



Congratulations!

Congratulations to Kester Group client John Brown University for their \$1.3 million five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The grant will fund free professional development for K-12 teachers to earn the English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement on their teaching licenses.

JBU was one of only two Arkansas institutions of higher education to win one of 73 grants nationwide for teacher training. As a result of this project, 90 teachers in two school districts will become better qualified to teach English Language Learners in the classroom.

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Funders are Tweeting

The Case Foundation has produced a public list on Twitter of Foundations who Tweet.

What a great resource!

We are not Twitter experts, for sure. And we are new to Twitter lists. So, if you catch us giving wrong information here, please send us a note so we can correct it for everyone.

Here is the link to the list:
<http://tinyurl.com/6o9r2zx>

When you go to the page, on the left-hand side are three options. The first is "Tweets." The second is "Members." The last one is "Subscribers"

You want to make sure that you are on the "Members" option. This is the one that lists all of the foundations that Case was able to find out there in the Twittersphere.

If you find yourself on the "tweets" page, you will see the most recent

tweets from the foundations, but you also have to wade through unrelated tweets from all of the subscribers too. We see no need to do that.

You can choose to subscribe to the list. Or you can browse the Members list, and select certain foundations to follow one-by-one.

The day we accessed the list, Melinda Gates had just joined and was listed first. Foundations you will find here include the Kellogg Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson, and Annie E. Casey.

Members aren't in alphabetical order, but the list is not cumbersome to work through. Lots of smaller regional and community foundations are there too.

Of course, this is still a very small percentage of the total number of foundations in the U.S., but we applaud those who are working hard to communicate with the public.



Prioritizing Your Prospect List

By Cheryl L. Kester, CFRE

If you've been to a grantwriting workshop, you probably learned that you must do research to identify your funding prospects. You learned that the "shotgun approach" (a letter to every foundation in the state) will fail. You get that.

So, off you go to do your research. You may come back with a long list of foundation prospects. Now what? In my experience, people love to teach you how to use a resource like the Foundation Center's online database. But few bother to teach you what to do with the results.

You must winnow that list down into a short list of realistic, good-fit prospects. Go for quality, not quantity. Grant proposals take time to write. Lots of time. Maybe you are squeezing proposal writing in between planning the 5K and the year-end mailing. You have to choose wisely which ones will get your time.

When you run your search, you can check a box to exclude from the results foundations who give only to pre-selected organizations. But if you didn't know to do that, skim your list now and pull those funders out first.



Focus on the Best Prospects

1. *Omit those not accepting applications or whose limitations exclude you*
2. *Find a clear link between their funding priorities and your project*
3. *Investigate who they gave to in the last 2 or 3 years*
4. *Be realistic — ask yourself, "why would this foundation support us?"*

Then jump to the "limitations" section of the profile. This avoids the heartbreak of getting excited about a foundation who looks like a great prospect, only to learn as you keep reading that you are not eligible for some reason.

After you exclude prospects for these two obvious reasons, you have to get more strategic and less black and white. Here is what you need to understand, those database profiles are only the beginning. They help you make a list and cross the obvious lemons off the list.

Then you have to dig further. Your two main resources for this are the foundation's website and their tax return. You will be surprised by how many do not have a website, but search for one. The tax returns are free at guidestar.org.

The goal of getting the tax return is to get the complete list of grants made. You don't have to be a CPA to understand it and don't have to read the whole thing.

But you absolutely have to find out who the foundation supported in the most recent past. Sometimes who they are giving to does



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not match up with what they say are their priorities . You need to be a bit of a detective to figure this out.

So, here are the things we look for as strong indicators of a good fit:

- Clear alignment of the funder's interest with your mission
- The funder has given in your geographic area
- The funder has made grants to organizations similar to yours

The more of these you hit, the higher quality the prospect.

Then, here are a few other details to consider about the foundation prospect:

- They give to the type of project for which you need funding (like a capital project or scholarships)
- They make grants of the size you need for your project (NOTE: most don't want to fund your entire project)
- They make a large number or variety of grants annually (if you see 2 -3 years of only a few grants to the same recipients, your chances of breaking in as a new applicant are probably smaller)

Using these criteria, rank your prospects into A,B or C-level prospects. A-level prospects are a perfect fit. You must apply this year! B-level prospects have no reason they would not give to your organization, but no clear connection. Try to work proposals to one or two of these onto your calendar each year.

Finally are the C-level prospects. There is no reason they would give to your organization, but you are not explicitly excluded. I put them on my "rainy day" list, for days when the boss asks, "have we really tried absolutely every possibility out there?"

Please share your prioritization strategies or respond at kestergroup.com/blog

What other criteria do you use to decide whether to apply to a foundation?

Tell us at kestergroup.com

Grants Questions Answered

Q: What should be on my resume if I want to start a career in grantwriting?

A: This just in! A question from a college student already thinking ahead to a possible career in the non-profit sector. Wow. I was not that organized when I was an English major back in 1991.

Make sure you have writing classes there. This student is a journalism major, but anyone can take writing courses. If your institution has a grantwriting class take it. Check the grad school and see if they will let you audit one of theirs if there is no class at the undergraduate level.

Go to workshops like those offered by local chapters of GPA or AFP and make sure to list any such professional development on your resume. Any past work experience working for or volunteering at a non-profit agency, especially in anything to do with fundraising, would be a plus and should be highlighted.

Of course if you can volunteer or intern somewhere and get some actual grantwriting experience under your belt, even better. Please share your tips on our blog! kestergroup.com/blog

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The Kester Group, LLC has helped clients raise more than \$55.9 million in grants and contracts. The principals and associates have been employed by non-profits, schools, colleges, arts and healthare organizations. We know you and are committed to your mission.

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Upcoming Grant Opportunities

Kendal Charitable Innovation Grants

<http://www.kendalcharitablefunds.org/>

Email: cwade@kendalcharitablefunds.org

Deadline: June 15 (for Letters of Intent)

Grant Size: up to \$25,000

Grants for Innovative New Programs to Improve the Lives of Older Adults. Eligible applicants are nonprofit organizations with pilot projects that address services; research; or developing new understandings of the potential for aging well.

Tom's of Maine 50 States for Good Program

<http://tinyurl.com/3z8mxoc>

Deadline: June 12

Grant size: One \$50,000 award, five \$20,000 awards

Programs that mobilize community volunteers and have a positive impact on the community in one of the following three areas: (1) environmental goodness; (2) healthy goodness; and (3) human goodness.

The DJ&T Foundation

<http://tinyurl.com/3q9u3a5>

Tel: (323) 465-9955

Deadline: None

Geographic focus: National

Grants to establish on-site or mobile surgical units, spay/neuter transport vehicles, or equipment for clinics. Only non-profits are eligible, not municipalities.

Nat'l Ed. Assoc. (NEA) Teacher Dev't Grants

<http://tinyurl.com/y8fc53w>

Deadline: Jun 1 and Oct 15

Grants: \$2,000 and \$5,000

Learning & Leadership Grants support public school teachers or and faculty/staff in higher ed to attend professional development, such as summer institutes or to form research or group study. Only teachers in public schools or faculty at public colleges/universities are eligible.