Harford County
Department of Housing and Community Services

May 22, 2025

1:00-2:30 P.M.

The Narrative: Writing to Communicate Impact: In this session, we'll cover impactful and succinct writing strategies and approaches to elevate the narrative responses within grant applications.
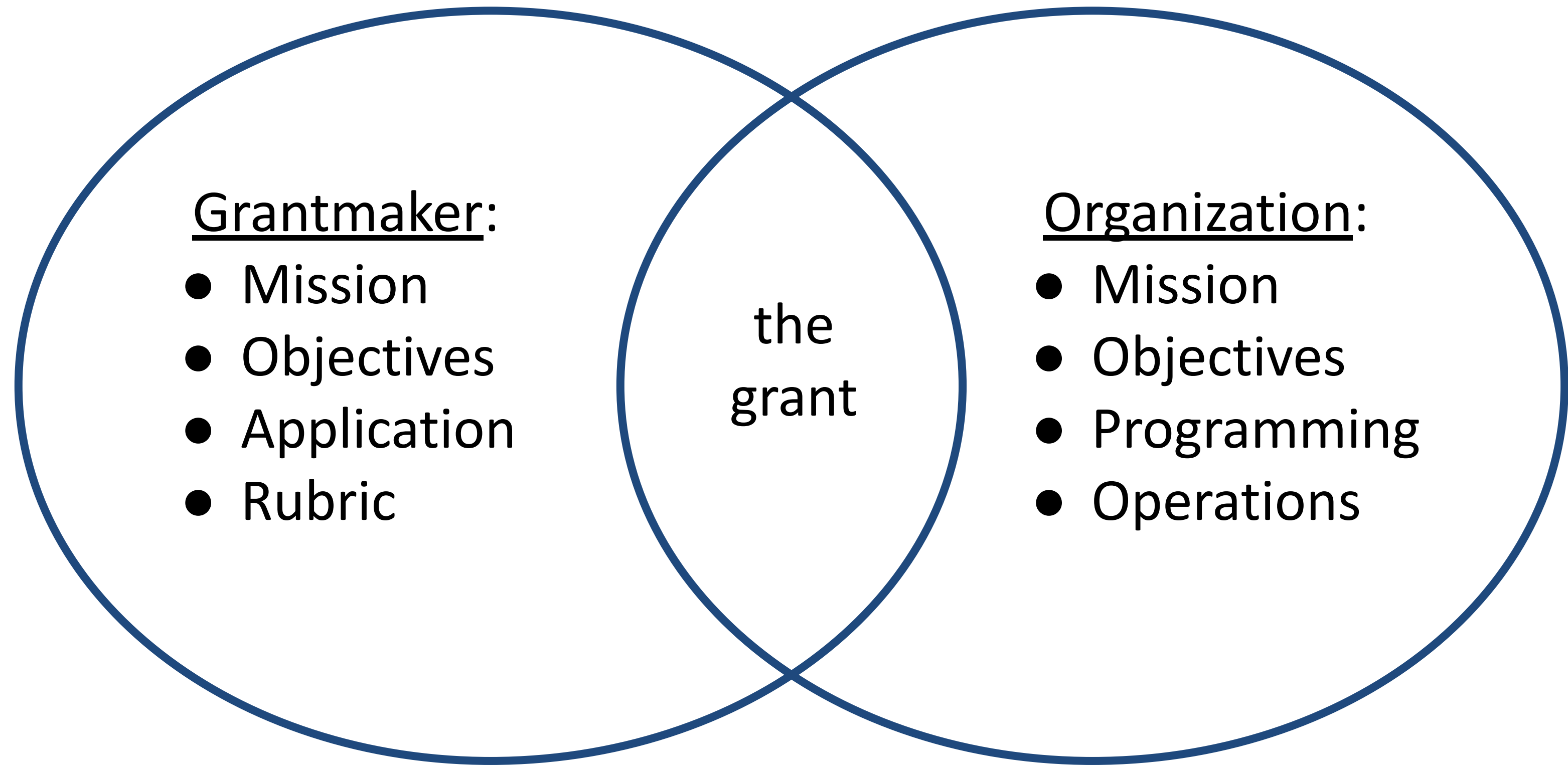
AGENDA

- **Welcome and Introductions**
- **Grounding**
- **Guiding Tenets**
- **Application Practice**
- **Q&A**
- **Next Steps and Reflection**

Session Agreements

- Enter the conversation with curiosity, inquiry, openness, honesty, and patience.
- Speak from your own experience.
- Naming ideological differences is welcomed as a means of clarifying choices.
- Be aware of your positionality and act with intention.
- Hold one another accountable with care.
- Give grace.
- Balance speaking and listening.
- Permission to contribute in rough draft.

Guiding Tenets

- Paint the full picture.
  - Use "plain" language.

- Backwards map.

- Diversify the information.

- Communicate clearly and directly.

- Define *impact* in relationship to the overlap:
  - Include the "why"
  - Include evidence of impact (value, benefit, to whom?)
  - Include specifics.
  - Uplift/center the "who" by connecting to the work.

Grantmaker:
- Mission
- Objectives
- Application
- Rubric

the grant

Organization:
- Mission
- Objectives
- Programming
- Operations

Application Practice

The Orchard Read to Succeed! project will enable at risk students to improve their reading skills through utilization of five computers equipped with scanners and assistive reading software. Students using this innovative reading system will be able to utilize all their classroom materials, including textbooks providing them access to the general curriculum. The students will increase their reading speed and comprehension, which will help them obtain classroom subject proficiency. Included in the Read to Succeed! project will be a day of training for the reading specialist and classroom teachers on the features and use of the Kurzweil 3000 software.

Group 1

Our Mental Health First Aid training program will directly impact 500 educators across 15 underserved school districts in the first year. By equipping these professionals with evidence-based intervention skills, we will create a support network reaching approximately 12,500 students annually. Post-program evaluations from our pilot show that trained educators were able to identify and appropriately respond to mental health crises 87% more effectively, resulting in a 42% increase in successful referrals to treatment. This initiative directly addresses the county's documented 35% increase in adolescent mental health emergencies since 2022, creating sustainable impact through a train-the-trainer model that will continue to build community capacity long after the grant period ends.

Group 2

Our after-school program will help kids stay out of trouble and improve their grades. We hope to serve about 100 students and provide them with tutoring and recreational activities. This program will make a difference in their lives and help them develop better study habits. **We think this program is important** because students need a safe place to go after school, and many parents work late hours.

- Who are the students being served? Where are they from? Demographics.
- Where is the program and the hours
- Who is doing the tutoring? What is the program?
- How will it impact study habits?
- Evidence, not the bold
- Do not like the use of 'we' and negative language

Group 3

The Computer Literacy Project will provide laptops and internet access to underserved families in our community. We will purchase computers and distribute them to those who need them. By giving people technology, we expect they will have better opportunities for employment and education. This project is important because everyone deserves access to computers in today's digital world.

Group 4

Our health education workshops will teach community members about nutrition and exercise. We plan to hold monthly sessions covering various health topics and distribute informational materials. We believe these workshops will help people make better health choices and possibly reduce health problems in our community. Our staff is experienced and passionate about health education.

Group 5

The YDS program is designed to support out-of-school-time programs that serve youth, implementing structures and strategies that foster 21st Century skill-building and meaningful civic engagement. The model transforms existing youth programs by utilizing the actual operation of their organization as an opportunity to build youth skills and increase participation and engagement.

Impact Areas:

Structural changes: A youth advisory council is established to make and offer guidance on program offerings and organizational operation.

Changes to program design: Youth members take on facilitation and leadership roles, leading meetings and activities with their peers.

Revisiting adult roles: Adults learn to build strong adult/youth partnerships, playing an active supportive role in helping youth be successful.

Building sustainability: Organizational changes are sustained by infusing YDS principles across the organization, with attention to governance and mission statements.

APPLICATION PRACTICE

How will the program be impactful?

- Statements
- Questions
- Gaps

QUESTIONS

Reflection and Next Steps

In person, Thursday, 5/29, 2-4:30PM
201: Building upon the 101 sessions, the 201 sessions focus on aligning programmatic activities, financial sustainability, and measurable outcomes within philanthropic requests, deepening the understanding and practice of grant writing.