Grant Writing: Finding Funders, and Writing Effective Proposals

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http://epa.ohio.gov/oee/EnvironmentalEducation.aspx

Two Important
Things to Remember…

#1

- Don't let the funder drive your project! Instead, drive your project proposal to the most appropriate funders.

#2

Start Early!

Getting Started…

A *lot* more time should be spent designing the project than writing the grant proposal.

Getting Started:

How well can you articulate your organization's mission?

Collaborate

- Consider cooperating, not competing!
- Who would be a good collaborator?
- Which partner should submit the grant application?

Answer these questions for the grantmaker:

- What is it you propose to do?
- What will be the result?
- How will you know if it worked?
- Why are you the right people to do it?

- How much money do you need?

Have your answer ready:

- What will you do when the money runs out?
- If the grant is for operating expenses, what will you do if it is not renewed?

- Can you use the grant to leverage other funds?

Any ethical issues?

More things to think about…

- Is it cost-effective to apply for a grant?
- Are there strings attached? Is your agency prepared to comply with them?
  - Copyrights, use of grant products
  - Maintain equipment in service for x years
  - Competitive procurement
  - Audited financial statements of your organization

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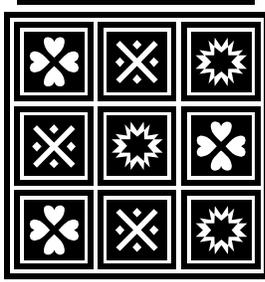
Which pieces of your project are most appropriate for which funding source?

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What's on the mind of the grantmaker?

- Publicity, legacy
- Risk Avoidance, Liability
- Who controls the property? Are there long-term use agreements or MOUs? (Does the grounds crew know not to mow down the butterfly garden over the summer?)
- Transfer institutional memory (When this year's conference chair retreats in exhaustion, who will train next year's chair?)

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What's Sexy?

"Public-private Partnerships"
"Faith-Based Initiatives"
"Community-Based Organizations"
"Capacity Building"
"Intergenerational" programs

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What's Not-so-Sexy?

Life Support

Overhead/Indirect

"Trinkets-and-Trash"

Equipment that might sit on a shelf

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Prospecting Tips:
Finding the Right Funding Source

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Who Does the Most Giving?

Foundations?
Corporations?
Individuals?

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Ohio Gives... $6.6 Billion Annual Charitable Giving

- Individuals 75%
- Foundations 20%
- United Ways 3%
- Other funders 2%

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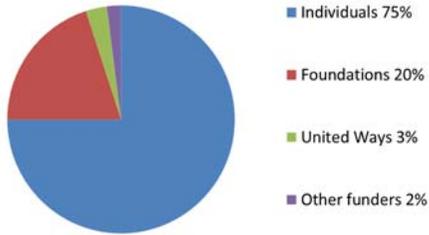
What do Ohio Individuals Support?

1.31 million Ohioans donate about $5 billion to charity annually

- Religion 36%
- Education 16%
- Disasters/Human Services 11%
- Health 9%
- Other 9%
- Public Affairs/Society Benefit 8%
- International 5%
- Arts 4%
- Nature, Environment 2%

Individual Donors Household Income

- > $200K 7%
- $50K-$200K 68%
- < $50K 24%

Philanthropy Ohio

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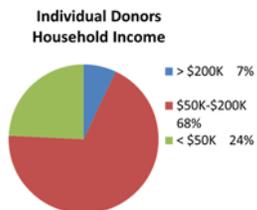
Three Types of Grant Makers

- Foundations
- Corporations
- Government Agencies

Why are there Foundations?
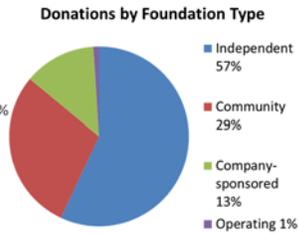

Types of Foundations

- Independent
- Company-sponsored
- Operating
- Community

What do Ohio Foundations Support?

3,593 foundations award $1.24 billion annually

- Education 22%
- Health 19%
- Human Services 18%
- Arts & Culture 14%
- Public Affairs/Social Benefit 14%
- Environment 5%
- Religion 3%
- International 3%
- Other 2%

Donations by Foundation Type

- Independent 57%
- Community 29%
- Company-sponsored 13%
- Operating 1%

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Finding Foundations…

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Get Thee To A Library or Online Directory!

90% of U.S. Foundations do not have websites, according to the Foundation Center.

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The Foundation Center
www.foundationcenter.org

- Grant maker information and Web sites
- Seminars on proposal writing
- Subscriptions to online directories from $19.95/month
- FC Search database on CD ROM
- Cleveland Office: 1422 Euclid Ave, Suite1660, 44115-2001

FOUNDATION CENTER **Repository Libraries in Ohio**

- Cincinnati/Hamilton County
- Cleveland (Foundation Center)
- Columbus
- Dayton/Montgomery County
- Mansfield/Richland County
- Muskingum County
- Stark County
- Toledo/Lucas County
- Youngstown and Mahoning County

Foundation Center Subject-Area Directories

- Elementary and Secondary Education
- Environmental Protection and Animal Welfare
- Foreign and International Programs
- Higher Education
- Religion, Religious Welfare & Education
- People with Disabilities
- Women and Girls
- Minorities
- Services for the Aging

More Foundation Center Subject-Area Directories

- Capacity Building, Management & Technical Assistance
- Public Health
- Cancer Research & Patient Care
- Disaster Relief and Recovery
- Employment
- Community and Economic Development
- Information Technology
- Housing, Services for the Homeless

THE GRANTSMANSHIP CENTER.
Get funding. Create change.

- https://www.tgci.com/funding-sources
- Lists by state of top foundations, community foundations, and corporate grantmakers
- Abstracts of successful proposals

Researching Foundations…

- Annual Reports in the reference section of the public library

- 990-PF Forms are the tax returns of grant making foundations, and are often the best source of information on very small foundations.

- Online at The Foundation Center www.foundationcenter.org

- Environmental Grantmakers Association https://ega.org

Periodicals

- Chronicle of Philanthropy, http://philanthropy.com/
- Grass Roots Fundraising Journal
- Foundation News and Commentary
- Nonprofit World
- Nonprofit Times

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Finding Corporate Givers

- Look for local companies' Annual Reports online and in the reference section of the public library
- Look for phrases like "community involvement" or "corporate responsibility" rather than "grants"
- *National Directory of Corporate Giving* from the Foundation Center

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Ohio Utilities grantmaking

- Are you in their service area?

AEP AMERICAN ELECTRIC POWER

DUKE ENERGY.

FirstEnergy

OhioEdison

NiSource

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Finding Federal Government Grants

- http://grants.gov
- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, www.cfda.org
- The Federal Register, www.archives.gov/federal_register/index.html
- Web sites of relevant federal agencies:
  - Homeland Security https://www.dhs.gov/how-do-i/find-and-apply-grants
  - Health & Human Services https://www.hhs.gov/grants/index.html

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Federal Grants

- Most are reimbursement only
- Eligibility Determinations for project and applicant
- Many are passed through state agencies
- "Public Private Partnerships"
- Bundle small projects together into a larger combined application whenever possible
- "Allowable Costs" and administrative costs
- Understand what the reporting requirements will be before you apply! Most require quarterly reports and annual FFRs

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Finding New Federal NOFAs
(notices of funding availability)

- Posted daily at www.tgci.com/ but not archived
- Check the Federal Register database www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/ and search for NOFA and SuperNOFA

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Finding State Government Grants

- Master list of Ohio state agency grants
  http://transparency.ohio.gov/grants/
- Master list of Ohio state agency Websites,
  http://www.ohio.gov/agencies/
- Grant Resources page on Ohio State Auditor Website,
  www.auditor.state.oh.us/services/lgs/GrantResources/
  default.htm

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Researching Grantmakers

- Look for giving patterns
- Do they give for the purpose you are interested in?
- Do they give to organizations that "look like you?"
- Do they give in your geographic area?
- How much is their usual range of giving?
- Does their mission match yours?

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When you call a grantmaker…
(AFTER reading their Website)

- Request sample applications of recently funded projects
- Application deadline vs. actual start date
- What are funding priorities *this year*?
- How will applications be reviewed?
- Suggestions for benchmarking
- Will they comment on a draft (which you will provide them *well before the deadline*)

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Common Mistakes

- A well-written proposal for a poorly designed project

Common mistakes

- The proposed project may be a great idea, but it doesn't match the purpose of the grant program

Common Mistakes

- Emotional appeals

Common Mistakes

- Pleading poverty

Common Mistakes

- Describing the tree

Common Mistakes

- "Let's develop a new program! Then let's go market it to people who will use it!"

Common Mistakes

- The shopping list

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It's All About You, Isn't It?

- Presenting it in terms of what you want to provide, instead of what your clients or audience need

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Common Mistakes

- Ferraris and Jalopies

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Common Mistakes

Lack of specifics on equipment purchases:
- Photo
- Manufacturer Specs
- Vendor Quote
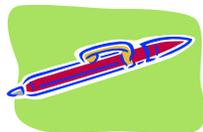- Useful Life & Maintenance Plan
- Why not rent?

Common Mistakes

- The $50 hotel room

Common Mistakes

- "Trinkets and Trash"

Common Mistakes

- Putting all the grantmaker's buzz words in the first paragraph...and nowhere else

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Common Mistakes

- Alphabet Soup: "The OFSWCD has worked closely for eight years with ODNR-DSWC, -DOW and –DNAP, using the NAAEE guidelines, to present WET, WILD, and PLT..."

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Common Mistakes

- Edspeak: "This project features hands-on, minds-on activities that draw upon the multiple intelligences of learners, evaluated through authentic and diverse assessment..."

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Common Mistakes

- If we offer it, they will come

Common Mistakes

- "Drive-by workshops" with no follow-up

Common Mistakes

- The Edge to Edge Pizza Proposal (words cover the page from edge to edge)

Common Mistakes

- Lost-without-a-roadmap

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Common Mistakes

...for only $25,000!

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Common Mistakes

- "I'll have my school principal/state legislator/mother write a letter of support about what a great idea this is!"

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Common Mistakes

- "Wet Ink Specials" – Not finishing a draft proposal early enough for your grant writing buddy or the grant maker to provide you comments and suggestions

Circular Reasoning

- Avoid presenting the absence of your solution as the actual problem
- Example: "The problem is that we have no pool in our community. Building a pool would solve the problem."

Parts of a Proposal

- Need or Problem Statement
- Goal/Objectives
- Activities
- Outcome Measurements
- Timetable
- Personnel or Organization Qualifications
- Continuation Plan
- Budget Spreadsheet and Narrative

Example of a Need Statement

- "In a 2010 survey of Ohio dry cleaners, 65% admitted having difficulty understanding which new disposal regulations apply to them. 50% said they would not be comfortable calling a regulatory agency to ask that question."

Objective: Where do we want to be when we're finished?

- Example: "Our after-school program will help children read better."

Better example:

- "Our after school remedial education program will assist 50 children in improving their reading scores by one grade level. Progress will be demonstrated on standardized reading tests administered after participating in the program for six months."
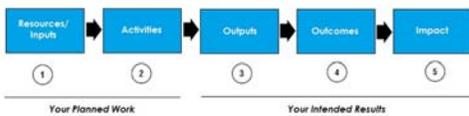
Objectives

- Specific
- Measurable
- Appropriate
- Realistic
- Time-bound

Federal Grants: Logic Models

- WK Kellogg Foundation's *Logic Model Development Guide* free download
  www.wkkf.org

Federal Grants

- Outputs:
  - # school buses retrofitted
  - # & type of pollution control equipment installed
  - Estimated pounds of pollution reduced (DEQ tool)
  - Cost effectiveness ($ per pound of PM 2.5 reduced)
- Medium term Outcomes:
  - Widespread adoption of retrofit technology by Ohio school districts
  - documented PM 2.5 reductions
- Long-term Outcomes:
  - Improved air quality in four urban nonattainment counties
  - Continued progress toward MCDI goal of affecting 3.3 diesel engines through voluntary actions

Objectives vs. Activities

- OBJECTIVES explain what the project will achieve (where we want to be when we're finished.)

- ACTIVITIES are the specific steps that will achieve the objectives. How do we get there (the objective) from here (the current problem or need)

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Activities: How do we get there from here?

- Who, What, Where, When, and How
- Provide a detailed description for the duration of the project
- Explain the sequence and timing
- Specific activities make it possible to develop the project budget

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Sample Objective
What would be the activities?

The students will create and maintain an environmental home page in our computer lab

- - Activity One:
- - Activity Two:

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Better: If the *Objective* is to improve 150 students' computer and analytical skills…

- Activity one: Analyze the content of a Web page
- Activity two: Compare two Web pages on the same environmental topic
- Activity three: Create a home page about this class's environmental projects

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Personnel/Organization Qualifications

- Why are you the one for the job?
- Brief biographical sketches (or job description if not hired yet)
- Evidence of accomplishments
- Endorsements from others
- Stick to what's relevant for the project

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Project Evaluation:
Things to Think About

- Correlation is not causation: There may be multiple explanations for your good results
- Cost of evaluation relative to overall project
- Must be designed in early
- Include both quantitative and qualitative indicators

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Project Evaluation:
Things to think about…

- Lessons learned from UNsuccessful projects
- Purpose of your evaluation

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"Summative Evaluation"
(e.g., for reports to the grantmaker)

- Did the program work?
- Did it attain its goals?
- Were the desired outcomes for participants achieved, and were they worth the cost?
- Should the program be continued?

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"Formative Evaluation"
(to make an ongoing program better)

- What are the program's strengths and weaknesses?
- Are participants progressing toward desired outcomes?
- Which participants do better than others and why?
- Can we operate the program more efficiently without compromising quality?

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Program Evaluation Resources

- WK Kellogg Foundation's *Evaluation Handbook* http://wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2010/w-k-kellogg-foundation-evaluation-handbook
- Centers for Disease Control's *Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health*, http://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework/index.htm

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Detailing a Budget
(Itemize, Itemize, Itemize…)

- Personnel
- Non-Personnel
- Contractual

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Personnel

- Salary/wages: number of hours times hourly rate for each position, or % of time @ what salary
- Benefits and how calculated
- Rule of thumb: benefits roughly 1/3 of salary
- Job description if not hired yet

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Non-personnel

- Supplies (consumables): itemized, unit price, totaled
- Equipment: itemized, unit price, totaled
- Printing: number of copies times unit price, totaled
- Travel: miles at specified reimbursement rate, or per diem per traveler
- Allow for breakage
- Remember the Buick!

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Contractual

- Describe the service being provided
- Name or organization or individual providing the service (or copy of RFP)
- Number of hours times hourly rate
- Grant makers scrutinize closely for contractors' padded indirect costs

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Meeting the Match

- Grant application should tell you how much cash or in-kind match is required
- Always offer at least the estimated value of your organization's staff time and supplies that are not being covered with grant funds
- Include volunteer hours in your match. http://independentsector.org/volunteer_time includes current estimated rates by state (Ohio $22.06)

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Letters of Support

- "This is a much-needed project, and this organization is terrific."
- That's nice.

Letters of Collaboration

- If someone's participation/permission is crucial to make the project happen, have them write *specifically* what they will do or provide
- **Coach them**, or they will write a generic support letter
- Allow time to assemble these letters
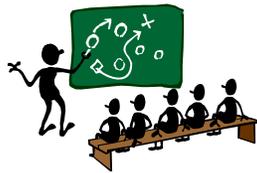
A word about innovation…

- Innovative, creative projects make funders' eyes light up
- Administrators (your boss?) want tried-and-true, sound methodologies with a track record of success under similar conditions
- What's a grant applicant to do?

Quick Tips…

- Re-read the RFP or grant guidelines after you've finished the draft
- Understand who will be reviewing the proposal, and tailor your jargon level to their understanding
- Be sure your proposal can pass the Spouse Test

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Still More Quick Tips…

- Check your math on the budget
- Check your timeline against the funder's calendar
- Check to be sure you have completed all sections
- Round up needed signatures and collaboration letters

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Pop Quiz!

- What were the two most important things to remember from this program?

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Happy Hunting!

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