



Grant Guidance

Thomas-Forbes & Kester, LLC

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 6

MAY 2009

“The skill of writing is to create a context in which other people can think.”

—Edwin Schlossberg

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Finding “Good Fit” Funders 2

Where Do I Find Funders? 3

Grants Questions Answered 3

Upcoming Grant Opportunities 4

Contact us!

Cheryl Kester, CFRE
ckester@cox.net
(479) 582-1053

Melanie Nolen
melanie@tfkgrants.com
(479) 582-4600 ext 105

www.tfkgrants.com

Choose Your Funders Wisely

With limited staff time for grantseeking, increasingly tight budgets at nonprofits, and decreasing assets of funders, it is more important than ever to carefully select and target the best funders for your organization. In this issue of *Grant Guidance*, we are tackling this subject to help equip you with the skills you need to be a successful grantseeker, even during tough economic times.

Cultivate Relationships with Funders During Times of Reduced Giving

Research from the Foundation Center and the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* confirms that 67% of foundations will reduce their giving in 2009. Some predict giving will continue to decline into 2010. (*Philanthropy New Digest*, 3/31/09).

Some funders are limiting their giving to nonprofits with whom they already have a relationship, making it extra difficult for new applicants to successfully break in.

So, what to do? Especially if you are a new applicant to a funder?

First, consider this a time period in which to cultivate relationships with funders to whom you can apply when they are ready.

and listen. Not all foundations are reducing giving; you may get the go-ahead to apply.

Even though the odds of receiving the funding on your first attempt will be lower this year, just getting your name in front of the funder to build familiarity can position you to be more competitive later.

Visit the Foundation Center website to listen in on a funder panel discuss how applicants should cultivate relationships during this time:

<http://foundationcenter.org/focus/economy/>

Follow the link to “How to Approach Funders in Difficult Economic Times.”

Do your research, call the prospects, Keep trying!

Finding “Good-Fit” Funders

By Melanie Nolen



When searching for funders, consider both your organization’s mission and each aspect of the individual programs you deliver that might broaden your eligibility with funders.

Just as important as writing a solid grant proposal is selecting the right funders to apply to. Even the best proposal will not receive funding from a funder who is a poor fit for the applicant organization. Here are some tips to help you determine “good fit” funders—those most likely to fund your organization.

1. Select funders whose interests align with your mission. If you are a health-care organization, choose funders who are interested in health care. Most funders’ guidelines will specify these interests.
2. Select funders who give in your geographic area. If the funder’s guidelines do not state a giving area, check previous gifts lists on the funder’s Form 990s (available on guidestar.org) to determine where the funder gives.
3. Select funders who have funded organizations similar to yours in the past. If you are seeking support for a symphony, check funders’ gifts lists for symphonies or performing arts groups the funder has supported recently.



Quick Tip

Think of a grant as a partnership between your organization and the funder. Look for funders who want to make the same difference in the world that you are working toward.

4. Select funders who give to the type of project for which you are seeking support (capital/building, general operating, programming, etc.). Many funders may be interested in your subject area but are unwilling to fund the type of support you need.
5. Select funders who give gifts of the size you need. Applying to funders who do not give gifts above \$200 when you have a \$2 million project is not a good investment of time. Then again, applying to one funder for \$2 million is similarly unrealistic. Seek a healthy balance between the extremes, and apply for funding that will be worth the time you spent preparing the application.
6. Select funders who are interested in the demographic you serve. If your organization or project benefits children, look for funders interested in children. Many funders have a demographic focus such as minorities, families, the elderly, or the homeless.

The more of these criteria a potential funder meets, the better a fit it is for your organization. Spend your time on your “best fit” funders and you will increase your chances of grantseeking success.

For more help, see the Foundation Center’s [Guide to Funding Research](#).

Where do I find funders?

Perhaps you know the name of a funder you want to research. Or perhaps you are simply looking for funders interested in your subject area or your community. Where do you find information such as a funder's interests, guidelines, and previous giving?

Private foundations are required to file a tax return Form 990 each year. These forms are public record and can be found on the websites and databases on the right.

A funder's previous gifts list will most often be found at the bottom of the 990. See [our article on interpreting 990s](#) for additional help.

Use any profile that you find on a funder database as merely a first step in your research. Look for funders' websites (a google search works well) for more specific and current information. Occasionally a funder's guidelines may be attached to the 990 as well.

[Foundation Center's Foundation Finder](#)

If you know the name of the foundation you want to research, you can search here for contact information and 990s.

[Guidestar.org](#)

With a free registration, you can search on Guidestar by keyword, funder name or funder location. Results display 990s, contact information, and recent news.

[NOZA](#)

With a free registration, you can search by funding interest, location, and funding amount. Results show previous gifts the funder has made.

[Grants.gov](#)

Here you can find federal funding opportunities. You can also check individual government agency websites, as sometimes funding opportunities will be posted there before they appear on Grants.gov.

Grants Questions Answered

- Q. If my organization has several projects that need funding, how do I decide which one to take to any given funder?
- A. Often, you will apply to funders for only one project that your organization is planning, even if you have multiple projects on your plate. For each funder you apply to, you should choose the project that most closely fits the funder's guidelines and previous giving (use the questions in "Finding 'Good Fit' Funders" to help you). For instance, a theater company might request funds for instructive summer theater camps for children from a funder who is primarily interested in education, and look for other funders to support an adult theater production. Request funds for the programs most likely to interest each of your prospective funders.



Have a question?
Send it to Melanie
to include in next
month's newsletter!

Thomas-Forbes & Kester, LLC
Grants Consultants
Fayetteville, AR 72704
(479) 582-1053
info@tfkgrants.com
www.tfkgrants.com

We are members of and follow the
Codes of Ethics of :



Thomas-Forbes & Kester, LLC is committed to serving non-profits through grant writing, training, strategic planning and program design and evaluation. The principles and associates have been employed by non-profit organizations, been volunteers and served on non-profit boards. We know you and are committed to your mission.

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

You may request to be removed from our newsletter mailing list at any time by sending an email to melanie@tfkgrants.com.

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

Best Buy Community Grants

Tel: (866) 625-4350

bestbuygrant@easymatch.com

<https://www.easymatch.com/bestbuygrant/>

Deadline: June 15

Grant Range: \$10,000 max (avg. \$5K-\$7K)

Giving for projects that benefit young teens in the areas of education, life skills, leadership skills, or relationship development. Applicants must be located within 50 miles of B.B. facility.

For details and to apply, visit [Best Buy Children's Foundation](http://www.bestbuychildrensfoundation.com) online.

RGK Foundation

1301 West 25th Street, Suite 300

Austin, TX 78705

Tel: (512) 474-9298

<http://www.rgkfoundation.org>

Deadline: none; next board meeting June 5

Grant Range: \$10,000—\$280,000 (avg. \$25K)

Giving nationally for projects in the areas of Education, Community, and Medicine/Health.

For details and to submit an electronic LOI, visit the [RGK Foundation](http://www.rgkfoundation.org) website.

Captain Planet Foundation

133 Luckie Street, 2nd floor

Atlanta, GA 30303

Tel: (404) 522-4215

<http://www.captainplanetfoundation.org>

Deadline: June 30, Sept. 30, & Dec. 31

Grant Range: \$250—\$2,500

Giving in all states for hands-on environmental projects for children and youth.

For details and to apply, visit [Captain Planet Foundation](http://www.captainplanetfoundation.org) online. Applicants will be notified of funding within 4 months of applying.

Home Depot Building Healthy Communities

team_depot@homedepot.com

<http://corporate.homedepot.com>

Deadline: June 15, Sept. 15, and Dec. 15

Grant range: up to \$2,500

Home Depot gift cards are issued to nonprofits who are using volunteers for projects to improve the community such as building, landscaping, improving green spaces, and others.

For details and to apply online, visit the [Home Depot Community Grant Program](http://www.homedepot.com) website.