



SMART AND CARING GRANTS FINAL REPORT & IMPACT STORY GUIDELINES

Final Report and Impact Story Guidelines:

The Community Foundation of Southeastern Alberta looks forward to receiving information on the Community Priorities Grant awarded to your organization. This report is not intended to be an onerous and time consuming task. We simply want to know more about your organization and the impact of the grant.

We may contact you for additional information upon receipt of this report in order to promote the success of your project and the impact of the grant.

General Information:

There are three components in the Smart and Caring Grant Final Report:

- Final Report
- Impact Story
- Financial Report

Please ensure you have completed all three components. Note that agencies are not eligible for future grant funding unless a final report has been submitted.

Impact Story Suggestions:

The easiest way to show the impact that your organization has in your community is through an impact story. We collect story ideas that will help show case the broad range of projects that we support in our region.

The most powerful story you could provide would tell how this grant made a direct impact or difference in one person's life. Please do not reveal any identifying information about this individual unless you have written permission to do so (please provide).

As humans, we love stories. For as long as we have had speech, stories have been used to communicate emotions and experiences.

Stories can be used for lots of different purposes – to educate, to provide pleasure, to solve problems. But here we're considering how to use them to communicate the difference your organization makes in people's lives - your outcomes and impact.

Here are some simple steps that you can take to 'storify' your impact reporting:

Know your audience: Your story may be used in future CFSEA reports and/or events – for donors and funders, board members, other service participants and the general community.

Set the scene: Help us see and feel the situation at the beginning of your story. What are the needs you are responding to? What is the scale of these issues? Is there anything that your audience and your characters have in common? If your audience understands why you're needed and where you're coming from, they'll engage with your story.

Shape your narrative: A good story describes the journey your characters make when they engage with your services. Shaping this narrative well will create tension, keeping your audience engaged to the end. It will also give them a much better appreciation of just how much effort went into creating the end outcomes and impact.

The classic story narrative:

- **Beginning:** your character was living a normal life, much like yours or mine (or even better, your audience's). But then something threw life out of balance - the 'inciting incident'.
- **Middle:** your hero battles to deal with this new cruel reality, aided by your organization. There are ups and downs along the way as your hero struggles between positive and negative forces, giving two very different visions of the future.
- **End:** things resolve into a better new reality. Describe the ways in which life is now better for your hero – this is your outcomes and impact.

Make it personal: It is hard to relate to a load of numbers on a page or on a slide. The characters of your story need to have personality if your audience is going to relate to them and be inspired.

Bring your characters to life with the language you use and by describing individual cases. Give your character a voice by using quotes or introduce some humour. This will encourage your audience to connect emotionally to the story.

Show scale: You can inspire and engage with an individual's tale, but for your full impact story, you also need to be able to show the magnitude of your work and achievements.

How many people are you working with? Of those, how many people have you helped to achieve positive outcomes? And if there have been challenges, how did you overcome these?



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Keep it short: The appropriate length for your story depends on who your audience is. In general, keep it concise. You don't want your readers to get bored or distracted before they get to the end. We are looking for a maximum of 500 words or less.

Be accessible: A story should speak for itself – your audience shouldn't have to do any analysis to find the point. Make sure that you aren't expecting your audience to look through lots of data, or using any jargon.

Source: www.knowhownonprofit.org

CFSEA RECOGNITION:

The reason for emphasizing your ongoing public recognition of the Community Foundation's contribution to your project is quite simple: the exposure helps us grow our endowment fund which results in more grant monies available for charities. Your stories and media coverage inspire individuals and corporations to contribute to worthy causes. Donors want to hear about the impact of their generosity. It is an important component for us.

SUBMISSION:

Once completed, please forward an electronic copy to admin@cfsea.ca. Any additional information (photographs, publicity clippings, etc.) may be sent electronically or via mail to:

**Community Foundation of Southeastern Alberta
#104, 430 – 6th Avenue SE
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 2S8**

We are here to help . . .

If you need assistance of any kind, please do not hesitate to contact the Foundation office. We will be happy to assist you.

- Chris Christie, Executive Director chris@cfsea.ca
- Niki Gray, Grants and Administration Coordinator admin@cfsea.ca