gives you an insider's perspective on what it really takes to win a GIFT Grant. Believe us, if you want to increase your chances of winning a grant, you'll want to refer to this booklet over and over again.

Over the years, we've seen it all. We know exactly what we're looking for and how to tell if an application is a winner or not. And sad to say, we have also seen some really amazing ideas fail to get a grant, just because they didn't follow a few simple instructions, or didn't read the questions carefully. We DON'T want this to happen to you. This document is meant to help you understand how to approach this, as well as giving you a few tips along the way.

If at any time when reading this booklet, you feel like you need some clarification, please drop us a line. Our contact information can be found at the end of this booklet. We're always happy to help anyone make their GIFT Grant application the best it can be.

With that said, let's begin...

Sincerely,

Jennifer and Teresa
Community Knights



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GIFT

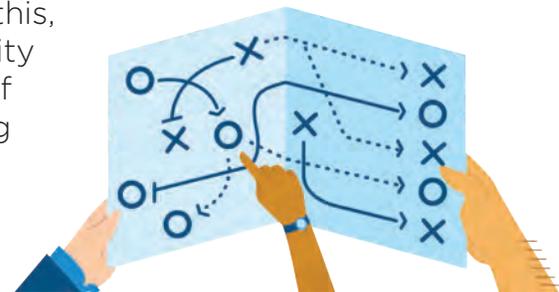
Grant Initiative Fundraising Team

It All Starts with Passion and a Dream

So, you have an idea of how the Peninsula can become a healthier, happier and more prosperous place? **Do you have a passion for helping others, meeting needs and making sure others have greater access to resources? Then, you are in the right place.** The GIFT Grant program is your opportunity to gain funds, support and a platform to get your non-profit dream going.

Before we get into the nuts and bolts of the GIFT program, how it works and how you can get your very own grant, we need to talk about what the GIFT program is. GIFT stands for Grant Initiative Fundraising Team. We've put together a specialized group of experienced non-profit professionals who are acting in your, and the Peninsula's, best interest. This group of people are dedicated to awarding grants to those non-profit organizations that can/will have a positive impact on our community. This means, when you join the GIFT program, you will work hand-in-hand with some of the best and brightest people that can help you navigate the often-stressful waters of non-profit funding and program liftoff.

You must be wondering, so how does this work? Where does Community Knights get the funds and resources to be able to do this? To put it short, we have a dedicated group of volunteers and donors that make sure Community Knights is able to disburse grants to the best non-profit organizations. We have created a "pool" of money that is reserved to support programs that enhance and improve the Virginia Peninsula's community. We wouldn't be able to do any of this, without our hardworking, diverse and dedicated Community Based Volunteers and donors. So, next time you see one of these people, give them a high-five. They're doing amazing work!





Our support for non-profits go way beyond just providing grants. When you work with us, you'll get incredible support. The environment we've created is designed to help non-profit and public schools to work together, collaborate and meet needs in innovative ways. This means grant recipients join a type of family who are each dedicated to support each other, and the Peninsula. Because this is such an important part of our culture, we want everyone we work with to have the same passion. You'll see just how much we believe in collaboration in the sections to come.

Enough with us. The reason you're reading this is to learn more about how we can help you. And, the answer is plenty! We've invested over \$1.3 million into our community. By applying for the GIFT program you too can be awarded the grant you need to get off the ground, keep going or get to your next level. The impact you could be making is very real. And, you are on the verge of doing something that is much, much bigger than yourself!

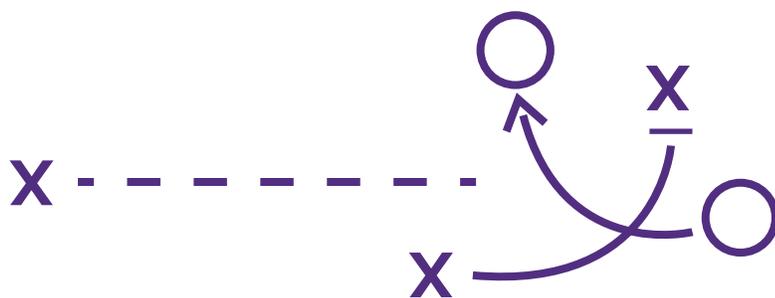
Are you excited? You should be.

But, there are rules.
I know....rules (sigh)

Answering the “How”

To make sure grants are awarded fairly and appropriately, every organization seeking a grant must apply for the grant. This application process isn't meant to keep you out of getting a grant. Far from it! The process of applying for a grant is specifically designed to help narrow your focus and answer the question, “How?” And, this “how” is the most important question that we must have answered. Your answer to “how” must be analytical, practical and aware of many different factors that will impact your endeavor. This means you must go from “having an awesome dream”, to “having a solid plan.”

Look, we're not knocking anyone from pursuing their dreams. We love dreamers. We're dreamers too! But, we are custodians of grant-funds. As custodians, there is a lot of trust placed in Community Knights to make sure the funds are awarded to those who will put those funds to their best use. From our experience, those organizations making the greatest impact are the ones who take the time to plan and determine exactly how they will make a difference in our community. Yeah, we know things don't always go to plan. But, it's better to have a dream and a plan, than just a dream.





And, that is what the grant-application process helps you do. It increases your chances of obtaining a grant and succeeding in the real world. By walking you through the very powerful steps of examining your school program or non-profit from all angles, you will see what so many others have seen - how your dream can become a reality.

Let's go a little deeper and take a look at what we're looking for in a GIFT Grant awardee.

Do You Have The Basics?

While there are many specific components we consider, every GIFT grant must have the basics nailed-down. We call these basics, because if a grant application doesn't have them, we usually just pass on it. So, before you begin, make sure you have the following four attributes.

Benefit The Peninsula

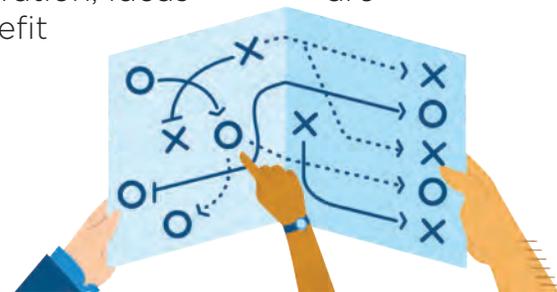
We view ourselves as knights for citizens of our community. This means we are 100% dedicated to doing as much good for our neighbors on this side of the water (the Virginia Peninsula). Anyone applying for a GIFT Grant must be able to demonstrate how the money will be used to benefit people in our geographical location. This includes Hampton, Newport News, Yorktown and Williamsburg.

Be a 501(c)3, public school or other non-profit organization that the Board deems to benefit the community

Our grant program distributes grants to non-profit (501(c)3's or public school organizations. If your organization can't meet that criteria, then you do have the option of seeking Board approval for an exception.

Demonstrate Similar Values

We are not interested in working with people who don't believe in teamwork. Community Knights is all about collaboration and having a "We Rise and Fall Together" mentality. Our grant recipients must be able to show how their organization have (or will have) collaborated with other non-profits and/or public school programs. And by sending one of their organization's members to serve on a CK Committee. By focusing on collaboration, ideas are spread, help is given and our entire area gets to benefit from it.





Manage The Grant Funds Well

Each of our grant recipients have to show how they will manage the money, and do it! There are a lot of regulations that we, as a grant-provider, must always adhere to. And one that we take extremely seriously is making sure our recipients have and implement a grant-funding management method.

What We Look For First In An Application

Now that we got the basics out of the way. Let's get into the nitty-gritty pieces of advice that we wish everyone knew going into the grant-application process. As you move forward with your grant-application, you will be asked many questions, and have to provide a level of detail that you may or may not have thought of before. To give you a heads-up, the following is a brief list of items you need to be aware of.

No IRS Problems

Your organization must be in good standing with the IRS. Need we say more?

Grant Responses Must Be Unique

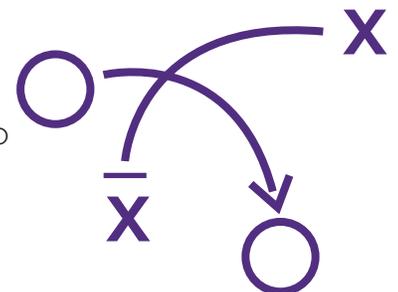
Your GIFT Grant application must be unique. Nothing can be copied from any previous Gift Grant application. The only exception could be standard organization-elements, like your mission, vision and values. But be warned, you will be tempted to copy and paste answers from previous submissions, and we will notice.

Be A List-Making Maniac!

We look at grant-applications all the time. We know all the tricks in the book. When we ask for lists, we are serious – especially when it comes to money. A good rule of thumb is, whenever you see a list, be as detailed and clear as possible. If you are having trouble coming to an exact number, feel free to give an estimate. But, that estimate must be logically linked in the real world. For example, if you want a new microscope, but can't find the exact price of the microscope you need, go ahead and look up how much similar microscopes cost. Once you have that number, adjust your estimate accordingly. Don't just put a number in there. Please show us that you've put thought into it.

Serve Us Some Juicy Details

We're pretty good at noticing when something isn't adding up. You know the feeling? Like when you know something just isn't quite right. As grant-custodians, we don't like that feeling. But, it happens all the time. This feeling usually occurs when we read something that is too





vague or too general. When this happens our antenna goes off and we either become way too critical, or blow people off entirely. You don't want that to happen (neither do we!). So please be detailed.

Answer the question

Every question on the grant application is there for a reason. They are there because we want specific answers. As you work through the application, don't just write a response. Make sure you are answering the question! Our suggestion to you is to slow down and make sure you understand exactly what each question is asking.

Don't Copy and Paste

We've said this before, we'll say it again. Don't copy and paste! We will notice!

Show How You Collaborate

We want to know if you share our passion for collaboration. Throughout your entire application, it's good to convey how important collaboration is to your organization. We highly suggest pointing out how you help other non-profits and/or public school programs, especially if they are other GIFT Grant recipients. And, if you have any new or innovative way to expand/strengthen collaboration amongst the Peninsula, make sure to write that down too!

Impact. Impact. Impact.

In the end, all we want is to make an impact on the Peninsula. We want to see lives changed and needs met. You will be asked poignant questions about how people will be impacted. We suggest taking the time to answer these questions. They are the "meat and potatoes" of the entire application process. If you get this wrong, you won't receive a grant.

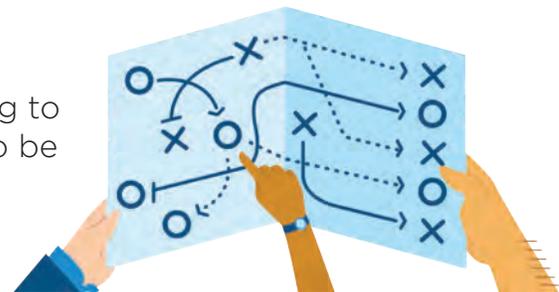
Questions about impact will range a bit. But with your answers, we'll be asking ourselves the following three questions.

- Does the calculation of impact seem to be valid?
- Does the calculation account for the lifetime of use for the items requested?
- Does the calculation account for a lifetime of the project/program?

We cannot stress how important it is to be detailed here. We must know you've thought through exactly how your organization will benefit those on the peninsula and all the details associated with it.

What's the Benefit to People?

Remember, this application-process is all about trying to answer the question "how." This is where you need to be





very specific and intentional with your answer. You must describe the benefits people will receive as a direct result of you obtaining money for a grant. Within this answer, you need to be able to describe how widespread and significant your impact will be. No matter what your answer is, you must be able to tie it to a metric of some kind.

What Does the Future Look Like?

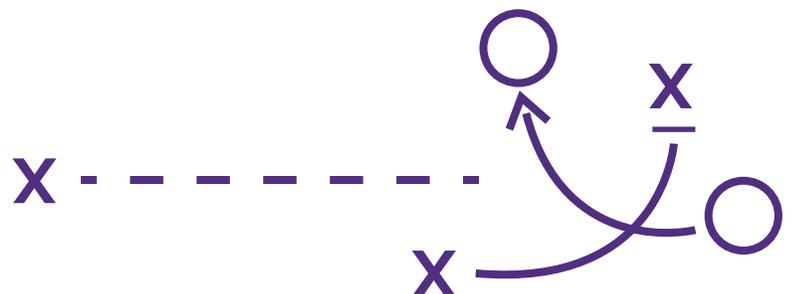
The GIFT Grant you're applying to doesn't exist in a vacuum. It is a part of your organization's on-going story. We know (or, at least hope) you'll use the money alongside other funding sources, to ultimately have a larger impact on the Peninsula. If you can show us a link between receiving a grant and how the program/project will be sustained beyond the GIFT Grant, we want to hear about it. This helps us get a better picture of how you are diligently building your organization/program to continuously benefit those in the Peninsula.

Do You Have A Plan?

In the end, we want to know if you have a plan. As we've said before, that's the whole point of all of this. When we are done reading your application, the main question we want to have answered is "does this organization/program have a plan?" And if so, we want to know that plan is workable, reasonable and will produce actual, positive results for people living on the Peninsula.

For Those With New (unconventional) Ideas

You may be thinking that your idea isn't too "out-of-the-box." We're here to say, that's okay! Still apply. Some of the greatest ideas have come from unknown and humble beginnings. Our perspective is, every organization is different and produces benefits in unique ways. Your organization may have a completely unconventional way of addressing a problem. We love innovative ideas. But no matter what your organization/program is, you must describe it in a way that we can understand. This could mean that you revise a section multiple times, until you get it just right. Or it could mean that you break down a complex idea into simplistic parts, so that we'll "get it." Regardless of how you do it, please make sure your application presents information in an understandable way.





Important Facts

So far, we've covered what we consider to be the most important parts of evaluating a GIFT Grant application. Now it's time to talk about a few pointers that we've seen trick people up in the past.

Referring to a Grant as a Donation

We administer and award grants. We, at no point, give donations. Do not refer to our grant as a donation in your application, in a thank you email or any other type of verbal or non-verbal communication. We have to be very clear about that and will always correct you if you ever refer to a grant as a donation.

Keep Track Of Your Money

When you receive your grant funds, you must be able to account for that money and tell us exactly how that money was used. This means you must keep track of your award as it's own line item and track any and all expenses leveraged against it.

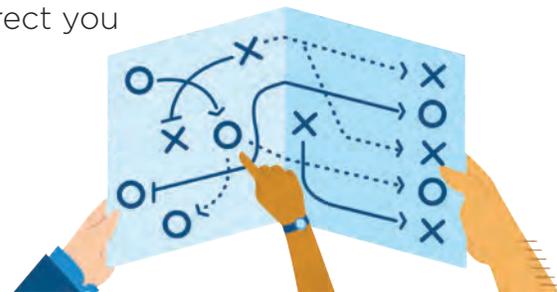
Be An Active Team Player

As we've talked about throughout this e-book, we love collaboration. We also require all GIFT Grant recipients to participate in a Community Knights Committee. This gives you (and others) to benefit from the collective power of the Peninsula's non-profit community. We have seen so many lives impacted, just from the sharing of ideas and willingness to help others.

Go Ahead, Apply! No Intimidation Here :)

As you can see, a lot goes into applying for a GIFT Grant. If this is your first time applying for a grant of any kind, it can seem intimidating. You may not feel like you have all the answers. Don't give up! We understand this feeling and know all the pressures associated with starting out. That's why, for anyone interested in applying for a grant, we make ourselves available to help walk you through any questions you may have. You may have a simple question, or a lot of tough questions. To that we say, give us your best shot. We can take it. And chances are, we've probably answered them a time or two. Have a question? Just ask.

Our goal isn't to keep you from getting a grant. Our goal is to help you make an incredible impact on the Peninsula. As you take these steps toward doing that, we will do everything we can to help you, connect you and direct you





toward the best outcome for you and our area. That's why we've hold regular grant-writing workshops and will respond to any questions you have. And, we'll make our network available to you, as needed.

In short, everything you need to start, strengthen and sustain a non-profit or public school program is ready and available to you. All you have to do is take advantage of what we have to offer, which is a whole bunch. Our hope, in the end, is that we can be a springboard for you, as you continue on your journey of helping countless people and touching innumerable lives. We're all in this together. That's they we know we are going to make it together.

Contact

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