

The Decision Matrix

Criteria	The critical question	Rating (1-5)	Notes / red flags
Alignment	Does their mission match our actual work, or are we stretching to fit?		
Capacity	Do we have the staff bandwidth to manage the grant and the reporting?		
Eligibility	Do we meet every hard requirement (geography, tax status, budget)?		
Feasibility	Is the deadline realistic enough to produce a high-quality proposal?		
Connection	Do we have a bridge to a program officer or a past grantee for context?		
ROI	Is this a one-time "band-aid" or a potential multi-year partnership?		
Total Score	18+ = Go 12-17 = Discuss Below 12 = No-Go		

How to score:

5 (Excellent) Perfectly aligned; we are pre-sold or have a deep connection.

3 (Average) Good fit, but will require extra effort or a cold application.

1 (Poor) High risk or mission creep or deadline issues.



2026 Grant-readiness checklist

Phase 1: The Vault (Infrastructure)

Action: Centralize "The Big 4" (Board List, Audit, Budget, 990).

Goal: Have every required document ready for an 11:00 PM deadline.

Phase 2: The Filter (Strategic Vetting)

Action: Run every lead through the Go/No-Go Decision Matrix.

Goal: Stop mission creep and only chase high-ROI opportunities.

Phase 3: The Impact (Narrative & Data)

Action: Refresh your KPIs and Logic Models.

Goal: Ensure your data reflects 2026 scalability and real community change.

Phase 4: The Efficiency (Ethical AI)

Action: Establish AI Guardrails and Prompt Templates.

Goal: Speed up drafting while protecting sensitive donor/financial data.

Phase 5: The Partner (Relationship Stewardship)

Action: Conduct one "Non-Ask" touchpoint per week (Zoom coffee or tour).

Goal: Move from vendor status to trusted partner before the grant opens.





About Grant Assistant by FreeWill

Grant Assistant is an AI-powered platform that makes writing grants faster and easier for nonprofits of all sizes. It transforms the grant-writing process, helping users move from a blank page to a polished draft in a third of the time.

Whether you're applying to family foundations, corporations, or government agencies, the platform ensures each proposal is fully compliant with funder requirements while staying true to your organization's mission, programs, and voice.

By simplifying even the most complex applications, Grant Assistant empowers teams to pursue more opportunities and secure more funding—without the need to hire additional staff.

If you'd like to learn more about how Grant Assistant can help you achieve your fundraising goals, request a demo here.

[Request a demo here](#)