

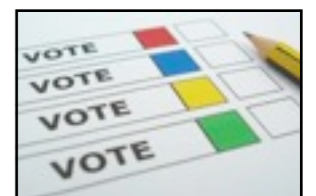
# Winning Grants

Finding and Approaching Foundations  
to Fund Your Nonprofit Organization



# What we'll be covering today

- How to use free tools to find foundations to support your mission
- How storytelling can bring your grant proposal to life
- How to read a foundation's 990
- How to set your organization apart when seeking grant funding
- How to identify which foundations you should be targeting
- Follow-through



# Your first step

Research!

*Prospective Funders*



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The rules governing grantseeking are changing - rapidly. Stay on top of the latest information regarding grantmakers by becoming a GrantStation Member today. Now through August, we are running a summer sale that can only make you smile!

Summer sale prices:

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## Welcome to GrantStation

GrantStation is an online funding resource for organizations seeking grants throughout the world. Providing access to a comprehensive online database of grantmakers, as well as other valuable tools, GrantStation can help your organization make smarter, better-informed fundraising decisions. Learn more about our services below:

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## Online Education

- [FREE Tour of the GrantStation Website](#)  
6/14/2011
- [How to Craft a Proposal to a Foundation](#)  
6/16/2011
- [Conducting a Community Needs Assessment](#)  
6/23/2011

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FoundationSearch America 

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View the top proposals in the [2007 World Proposal Championships](#)

Client Testimonials

*As the executive director of a non-profit organization, I am frugal when it comes to spending money. But I don't have to think at all when it comes to renewing...* [read more](#)

Mark Cole

## Welcome

...to FoundationSearch, North America's leading source of foundation funding information for non-profits.

What's New

[Director Connections](#) (beta) Update: Now discover all director connections between North American Corporations and Foundations

Explore **Director Connections...**



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## Get the Most Out of Foundation Directory Online

Get the most out of your *Foundation Directory Online* subscription by learning tips and tricks for finding funding prospects. The free class *Introduction to Finding Funders* will teach you how to create customized searches to develop lists of prospective foundation and corporate donors that match your organization's funding needs. Register now for classroom sessions coming up in June at our Atlanta, Cleveland, New York, San Francisco, and Washington libraries as well as Salisbury, MD, and several locations in Louisiana. And if you're not near any of those locations, you can attend the live webinar. [Learn more and register»](#)

## Headlines

**Microsoft, Boeing Commit \$50 Million to Washington Scholarship Fund**

With the state matching the contributions from Washington's two largest private employers, the public-private initiative will help low- and middle-income students earn bachelor's

## RFPs

**National Endowment for the Arts Announces New Arts in Media Funding Category**

Grants of up to \$200,000 will be awarded to nonprofits, units of state and local government, and federally recognized tribes working on

# Top tools for the grant seeker on a budget



- Nozasearch
- Guidestar

# Why target small to mid-sized foundations?

## THE CHRONICLE OF PHILANTHROPY

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June 30, 2010

### Small and Midsize Foundations Exceed Payout Requirements in 2009, Study Finds

By Debra E. Blum

Small and mid-sized foundations were more generous to charities than they had to be last year, according to a new study.

More than eight out of 10 small and midsize foundations spent more than the minimum distribution required by law—which is about 5 percent of investment assets each year—according to a study by Foundation Source, a company that provides services for family foundations and other philanthropies.

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SIMILAR ARTICLES



# Other Resources

- Council on Foundations
- Association of Small Foundations
- Your local AFP
- Check to see if your state has a foundation directory

# Remember ...



# Your second step

Organize!

*Save time*



# 10 essential documents your organization should have on hand

1. A copy of the IRS letter confirming your organization's 501(c)(3) status
2. Your annual operating budget and actual income and expenses for most recently completed fiscal year AND for current year-to-date.
3. Three (3) largest funders in the last fiscal year and type of grant and/or master list of awarded grants for last five years





4. Itemized project budget (if applicable) for how this specific grant will be used. Identify each source of revenue, the amount, and whether funds are either committed or pending. If request is for a multi-year grant, include multi-year program budget.
5. Your most recent **AUDITED** financial statement (if budget greater than \$100,000) or Form 990 (if budget between \$25,000 and \$100,000). If neither document is available, include unaudited financial statement.

6. Latest annual report or summary of the organization's prior year activities.
7. Current board list
8. One-paragraph description of key staff, including qualifications relevant to the request.
9. Grantee report (if previously funded).
10. Letters of agreement from any collaborating agencies, if applicable.



# Your third step

Writing!

*Don't forget your reader*



# Components of a typical proposal

- Cover page/executive summary
- Organizational history
- Problem statement
- Strategy and implementation
- Timeline
- Evaluation
- Personnel
- Budgets
- Attachments
- Cover letter

# What are you raising money for?

- General operating funds
- Start up funding
- Capacity building or technical development
- Capital or equipment

# On to proposal writing

The first rule? Don't bore your reader!



# Competition is Fierce!



# The 12/12/12 Rule



# What's a USP?



# One organization's USP

*A USP is different than an organization's mission statement.*

The mission of charity: water is: "charity: water is a non-profit organization bringing clean and safe drinking water to people in developing nations.."

charity: water

Charity:Water's USP to their *donors* is  
"When we started charity: water, we made a bold promise to the general public — 100% of their donations would go directly to the field to fund water projects. Even the credit card fees from your donation today are sponsored so a true 100% goes to people in need."

# Don't forget the human element

*“The most successful development writers take the time to both experience their causes firsthand (sleep in the shelter, go to rehearsals, visit the wilderness) and cultivate personal relationships with their donors (“people give to people”). You'll give yourself an amazing head start when applying for a grant just by following an organization's guidelines and getting your math right—it's surprising how many fundraisers do neither. Make your point once, clearly, and don't forget the human element.”*

Joseph Barbato



# Storytelling

- Get prepared - learn as much about your agency as possible. Shadow a program staffer, talk to clients and donors, spend a day in the field.
- Pull together your data, statistics, testimonials



# Celebrate successes!



*Operation: Kid Equip is not just pencils, paper and books.  
It says to every child, you are loved and valued  
and we believe in your dreams.*

## I. NARRATIVE

### Executive Summary

It was a heart-breaking situation, and one that's seen far too often these days in Southeastern Michigan schools. Little Matthew, just entering the second grade, was mortified. His backpack was leaking and the other students had noticed. What's more his teacher had noticed too and, as she opened his backpack, Matthew was nearly in tears over what the teacher was about to find.

What was in Matthew's backpack?

Milk.

Matthew only drinks half of the milk he receives at lunch. He then tries to save the other half for home. There's no milk at home and, on some evenings, there's no dinner either.

But thanks to *Operation: Kid Equip*, Matthew's teacher was able to visit the well-stocked Teacher's Annex that evening and pick up a brand new backpack and replacement school supplies, free of charge. The next morning when Matthew showed up in class with nothing his teacher gently took him aside to give him all the things she had picked up for him at our warehouse. Matthew's teacher was also able to pick up resources for food assistance to share with Matthew's family. Matthew won't need to conserve his lunch anymore.

Since 2006, *Operation: Kid Equip's* vision has been a community where every child's basic school day needs are met. We accomplish this through our mission of providing free school supplies, books, hygiene and food items for local children in need. We believe that a child's academic achievement should not be constrained by financial inabilities.

# **Keep your focus on**

- **Successful outcomes**
- **Need**
- **Why should the funder care**

# Avoid

- Redundancy
- Jargon
- Over-explaining your methodology



# Your fourth step

Success!



*Funding*



# Your fourth step

Rejected



# **#1 Reason Why Proposals are Rejected**

1. The organization failed to follow the grant application guidelines.

**An amazingly simple way to ensure that  
you follow the guidelines**



1. Write your cover letter ***first***
2. In the body of the letter reference *every single item* requested in the foundation's guidelines. Example: *In addition to our grant proposal enclosed you will find:*
  - *Application cover sheet*
  - *Proposal narrative*
  - *Our 501(c)3 letter*
  - *Our current board listing*
  - *Our current annual budget*
  - *Our most recent annual report*

# Six additional reasons for rejection

2. Are you putting the reader to sleep?
3. Have you done your homework? One of the most common first time errors is over-asking.
4. Have you proofread your proposal?
5. Is the proposal sloppy and difficult to read?
6. Is your proposal filled to the brim with the latest jargon?
7. Does your budget match the narrative?

# How Much Should You Request in Your Grant Proposal? How Much Do You Need?!

“Your unrealistic request can signal to a grantmaker that you are not smart about money or relationships.

When we get a grant request for a large amount when we don't already have an established grantmaking partnership, we question the grantseeker's judgment. We sometimes ask how grantseekers decided upon the size of their ask, and when they say “we saw you gave X to \_\_\_\_\_,” we find that incomprehensible.

How can you possibly know what factors went into that decision? How can you assume your relationship with us merits a similar figure?

With us, and with many other foundations, you are FAR better off to lowball. Make it easy for us to say yes. Exceed our expectations. Be a good investment. Report back to us. And then ASK us what would be a good ballpark figure for the next request.”

We're struggling right now with a request that is five times the size of the previous grant. We would have been pleased to double last year's grant, but our Grants Manager described this request as “a gut punch.”

When we asked “what factors went into this huge leap?” the answer was, “you ‘get’ us, you like us, and we saw what you gave to others.”

Well, we DO like them. We DO get them. But this outrageous request reduced our affection level considerably.” Family Foundation President

# What to do when you're rejected



# **And you will be rejected ...**

In one year the Ford Foundation received 144,000 grant applications and 2,000 grants were made.

**Call the foundation and ask to speak to the program officer who reviewed your proposal**



# **Ask these three simple questions:**

1. Is there anything we could have done differently in our proposal?
2. May we resubmit for your next funding cycle?
3. Are you aware of any other foundations that we might approach?

# **You've been funded- don't forget to follow up!**

- Submit your grant report before the deadline
- Communicate at least once before the grant report is due with a short letter outlining your successes

# Rinse and repeat!



# Resources

- *Storytelling for Grantseekers*, Cheryl A. Clarke
- *How to Write Knockout Proposals: What You Must Know (And Say) to Win Funding Every Time*, Joseph Barbato
- *Grassroots Grants: An Activist's Guide to Grantseeking*, Andy Robinson

# Remember ...

*“It does not happen all at once. There is no instant pudding.”*

W. Edwards Deming



# Key takeaways ...

1. Become a prospecting detective. Research often - on a weekly basis if possible
2. Organize. Keep your records current and keep pdf files as well for online applications
3. Inject storytelling into your grant proposals
4. Be cognizant of what's in it for the funder
5. Follow the guidelines to a T
6. Follow up!



# Questions?

