

The Organic, Whole Earth, Back to Nature Guide to Grantsmanship

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The object of grantsmanship is to negotiate your way into spending someone else's money for a purpose that you consider important. Consequently you must convince some source of money about your credibility as an administrator of funds and about the worth of your project. You are selling your management skills and your program ideas in the highly competitive arena of voluntary charitable donation and of jointly-sponsored private donor/government funded program service. In order to improve your batting average you must have good information about yourself, your target group and their needs. You must also have a clear picture of who can help you to meet those needs. This paper focuses on some practical considerations in grantsmanship. Special emphasis will be placed on grantsmanship with government agencies. Sources of grant funding, uses of grant funds, preparation of proposals and project administration in terms of accounting and project evaluation will be discussed.

Sources of grant funds

Money may not grow on trees but it may be lurking in places where you might not expect to find it. A variety of funds, trusts, and government agencies have awards to make. Your first job is to hunt down sources of funding. This effort involves isolating those agencies who are most likely to fund your project. Two main references are available which detail grant giving sources:

1. *Resources for Community Groups*. Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Multicultural Development Branch, Queen's Park, Toronto M7A 2R9, 1978.
2. *A Canadian Directory to Foundations and Other Granting Agencies* (Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1973).

These two publications provide a wealth of information on who has money to give.

The likelihood of your receiving funds will depend on the thoroughness of your investigation about each funding source. You must carefully review the eligibility and feasibility of your project for funding. The requirements of specific awards will be clearly specified in their publications or in discussion with the project officers for a given funding source. For example, you may wish to obtain a grant awarded by Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, such as Young Canada Works. You must review their published material and contact a project officer. You will discover that a high priority is given to projects which stress training for project workers and their move to competitive employment. Further, projects must have some lasting impact on

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community resources. Thus, a project must demonstrate an awareness of the employment setting for training purposes as well as a sense of social responsibility. Government funds are used increasingly to sponsor projects on such terms. Projects which meet only your organization's goals may not qualify for government funding. Training value, social relevance criteria or other obvious criteria must be adequately addressed in a proposal or other communications with government representatives. Emphasis must be placed on benefit to the target group not on benefit to your organization.

Each funding body will have different criteria for measuring the eligibility and feasibility of your project. You will increase the chances of receiving an award by matching who you are and what you need with those criteria. In the case where a good match occurs an agency may give up some control over their funds to you. Criteria for eligibility usually include geographic location of the project and the nature of goals of the sponsoring group. Feasibility issues include an assessment of the need for your program in the community and the probability that your group can deliver the service or project for which you requested funds.

Advisers

Most levels of government have consultants/advisers available to help you during the development of projects. For example, suppose you have identified a municipal department, provincial ministry or federal ministry as a likely sponsor by consulting the previous references. You should contact the agency/ministry as soon as possible to tap their resources for grant development. You are looking for human as well as financial resources. These project advisers have a clear idea of their agencies priorities. Further, they are very aware of the need to account for the use of tax dollars. As a charitable group, you must account for donor dollars. Establishing rapport with your project officer can vastly facilitate the ways in which you share your mutual obligations for this accountability to the taxpayer/donor who "invests" in your project.

Uses of Grant Funds.

It is admittedly a challenge to capture grant support. Two major trends in government grantsmanship have appeared recently:

1. Multiple funding sources allow for increased responsibility for local control of projects.
2. The use of funds for short term projects has changed the nature of grantsmanship for voluntary groups.

Multiple funding of projects. The complexity of the partnership between federal government and voluntary groups has been extensively documented in the recent publication *Volunteers in Action* (1977). Issues of financial security for projects and the balance between government and local priorities in voluntary groups are explored in this publication. You may wish to review the document to obtain a perspective on federal government attitudes toward voluntary groups

and their activities. The government resources can be used to promote the variety, the autonomy, and sensitivity of local programs.

Multiple funding sources can be seen as positive or negative factors in program service development. The most positive points involve the availability of funds for dynamic, short term projects. These sources can be used to promote the variety, the autonomy, and the sensitivity of local organizations in their program development. Requirements for the competent management of funds and for social relevance from so many levels of government can facilitate citizen participation. It is a challenge to charitable/voluntary organizations to develop the skills necessary to use resources to their most creative advantage in each locality. On the negative side, continuity of service may be jeopardized by dependence on grants rather than on "regular" operating funds. Further, staff may require or prefer the job security of complement positions. It is up to a particular agency to determine if the financial, administrative and supervisory or training demands of a project can be met. Is there an adequate trade-off to warrant the investment of staff time in the project development and supervision?

Short term/issue specific grants. It is no longer acceptable to request government funds to support organizational goals alone. Support is directed toward special needs target groups and their increased involvement in the community. Agencies require statements which clarify the target group, project intent, and outcome expectations of the project. In effect, a contract relationship is being established for the terms of service delivery around a particular project. Successful competition for limited funds will depend on an agency's ability to identify gaps in service to special needs groups and feasible/cost-effective ways to deliver the service. Agencies may provide a service which complements existing community resources and assist in more effective utilization of services by the target group. As yet, only limited efforts have been made to coordinate service development and delivery and avoid redundancy and haphazard program proliferation. For example, the Ministry of Community and Social Services for the Province of Ontario (1977) has provided community groups with a format which outlines how to approach service review to avoid redundancy.

The responsibility for identifying the "need" of your target group or the "gap in service" in your community rests with your agency. The government resources and use of their funds can be brought to bear only after you have developed the project. You must present your material in a manner which stresses your fiscal responsibility and management skills as well as the pressing need for your program in the community. All the suggested material has been collected. You must present your case to the appropriate funding source in a project proposal.

Proposals

The proposal is your formal commitment of intent to your funding source. It is your contract for a service. The presentation of your case by this vehicle is critical to the image of your voluntary organization, to the success of your project, and to improvement in service to your target group.

The Social Planning Council for Hamilton provided a proposal guideline (Social Planning and Research Council, 1972) which has been slightly modified for the purposes of this paper. The type of material which follows is required for an application for support of a program from virtually any source, ranging from a local service club or provincial foundation to the Federal Government.

1. *Title*

Use agency or program name.

2. *Statement of Problem*

Outline clearly and concisely the problem or problems which lead to the need for a demonstration project. Include statistical data if available.

3. *Theoretical Framework*

Outline your assumptions concerning the kind of activity you are proposing and the results you anticipate from the program. It will be necessary to clearly establish how the proposed activity will differ from what is presently being done, and how it will have significance on a wider level.

4. *Specific Objectives*

What are the particular goals you hope to accomplish through the proposed program.

5. *Administrative Procedures*

Who is responsible for maintenance of program standards and disbursement of funds? Include evidence of fiscal responsibility such as audited financial statements, evidence of professional expertise, incorporation, registration as a charitable organization, etc.

6. *Project Description*

a) *Operational Setting.* Where will base of operation be. Area to be served by the project. Any relevant demographic data.

b) *Target group.* To whom is this project directed.

c) *Scope.* Will it be metro-wide or limited to a specific neighbourhood?

d) *Duration.* Length of the project, hours of daily operation: rationale for these decisions.

e) Who will the program involve and how?

f) *Community Involvement.* Personnel: qualifications or special training to be required of staff or participants.

g) *Service:* how can present and additional resources be used in the project: describe any new methods, techniques or procedures being demonstrated and how these relate to existing programs and resources.

7. *Evaluation*

What methods are proposed to evaluate the project? Plans for following up project to determine its continuing effectiveness.

8. *Bibliography*

Any literature relevant to your project.

9. *Budget*

When applying for funds it may be advisable to indicate possible sources of long term financing and what has been done or is planned in this respect. Also state other monies you are anticipating.

Review, support and community education. Pragmatically, you may wish to have consumers of your service, your board members, and interested members review your proposal. First, they can offer valuable input which will help you to tune your presentation sensitively to the community. As well, these groups can provide endorsement letters in support of your project which can be directed to the appropriate agency.

The development of the proposal provides an excellent opportunity for community education and involvement. There is no need to frighten people about the “differences” your target group must live with. There is no need to make people guilty with sob stories about special needs groups. Legitimate human needs must be met with dignity and respect. Your community must recognize and value the need you have identified and value the participation of *your* group in meeting those needs. The whole process of grant development can be seen as an additional vehicle for community participation.

Site Visits. It is to your advantage to request that a project officer visit you and discuss your grant proposal. If you have done your homework, you have established rapport with him or her and can expect candid responses on the priority placed on your project and the likelihood of funding. Also, be sure to read the fine print on grant applications. If no site visit is made, you may have grounds to an unfavorable decision by a government agency.

Politics of Grantsmanship.

Many grants are subject to input from local politicians and/or committees of local citizens who advise the funding source on the merits of your grant. Two useful strategies may be employed to make the referees aware of the importance of your project:

1. Request copies of project awards made by that funding source in the recent past (1-3 years). Index the projects by target group, amount of award, duration of the projects, and the model assumptions of the project (i.e., were the projects custodial care or a community integration project). Point out to the referees the lack of priority setting for your target group. *Or*, point out paltry amounts of awards. Make it clear that you are concerned about the lack of recognition of this group’s needs within the community.
2. You must remind your funding source and their referees of their commitments to, or wareness of, the needs of your target group. You might wish to appeal to recent press releases, conference speeches, publications etc. to ask that source to back their statements with funds.

Project Administration – Accounting

Cost/benefit analysis. The financial side of project administration is an important area of your responsibility in grantsmanship. Government must justify the use of tax dollars. This justification is accomplished in terms of a cost/benefit analysis. In order to accomplish your goals, you must become conversant with accounting procedures and ways to link your income to your program outcome expectations. Further, you can build fiscal responsibility into your terms of reference for the project as a part of your contract relationship to the government agency. With such an approach you can develop plans and programs in a systematic and financially responsible way.

You can look to your project advisor for assistance in this area. Most government services provide backup on financial aspects of project management. It can be very helpful to adopt the strategy that planning identifies the output which is desired while budgeting identifies the input that is required to implement those plans (Pyhrr, 1973). The administration of funds will force you to a more realistic plan in your goal setting and programming. It will also help you to identify those aspects of a long term plan that can be accomplished with short term grant awards.

Techniques. Some excellent references are available to assist you in the financial aspects of project administration. These references include:

1. *Groups.* Ministry of Culture and Recreation Multicultural Development Branch, Queen's Park, Toronto M7A 2R9, Ontario, 1976.
2. *Canadian Standards of Accounting and Financial Reporting for Voluntary Organizations.* The Canadian Welfare Council, SS Parkdale Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, 1967.
3. *Functional Budgeting for Canadian Voluntary Organizations.* United Way/Centraide Canada SS Parkdale Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, 1972.
4. "Standards for Charitable Solicitation" Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc. Washington, D.C., 1974.
5. Martin, S.A. *Financing Humanistic Services.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1975.
6. Guide to Project Bookkeeping. Canada Works Program and Young Canada Works Program.

Project Administration – Evaluation

Benefit/cost analysis. Most voluntary organizations have as goals the improvement of community resources. The benefits which are to be made available may be perceived as very important in human terms. The high expense of quality services or of special events may produce results that can only be measured in terms of improved human function or comfort. Each group must struggle with ways to achieve those benefits and to report their accomplishments.

Increasing emphasis must be placed on the evaluation of programs or projects. Objectives must be clearly specified which include a description of the outcome

you want and some statement of your standards which measure your success or failure (Honey, 1978). Evaluation will make it possible for your group to recognize its contribution to the community and to communicate more effectively your commitment to your target group. You may wish to evaluate your services and characteristics of your target group which will produce results in service use, reasons for volunteer involvement, or staff activities in service delivery or volunteer relations. All these factors contribute to successful grant acquisition and administration by voluntary groups. The roles played by each participant in the process must be explored and understood in order to shape future grant development and to foster commitment to the goals of that group in your community.

Techniques. Program evaluation can be approached in straightforward ways for smaller voluntary groups. You can record the number of people who use your service and what happens as a result of their involvement with you. Larger voluntary groups may wish to invest in the development of sophisticated client user or donor identification systems which explore various characteristics of human behaviour as service recipients or attitudes toward the organization. If you would like to explore this aspect of grantsmanship more fully, you may wish to refer to:

1. *General Issues and Service Recipients Issues.* Guttentag, M. and Struening, E. Handbook of Evaluation Research Vol. I and II. London: Sage Publications, 1975.
2. *Volunteers Issues:*
 - a. *Volunteers: How to Find, to Select, and to Train* Ministry of Culture and Recreation. Toronto, 1978.
 - b. *Volunteer Administration: Readings for the Practitioner* available from Voluntary Action Resource Centre, Vancouver, B.C.

The partnership between voluntary groups and government resources at all levels has become increasingly important. This paper has focused on the critical areas of needs identification, resource identification, communication of those needs to the appropriate resources, and accountability of funds. The shared responsibilities and the development of sensitive programs constitute a new challenge to both government and voluntary organizations.