



The World of Grants

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The Grant Seeking World can appear to be quite confusing and justifiably so. As you strive to gain grant funding, this world seems perplexing and complex.

The Grant Seeking World demands that all the staff (not just the grant writer) work hard toward a fundraising goal. All parties attempting to get a program funded with a grant need to understand that:

1. Awards are contractual agreements with specific conditions and are NOT unrestricted gifts.
2. Competitions are cyclical and the submission deadlines are not negotiable
3. Applications and procedures are many times complex, detailed and quite lengthy
4. Acquisition of new grant funds most often involves a lengthy span of time and intensive team work.
5. Timely data collection and accurate baseline data are required for measurable outcomes.
6. Internal program reviews are a key component of effective and successful grant program development and implementation.

But most importantly, all administration and staff (not just the development staff) need to know all the requirements of the World of Grants because FUND development is necessary for the success of any mission.

In the next few pages you will find a short tour through the World of Grants with the pros and cons listed for each category of granting agencies.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS:

PROS:

- There is something for everyone! The Federal Register's Table of Contents reveals that the federal government has a grant for any and all types of nonprofit agencies or organizations that exist and this information can be easily located through the Federal Register or Grants.gov.
- Many are multi-year contracts
- Applications are scored (on a points system) by peer reviewers and contracts go to the agency that scores the highest.

CONS:

- ✗ Have strict guidelines and requirements
- ✗ Grantees are required to collect and report extensive information on participant qualifications and performance indicators
- ✗ Data collection requirements and fiscal administrative regulations must be adhered to strictly
- ✗ The average federal grant is very lengthy and requires many hard working hours.

- ✘ All staff needs to plan together to formulate the program, collect necessary information for the grant which requires on the average three to six months to prepare for the grant
- ✘ Competition for federal grants is fierce because of political climate and fiscal cutbacks at the federal level.
- ✘ Require programs to be planned on currently recognized “best practices” and on documented demonstration models
- ✘ Some government grants limit the amount of funds that can be spent for the purchase of equipment.

STATE GOVERNMENT GRANTS:

PROS:

- Wide range of grants available and many are for multiple year contracts
- Many announcements are public records placed on each states website
- Free grant related newsletters and announcement via email
- Less rigorous and demanding than federal government grants in the areas of data collection and documentation.

CONS:

- ✘ Political influences play a significant role (so get to know your state representatives)
- ✘ Most are federal “pass through” money and grantees are then federal grant “sub-grantees” and must abide by all the requirements of the federal agency giving the original grant to the state
- ✘ Most require strict fiscal management and have regulations that must be followed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS:

PROS:

- Usually for special, short term and/or emergency projects
- Local and City funds are solicited through a publicly advertised competitive application process
- Many competitions are annual and some offer multi year contracts
- Sometimes offer free e-mail notices of upcoming events
- Many do not require comprehensive baseline data to support need statements or subsequent increases in performance measures

CONS:

- ✘ Smaller pots of money to draw from
- ✘ Scored by paid staff members and submitted to public officials or politically appointed boards
- ✘ Political connections can play a substantial role in receiving funds
- ✘ Need to include letters of support from influential local politicians and community leaders

CORPORATE AND PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS:

PROS:

- Donate millions of dollars a year to a wide range of funding needs (seed money, capital campaigns, challenge grants, program funds, demonstration models, planning projects, staff development, research projects and much more)

- Less restrictive data requirements
- Simpler applications processes
- Program flexibility
- Encourage creative and innovative solutions to community problems

CONS:

- ✱ **People give money to People, not institutions...** create working relationships that create trust between your organization and the foundation staff members.
- ✱ Most often will fund programs and projects that demonstrate a solution to a community need
- ✱ Your program must fit their funding priorities exactly by their standards.
- ✱ A complete Grant Search must be conducted to locate the foundations because most are not well advertised
- ✱ Applicants are usually expected to provide matching dollars and/or in-kind donations to support the proposed program
- ✱ Funding priorities may change at any time and with no prior notice so you must keep up-to-date on each granting agencies interests.

THE “GRANT OFFICE” IS MORE THAN GRANT PROPOSAL WRITING...

Grant development requires that all staff work together on the following efforts:

- ✓ Initiating and building an internal communication network between all staff members
- ✓ Staff training on grant seeking requirements
- ✓ Team efforts to develop and submit proposals
- ✓ Team effort on processing all grant applications
- ✓ Searches for appropriate funding opportunities
- ✓ Relationship building with funding sources
- ✓ Ongoing program monitoring of all grant contracts and expenditures
- ✓ Annual internal program reviews and audits
- ✓ Submission of timely performance and fiscal reports
- ✓ Oversight of data collection (base line data, report data, quantitative and qualitative data for program evaluation)
- ✓ Record maintenance of all email and grant associated correspondence
- ✓ Record maintenance of all grant applications, contracts, reporting requirements

The grant seeking process cannot be left up to the grant proposal writer but instead **MUST** be a collaborative effort between all department staff, administrative staff and all organizational staff and volunteers. It takes a “whole village” to get grant funding and to maintain it for the life of your mission.

RESOURCE:

Rebecca Vermillion Shawver, MPA, Director of Grant Administration, Brazosport College, Lake Jackson, Texas, Charity Channel, Grant and Foundations Review newsletter