Panning for Gold: The Basics of Grant Writing

New England Museum Association Webinar
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Purpose of this Webinar

- Identify grant opportunities
- Identify best resources for funding
- Understand the grant writing process
- Strategies for funding success
Funding Trends

- Collaboration
- Evaluation
- Fiscal responsibility
- Paperless grant seeking
Who Will Fund Digital Projects?

- Public Funds
- Private Funds
- Subject Approach
- Geographic Approach
Do Your Homework

- Does your organization have a long-range plan?
- Fact sheet?
- Brochure?
- Develop prospect list
- Refine list
- Match funder to need
Grant Writing Resources

- Free funding information centers in libraries and nonprofit resource centers (in-person and online).
- Publications and supplementary materials useful to grant seekers
- Information provided by the granting agencies and foundations themselves
Research Funders

- Define project
- Identify prospects
- Track funding cycles
- Make contacts
- Use Internet
- Find common ground
Geographic Approach

- Fund in specific locations
- Associated Grantmakers of Massachusetts
- Local foundations
- Regional foundations
Five Kinds of Foundations

- General-purpose
- Special-purpose
- Company-sponsored foundations
- Community foundations
- Family foundations
Funding Prospects

- Maintain prospect sheet
- Check out annual reports
- Read guidelines closely – really closely!
- Use published directories
- Visit funder’s web site
Public vs. Private Funding
Public Funds

- Set by legislation
- Known application processes
- Firm deadlines
- Technical assistance
- More bureaucratic
- Public record
- Usually lengthier
- More requirements
- Contracts assurances
- Frequent reporting
Private Funding Source

- May be better source for local needs
- Allows pooled funds
- Better source for start up
- Less complex proposals

- Priorities may change
- More difficult to track
- Limited staff
- May not explain rejection
Federal Grant Sources

- National Endowment for the Humanities

- National Historical Publications and Records Commission

- Institute for Museum and Library Services
  [www.imls.gov/applicants/applicants.shtm](http://www.imls.gov/applicants/applicants.shtm)
Online Grant Resources

- The Foundation Center
  www.foundationcenter.org/
- GrantSpace (A Service of the Foundation Center)
  www.grantspace.org
- Small Foundations
  www.smallfoundations.org/
Massachusetts Grant Resources

- Associated Grantmakers of Massachusetts
  www.agmconnect.org/

- The Boston Public Library, Social Science Reference
  www.bpl.org/research/socsci/links.htm#nonprofits

- Massachusetts Historical Commission
  www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc
Massachusetts Grant Resources

- Foundation Center at the Springfield City Library
  www.springfieldlibrary.org/nonprofits.html
- Worcester Public Library
  www.worcpublib.org/web_resources/funding.html
- Massachusetts Humanities
  www.masshumanities.org/?p=glance
Massachusetts Grant Resources

- Massachusetts Cultural
  www.massculturalcouncil.org/programs/programs.html

- Foundation Center Cooperating Collection Morse Institute Library
  morseinstitute.org/services/foundation-center
Connecticut Grant Resources

- Connecticut Humanities
  www.cthumanities.org

- Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation
  www.cttrust.org

- Connecticut Council for Philanthropy
  www.ctphilanthropy.org
Rhode Island Grant Resources

- Rhode Island Council On The Humanities
  www.uri.edu/rich
- Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
  www.rihphc.state.ri.us
- Rhode Island State Council On The Arts
  www.risca.state.ri.us
Vermont Grant Resources

- Vermont Arts Council
  www.vermontartscouncil.org
- Vermont Council On The Humanities
  www.vermonthumanities.org
- Vermont Division For Historic Preservation
  www.historicvermont.org
New Hampshire Grant Resources

- New Hampshire Division Of Historical Resources
  www.nh.gov/nhdhr
- New Hampshire Humanities Council
  www.nhhc.org
- New Hampshire State Council On The Arts
  www.nh.gov/nharts
Maine Grant Resources

- Maine Arts Council
  www.mainearts.com
- Maine Community Foundation
  www.mainecf.org
- Maine Humanities Council
  www.mainehumanities.org
- Maine Historic Preservation Commission
  www.state.me.us/mhpc
Writing your proposal
Strategies When Considering Writing a Grant Proposal

- Start small
- Set both real and realistic goals
- Have a plan to avoid obsolescence
- Seek grant funds that give you the most bang for the buck
- Do your grant research
- Write each grant application with the specific funder in mind
Strategies When Considering Writing a Grant Proposal

- Read and reread the grant application instructions!
- Get expert help
- Ask for what you need but not more than the funder will likely give
- Get a second opinion
- Get support
- Seek local funding
- Read the fine print!
Functions of a Proposal

- Represents a program, project, activity, or function that an organization wants to undertake in response to a need
- Request for the allocation of resources
- Instrument of persuasion
- Promise to the funder to do certain things in certain ways
- A plan that serves as guidelines for the organization to implement the activity
Elements of a Proposal

- Letter of introduction/transmittal
- Title page
- Project abstract
- Statement of need
- Project design
- Goals
- Objectives
Elements of a Proposal

- Methods/activities
- Budget and narrative
- Management Plan
- Personnel/Staff
- Evaluation
- Cooperation/collaboration
- Appendices
Elements of a Proposal

- Support letters
- Maps/Floor plans
- Documentation
- Supporting materials
- Resumés
Some Quick Pointers

- Confirm interest of funder
- Involve staff
- Ensure resources to support project
- Research funders
- Use clear concise language

- Relationship with funder
- Detailed and realistic budget
- Project publicity before, during, after
Statement Of Need

- Describes problem or need
- Relates to priorities of funder
- Can be accomplished within timeframe
- Supported by statistical evidence
- Stated in terms of client/user not applicant
- No unsupported assumptions*
- Makes a compelling case
Goals

- Broad
- “Blue sky”
- Guiding statements
- Describe long term
- Relate to statement of need
Management/Project Plan

- Describes relationship of program to funder
- Shows organizational structure
- May describe physical setting of project
- Shows role of volunteers, advisory board, collaborators
- Describes the project(s)
- Complies with funding regulations
- Free from jargon
Objectives

- Outcome oriented
- Concrete
- Specific
- State accomplishment
- Show measurement
- Shows response

- Who?
- What (observable action)?
- By when (time frame)?
- Measurability (How measured?)
- Conditions ("givens")
Two Types of Objectives

- Management or Process – show accomplishment only
- Performance or Product – show impact on group
Management or Process Objectives

- Milestones towards completion of activities
- Be accomplished within timeframe
- Easier to write
Performance or Product Objectives

- Show a response from target group
- Identify behavior level
- Shows how behavior has been impacted or changed
Objectives Checklist

- Concise, specific, measurable
- Address outcomes
- Are not methods/activities
- State the time when things are to be accomplished
- Free from jargon
Developing Measurable Criteria

- **Time units**
  - Within three months...
  - By the end of the project year(s)...

- **Frequency rates**
  - Given the processing of 15 collections, an average of 3 people per year will use the materials.

- **Percentages**
  - Increase use of historic records by 15% by end of the project year
At the conclusion of the project year, 2,265 photographs and negatives from the Freedom House collection will be scanned and available for research in a searchable database mounted on the UASCD website.
Northeastern University
“Roxbury Places, People, and Events, 1950-1975”

As a result of the proposed scanning project, use of the scanned photographs will increase in the year following the project by at least 25% as determined by comparing hits to the photographs in the database to reference statistics from the previous year.
Jones Library Digitization Project

In the first year after public release of the database, Special Collections staff will fulfill at least five requests for publication of images solely in electronic format, without making use of copy negatives or original prints.
Methods/Activities Checklist

- Show means to accomplishing ends
- Includes a full description of action plan
- Show who does what
- Show when and where it will happen
- Relate to program objectives
- Provide schedule of activities, dates, places
- Describe step-by-step sequence
Methods/Activities Checklist

- Reasonable scope of activities within timeframe
- Flow from problem statement and program objectives
- Describe staffing
- Justify methods, dates, resources
Budget

- Provides a clear picture of how grant funds are to be expended
- Meets funder’s guidelines
- Justifies all costs*

- Realistic
- Get bids
- Use spreadsheets
- Check your math!
- No surprises!
Budget Items

- Salaries and other stipends
- Fringe benefits
- Materials to implement the program
- Training
- Outside consultants
- Program evaluation
- Equipment
- Indirect costs, if allowed
- Includes outline of “in-kind” support
Evaluation Design

- Shows objectives were met
- Methods were followed
- Allows funder to measure progress
- States criteria in clear, succinct language
- Uses survey forms, data collection
- Lists names of evaluator, if appropriate
- States reports and publications to be produced
Two Types of Evaluation

- Formative or Process
- Summative or Product
Formative or Process Evaluation

- Examines work plan
- Notes deviations from plan
- Shows how outcome was affected
- Ongoing monitoring of project
Summative or Product Evaluation

- Shows whether objectives were achieved
- Determines whether the program was effective
- Answers the question - How did we do?
Future of the Project

- Will program be self-sustaining after grant period?
- Shows alternative funding sources including collaboration/partnerships
- If seeking one-time funding state this clearly
Proposal Writing Schedule

- Make one and stick to it!
- Work backwards from due date.
- Figure out costs after objectives/activities
- Allow for copying, binding, and delivery if the proposal needs to be submitted in hard copy
- Distribute schedule to team members
Proposal Writing Tips

- Read successful proposals
- Use “active” verbs
- Use outline
- Follow funder guidelines
- Outside reader
- Submit all documentation
- Match need to funder
- Bulleted lists
- Strong ending
- Catchy title
Proposal Writing Tips

- Use advisory group as sounding board
- Include *substantive* support letters
- Consider use of timeline
- Don’t pad your budget
- One person write, several read!
- Show leadership
- Sell yourself
- Sell your project
- Write your abstract last
Proposal Writing Tips

- Work from outline
- Do your homework
- Be sure of facts
- Start strong
- Short sentences
- Varied length
- Do not exceed page limit
- Use charts, graphics
- Third person
- Keep it simple
- Give yourself full credit
- Matching funds
- Expect change
Proposal Writing Tips

- Institutionalize project
- Show commitment of collaborators
- Explain cost proposal

- Be consistent
- Be respectful
- Accept funding limitations
Common Concerns with Grant Applications

- Lack of Communication with a Program Officer
- Failure to follow current guidelines
- Failure to quantify collection formats and size
- Inadequate discussion of ownership & IP rights
Common Concerns with Grant Applications

- Lack of detail in Plan of Work
- No letters of support or commitment
- Missing information on project staff
- Budget errors
In Closing...........

- Have confidence in yourself
- Write clearly and support your statements
- Make sure that the proposal is clear to a non-colleague
- Work with the funder to produce the best possible proposal
- “Write with a pinch of humility and a dose of salesmanship”
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