

FIELD NOTES



DON'T TAKE GRANTS FOR GRANTED

With the need for many organizations' services increasing the competition for grant funds is shaping up to be more competitive than ever. How can you maximize your grant income and make your organization stand out?

FIVE STEPS TO SUCCESSFULLY SECURING GRANTS

- 1. Stay in touch.** Just as with individual donors, relationships are key. Communicate with previous and current funders to let them know how important their support has been and how your organization is working to meet increased community needs. Be honest about your organization's needs. Make sure all reports on previous grants are up to date.
- 2. Do your research.** Check foundation websites or call their offices to be sure the program you are proposing fits the foundation's priorities. Sometimes foundations change priorities based on economic conditions, community priorities or a change in leadership.
- 3. Follow the guidelines.** Use the format the foundation requests and attach all required documents. Foundations may choose not to consider incomplete applications.
- 4. Strengthen your proposals.** Make your case as compelling as

possible by talking about the urgency of the community's needs for your services and your capacity for meeting those needs. Show how the program you are proposing is faithful, not tangential, to your mission. Be sure to state specific outcomes of your program and how you will measure their accomplishment. Demonstrate the impact your program will have on the community and have a solid evaluation plan in place.

Imagine yourself in the shoes of a program officer. It's midnight and she's been reviewing proposals for 12 hours straight. Yours is the twelfth one in the stack. How are you going to get her attention? How are you going to get her to fall in love with your organization's mission?

- 5. Submit early.** Get your proposal in well ahead of the deadline instead of waiting until the last minute, when your request is likely to be buried among hundreds of others.

GRANTS ARE ONLY ONE PART OF YOUR FUNDING MIX

It is dangerous to rely on a grant as your only source of funding. Make sure you have a diversified fundraising plan, where grant-awarded money comprises no more than 20% of your fundraising goals. Grants are rarely long-term funding. So while they are an important part of your funding mix, a healthy attitude is to view any grant as a welcome bonus to your organization.

WE CAN HELP

In a time when many organizations' fund development staff are stretched to the limit, it can be difficult to find the time and energy needed to research and develop high quality grant proposals. Donor By Design can help—whether it's for a letter of intent, a full proposal, a corporate sponsorship request, prospect research, or ongoing help with proposal development and writing. Grants services are available by project or retainer and can include our Quick Start Grants Package, which is a scan of 15-20 local and national foundations/corporate foundations that have the best potential to be a strong match for your organization and a personalized proposal template for your organization or campaign.

Need a little help with your grant process? Contact us: info@donorbydesign.com

