

Preparing Successful Grant Proposals

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Session | At a Glance

- Current Trends in Grantmaking
- Funder Compatibility
- Questions Foundations Ask Internally When Reviewing Inquiries
- Sample Proposal Questions and Responses
- Proposal Writing Tips (Do's and Don'ts)
- Foundation Relationship Building

Key Points

You are Not
the Only
Nonprofit
Foundations
Are Working
With

Not Long
Term
Support

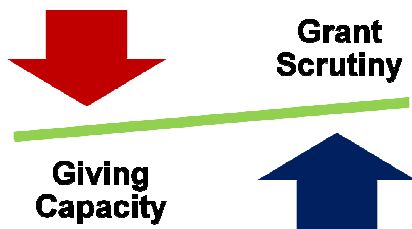
Foundations
Invest in the
Future

Program
Staff Review
and Trustee
Approved

One
Foundation
is One
Foundation

Trends in Foundation Grantmaking

The **Economy** and Effect



The Economic Impact: Current Trends in Grantmaking

- Decrease in **Number of Grants** Awarded
- Decrease in **Size of Grant** Amounts
- Decrease in the **Number of New Grantees**
- Decrease in the **Number of Multi-Year Grants**
- Decrease in **Capital Grants**
- Invitation only**
- Reassessment of priorities**
- Accountability emphasis**

Foundation Center
2010 Foundation Growth and Giving Estimates
1,300 Foundation Respondents

The Right Fit

Interest

Geographic Area
Priority Focus
Population Served

Type

Direct Service Providers
Intermediaries
Advocacy

Life Stage

New Growth Mature Turnaround

Assessing Fit

Where are you compatible?


Interests
Geographic area served
Types of Organizations
Award ranges

➔

Foundation Website
Annual report
E-Newsletter
Foundation 990

Questions Foundation Staff Ask Internally When Reviewing Requests

How are they different than....?
Are they making an impact?
Will a grant really make a difference?
How effective is their leadership?
Do they have the capacity to implement?
How will this request be sustainable?
Who else is supporting them?
Is the organization a good community partner?
What is the track record of success?



The Challenge

Helping the Foundation Understand the Purpose of Your Organization and the Need for Its Existence

The Linked Challenge

Turning That Understanding Into Support From the Funder

Evaluating an Organization



Understanding the Grant Proposal

Sample questions and responses

Q: Describe the Proposed Request

What Foundations Want to Know

- Background: Who, What, When, Why and How
- How your request is addressing a need
- Scope and Scale of Work

Tip: Assume the reviewer does not know anything about the organization or your specific needs. Avoid jargon and acronyms.

Q: Describe the Proposed Request

Example Response: Meals on Wheels of Blackford County is requesting support in order to continue to provide subsidy assistance to qualifying individuals. Approximately 30% of our clients are low income and would be unable to receive meals without subsidy reductions.

Information Gaps:

- How many are served annually?
- How many meals are provided?
- What is the cost of meals?
- How much is the subsidy assistance?
- What is the low-income subsidy qualifier?

Q: Describe the Proposed Request

Revised Response: Meals on Wheels of Blackford County is requesting support in the amount of \$30,000 for our **Financial Assistance Program**. The Financial Assistance Program was established in 2005 to help cover the costs of meals for low-income seniors who cannot afford to pay the **\$8.00 per meal cost**.

Meals on Wheels provides 2 meals per day, 5 days a week for 1,000 homebound seniors. Seniors receive 1 hot and 1 cold nutritious meal per day delivered by a Meals on Wheels volunteer.

Currently Meals on Wheels has 300 clients that are low-income and have an annual gross income of less than \$18,000. The Financial Assistance Fund reduces the financial barrier of the meal cost and helps ensure that low-income seniors enrolled in our program receive 2 nutritious meals on a daily basis.

Q: Indicate how Foundation Funds will be specifically used

What Foundations Want to Know

- Exactly how grant support will make a difference
- If the grant amount requested aligns with proposed activities/intended outcomes
- If the proposed costs are reasonable

Tip: Make sure you have fully assessed all costs associated with the request and that reasonable estimates have been obtained.

Q: Indicate how Foundation Funds will be specifically used.

Example Response: Support will be used to assist low-income individuals in Blackford County that cannot afford to pay for nutritious meals.

Information Gaps:

- How many meals/individuals will the grant request help?
- How will grant support be used?
- How will support make a difference for the population served?

Q: Indicate how Foundation Funds will be specifically used.

Revised Response: Over the past 3 years, Meals on Wheels has experienced a consistent increase in the number of low-income seniors requesting support for our Financial Assistance Program. **The entire grant request of \$30,000 would be used for our Financial Assistance Program.** Support would ensure that every low-income senior that requests financial assistance would receive meals at a reduced rate. **On average the gap between the cost of a meal and what a client can afford to pay is approximately \$2.95 per meal.**

Approximately 30% (300) of our clients served weekly would be unable to receive meals without subsidy reductions. Subsidies are determined using a sliding scale. **With a grant of \$30,000, over 10,100 meals could be provided to low-income individuals.**

Financial Assistance Sliding Scale (Based on Monthly Gross Income):

\$1500-\$1300	Client Meal cost = \$6.50	Funding Gap = \$1.50
\$1299-\$1000	Client Meal cost = \$6.00	Funding Gap = \$2.00
\$1099-\$900	Client Meal cost = \$5.00	Funding Gap = \$3.00
\$899-\$700	Client Meal cost = \$4.50	Funding Gap = \$3.50
Less than \$699	Client Meal cost = \$3.00	Funding Gap = \$5.00

Average: \$2.95 per meal

Q: Who will benefit from this grant

What Foundations Want to Know

- Impact of grant dollars
- Population demographics
- Proposed numbers served

Tip: Be specific in describing who will benefit from grant support. Create a visual image of those that will be impacted.

Q: Who will benefit from this grant?

Example Response: More than 300 low-income homebound residents who are enrolled as clients of Meals on Wheels of Blackford County will benefit.

Information Gaps:

- Trend in numbers served
- Population demographics

Q: Who will benefit from this grant?

Revised Response: Meals on Wheels serves over 1,000 seniors weekly and of that number 300 qualify for some financial assistance. **Grant support will ensure that 300 seniors per week will receive 2 meals per day/5 days a week.**

Demographics of Financial Assistance Program Participants

Average age = 72, 60% African American 90% are homebound, 72% live alone, 84% have dietary restrictions, 100% have incomes of less than \$18,000 annually,

2011 Financial Assistance Sliding Scale (Based on Monthly Gross Income)

Client Income	# of low-income seniors benefiting	% of low-income clients	# of meals provided weekly
\$1500 - \$1300	20	7%	200
\$1299 - \$1000	70	23%	700
\$1099 - \$900	130	43%	1300
\$899 - \$700	50	17%	500
Less than \$699	30	10%	300
Total	300	100%	3000

Q: What outcomes do you hope will be achieved during this grant?

What Foundations Want to Know

- What will be different or change as a result of support?

Tip: Define what you plan to increase or decrease or how you have changed behaviors, attitudes or situations.

Q: What outcomes do you hope will be achieved during the grant?

Example Response: To provide subsidy reductions based on the sliding scale listed to income eligible clients.

Information Gaps:

- Number served
- Difference made as a result of investment

Q: What outcomes do you hope will be achieved during the grant?

Revised Response:

With grant support we will achieve the following outcomes:

- 1) Meals on Wheels will not have a waitlist for financial assistance and 100% of low-income participants that request financial assistance for home delivered meals will receive a subsidy.
- 2) Over 300 seniors will receive nutritious meals 2 times per day, 5 days a week for 52 weeks.

Q: Who are your major supporters and collaborators?

What Foundations Want to Know

- That you have diversified funding
- That you have a broad base of community support for your work
- That you are partnering with other community organizations to meet a need or address a community problem

Tip: Only include supporters and collaborators that are confirmed.

Q: Who are your major supporters and collaborators?

Example Response: Meals on Wheels of Blackford County diligently works to have a diversified fundraising plan. As a United Way Agency we receive bi-monthly allocations. In addition, we aggressively pursue grant opportunities and host several fundraisers throughout the year. Finally, we receive many private donations from community organizations and private individuals and earn interest through our money market accounts. In the near future we intend to pursue the option of creating an endowment that will help to sustain us through regular allocations. We work with 3 local seniors centers who serve as congregate meal sites for our meal programs.

Q: Who are your major supporters and collaborators?

Revised Response: Meals on Wheels of Blackford County has an annual operating budget of \$500,000 and we strive to maintain diversity in our income sources.

2010 support for Meals on Wheels came from the following sources:

United Way: 30%

Service fees: 30%

Grants: 20%

Individuals: 15%

Special Events: 5%

Our largest corporate and foundation partners include: Blackford County Community Foundation, Target Corporation, Miller Family Fund, Williams Trust, and Home Depot.

Community Partners Include: Henderson Community Center, Tri-County Regional Hospital, Council on Aging, and the Blackford Senior Center

Final tips for preparing a written proposal

If possible, have a conversation before submitting a request

Submit the request that was discussed and for the amount provided

Don't miss deadlines

Follow instructions (page limits, copies, presentation)

Review for typos, grammar and make sure budgets add up correctly

Be honest and accurate about partnerships and supporters

Ask for a preliminary draft review

Maintaining a Relationship

Provide periodic personalized organization updates

Extend a personal invitation for a site visit post-grant

Stay in touch: Report back on your progress

Be proactive when something goes wrong



Engaging a Foundation



Questions

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