GRANT WRITING: BEST PRACTICES MANUAL

ACE Mentor Program of Austin

PREPARED FOR  2019 ACE NATIONAL CONFERENCE, WASHINGTON, D.C
PRESENTED  GERARDO GANDY, FOUNDING CHAIRMAN  GERARDO_GANDY@GENSLER.COM
In five years, the ACE Mentor Program of Austin has impacted the lives of hundreds of area students, providing nearly **8,000 hours** of mentorship, and awarding over **$60,000** in awards and scholarships.
2018 - 2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gerardo Gandy
Gensler

Christine Sheng
Rogers O’ Brien Construction

Allison Wilson
Ayers Saint Gross

Ingrid G. Featherston
Matt Fajkus Architecture

Jerry Negrete
The Chapman Firm

Catherine Cash
Gensler

Martha Gonzalez
Gensler

Tyler McElroy
AE Collaborative

Karima Baqdounes
Turner Construction

Adrianna Hong
Gensler

Anna Hernandez
Walter P Moore

Elizabeth Depwe
DCI Engineers

Andrea Lacour
Contour Collective
2018 - 2019 ASSOCIATE BOARD

Jessica Martinez
DCI Engineers

Francis Armstrong
MyStaffYourStaff

Jenny Janis
Campbell Landscape Architecture

Malerie Gamboa
Norris Design

Lilly Mannas
Rogers O’Brien Construction

Ricardo Majas Rojas
GSC Architects

Joe Williams
Norris Design

Johanna Spencer
Nelsen Partners

Olivia Pitt-Perez
Norris Design

John Branch
Hensel Phelps

Kyle Dunning
Walter P Moore

Justin Brodnaz
Hoar Construction

Darlene Cross
C Street Investments
2019 Program

97 Students from 14 Local High Schools

64 Mentors from 40 A-E-C Firms
### 2019 GRANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swinerton Foundation</td>
<td>$3,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin Foundation for Architecture</td>
<td>$3,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepsi</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moody Foundation</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** $21,000.00
If your affiliate has never applied for funding from governmental bodies or foundations, the mere idea of grant writing can be intimidating.
The good news is that by following a handful of fairly basic best practices and acquainting yourself with the grant writing process, you can drastically increase the chance that for your affiliate to receive funding.
1. BUILD YOUR TEAM.
GRANT WRITING TAKES FOCUS AND DEDICATION.

It requires the same level of careful precision used in general fundraising to hone your strategy and hit the right targets.
Grant funds typically represent a significant amount of money for the foundations that distribute them, so it is important for your affiliate to prove the following in your application:
1. That your mission is worthwhile, and aligns with that of the grant-writing body.
2. That your operations are sustainable.
3. That your projects and plans are impactful.
Remember, too, that grant applications typically require a considerable amount of written material.
Most grant-giving bodies will require applicants to submit the following:
1. Cover Letter
2. Full organizational structure outlines
3. Comprehensive background and context
4. Projected budgets and operating expenses
5. Prospective partnerships and alternate sources of funding
6. Letters of support from community stakeholders and other local organizations
WITH ALL THESE MOVING PARTS,
it’s rarely a good idea to attempt grant writing alone.
FORM A DEDICATED GRANT WRITING TEAM FOR YOUR AFFILIATE.

Make sure each member understands the scope of the entire grant proposal process. Only once everyone understands how each element will fit into the whole should you assign separate sections of the grant application to individual team members.
2. DO YOUR RESEARCH.
GRANT WRITING BEGINS WITH YOUR SPECIFIC MISSION, not necessarily with a specific grant you would like to receive.
THIS APPROACH IS EFFECTIVE IN THE LONG RUN FOR THE FOLLOWING TWO REASONS:

1. Beginning with your mission forces you to develop your project, making it more defensible and your case more passionate.
2. Clearly defining your goals lets you find the grant-giving body whose mission most closely aligns with yours.
This means that you’ll need to do some research to identify appropriate or ideal grants to apply for.
TRY STARTING AT GRANTS.GOV

This government database and resource center is the most comprehensive source for up-to-date information on federal grant opportunities, plus it offers helpful instructions and tips.
THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS, and state-level databases are also extremely useful resources at this stage.
Once you identify a particular grant whose description matches the mission of your project, research the grant’s source.
TRY TO LEARN AS MUCH ABOUT THE AGENCY OR FOUNDATION THAT IS OFFERING THE GRANT.

Your research should include:
GIVING HISTORY
Who has received its grants in the past? What kinds of projects does it support?

LEADERSHIP
Does its network overlap with yours? Who are its new and senior board members?

MISSION
What is its explicitly stated purpose for distributing grant funds?
ALIGN YOUR MESSAGE.

Align the angle of your grant proposal with whatever you learn about the foundation. Understand what motivates the funder, and tailor your grant writing strategy to best attract its attention.
3. COLLECT DATA AND METRICS
COLLECTING PROGRAM METRICS IS ALREADY AN ACE BEST PRACTICE.

Odds are that your affiliate already follows some sort of data collection protocols. Reviewing this data, and keeping it close at hand during the grant writing process will come in handy once you begin the grant writing process.
MAKE A STRONG CASE FOR SUPPORT.

A winning grant proposal backs up its projected plans with effective stories of impact and most importantly data.
YOUR MISSION OUTLINES HOW YOUR AFFILATE IMPACTS YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY,
but only persuasive and illustrative data can fully justify the decision to give major support like a grant.
Use data to make insightful connections that will set your grant proposal apart.
METRICS ARE KEY.

Being able to reference your affiliate’s metrics, as well as ACE National’s, will not only streamline your own grant writing, it’ll also allow you to back up any claims you make about your impact.
YOUR DATA CAN HELP YOU MAKE AND BACK UP RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT AND...

1. Your student, mentor, and donor engagement.
2. Your impact in the local community.
3. The growth of your program, both locally and regionally.
INSIGHTS AND CONNECTIONS

between metrics can often make the difference between a good grant proposal and a winning one.
Program Overview

The ACE Mentor Program of Austin is a registered nonprofit 501(c)(3) that educates, engages, and excites high school students about the wide range of career opportunities available in Architecture, Construction, Engineering, and related areas of the building design and construction industry.

Currently in its fourth year, the ACE Mentor Program of Austin is powered by the volunteer activities of a Board of Directors and mentors from local A/E/C firms and universities. These professionals generously donate their time and resources to the events and mission of ACE.

For students, it is a unique chance to discover and develop new skills, solidify their future goals and get on track to exciting, rewarding careers. In addition, many students form positive relationships with industry professionals who can provide important references for obtaining college admissions, scholarships, internships, and full-time employment.

Program Structure

• High school students are introduced to careers in the architecture, engineering, and construction fields through a design-focused curriculum.

• Students are grouped into teams with mentors from local A/E/C firms.

• Guest speakers present industry overviews that guide students through the development of their design project.

• At the end of the program, students present their design to a panel of industry experts.

• Students have the opportunity to apply for scholarships at the end of the program. Scholarships are awarded at the Final Presentation Night. ACE Austin has awarded over $30,000 in scholarships over the last three years.

• Students have the opportunity to participate in the CIRT National Competition by submitting their design.

Student Scholarship Videos

Follow the link below to see a compilation of scholarship videos submitted by ACE Alumni. The students were asked to describe the value of ACE and how the program has helped them determine their career path.

[Link to 2018 Student Scholarship Videos]
Program Calendar

Session 1 - November 1 - Introduction and Round Table Exploration

Session 2 - November 8 - Spaghetti and Gum Drops

Session 3 - November 15 - Field Trip - University of Texas

Thanksgiving Break

Session 4 - November 29 - Intro to Architecture

Session 5 - December 6 - Intro to Construction/Building Trades

Session 6 - December 13 - Intro to Engineering

Holiday Break

Session 7 - January 10 - Design Charette

Session 8 - January 17 - Design Activity

Session 9 - January 24 - Design Activity

Session 10 - January 31 - Construction Field Trip

Session 11 - February 7 - Design Activity

Session 12 - February 14 - Design Activity

Session 13 - February 21 - Design Activity

Session 14 - February 28 - Presentation Prep

March 2 - ACEA Mentor Rodeo

Session 15 - March 7 - Presentation Prep

Session 16 - March 14 - Final Presentation

Student and Mentor Demographics

176 Members

- 19 Board of Directors
- 13 Assoc. Board
- 64 Mentors
- 97 Students

Representing 40 A-E-C Industry Firms
- AEP Engineering PLC
- ACC
- Amity Worrall & Co.
- Associates
- Bergelco Corporation
- Choate Construction
- Claycomb Associates Architects
- Coleman and Associates
- Dashel Construction
- DPR Construction
- Drophouse Design
- Durwood
- Gensler
- Integral Group
- JE Dunn Construction
- KGA Architecture
- Kimley-Horn & Associates
- Martinez Moore Engineers
- McCollum Studio Architects
- MEDCO Construction LLC
- Nelson Partners
- Norris Design
- Page
- Pape-Dawson Engineers
- Perkins + Will
- RPS
- Ryan Companies US, Inc.
- Sanders Architects
- Stantec
- STEM 3000, LLC
- STG Design
- Structure4 LLP
- TSG Partners
- TSG Industries
- Texas Materials
- Texas State University
- The Beck Group
- The Beck Group
- The George O. Alan Company
- Turner Construction
- University of Texas at Austin
- Walter P. Moore

Representing 14 Local High Schools
- Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders
- Bowie High School
- Cedar Ridge High School
- Crockett High School
- Del Valle High School
- Kipp Austin Collegiate
- LISA
- Liberty Hill High School
- McCallum High School
- Round Rock High School
- St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School
- Vandegrift High School
- Weiss High School
- Westwood High School

Mentor Gender Distribution

- Female: 53%
- Male: 47%

Student Gender Distribution

- Female: 55%
- Male: 45%

Mentor Occupation

- Architecture: 25%
- Engineering: 48%
- Construction: 27%

Student Primary Interest

- Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Interior Design, Urban Planning: 45%
- Engineering: 48%
- Construction Management, Skilled Trades: 7%
## Session 1
- November 1 - Introduction and Round Table Exploration

## Session 2
- November 8 - Spaghetti and Gum Drops

## Session 3
- November 15 - Field Trip - University of Texas

## Thanksgiving Break

## Session 4
- November 29 - Intro to Architecture

## Session 5
- December 6 - Intro to Construction/Building Trades

## Session 6
- December 13 - Intro to Engineering

## Holiday Break

## Session 7
- January 10 - Design Charette

## Session 8
- January 17 - Design Activity

## Session 9
- January 24 - Design Activity

## Session 10
- January 31 - Construction Field Trip

## Session 11
- February 7 - Design Activity

## Session 12
- February 14 - Design Activity

## Session 13
- February 21 - Design Activity

## Session 14
- February 28 - Presentation Prep

### Balfour Beatty

**Construction**

1517-442-2424  
1517-442-2424  
1200 S. Capital of Texas Hwy  
Building 1, Suite 250  
Austin, TX 78746

February 15, 2019

To Whom It Concerns

Re: Ace Mentoring of Austin

I have been involved with ACE Mentoring for the last 15 years and was the Board President of the DFW ACE Mentoring Chapter for the last 5 years.

I recently relocated to Austin and have recently joined the Advisory Board for ACE Mentoring of Austin.

In my 40 years in the Industry, I have not been involved in an organization more deserving than ACE Mentoring. This organization is run locally by 100% volunteers who care about the Architecture, Construction and Engineering industry. They are dedicated to helping our industry thrive and give students an opportunity to see exactly what they will face as they enter the Professional and Trades Industry.

I wholly support ACE Mentoring and hope that your organization will also see that value that I do and support their efforts.

Balfour Beatty Construction  

Ed Prendergast  
Business Unit Leader / Vice President
4. BE CLEAR AND BOLD.
Grant writing is not a one-day process.
Ideally, each grant proposal takes at least a month. It takes time to comb through your language in the application to make sure that it is as effective as possible.
KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF GRANT WRITING

1. Be descriptive, but specific.
2. Stay concise and focused.
3. Provide relevant details whenever possible.
4. Support your plans with data or direct quotes.
Another great way to bolster your case for support in your grant application is to provide concrete stories of your affiliates impact within the community.
GRANT WRITING IS MORE ABOUT EXPLAINING THE VALUE OF YOUR PROJECT, THAN DESCRIBING THE SPECIFICS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION’S VALUES.

Use your grant proposal to emphasize the return on investment of your planned program or project. In other words, the literal return on investment that your curriculum or projects have generated.
SOURCES FOR STORIES OF IMPACT

1. What was your affiliates most successful outreach initiative?
2. Who are your local partners? (i.e. high schools, universities, or professional organizations)
3. Are there any students or families that want to share their story?
YOUR GRANT APPLICATION SHOULD INCLUDE DATA DESCRIBING THE SUCCESSES OF YOUR PAST PROJECTS.

1. Mentor and Student Engagement Rates
2. Hours of Mentorship Provided
3. Number and Amount of Scholarships Awarded
4. Impact on the local community
5. Rubric for Evaluating Impact or Success
MOST IMPORTANTLY, YOUR STORIES SHOULD INCLUDE STORIES OF YOUR SOCIAL IMPACT.

This includes testimonials from students and mentors, as well as families you’ve supported as evidence of your affiliate’s return on investment.
I LOVED being in ACE this year. I am really interested in pursuing a career in construction and this program deepened my interest in this field. The mentors were awesome, kind, and very qualified. It’s cool to know that I now have a network of people in the professional world. In fact, in an interview for an internship, the interviewer noticed I had ACE on my resume and was very impressed with my work. My favorite part of ACE was the field trips, most specifically the job site trip to the Independent and Third-Shoal. It was really cool to be on a real life construction site and that’s an opportunity I had never gotten before. Thank you so much for putting on ACE this year and I can’t wait till next year.

Olivia Pitt-Perez, ACE Student, 2018 ACE National Survey

Being apart of the ACE Mentor Program of Austin has been immensely beneficial in exploring and refining my path to become a licensed architect. ACE has given me a clearer, more in-depth understanding of all the components related to architecture, construction, and engineering.... Being capable of conceptualizing a livable, workable space that is eye-catching and unique, and then witnessing its construction to completion is definitely rewarding.

Dakota Gibbons, Junior

In engineering, every day offers a new problem to be solved or a new obstacle to overcome. For me, the ACE mentorship program has epitomized that cycle. At each stage, my group has been challenged to make critical decisions about the design, construction, and uses of our building, before being offered a new problem to resolve:

As Dimit, Junior

Thanks to the ACE program and the Architecture lessons, I learned how to not be afraid to let my creativity flow. Thanks to these lessons, I will already have an idea of what Architecture is about when I begin my studies.

Veronica Rebollar, Senior

Not only did my view on the architecture and engineering portions of ACE change, but I also got to see a new light on the construction side of things through our visit to the Iron Workers Union and our field trip to the job site at 3rd and Shoal. At the Iron Workers Union, I got to see who builds the cores of buildings and what kind of conditions they have to work through...building all of the creations that we design.

Noah Geroff, Junior

1. ACE AUSTIN IS ONE OF A KIND.

Unlike any other Program, ACE Austin introduces high school students to the full process of the designing and building a project and to all facets of the integrated design and construction industry.

2. ACE AUSTIN SERVES THE ENTIRE A-E-C INDUSTRY:

The entire A-E-C industry initiated and now sponsors and directs ACE in order to meet its workforce needs. No other after-school or mentoring program has a comparable industry-wide focus or base.

3. ACE AUSTIN HELPS MEET FUTURE A-E-C WORKFORCE NEEDS.

• 7 in 10 of all alumni major in A-E-C in college or are already employed in the industry.
• 23% of 2014 alumni (1,655) entered college declaring a major in a design field (architecture, landscape architecture, interior design) 46% expected to major in mechanical, civil, electrical, and structural engineering. (Another 13% plan to pursue other engineering fields.) 4% plan to major in construction management.

4. FISCALLY ACE IS VERY EFFICIENT

75% of the funds ACE raises for the national program go into program functions according to financial audits for the past two years. A low 25% of the ACE Budget covers administration and fundraising.

5. ACE’S SUCCESS HAS EARNED NATIONAL AND LOCAL RECOGNITION

• President Obama presented ACE with the nation’s highest award for mentoring, the 2010 Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring.
• The American Institute of Architects bestowed on ACE its 2014 Collaborative Achievement Award.
• Every year ACE Affiliates and their leaders win awards from local governments and community organizations.

6. ACE TEACHES STUDENTS A BROAD RANGE OF INDUSTRY-RELATED SKILLS.

More than 80% of ACE students agree that they learned such skills and knowledge as sustainable design, basic engineering principles, construction cost estimation, and computer-aided design.

7. ACE GIVES STUDENTS A 21ST CENTURY WORK-LIFE SKILLS PRIZED BY EMPLOYERS.

8 of 10 Alumni from the class of 2014 agree that as a result of ACE their leadership, oral and graphic communication, problem solving, and teamwork skills have improved.

8. ACE INCREASES DIVERSITY IN THE A-E-C FIELDS

By a factor of 2 to 3, ACE sends higher percentages of African-American and Hispanic students into architecture, civil, mechanical and electrical engineering programs compared to national rates of freshmen enrolled in these fields.

9. ACE HELPS STUDENTS GO TO COLLEGE AND GIVES THEM CONFIDENCE IN COLLEGE.

• Almost 6% of students report ACE increased their motivation to attend college.
• ACE has awarded more than $14 million in scholarships since founding.
• 7 of 10 alumni say they felt ACE gave them an edge over their freshman college classmates.

10. ACE ENHANCES STUDENT’S ATTITUDE TOWARD HIGH SCHOOL STUDIES.

Two-thirds of ACE alumni from the class of 2014 believe their ACE experience made their high school studies more meaningful and motivated them to study more.
Video Scholarship Applications
SO REMEMBER, BE CLEAR AND BOLD.

Keep your language straightforward and concise to make it as persuasive as possible. Including relevant data and making smart insights should do the convincing, not the length or vocabulary of your proposal.
5. 
BE LOCAL.
Relationships are extremely important in the non-profit world.
The ties between our affiliates, community partners, and industry organizations are the key to success. This is true for grant writing as well, especially when the grant-giving body you’re targeting is locally based.
While grant proposal should be the main focus of your efforts, reaching out to the funding body is a good best practice, particularly towards the beginning of the grant writing process.
Personally introducing yourself, or your ACE affiliate, in order to request further information about the grant program is the best way to initiate contact.
Calling, writing, or meeting with the grant’s program officer, is a good way to discuss the alignment of your ideas and the priorities of the grant-giving body.
Keep in mind that some organizations request that applicants not contact the grant program officer, so always check before moving forward.
If the grant officer thinks your ideas would be a good fit for the grant, you’ve made a memorable impression and increased your chances of success.

If the grant officer doesn’t think your plans suit the grant, you’ve just saved your affiliate a lot of wasted time and effort.
CASE STUDY
The Moody Foundation
Benefiting the People of Texas

For more than 75 years, the Moody Foundation has funded projects and programs that better communities in our great state of Texas. As a family, our stories have fueled our mission and our grantees continue to inspire us across the arts, education, environment, health, and social services.
GROWING BIG IDEAS

THE MOODY FOUNDATION STRENGTHENS THE FUTURE OF TEXAS
by investing in charitable projects that exhibit innovative ideas and make long-term improvement in our communities.

OVER 4,000 GRANTS AWARDED
TEXAS-BASED NONPROFITS MAY APPLY FOR FOUNDATION FUNDING ON AN ONGOING BASIS
Learn more about our grantees and the amazing work they are doing.
On the Rise: About Our Logo

Built after the 1900 storm devastated Galveston Island, the Galveston Seawall was constructed to protect the city, allowing it to prosper for more than 100 years. Because Galveston is the hometown of the Moody Foundation, it only seemed appropriate that our logo should reflect the seawall’s iconic upward arc, symbolizing the type of work we support: innovative, collaborative and inspired.
February 21, 2019

Dear Moody Foundation Grant Committee,

My name is Gerardo Gandy and, as the Chair of the ACE Mentor Program of Austin’s 2017-2018 Board of Directors, I am honored to introduce you to ACE and share the exciting ways our program is serving students in Austin, Texas.

The ACE Mentor Program started in 1991 as a local mentorship program run by the Board of Advisors to Manhattan College’s Engineering School. More than 20 years later, ACE is nationally engaging 9,000+ high school students per year in over eighty affiliate programs throughout the nation. But equally as important as understanding our program’s history is seeing the value ACE has locally, both now and in the future.

Prior to the founding of the Austin Chapter, Austin lacked a comprehensive outreach program aimed at engaging high school students interested in the building industry. Programs such as ACE do the important work of empowering young women and supporting minorities to pursue a career in the A-E-C industry, helping to evolve our profession into one that is more reflective of the many facets of our society.

Austin is rapidly growing and developing, and although this is exciting it also comes with its fair share of challenges. An investment in ACE is not only investment in the students and their dreams, but also in the future of our city and state. We are empowering the leaders of tomorrow, who will shape and design the future built environment. They will build smarter, engineer stronger, and design greener.

Over the past two years, ACE has worked with hundreds of area high school students. The program offers a 16-week program where students work in teams with A-E-C industry professionals, who serve as mentors, to design and plan construction of a building. Students are further immersed in the A-E-C industry through construction site tours and a trip to the UT Schools of Architecture and Engineering. ACE Mentorship goes beyond the construction project.

Through experiences such as these, students are encouraged to pursue their dreams, supported by thousands of dollars in available scholarships offered by the program. The effects of one scholarship are exponential. Your support today, could materialize itself into a building that fosters community and wellbeing within our city, a water treatment plant that provides cleaner water for our region, or even a bridge that will help strengthen our state’s transportation network.

There is no greater investment than equipping our future while inspiring our present. I thank you for your consideration.

Gerardo Gandy
Chairman

ACE Mentor Program of Austin
212 Lavaca Street Suite 390
Austin, Texas 78701
www.acementor.org
I. WHO WE ARE

Dear Moody Foundation Grant Committee,
My name is Gerardo Gandy and, as the Chair of the ACE Mentor Program of Austin’s 2017-2018 Board of Directors, I am honored to introduce you to ACE and share the exciting ways our program is serving students in Austin, Texas.
II. OUR HISTORY AND OUR ROLE IN THE FUTURE

The ACE Mentor Program started in 1991 as a local mentorship program run by the Board of Advisors to Manhattan College’s Engineering School. More than 20 years later, ACE is nationally engaging 9,000+ high school students per year in over eighty affiliate programs throughout the nation. But equally as important as understanding our program’s history is seeing the value ACE has locally, both now and in the future.
III. THE NEED AND OUR MISSION

Prior to the founding of the Austin Chapter, Austin lacked a comprehensive outreach program aimed at engaging high school students interested in the building industry. Programs such as ACE do the important work of empowering young women and supporting minorities to pursue a career in the A-E-C industry, helping to evolve our profession into one that is more reflective of the many facets of our society.
IV. OUR IMPACT

Austin is rapidly growing and developing, and although this is exciting it also comes with its fair share of challenges. An investment in ACE is not only investment in the students and their dreams, but also in the future of our city and state. We are empowering the leaders of tomorrow, who will shape and design the future built environment. They will build smarter, engineer stronger, and design greener.
V. OUR PROGRAM

Over the past two years, ACE has worked with hundreds of area high school students. The program offers a 16-week program where students work in teams with A-E-C industry professionals, who serve as mentors, to design and plan construction of a building. ACE Mentorship goes beyond the construction project. Students are further immersed in the A-E-C industry through construction site tours and a trip to the UT Schools of Architecture and Engineering.
VI. YOUR RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Through experiences such as these, students are encouraged to pursue their dreams, supported by thousands of dollars in available scholarships offered by the program. The effects of one scholarship are exponential. Your support today, could materialize itself into a building that fosters community and wellbeing within our city, a water treatment plant that provides cleaner water for our region, or even a bridge that will help strengthen our state’s transportation network. There is no greater investment than equipping our future while inspiring our present.