

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.

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Iron Workers of Texas
and the Mid-South States

2019 PROGRAM

97 STUDENTS FROM 14 LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS

64 MENTORS FROM 40 A-E-C FIRMS

2019 GRANTS

Swinerton Foundation	\$3,000.00
Austin Foundation for Architecture	\$3,000.00
Pepsi	\$5,000.00
Moody Foundation	\$10,000.00
<hr/>	
	\$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.

ACE AUSTIN GRANTS COMMITTEE



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Chairman



Tyler McElroy
Fundraising Chair



Jenny Janis
Grant Champion



Catherine Cash
Treasurer



Jerry Negrete
Legal Chair



Martha Gonzalez
Scholarship Chair



Anna Gonzalez
Student Recruitment Chair



Martha Gonzalez
Mentor Recruitment Chair

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.



ACE Mentor Program of Austin

2019 PROGRAM SPONSOR PACKET

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.

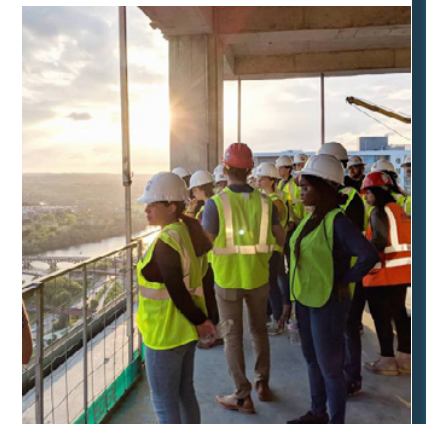
Program Structure

- 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

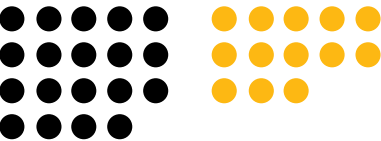
Follow the link below to see a compilation of scholarship videos submitted by ACE Alumni. The students were asked to describe the value of ACE and how the program has helped them determine their career path.

[Link to 2018 Student Scholarship Videos](#)



Program Demographics

176 Members



19
Board of Directors

13
Assoc. Board

64
Mentors

97
Students

Board of Directors:

Gerardo Gandy
Christine Sheng
Allison Wilson
Ingrid G. Featherston
Jerry Negrete
Catherine Cash
Martha Gonzalez
Tyler McElroy
Karima Baqdounes
Adrianna Hong
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Kasey Faust
Marvin Ragsdale
Phil Thoden
Wayne Crew

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Malerie Gamboa
Lilly Mannas
Ricardo Maga Rojas
Joe Williams
Johanna Spencer
Olivia Pitt-Perez
John Branch
Kyle Dunning
Justin Brodnax

Representing **40**
A-E-C Industry Firms

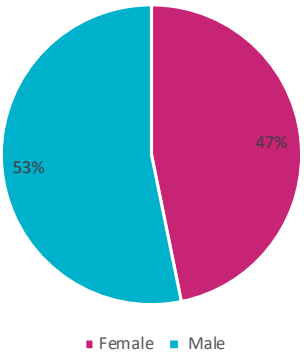
A&P Engineering, PLLC
ACC
Amity Worrel & Co.
Architexas
Bergelectric Corporation
Chioco Design
Claycomb Associates Architects
Coleman and Associates
Dashiell Corporation
DPR Construction
Drophouse Design
Dunaway
Gensler
Integral Group
JE DUNN Construction
KGA Architecture
Kimley-Horn & Associates
Martinez Moore Engineers
McCollum Studio Architects
MEDCO Construction L.L.C.
Nelsen Partners
Norris Design
Page
Pape-Dawson Engineers
Perkins + Will
RPS
Ryan Companies US, Inc.
Sixthriver Architects
Stantec
STEM 3000, LLC
STG Design
StructuresPE, LLP
TBG Partners
TD Industries
Texas Materials
Texas State University
The Beck Group
The Beck Group
The George D. Alan Company
Turner Construction
University of Texas at Austin
Walter P. Moore

Representing **14**
Local High Schools

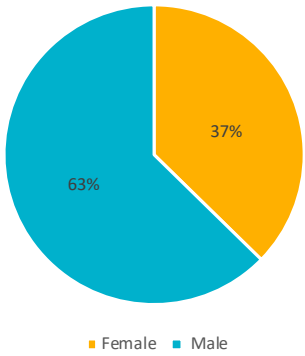
Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders
Bowie High School
Cedar Ridge High School
Crockett High School
Del Valle High School
Kipp Austin Collegiate
LASA
Liberty Hill High School
McCallum High School
Round Rock High School
St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School
Vandegrift High School
Weiss High School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

Student and Mentor Demographics

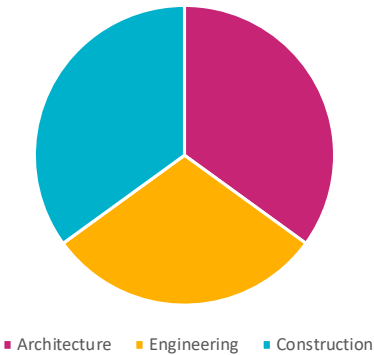
Mentor Gender Distribution



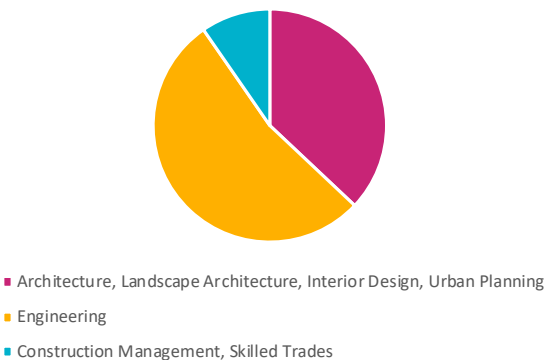
Student Gender Distribution



Mentor Occupation



Student Primary Interest





Austin Chapter of the Associated General Contractors

609 S. Lamar
Austin, TX 78704
(512) 442-7887

February 15, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Austin Chapter AGC, a professional trade association for commercial builders working in Austin and throughout Central Texas, I am writing this letter in support of the ACE Mentor Program of Austin's application for a 2019-2020 curriculum grant in the amount of \$10,000.

As a construction industry professional here in Austin, I can't say enough good things about the local ACE Mentor Program that has quickly grown from conceptual stage to exceptional performance in just a few years. I currently serve on the ACE Advisory Board and have been thoroughly impressed by the high level of talent, vision, commitment and ability to execute a plan that the ACE leadership has demonstrated consistently.

Since beginning in 2015, the program has grown from serving only 18 students to a current total of 97 from 14 area high schools. This FREE after-school program is led by volunteer mentors representing the local architecture, construction and engineering professions. Each student participates in over a dozen sessions to learn how to manage a building project from concept to completion. Awards and scholarships are presented after final presentations are completed.

This program is critical to the future success of our Austin area that requires the ongoing development of buildings and related infrastructure to meet the increased demands of a growing population. Through the volunteer efforts of both the ACE leadership and mentors, local students are presented with an excellent opportunity to learn directly from active industry professionals about the demands and rewards of a career in design and construction.

I strongly recommend this important ACE Mentor program as a worthy recipient of Moody Foundation Grant, as the funding would allow it to continue at no charge to the growing number of participants.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Phil Thoden
President and CEO
Austin AGC

Balfour Beatty
Construction

t.512-445-2424
f.512-445-2434
1250 S. Capital of Texas Hwy
Building 1, Suite 250
Austin, TX 78746

February 15, 2019

To Whom it Concerns

Re: Ace Mentoring of Austin

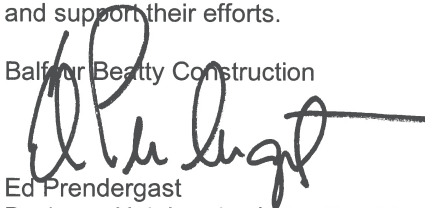
I have been involved with ACE Mentoring for the last 15 years and was the Board President of the DFW ACE Mentoring Chapter for the last 5 years.

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?**

ACE AUSTIN COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY



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.

Student Testimonials

“ 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.

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-cathcing and unique, and then witnessing its construction to completion is definitely rewarding.

Dalton 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 desicions about the design, construction, and uses of our building, before being offered a new problem to resolve.

Avi Distler, 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 Gershoff, Junior

Top 10 Reasons to Support ACE Austin

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. ACES’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 form 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.

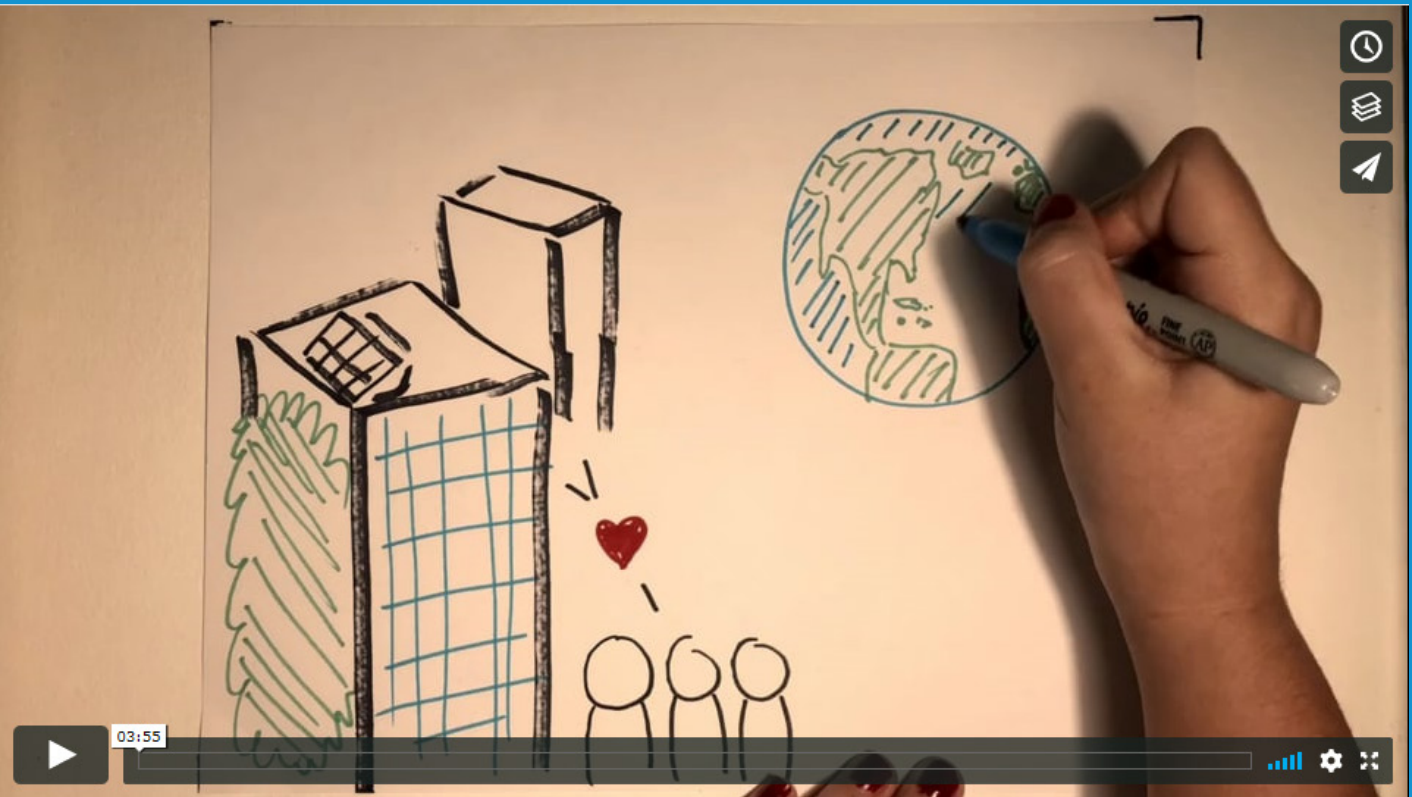
9. ACE HELPS STUDENTS GO TO COLLGE AND GIVES THEM CONFIDENCE IN COLLEGE.

- Almost ¾ 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 freshmen 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

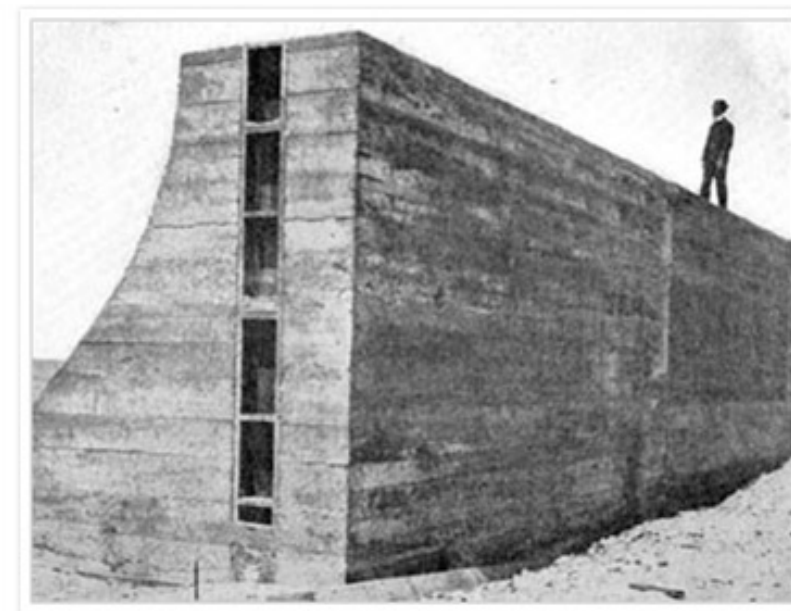
Learn more about our grantees and the amazing work they are doing.



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.

[LEARN MORE](#)





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

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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

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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

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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.

