



Center on AIDS & Community Health

Dear ConnectHIV Grantees,

As many of us have experienced, finding ways to financially sustain programs and organizations is an ongoing, and at times, challenging process (especially in the current economy). Applying for grants and raising program funds is often associated with stress and frustration. In working closely with you over the past few years, we have identified some common areas of need in terms of your fundraising and sustainability needs. AED has developed four tools, highlighting four main funding areas, and a list of corresponding reference terms to assist you in thinking of new or strengthening your current fundraising processes.

The four tools were designed to serve as supplemental information; they are not designed to be comprehensive job aids for all of your fundraising needs. The four tools cover:

- **Sustaining Your Program through Federal Grants**—including information on how to use www.grants.gov to access federal grants, how to access state and local grants, and how to apply for grants.
- **Sustaining Your Program through Federal Contracts and Subcontracts**—including information on how to use www.fedbizopps.gov to access federal contracts, collaborate with other organizations, and tips for preparing successful federal contract proposals.
- **Sustaining Your Program through Private-sector Grants**—including information on how to research donors through the Foundation Center, tips for preparing successful proposals for the private sector, and additional resources.
- **Successful Fundraising beyond the Proposal**—including information on creating a strategic fundraising plan, selecting and using a “Champion,” forming alliances with local businesses, and gaining media support.

Please use these as self-help tools to strengthen your existing fundraising capacity, build fundraising skills in less familiar areas, and support the consideration of non-traditional fundraising methods.

We hope that these tools are useful to you. Best of luck in your fundraising endeavors!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Beadle de Palomo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Frank Beadle de Palomo
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Key Terms

Bid/No Bid Decision: The process the organization undertakes to determine variables such as risk, cost of investment to pursue, availability of staff and consulting resources, likelihood of funding, and competitive position. The decision to bid or not bid should be made quickly because most RFPs allow 30 days from release to due date.

Competitive advantage: A factor in why the government may wish to award to your program. Advantages include superior technical ability, lowest cost, and credibility with target audience, among others.

Contracts: A legal agreement between the federal government and an organization, usually a corporation, with specific duties, deadlines, representations, and certifications of compliance to federal regulations.

FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions.

Prime Contractor: The organization submitting the bid and legally responsible for performance under the contract. Large and complex contracts often have a number of subcontractors, including small and minority businesses to fulfill federal mandates through the Small Business Administration.

Procurement: The broad term for acquisitions, including RFPs, requests for quotes, sole source, and set asides for small and minority-owned businesses.

Request for Proposals (RFPs): The document used by the government to request goods or services. The RFP contains a Statement of Work (SOW) which states specifications of the desired goods or services, evaluation criteria, directions for technical and cost proposals, and lists requirements for representations and certifications.

SMART objectives: **Specific** (objective clearly states what change is desired, where the situation will be changed and who will be affected), **Measurable** (objective can be measured or counted in some way), **Attainable** (achievable), **Relevant** (objective is important to the project and achieving the goal), and **Time Bound** (objective states the time period within which it will be accomplished).

Statement of Work (SOW): The section of an RFP that describes the precise characteristics of the intended goods or services, usually specifying deliverables with due dates.

Subcontractor: The subordinate organization proposed by the prime contractor to address a portion of the Statement of Work. Several subcontractors may be proposed by prime contractors, who must show clear management oversight. Proposed subcontractors must be approved by the government agency.

Win themes: Strategies to identify and highlight where your program offers an advantage over the anticipated competition.



Sustaining Your Program Through Federal Grants

Developed by the AED Center on AIDS & Community Health with support from the ConnectHIV Initiative.

FINDING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

What is the difference between a grant and a cooperative agreement?

A federal grant is an award of financial assistance from a federal agency to a recipient to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by a law of the United States. Federal grants are not federal assistance or loans to individuals.

A cooperative agreement is an award of financial assistance that is used to enter into the same kind of relationship as a grant; it is distinguished from a grant in that it provides for substantial involvement between the federal agency and the recipient in carrying out the activity specified in the award.

Who is Eligible?

Eligibility is designated in the beginning sections of each grant or cooperative agreement, and varies depending on the nature of the grant. Some may be restricted to academic institutions, or state or local government agencies. Your HIV/AIDS program is most likely a 501(c)3, so look for the designation "non-profit" in the list of eligible organizations.

Note that some grant programs seek research from academic institutions that must partner with local community organizations. There are several benefits to creating links with local academic institutions, including both community colleges and large universities. Only one eligible organization may apply as the lead organization for the grant; if you join another organization's bid, you are likely to be designated a "sub-grantee."

How to use Grants.gov for federal grant opportunities

Grants.gov allows you to find and apply for competitive grant opportunities from all federal grant making agencies. More than 1,000 grant programs are offered by 26 federal agencies in 21 categories. It can take up to two weeks to process your registration, so you'll want to register your organization as soon as possible. See the 'Registering with Grants.gov' text box for instructions on completing this process.

Spend some time searching the valuable and helpful information on the website, such as **Glossary, Free Software, "Succeed" e-newsletter, e-mail alerts, search tips, and troubleshooting support.**

Be sure to avoid fake grants.com sites, which pretend to be government sponsored but may be misleading. The ".gov" can only be used by the U.S. Government, so you can feel secure as long as websites you are searching are ".gov" sites.

Grants tend to be awarded in cycles. You will want to find grants that are due in about six weeks to two months, and grants that are due in later intervals. Grants.gov allows you to search what is currently available as well as archives of grants awarded in the past.

Registering to receive government grant announcements

In addition to registering on www.grants.gov, it can be beneficial to identify federal agencies that are likely to support your program's activities. The following agencies award grants to support HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment:

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (www.cdc.gov)
- **Health Resources and Services Administration** (www.hrsa.gov)
- **National Institutes of Health** (www.nih.gov)
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** (www.samhsa.gov)

Depending on the nature of the services you offer, you may also want to monitor the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (www.hud.gov) website and the Corporation for National and Community Service for VISTA and AmeriCorps programs (www.nationalservice.org).

Federal agencies have search tabs usually identified as "grants" or "grant opportunities." When you are on the home page of the agency, click on this tab and register to receive e-mail alerts on new grant announcements. Often agencies give notice of forthcoming grants to those receiving the alerts.

REGISTERING WITH GRANTS.GOV

- Go to www.Grants.gov.
- Explore what this user-friendly website has to offer by clicking on buttons in dark blue on the left of the home page such as "About Grants.gov" and "Help." Also explore the sub-sections within these categories such as the "Download Software" section of the "Help" category.
- Click on "Get Registered," found in the red block in the "For Applicants" category on the left of the home page.
- Click on "Organization Registration Overview Tutorial" on the "Get Registered" page to watch the 10 minute presentation on the registration process.
- Click on the "I want to register on behalf of my organization" link. This will take you to the registration page, which begins with a five-step guide to registration. The "Organization Readiness Checklist" and "Organization Registration User Guide" PDF documents provide detailed step-by-step instructions on registering your organization.
- Click on "Step 1: Obtain DUNS Number" at the bottom of the page. Follow the directions on the screen and in the "Organization Registration User Guide" to complete registration. It can take up to two weeks to process your registration; after you have received approval, you can submit grant applications.
- Search for grant opportunities by clicking on "Find Grant Opportunities" in the red box under "For Applicants" on the left of the home page.
- Narrow your search to focus on those grants relevant to your organization. Searches may be limited to keywords (such as "HIV/AIDS"); categories of funding activities (such as health and community development); and agency. Under Advanced Search, you may select dates, funding activity category, funding instrument type, eligibility, and agency, all working at the same time to focus your searches.

How to find state and local grants

In response to the Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, state and local governments are tracking the distribution of federal funds into the economy—this can mean funding community-based organizations such as yours. Each state will have its own mechanisms. County department heads are responsible for tracking and listing stimulus funds in their own areas. States and local jurisdictions may expedite purchasing through non-competitive grants to get federal funds into the community as quickly as possible. To find opportunities in your community, follow the steps in the text box.

FINDING AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT FUNDS

- Go to www.Recovery.gov.
- On the home page, click on “State Progress and Resources” on the right.
- Click on your state on the U.S. map. This will direct you to your state’s Recovery and Reinvestment Act website.
- Write down or bookmark your state “Recovery and Reinvestment” website for frequent reviews.
- If possible, sign up to receive regular e-mail alerts of funding opportunities in your state.

APPLYING FOR GRANTS

Electronic Submissions

Agencies are transitioning from hard copy to electronic delivery. Submitting your proposal electronically allows you to work up until the due date, and avoid mailing and delivery costs. On the other hand, some programs may be hesitant to submit electronically. All grants officers are open to discussions with applicants, and many seek to be flexible and supportive. If you wish to submit hard copy, or wish to have a “walk through” prior to the due date, contact the designated grants officer.

Follow all directions carefully

Because grants are a competition among numerous eligible applicants, most agencies are very strict about compliance with directions to ensure all bidders have a fair chance. If one bidder is allowed to exceed page limitations or line spacing in its application when the directions call for double-spaced text, it may give an unfair advantage to that bidder. Many agencies make sure the grant application is in full compliance before it is sent for review. If you do not follow the directions explicitly, you are taking the risk of having your application returned without review.

Likewise, deadlines are strictly observed. A grant delivered one minute late will be rejected. Electronic deliveries are time-stamped by the e-mail program. You may want to give yourself some extra time to upload proposals electronically; give yourself at least six hours prior to the deadline to ensure transmission.

SUCCESSING WITH YOUR APPLICATION

The Review Process

Agencies have slight variations on review, but generally they follow similar processes. Frequently applications are checked against format specifications of page length, margin size, and spacing. If guidelines have been correctly followed, the application is forwarded to “peer review.”

Your application will be assigned to a review group of “peer reviewers,” professionals who by experience or credentials are knowledgeable in the funding category. Applications are scored by these individual reviewers. Scores must be explained by designating strengths and weaknesses against each evaluation criteria. A review meeting is convened to discuss each application, explore individual evaluations, and reach consensus. These final scores are used to fund as many applications as possible within the grant ceiling. Agency websites offer detailed descriptions of specific processes.

Typically reviews take several months from the due date of the applications. Since federal funds often must be spent before the end of the fiscal year (September 30th), many grants are due in the spring and early summer so that funds can be dispersed before October 1st (the beginning of the federal fiscal year).

Follow-Up

If you are not funded, take the opportunity to discuss your bid’s strengths and weaknesses with the grants officer by formally requesting a debriefing. A lot has gone into the process, so allow a few weeks to go by before your request. See this opportunity as a chance to learn, not as a chance to have the decision reversed. The feedback can help your organization identify areas that will need work in your next proposal. The grant officer may be in charge of your next application, so work toward building a positive relationship.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

“Developing Competitive SAMHSA Grant Applications” offers information relevant to SAMHSA and other federal agencies. This information can be accessed using the steps listed in the “SAMHSA Resource for Developing Competitive Grant Applications” text box.

SAMHSA RESOURCE FOR DEVELOPING COMPETITIVE GRANT APPLICATIONS

- Go to www.samhsa.gov.
- Under “Browse by Topic” on the left of the home page, select “Grants Information” listed in alphabetic order.
- Click “Applying for a SAMHSA Grant” on the left side of the page.
- Click “New Grants.”
- Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the link under “Technical Assistance and Training for SAMHSA Grant Applicants.”
- Click on “Developing Competitive SAMHSA Grant Applications.” You can either order a printed copy of the manual, or download sections or the entire manual.



Sustaining Your Program Through Federal Contracts and Subcontracts

Developed by the AED Center on AIDS & Community Health with support from the ConnectHIV Initiative.

UNDERSTANDING FEDERAL OPPORTUNITIES

The U.S. Federal Government is the largest purchaser of goods and services in the world. Competitive contracts are used when the government has clear intention of its purchasing and is seeking the best value, usually balancing the best technical capability with lowest cost. While grants often fund as many organizations as possible within funding limits, contracts are usually awarded to only one prime organization. Most Requests for Proposals (RFPs) allow only 30 days for response, so time is of the essence. Managing a contract is very different from a grant. Not all nonprofits are set up to manage contracts. Your organization should learn of opportunities and decide whether to bid on them as quickly as possible.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will increase the number of federal contracts released at least through early 2011. This tool presents ways to track stimulus package and other federal funding to find opportunities to sustain your program.

USING WWW.FEDBIZOPPS.GOV

FedBizOpps.gov is the online government point-of-entry for federal procurement opportunities over \$25,000. It serves both as a gateway to federal contract opportunities and as a resource to find out about organizations receiving funding. It is used by federal contracts offices to announce new federal procurements, track modifications, and announce awards.

There are several useful features on this site. Note the light blue box on the lower-right side of the home page, titled

HOW TO ACCESS AND USE FEDBIZOPPS.GOV

- Enter www.fbo.gov in your Internet browser.
- Click on "General Info."
- Watch the three videos describing the features of the system under "For Vendors."
- Register as a vendor to access advanced functions: click on the "Register Now" tab on the homepage in the "Vendors and Citizens" box and follow the instructions from the video.
- Once you are registered, you can begin searching for funding opportunities. You can use the "Quick Search" on the homepage and search by subject area such as "HIV/AIDS." You can also click on the "Advanced Search" link and customize your search using a number of criteria, as listed below.

“Additional Resources.” To access information on frequently asked questions, click on “FAQs.” To move to grant information, click on “Federal Grants” to go to www.Grants.gov.

You can access information on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act by clicking on the “Recovery.gov” tab. Clicking on “State Progress and Resources” will bring up a map of the U.S; click on your state to find opportunities created by the stimulus package in your area. For more details on using Grants.gov, refer to the “Sustaining your Program through Federal Grants” tool.

The “Advanced Search” button allows you to tailor specific searches, narrowing the citations for the immense database to just those that are relevant to your search. It may be helpful to experiment with various searches to discover the features under each of these fields, listed in the text box.

COLLABORATING WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Many contracts require a team of organizations to be fully responsive to the Statement of Work in the RFP. For example, in its commitment to health reform, the federal government funds research on a number of health issues to determine what is working best. A local research institution or university may need to work in collaboration with a community-based program such as yours to implement new approaches and evaluate how well they are working.

You can use the archive functions in FedBizOpps.gov to find such research initiatives. This allows you to track funds to organizations in your area by searching award information using a variety of search criteria, such as zip code, organization name, and listings of agency awards. Your organization would serve as a subcontractor to the university or research organization. As a subcontractor, you would contribute to the prime’s proposal, rather than bear full responsibility and cost.

UNDERSTANDING ADVANCED SEARCH FEATURES

- **Keyword Text:** Search by keyword such as “HIV/AIDS” or the name of an organization you want to learn more about.
- **Agency/Office/Location:** Search for all federal agencies or specify a certain agency, such as “Department of Health and Human Services.”
- **Documents to Search:** Choose either “active,” “archived,” or both. Documents are designated “active” as they go through the process of announcement to award; “archived” documents have completed the process and filed for historical review.
- **Opportunity/Procurement Type:** Search by type of procurement, for example, “award notice.”
- **Posted date or date range:** Search by date(s) announcement was posted.
- **Place of performance zip code:** Search by award location.
- **Set-Aside Code:** Some procurements are limited competitions under Small Business Administration guidelines.
- **Classification Codes:** Only a few of the classifications will be relevant to your organization, such as “R—Professional, administrative, and management support” and “U—Education and training.”
- **NAICS:** Classifies business establishments under the North American Industrial Classification System.

SELECTING FEDERAL AGENCY WEBSITES

Once you have determined the federal agencies that are likely to fund contracts in your areas of interest, you may go directly to the agency website, register, and be added to receive updates in contract related information. Contract procurements frequently receive modifications, such as answers to technical questions and extensions to due dates. Since this information can be so critical to your proposal, we advise using both FedBizOpps.gov and agency websites to obtain contract information. Note: www.AIDS.gov offers a list of agencies and programs addressing HIV/AIDS.

SEARCHING AIDS.GOV

- Go to www.AIDS.gov.
- On the left of the home page, click on “Agencies and Programs.”
- Choose a listing of all programs, or choose prevention, treatment, minority initiatives, or global programs.

EVALUATING YOUR PROPOSAL

Each RFP must list the criteria by which proposals will be evaluated. An agency will use either internal federal employees or outside reviewers who have expertise in the area of the procurement; the review committee will be chaired by a federal employee. Reviewers are instructed to carefully read the proposals against the evaluation criteria, score each proposal, then discuss the scoring with other review members. When you develop an outline, be sure to address every point in the evaluation criteria to maximize your score and increase the likelihood of funding. Be sure to follow the format specified in the RFP and address each of the evaluation criteria’s points under the section specified to ensure getting the highest possible score. Reviewers are quickly reading a number of proposals, so be concise, thorough, and address points where the reviewers will be expecting to find them.

Reviewers must document the proposals’ strengths and weaknesses. They may not use any prior knowledge they may have of the applicants; rather, they must score what you have written. Comments are summarized by the contracts officer and may be requested as a debriefing after the final outcome of the competition has been announced.

TIPS FOR PREPARING FEDERAL CONTRACT PROPOSALS

Prepare for success

- Create a proposal timeline to ensure submission will be on time. Include key benchmarks (first and second drafts, final reviews and approvals, production and delivery time).
- Develop an outline for the proposal that is responsive to evaluation criteria and agency preferences.
- Create a checklist of all documents required for the proposal.
- Organize the proposal team; ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities, the proposal application, donor perspectives, and proposal development deadlines and deliverables.
- Attend conference calls or bidders conferences—this will help you learn more about the procurement and about the competition.

Clarify program aspects

- Hold a brainstorming session to define the problem that the agency is addressing.
- Develop a detailed project to address this problem: realistic goal, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time Bound) objectives, detailed activities, and management and monitoring and evaluation plans.
- Use matrixes or an outline to organize information. The project description can be outlined quickly, in bullet form if necessary, to generate basic ideas.

Think through costs to address the statement of work

- Clarify how your current staff can address the procurement, and augment any missing elements with consultant or subcontractor expertise.
- Confirm that the budget is realistic and adequate to implement the project and achieve targets. Match your cost proposal to the technical proposal's strategies and proposed deliverables.

Develop a winning proposal approach

- Brainstorm key points with your team that are important to the agency.
- Define "win" themes specific to your organization by thinking about your strengths and weaknesses compared to other organizations competing for the same funding.
- Incorporate "win" themes and competitive advantages into the proposal outline and program description.

Write the first draft

- Use the outline to guide writing assignments and specify approximate length for each section to meet page restrictions.
- Urge writers to suggest illustrations, tables, and graphics to appeal to visual reviewers.
- Remember that the first draft is just a draft; anticipate multiple revisions to refine the proposal.

Gain insights from staff and supporters

- Share early drafts with your proposal review team. Request specific feedback on strengths and suggestions for improvements rather than general comments on weaknesses. Communicate a specific deadline for comments and ensure that reviewers are briefed on the application requirements and the donor's needs.
- About a week before the due date, hold a "Red Team Review" where colleagues emulate the reviewers and score your proposal (based on the RFP scoring criteria) in final draft. Convene this group to confirm that the project is technically and programmatically sound, and that the proposal is responsive to the agency's needs. Discuss ways to adjust the final details of the proposal to improve your score and likelihood of funding.

Submit the proposal

- Conduct a final review to ensure the application package is complete and responsive to the donor's specifications.
- Plan for complications and last minute challenges. Request all proposal team members be available for support and final requests.
- Submit the proposal well before deadline: a day or at least several hours before the time due.
- Request a confirmation receipt from the donor.
- Be sure to thank all who supported the proposal development process.



Sustaining Your Program Through Private-Sector Grants

Developed by the AED Center on AIDS & Community Health with support from the ConnectHIV Initiative.

PRIVATE AND CORPORATE FOUNDATION FUNDING

Philanthropy is a major source of funding in America—65,000 independent, corporate, and community foundations support nonprofit organizations. The private or foundation sector differs from government funding, in that many foundations prefer to fund specific things. Many foundations only fund programs that serve locally, either by city, state, or region. Some foundations focus on a particular type of service or specific population.

Major supporters of HIV/AIDS include Bill and Melinda Gates, Ford, Robert Wood Johnson, Pfizer, and amfAR Foundations. Community AIDS Partnerships fund local AIDS organizations (for example, see www.washingtonaidspartnership.org). To access private and corporate funding for your program requires research.

LEARNING ABOUT DONORS THROUGH THE FOUNDATION CENTER

The Foundation Center is the leading authority on foundations, offering substantial databases and several communication resources. Follow the steps in the text box to access its website.

Although some information is available for free, the online Foundation Directory may only be searched after paying a subscription charge. Information on obtaining a subscription can be found on the Foundation Center website. If you are unable to purchase a subscription for your organization, colleges, universities and public libraries in your area may already be registered and willing to share this resource with you. Shared access and collaboration is encouraged by the Foundation Center.

ACCESSING FOUNDATION CENTER RESOURCES

- Use your web browser to go to www.foundationcenter.org.
- Click on "Get Started."
- Click on "Nonprofit grant seekers" under the "Welcome" box on the left.
- Review the extensive resources.

The Foundation Center has Library/Learning Centers located in Atlanta, Cleveland, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. Throughout the country, hundreds of Cooperating Collections offer core collections of Foundation Center tools.

The Foundation Center offers a number of training courses such as proposal writing and how to best approach a foundation. Most of these courses are for fee, but you may select a free webinar broadcast on proposal writing.

The Philanthropy News Digest is a service of the Foundation Center. It contains articles about philanthropy and news of interest to the field. To review this service, click on "Gain Knowledge" on the homepage, then find the last item in the menu.

TIPS FOR PREPARING PROPOSALS TO FOUNDATIONS

Prepare for success

- Research the foundations thoroughly to ensure that they fund the program, target population, service, and geographic area of your project.
- Create a proposal timeline to ensure submission will be on time. Include key benchmarks (first and second drafts, final reviews and approvals, production, and delivery time).
- Develop an outline for the proposal that is responsive to evaluation criteria and donor preferences.
- Create a checklist of all documents required for the proposal.
- Organize and brief the proposal team; ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities, the proposal application and donor perspectives, and proposal development deadlines and deliverables.

Clarify program aspects

- Donors rarely want to be your program's sole means of indefinite support. Include information on how other revenue generating activities will augment support.
- The more you can help the business or foundation increase its visibility, reputation for goodwill, and stature in the community, the more likely you will get funded.

Think through costs to address your request

- Clarify how your current staff will implement your proposed project, or if you will be hiring additional staff.
- Confirm that the budget is realistic and adequate to achieve targets. Match your cost proposal to the technical proposal's strategies, approach, and proposed deliverables.

Develop a winning proposal approach

- Brainstorm key points that are important to the donor.
- Define "win" themes specific to your organization by thinking about your strengths and weaknesses compared to other organizations competing for the same funding. A win theme is a strategy or credential unique to your program that would make the donor select you rather than another organization in a world of good causes.
- Incorporate "win" themes and competitive advantages into the proposal outline and program description.

Write the first draft

- Use the outline to guide writing assignments and specify approximate length for each section to meet page restrictions. Foundation proposals are usually very concise.
- Urge writers to suggest illustrations, tables, and graphics to appeal to visual reviewers.
- Remember that the first draft is just a draft; anticipate revision and review cycles to refine the proposal.
- Use action words and compelling verbs. Support claims.

Gain insights from staff and supporters

- Share early drafts with loyal colleagues. Request specific feedback on strengths and suggestions for improvements rather than general comments on weaknesses. Communicate a specific deadline for comments and ensure that reviewers are briefed on the application requirements and the donor's needs.
- About a week before the due date, hold a "Red Team Review" where colleagues emulate the reviewers and score your proposal in final draft. Convene this group to confirm that the project is technically and programmatically sound, and that the proposal is responsive to the donor's needs. Discuss ways to adjust the final details of the proposal to improve your score and likelihood of funding. Strive to make the proposal as content rich and concise as possible.

Submit the proposal

- Conduct a final review to ensure the application package is complete and responsive to the donor's specifications.
- Plan for complications and last minute challenges. Request all proposal team members be available for support and final requests.
- Thank the donor for thoughtful consideration of your proposal. Be sure to leave your name and contact information.
- Submit your proposal well before the deadline: a day in advance or at minimum several hours before the time due.
- Request a confirmation receipt from the donor.
- Be sure to thank all who supported the process.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **The Chronicle of Philanthropy.** Advertised as "the nonprofit world's Number One news source." To find fundraising information, go to www.philanthropy.com and click on "Fundraising" in the box on left. This resource requires a subscription fee.
- **Association of Fundraising Professionals.** Advertised as "advancing philanthropy through education, training, and advocacy." This is an excellent source for finding consulting resources in your area. Although aimed at fundraisers, this is a good source of information in the philanthropy field. To access this site, go to www.afpnet.com.
- **Community-Driven Institute.** Provides free, insightful articles. Go to www.help4nonprofits.com, click on "Non-profit Library," and then go to "Fundraising/Resource Development" and "Marketing/Community Engagement."
- **Campaign Consultation, Inc.** This for-profit company has developed helpful guidelines for the Corporation for National and Community Service. Go to www.campaignconsultation.com, find the iConnect tab on the left, and scroll down to "Producing Proposals That Work!"



Successful Fundraising Beyond the Proposal

Developed by the AED Center on AIDS & Community Health with support from the ConnectHIV Initiative.

Often even the best proposals are part of a large pool competing within tight budgets. Effective programs and excellent proposals are necessary, but not always sufficient for funding. This tool will highlight suggestions for both improving the success of your proposals and stimulating ideas for other fundraising opportunities.

This tool focuses on ways to sustain your program through careful planning, identify powerful “Champions” who can help your cause and your organization, and develop multiple fundraising strategies that work. Some recommendations in this tool may help distinguish your proposals from the pack and lead to more success; other ideas may enhance your overall management and visibility, thus leading to long-term sustainability.

ORGANIZING FOR FUNDRAISING

Develop an overall three- to five-year strategic plan for your organization, incorporating a specific fundraising plan. Be as inclusive as possible in planning—include board members, staff, and volunteers (you may even want to reach out to former donors for their inputs and advice). The goal is to generate ideas and gain perspective, so with a more diverse team and inputs you will benefit from many different viewpoints. Form subcommittees if specific tasks need to be completed. Strategic plans usually incorporate the areas outlined in the text box.

OUTLINING YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

- Introduction
- Organizational Background
- The Organization and its Environment (including Operations, Organizational Culture, and Leadership)
- Organizational Vision (including Vision, Mission, and Values)
- Issues and Strategies (including Financial Considerations and Resources)
- Annual Action Plan (including Annual Workplan and Milestones)
- Monitoring & Evaluation (including Accountability and Follow-up)

Define how much funding you will need for each year; targets should match your plans. Healthy organizations grow, so account for some degree of expansion, identify any potential shortfalls and gaps. Hold a brainstorming session, and analyze the ideas that are generated to determine which ones are likely to generate the funds necessary to accomplish your plan. Set realistic dollar amount targets for each program or organizational idea.

Most successful organizations have at least half of their funds covered (a “backlog”), so they are not seeking to raise funds for their entire budget each year. Concentrate on activities in Year One; once you have momentum and fundraising success, you can build on these accomplishments and connections in future years.

A STRATEGY: IDENTIFYING A “CHAMPION”

A “Champion” is a national opinion leader who is passionate about your issue. He or she gets things done and can influence others through “interpersonal leverage.” “Champions” have a high degree of influence; as a result, they are highly sought after by a number of good causes. Follow these steps to identify and recruit your “Champion.”

1. Organize a small selection committee, including members of your Board.
2. Hold one or more brainstorming sessions to identify influential leaders the group knows and to which the group has a connection. Remember in brainstorming there are no wrong ideas—encourage creativity and reach.
3. Develop a list of the top candidates.
4. Define a strategy for contacting each name on the list. Strategies may include finding a friend or colleague to contact the potential “Champion” on behalf of your organization; a short letter may be sent; or a meeting may be arranged.
5. Contact the top person on the list. If unsuccessful, work through the rest of the list.
6. Reassure candidates that your organization only wants their leadership, not their check. Explain how much time will have to be committed (e.g., no more than an hour a week) and the scope of their commitment (e.g., make phone calls, identify key contacts, attend a meeting, etc.). Ask if the potential “Champion” is comfortable helping you raise the amount you have targeted. If the candidate agrees, your “Champion” has been selected.
7. Quickly prepare and distribute a press release. Hold a press conference to announce the “Champion,” the members of the task force, and your organization’s objective(s).

WORKING WITH YOUR “CHAMPION”

1. Assign a staff member to carry out fundraising activities requested by the “Champion.” This ensures someone is supporting your “Champion” and following up on all ideas.
2. Ask your “Champion” if he or she wants to add other members to the task force. The “Champion” is likely to call on people who can either make donations themselves or call on other potential donors. The ideal group is small in number and large in influence.
3. Officially appoint members to the fundraising task force by sending a letter signed by your Executive Director.
4. Hold an opening event to announce task force appointments.
5. Make meetings of the task force short and enjoyable, focus on key decisions.
6. Seek the fundraising task force’s input on potential fundraising ideas. Share these ideas inclusively among staff and volunteers to get feedback and create support.
7. Create a detailed fundraising action plan with schedule and budget targets. Define specific tasks and assign responsibilities.
8. Prepare a short (one page or less) handout that can be used to give a 30 second compelling description of your program and its accomplishments.

FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES

Your program should pursue multiple sources of funding. Possible sources of funding include:

- **Events.** Organize a dinner or dance and sell tickets and sponsorships. Recruit a prominent entertainer, sports figure, political official, or musician to donate time for a program with ticketed admissions. Host a golf tournament and other social/sport event that is culturally appropriate to your community (Be creative: Fashion Ball, including on-site make-overs? Rodeo? Classic car rally? Bicycle race?).
- **Speakers’ Bureau.** Form a Speakers’ Bureau whose members speak to and ask for contributions from civic or religious organizations and other community groups. Present testimonials (in written, audio, or video formats) from clients served by your organization.
- **Corporate Vendor Program.** Create a corporate vendor program in your community where the Chief Executive Officer requests company vendor contributions for your organization.
- **Corporate Matching Contributions.** Obtain a corporate “match” for employee contributions to your organization.
- **“Round-up” Program.** Implement a broad-based retail store “round-up” program where customers are asked to round-up purchases to the next dollar over a certain time period. This approach should be used infrequently and for a short duration.
- **For-profit business.** Create a for-profit operation to generate profit-based income such as a bakery or coffee shop. Seek donated space to keep your overhead as low as possible.

WHEN TO SEEK EXPERT HELP

You may wish to seek outside expertise to provide advice on or lead a specific fundraising strategy. Some issues to consider include the following:

- Using internal staff to lead or support fundraising strategies has a cost, at times comparable to or higher than hiring an expert who may be able to perform much more efficiently.
- Project demands may preclude using internal staff; in this case, the only way to achieve the fundraising strategy may be to contract out services.
- If a strategy is not performed well, it may reflect poorly on your program.
- Start with something that has a high potential for success. A lack of success may drain energy and lower morale among your staff, discouraging future innovation.
- Successful strategies lead to benefits beyond funding such as increased awareness of your program's goals and achievements and increased momentum for overall growth.

If you decide to engage an expert or a company specializing in your chosen strategy, your first task should be to develop a clear Scope of Work that specifies deliverables and deadlines. Even if you know an expert who you think could do an excellent job, a competitive procurement may engage talent you are not aware of and encourage cost competition. Clearly explain the evaluation factors for the procurement. You may wish to suggest a range of costs or simply allow competition to drive down costs. If you don't suggest costs, consider increasing the evaluation score of this area in comparison to technical considerations.

FORMING A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES

Joint ventures with businesses can lead to long-term, self-perpetuating funding. While the business may provide limited financial support, a strategic alliance may be a highly valuable part of your organization's sustainability. Businesses benefit from forming a strategic alliance with organizations like yours to foster their "Corporate Social Responsibility." They can publicize their support to attract new customers who care about your cause. Their employees may prefer to work for companies associated with social issues, and are likely to be more productive and loyal.

Think through how the business will benefit, so your selling points come from the perspective of the potential business partner. As an HIV/AIDS program, you are part of the overall health care industry. Do local hospitals or pharmacies make natural allies? Consider how the strategic alliance will increase the customers, improve the performance of employees, and provide visibility in the community for the for-profit organizations you are approaching. Do you provide a service that is strategic to the business (e.g., bilingual staff who can provide support for translation, community outreach staff who can share information or materials in homes, etc.)?

Prepare short, concise handouts summarizing your organization and for what you are asking. Using the company's operator or website, try to identify the highest ranking official possible who can make a decision to form the alliance. A director or vice president of marketing, public relations or social responsibility may be your best point of contact, but do your homework to find out who is the decision maker. If you have identified a "Champion," see if they have connections you may capitalize on, or plan to include the "Champion" in your meeting.

MEDIA SUPPORT

Since businesses seek increased visibility as a means to increased profit, they can generate positive media coverage about their connection to your program to enhance their image. Large businesses usually have internal communication vehicles that reach their employees. Businesses may be willing to promote their relationship to your organization through newsletters or e-mails.

Media outlets are businesses too. Consider forming a strategic alliance with a newspaper, radio or TV station in your area to boost media support. Engaging media for publicity increases your organization's reach and highlights your accomplishments. Media constantly seek newsworthy stories. What does your organization do, or could it do, that is newsworthy? In the upcoming efforts for health reform, seek opportunities to write editorials or send "letters to the editor" on how your organization plays a part in increasing quality or decreasing cost.

Another strategy is to create a Public Service Announcement (PSA). A short PSA can be made for television, radio, or internet. Community colleges or local universities with communications programs may help you do this by making your issue or organization part of a class assignment.

RESOURCES

- **Business for Social Responsibility** (www.bsr.org): This San Francisco-based nonprofit's website offers free resources and blogs on corporate social responsibility.
- **Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't** (Jim Collins, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 2001): Although written for a business audience, the principles are equally valid for nonprofit organizations. This book has been used to motivate and encourage staff to participate in strategic planning.
- **Seely and Associates, Inc.** (703-624-2793; rseely@cox.net): Dr. Richard Seely is a fundraising consultant who has pioneered the use of the "Champion" model and through AED, has worked with the ConnectHIV grantees. His information is provided for reference purposes only and is not a recommendation from AED.

