

# Grantwriter's Inkwell

A quarterly newsletter dedicated to providing the latest in grantseeking news, grantwriting tips and announcements for funding opportunities.



## Where Does Funding Go?

The question below was asked of the participants in a recent teleconference I took part in. I was surprised at the number of organizations that disagreed with the intended answer, so I thought I'd pose it to you for consideration:

True or False: Grants are awarded to nonprofits by foundations based on the organization that has the greatest need.

**FALSE!** While such a statement may seem counter intuitive to how foundations should be using their funds to support their local or targeted communities, the truth is that funding from foundations goes to the organization which the foundation believes to be the best match to their mission for how their funds are used. This is not typically the same organization that could be identified as having the greatest need for support. The foundation makes this decision based on the case presented by your organization and any further due diligence carried out by the foundation itself.

The truth of such understanding can only give you a better perspective from which to write your requests for funding. Rather than presenting organization as extremely needy of the foundation's support, instead, I recommend that you focus on presenting a strong case for why your program is a match to the foundation's mission, how your objectives are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic & time-bound), evaluation methods, and how you plan to sustain the program.

I suggest that you take a few minutes to reread your next grant application with that question in mind – are you presenting as the greatest need, or the best fit to the foundation's mission? If it is a bit of both, that is great, but be sure to always make the strong connection to the foundation's mission in order to increase your chance for a successful result.

*As originally published by DH Leonard Consulting on Grantwriter's Blog (<http://grantwritersblog.blogspot.com>)*

## In This Issue

- Relationships with Funders
- Proactive Grantseeking
- Restore NY Funding Announcement
- Registration Information for Upcoming Workshops  
\* REGISTER FOR THE FREE UPCOMING WEB-BASED WORKSHOP!

## FREE Seminar Offered by DH Leonard Consulting

### Foundation & Grants Fundraising Overview

### Web-Based Seminar

**Date:** April 23, 2009

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

**Cost:** FREE!

### Topics Covered

- Understand the different types of funders: family, corporate, community foundations, etc
- Understand the characteristics grantmakers look for in their nonprofit partners
- Understand the process of seeking and receiving grants

**Turn to page 2 for the full listing of DH Leonard Consulting's Spring 2009 workshops.**

## Grantwriter's Inkwell is Going Digital!

Subscribe to Grantwriter's Inkwell, DH Leonard Consulting's quarterly newsletter in order to:

- Stay up to date on trends in grant funding...
- Receive information on potential funders...
- Receive information on upcoming workshops...

**Email [newsletter@dhleonardconsulting.com](mailto:newsletter@dhleonardconsulting.com)** or call 315.285.5194 to sign up to have DH Leonard Consulting's quarterly e-newsletter delivered right to your desk!

Your email address will never be given or sold to other businesses or individuals.

## Upcoming Seminars from



The seminars listed below are being offered by DH Leonard Consulting in the upcoming months of 2009.

These workshops are all being offered as web-based so that non-profit professionals can stay current with the latest techniques and trends by interacting with and learning from their peers...all without the considerable time and cost restraints of attending traditional seminars.

### Web-Based: Grantwriting in the North Country: Mastering the Basics and Beyond

**Date:** May 14, 2009

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. — 11:30 a.m.

**Cost:** \$40.00

- Gain a competitive edge with a well-crafted proposal package
- Learn the best way to present your information
- Overview of the key elements of each section of the proposal

### Web-Based: Grantwriting in the North Country: Mastering the Basics and Beyond

**Date:** June 11, 2009

**Time:** 1:00 p.m. — 3:30 p.m.

**Cost:** \$40.00

- Gain a competitive edge with a well-crafted proposal package
- Learn the best way to present your information
- Overview of the key elements of each section of the proposal

### Web-Based: Proposal Budgeting & Evaluation

**Date:** June 25, 2009

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

**Cost:** \$35.00

- Learn to build a grant budget step-by-step
- Understand how to tell the program story through the budget and budget narrative
- Present the clearest budget while still following funder guidelines

Registration forms can be found on the opposite page or at [www.dhleonardconsulting.com](http://www.dhleonardconsulting.com) or by calling (315) 285-5194.

**Registration for each workshop is limited, so register early!**

DH Leonard Consulting offers web-based workshops with simultaneous conference call based participation as a means to deliver critical grant writing information to you while minimizing the time that you have to be away from your desk in order to participate. For additional information about the systems used, please contact Diane at (315) 285-5194.

## Relationships with Funders are Essential

In an environment of economic crisis, one of the most important things that nonprofits can do is to carefully maintain and nurture their existing relationships with foundations, state contract managers, and corporate foundation staff. While these relationships alone do not lead to grant funding, they can assist in increasing the rate at which your organization's chance of maintains or renews funding.

You may ask yourself what you should do to improve your organization's relationships with funders. Four of the key elements to maintaining strong relationships with your funding sources are to:

**1. Respect your funding source.** Meet the deadlines established by the funder for reports, funding renewals, etc. While there are many other ways that you can show respect to your funding sources such as properly recognizing their support, respecting the deadlines they have provided related to your funding is one of the most crucial things that your organization can do to maintain strong funding relationships.

**2. Seek input from your funding source.** Prior to submitting a request for funding, be sure to have discussed your proposed program with your primary contact with the funding source. While your contact may or may not be on the board of directors which makes final funding decisions, staff and volunteers involved in providing funding are your best critics for what is a strong fit with their current funding guidelines and ideals.

**3. Listen to input from your funding source.** While you may be great at seeking input from your funding source it is important to truly listen to their input. This is not to say that you should jump to adopt all suggestions proposed by each of your funders. That would certainly lead to a chaotic program and organization. Rather, you should thoughtfully consider the input from your funding source, and as appropriate provide feedback to the funding source on why you may not have adopted their suggestion.

**4. Provide feedback and updates to your funding source.** Funding sources often appreciate the opportunity to hear about the positive accomplishments of a funded program outside of their required reports. Big events for a program such as receiving a significant grant from another funding source to support the program, or a breakthrough in achieving the goal of the program are welcome phone calls or emails by your contact at funding sources. On the flip side, funders understand that funded programs do not always go exactly as laid out in work plans and timelines. If you encounter a significant setback or a shift in direction for the program, funders also appreciate being updated on changes of that nature in addition to receiving the positive updates.

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## Proactive Grant Seeking

You may be asking, "What is proactive grant seeking?" Isn't the act of submitting an application for grant funding proactive versus sitting back and waiting for foundations to find you and make gifts proactive? True. That is an initial way to look at being proactive in your grant seeking efforts.

However, the definition of proactive grant seeking I use is that proactive grant seeking/grant writing is the act of writing a proposal PRIOR to identifying a funding source or request for proposal/application (RFP/RFA) that you plan to submit the proposal to for consideration. Yes, I can hear the questions now, "Why write a proposal if you aren't sure there will even be a funder to submit the proposal to?!? Especially given today's economy."

Yes, responding to open RFPs/RFAs is a critical piece of a grant seeking strategy for any nonprofit organization. However, responding only to open RFPs/RFAs leaves your organization in a position where you are missing out on all of the funders that do not release formal RFPs/RFAs.

When you write a proposal for a program that you want to pilot, expand, or find additional support for prior to reading a RFP/RFA or making the list of funders that you want to approach for support, you are instead:

- focusing on what the ideal layout for your proposed program is;
  - the true budget for the pilot/expansion/etc; and
- hopefully, most importantly, keeping the proposal inline with your organization's strategic plan (or at least stated mission/vision/goals if you don't have a formal strategic plan.

Often times, when an organization's grant seeking strategy focuses solely on responding to RFPs/RFAs, their desire to apply for a funding opportunity and mold their programming to the restrictions of the opportunity overshadows what the organization's design for a program would be if the RFP/RFA was not on their desk. Writing the proposal first as a "boiler plate" and then looking for funders that have a mission/values similar to that of your organization and the program being proposed tends to do two things:

1. Lead to a higher success percentage for proposals that are submitted.
2. Make the implementation of funded programs more seamless for program staff as it is so well aligned with the strategic plan, mission, etc of the organization.

So, next time you have a few minutes, sit back to consider what programs you would seek funding support for if not focused on the specific restrictions of a RFP/RFA and let that start to guide your grant seeking strategy. There will always be open RFPs/RFAs to respond to, and you should not stop applying through those avenues, you just may want to consider a different way to cast your net a bit wider in your search for support.

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## Workshop Registration Form

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Workshop Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Foundation & Grants Fundraising Overview\* (April 23 2009) - FREE  
\_\_\_\_\_ Grantwriting in the North Country: Mastering the Basics and Beyond\* (May 14, 2009) - \$40.00  
\_\_\_\_\_ Grantwriting in the North Country: Mastering the Basics and Beyond\* (June 11, 2009) - \$40.00  
\_\_\_\_\_ Proposal Budgeting & Evaluation\* (June 25, 2009) - \$35.00

Total enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form, with payment (checks should be made payable to DH Leonard Consulting) to:  
DH Leonard Consulting  
15227 Heritage Drive  
Clayton, NY 13624

Please call (315) 285-5194 with any questions about registering.



Diane H. Leonard, President of DH Leonard Consulting, has been in fundraising for nearly a decade with more than six years of professional experience as both a staff member at a public foundation and then as a professional grantwriter in a large metropolitan city. DH Leonard Consulting far surpasses grantwriting "industry standards" with more than 60% of the proposals submitted in the last five years receiving funding. DH Leonard Consulting has raised more than \$4.5 MILLION dollars in funds in the last five years for nonprofits with annual budgets ranging from \$50,000 to \$4.1 million annually.

### **Services Offered by DH Leonard Consulting**

#### **Funder Research**

DH Leonard Consulting can work with you to assess your current funding needs and then search our database and other Foundation listings for appropriate corporate, family, public, and private funders on the local, regional, and national level. We provide you with recommendations for the "best fit" potential funders and a process for approaching the identified funders.

#### **Proposal Writing/Editing**

DH Leonard Consulting can work with you to write a proposal for funding based on the results of potential funder research or a request for proposal that has been identified by your organization. The proposal writing process involves gathering information about your organization's programs and activities, working from existing program plans to develop grant work plans, and developing grant budgets. Each proposal is tailored to the specific application and funding focus of the funder.

#### **Program Planning & Design**

DH Leonard Consulting can assist your organization in developing or formalizing a program idea in order to prepare for submitting a grant application. The formalizing process leads to establishing program goals and objectives as well as program work plans, timelines, and evaluation components.

Call Diane (315) 285-5194 to find out how DH Leonard Consulting can help increase the grant revenue of your nonprofit, or visit [www.dhleonardconsulting.com](http://www.dhleonardconsulting.com).

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