



Congratulations

Congratulations to the [Stapleton Foundation](#) for Sustainable Urban Communities for winning a \$181,000 Colorado Health Foundation grant and permission to apply for two more years of funding! The grant will establish two pilot “be well Healthy Living Centers” in Denver-area neighborhood Recreation Centers.

The Healthy Living Centers will bring essential nutrition education, physical activity education and enrollment assistance with Recreation Center scholarships directly into high-need neighborhoods where people live, work and play. At the end of the pilot, the Stapleton Foundation plans to seek additional grants to expand the project into more centers.

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Contact us!

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The State of Grants

Many of you are telling us you are facing pressure from your boards to “write more grants” and/or increase your funded ratio.

In Fall 2011, Grant Station and Philantec released a report you need to read. *The State of Grantseeking* examines how success in grants has changed during the last two years.

For example, Philantec reports, “A majority of organizations applied for more grants, but increased efforts only resulted in more grant funds for 26% of respondents.”

This is partly because the average size of grants has decreased.

Another situation we have been encountering is organizations trying to save money by having board members or other volunteers write proposals. This usually backfires.

More than half of non-profits (57%) who used board members or other volunteers for their grant writing received no grants at all.

Small non-profits face the biggest challenges. For most organizations with annual budgets of \$50,000 or less, only 10% of their annual budgets comes from grants— that’s \$5,000 a year, or less.

To add insult to injury, these small non-profits saw grant revenues decrease in 2011.

Instead, non-profits with annual budgets of \$100,000 to \$5 million report the greatest success in grantseeking. Similarly, those who can afford to allocate grant writing to a staff person or consultant, win more grants.

This is information you can use!
Get the full study for free at:
<http://tinyurl.com/88gj4ef>



It's the Opportunity, Stupid

By Cheryl L. Kester, CFRE

With apologies to a presidential candidate some of our readers are too young to remember, we urge grant professionals everywhere to adopt this new mantra. (Ok, my mother would never allow her children to call anyone stupid, so you can drop that part, but be sure to keep the opportunity part.)

In fact, I must give credit to Sandy Edwards, a renowned fundraising professional in Northwest Arkansas who is at that new little art place we have here called Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

Sandy said, "Don't focus on the need. Focus on the opportunity!" The opportunity to be a part of something big, something exciting, something that is changing lives is what motivates donors. Well, guess what? Those foundation prospects of yours are "donors" too. Funding decisions are made by people. And people like to work with winners.

***"Don't focus
on the need.
Focus on the
opportunity!"***

**— Sandra
Kaiser
Edwards,
CFRE**

Keep on the Sunny Side

- 1. Show how your organization is perfect to meet the need*
- 2. Share exciting stories that demonstrate success is possible*
- 3. Make sure your proposal has a clear, convincing plan*
- 4. Keep a tone of invitation, not begging or dire need*

Am I suggesting that you leave the Need section out of your proposals? No. I did recently have a client tell me that our description of the challenges facing her neighborhood made her want to cry. Of course, you must have the Need section.

A great grant proposal turns that Need into an opportunity, instead of presenting such a dire a situation that the reader feels there is no hope of making a difference. Foundations want to invest in a cleaner, safer, healthier world. You are giving them a chance to do just that.

While communicating the real needs you plan to address, don't forget to weave in stories that show your organization has a track record of meeting those needs. Plus, don't try to pass off a poorly-planned project and hope the funder doesn't notice. Convey that your organization has its act together and is a wise investment.

Be sure to communicate that you are offering "a great opportunity to invest in [*Insert Your Mission Here*]!"

Our articles are now part of our blog. Respond at kestergroup.com

We Recommend: Federal and Foundation Assistance Monitor



Whenever we provide grant training, people always ask, “How can I find out earlier about grant opportunities?”

This is especially true of federal grants. Until recently, our best advice had been to find out which federal agencies are most likely to fund your projects and monitor that agency as closely as possible.

However, we are now pleased to recommend a subscription to “Federal and Foundation Assistance Monitor,” from CD Publications.

CD Publications reviews legislation and budget plans. Just as important, they have entrée into funder offices and get first-hand information about

what is coming soon.

This is much more than a simple notification of what deadlines are active now. Whenever possible, FFAM gives advance notice of RFPs that will be coming out. Also, whenever possible, they provide a link to the prior RFP so you can start working on your project early.

You can download a free copy of FFAM or one of the other discipline-specific newsletters (such as funding for the arts, children or health) before committing to a subscription.

We use this resource in our office and always find good information to share about upcoming opportunities.

Try it at cdpublications.com.

Federal and Foundation Assistance Monitor *talks to funders. They track upcoming RFPs to give subscribers the earliest possible alerts of funding opportunities*

Grants Questions Answered

Q: What are some tips to help me fit more grantseeking into my busy schedule?

A: Grantseeking is time consuming. Many development officers who have to do all of the fund-raising have difficulty investing the time to create winning proposals. Here are some strategies to get more quality proposals out the door in 2012:

- Create a “grants calendar” for the year with funder deadlines and action steps. This will help remind you to work on proposals and will ensure you don’t miss opportunities.
- Schedule time just to work on proposals. Trust us, we know. If your plan is to just “squeeze it in,” you will never have the time.
- Consider writing away from the office. Proposals require long periods of concentration. That’s hard to achieve when the phone is ringing or people stop by your office every few minutes. If you can’t get away, turn off your phone and close the door with a “Do Not Disturb” sign.
- Have on hand content you will need for any proposal so you don’t have to write it from scratch. Commonly requested information such as your organization’s history, mission, clients served, and key personnel can usually be used in multiple proposals with only minor edits.
- BUT—think quality, not quantity. One strong proposal for a top-priority project to a really good-fit funder is worth much more than several generic letters fired off to “hopeful” prospects (see *article on p.1 about how just sending out more proposals does not usually bring in more funds*).

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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

Robert Wood Johnson Reform Fund Round 2

<http://tinyurl.com/5ulhenp>

Tel: (202) 452-831

Email: aspencer@gih.org

Deadline: Feburary 29

Giving Range: Up to \$30,000

Giving to foundations that will provide grantseeking support to state and county governments working to implement health reform law

Connecting Youth to the Outdoors Initiative (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation)

<http://tinyurl.com/7xsq3qo>

Contact: Claire Thorp

Email: Claire.thorp@nfwf.org

Deadline: January 27

Grant range: \$50,000 to \$100,000

(1:1 match required)

Giving to programs that fund innovative conservation job opportunities for youth that expose them to career opportunities

Kessler Foundation Employment Program

<http://kesslerfoundation.org>

300 Executive Drive, Suite 70

West Orange, NJ 07052

Tel: (973) 324-8362

Email: KFgrantprogram@kesslerfoundation.org

Deadline: Feb 2 for concept submissions

Giving Range: \$100,000 to \$250,000 per year

Giving for programs that increase employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities

Bikes Belong Coalition

<http://www.bikesbelong.org/grants/apply-for-a-grant/>

P.O. Box 2359

Boulder, CO 80306

Tel: (303) 449-4893

Deadline: February 29

Grant Range: Up to \$10,000

Giving to programs that connect existing facilities for create new biking opportunities