

# Shawn Cunningham

## Grant Writer

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**Areas of experience: Museum/Library, Historic Preservation, Community/Economic Development, Arts, Education, Environmental, Community Action.**

In working as a staff or board member of a number of non-profit organizations, I have written many grant applications. Through this work, I have developed a personal philosophy of in-depth engagement with the program staff of grant-making organizations so proposals are well targeted and understood. This has resulted in program officers providing excellent advice for crafting the proposal while the program office becomes familiar with the applicant's needs and programs.

I have written more than \$2,200,000 in successful grants from federal, state, and local governments as well as private foundations and companies including:

- USDA Rural Development - Rural Business Enterprise Grant,
- National Endowment for the Humanities,
- United States Transportation Department,
- Maryland Housing and Community Development,
- New York City Public Administrator (proposal for assignment of funds as residual legatee,)
- Baltimore Mayor's Office on Arts & Culture,
- Baltimore County Commission on Arts and Sciences,
- New England Grassroots Environmental Fund – Grow Grants,
- Preservation Trust of Vermont - Challenge Grants,
- The William G. Baker Foundation,
- The Goldsmith Foundation,
- The Becker Family Foundation,
- CSX Corporation
- Black and Decker
- Sylvan Learning Systems

As a Peer Reviewer for the Institute of Museum Services (a federal agency now called The Institute for Museum and Library Services,) I was trained to review applications of museums competing for general operating support grants. This included reviewing detailed financial and collections management reports, analysis of funding, public and education programs as well as publicity materials, and then writing detailed comments about each application including a recommendation for the IMS program staff to use in making a funding decision. Working on the other side of a grant request rounded out my view of the process and gave me insights into the difficult job of giving away money. This has been invaluable in writing subsequent applications for funds.

One of the most important parts of grant writing is in telling the story behind the need. As a staff or freelance writer for research companies, publishers and newspapers I have developed the storytelling experience to put forward a convincing argument for funding a project or program or capital investment.

Finally, I will not take on a grant proposal that I think will be unsuccessful but I am happy to work with a client in positioning itself to be successful in the future. This may include generating supporting materials, review of financial information, establishing a track record of achievement and accountability.

### **Rates on Request**