



FUNDING FOUNDATION™ DIAGNOSTIC

ABOUT THIS ASSESSMENT

Most nonprofits already have the information they need. The challenge is that staff spend valuable time finding it, updating it, reconciling different versions, and rewriting it for each new opportunity. This diagnostic will help you see where your processes may be costing your organization time and capacity.

DIRECTIONS

Choose the answer that feels most true for your organization today—not the answer you think you should give.

Give yourself:

- 1 point for every A
- 2 points for every B
- 3 points for every C
- 4 points for every D

Add your points from all 10 questions. Your total score will fall between 10 and 40.

WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED

Use your results to decide what kind of support makes sense:

Explore the Funding Foundation™

For organizations ready to build a complete, reusable funding system.

Explore All Services

For focused help with messaging, grants, research, strategy, or development tools.

Start a Conversation

For help figuring out which next step fits your organization.



Circle one response. A = 1 point | B = 2 points | C = 3 points | D = 4 points

1

Someone asks what your organization does. What happens?

- A. We know our work inside and out, but our answer usually gets long because there is so much we want people to understand.
- B. We have a general explanation, but we often rewrite it depending on who is asking.
- C. We have a solid explanation, although some programs are easier to describe than others.
- D. Our team can explain the work clearly, consistently, and without overthinking it.

2

A funder asks why your organization is needed. How ready are you?

- A. We can explain the need in conversation, but turning what we know into a well-supported response takes time.
- B. We have useful data, stories, and community knowledge, but they live in different places and have to be pulled together for each application.
- C. We can make a strong case, but it usually needs updating.
- D. We have a clear, current case for support backed by evidence and community insight.

3

Could someone unfamiliar with your organization understand how all your programs fit together?

- A. Probably after we explain the history, relationships, and reasoning behind each program.
- B. The connections make sense internally, but they are not always obvious in our materials.
- C. The connections are there, but we could explain them more clearly.
- D. Each program has a clear role in advancing the larger mission.

4

A grant opens Friday and is due in two weeks. What is your first move?

- A. Start gathering program details, budgets, outcomes, and background information from staff.
- B. Open old applications and begin piecing together the strongest language we can find.
- C. Pull from several solid materials and update what is needed.
- D. Start with organized, current language and focus our time on tailoring the proposal.

5

How often are you rewriting the same program description?

- A. Nearly every application, because the questions are slightly different.
- B. We reuse old language, but it usually takes significant editing to make it accurate, current, and consistent.
- C. Occasionally, but we usually have a good starting point.
- D. Rarely. We have strong, adaptable narratives ready to use.

Circle one response. A = 1 point | B = 2 points | C = 3 points | D = 4 points

6

When you talk about outcomes, what comes most naturally?

- A. We can easily describe what we provide, but explaining the larger change takes more work.
- B. We know what success looks like, but our outcomes are worded differently across grants, reports, and internal materials.
- C. We have defined outcomes, although they are not used consistently.
- D. We have clear outcomes, indicators, and evidence connected to the work.

7

A grant looks promising. How do you decide whether to apply?

- A. We look at eligibility, the deadline, and whether the funding could support something we need.
- B. We talk through the opportunity and make the best judgment we can, but we do not have a consistent way to compare the effort with the likely value.
- C. We consider fit, timing, capacity, and the likely return on our effort.
- D. We use a consistent process to pursue strong opportunities and confidently decline weak ones.

8

Where do you look when you need organizational information for a proposal?

- A. Old grants, reports, shared drives, emails, and staff members who may remember where something is.
- B. We have most of what we need, but finding the best and most current version takes longer than we would like.
- C. We have several reliable sources, although they are not fully organized.
- D. We have one clear system with current information and reusable content.

9

Who holds most of your organization's funding knowledge?

- A. One person knows the history, funders, and how all the pieces fit together best.
- B. Several people carry different parts of the knowledge, and completing a proposal often requires input from all of them.
- C. Most information is shared, although important context still lives with specific people.
- D. The knowledge belongs to the organization, not one individual.

10

Your main funding person leaves tomorrow. What happens?

- A. Someone would have to rebuild the process from old files and conversations.
- B. The basic information remains, but the reasoning, relationships, preferred language, and unwritten knowledge are much harder to replace.
- C. Most of the work could continue, although some context would be lost.
- D. The system, language, and strategy would remain in place.



RESULTS

10–16 points: Your team is carrying the load

Funding work depends on staff searching for information, rebuilding language, and filling in gaps each time a new opportunity opens. The work gets done, but it takes more time and coordination than it should.

17–24 points: You have the pieces, but not the system

Your organization has useful materials, past proposals, and valuable internal knowledge. Finding, updating, and connecting them still takes too much work.

25–32 points: You have a solid base with a few gaps

Much of your funding system is already in place, but repeated work, inconsistent materials, or reliance on specific people still slows the process down. A more complete system could make grant work faster and easier to sustain.

33–40 points: Your funding system is working

Your organization has clear language, organized materials, and shared systems that support the work. The next step may be refining strategy, strengthening specific content, or preparing the system to support growth.

What is slowing your funding work down?

Circle every A or B. Those answers show where your team is losing the most time.

Ask yourself:

- What do we keep finding, explaining, or rewriting?
- What depends too heavily on one person?
- What would become easier if the basics were already built?

Let us know where your team needs support. Shared Ground was built by leaders, for leaders. Focus on your impact. We'll help build the foundation beneath it.



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