

# Essential Terms for Navigating Journalism Grants, Organized by Category

By [Grants for Journalists](#)

## Grant Application & Proposal Process

**Applicant** — The individual or organization submitting a proposal for funding consideration.

**Abstract / Executive Summary** — A brief overview of the grant proposal (typically 250–500 words) summarizing the project's purpose, methods, and expected outcomes.

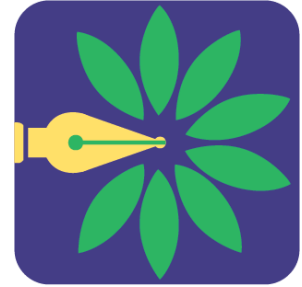
**Capability Statement** — Document outlining an organization's qualifications, experience and capacity to successfully complete the proposed project.

**Eligibility Criteria** — Specific requirements that applicants must meet to be considered for funding.

**LOI (Letter of Inquiry)** — A short document that expresses your interest in a project, partnership, or grant or purchase; it outlines the basic terms before a formal agreement is finalized.

**Project Narrative** — The story of your project — why it matters, who it serves, how it will be done, and who's on the team.

**Proposal** — A full grant application outlining the journalism project's goals, significance and plan for execution.



**Request for Applications (RFA)** — Announcement inviting applications for a specific grant program with detailed guidelines.

**Request for Proposals (RFP)** — Solicitation for project proposals, often used by government agencies and foundations.

**Appendix / Attachments** — Supplementary documents such as resumes, letters of support, or organizational charts.

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## Grant Types & Funding Structures

**Award** — The formal notification and documentation that a grant has been approved for funding.

**Award Period** — The specific time frame during which grant funds may be spent and project activities must be completed.

**Bridge Funding** — Short-term support used between grant cycles or while securing additional funding.

**Capacity Grant** — Focused on building infrastructure, leadership, systems, or skills — not content.

**Fellowship** — A grant awarded to a journalist (or team) for a specific project or period of work, often with editorial mentorship.

**General Operating Support (GOS)** — Funding not tied to a specific project. Can be used for salaries, rent or any other expenses.

**Grant** — A sum of money given by a funder to support a specific project or organization — without the expectation of repayment.

**Pass-Through Grant** — Funding awarded to one organization which then distributes some or all of the funds to other partners to carry out parts of the project.

**Project-Based Grant** — A grant designated for a specific initiative or reporting series.

**Rapid Response Grant** — Funding available quickly for urgent reporting needs, such as disaster coverage or political unrest.

**Seed Funding** — Initial or early-stage support for launching a new journalism project, media outlet or product.

**Sub-Award** — Grant funding passed from the primary recipient to another organization to carry out part of the project.

**Subgranting / Regranting** — When an organization receives funding to redistribute smaller grants to others (e.g., local newsrooms, freelancers).

**Unrestricted Funds** — More flexible support that can be used for general operations, not just the project.

**Restricted Funds** — Grant dollars that must be used only for the proposed or specified purposes of the project outlined.

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## Budget & Finance

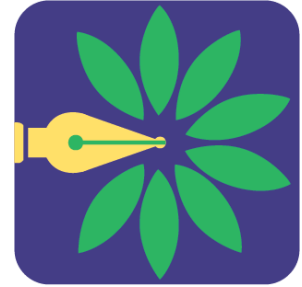
**Budget** — A detailed breakdown of anticipated project expenses.

**Budget Narrative** — A written explanation of each budget item and how it supports project goals.

**Allowable Costs** — Expenses permitted under the terms of a specific grant program.

**Direct Costs** — Expenses that can be specifically attributed to the grant project, such as personnel, equipment and supplies.

**Indirect Costs / Overhead** — Administrative expenses not directly tied to the project but necessary for operations (e.g., rent, HR).



**In-Kind Support** — Non-monetary contributions like donated newsroom space, volunteer editing or shared tech.

**Matching Funds** — Money or resources you raise to complement the grant, sometimes required by funders.

**Revenue Streams** — How you make money: advertising, sponsorships, institutional funding, audience/reader support and other revenue-generating activities.

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## Organizational & Legal Structures

**Fiscal Agent** — Similar to a fiscal sponsor, but typically acts more as an administrative pass-through by handling funds and compliance without taking on full legal responsibility.

**Fiscal Sponsor** — A nonprofit that receives and manages grant funds on behalf of a project or organization that lacks its own 501(c)(3) status.

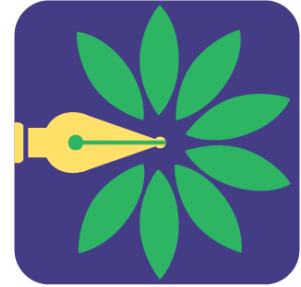
**For-Profit Newsroom** — May still be eligible for grants, especially if the project has public benefit.

**Funder / Grantmaker** — An individual or organization that provides money to support a project, organization, initiative, or person.

**News Collaborative** — A network of media partners and civic groups working together and pooling resources for deeper community coverage.

**Nonprofit Organization** — A legally registered entity that operates to serve a public, charitable, educational, religious, or social mission rather than to generate profit.

**MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)** — A written document that outlines the terms of a partnership or collaboration between two or more parties.



## Project Planning & Management

**Capacity Building** — Support to strengthen your newsroom, for example, upgrading a CMS, training staff or hiring development personnel.

**Community Engagement Plan** — How you'll involve or serve the audience, through listening sessions, source tracking, events, etc.

**Deliverables** — Specific, measurable outputs or results that must be completed and provided as part of a project.

**Logic Model** — A visual representation of how project inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes connect.

**Milestones** — Key progress points or deadlines for reporting, production or evaluation.

**Scope of Work** — Detailed description of all activities, deliverables and timeline for the proposed project.

**Stakeholders** — Individuals, groups or organizations that have an interest in or are affected by a project, decision, or organization.

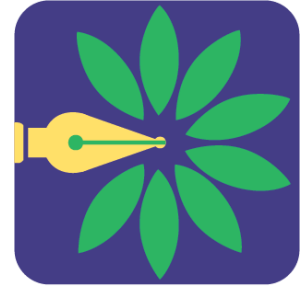
**Work Plan / Timeline** — A schedule for producing and publishing content or achieving other grant-funded goals.

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## Evaluation, Reporting & Compliance

**Annual Report** — A yearly summary of project activities, outcomes, and financial expenditures.

**Audit / Financial Review** — A review of your financial practices, sometimes required for larger grants.



**Compliance** — Meeting the legal, financial and ethical terms of a grant agreement.

**Dissemination** — The process of sharing project results, findings or products with relevant audiences and stakeholders.

**Evaluation** — A formal assessment of the project's effectiveness and impact.

**Evaluator** — External professional who assesses project effectiveness and outcomes, often required for larger grants.

**Grant Report** — A narrative and/or financial report submitted to the funder detailing how funds were used and what outcomes were achieved.

**Monitoring** — Ongoing tracking of project activities and performance.

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## Impact & Outcomes

**Engagement Metrics** — Measures of audience impact, including pageviews, shares, time on story, or event attendance.

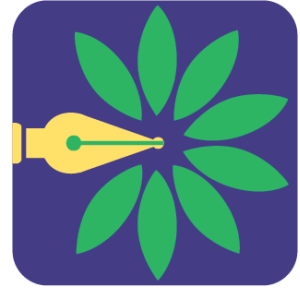
**Impact** — The measurable change of what happened because of your work.

**Indicators** — Specific, measurable signs of progress toward outcomes.

**Outcomes** — Broader effects, like policy changes, increased civic engagement, or a more informed community.

**Outputs** — Tangible deliverables like the number of articles, newsletters, interviews or podcast episodes produced.

**Reach** — The size and demographics of your audience, whether it's local, national, underserved, etc.



## Sustainability

**Sustainability** — Plan for continuing project activities or maintaining outcomes after grant funding ends.

**Sustainability Plan** — How you'll continue the journalism project, or fund your newsroom, after the grant ends.