The Secrets of Successful Grant Writing

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Hello!

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Why Write Grants?

- Provide support for activities in the organization
- Develop new initiatives
- Expand opportunities to train staff and students
- Support training and research activities
- Develop and advance scientific knowledge in the field
- Legitimize your projects
- Enhance your organization’s prestige
- Advance your professional career

(Gitlin & Lyons, 2004)

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Basic Formula

Fundable Idea
+
Right Funder
+
Strategically Written Proposal

=
Types of Support

- Operating funds (general support, unrestricted funds)
- Special projects
- Research
- Capacity building
- Capital or Equipment
- Endowments

(Carlson, 2002)
The Proposal Process

- Developing a clear plan
- Researching funders thoroughly
- Building a relationship with funders
- Targeting your proposal carefully
- Writing a concise proposal

(Carlson, 2002)
Developing a Clear Project Plan

Questions to ask:

- What new projects is your organization planning for the next 2-3 years?
- Which of these projects are compatible with your organization’s mission & purpose?
- What is unique about the project?
- What community needs does the project address?
- Do you have the expertise to carry out the project?
Fundable Ideas:
What’s Hot and What’s Not

HOT
• Community & home-based service models
• New health care models (cost-effective patient outcomes)
• Underserved populations
• Innovative use of technology
• Chronic disease self-management
• Workforce issues
• Informal care giving
• Interdisciplinary approaches to service, research
• Innovative health promotion, disease prevention programs
• Self-sufficiency

NOT
• Hospital-based systems
• Uni-discipline service & research programs
• Exclusion of women and diverse ethnic groups
• Research with little clinical applicability
• Large overheads
• Operating costs
• Programs needing continued support

(Gitlin & Lyons, 2004)
Fundable Ideas: Questions to Ask

- Is this idea stimulating and important enough to warrant additional planning and research?
- Does the idea reflect contemporary thinking in the field?
- Does the idea have long-term potential that can be expanded upon?
- Does the idea fit into the goals of my organization?

(Gitlin & Lyons, 2004)
Turning Good Ideas Into Fundable Proposals

- What community need does the plan address?  ➔  Statement of Need
- What would an improved community situation look like?  ➔  Goals & Objectives
- What can your organization do to improve the situation?  ➔  Methods
- How will you determine if your project has been successful?  ➔  Evaluation
- How much will the project cost?  ➔  Budget
- How will the project be funded in the future?  ➔  Sustainability

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Finding the Right Funder

Undertake a search of grant makers who:

- Are interested in the general area(s) that your idea encompasses (e.g., elderly, housing, poverty, health)
- Fund the kind of program you wish to propose (e.g., seed money, research, capital support)
- Accept unsolicited proposals
- Give money in amounts that will allow you to develop your project
WRITING YOUR PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL COMPONENTS:

• Statement of Need
• Goals & Objectives
• Methods
• Organization Description
• Evaluation
• Budget
• Sustainability
Statement of Need

• WHO is in need?
• WHERE is the need?
• WHAT is the need?
• WHY does the need occur?
  – What evidence do you have to support your claim?
  – What are the consequences of meeting the need?
  – How is the need linked to your organization?

(Carlson, 2002)
Goals & Objectives

• **A GOAL** is a broad-based statement of the ultimate result of the implementation of the program.
  – *Ex.:* To enhance the quality of life of isolated seniors living in the community.

• **OBJECTIVES** are more narrowly defined than goals – they are measurable, time-specific results that the organization expects to accomplish as a part of the grant.
  – *Ex.:* The XYZ Organization will reach 200 isolated elders in the community (by implementing its Elder Outreach program).
Objectives

Objectives should be:
- stated in quantifiable terms
- stated in terms of outcomes (not methods)
- clearly identify the population/group being served
- realistic and capable of being accomplished within the timeframe indicated
- tied to the statement of need

(Carlson, 2002)
METHODS

METHODS are:

• the detailed description of how you will achieve the ends specified in the objectives

• also frequently referred to as activities or strategies

• tied to what you’re asking funding for (e.g., staff, equipment)

• need to specify the timeline of the project and who will carry it out
Organizational Description/Background

- Provides information on who you are and what you do
- Establishes credibility
- Gets funders interested in your organization – ultimately they fund the organization, not just the program you’re proposing
- Reassures reviewers that you are fiscally sound and capable of implementing the proposed project
Organizational Description/Background

• Explain why and when your organization was founded; its philosophy and reason for existing

• Describe what you do – your mission

• Target population(s) served and current programs

• Use testimonials/data to increase credibility, if appropriate

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EVALUATION

How will you know that your program is successful?

• Did the project accomplish what was expected?
• Was an impact made on the need that was specified?
• Did you carry out the program as described?
EVALUATION

QUANTITATIVE MEASURES (examples):
- Numbers of people served
- Increase in referrals
- Decrease in emergency visits
- Pre-/post-intervention measures; follow-up measures

QUALITATIVE MEASURES (examples):
- Opinions/feelings of participants
- Satisfaction measures
- Approximate indicators that clients are moving in the right direction
BUDGET

• Establish the budget period/length of time the budget covers
• Estimate expenses – obtain real figures whenever possible
• Make sure the requested budget is in line with the proposal (don’t “pad” it with extras that your organization wants)
• Indicate in-kind/donated goods & services, if appropriate
• Include a Budget Justification that explains how and why the budget is organized
SUSTAINABILITY

➢ Funders want to fund projects that will live past the initial funding period; they do not want to fund something that is totally reliant on their funds for survival.

Future funding can come from a variety of sources:

- Other grants
- Annual campaigns/fundraising
- Corporate support
- Fee for service/insurance
- Sale of items/activities
The Ten Commandments of Good Grant Writing

I. Have a creative, unique & fundable idea.
II. Be able to support why your project should be funded and why you are the one that can do it.
III. Write a proposal that is logical and explicitly outlines what you are going to do.
IV. Be concise, use specific language; don’t use jargon.
V. Write with passion and enthusiasm about your project – if you’re not excited about it, no one else will be!
Ten Commandments continued

VI. Call funders in advance of sending in a proposal – don’t waste your or their time by sending in a proposal that doesn’t meet their guidelines.

VII. Follow funders’ instructions exactly.

VIII. Make sure your budget follows the goals/objectives/methods. Don’t throw “extras” in and hope they won’t be noticed!

IX. Proof-read, proof-read, proof-read!

X. Don’t be discouraged if/when you get turned down – just keep trying … you WILL succeed!