

Sample Grant Language (Adaptable Template)

Project Overview

[Project Name] is a mentoring initiative for underrepresented students in the media arts field that addresses inequality at the student level through community building, technical workshops, and professional development opportunities. In its first year, as a DIY grassroots initiative, it hosted a series of well-attended workshops, skill shares, and community events. The Me Too movement made clear how difficult working in the media industry is for women, LGBTQ individuals, and BIPOC folks, and this initiative was founded to in part address this inequality.

We are requesting support that would allow us to expand programming, grow our community, and increase our positive impact on student experience.

Project Purpose

In the past decade, representation in movies and TV has drastically improved as people of color, women, and LGBTQ individuals have gained more complex leading roles. However, behind the camera, women, queer people, people of color, and trans/non-binary folk remain underrepresented in creative decision-making positions. This discrepancy becomes even starker in technical roles such as camera operator, lighting designer, lead editor, and director of photography.

This systemic issue is mirrored in higher education. [Project Name] would take advantage of grant support as a way to develop its mutual aid and mentorship model, while also engaging in dialogue with other successful initiatives to understand how they succeeded (or fell short) in supporting diverse students in technical and media fields.

Stakeholders + Needs

This initiative is inclusive, but the work is geared toward students who are underrepresented in the media arts — queer, BIPOC, trans, LGBTQ, non-binary, and women students.

Through community listening sessions with undergraduates across several disciplines, students engaged in dialogue about the hardships they faced. We found that underrepresented media artists often suffer from:

- **Under-confidence in Technical Skills** — Due to economic inequality, some students had less access to cameras and computers throughout their lives. Students therefore reported feeling behind their peers in technical knowledge.

- **Alienation** — Students reported a sense of loneliness and alienation, which had a material effect on their success. Filmmaking requires collaboration, but students with marginalized identities found it difficult to access peer support in male-dominated spaces.

As our society becomes more and more media-based, we believe diversifying who gets to tell stories will make our society safer and more compassionate to all people.

Intended Impact

Imagine you are a freshman media arts student interested in photography, from a minority background, and feeling alienated at the university, unsure of where you fit in. You encounter this initiative early on and are invited into the community:

- You share your photographs in a student-curated art show, gaining confidence.
- You attend a community prom and meet collaborators.
- You take a workshop led by a local professional, learning a new editing program, and this connection leads to an internship.
- You attend a speaker series and are inspired by the work of an Indigenous filmmaker, sparking your own documentary project.

This is the kind of transformation the initiative aims to create.

Team (Example Roles)

- Director (faculty or lead organizer)
- Undergraduate community organizers
- Faculty mentors for intermedia and artist outreach
- Community outreach coordinators

Partners (Example Types)

- Campus-based centers for media, arts, and performance
- Community and nonprofit art organizations
- Local galleries and creative youth programs

Intended Scale

Based on attendance at previous workshops, we anticipate serving annually:

- 200 undergraduate students attending workshops and social events

- 25–40 students deeply involved in leadership and skill sharing
- 30 graduate students
- 20 faculty collaborators

We believe we can grow these numbers, expanding programming, offering more peer teaching opportunities, and increasing outreach.

Funding Request + Intended Use of Funds

We are requesting multi-year support to cover:

- Workshop materials (cameras, software, lights)
- Workshop stipends for technical and industry professionals
- Event support (food, refreshments, community-building activities)
- Guest speakers and visiting artists
- Student leader stipends

Anticipated Long-term Needs

We are currently housed in shared campus facilities but are seeking a dedicated lab and meeting space. This would include access to computers, housing for gear, a small library, and community meeting space. Having a safe, consistent home base is central to sustaining long-term student impact.