

Seeking Foundation Grants

September 2010



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A service of the Corporation for National and Community Service - Special Projects and Sustainability Initiative

Dear “Grant-Seeking” Colleague,

While large foundation grant giving shrank, giving by small and medium-size foundations actually grew in 2009. This issue of On-The-Go eTA focuses on some ideas to attract support from this donating audience. Click on the titles at the right to learn more about...

Donor-Advised/Designated Funds

What Foundation Funders Want

Foundation Visit Preparation

On-The-Go eTA is also interactive!

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If you wish to receive direct assistance from our team of issue experts, you can also contact Campaign Consultation, Inc. at OnTheGo@CampaignConsultation.com.

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Donor-Advised/Designated Funds

In order to attract more foundation grants, it's important to become acquainted with donor-advised/designated funds. Individuals and families of wealth are attracted to placing resources into donor-advised/designated funds rather than establishing their own foundations. These funds, many of which are advised/designated toward grassroots, health and human service causes, etc. – often reside in community foundations which help donors to ...

- Save administrative costs as more donors pool their resources
- Worry less about running their own foundations
- Provide an extra layer of anonymity if they so choose
- Offer peace of mind that there's a mechanism in place to responsibly manage their gift upon their death and

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TIPS FOR THE TIMES

It's perfectly permissible to ask foundation representatives to join your volunteer leadership committees if they have been consistent and recurring champions of your program.

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Featured eGIZMO (Giving

lack of heirs

The funds differ in the degree of control that the donor has over giving as described below:

Donor-advised funds:	Donors advise that income/assets be directed to eligible charitable recipients for grants. However, the community foundation's board of directors have the liberty to accept or reject their recommendations.
Donor-designated funds:	Donors designate that their fund's income or assets be given to one or more specific charitable recipients or causes. However, after many years and perhaps the death of the donor and their heirs, the governing body is responsible for redirecting fund resources if the designation is no longer necessary, incapable of fulfillment or is inconsistent with the changing needs of the community or area served.

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What Foundation Funders Want

You are well acquainted with what your cause needs and can easily express it in a proposal. It is equally important to take the time to focus on what a foundation funder requires. The closer you come to marrying your organizational needs to the expectations of funders, the greater the likelihood of receiving support. Here's what foundation funders want ...

1. *To give away their money*

Foundations are required to give away 5 percent of the fair market value of their assets annually. They are looking for meaningful projects.

2. *A good fit with their priorities*

Foundation funders are explicit about the kinds of organizations and projects they fund. Be certain that you clearly understand what they are by reading their profiles. If unclear about their interests, call the foundation.

3. *A well-written proposal*

Read the guidelines carefully to be certain that you

- **Featured eGIZMO** (Giving Information for Zooming Mission Objectives) Producing Proposals That Work. Learn to develop a proposal that stands out from hundreds of competing proposals. [Click Here](#) to view

- **Social Media Monday:** The VISTA Campus & Your Project. Build skills for your assignment by using the VISTA Campus. No matter what area of community change you are working in, the Campus has resources to help. [Click here](#) to join in.

- **Become a fan of AmeriCorps VISTA on Face book:** [Click here](#) to register

- **VISTA Works:** a comprehensive interactive learning tool that helps VISTAs figure out their next steps after service. [Click here](#) to view it.

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have included all requested information. Proofread for grammatical accuracy and then ask someone else to proofread before you submit.

4. *Measurable results, efficiency and accountability*

Foundations need to know that their funds have impact, are being used wisely and are not wasted. Ensure that your proposal includes a scrutinized budget. Determine your impact goals and how you plan to measure/evaluate your success. These proposal aspects will win you the respect and eventual trust of foundation funders.

5. *Creative solutions*

Foundations are especially interested in new ways to solve old problems. This is why many foundations have a limit on the number of years they will support a particular project.

6. *A plan for sustainability*

Funders want to know that you are committed for the long haul. They want to see plans in place for growing the project and funding it through multiple sources.

7. *Other funders*

Only in very rare instances will a foundation agree to be a sole funder of a project. They want to be partnered with other funders. Quite often they will come right out and ask who else has been asked.

8. *A relationship*

You can start building a relationship even before you submit a proposal. Call for an appointment to visit and discuss your ideas. If your proposal is funded, remember to thank the foundation. Send articles, papers, or other materials that demonstrate the impact of their support. If the foundation's support leads to other funding, let them know. Building your relationship over time may well lead to future support.

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Foundation Visit Preparation

When you receive a call from a foundation leader who wishes to visit your program, that's good news. It means that your proposal is under serious consideration. Here are some tips:

When a foundation leader visits your site

[Sustainability@
Campaign
Consultation.com](mailto:Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com)

[The Chronicle of
Philanthropy](#)

"Donors don't give to institutions. They invest in ideas and people in whom they believe."

– G.T. Smith, President,
Bethany College, WV

- Beforehand, ask the prospective funder about any program areas in which they are specifically interested. Determine how many others will be joining them and the length time available.
- Prepare some anecdotal stories that you're often unable to include in a grant proposal. Such stories provide funders an opportunity to absorb and understand your organization and programs.
- Inform other staff colleagues who are adept presenters, about your research on the foundation and the proposal. Ask them to join you and/or prepare a brief report for the visit. You should consider having a board member and your finance person on call during the meeting.

When you visit a foundation

- Augment your research by visiting a foundation in advance of a funding request. Such a face-to-face is useful in finding out if there are any changes in program, personnel, discretionary monies and other giving possibilities. If you are brand new to a social profit organization and still learning about your community, use this meeting as an opportunity to gather valuable information and build relationship.
- Brief board members and anyone else who is joining you regarding the foundation's background and your proposal. Share a draft agenda to use time efficiently in respect of the funder's schedule.
- Always leave something behind – i.e., an information packet that contains your business card, an annual report, press coverage, Board / Advisor list, latest newsletter, etc. Remember, parting remarks exchanged in the doorway are often the most important outcome of the entire visit – use strategically.

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VISTA Campus

VISTA Campus VISTA Campus is an online learning environment for the VISTA community. The aim is to support you in your development throughout and beyond your VISTA service. The Campus includes self-paced tutorials and courses, reference materials, discussions boards, a campus bookstore and more to help improve your skills and connect with other VISTAs. To access the site, go to <http://vistacampus.org> and select the "VISTAs" option. You can enter the site as a guest or create an account to access the content and discussion boards.

Online Capacity Building Tools

Interactive online capacity building products on a myriad of topics are provided for your use at your desk or in the field. Featured below is Briefcase for Success. Access these and other products at <http://nationalserviceresources.org/cci/5cs>

- **Briefcase for Success: Tools and Resources for Financial Asset Initiatives** will help low-income individuals and poor communities better understand our financial system and build economic security. <http://nationalserviceresources.org/files/cci/briefcase-for-success/BFS-1/briefcase.html>
- **Website Wizard:** This self assessment tool assists programs and projects to maximize their websites for sustainability. Simply [click here](#).
- **Online Courses/Webinars:** Web courses on topics pertinent to Sustainability such as — Build Fundraising Volunteer Champions, Cause Related Marketing and Corporate Partnerships are available through the CNCS Resource Center at <http://nationalserviceresources.org/online-courses>

Onsite Capacity Building Events

Institutes, workshops, webshops and individual consultation can be made available to help you build sustainability for your organization or project.

- **National Sustainability Institutes:**
The National ASK (Awareness, Skills, Knowledge) to Sustain Institute, sponsored by Corporation for National and Community Service, provided by Campaign Consultation, Inc. 1998-2002.
<http://www.campaignconsultation.com/index.php/publications-products>

The Resources Now! National Institute, sponsored by Corporation for National and Community Service, provided by Campaign Consultation, Inc.
<http://www.campaignconsultation.com/index.php/publications-products>
- **Workshops/Clinics:** The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), through its T/TA service provider Campaign Consultation, Inc., offers ninety-minute and three-hour workshops and clinics on such topics as Developing Major Donors, Building Strategic Partnerships, Working with Boards & Advisory Councils, and more. [Click here](#) to inquire.

The Chronicle of Philanthropy:

You are encouraged to subscribe to The Chronicle for the latest news in the social profit industry. [Click here](#) for more information.

Sustainability Assistance:

Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com is designed to give information fast on building capacity. Use this online support for advice from a fundraising professional. Contact Sustainability@CampaignConsultation.com

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