

Grant Seeking-Three Steps to Enhance Your Success

Grant seeking has become harder during the current economic times. Successful applicants have become more informed, more innovative in presenting applications for their proposed programs, and very attentive to the exchange of information between grantors and grantees. The following is my overview of what I gained from the comments of the four presenters at McGill, Power, Bell & Associates' seminar on Grant Writing: Two Perspectives – Applicant and Grantor.

Identify target sources of funding:

- Identify “givers” who fund your geographic region
- Determine what types of programs they fund; the needs of the organization should parallel the objectives of the giver
- Forget about mass mailing; develop a funding source ranking sheet and concentrate efforts on fewer sources of funding
- Generate strategies for obtaining support from target organizations
 - Identify good contacts and cultivate opportunities
 - Research the correlation between your mission and the giver’s mission
 - Contact other grantees – what worked for them?
 - Communicate personally when there is an opportunity. Remember that grantors are “people” giving to “people”

Completing the grant application:

- Adhere to a grantor’s guidelines; completing the application as instructed could be the “make” or “break” of the proposal
- Be informative, when opportunity allows, about your own organization
- Include all appropriate parties in the process and make sure they are knowledgeable about the request; you never know when, where or with whom the grant proposal may be discussed
- Follow up on the application and offer more information if needed
- Keep the giver aware of changes that occur after the application is submitted
- Ask for feedback on rejected grant proposals

Selling the proposal:

- Present your proposal in a format that not only meets the grantor’s criteria, but identifies the proposed project as an expansion or an integral complement of the organization’s principal activities;- Grantor agencies want commitment and long-term benefits from the expenditure of their funds..
- Be creative; For example, does partnering with another organization increase the cost to benefit ratio of the proposal?
- Present your financial circumstance completely, accurately and favorably; incorporate elements of the organization’s business plan, cash flow capabilities, and long-term goals in the proposal
- Show internal commitment; document possible in-kind match services or revenue, and outline fund-raising plans that will assist with sustaining the proposed project
- Document how the proposed project will enhance past or current achievements, and emphasize other positive result that will come from the funded program.
- Ask for in-kind gifts (products or equipment) in lieu of cash; the request to the right organization at the right time could reap unusual benefits to your organization
- Outline proposed “visibility” opportunities for the grantor; some grantors may request no acknowledgement of their gift, but others want recognition

I hope the above information enhances your grant seeking opportunities.

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