

CHECK THESE OUT...



Grants.Gov- Federally sponsored web site that allows you to receive grant opportunity notices according to identified target areas of interest

http://www.grants.gov/appllicants/email_subscription.jsp

USA.gov for Nonprofits- Links to information and resources to federal grant opportunities

<http://www.usa.gov/Business/Nonprofit.shtml>

Foundation Center-Grant Seeking Assistance for Nonprofit Organizations- Information and registration for researching and identifying sources of funding

<http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/individuals/>

Issue 15

focus

● Issue 15 2012

TOPIC WATCH

Each month we will feature a different topic; expanding the knowledge, resources, and peer networking in targeted areas. These target areas will include workforce development, transition, supported education, leadership, organizational development, sustainability, and others as they are identified.



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Fundraising: Locating Resources to Maintain the Mission of the Organization

As the economy has changed, nonprofit organizations have seen and felt the impacts of higher costs, increased population needs, and dwindling resources. Many organizations have been forced to shut their doors or lay off staff in an effort to maintain their operations. Organizations also find themselves competing with their peers, partners and major universities and hospitals for money that was originally considered earmarked for consumer run organizations and their programs. The organizations that survive will need to know what funds are available, how to look for them, and how to secure them. This Focus and those that follow in the upcoming months will feature information, resources, and tips on how to research, locate, and secure funds.

Fundraising is a fairly straightforward field—even the name is plain and simple. We need money, and to get it, we have to raise it. People often think of nonprofit fundraising as small special events, like lemonade stands or bake sales, or collecting a lot of donations. In reality, there are many ways to “raise money.” Fundraising includes multiple approaches to acquiring funds to assist nonprofit organizations in meeting the goals of their mission and vision. It is any activity undertaken to generate revenue, including: 1) grants and contracts, 2) charitable giving, and 3) events. While there may be overlap in methods and resources, these approaches each warrant attention as a potential way to provide for your organization’s sustainability. This month we will focus on the most popular way for organizations to garner money for their everyday operations and to support targeted programs and activities: grants.

Grants

A grant is a form of financial aid that does not need to be repaid. They are typically given to organizations that demonstrate a need for their services among their population of focus, a financial need, and organizational capacity to provide positive outcomes.

Organizations can solicit funds through grants from a variety of sources. Sources might include the federal, state, and local government; small and large businesses; foundations; the United Way; religious organizations; professional associations and unions; and other nonprofit organizations.

There are generally two types of grants: solicited and unsolicited. Solicited grants are opportunities associated with "Invitations to Bid" and "Requests for Proposals" where the grantor seeks proposals from eligible entities to undertake a particular scope of work that it has de-

finied. Unsolicited grants are those opportunities in which an organization directly solicits the grantor for funds to undertake a scope of work it has defined that is relevant to the purpose and objectives of the potential grantor.



Grants can be very helpful to an organization as a means to generate resources to supplement its core funding and help achieve its mission. However, the key is to secure grant funding that supports the agency's operation and does not require significant additional operational obligations (especially obligations that are not directly connected to the agency's mission). In other words, a grant should fit the organization's mission. Also, grants typically contain a hidden obstacle, namely, they are often time limited and are not recurring. For example, they may be for a set amount of dollars for a specified amount of time, such as a year or three years.

Where Do You Find Grants?

The internet makes locating grants and foundations that support targeted missions and populations more convenient.

- 1) You can search the internet with key words and add the "+grants" or "+funding" after the key word. For example "mental health consumer +funding" or "mental health partnerships +grants". You will be offered links that match or closely match your query. Please note that not all matches will be relevant. Some may be old grant announcements or programs for which you are not eligible. You will need to sort through them to locate viable funding options for your organization. Some other key search terms that might be helpful include:
 - a. Nonprofit funding +mental illness
 - b. Community partnerships +grants
 - c. Community outreach grants +mental health
 - d. Organization funding +mental illness
 - e. Mental health consumer program grants
 - f. Mental health funding +foundations
 - g. Finding grant dollars
- 2) You can also sign up for free announcements regarding the availability of funding. These usually come as weekly newsletters to your email. Again, to locate these opportunities, you can search using key terms, such as "nonprofit funding news," "grant funding notifications," or "subscribe to grant releases."



Tips for Locating Grant and Foundation Dollars

There are several things you can do to improve the likelihood that you will locate funding opportunities that will match your organizational needs.

- Make researching funding opportunities a priority within your organization. It is unlikely that you will learn about funding opportunities by waiting for them.
- Assign someone the responsibility of maintaining a database or spreadsheet of funding opportunities, funding agencies or programs, and the basic information about opportunities, such as eligibility, requirements, and due dates.
- Set a regular schedule for checking or searching the internet for opportunities. For example, you might check every Monday morning. It is important to check regularly on the same day to ensure you do not miss the announcement of an opportunity.
- Sign up for every free notification that you can find. Make sure this all is done through the assigned person so you are not duplicating one another's work or missing something because you assumed someone else got it.
- Review funding opportunities regularly with your Board to determine which ones warrant the investment of application time.
- Collaborate with other organizations that serve the same population to see if they are willing to partner on grant opportunities. Offer to write them into those that you apply for, including money and targeted activities that they would be responsible for and request that they do the same. This will help minimize your competition and create opportunities of partnerships that result in actual program dollars.

Key Words and Acronyms:

ITN: Intent to Negotiate – this is an invitation for specific organizations to apply for available funding and is not generally open to those not on the invitee list.

RFP: Request for Proposals – this is a funding availability announcement that specifies the funding, eligibility, and application requirements.

RFA: Request for Applications – this is the same as the RFP.



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