grant. One-year grants are still the most common, but an increasing number of funders are giving out multiyear grants. Again, one is not better than the other. What matters is that the length of the grant fits the goals of the project.

All grantmakers want their grants to succeed, but oftentimes they withdraw funding before the programs have had a chance to take hold. One year is enough time to start a program but usually it is not enough time to stabilize it. Today, multiyear grants are typically given for three years, but there is nothing magical about that number. Three years may be a reasonable time for many new programs, but a very ambitious program may need more sustained support before it is stabilized.

In the early years of the Marshall Fund, Maxine and Jonathan Marshall shied away from giving multiyear grants. Over the years, however, they gained confidence in their ability to monitor multiyear grants with the same vigilance that they gave to one-year grants. “We give out the money in 6-month installments,” says Maxine. “That way we can keep tabs on how the organizations are doing and whether they’ve run into any problems. We also require grantees to submit written progress reports every 12 months to see whether the organizations have run into any problems. Some foundations also make interim visits to the organization but our system has worked well for us.”

**TIP ➣** In your first year of grantmaking, it is probably best to limit your grants to 1 year. Once you have a better understanding of the field and feel more at home with the grantmaking routine, you may consider giving multiyear grants.

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**fig 5**
What Grantmakers Commonly Require Grantseekers to Include in Applications

- One-page cover letter, including a brief description of the project, its cost, specific amount requested in the proposal, names of other foundations applied to, and name of a contact person;
- Proposal narrative with an executive summary, need statement, project description (including evaluation, project budget, fact sheet for applicant, conclusion);
- Appendix;
- Copy of most recent tax-exemption letter indicating 501(c)(3) status;
- Current list of board members and their affiliations;
- Current list of staff and their qualifications to lead and manage project; and
- Supplementary materials (annual reports, videos, brochures, or published articles). If you do not want to receive these materials, say so.

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**TIP ➣** Regional Associations of Grantmakers (RAGs) have begun to publish common grant application forms that grantmakers can use. The forms are easy for grantmakers to adapt to their uses, and make applying far easier for grantseekers. A list of RAGs can be found at www.rag.org.

**TIP ➣** Make life easier for your board members by requiring grantseekers to submit proposals in a standardized format. State your requirements regarding paper size, spacing, use of bulleted items, and placement of page numbers. In reading through proposals, trustees often want to pull out some pages for reference later. For that reason, it’s better to have applicants secure proposals with elastic bands or sturdy paper clips rather than putting them in binders or folders.