

MUSCATINE GRANT WRITERS NETWORK

FROM GOOD TO FUNDED

MARCH 26, 2026

INTRODUCTIONS

“Nice to meet you, gotta go.”

Good vs. Funded

good

funded

Clear → Clear + **Memorable**

Solid Data → Solid Data + **Emotional Connection**

Fits Guidelines → Fits Guidelines + **Aligns deeply with funder priorities**

Lists Outputs → Lists Outputs + **Shows meaningful outcomes**

**WHAT DO YOU THINK A GRANT
REVIEWER REMEMBERS MOST
24 HOURS AFTER READING
APPLICATIONS?**

CLEAR + MEMORABLE

Statement of Need

“Many people in our community struggle with access to services.”

Rewrite

- Strengthen clarity
 - What’s the problem / opportunity?
 - *localize + urgency + relevance*
- Stickiness
 - *Why should I remember this application?*

who + barrier + what’s out of reach + why it matters

DATA + CONNECTION

The organization provides essential support services to individuals experiencing housing instability within the county. In the past year, over 1,200 individuals accessed emergency shelter, case management, and resource referral programs. Services are delivered through a coordinated intake system designed to assess need and allocate resources efficiently. Program outcomes indicate that 62% of participants secured temporary or transitional housing within 90 days of engagement. Continued funding will allow the organization to maintain service capacity, expand outreach efforts, and address ongoing gaps in access to stable housing.

Rewrite

- Funders want stats, but they remember stories.
 - Where is the human in this?
- “One person” + “One moment” framing
 - Every application will help them tell the story they want to tell
 - “We funded X meals for X people”
 - Emotional connection will help them *select your version of the same story*

DATA + CONNECTION

SAME
CHARACTER
COUNT!

The organization provides essential support services to individuals experiencing housing instability within the county. In the past year, **over 1,200 individuals** accessed emergency shelter, case management, and resource referral programs. Services are delivered through a coordinated intake system designed to assess need and allocate resources efficiently.

Program outcomes indicate that **62% of participants secured temporary or transitional housing within 90 days of engagement**. Continued funding will allow the organization to maintain service capacity, expand outreach efforts, and address ongoing gaps in access to stable housing overall.

good

Last winter, Maria stood outside our doors with everything she owned in a single bag, unsure where she and her young son would sleep that night. She is **one of more than 1,200 individuals** who turned to us this year—each facing a moment of crisis, each needing more than a number. Through coordinated intake, Maria quickly accessed shelter, case management, and support. **Within 90 days—like 62% we serve—she secured housing**. Today, her son has a warm bed, and Maria is rebuilding with hope. Continued funding ensures more families find safety, stability, and a path forward.

funded

GUIDELINES + PRIORITIES

Funder Priorities (mock)

We prioritize funding for programs that provide essential services to individuals experiencing housing instability and demonstrate measurable outcomes. Supported activities may include emergency shelter, case management, coordinated intake, and resource referral systems designed to assess need and allocate services efficiently.

- Competitive proposals will include clear performance metrics, such as participant retention, service utilization rates, and progress toward employment or income stability. Emphasis is placed on operational effectiveness, cross-sector collaboration, and the ability to deliver consistent results across target populations.
- Preference will be given to organizations that incorporate data management systems, demonstrate fiscal accountability, and align services with broader community planning efforts to improve system-level coordination and long-term impact.

Rewrite

- **Funders aren't funding you, they're funding their priorities through you**
- Mirror language from guidelines – then personalize it (*your version of the same story*)
- **Using your previous rewrite, what would you emphasize or cut to match their funding priorities?**

OUTPUTS + OUTCOMES

Output

“We will serve 200 clients.”

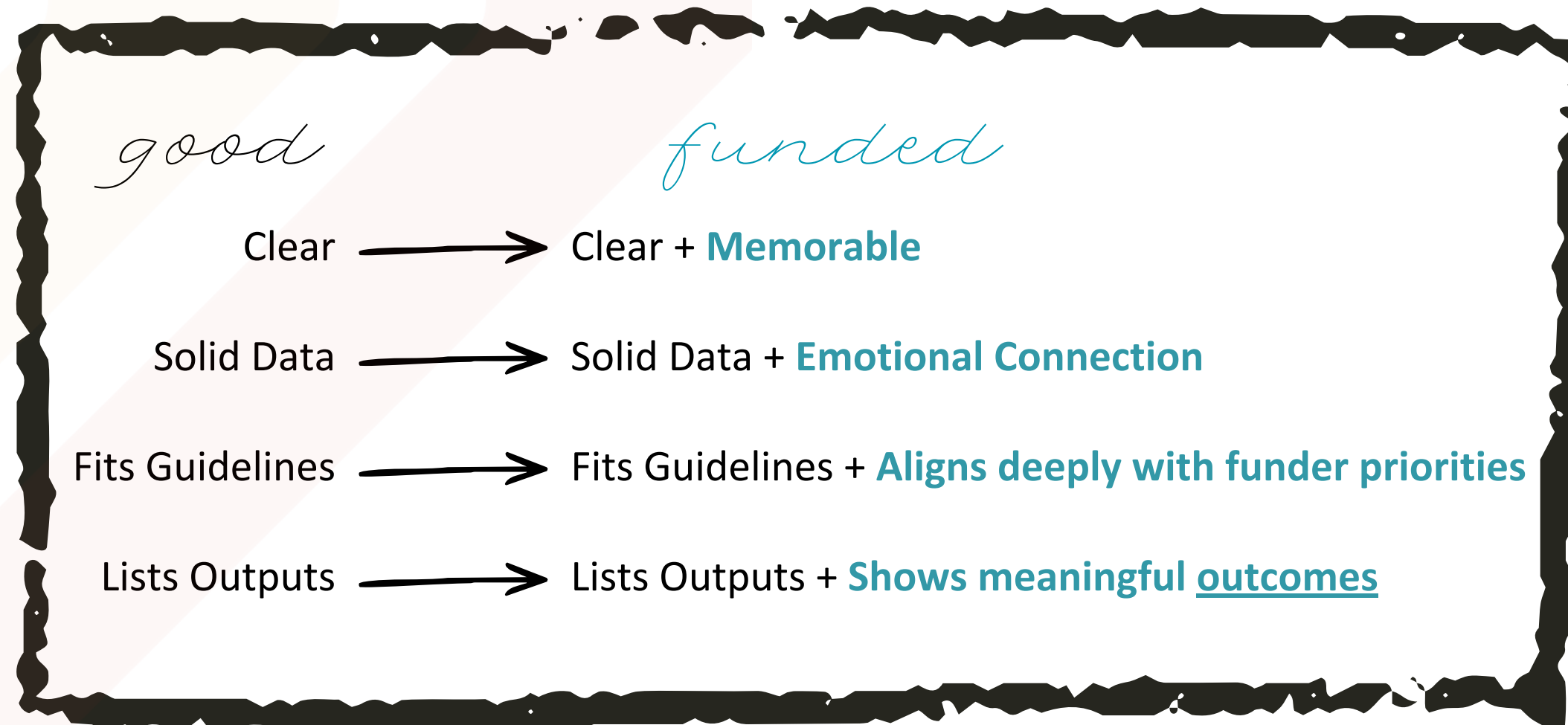
Outcome...

Rewrite

- Outputs \neq Outcomes
- Outcomes = Change, impact, measurable difference
- Outputs describe what you did – outcomes describe why it mattered.
- Funders don't fund services, they fund results.
- An output is a promise to act, an outcome is evidence of success.
- Counting people is NOT the same as changing lives.

The Funded Proposal Checklist

- Is the need unmistakably clear?
 - Is it memorable?
- Is there a human story?
- Does it clearly align with the funder?
- Are outcomes meaningful and measurable?



NEXT NETWORK MEETING:

JUNE 25, 2026

FROM DEFICIENT TO DIGNITY:

TRANSFORMING HOW WE WRITE ABOUT COMMUNITIES