



# Grant Guidance

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

—Edwin  
Schlossberg

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Developing Relationships with Grant-Makers 2
- “Bring Back the 4th” program 3
- Grants Questions Answered 3
- Upcoming Grant Opportunities 4

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## NWA Free Health Center Receives Kresge Grant

Congratulations to the [Northwest Arkansas Free Health Center](#), which has received a [Health Clinic Opportunity Fund](#) grant from the [Kresge Foundation](#) to support a 1/2 day expansion in the Center’s hours of operation, bringing it to 5 full days of service for the first time in its history. With this award, the Free Health Center will be able to serve more patients, improve the efficiency of its services, and expand its fundraising capabilities. For more information about the Free Health Center, visit [www.nwafreehealthcenter.org](http://www.nwafreehealthcenter.org).

## Study Examines Grant Maker- Seeker Relationships

A recent article in *Chronicle of Philanthropy* (May 6, 2010) reported the findings of a study which examines relationships between grant makers and grant seekers.

The study, conducted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy, gathered feedback from over 25,700 grant seekers on 226 grant-making officers at foundations across the US and recognized exemplary foundation employees from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Northwest Health Foundation, Heinz Endowments, and Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, among others.

According to the report, the four characteristics most important to relationships between foundations and grant seekers are: 1) grant-making officials having a good grasp of the foundation’s strategies

and goals; 2) a candid selection process that helps grant seekers improve their proposal writing and operations; 3) the expertise of grant-making officers in the charitable causes and geographic regions they support; and 4) frequent and open communication between grant-making officials and grant seekers.

Grant-making officers recognized by the study cite being available and connected to their community as their top priorities in working with grant seekers. Chris Kabel of the Northwest Health Foundation comments, “Grant making has been called both an art and a science...As you get more comfortable with the science end, you branch out into the more subtle aspects of grant making, which is much more relationship-based.”

## Developing Relationships with Grant-Making Organizations

By Cheryl L. Kester



*“I’ve heard foundation staff say that when they ask you questions or give you tasks to perform, they’re often more interested in how you respond than in the content of your answer.”*

There are two important things to remember when cultivating relationships with funders: 1) Foundations are like people—they all have different “personalities,” and 2) Foundations are NOT like people—the cultivation process is different from the process that would be used to solicit a major gift.

In the grants world, submitting a proposal is a perfectly acceptable “relationship starter.” Since many funders will only talk to grantees, this is often the only way to get your foot in the door. If your board chair and the foundation’s president have been best friends since grade school, you might not need to follow the foundation’s rules. Otherwise, research all you can about the foundation, craft your proposal to fit their interests, send it in, and get funded. Then you have a starting point for a relationship.

Different types of funders need different cultivation strategies. Foundations administered by a bank or trust company can be scratched off your “relationships” list, since the donor is dead and the trust officer has no interest in meeting you. Government agencies each have their own personality and offer different amounts of assistance.

For foundations who require a Letter of Intent as a first contact, be sure to follow their guidelines; sometimes you can call these funders if you have a genuine question about the LOI or funding process. Family foundations and donor-advised funds are the types of funders you can establish long-term relationships with because you are concerned about the same problems and potential solutions. Funders who have funded you in the past are your very best bet for relationships. Be sure to be mindful of these funders’ cultures—with some, you’re family, while others are more formal.

For “hard to crack” funders, the first step is excellent research. Foundation officers want to know that you’ve done your homework and are a prospect for more conversations. It’s your job to convince them of this right away. Contact them through the methods outlined in their guidelines (if they say they don’t accept phone calls, don’t call).

Once you’ve made your initial contact, look to them for guidance for the next step. If the initial contact is a phone call and they’re not answering, try either a letter or application and put them on your calendar for next year. If you haven’t heard back after 3 months or so, follow up with a polite phone call to check the status of your application.

If they ask for more information, send you forms to fill out, or give you the go-ahead to submit a full application, do everything they ask, make it look sharp, and send it back early. I’ve heard foundation staff say that when they ask you questions or give you tasks to perform, they’re often more interested in how you respond than in the content of your answer.

If foundations reject you, send a “thanks for reviewing our proposal” letter. You may follow up with a very polite phone call (no whining!) to ask how to strengthen your proposal for next year. Some will give you advice and some won’t. Be gracious about the funder’s policies. If they fund you, even if it’s for less than you requested, thank them profusely, be good stewards of the money, and report as required. Now you have a relationship! Invite me to the wedding.

(This article is condensed from an article by the same title published by *Grants & Foundation Review* at [CharityChannel.com](http://CharityChannel.com), July 19, 2006)

## “Bring Back the 4th” Uses Citizen Participation to Determine Grant Recipients

Tough economic times have forced cities all over the country to cut back or eliminate their 4th of July celebrations. Fireworks, cookouts, and parades have disappeared in many places as municipal budgets have been pared down.

This year, Liberty Mutual awarded 10 cities across the country with “Bring Back the 4th” grants to support their Independence Day celebrations. Instead of a traditional proposal, however, Liberty Mutual gave citizens the chance to go to their website and take a quiz entitled “Responsible Moments in U.S. History.” The 10 cities with the most completed quizzes received \$10,000 each toward their celebrations.

A list of this year’s winners can be found on the [“Bring Back the 4th” website](#).

The “Bring Back the 4th” program is emblematic of the rising popularity of grant competitions in

which citizens get to participate in the decision-making process. For example, the [Pepsi Refresh](#) program allows people to visit its website and vote for the best proposed ideas in several different funding ranges.

While many corporations are using this approach to increase traffic on their websites and respond to the issues their consumer base cares about, foundations are getting in on the act as well. [Tourism Cares](#) recently opened voting on its website for visitors to choose a project to receive a “Save Our Sites” grant.

Giving citizens a greater participatory role in the decision making process of grant makers may become important in appealing to members of Generation Y, who have been shown to want more involvement and more transparency from the organizations they support and volunteer for than their predecessors.

## Grants Questions Answered

Q. How do I become a “pre-selected organization” for funders who only give to pre-selected organizations?

A. How to develop a relationship with a funder who only funds pre-selected organizations is one of the million-dollar questions of the grant world. Foundations adopt this policy for a variety of reasons. Some are focused on a community in which the board members are very active and feel they have a good knowledge of the organizations they want to fund. Sometimes the founding donor of a foundation leaves a list of organizations for her trust to fund after her death, and trustees are restricted by foundation policy to only select grantees from among those organizations. Our best advice is to call these foundations and very politely ask if there is a process for becoming pre-selected, or if you may send informational materials about your organization (without an ask) to the foundation so that they can learn more about you. Whatever their response, respect the funder’s wishes and follow their advice. Do not waste your time applying to these organizations unless you are advised by a foundation officer or board member to do so.



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You may request to be removed from our newsletter mailing list at any time by sending an email to [melanie@tfkgrants.com](mailto:melanie@tfkgrants.com).

## Upcoming Grant Opportunities

### **Nat'l Endowment for the Humanities America's Historical & Cultural Organizations**

Contact: NEH Division of Public Programs  
(202) 606-8269

[publicpgms@neh.gov](mailto:publicpgms@neh.gov)

Grant Range: \$40,000-\$75,000

Deadline: August 18, 2010

*Planning and implementation grants available for developing humanities content*

For more details, visit the [Planning Grant](#) and [Implementation Grant](#) guidance online.

### **Nat'l Education Association Green Across America Grant Program**

<http://www.neamb.com/green>

Grant Range: up to \$1,000

Deadline: July 30, 2010

*Giving to projects that encourage K-12 students to increase earth-friendly behavior in their neighborhoods or communities*

For more information, visit the [National Education Association](#) online.

### **Service Learning Workshop Mini-Grants for Community Colleges**

Contact: Gail Robinson

(202) 728-0200

[grobinson@aacc.nche.edu](mailto:grobinson@aacc.nche.edu)

Grant Range: \$2,000

Deadline: August 6, 2010

*4 community colleges will be selected to host a regional workshop on service learning*

For more information, visit the [American Association of Community Colleges](#) online.

### **AstraZeneca Health Care Foundation: Connections for Cardiovascular Health**

[ConnectionsforCardiovascular-](mailto:ConnectionsforCardiovascularHealth@astrazeneca.com)

[Health@astrazeneca.com](mailto:Health@astrazeneca.com)

Grant range: \$150,000+

Deadline: July 31, 2010

*Giving to projects that address patient cardiovascular health issues*

For more information, visit the [AstraZeneca Health Care Foundation](#) online.