

Corporate and Foundation Giving

Strategies for Successful Grant Seeking

1. Assess your project

- ✓ Who is leading this project?
- ✓ Who will benefit from the results?
- ✓ What need are you addressing?
- ✓ What are your goals & objectives?
- ✓ When will the project begin? When will it end?
- ✓ Where will the project take place?
- ✓ Where are the beneficiaries of the project?
- ✓ Why is this project important?
- ✓ Why are you the best person/organization to undertake this project?
- ✓ Why should the funder provide support?
- ✓ How will you accomplish your goals & objectives? Is this doable?
- ✓ How much will this cost?
- ✓ How will you evaluate your success?

2. Identify potential funders

Typical resources for identifying funders

- ✓ Word of mouth, newspaper articles, sponsors
- ✓ On line search engines and databases
- ✓ Corporate / foundation directories
- ✓ Past donors
- ✓ Board / staff contacts
- ✓ Prospecting sessions
- ✓ Chronicle of Philanthropy
- ✓ The Foundation Center
- ✓ Local businesses
- ✓ Funders' websites

Qualify the Funders

- ✓ Identify those with the highest potential.
- ✓ Study the web site or printed publications of your most promising prospects.
- ✓ Consider the funder's grant making approach. How does it think problems are best solved?
- ✓ How are decisions made? Does it use peer reviews?
- ✓ Are there funding cycles or deadlines?
- ✓ What is the preferred mode of applying? How does the funder want to be contacted?
- ✓ Are there any special instructions?
- ✓ How does your program fit with the funder's interests?
- ✓ What is the amount of total giving? For how many grants?
- ✓ What is the range of grant amounts? What is the average size grant?

- ✓ What is your organization's history with this grant maker?

3. Initiate Contact

Phone calls, visits, email, letters of inquiry

- ✓ **Show that you've done your homework.**
 - Review available information about the funder.
 - Demonstrate why this funder will be interested in this project.
- ✓ **Be substantive**
 - Describe the need concisely and clearly present the proposed solution.
 - Avoid jargon, boosterism, and flowery subjective statements that can't be supported by facts or others' statements.
 - Be factual and persuasive.
- ✓ **Keep it short**
 - Be direct.
 - Respect funders' time constraints. Don't just call or visit to "talk."
 - Letters of Inquiry generally are 1-3 pages; often, the funder will indicate a page limit. Do not go over that limit!
- ✓ **Excite the funder**
 - Interest the funder into wanting to learn more about your project.
 - Be compelling.
- ✓ **Answer the "5W's and H"**
 - Describe the project, and its impact, succinctly and clearly.
 - Assume the funder is not familiar with your idea.
- ✓ **Bonus points**
 - Your project benefits many people.
 - You propose a novel approach.
 - Your project is a partnership, conducted collaboratively with others.
 - Your project is inclusive of those you plan to help.
 - You can demonstrate institutional or community support.
 - The grant will leverage additional support.
 - The work will continue after the foundation grant has ended.
 - Others will replicate your project.

4. Prepare Proposals

Ten tips for preparing grant applications

- ✓ Follow directions.
- ✓ Answer all the questions completely.
- ✓ Use a clear writing style.
- ✓ Assume your readers know nothing about the project or organization.
- ✓ Demonstrate how you are solving a community problem.
- ✓ Give concrete examples.
- ✓ Show what sets you apart from others.
- ✓ Be specific about the support your partners/collaborators will provide.
- ✓ Be honest.
- ✓ Ask for assistance from the funder.

Typical proposal outline

- ✓ Cover letter
- ✓ Title page/table of contents
- ✓ Abstract/summary
- ✓ Statement of need
- ✓ Project activity
- ✓ Outcomes & Evaluation
- ✓ Credentials
- ✓ Dissemination
- ✓ Budget
- ✓ Enclosures

Typical Enclosures

- ✓ IRS letter / Proof of non-profit status / 501 (c) (3) status
- ✓ List of volunteers/board members and their affiliations
- ✓ Proof of accreditation
- ✓ Project Budget
- ✓ Audited financial statements or operating budget
- ✓ Letters of support / news articles
- ✓ Resumes
- ✓ Financials (990, audited financial statement, budgets)
- ✓ Diagrams or schematics, if applicable
- ✓ University administrative endorsement

5. Follow through

What happens after "NO"

- ✓ Don't despair
- ✓ Review rejection letter for clues
- ✓ Call for advice / be gracious
- ✓ Keep them posted

What happens after "YES"

- ✓ Acknowledgements
 - Thank you letters
 - Receipts
- ✓ Communication
 - Reports
 - News articles
 - Phone calls/emails when appropriate
- ✓ Recognition
 - Donor lists
 - Press releases
 - Special events
 - Mementos/plaques
 - Recognition on website
- ✓ Evaluation
 - Interim and financial reports
 - Narrative and budget