

A person is sitting at a desk, writing in a notebook with a pen. In the background, a laptop is open, displaying a website with a navigation bar containing 'About', 'Education', 'Admissions', and 'Student Life'. The main content of the website says 'Send your application now!' and 'The World'. There are also some books and a pen holder visible on the desk.

Planning a Fundable Grant Proposal

Welcome & Session Overview

March 19, 2026

Today's Goals

**By the end of this morning,
you will:**

Understand what makes an OEEF proposal fundable

Define a clear project needs, audience, and scope

Draft strong measurable outcomes that support your idea

Shape your concept so it's ready for budgeting and timelines in tomorrow morning's session

Describing the Problem Clearly

Define

Define the specific environmental or educational issue your project will address

Use

Support your case with data, observations, or local evidence

Explain

Describe why this issue matters to your audience or community

Keep

Keep your need statement concise, specific, and focused

Defining a Clear, Fundable Project Scope

**DESCRIBE THE
PROBLEM OR NEED
YOUR PROJECT
ADDRESSES**

**OUTLINE YOUR
SOLUTION OR
STRATEGY**

**KEEP IT FOCUSED,
REALISTIC, AND
TIME-BOUND**

**ALIGN THE SCOPE
WITH THE
FUNDER'S
MISSION**



Building Your Work Plan

Identify

Identify project activities and deliverables

Ensure

Ensure alignment with your project scope

Plan

Plan evaluation and reporting from the start

Identifying Your Audience



WHO BENEFITS FROM YOUR PROJECT?



WHY DOES THIS AUDIENCE MATTER TO THE FUNDER?



HOW DO THEIR NEEDS CONNECT TO YOUR PROJECT GOALS?

Setting SMART Objectives

SPECIFIC – WHAT EXACTLY WILL BE DONE?



MEASURABLE – CAN PROGRESS BE TRACKED?

ACHIEVABLE – IS IT REALISTIC GIVEN YOUR RESOURCES?

RELEVANT – DOES IT MATCH THE FUNDER'S FOCUS?

TIME-BOUND – WHEN WILL IT BE DONE?

Your One-Paragraph Project Summary

- **Summarize your problem/need, audience, and intended outcome**
- **Keep the summary clear, specific, and concise**
- **Demonstrate alignment with OEEF priorities**
- **This becomes the foundation for your full proposal**

Understanding Eligibility & Funder Priorities



Always read the eligibility criteria carefully



Funders often have priority topics or populations



Review past awards to spot patterns



Align your project with the funder's language



If unsure, ask the funder directly



Funded Project Example: Northwest High School Science Museum

Why was it fundable:

- **Clear, well-defined need**
- **Strong alignment with OEEF priorities**
- **Direct, measurable benefits for students**

Key strengths:

- **Hands-on STEM learning environment**
- **Partnerships with museums, parks and universities**
- **Permanent and replicable impact**
- **Strong career exploration components**



Funded Project Example: Appalachian Ohio Tick Project

Why it was fundable:

- **Addressed an urgent environmental & public health issue**
- **Strong alignment with OEEF priorities**
- **Clear connection between environment and human health.**

Key strengths:

- **Authentic field and lab research for students**
- **Career exploration in environmental and public health sciences**
- **Strong collaborations (OSU, Extension, ODH, schools)**
- **Replicable model with lasting statewide impact**

Collaborators

**Funders provide
the resources to
make your
project possible**

**Collaborators
help strengthen
your proposal
and deliver the
work**

- Your #1 collaborator
= your audience!

**Collaborators
also help market
or promote your
project**

**Consider “no-
strings-
attached”
support (gifts of
time, space, or
resources)**

Types of Funders

Government: federal, state, local

Private Foundations: community, family, independent

Corporate Giving Programs

Local and Community Funds

*****Each has unique eligibility, priorities, and expectations**

Researching & Identifying Potential Fundors

**Finding
the
Right
Funder**

**Review funder eligibility and
priorities**

Search funded project lists

Network in your field

Use online grant databases

**Match funder style to your
project**

Strengthening Your Connection

Reach out

Reach out early



Ask about

Ask about fit and priorities



Share

Share your project vision



Listen

Listen to feedback



Maintain

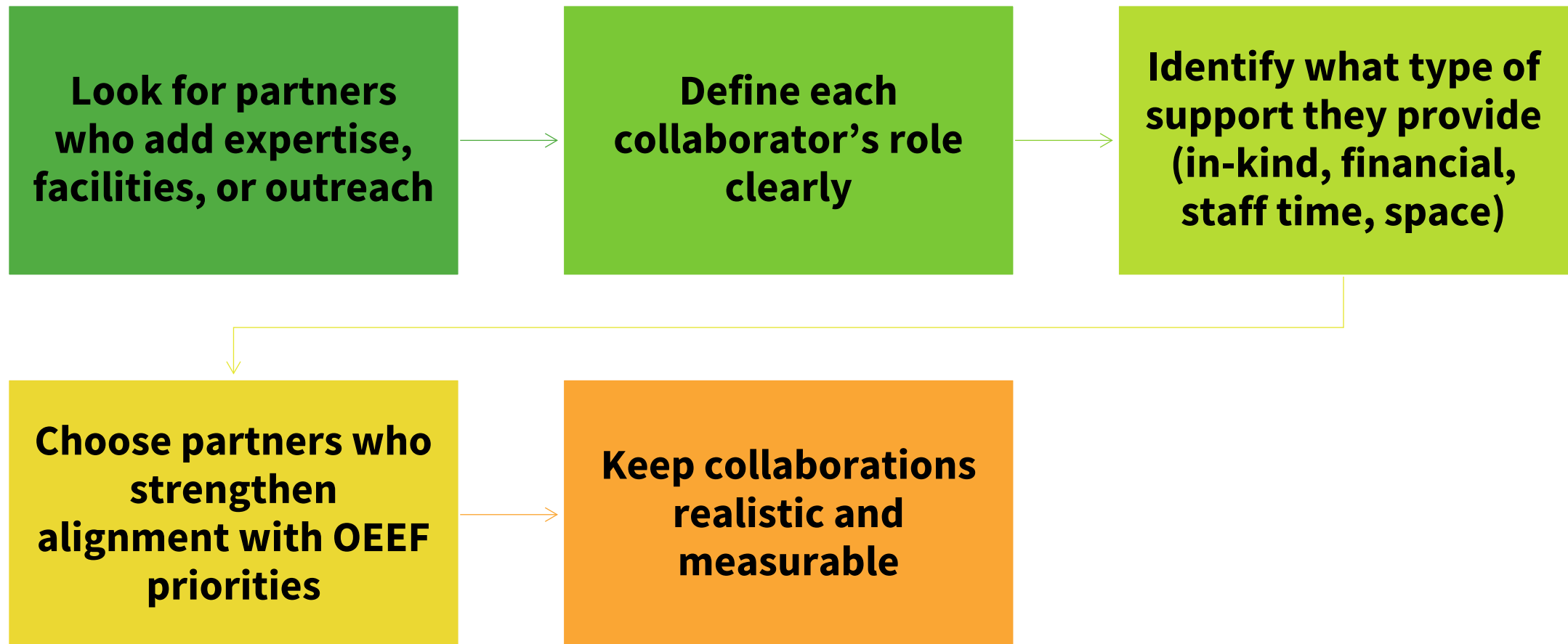
Maintain communication



How to Find the Right Funder

- **Start with a clear project scope and measurable outcomes**
- **Review each funder's eligibility rules and priorities**
- **Look at past funded projects for alignment**
- **Use grant databases and community foundation listings**
- **Ask the funder early about fit or preferred audiences**
- **Identify collaborators who strengthen your application**

Identifying Strong Collaborators



Tools to Find Grants

- **Key Resources for Grant Searches:**
 - **Grants.gov (all Federal grants)**
 - **Foundation Directory Online – private and community foundation search tool**
 - **Candid.org – free funder research and nonprofit profiles**
 - **The Grantsmanship Center (tgci.com/funding-sources);**
 - **U.S. EPA Grants;**
 - **State and Local Agency Websites (e.g., Ohio EPA); and**
 - **Community Foundations and Nonprofit Hubs**

Wrap-Up

Today, you:

- **Learned what makes an OEEF proposal fundable**
- **Clarified your project's need, audience, and scope**
- **Explored how to align your idea with OEEF priorities**
- **Developed strong SMART outcomes to support your concept**
- **Identified ways to find the right funder and collaborators**
- **Build the foundation of creating your budget, timeline, and narrative in tomorrow's session**

What's next tomorrow?



Understand OEEF budget requirements and avoid common mistakes



Build a clear, accurate budget justification



Create a realistic project timeline with milestones and responsibilities



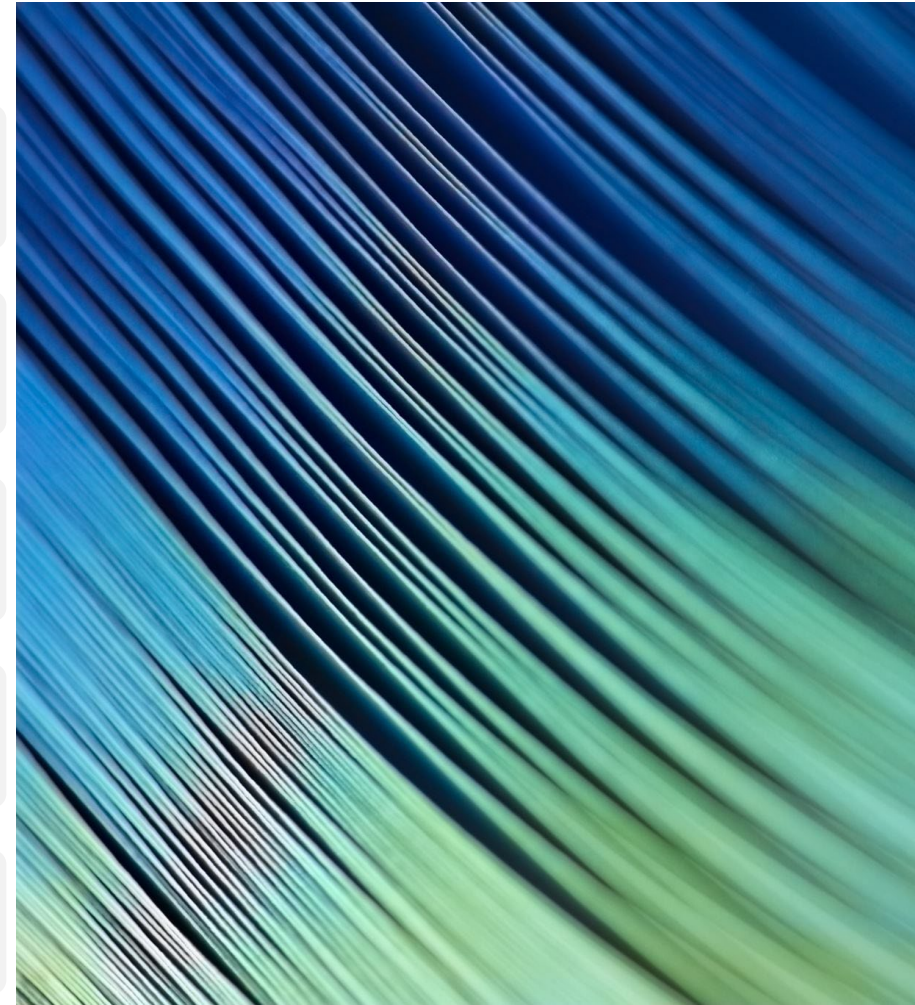
Define roles for fiscal agents, collaborators, and supporters



Strengthen your full narrative and align it with OEEF priorities



Assemble all components into a complete, competitive OEEF application



**Thank You and
Stay Connected**

Questions after today?

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Mini-Grants: Up to \$5,000 – contact Dennis Clement

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General Grants: \$5,001 - \$50,000 – contact Heather Lauer

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Office of Environmental Education

- <https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-andoffices/environmental-education/welcome>
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