



The Amazing Adventures of...



Nutrition and Aging  
Resource Center

# Captain Funds Finder

## Introducing YOU to the Nutrition and Aging Resource Center's NEWEST SUPERHERO!

Providing nutrition to aging adults is incredibly important and can be challenging at times. Often, one of the biggest obstacles Older Americans Act (OAA) nutrition programs face is sufficient funding to serve the number of older adults who need services. It is important to find other sources of funds to help pay for much-needed meals and services. Finding (and securing) funding can be a challenge .....and an adventure!

Use this treasure map as a guide to obtain funds from local governments and organizations. Along the way, the Captain will give tips and tricks that have worked for her as she seeks out treasure in the form of funds for OAA meal programs.

### But first, we must Prepare for the Journey

As with many things in life, the more time and effort spent preparing, the better the results. The same is true when it comes to getting funding. Preparing for the journey includes studying your program, the funding opportunities available, and the community. Then you can put the information (or data) you have gathered to good use.

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## Get to know more about..... your funding needs:

What is it in your organization that is missing or needs to expand? What need is not being met in the community? Get specific and know the exact need, including what the funds will be used for and how much you will need, in order to seek funds effectively. For instance, if you need new equipment for cold food storage, research the size of cooler you will need to fit the space you have available. Find a supplier of that equipment and the exact cost to purchase and install the cooler. The more precise you are with knowing the need, the more targeted you can be in finding funding that will cover the costs and that will fund equipment for food storage.

When it comes to aging nutrition programs, it is extremely important to know the cost to deliver meal services. Knowing your meal cost, your true meal cost, is extremely important. It isn't just food that contributes to the total cost of a meal. You must also account for all of the other costs including paid labor, utilities, meal packaging, location expenses, etc. to know how much funding you actually need. To help calculate this, see [Identifying the Total Cost of a Meal](#) summary brief and [Extended Brief](#). Knowing this exact cost is important for day-to-day operations and budgeting. It is also important for calculating funding needs when you want to expand services.

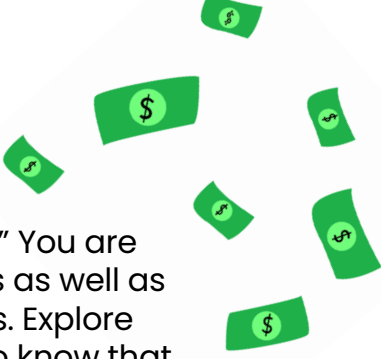

**Knowing your exact needs can help narrow down potential funders.**



## Get to know more about..... funding opportunities that already exist.

Do your local and state governments or other community organizations regularly offer funding opportunities such as grants? Are there individuals, foundations or other charitable organizations in your community that could provide funding? One way to find out is by reaching out to [local government offices](#), councils of government, and state government officials to ask what funding may be available. Also, contact other similar organizations in your community to ask about how they are funding projects. Perhaps they can offer some insight.







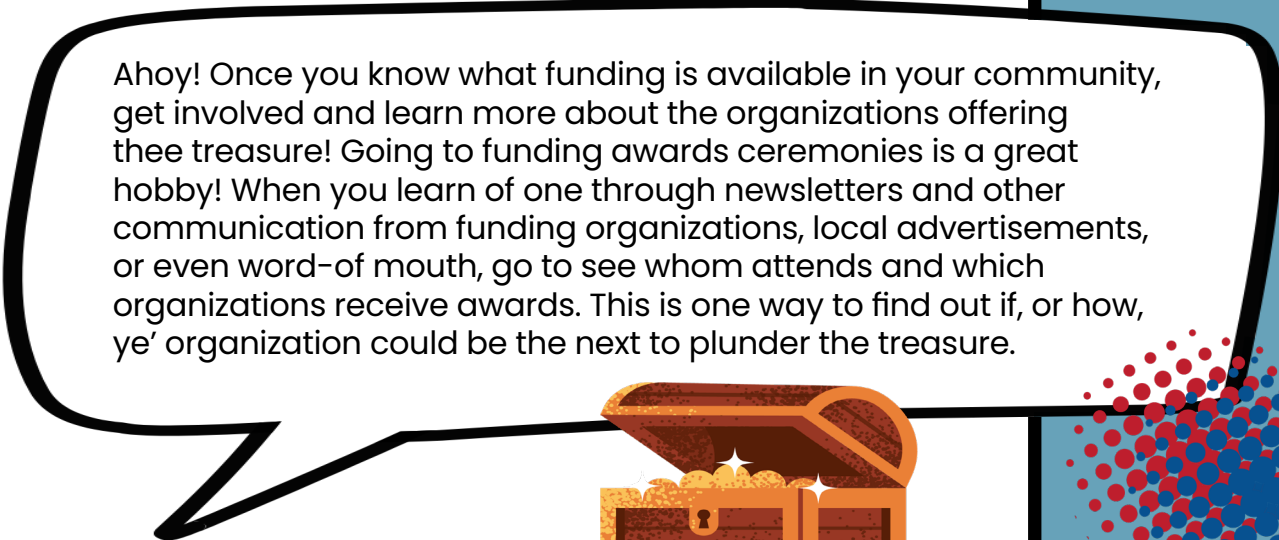
Another option is to search online for “funding opportunities for nonprofit organizations.” You are likely to find results including articles listing top sources of current funding opportunities as well as sites such as [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), [grantwatch.com](https://www.grantwatch.com), and [Philanthropy News Digest](https://www.philanthropy.com), among others. Explore these options, filtering results to match your organization and goals. It may be helpful to know that in some cases, a funding opportunity may be known as a “purchase for service agreement.”

Sign up for newsletters from local and national programs whose mission and values align with your work and may offer funding. This is a great way to stay up to date with what is happening, including funding opportunities and related activities and deadlines.

And of course, don't forget about revenue opportunities like social enterprises and fee-for-service. Securing various funding sources for meal programs helps ensure sustainability of services. You can find more information about funding sources and how to make the most of them [here](#).



### The Captain says:



Ahoy! Once you know what funding is available in your community, get involved and learn more about the organizations offering thee treasure! Going to funding awards ceremonies is a great hobby! When you learn of one through newsletters and other communication from funding organizations, local advertisements, or even word-of-mouth, go to see whom attends and which organizations receive awards. This is one way to find out if, or how, ye' organization could be the next to plunder the treasure.



## Also the Captain says:

I am a "people person", which, I admit, helps. I always ensure to be present, active, and seen in my community. Make the effort to introduce yourself to other pirates, errrrr, ....community members, whether at a formal event or even the grocery store, post office, or PTA meeting. Ensure people in the community, especially those in political office and those who are involved with funding, know your face, whom you represent, and how you help older adults in the community. Also, provide talking points to ye' crew: staff, volunteers, and board members, to be champions on your organization's behalf!

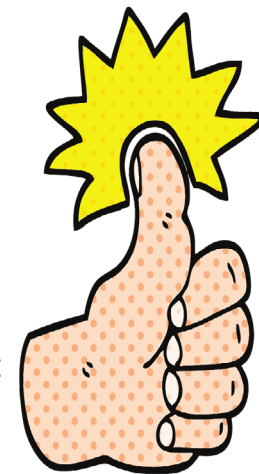


**Make the effort to introduce yourself to other community members...**

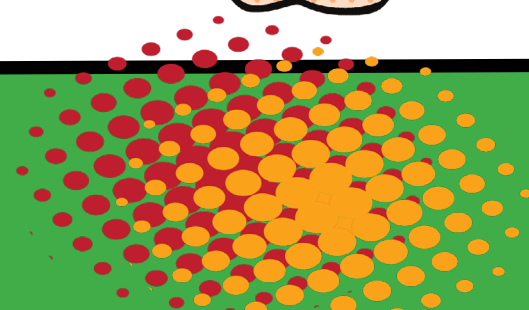


### **Never applied for a grant before? Here is a hot tip:**

Offer to review grant applications before you apply for a grant. This is good practice for grant writers ....or future grant writers, such as yourself. You will learn the ins and outs of the grant requirements, what makes a good grant application, and perhaps even more helpful, what makes a poor application. You can take these skills and apply them to your own grant application when the time is right. To be a grant reviewer, contact the organization offering grants. For example, the [Administration for Community Living \(ACL\)](#) is always looking for grant reviewers to help!



**...take these skills and apply them to your own grant application when the time is right...**



## Get to know more about..... the key players:

Individuals within government agencies and community organizations create funding opportunities and even review funding applications. In some instances, they may also decide who receives funding. Know whom these individuals are and develop working relationships with them.

Try [stakeholder asset mapping](#) to discover those you know or need to know. In other words, take the time to ask “who am I and my organization connected with already? Who are we not connected with, but should be?” If there are individuals and organizations within the community that are not current connections, explore opportunities to meet.

**...discover those you know or need to know...explore opportunities to meet...**

## The Captain says:

I get to know the key players in my community who may know of funding or are involved with funding opportunities. I have created professional social media pages that I use to connect with other professionals, especially the “who’s-who” of funder organizations. This is one way to learn about their lives and the organizations they work for. I look further into the organization to see if they currently offer funding and if their mission, vision, and goals align with my work.

Also, what do I have in common with the professionals themselves? Do they have little lil’ buccaneers? Pets? These clues show what we have in common and are ways to connect when we interact. Ultimately, I want these people to feel comfortable with me and like me. This way, they are more interested in what I do and my work providing nutrition for older adults in the community.

Remember: I want them to know my face, whom I represent, and the amazing work I do. This way, if and when funding opportunities arise, they will think of me. Arrrr!



## Get to know more about..... your community:

Do some research to find data on your local community. Also, know how your community stacks up against other communities across the nation. This data may be quantitative (numbers and figures) or qualitative (information that is more descriptive such as testimonials from participants), and having both kinds of data is likely the most beneficial. Where do you get this data? Try the following:

### Look within your organization:

- Is your organization collecting data via a survey, perhaps at intake? Compile and use the data you have at your fingertips. Find the number of older adults currently served, how many are at risk of food insecurity and/or malnutrition, wait lists, demographics such as race and ethnicity, poverty status, etc., or other information that has been collected.
- If useful data is currently not being collected on meal participants, can you begin offering a survey to obtain facts and feedback that may be helpful?

### Look within your community:

- Reach out to your city/town government office to gather information about the local population.
- Contact the [local Extension office](#), supported by the land-grant university in your state. Ask what data may be available about your local community and the population you serve.
- Do not overlook testimonials! These are examples of qualitative (descriptive) data and can be very powerful.

### Look within your state and beyond:

- Data regarding aging Americans and Older American Act (OAA) programs participants, both nationally and locally, is found within the [AGing, Independence, and Disability \(AGID\) Program Data Portal](#).
- Data from the Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) [study](#) can be very powerful in showing the impact of OAA Title III meal programs.
- Check out the Nutrition & Aging Resource Center's [Program Evaluation](#) page for additional resources.

Once you have your data, find a way to keep it organized so that it is easy to use.

Ay, the easiest way to organize and store data is with data tracking software programs. These programs can keep track of changing conditions, ensuring your data is always up-to-date and allows for comparisons across time. If purchasing new software is not possible, even tracking your current data in a simple spreadsheet can be extremely beneficial.



**The Captain says:**

Though it isn't necessary to do these steps in any particular order, it is the pirate's code of conduct to gather as much information as possible. Any great pirate knows that ye' must prepare for the journey ahead.

**Ensure your data is always up-to-date!**

## Chase down Ye Treasure

Now that you have collected your data, you are going to apply and “capture” the funding!

### Know what is needed:

Whatever the source may be, it is important to fully understand the requirements of the funding. Read the application or requirements thoroughly and ask questions, if necessary. Some grants, foundations, and funding opportunities have specific eligibility requirements such as having non-profit status, etc. Also, some may require thorough record keeping, data collection, regular follow-ups, specific reporting requirements, etc. Others may not. Be sure that you can manage everything that is required before you apply or ask for the funding.

### Fill in the blanks:

Next, begin completing the application process, if required. An informal or formal proposal might be required if a formal application process is not in place. Both of these options could take many hours, especially if you are new to the process, so plan ahead. Know who else within your organization will need to contribute information or may need to approve the application and communicate those needs and appropriate timelines in advance. Follow instructions, and be concise when answering the questions. The person who reviews your application should be able to understand what you have written. If possible, have someone else read through your answers to check for understanding and give you any feedback.



When possible, it may be beneficial to have one crew mate from an organization writing, or at least involved and assisting with all grants. This can ensure consistency and efficiency in the process. This swashbuckler should work closely with subject-matter experts from the organization for specific funding requests or applications to ensure the proposal is as strong as possible. Additionally, consider creating a template for your organization so that answers can be stowed away and used on future applications to save time.

### The Captain says:

Some answers will be clear while others will give you the opportunity to make your application stand out from the crowd. This is your chance to tell the story of ye work, the impact it has on the community, and why ye program deserves the funding you are seeking.



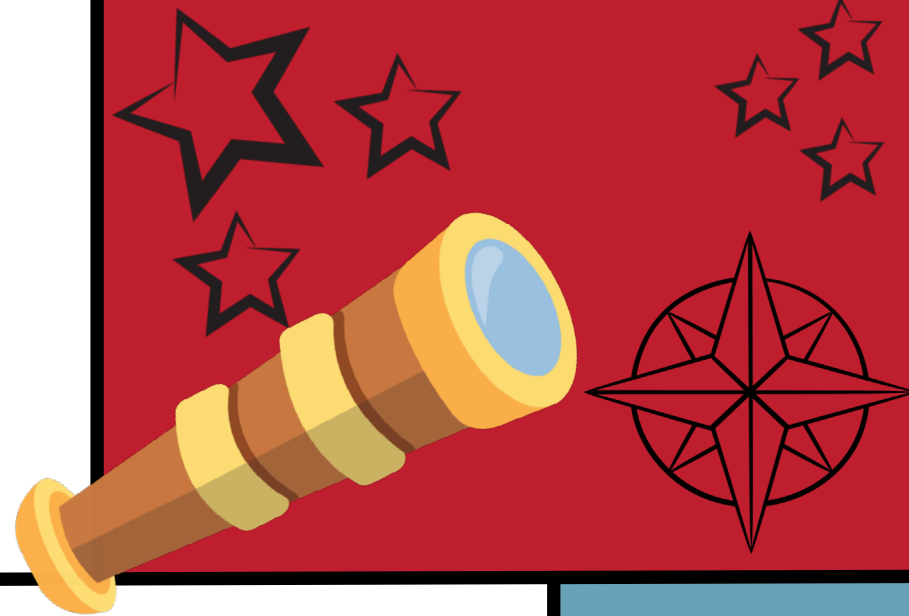
## Tell a Tale:

Compelling stories help gain support, funding and participation, and drive positive outcomes. The first step is to ensure your audience can understand the data and information you are conveying.

### The what:

Data provides the evidence for your great story. Presenting that data in a way that is meaningful to your audience can be the real challenge. When it comes to quantitative data (facts and figures), simplify the numbers to help others visualize the information.

Consider the following example. "In SFY22, 38.9% of home-delivered meal consumers and 18.9% of congregate consumers are at risk for food insecurity."



**Ensure your audience can understand the data and information you are conveying.**



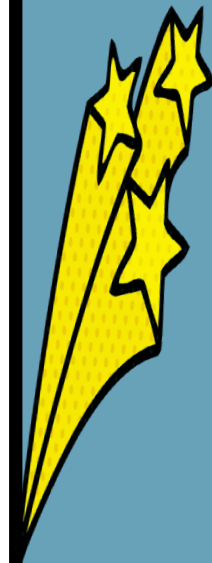
Can you really grasp what is being conveyed? One of the best ways to help your audience "get it" is to simplify the data. Instead of using percentages, try using whole numbers that can be pictured easily. In this case, we could say that "4 out of 10 home-delivered meal consumers are at risk for food insecurity, and 1 out of every 5 congregate meal consumers is also at risk for food insecurity."

### The Captain says:

Ay, me hearties!  
It is even better if you can provide actual visuals!



1 out of 5 congregate consumers is at risk for food insecurity





Take credit for the work you are already doing. Be sure to highlight any existing synergies and strengths. What relevant or related partnerships already exist for your organization? Draw attention to how your organization is working closely with other community organizations to accomplish common-goals efficiently and to make the biggest impact possible.

### The Captain says:



For example, our home-delivered meal clients often need home modifications to continue living safely at home, so me organization partners with Habitat for Humanity. Funders in thee community are familiar with the work that Habitat for Humanity does which helps give our work credibility. Also, we can demonstrate that by working with a volunteer organization such as Habitat for Humanity, we are saving on costs! The volunteer hours save on staff wages, and we are able to obtain building materials at-cost through this partnership. Funders often appreciate knowing that funds are being used responsibly.

### The why:

Communicating data in a simple and understandable way is only one part of your story. Why is that data important? This is what your audience really needs to know. Develop your story to let them know what the information means, specifically to them and the community. Use the data, or evidence, to help them see why your program needs the available funding. This is done by showing how your work aligns with the funder's mission and the goals of the funding opportunity. This is your value proposition. Organize and develop this story in advance.

This is my friend, [The Nutrition Communicator](#), with some great storytelling tips.

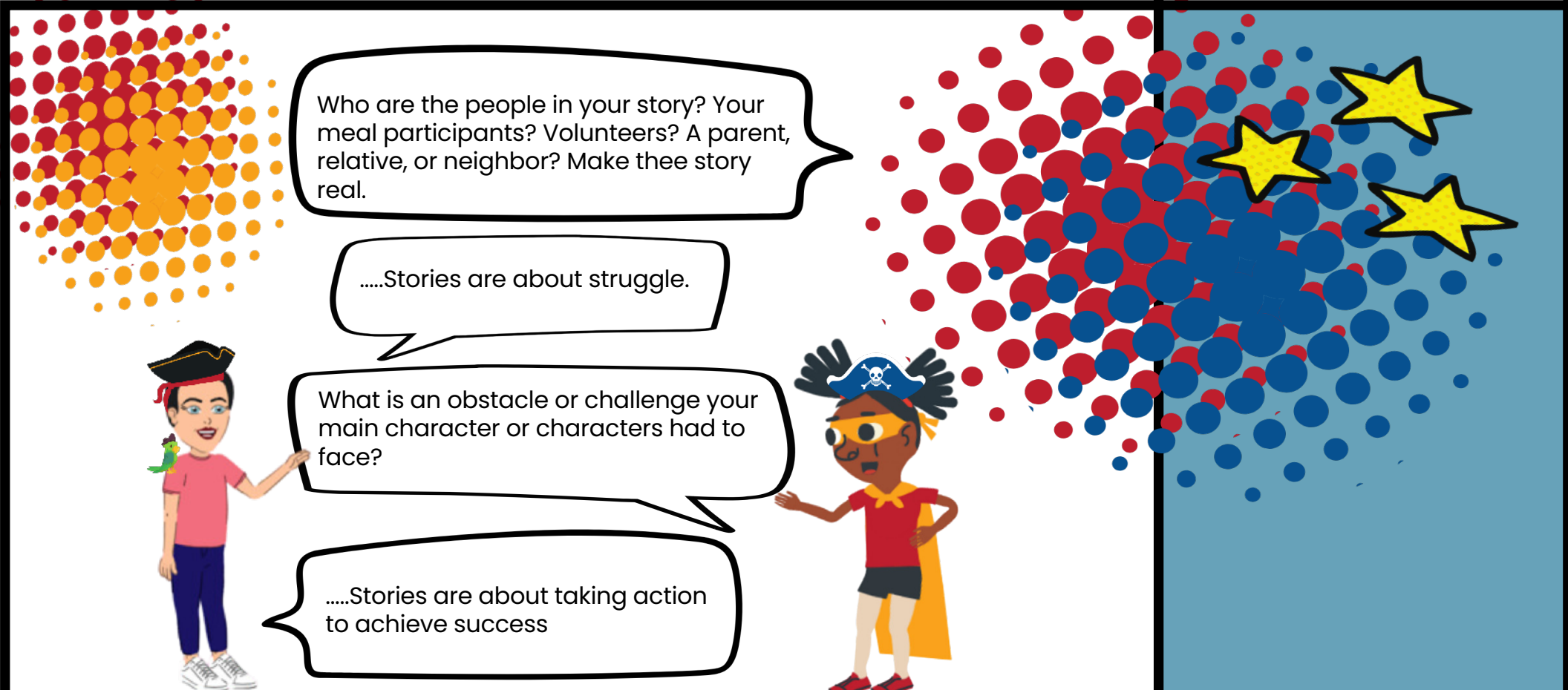


**Do you know what makes a good story?**

.....Stories are about people



*Conversation to be continued.....*



Who are the people in your story? Your meal participants? Volunteers? A parent, relative, or neighbor? Make the story real.

....Stories are about struggle.

What is an obstacle or challenge your main character or characters had to face?

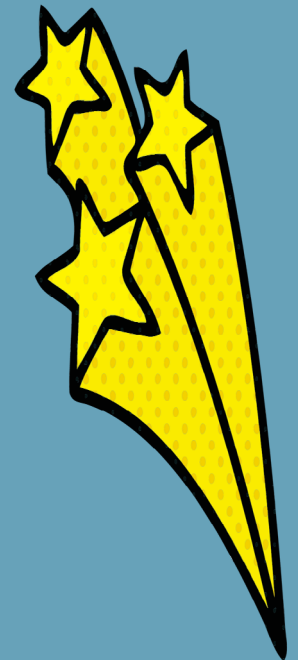
....Stories are about taking action to achieve success

Ay! Ideally, your program and services are the tools that were used to achieve success. This is when testimonials can come in handy!

**As you develop your story, it is important to remember to:**

....Be concise – use as few words as possible

Know the information and message you want to convey and stick to it.



.....Be clear – make sure your audience understands your meaning.

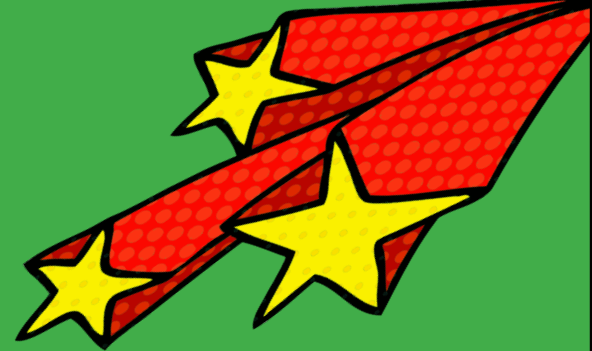
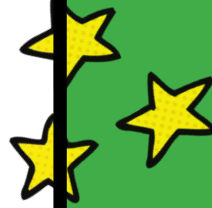
Remember that data? This is why it is so important that it is easy to understand. Also, the people you will be asking for funding do not live and work in ye' world every day, so be sure to use simple, regular terms and avoid jargon and acronyms. Ensure they know that "congregate meal" refers to meals being served at the County Senior Center, use home-delivered meals instead of HDM, etc.

.....Be compelling – speak to the head, the heart, and the hands and feet. That means impact knowledge (the head).

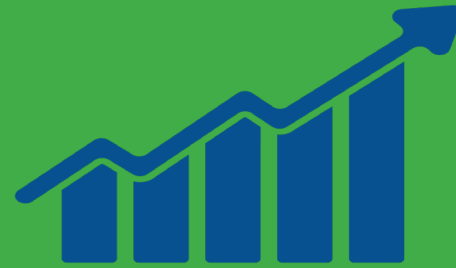
give them new knowledge with ye' data



**Be sure to use simple, regular terms and avoid jargon and acronyms.**



**Give them knowledge with your data.**



attitudes (the heart)

Ensure they care about the work you do and the impact it makes to your community

and behaviors (the hands and feet)

this is where you ask for action on their part... you are asking for the funding.  
**This is why you have done all this! SAVVY?**



## The how:

For some, creating an infographic to tell the story is beneficial because it can be engaging and tells the important data and information in a concise way. Perhaps a written story works best, especially when it comes to applications for funding. Sometimes, being able to verbally tell your story can have a major impact, especially when given the opportunity to speak at an event, on a podcast, or via radio or television segment.

**Be engaging and tell the data and information in a concise way.**

## The Captain says:

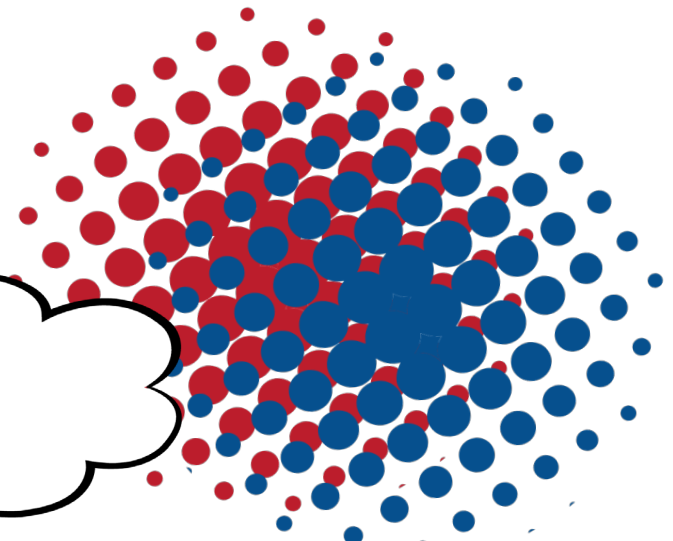


Telling me tale is always important for me to gain thee interest of me hearties. I present me data and find ways to share either personal stories of caring for me granny or those personal tales of other pirates I know.

It is important for me to capture the heart of thee funders, so I also ask for a chance to present in person whether or not that is offered. Then, I can tell me tale as I look them in the eye. I keep a lookout and read the body language of me mateys in the room.

When I know I have touched their heads, with me data, and their hearts with me story, I know it is time for their hands and feet; it is time to make the "ask." The ask should be specific and personal. For example, "We currently serve 10,380 meals in the community with our own investment of \$125,000. We are asking if you will partner with us for \$1 per senior in your community for a total of \$5,000."

I make it personal whenever I can by also using examples of actual individuals, families, or local businesses that will benefit from the funding. It is a reminder of how thee treasure will benefit real people in their community.



## Finish Strong

Our map led us to the treasure we seek. We have discovered both funding needs and opportunities and have explored key players and needs in your community. We then voyaged into seizing the funding including capturing the heads, hearts, hands and feet of our funders with our tale. Congratulations! You are likely on your way to receiving new funds.

If not, don't give up. Instead, follow-up! Return to the funder the following year and be prepared to provide updated data. Sometimes patience and persistence will be what finally "pay" off.



## The Captain says:

Ay! Now ye have found your sea legs. It is time for the adventure to continue. I find that by staying present and involved in the community, people and organizations are now approaching me when they hear of treasure to be found. All of the hard work is worth it when we can expand our services and feed more older adults in the community. Arr!

Best of luck on ye journey, and anchors away!



## Glossary of Pirate Terms for Ye Landlubbers

**Ahoy!** – An interjection used to hail a ship or person, or to attract attention.

**Arr!** – An exclamation

**Aye (or Ay)** – Yes; an affirmation.

**Buccaneer** – A pirate.

**Code of Conduct** – A set of rules which govern pirates behavior on a vessel.

**Hearties** – A term of familiar address and fellowship among sailors.

**Landlubber** – A person unfamiliar with the sea or seamanship.

**Lookout** – The pirate who keeps watch for land or oncoming ships.

**Matey (or Mate)** – A piratical way to address someone in a cheerful, if not necessarily friendly, fashion.

**Me** – My

**Plunder** – To take booty

**Sea legs** – The ability to adjust one's balance to the motion of a ship, especially in rough seas. After walking on a ship for long periods of time, sailors became accustomed to the rocking of the ship in the water. Early in a voyage a sailor was said to be lacking his "sea legs" when the ship motion was still foreign to him. After a cruise, a sailor would often have trouble regaining his "land legs" and would swagger on land.

**Savvy?** – A question asking, "Do you get it?" or "Do you understand?"

**Swashbuckler** – An adventurous, romantic swordsman who is also chivalrous, witty, and generally has a sense of humor.

**Ye** – Your

<https://www.pirateglossary.com/>

<https://lewespirates.com/pirate-lingo/>



Avast ye! Special thanks to me hearty, [The Nutrition Communicator](#), Barbara J. Mayfield, MS, RDN, LD, FAND for ye counsel in telling tales. Arr!

