SAMPLE ASSESSMENT · ILLUSTRATIVE. Organization, funders, peers, and identifying details changed. A real Assessment is built from your organization's own public record.

GRANT FUNDING VIABILITY ASSESSMENT

Riverbend Family Services

Know whether grants can carry the plan before your team spends the next cycle proving they cannot.

Prepared for	Riverbend Family Services
Prepared by	Sharke
Date	July 10, 2026
Organization	CO, human services, revenue $2,700,000
Evidence level	High

Public-record funding and pipeline read. Not a financial-health verdict, win prediction, or tax advice.

1. THE DECISION

Your position: Thin-Reserve

In plain terms: Your cushion is thin: unrestricted runway about 1 month; cash runway about 1 month.
The funder market: The visible institutional grant dollars in your field are spread broadly across many funders, so diversification is a numbers game you can actually play.
The call: Protect the flexible cushion first: extend the unrestricted runway and stabilize the near-term clock before leaning the budget on new grants.

50
Funding Viability Index, out of 100

130
funders have backed two or more organizations like yours

1
month of unrestricted runway

Section 3 has a shortlist to start with, each shown with a real grant it made to an organization like yours.

WHAT DETERMINED THE FUNDING VIABILITY INDEX

In your favor, holding the Index up: public support breadth and spending sustainability. Working against you, pulling it down: reserve runway, funding trajectory and grant pipeline.

THE GRANT PATH AT YOUR SCALE

Most foundation grants in your field fall below the size a meaningful grant needs at your scale; only the largest reach it. A foundation-only pipeline would take an impractical number of small grants, so the realistic path blends the larger foundations with other ecosystems: federal programs (the Administration for Children and Families and HHS) and the largest national funders carry the grants your field's foundations cannot.

Confidence on this page: High. The page-1 read is only as strong as its weakest input, so it is gated to that level; every market line is scoped to the visible institutional grant record, and the position read is your own filing measured against organizations like you.

WHAT THIS REVIEW SHOWS, AND WHAT IT CANNOT

This review shows the strongest public-record starting point. It does not decide which funders deserve staff time now. That requires live verification: current cycle behavior, current priorities, mission fit, and pursue / cultivate / remove decisions.

THIS REVIEW ANSWERS

- How viable the funding behind your mission looks today
- How much flexible runway leadership actually has
- Whether revenue is moving with or against your field
- Whether the visible funder market is broad enough to build against
- What size pipeline a meaningful grant role would take

THE VERIFIED PIPELINE ADDS

- Which specific grants Sharke has surfaced for you to pursue
- Which funders deserve your team's time now -- pursue, cultivate, or remove
- Which funders are active now, not just historically visible
- A working pipeline leadership can manage week to week

PIPELINE FUNDING VIABILITY ASSESSMENT

50 Funding Viability Index, out of 100
BUILDING

Building means scores of 50 to 69: the funding base holds today, and the pipeline that protects it is still being built. The Index is built from the viability measures below, each read from your own filings and your field -- how viable the funding behind your mission looks today, not a verdict on your organization.

Measure	Viability	What your filings show, and where peers sit
Reserve runway	WATCH	About 6 months of spending covered by net assets *In the bottom 34% of human-services nonprofits in the 1M-3M revenue range on this measure (sample of 50).*
Funding trajectory	EXPOSED	Total revenue is trending down, about -13% a year across 2021 to 2024 *In the bottom 2% of human-services nonprofits in the 1M-3M revenue range on this measure (sample of 50).*
Public support breadth	STRONG	Public-support test at 97%, 64 points above the 33% threshold
Spending sustainability	STRONG	Spending is within revenue; reserves are not being drawn down
Grant pipeline	EXPOSED	about 2 of 24 grants toward a viable pipeline
Funder pipeline	EXPOSED	about 3 of 13 funder relationships toward a viable pipeline

The pipeline behind that number

A viable pipeline keeps enough grant applications moving to win about half your funding in grants, spread across a set of cultivated funder relationships, because most applications do not convert and over half of grant funding does not renew:

Pipeline measure	A viable target	A typical starting point
Grant Pipeline Size (grants in your pipeline a year)	about 24	about 2
Funder Pipeline Size (funder relationships)	about 13	about 3

*Grants carry about half your funding when no single grant tops about 15%, so the goal is roughly 4 repeatable wins a year. At about 6 applications per win (the rate for an organization with a younger or rebuilding profile), that means keeping about **24 grants moving** in your pipeline, spread across about **13 funder relationships** (roughly 55% of the applications, since some funders back more than one). With about 2 grants and 3 funders on the radar today, most of that pipeline is still ahead; building it is what the next funding cycle is for. Sharing what you actually have in flight turns this from a typical baseline into your numbers.*

2. THE FUNDER MARKET FOR ORGANIZATIONS LIKE YOU

This reads the funder market for human-services nonprofits in the 1M-3M revenue range as the public grant record shows it -- the field your grant pipeline would be built against.

The visible institutional grant dollars going to organizations like yours are spread broadly across many funders, with no small group dominating. Diversification here is a numbers game you can actually play: the support is wide, and at least this wide (the public record under-captures the small-funder tail, so the real market is likely broader still).

Confidence: High. *This read is stable and well covered (it holds across resamples of the public record).*

Across the visible institutional grant record, a broad set of funders have backed organizations like yours, and a meaningful share of them have backed more than one. Those repeat funders are the warmest place to start.

Among organizations like yours, a typical institutional grant runs about $20K ($10K to $50K for the middle half), and a large grant in this field starts around $50K, reaching $132K at the top of the range. These are realistic targets drawn from the public record, not aspirations.

Every line in this section is scoped to the visible institutional grant dollars in the public record. The public record over-captures large grants and misses the small-funder and individual-gift tail, so a broad read is conservative and a concentrated read is the one to corroborate.

3. A FUNDER SHORTLIST TO VERIFY

We found about 130 funders that have backed two or more organizations like yours in the public grant record -- the size of the field worth working. Below is a shortlist of 5 to start with, each shown with a real grant it made to an organization like yours. This is a starting shortlist to verify, not a vetted match list: the public record shows each one funds organizations in your field and accepts applications, but it cannot tell you they fit your mission or that they are giving right now. Confirming which actually fit, and which are giving today, is the work that comes next.

Cascade Foundation

National foundations, Open application

Verify first

Already a funder of yours, with about $400,000 (most recent 2023). Has backed 1 organization like yours; typical grant about $99,000, smaller than the roughly $340,000 grant your pipeline needs, so it reads as a fill-in rather than a lead.

Front Range Endowment

National foundations, Open application

Verify first

Backed Gateway Resettlement Services, another Colorado human services nonprofit, with about $150,000 (most recent 2023). Has backed 2 organizations like yours; typical grant about $100,000, smaller than the roughly $340,000 grant your pipeline needs, so it reads as a fill-in rather than a lead.

The Hollis Foundation

National foundations, Open application

Verify first

Backed Bridgeway Youth Advocates, another Colorado human services nonprofit, with about $150,000 (most recent 2023). Has backed 1 organization like yours; typical grant about $150,000, smaller than the roughly $340,000 grant your pipeline needs, so it reads as a fill-in rather than a lead.

Kestrel Foundation

National foundations, Open application

Verify first

Backed Beacon Immigration Law Center, another Colorado human services nonprofit, with about $100,000 (most recent 2022). Has backed 2 organizations like yours; typical grant about $80,000, smaller than the roughly $340,000 grant your pipeline needs, so it reads as a fill-in rather than a lead.

Aldergate Fund

National foundations, Open application

Verify first

Backed Gateway Resettlement Services, another Colorado human services nonprofit, with about $60,000 (most recent 2023). Has backed 1 organization like yours; typical grant about $30,000, smaller than the roughly $340,000 grant your pipeline needs, so it reads as a fill-in rather than a lead.

What This Shortlist Cannot Tell You

Each card above carries a verification status -- Verify first, Verify but size-fit unclear, Cultivate before applying, Hold until live cycle is confirmed, or Public-record lead only -- and one the public record cannot assign on its own: Remove if live evidence does not hold. This is a starting shortlist to verify, not a vetted match list. The public record cannot tell you:

- whether these funders are giving this year, not just historically
- whether your mission fits their current priorities
- whether the cycle is open now
- whether staff time should be committed before cultivation happens

Turning this shortlist into a verified pursuit path requires live verification of current cycle behavior, current priorities, mission fit, and pursue / cultivate / remove decisions.

The funding ecosystems Sharke would map

Your shortlist above is the verifiable slice of a wider landscape. One way to see that landscape is as a handful of ecosystems, not all worth pursuing, but together they show where the strongest opportunities tend to sit:

National foundations: Health, human services, family, and independent foundations that give nationally.

State funding: Colorado state agencies and grant programs aligned with your work.

Federal funding: the Administration for Children and Families, HHS, and related programs that fund work in human services.

Community foundations: Regional funders aligned with your work. In Colorado, the public grant record shows 4 that fund organizations like yours, including Community Foundation of the Rockies, Mile-High Community Foundation.

Corporate giving: Corporate foundations and employee-giving programs, especially companies with a presence in your region.

Strategic relationships: Peer organizations, coalitions, and networks that open doors to invite-only funding, the opportunities that never appear in a public database.

4. THE PIPELINE IT WOULD TAKE

If grants are to carry about half of your roughly $2.7M in funding, the annual grant target is about $1.4M. Kept below the level where any single grant carries too much of the budget, that points to a handful of larger, repeatable grants a year, with the application and funder pipeline that feeds them running several times larger, because not every application converts and not every grant renews.

Target	What it means
About $1.4M a year from grants	Grants carrying about half of current funding
About 4 grants won a year	Sized so no single grant tops about 15% of funding
About 24 applications a year	At roughly 6 applications per win (a younger or rebuilding profile)
About 6 applications a quarter	A planning cadence, not a prediction
About 13 funder relationships in cultivation	About 55% of the grant pipeline, since some funders support more than one application

These are planning assumptions using typical grant-seeking odds, not a prediction of awards. The real pipeline is shaped by which funders have a documented path for you right now -- the verification step that turns this plan into a pipeline.

Foundation grants alone, or other ecosystems?

Can foundation grants carry that on their own? A meaningful grant for an organization your size is about $82K to $410K -- 3% to 15% of your funding, large enough to matter without any one grant dominating. Foundation grants in your field typically run about $20K ($10K to $50K for the middle half), reaching about $132K at the top.

The "grant path at your scale" takeaway up top is the verdict these grant sizes point to.

5. WHERE YOU STAND

How does your funding position compare to organizations like you, and which way are you trending? Each read below is your own filing measured against a sample of your field, and only the comparisons where you sit clearly off the field median are shown (a typical-for-your-field measure is left out rather than dressed up).

- Your funding model is more contributed-reliant than about 78% of human-services nonprofits in the 1M-3M revenue range: roughly 98% of your revenue is contributed (donations, grants and events) rather than earned. That is a model fingerprint, not a concentration verdict; how many distinct funders carry that line is read from your own public-support test, not this comparison.
- You are losing ground relative to your field: revenue is trending about -13% a year while human-services nonprofits in the 1M-3M revenue range are growing about +9% a year (you are below about 98% of them on this measure). That is not a verdict on the organization; it means the next funding cycle has to be built deliberately, not treated as a list of possible grants.
- Your flexible cushion is thinner than about 88% of human-services nonprofits in the 1M-3M revenue range: about 1 months of unrestricted runway, against a field median near 9 months. This is the cushion to watch.

Comparisons are drawn from a sample of about 50 human-services nonprofits in the 1M-3M revenue range with multi-year public filings. A measure is suppressed where the field sample is too thin to be honest (fewer than 12 usable peers).

6. YOUR REAL CUSHION

How much real, flexible time do you have to act? Not all reserves are equal. This ladder moves from the widest read (everything on the balance sheet) to the narrowest (the money you could actually spend tomorrow), all from your own 2024 Form 990 (monthly operating cost about $221K). The unrestricted rung is usually the one that matters most: it is the cushion the board can actually redirect.

Reserve	Months of operating cost	What it is
Total reserves ($1.2M)	about 6 months	everything on the balance sheet, including property and restricted funds (the widest, least-flexible read)
Unrestricted reserves ($290K)	about 1 months	net assets without donor restrictions, the money the board can actually redirect
Cash on hand ($292K)	about 1 months	cash and short-term investments, the strictest liquidity floor

About **77% of your reserves are restricted or locked** and cannot absorb a sudden shock; the unrestricted rung above is the cushion that actually flexes. The gap between the total and unrestricted rungs is the part of the cushion you cannot freely redirect.

READ YOUR RUNWAY AS A DECISION CLOCK, NOT A GRADE

This is a short clock -- about 1 months of unrestricted runway -- so build and verify the next funding path now, before choices become reactive. And the clock is moving: revenue is trending down about 13% a year, so the window narrows on its own, before the cushion is even touched. The question is whether the funding path is being verified while leadership still has time to choose.

These figures are your own filing. Where you stand against organizations like you is Section 5 above.

7. THE DECISION BEFORE THE NEXT FUNDING CYCLE

If your top one or two funders changed priorities tomorrow, how would your mission continue?

You cannot control whether your largest funders change priorities.

You can control whether your organization is already building the funding that comes next.

About 98% of your revenue is contributed (gifts and grants) rather than earned -- the part of your funding most exposed when a funder or donor changes course. And they do: in 2025 the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative wound down entire grant programs, and organizations that had planned around those renewals were told the funding would not continue (across the sector that year roughly half of nonprofits reported losing grant funding). The narrower the set of funders behind that contributed share, the more a single pivot matters -- which is exactly what the funder market read and the shortlist help you get ahead of.

This review measures how prepared your organization's funding appears to be today, and points to the verified grants and funders that strengthen tomorrow's funding path. The strongest organizations reduce that uncertainty by continuously building and verifying the funding that comes next, before they need it.

The decision the next cycle has to make:

- Which funders to pursue first
- Which funders to cultivate before an application is sent
- Which funders to remove if live evidence does not hold

Recommendations

1 Build the funder pipeline ahead of need

WHY IT MATTERS

Most applications do not convert and over half of grant funding does not renew, so a viable pipeline cultivates several times more funder relationships than the grants it wins.

FIRST ACTION

Open conversations with the open-application funders in the shortlist that already back organizations like yours, then add relationships toward the funder-pipeline target in the Pipeline Funding Viability Assessment.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

A warm, growing pipeline of funders who know you before the application window opens.

2 Manage the grant pipeline to a number

WHY IT MATTERS

A grant target sized to about half your funding points to a handful of repeatable wins a year, fed by a planned application cadence.

FIRST ACTION

Adopt the planning model in Section 4 as a working plan, owned by one person, and track applications against the quarterly cadence.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

A predictable funding pipeline leadership can watch tracking against the next cycle.

The First Verified Work Order

The next move is not to build the whole pipeline at once. It is to turn this review into the first verified work order: the first 3 to 5 funders checked for live fit, current cycle behavior, relationship requirements, and pursue / cultivate / remove decisions. Within one week, Sharke returns the first readout and surfaces better-fit opportunities where the public-record shortlist does not hold.

Verify the first 3 to 5 funders: pursue / cultivate / remove decisions returned in the first one-week readout.

HOW SHARKE HELPS

Sharke helps nonprofit leaders continuously strengthen the future funding behind their mission: verifying today's funding path, identifying where it is vulnerable, and surfacing the verified grants and funders that make the organization less dependent on any single source over time, so the funding behind your mission is not dependent on hope.

APPENDIX: THE FULL RECORD

The body of this review is the synthesis. This appendix shows the underlying calculations in full, for the board members and finance staff who want to see the work.

Your own record (from your IRS Form 990)

Funding concentration	98% of revenue is contributed (donations, grants and events) rather than earned, typical for an organization funded mainly by philanthropy. The public-support test at 97% shows a broad base of support, not reliance on a few funders.
Funding trajectory	Total revenue is trending down, about -13% a year across 2021 to 2024
Financial resilience	About 6 months of spending covered by net assets
Fundraising return	About $13 raised for every $1 of fundraising expense
Public-charity standing	Public-support test at 97%, 64 points above the 33% threshold

The full peer comparison

Your filing against a sample of organizations like you on every measure, including the ones where you sit about typical (the body above only calls out where you are clearly off the field).

Measure	You	Field median	Where you sit
Unrestricted runway	about 1 months	about 9 months	lower than about 88% of the field
Cash runway	about 1 months	about 3 months	lower than about 82% of the field
Contributed share of revenue	about 98%	about 83%	higher than about 78% of the field
Revenue trend	about -13% a year	about +9% a year	lower than about 98% of the field

The funder market, in detail

- **Funders backing organizations like you:** about 340 in the public grant record, of which about 130 have backed two or more (the repeat funders, the ones most worth pursuing).
- **Typical grant sizes in your field:** $10K (25th percentile), $20K (median), $50K (75th), $132K (90th).

The peer set and what the public record can show

- **Your field cohort:** human-services nonprofits in the 1M-3M revenue range, a sample of about 50 with multi-year public filings.
- **Sources:** IRS Forms 990 (your filings and your peers'), and the public institutional grant record (IRS Schedule I).
- **What the public record CAN show:** your own financial position, your field's distribution, and which funders have given to organizations like you.
- **What it CANNOT show:** whether a funder fits your mission, whether a funder is giving this year (there is no current-year signal), or the small-funder and individual-gift tail (the record under-captures it). Funder

names are candidates to verify, not vetted matches. None of this is tax advice.

Draft for review. Every figure is drawn from public IRS filings and the public institutional grant record. This is a funding-position and pipeline read, not a financial-health verdict, a win prediction, or tax advice. Funder names are funders you can research and approach, not a statement of mission fit or current giving.