



FROM APPLICATION TO IMPACT

Best Practices for Grantees

WE WILL BEGIN SOON.



AGENDA:

- Introduction & Housekeeping
- NAAF Overview
- Telling Your Story Through Data: The ‘Why’ and the Need
- Free Tools to Strengthen Your Application
- What NAAF Looks For: Best Practices and Common Pitfalls
- Compliance, Reporting, Audit Overview and Expectations
- Communications Tips: Beyond the Final Report
- Key takeaways
- Question & Answer



HOUSEKEEPING



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EXECUTIVE WELCOME



Libby Washburn
NAAF Associate CEO

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HEALTHY LANDS, HEALTHY PEOPLE, HEALTHY ECONOMIES.

NAAF is the largest philanthropic organization devoted solely to serving Native American farming and ranching communities.





FOUNDATIONS OF SUCCESSFUL GRANTWRITING



USING DATA TO SUPPORT YOUR STORY

- Data helps **illustrate** the scope of the problem.
- It **provides evidence** that your solution is necessary and well-informed.
- Strong proposals **uncover the stories** behind the hard numbers.



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EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT DATA SOURCES

- Census of Agriculture
- Native Lands Information System
- Rural Health Info Hub
- State, local, or Tribal reports
- Internal community surveys and assessments

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WHAT MAKES A STRONG NARRATIVE

- **Clear** problem statement
- **Alignment** with funder priorities
- **Compelling** solution
- **Impact & outcomes**
- **Strong voice & storytelling**



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THE “WHY” IN GRANT PROPOSALS

- Share the **urgency** of the issue.
- **Align** priorities with the funder.
- Showcase expected **impacts and outcomes**.



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FREE TOOLS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR APPLICATION



FREE TOOLS TO **STRENGTHEN** YOUR APPLICATION

- Use **active voice**
- Be **clear and concise**
- Write with **confidence** and **impact** using free and low-cost tools:



Hemingway
Editor



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ATTEND NAAF'S UPCOMING WEBINAR: **AI 101** FOR GRANT WRITING

Thursday, November 13 - 2 p.m. ET



**HOW AI
ESSENTIALS
CAN ENHANCE
EFFICIENCY**



**OPPORTUNITIES
AND PITFALLS OF
USING AI**



**REAL-WORLD
STRATEGIES**

**SCAN TO
REGISTER**



bit.ly/AINAAF

TEMPLATES - TAP INTO SMART, ACCESSIBLE TOOLS THAT MAKE YOUR APPLICATION SHINE

Logic Model

Inputs

- Staff
- Equipment
- Funding
- Etc

Outputs - Strategies

- Hold 5 in-person financial trainings
- Publish a report detailing barriers to credit
- Launch curriculum
- Etc

Target Audience

- New and beginning farmers ages 30 - 50
- Native youth ages 18 - 24
- Tribal producer group
- Etc

Outcomes - Short & Long

- Support directly to 15 new and beginning farmers on the reservation
- 50 youth attended leadership summit
- 25 producers participated in financial trainings

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TEMPLATES - TAP INTO SMART, ACCESSIBLE TOOLS THAT MAKE YOUR APPLICATION SHINE

Budget

Personnel Costs

Direct Costs

Intermediary
Funds

Indirect Costs

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TEMPLATES - TAP INTO SMART, ACCESSIBLE TOOLS THAT MAKE YOUR APPLICATION SHINE

Budget - Personnel Costs

Personnel Costs			
Executive Director (5% time; \$100,000 annual salary, 3% increase in Year 2)	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,150.00	\$ 10,150.00
Senior Program Officer (10% time; \$75,000 annual salary, 3% increase in Year 2)	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,725.00	\$ 15,225.00
Grants Officer (10% time; \$55,000 annual salary, 3% increase in Year 2)	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 5,665.00	\$ 11,165.00
Salary and wage subtotal	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,540.00	\$ 36,540.00
Fringe: Executive Director (18%)	\$ 900.00	\$ 927.00	\$ 1,827.00
Fringe: Senior Program Officer (18%)	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 1,390.50	\$ 2,740.50
Fringe: Grants Officer (18%)	\$ 990.00	\$ 1,019.70	\$ 2,009.70
Fringe subtotal	\$ 3,240.00	\$ 3,337.20	\$ 6,577.20
Personnel Costs by Year and Total	\$ 21,240.00	\$ 21,877.20	\$ 43,117.20

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TEMPLATES - TAP INTO SMART, ACCESSIBLE TOOLS THAT MAKE YOUR APPLICATION SHINE

Budget - Direct Costs

Direct Costs

Winter Technical Assistance Training

Facility rental and A/V fee

\$200.00

\$200.00

\$400.00

Meals for participants

\$250.00

\$250.00

\$500.00

Summer Technical Assistance Training

Facility rental and A/V fee

\$200.00

\$200.00

\$400.00

Meals for participants

\$250.00

\$250.00

\$500.00

Travel

Airfare

\$2,000.00

\$2,000.00

\$4,000.00

Lodging

\$1,200.00

\$1,200.00

\$2,400.00

Per Diem

\$280.00

\$280.00

\$560.00

Ground Transportation

\$400.00

\$400.00

\$800.00

Grantee Convening

\$750.00

\$-

\$750.00

Must be at least \$750

Supplies (under \$4,999 or less)

Office supplies (paper, printer ink, etc.)

\$1,000.00

\$1,000.00

\$2,000.00

Laptop

\$1,500.00

\$-

\$1,500.00

Equipment and/or Capital Expenditure

N/A

\$-

\$-

\$-

Contractual/Consultant

Consultant for Site Visits

\$4,800.00

\$4,800.00

\$9,600.00

Printing/Publications

Technical assistance training booklets

\$500.00

\$500.00

\$1,000.00

Other

N/A

\$-

\$-

\$-

Direct Costs by Year and Total

\$13,330.00

\$11,080.00

\$24,410.00

Sum all direct costs

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TEMPLATES - TAP INTO SMART, ACCESSIBLE TOOLS THAT MAKE YOUR APPLICATION SHINE

Budget - Intermediary Funds

Intermediary Funds			
Loans	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Re-grants	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
Scholarships	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Intermediary Funds by Year and Total	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 120,000.00



TEMPLATES - TAP INTO SMART, ACCESSIBLE TOOLS THAT MAKE YOUR APPLICATION SHINE

Budget - Indirect Costs

Indirect Costs			
All personnel and direct line items	\$	5,185.50	\$ 4,943.58
(max indirect rate of 15%, intermediary excluded)			
	\$		10,129.08





WHAT NAAF LOOKS FOR: BEST PRACTICES AND COMMON PITFALLS



WHAT NAAF LOOKS FOR: BEST PRACTICES

Guidelines & scoring criteria:

- Access to capital
- Meeting the **mission**
- **Impact** on farmer and rancher demand
- Demonstrating community **need**



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WHAT NAAF LOOKS FOR: BEST PRACTICES

- **Clear objectives** aligned with NAAF's goals and trust agreement.
- **Realistic budgets and timelines.**
- **Community voice and partnerships** included in planning and execution.

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COMMON PITFALLS IN WEAK APPLICATIONS

- **Lack of alignment** with funder priorities.
- **Vague** or unrealistic objectives.
- **Weak or absent data** supporting the need.
- **Overly ambitious** budgets or timelines.
- **Minimal evidence** of community involvement.



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TIPS TO **STRENGTHEN** APPLICATIONS

- Ground your proposal in **solid data** and community input.
- Ensure **clear, measurable objectives**.
- Align tightly with the funder's mission and criteria.
- Highlight **partnerships and sustainability**.
- Write with **clarity, confidence, and focus**.



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REPORTING & AUDIT OVERVIEW AND EXPECTATIONS



GOOD COMPLIANCE PRACTICES START DURING THE APPLICATION WRITING PROCESS



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COMPLIANCE TIPS: APPLICATION WRITING

- Carefully **review all instructions** and resources.
- **Address** each evaluation criterion in detail.
- Use the NAAF budget template and double-check totals.
- Keep **budget** requests **consistent** across the application.
- Review unallowable costs in the RFA overview.

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COMPLIANCE TIPS: AFTER FUNDING IS AWARDED

- **Complete** onboarding steps.
- Sign and **finalize** the grant agreement.
- Initial payment begins on the official start date in the agreement.
- **Identify report due dates** or other required followups.



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COMPLIANCE TIPS: REPORTING

- Submit reports **on time**. For NAAF, this is every six months and a final report at grant close.
- **Share** progress, challenges, successes, and impact.
- Use **project management** software to help stay on top of deliverables.
- **Monitor** expenses regularly.
- Meet deadlines to stay in **compliance**.
- Keep your funder's **POC updated** if issues arise.



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AUDIT & FINANCIAL TIPS: PRE-APPLICATION

- Ensure financials and audits are **up to date** with your accountant.
- **Address** any audit findings with a corrective action plan.



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AUDIT & FINANCIAL TIPS: OPEN APPLICATION

- **Submit** complete financial statements.
- **Show** progress on corrective action items from audits.
- **Demonstrate** stewardship

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AUDIT & FINANCIAL TIPS: **POST AWARD**

- **Continue** addressing audit findings even after funding.
- **Complete** corrective action plans to prepare for future applications.





COMMUNICATIONS TIPS: BEYOND THE FINAL REPORT





WE ARE THE STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES

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WHY STORYTELLING MATTERS

- Stories make impact **real**
- Quotes, photos, and short narratives bring **work to life**
- **Engages** funders, media, and communities



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BEST PRACTICES FOR REPORTING

DATA + STORY + VISUALS

- Highlight outcomes, not just activities
- Combine stories, visuals, and data
- Share lessons learned



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QUICK TIPS FOR STORYTELLING



**FOCUS ON
PEOPLE**



**QUOTES
+ PHOTOS**



**KEEP IT
DIGESTIBLE**



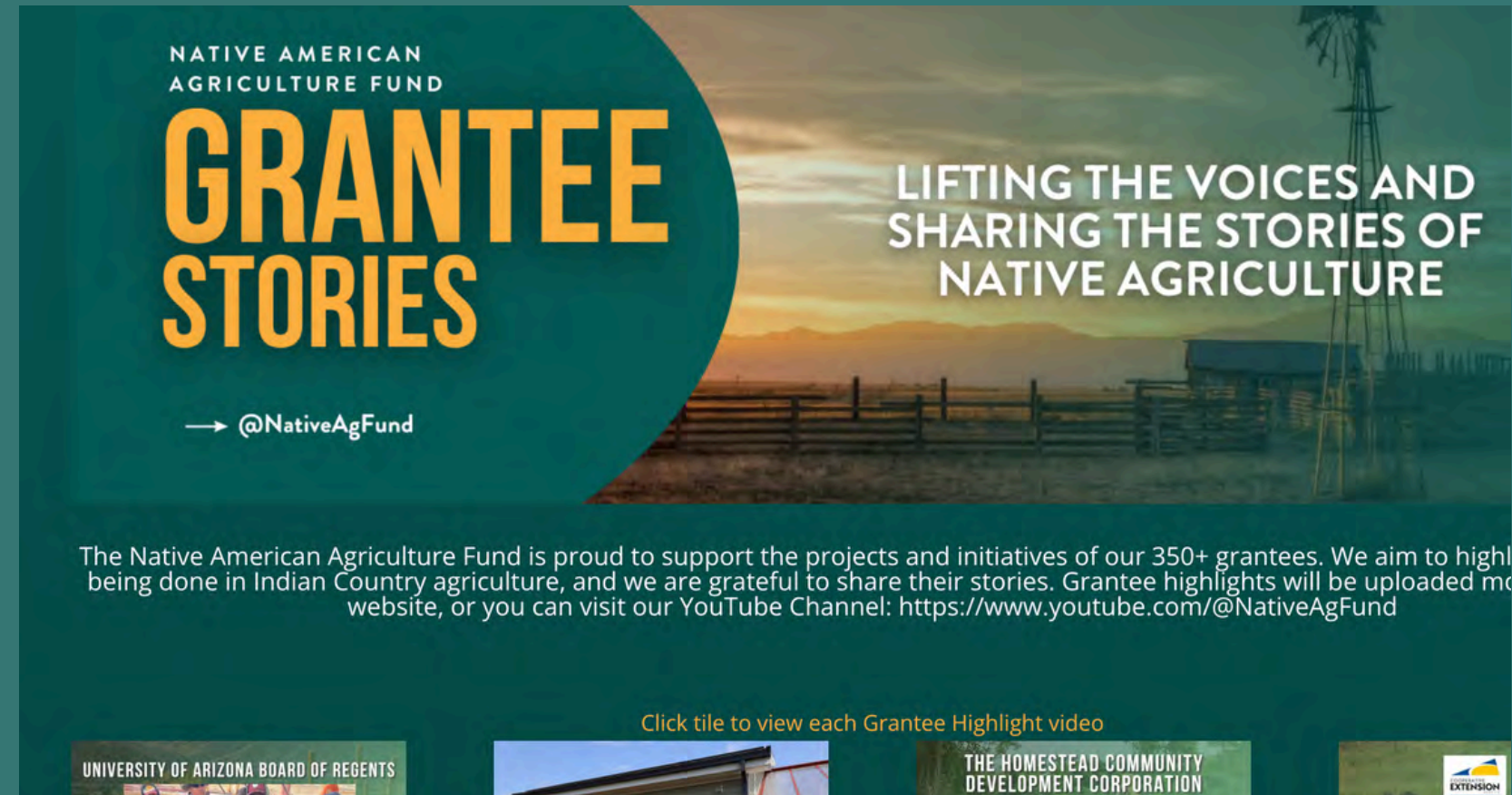
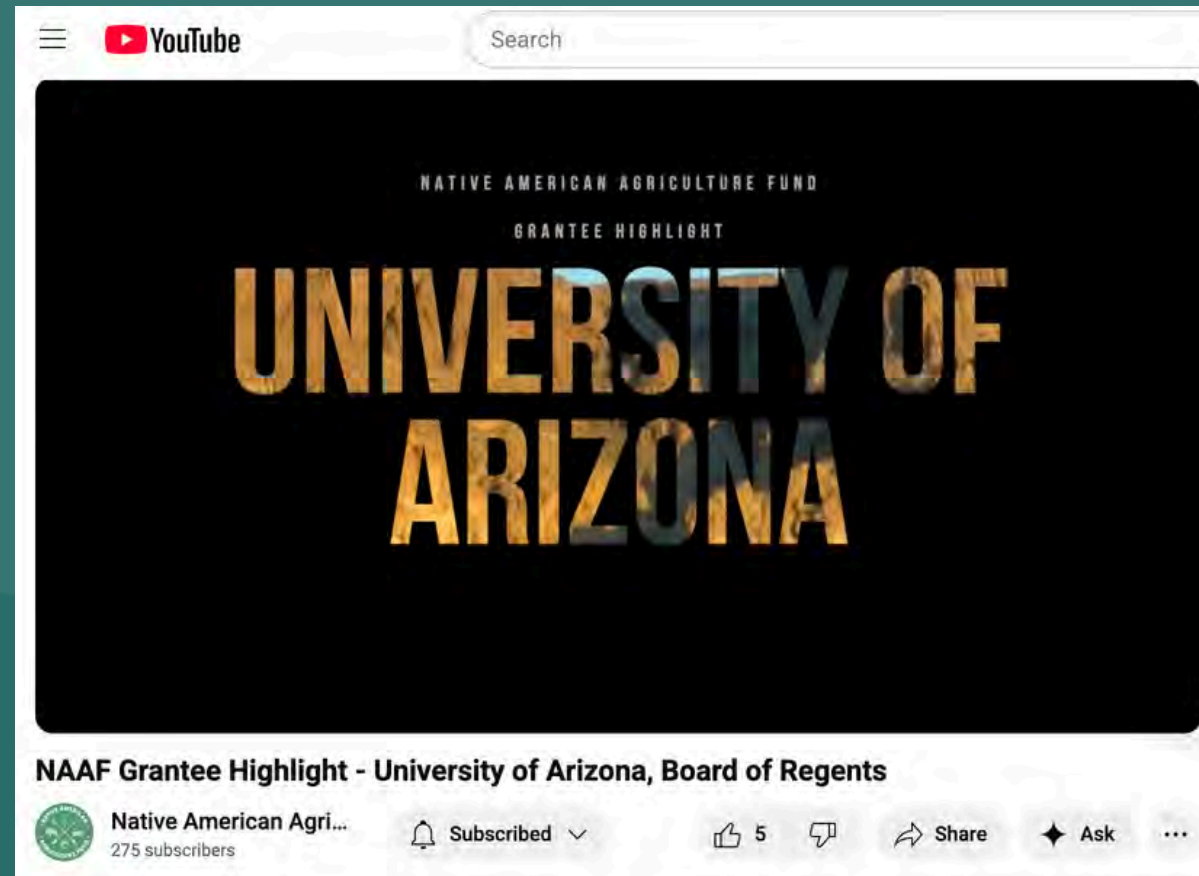
**HIGHLIGHT
RESULTS**

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STORIES AMPLIFY **IMPACT**

- Personal stories connect audiences to the mission
- Stories can be reused in newsletters, social media, presentations

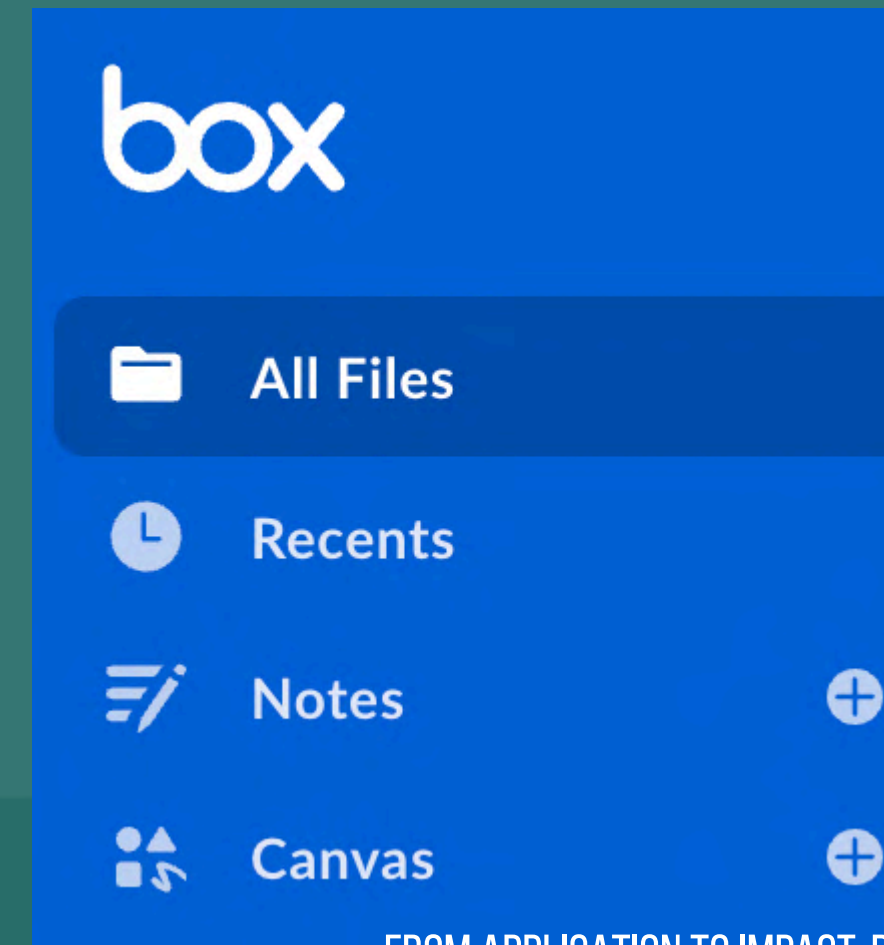


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MEDIA & PROMOTION

- Build media **relationships** & pitch human-interest angles
- **Partner** with funders communications team for promotion
- **Share** photos, videos, and updates

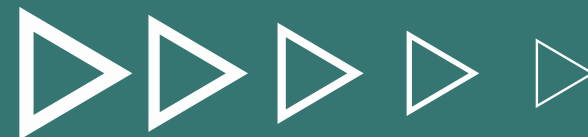


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NATIVE AG COMMUNICATORS **WORK GROUP**

Calling All

**NATIVE AG
COMMUNICATORS**



WANT TO JOIN?
SCAN HERE



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WHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH FUNDERS MATTER

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RELATIONSHIPS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

- **Share** program **highlights**
- **Stay ahead** of potential challenges
- Connect with **new resources** and opportunities
- Strengthen **visibility**
- Create “**buddy-system**” to keep POC informed on staff changes.

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NAAF'S GO-TO TEAM FOR SUPPORT & GUIDANCE

CDFI_s



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TRIBES &
EDU_s



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KEY TAKEAWAYS



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TAKEAWAYS:

- Tell a **strong, data-driven** story.
- Use **free** and practical tools.
- Know what funders are looking for and **align projects** with their mission.
- **Prioritize compliance** from the start.
- Communicate impact beyond reports.
- **Build** strong **relationships** with funders.



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QUESTION & ANSWER

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