



Conference Scholarships

If you are despairing of how to pay for essential professional development, the Grant Professionals Foundation offers multiple scholarships to offset the costs of attending the GPA national conference. GPF awards cover the costs of registration and three nights lodging. The forms for 2012 are not quite up yet, but watch the Foundation's website at www.grantprofessionalsfoundation.org. You must be a GPA member to qualify.

Individual chapters also offer their own scholarships and may have earlier deadlines (such as the St. Louis chapter, whose scholarship deadline is this spring).

In This Issue

Balancing Need with Opportunity	2
We Recommend: FREE Online Logic Model Builder	3
Grants Questions Answered	3
Upcoming Grants Opportunities	4

NonProfit Associations

Does your organization belong to your statewide nonprofit association? Or an association dedicated to your field, such as the National Coalition of Healthcare Networks or the National Coalition for the Homeless?

Most states have a statewide nonprofit association. However, their names may be confusing. In our state, the association is called the Arkansas Coalition for Excellence. If you did not know who they were, it would be hard to figure it out on your own.

You can use the "Find Your State Association" page at the National Council of Nonprofits website at <http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/salocator> to find your state's listing.

Why should you pay the (usually very inexpensive) dues to belong to one more organization?

Because you get incredible bang for your buck. Usually when you join the state association, you get membership in the national organization as well.

One of the main benefits is that these organizations can advocate on behalf of their members. Yes, they can lobby.

In these days of budget cuts (such as the distressing cuts in CDBG funding), non-profits doing excellent work in the community need a voice on their side at the budget table.

In addition to advocacy, most state associations offer important training, discount purchasing agreements, and job boards. Some even have access to pro-bono legal services.

Go check out your state's association today.

Contact us!

The Kester Group, LLC
Cheryl L. Kester, CFRE
(479) 582-1053
cheryl@kestergroup.com
www.kestergroup.com

Follow us on
Twitter
[@KesterGroup](https://twitter.com/KesterGroup)



Respond to
articles at our
[blog](#)





How to Keep Proposal Content Fresh

By Cheryl L. Kester, CFRE

When I worked for a university, raising scholarship funds was always a priority. I sent out letters for scholarships, year after year. Proposals to foundations who had funded us in the past were more challenging, because I felt compelled to come up with a new twist or new content annually. I knew they had read last year's proposal because they sent a check!

The same is true when raising general operating funds for any organization or even "project" funds when you have the same project year after year (building homes, or offering literacy classes, or doing stream cleanups). How do you keep it fresh?

Here are a few suggestions. Most you will probably have heard before, but maybe today one will resonate with you when you need it:

Get out!

Get away from your keyboard and walk around your organization. Meet people and see programs in action.

Get Out!

That's right. Get out from behind that keyboard and take a walk. Visit your colleagues and pump them for information or stories. Sit down next to the Down's Syndrome client patiently stuffing envelopes. Watch the kids playing ball. Listen to the navigator helping a patient through confusing paperwork. Take photos if they're allowed. We can all be energized by these real life reminders of why we love our job and our organization. You'll get content. You'll have mental images of the smile on a child's face that you can turn into a story and transfer to paper.

Get New Content

Every year, I reminded colleagues that I needed new student stories—more than one, please. I can't keep using the same story every year of the kid who was saving up his workstudy earnings to buy his mom a pair of shoes for Christmas (not *Sex and the City* shoes; basic necessity-type shoes). It was heartwarming, but even funders who turned us down are probably starting to recognize that story. What's happening this year? Who is our new poster child?

Get Fresh Eyes

I have always thought that one of the best favors we grant professionals can do for one another is to swap old, tired proposals and have a "jazz it up" session. But, we usually don't like to share our proposals with each other. So, even if you just verbally explain to someone new what your organization does and why it matters, that can often get you reenergized. The questions they ask or what gets them excited about your mission may give you a new angle.

Get Away

Sometimes we just need to leave. To go get a Mocha Latte. Or a massage. Or exercise. Or pray. Distance, especially if you are really





frustrated or burned out, can be a sanity saver and is essential to true productivity. If you can't leave the office, then catch up on filing, reading those fundraising magazines, or emptying your email trash bin. Two are mindless repetition; one is professional development. Any will give you a break from feeling like you need to produce right this second and let your brain re-set.

Get Someone Else's Content

Whenever I'm stumped, I consult proposals written by others like those in the Foundation Center's two volumes of sample proposals or the ones that accompany other grant books. Even after (or maybe because of) writing grant proposals for years, I can find inspiration to get out of the rut of how I've always done it and strike out in a new direction by seeing how someone else did it differently.

I welcome additional suggestions for keeping motivated, getting over writer's block or livening up old content. Let's do it over a Mocha Latte. Or respond via our blog at kestergroup.com/blog

(A longer version of this article was originally published by *Grants and Foundation Review* at CharityChannel.com in December 2008.)

Respond with your comments and suggestions on our blog. See article at left for the address.

Grants Questions Answered

Q: Is it OK to include photographs in grant proposals?

A: Yes! We like including photographs that are clearly directly tied to your proposal's purpose and help tell the story. Like the time we were writing proposals for stoves that would enable Honduran villagers to use less wood for cooking and heating and we included the photo of the elderly woman with a huge load of wood on her head, walking for miles to her home.

Carefully chosen and judiciously placed photographs can add incredible human interest to your proposal or can help illuminate a complicated concept. Make sure you have mastered your word processor's techniques for placing photos and wrapping text around them so that the job looks professional.

Don't overdo it. Only one or two photos are probably necessary. Always print out your proposal with the photos on a black and white printer to see how it may look to reviewers who only get a photocopy of the original. You are checking to be sure your proposal copies clearly and the photos don't turn into black blobs!

The Kester Group, LLC
Grants Consultants
Fayetteville, AR 72704
(479) 582-1053
info@kestergroup.com
www.kestergroup.com

We are members of and adhere to the Codes of Ethics of:



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.

Please visit our website for more information: www.kestergroup.com.

Follow us on Twitter
[@KesterGroup](https://twitter.com/KesterGroup)



Respond to articles at our [blog](#)



You may unsubscribe from the newsletter at any time by sending an email to cheryl@kestergroup.com.

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

Mary Kay Foundation Domestic Violence Shelter Grants

<http://tinyurl.com/3v6mdnw>

Tel: (877) 652-2737

Web: www.marykayfoundation.org

Deadline: April 30 (awards announced in Oct.)

Grant size: \$20,000

The Foundation makes grants to at least one domestic violence shelter in every state. Application forms are available at the website listed above.

Homeless/Runaway Youth Basic Centers & Street Outreach Programs

<http://tinyurl.com/3swfwdk> (Basic Centers)

Tel: (202) 205-9546 (BC) 205-7745 (SOP)

Deadline: June 7 (anticipated; RFA approx. 4/8)

Grant Sizes: \$25k-\$200k

Two federal programs (Basic Centers and Street Outreach) to reach runaway and homeless youth. Eligible applicants include nonprofits, public and private universities, and governments.

ING Run for Something Better

<http://www.sauconyunforgood.com/how-to-apply/>

Contact: None given

Deadline: May 15, 2012

Grant Size: Maximum of \$2,500 per school
Giving directly to schools (K-8) who wish to start or expand a running program for students. Don't put this off to the last minute as you must provide detailed demographic and other data in your application.

Community Forest Grants

<http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/cfp.shtml>

Email: communityforest@fs.fed.us

Deadline: May 15, 2012

Grant Ranges: Max of \$400,000; match required
Eligible Applicants: governments, nonprofits
Federal program to establish community forests by acquiring private land in danger of "conversion" to non-forest uses. Very competitive.