

Added Value

Timely Info from Karen Eber Davis Consulting

Winter 2005

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I'm Writing a Grant

Five to Get Ready

Steps to Take Now to Prepare for Federal Grants

Early preparations for federal grants are necessary to increase your success in this venue. Yet many federal programs publish specifics on their next grant cycle only six weeks before the two-inch proposal's due date. How can you prepare early? Take the following steps:

1. **Identify** the programs and agencies of interest to your organization at individual department, agency websites or websites like <http://www.grants.gov>. As you investigate different opportunities check:

- For new programs
- If existing programs were funded last year and if they will be funded again
- For adequate funding. Despite their "openness" to many applications, some programs will only fund three or four grants.

2. **Contact** key federal staff member to discover:

- The program's intent and history
- The number of applications received, the number funded and the number of first-time applicants funded
- Common errors, including types of failures and the percentage of each type

- The range of due dates in recent grant cycles
- The professional positions held by reviewers
- Examples of activities that enhanced the value of high-ranked proposal
- Examples of proposal contents reviewers found irritating
- The anticipated amount of change in the application procedure in the next cycle
- Recommendations on other information to review and the names of any published studies on the program
- How to sign up for email notifications
- The names and locations of top scoring applicants.

3. For existing programs, identify organizations that received funding during the last grant cycle. Email staff at these agencies to request an **interview**. Listen to staff members responses to questions like:

- Who was useful in the federal process?
- How much time did proposal preparation take?
- What sections involved other groups and

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Karen Eber Davis Consulting, "the More than Money" service organization, helps people turn good ideas into exceptional, funded ventures. Since 1994, the firm has helped hundreds of organizations, including social service, education, religious, arts, environmental government and healthcare institutions to improve the services they offer to their customers and strengthen their organizations.



therefore require additional start-up work?

- If you applied again, what would you do differently?
- After you got the grant, did the start-up process go smoothly?

4. From the website or federal staff member **retrieve** the previous year's applications documents. Scan them to identify time-consuming activities, like land acquisition or coalition formation. Begin needed activities. For example, hold a preliminary meeting with potential supporters and partners to share your discoveries to date.

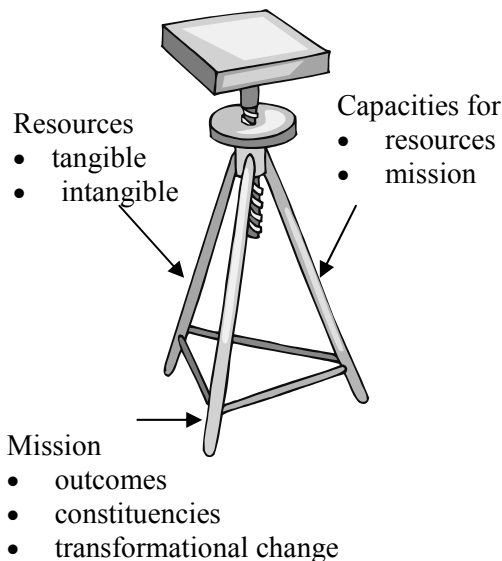
5. **Decide** who will write the grant and what type of evaluator you will use. If you will hire outside counsel, contact them now and provide a deposit to reserve their time.

Preparing a federal grant application is a large undertaking. Your preliminary work will help you:

1. Grow your knowledge, so you can select the best programs for your organization,
2. Save time and sanity after the announcement of a due date
3. Increase your successes

Use the five ideas above to start to get ready today for your federal funding this year.

Overview: A Model of a Successful Organization



how to negotiate a wheelchair over that uneven spot in your front entrance to complex survival issues like developing plans for adequate long-term finances. To succeed, set capacity goals in each of these four categories:

1. Human

You share human capacities with every other person. These capacities include balancing conflicting desires, functioning in specific cultures, living out values, physical skills, etc.. Although leaders do much of their capacity work in advance of their arrival at your offices, their capacities can continue to grow. You can support this growth. Encourage people to identify specific goals and set-up detailed tasks to pursue their development.

2. Organization/Community

Another set of capacities are those shared with other organized groups. These include communicating about your services, finding ways to get the bills paid, running meetings and organizing communications. These capacities work across organization types i.e., Doctors Without Borders adopted Federal Express' motto "Be there in 48 hours." What capacities can you improve by studying businesses, government agencies or even your neighborhood group? Who is offering courses? Can you find written information on capacities you need?

3. Nonprofit or Other Organization Sub-Community

Your organization also needs other capacities that they share with similar organizations. For example; Salamon's classic 1987 study found that nonprofit failure was caused by an inability to generate sufficient funds, paternalism, too narrow a focus and amateurism. Therefore, nonprofits need to develop capacities to generate funds, establish a comfortably broad mission, be professional and offer self-determination to those served. With one million nonprofits, a significant market exists to teach these and other critical capacities. To increase these skills, identify the essentials you need, find the best teachers, then learn and apply the capacities they teach. (For example, on February 24, I will teach "Three-Steps to Program Improvement, The Get Wise Strategy"- a course about making program improvements, a capacity needed in all organizations, except those already dying.)

4. Distinctive

Finally each organization needs to develop its own set of distinct capacities. To succeed the local food bank in New York City and Oshkosh Wisconsin, each need to develop their own set of distinctive, although similar, capacities to respond to local needs and opportunities. Growing your distinctive capacities helps you create your identity, make specialized contributions to those you serve and enhance your community. For example, Atlanta's Food Bank developed both a Supper Club in conjunction with local restaurants and Learn to Cook activities. When identified, developed and marketed, you can use your unique capacities as your calling card. To get fabulously good at these capacities over time: recognize them, study ways to improve them, take actions to grow them, evaluate your results and repeat. Since these capacities are unique, calling in outside counsel to assist with any of these steps, supports their growth dramatically.

Conclusion

In addition to 1) making more mission, 2) sustaining and growing resources, to be successful, you need to 3) grow your capacities. These include proficiencies like lining up children or coaching a board member to ask a friend for a donation. To be successful, each organization needs its' own specific capacities, as well as ones they share in common with other people other groups and other nonprofit organizations. To ensure your success, create specific, detailed plans on how you will grow your capacities in these four areas. Then update them yearly.

Newsroom

Check Out
www.kedconsult.com
where you can. . .

1. Participate in a new survey
Take a few moments to respond to this question:

If an individual gave your organization \$1 million in unrestricted funds and you had to spend it, where would you invest?

2. Read new articles

- Where Do Nonprofits, Excluding Health Care, Derive Their Funding?
- Seven Lessons to Help You Increase Fundraising Success
- Consulting Group Makes Predictions for 2005 (Press Release)

3. Read back issues of *Added Value*, press releases and other articles like:

- Need to Make a Tough Decision?
- Twenty Expense Items to Consider When Creating a Budget
- When Is Your Organization Ready to Apply for and Receive a Grant?

Advancing Philanthropy Article

The November/ December 2004 edition of *Advancing Philanthropy* "What's Working" column features an the article, "Quickly Respond to Last-Minute Grants," authored by Karen Eber Davis. The article provides a list of grant attachments to keep on file to help you be ready to submit a grant on short notice.

More Good News for Current Purchasers of *Local Sources* & *More Local Sources*

In addition to the resource books, purchasers get periodic updates and discounts on Advanced Grant Clinics. (Save these two dates for new clinics, May 17 and November 29.)

Congratulations . . .

to Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Florida, Tampa, for their \$50,000 grant from Thrivent Financial Services for their Youth Leadership Initiative.



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Part 4, What is Success? Growing Capacities

In the last three newsletters, two of three success components were discussed. If you compare success to a three-legged stool (see page 2), the first leg represents mission and the second resources. This final article discusses the third leg or component needed for success: growing capacities. To read the earlier articles, see www.kedconsult.com.

“Capacity,” writes Susan Kenny Stevens of the Ford Foundation, “refers to the connection between a nonprofit organizations health, competencies and durability on the one hand and the effectiveness of its mission and service delivery on the other.” In other words, capacity encompasses knowing the right actions and doing those actions well. Without a collection of honed capacities, the best organization can be compared to a luxury liner filled with fine food, attentive staff and plans for exotic destinations. It has a clear mission and abundant resources but, the cruise will be unsuccessful if the captain and leaders can’t navigate out of sight of land, run the engines properly or slow for icebergs. In other words, you can be surrounded by mission and resources, but you will soon run out of both, if you fail to grow your capacities.

What Are Capacities?

Capacities include everything from occasional procedures like knowing

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Workshop & Event Calendar

Save these 2005 Dates

Jan. 13- Show Me the Money

Feb. 24- Three-Steps to Program Improvement, The Get Wise Strategy

May 17- Advanced Grant Clinic- A Marriage of Convenience: How to Link Your Grants and Individual Fundraising Efforts

September 16- Teleconference- Nonprofit Money Myths that Snag Even the Best Organizations

November 29- Advance Grant Clinic- Budgeting for Success

For more information about these and other events see www.kedconsult.com

Workshop-in-a-Brochures



Help! I am Writing a Grant

Help for the Beginner and Expert Alike Who Want to Create Better Proposals Faster
 Step-by-step procedures from organizing your time to producing an outstanding proposal. The five essential grant questions you must answer in every proposal, whether the funder asks them or not. Effective for individual learning and workshops using group discussion.



How to Lead Great Meetings

"A great help to my board chair, who runs a lovely meeting, but goes on and on" was one comment we heard about this workshop-in-a-brochure. *How to Lead Great Meetings* gathers information from more than 20 publications and years of leading and attending meetings. You can read it in 30 minutes and use the information more than 30 times a year. Useful for all staff and volunteers who run meetings.



How to Enlist Great Help

In this workshop-in-a-brochure, you will find a guide to assist you in enlisting the help you need, including volunteers and employees. What steps can you take to ensure getting a "yes" when you request help? What can you do if no one wants a job? How do you ask so that you get a dependable answer? Essential reading for anyone looking for help.

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