Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities

Sustainability Planning and Resource Development

for Youth Mentoring Programs

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
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About the Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities Series

Mentoring is an increasingly popular way of providing guidance and support to young people in need. Recent years have seen youth mentoring expand from a relatively small youth intervention (usually for youth from single-parent homes) to a cornerstone youth service that is being implemented in schools, community centers, faith institutions, school-to-work programs, and a wide variety of other youth-serving institutions.

While almost any child can benefit from the magic of mentoring, those who design and implement mentoring programs also need guidance and support. Running an effective mentoring program is not easy, and there are many nuances and programmatic details that can have a big impact on outcomes for youth. Recent mentoring research even indicates that a short-lived, less-than-positive mentoring relationship (a hallmark of programs that are not well designed) can actually have a negative impact on participating youth. Mentoring is very much worth doing, but it is imperative that programs implement proven, research-based best practices if they are to achieve their desired outcomes. That's where this series of publications can help.

The Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities series, sponsored by the Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence, is designed to give practitioners a set of tools and ideas that they can use to build quality mentoring programs. Each title in the series is based on research (primarily from the esteemed Public/Private Ventures) and observed best practices from the field of mentoring, resulting in a collection of proven strategies, techniques, and program structures. Revised and updated by the National Mentoring Center at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, each book in this series provides insight into a critical area of mentor program development:

Foundations of Successful Youth Mentoring—This title offers a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of successful youth mentoring programs. Originally designed for a community-based model, its advice and planning tools can be adapted for use in other settings.

Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual—Much of the success of a mentoring program is dependent on the structure and consistency of service delivery, and this guide provides advice and a customizable template for creating an operations manual for a local mentoring program.

Training New Mentors—All mentors need thorough training if they are to possess the skills, attitudes, and activity ideas needed to effectively mentor a young person. This guide provides ready-to-use training modules for your program.

The ABCs of School-Based Mentoring—This guide explores the nuances of building a program in a school setting.

Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors—This resource is written directly for mentors, providing them with 10 simple rules for being a successful mentor and quotes from actual volunteers and youth on what they have learned from the mentoring experience.

Sustainability Planning and Resource Development for Youth Mentoring Programs—Mentoring programs must plan effectively for their sustainability if they are to provide services for the long run in their community. This guide explores key planning and fundraising strategies specifically for youth mentoring programs.

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The Hamilton Fish Institute and the National Mentoring Center hope that the guides in this series help you and your program's stakeholders design effective, sustainable mentoring services that can bring positive direction and change to the young people you serve.

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Introduction

As youth mentoring has increased in popularity over the last decade, so has the competition for funds to support local mentoring programs. While mentoring programs come in all shapes and sizes—from small grassroots efforts with shoestring budgets to multimillion-dollar nonprofits—all face the constant challenge of finding sufficient funds to deliver their services over time. Mentoring programs face competition not only from each other, but from other youth-serving and social-profit organizations as well. With program staff focused on providing quality services to youth, resource development and sustainability planning are tasks that occasionally fall through the cracks. Even with concerted effort by program staff, the road to program sustainability can be filled with unexpected challenges and tough decisions.

This guidebook is intended to give youth mentoring programs a basic overview of resource development planning and many of the major funding sources that programs target through their planning efforts. It is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to developing and maintaining a successful nonprofit or youth-serving organization (there are many factors other than resource development that make or break a successful organization). But it will give program staff some useful concepts and tools that can help them find the support they need, in many forms, to maintain their mentoring services over time.

What Is Sustainability?

Sustainability, capacity building, resource development, fundraising—these are terms that often are used interchangeably to describe the work that nonprofit and youth-serving organizations do to survive and thrive. To begin our discussion of sustainability it will be helpful to briefly define these terms and shed some light on how each is related to the other.

Sustainability in the context of a mentoring program refers to the overall stability of the organization: its ability to weather temporary challenges, provide quality services in the present, and maintain a solid foundation for its future. Sustainability is affected by all the key activities and functions of an organization and all major activities are, in turn, affected by the ability of an organization to sustain itself.

Capacity-building is the process by which an organization strengthens its foundations in order to increase its ability to carry out its mission. Organizations can build their capacity by strengthening boards, building technological resources, engaging volunteers, raising funds, building partnerships, and developing staff skills and knowledge. Agencies with strong organizational capacity are more likely to be sustainable.

Resource development planning is the intentional process of setting short- and long-range goals for obtaining the financial resources needed to support the organization. By planning a set of activities to reach a stated goal, programs can avoid last-minute fiscal crises and haphazard responses to every new fundraising idea that comes along. The resource development plan offers a road map to fiscal stability.

Fundraising gets down to the nuts and bolts of obtaining financial support to carry out the activities of a program or organization. It is one piece of capacity building—albeit a very important one—and is usually most successful when the agency has a well-developed organizational capacity. As an example, a fundraising event that relies on a large donor list will be most successful when the agency has a strong, active board, extensive community connections, and sufficient resources to contact donors.

This guidebook focuses on the process of developing resources for lasting programming, because without these resources your mentoring program will be unable to grow and thrive. One important key to doing this successfully is to see resource development as integral to long-range sustainability. Resource development uses fundraising strategies to build agency capacity, which helps strengthen its sustainability. Sustainable organizations, in turn, can carry out their mission and develop more resources to maintain, enhance, and expand services.

Programs and organizations that understand this symbiotic relationship see every fundraising activity as having multiple purposes, all of which can affect and enhance long-range sustainability. As you work through the advice and tools in this guide, you are likely to see ways in which your own program can raise funds, attract volunteers, expand partnerships, and build overall capacity, all at the same time.

About This Guidebook

This guidebook has been designed to help mentoring programs create a resource development plan. It can stimulate a conversation about the overall long-term direction of your program and the steps you will take to ensure a successful future. It will be most useful to individuals in small to mid-sized programs who have decisionmaking authority or who, with the help of key superiors, can champion or sponsor a resource planning process. It will also be most beneficial to those in the early stages of their resource development planning. For this audience, the guidebook will be a useful step-by-step planning tool to get headed in the right direction.

Individuals in larger, established mentoring programs or youth-serving agencies will find this book a useful reference tool to support and inform their existing planning process. As a reference, this guidebook contains several planning exercises that can strengthen current planning efforts and reveal new sustainability approaches for consideration.

The first two sections of this guidebook describe a typical resource planning cycle. As with most project planning cycles, these sections describe how to:

- Get organized for planning
- Assess where you are
- Assess where you want to be
- Create a plan and process to get from where you are to where you want to be

These sections* are supported by planning worksheets and other useful tools, as found in Appendix C.

The next sections of the book describe the primary funding streams that are typically part of a youth mentoring program's resource development plan. Chapters in this section address the nuts and bolts of seeking support from:

- Direct support from corporations and businesses
- Foundations

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*Much of the planning content in this revised version of the guidebook was adapted from *Building a Sustainable Mentoring Program: A Framework for Resource Development Planning* (Mentoring Resource Center, 2006).

- Government sources
- Individual giving
- Events and other local support

While these chapters present each strategy as an individual approach, the assumption is that programs will integrate multiple strategies to create a diversified resource base. Finding the right "mix" of sources is the key to success for most mentoring programs.

The appendices of the guidebook cover additional topics and provide tools that can help with your planning efforts:

- Involving your board in resource development
- Ethical considerations in resource development
- Planning tools and worksheets
- Other books and planning tools

However you choose to use the contents of this guide, we hope that it will help you develop a stable and sustainable program that will allow young people in your community to thrive through the support and friendship of a caring mentor.

Section I.

Preparing for Resource Development Planning

Before launching into a resource development planning process, it is important to take a step back and look at some of the guiding principles that can lead to long-term sustainability for mentoring programs (and nonprofits of all types). Regardless of the types of support you seek, these principles will help connect your program to your community and provide perspective for making decisions in the best interests of the youth, parents, and institutions you serve. Sustainability and fundraising work can be challenging, but these principles will provide valuable direction and context for the planning you are about to undertake.

Guiding Principles of Resource Development

1. ***Create passion for what you are doing.*** There is no substitute for passion when it comes to resource development. As Craig Bowman writes later in the section on individual giving campaigns:

   > *Passion fuels our work. It gives us hope. It fires our imaginations. Passion gives us the courage to do, to give, and to share. . . . [T]he resources you need will come when you are in the business of raising the passions of the people connected to your work.*

   You may need to develop the "passion-raising" within your own organization. Developing a powerful message about the importance of your mentoring program can raise the passion of those who are in a position to support your efforts, laying the groundwork for a strong resource development plan. And once these key supporters tap into their passion, they can, in turn, spread your message to a wider audience.

2. ***Understand and support your program's mission/vision/goals.*** Your staff and your supporters must be able to clearly describe your mentoring program's mission, vision, goals, and activities. This is important not only to "sell" your program to potential donors, but also to help you remain true to that mission as you begin to seek additional funding. Too often, programs "follow the money," modifying their core mission to accommodate a new funding stream or a wealthy donor with a particular programmatic interest. Make your mission drive the development of resources, not the other way around.

3. ***Be realistic but maintain a positive attitude.*** Know where you are in the continuum of resource development planning and where you want to be, taking into account the strengths and limitations of your agency and the community you serve. Spend time clearly identifying your "current reality" and deal upfront with any significant barriers that may affect your ability to move forward. More on this process follows in the next sections.

4. ***Develop fundraising goals and objectives that are realistic for the capacity of your agency and the local community.*** Each situation is unique and requires different approaches and solutions. Small organizations with limited budgets and staff time make different resource development plans than larger ones. Similarly, programs in rural areas face vastly different fund-raising challenges than those in metropolitan areas.

5. ***Get to know your organization and your community inside and out,*** and engage a team of helpers who can give you the information you need. If you are part of a larger organization, develop close ties with those staff members who are involved in agency-wide planning, budgeting, resource development, and community relations. If your agency is small, seek additional support from community volunteers and your peers in other youth-serving programs. Getting support and buy-in from many people as you develop your plan will make the job of implementing it much easier.

6. ***Develop a strong presence in your community as a champion for kids.*** The passion that you have for your mentoring program, combined with a clear understanding of the strengths and challenges within your community, can make you a powerful advocate for youth services. Take the time to serve on youth-related committees and boards, participate in community forums or hearings, write letters to the editor, inform local government officials about your work, and network with other social service organizations. As you build a role for yourself and

your program in the community, you will broaden your network of partners and supporters and are more likely to find opportunities for developing new resources to support your activities (see the sidebar on page 9 for more tips on using advocacy as an aspect of sustainability).

7. ***Actively seek and obtain the support and involvement of your board of directors and other agency leaders.*** Resource development should be one of the key responsibilities of your organization's board of directors and executive leaders. These individuals often have strong connections to community leaders and the authority to make your resource development plans a priority; if your program does not have a formal board of directors, consider forming an advisory committee that can fill this role. If your management team and board are fully behind your program, you are well on your way to long-term sustainability. (See Appendix A for some important tips for building board commitment to sustainability.)

8. ***Diversify to build capacity.*** The golden rule of resource development says that no more than 30 percent of your funding should come from any single type of resource: that is, public funding, private or corporate foundations, business support, fundraising events or entrepreneurial ventures, and individual giving. This is a goal to work toward, but don't expect to get there in the first year or two. Use the strengths of your agency and supporters to determine which blend of funding sources will most likely work for you.

9. ***Document your program's success from day one.*** Nothing gives sustainability efforts a boost more than solid evidence that the program is having a positive impact on the lives of participants. Unfortunately, most programs do not think about the impact of their services until it is too late. Evaluation, of both program outcomes and participant satisfaction, must start early on so that results can be demonstrated when needed. Sustainable programs are the ones that can definitively say "this works."

10. ***Partnering is a good thing. Recognize that resource development is competitive, but doesn't have to be divisive.*** Other programs in your community are likely to seek funding from the same sources that your organization will. These same programs may be your partners—they may refer clients to you or have services your clients need. It is possible, even vital, to build these positive relationships even though you may be in competition for future funding. Identify ways in which your agency or program is different from those with whom you are in competition, rather than trying to "out-do" them. There are plenty of ways to avoid competition—but only if the communication channels are open.

More Tips for Sustainability Success

As you read through this guide, think about simple ways you can incorporate activities that support resource development into day-to-day operations. Here are a few ideas:

- Talk about sustainability at every advisory board meeting, every board of directors meeting, and every meeting with your supervisor. Come up with a couple of clearly defined goals for the coming year or two, write them down, and get these important players to buy into them.

- When attending community meetings to recruit volunteers, take advantage of this opportunity to hear about potential funding or current community issues and to get to know community leaders who may be helpful in the future. Keep a file of these for future reference and set aside time each week to make appointments with these important allies.

- At each staff meeting, include time for success stories or other ideas for marketing your program. Take advantage of your staff's creative suggestions.

- Track your achievements and use them in all your public relations and marketing materials. View your successes not only in terms of the help you bring to clients, but also as visible expressions of the impact mentoring can have on the community.

- Be sure that your program evaluation plan will yield information that can be used to promote your program. For example, positive comments this year from a parent or student satisfaction survey can be used next year in a grant proposal or in a pitch to a local business or corporation as evidence your program is working.

- Use existing research and findings on mentoring to prove the relevance of your program in your particular community. Show how your program follows best practice guidelines for mentoring that are based on research.

Using Advocacy as an Aspect of Sustainability

Educating elected officials about youth mentoring and the needs of children is one of the most underutilized sustainability strategies in our field. When programs receive federal funding, and sign the non-lobbying clause (assurance), they frequently feel this disallows any further contact with an elected official. This is most certainly not the case!

Keeping your elected officials—local, state, and federal—informed about your program and about youth mentoring as a whole, builds a relationship that can provide you with increased awareness of new policy directions and any funding opportunities that result. Beyond that, you will be recognized as a valuable community resource for general information and data regarding mentoring. These efforts will ensure that your program is widely known, respected, and valued by those individuals who set the mentoring agenda in your community, and may, with time, influence specific funding streams.

Of course, mentoring program coordinators really don't need one more task laid upon their desk. The good news is that networking with important political officials is actually best left to your Board members. If coordinators can work with and groom their board of directors, and get them to share in the responsibility of effective advocacy, they will enjoy increased benefits. Board members are ideal representatives of a mentoring program; in the eyes of the elected official (and his or her staff), the board member is seen as less self-serving than the paid employee. One of the best ways to train board members for this task is to initially go with them to the elected official's office and make introductions.

Avoid discussions regarding specific legislation. Rather, use the time to educate the elected official regarding your agency, your mission, and what impact it has on his or her constituents. Having an agenda in place for discussions—even a very informal one—can help everyone stay "on task" for the meeting. Elected officials and their staff members have tight schedules, just as we do, and they appreciate thorough preparation for the meeting.

In addition to the one-on-one visit with an elected official, keep in mind the importance of asking them to participate on your Board, task forces, and committees. Try and get them involved directly. I have been fortunate to work within a community action agency where a tripartite board was required. We had board representation equally divided between low-income, private sector, and public sector representatives. In reality, my agency recognized and accepted that it was difficult for some public service representatives (elected officials and/or their designees) to attend meetings regularly. However, we diligently kept them informed through copies of the minutes and newsletters.

These tips provided by Renee Hoover, an independent consultant and former NMC trainer.

Getting Organized

Now that we've covered some guiding principles for sustainability, it's time to get down to the specifics of how to develop and implement a resource development plan that will work for your program. This process includes three distinct stages: preparation, developing the plan, and implementation. The rest of this section covers how to prepare for your planning process—doing the important background work and establishing an infrastructure to support your resource development effort. Section 2 offers a detailed guide to developing and implementing a plan that will work for your organization.

Getting the ball rolling is often the hardest part of sustainability planning because it requires a lot of time and a high level of persistence, energy, and enthusiasm from you and your staff. Kick-starting any planning process requires a cheerleader who can build the commitment of key players for the long haul. This person, or team of people, will initially drive and facilitate the process, but as the plan is developed other players will emerge who may eventually take on major responsibilities for planning, implementing, and evaluating the sustainability effort.

It is important to note here that this process isn't necessarily linear and that the plan you develop is, and should be, a living document that requires frequent updates and adjustments to remain effective. Your program may already be conducting fundraising activities without having a written resource development plan, or you may have a "bare bones" plan that will need to be revisited and strengthened as you try out new ideas. As you read through this section, think about where you are in your sustainability planning process—what you have done, what you need to revisit, what has yet to be started. The Sustainability Planning Checklist in Appendix C provides a tool for keeping track of your progress.

The key steps involved in getting organized are:

Step 1. Identify Leadership

The need for a cheerleader to champion your effort was discussed earlier in the context of passion-raising. But the need for leadership goes beyond enthusiasm. Leadership for resource development requires the authority to make decisions, the ability to think strategically, the skills and experience to be effective, and the passion to be visionary. No small role to fill! Fortunately, all these requirements do not have to be contained in a single person, but can be built as you develop a planning team.

That said, someone needs to be the initiator, the jump-starter. If your program is part of a larger organization or institution, this person will have to make a case for the need to develop a sustainability plan, and will need to get top decisionmakers within the organization and at partner agencies to give approval to move forward. Keep the message simple and to the point, and decide how to keep these people informed throughout the process. Their approval represents their commitment to the process and gives your chosen leader the authority to move forward.

Step 2. Identify and Allocate Resources To Support the Planning Effort

Planning for sustainability requires resources: time, space, materials and supplies, and money. For example, you may need to purchase a software program to track your results, buy a subscription to an online foundation search engine, or hire a one-time consultant to help you develop your plan. You should also count "in-kind" or donated goods and services among your available resources. Be sure that your decisionmakers know that you will need to allocate some financial resources to the effort, and ask for their help in identifying an appropriate source.

A word of caution is appropriate here regarding allowable costs for resource development activities. If you are currently operating on government funds, make sure that you follow the guidelines around allowable fundraising activities. The basic advice is that you may not use government grant resources for direct fundraising activities or staff time spent on raising funds. However, there are some creative solutions to these restrictions, such as using other, non-government funds to pay for staff time spent on sustainability tasks. Be sure to check with any grant monitors you may have to determine what is allowable and what is not.

Step 3. Recruit and Establish a Planning Team

There are no hard-and-fast rules for who should be involved in resource development planning, but some important considerations should be kept in mind when building your team so that you end up with a dynamic, compatible, and effective group. These include:

- ***Leadership and decision making.*** Although your effort has identified a leader to head up the charge, no one person has the credibility, expertise, or skills to single-handedly lead a substantive planning or change initiative. Your team should include people who have enough power to make initial decisions and who are willing to share many of the leadership tasks.

- ***Skills and competencies.*** Tap the existing skills and abilities of your staff to find people who can provide specific skills needed to help in the planning process. Look for helpers who have:
  - Previous planning or fundraising experience
  - Strong organizational, communication, and research skills
  - Creativity
  - Knowledge of budgeting and basic financial skills
  - Experience working on a team

  If your staff is very small, reach out to volunteers or loaned staff from other agencies to join your effort. If you need advice on a specific topic as your planning moves ahead, consider inviting an expert to one of your meetings to coach you. You'll also need someone who is good at organizing and tracking information who is willing to be the group record keeper.

- ***Passion and enthusiasm.*** No set of skills can compensate for a lack of these two important ingredients. Look for people who share your passion for mentoring and who understand the need for your services in the community.

- ***Representation from partner organizations.*** The involvement of significant partners in the planning phase helps ensure buy-in down the road. Remind these helpers that their involvement gives them both a voice in the planning and an opportunity to develop resources that their organization will also benefit from down the road.

It's likely that your team will begin with just a few key players, but as you move through the process you are likely to pick up additional members who can provide valuable assistance. Before jumping into your planning, come to agreement about the team's mission and scope of work, and set some initial timeframes for completion. Be sure that your team members understand and agree to the time commitment required.

Assessing Your Current Situation

Because sustainability is an integral part of all you do, a good planning process begins by assessing your own program and organizational strengths and challenges, as well as those of your partners and the broader community in which your services are provided. You can't know where you are going until you know where you are.

This assessment process will help you and your team:

- Understand the strengths and limitations of your program so that you can develop a tailored, realistic plan for resource development
- Learn how your mentoring program currently interacts with partners, and how these partners add value to your long-term stability
- Identify other community organizations with which you could develop a relationship that could increase your program's sustainability
- Understand the broader needs of the community and how your services meet those needs

Because each organization and each community is different, it's important to tailor your internal and external assessment to your own unique situation. The suggestions and tools in this section provide a framework for your work, but only you can decide what areas are most important to focus on. As you move forward, you will gather considerable information that will help you later on when you develop your long-range plan, so be sure that you have a good system for keeping track of what you learn. (See Appendix C for several tools you can use to track your findings.)

"But my program doesn't have extra funds for sustainability planning!"

You're not alone, but there are options. Here are a few ideas:

- Ask your board of directors for a one-time contribution to support your planning effort
- Hold a special—but simple—fundraiser such as a raffle to raise what you need
- Search for a small grant from a foundation that supports one-time funding of capacity-building efforts (try the Grantsmanship Center at http://www.tgci.com or another foundation search engine for ideas)
- Borrow staff from other departments in your agency or ask your partners for help
- Get software or supplies donated
- Recruit volunteers with experience in planning and resource development (look to your local volunteer centers for help)

1. ***Conduct an Internal Assessment.*** The first stage of your assessment will look at your internal strengths, challenges, and oppor-

tunities. If areas of significant concern emerge, such as a lack of commitment to the program by top-level administration, you will likely need to work on these before launching a fundraising effort. Similarly, areas of strength that emerge, such as a committed working board of directors, can help drive implementation of your plan.

What, and how much, should you review? Think about the aspects of your organization that may affect your ability to develop sustainable resources, and what you will need to know to make your case to a potential funding source. The worksheet, "Conducting an Internal Assessment" on the following page provides some guidance on what should be reviewed.

After the team reviews these pieces of useful information about the mentoring program—and the organization as a whole—conduct a brainstorming activity with the group. Ask the team the following questions:

– What strengths stand out as being most useful for developing resources for our program?

– What challenges did you find that may inhibit the effort?

Allow everyone on the team an opportunity for input and list their responses. Your list may show, for example, that you have administrative staff members in your organization who are able to provide grant writing or event planning support. But you may also identify a lack of support from your organization's top decisionmakers as a challenge. The factors you identify should be considered throughout your planning process—making the most of your agency's strengths and identifying ways to overcome or minimize the challenges.

2. ***Conduct an External Assessment.*** At the risk of stating the obvious, mentoring programs exist to serve their communities, but they also rely extensively on them for support. The partnerships and relationships your mentoring program has with the community, the services you provide to them, and the visibility and perceived success or failure of your program are all vital considerations in developing your plan. So, just as you spent time assessing your internal landscape, you will need to assess the external environment as well.

   To make this process manageable, start by looking at your partners, both informal and formal—the groups and individuals who are already involved in your work. Then move to looking at the broader community and the ways in which your program interacts, supports, and is supported by it. For example, what government organizations, community groups, or service clubs do you have a relationship with that could be enhanced? Which ones do you know about but have never had a relationship with? Focus on what you already know, and use your staff, board of directors, and partner organizations to help inform your process.

The worksheet, "Conducting an External Assessment" on page 18 outlines the information you might want to gather as you assess your current partnerships and the broader community as it relates to your work.

Assessing partnerships. Your mentoring program probably has both formal and informal partnerships with other organizations in the community. These may be financial or non-financial agreements to carry out certain parts of the mentoring service, and obligations under the agreement are usually spelled out in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or financial contract. Your agency may also have informal partners—organizations that support your work and see its value to their own mission. For example, a tobacco prevention program in the schools may refer young people or volunteers to your mentoring program and will seek opportunities to present their information to your mentors and mentees through invitations to events or coming to your mentoring training sessions.

Your current business supporters should also be included in your assessment of partnerships. Their contributions may range from allowing you to place posters on their bulletin boards to making regular financial contributions to your program. Think about

Why Partnerships Matter

Partnerships benefit your program's sustainability in many ways, including:

- Maximizing resources through the sharing of space, staff, administrative services, or other items—in-kind contributions that can make all the difference
- Shared visibility from media coverage, marketing, and other public information that showcases the partnership
- Opportunities to develop collaborative projects that are attractive to federal, state, and local funding entities
- Enhancing and strengthening your services by filling other unmet needs of your clients and their families
- Cross training or shared training opportunities for staff and volunteers
- Informal networking among staff and agency leaders
- Providing access to potential volunteers
- Making financial contributions (businesses, foundations, local government, etc.)

Partnerships can also be difficult, time-consuming, and even contentious, especially when contractual obligations are unclear. Be honest about any issues you are having with partners and develop plans to resolve these as part of your sustainability planning process.

Conducting an Internal Assessment

These questions can help guide the assessment of your program at this time. By understanding your current strengths and challenges—what is in place and what needs work—you will have a better sense of your program's readiness for resource development planning. You can adapt this list to include additional questions of your own or limit your focus to several key issues.

1. What is your agency's mission and vision?
2. What are the primary goals and objectives of your mentoring program?
3. Who are the youth you serve and why?
4. What are your outcomes to date? Use your most recent evaluation or program data, as well as anecdotal success stories.
5. What do you do best? What do you need to improve?
6. What is your total budget? What resources do you have, including both financial and in-kind? Be sure to include volunteers and their skills in this mix.
7. When will your primary funding sources end?
8. How is your parent organization structured and administered? Who's in charge?
9. What is staff capacity for participating in sustainability activities? Skills, hidden talents, job responsibilities, and availability?
10. What are the strengths and limitations of your board of directors and/or advisory committee?
11. What else do you need to know about the internal workings of your program?

As you work on this review, gather together documents that can provide the information you need. Try to gather as many of these as you can and check them off this list:

- ☐ The original grant applications for current funds
- ☐ Parent organization and mentoring program budgets detailing all sources of funding
- ☐ Your most recent annual report
- ☐ Board of directors roster, their skills and connections in the community
- ☐ Policy and procedure manuals
- ☐ Data on program outcomes
- ☐ Your parent organization's long-range plan, if available

how these businesses also receive value from their relationship with your program.

Assessing the broader community. Next, focus on the larger community that your program serves. This work will be ongoing as you actually begin to implement strategies for resource development and sustainability, but during this planning phase your team needs basic information about the community's needs, assets, resources, and long-range goals. Also helpful will be a look at potential stakeholders who share your mission and interests but are not currently connected to your program.

This process helps you identify how your overall mission fits into the larger community and how connected you are to those you claim to serve. Don't try to be comprehensive, but rather identify those issues, organizations, and resources that most closely relate to your work and your population. The result of this part of the process can reveal many opportunities for future partnering and possible sources of new funding for your services.

Assessing potential funding streams. As part of the assessment of your external world, you may identify specific funding sources (government, business, foundations, etc.) that initially interest you. Be sure to keep track of these (including any timelines for applying for funds) so that you can see how they fit into the overall direction and specific activities in your plan once it starts to come together.

3. ***Summarize, Interpret, and Present Findings.*** As you go through each of these three assessments—of internal factors, of partner agencies, and of the broader community—you'll generate a lot of information that needs to be put into some kind of order. Use these tips to help keep this information in order:

    - Have your team record-keeper maintain a master notebook with tabs for each major component of your process so that you can stay organized. Or come up with an electronic file system that allows all team members to review documents in shared files.

    - For each review, write a brief summary or use a grid to chart major strengths, challenges, and opportunities in each category (see Appendix C for sample tools that may help you).

    - Have the team identify any emerging themes or patterns, problem areas, or areas of special strength.

Conducting an External Assessment

Review your partnerships

1. Who are your partners? List every agency or business you can think of that is currently involved with your program, starting with your formal partners and working out from there.
2. What is their mission and how does it resemble your own?
3. What population(s) do they serve?
4. What strengths do they bring to the partnership? Include both agreed-upon benefits and unanticipated ones.
5. What limitations or challenges do they bring? What impact do they have on your plan for sustainability?
6. How do they benefit from the partnership—what's in it for them?
7. What potential is there for strengthening the partnership for mutual benefit?

Gather and review such information as:

Memoranda of understanding, contracts, your grant proposal, and other formal documents that describe your formal relationship with partners

Rosters of the Boards of Directors of your partners

Brochures or other marketing materials

Examine the broader community where you provide services

1. What are your community's significant, unmet human service needs (e.g., lack of housing, school dropout rates)?
2. How does your program help meet community needs?
3. Are other mentoring programs in the area? How do you work with them?
4. What other organizations serve or support the youth and families you work with?
5. Which public agencies serve children and families and what is your relationship with them?
6. Do you have allies in city, county, or state governments who are committed to youth and families and/or mentoring?
7. What local foundations, businesses, or individuals support youth work (through direct financial or in-kind support) in your community?

Organizing your information and key findings will help you as you begin to craft your resource development plan. A clear, concise summary may also be needed to inform your board, advisory committees, and other staff in your organization who need to be involved.

You may present your assessment to your board of directors or top agency or school administrators to get feedback and any needed approval to move ahead. Come up with a couple of significant points that can be presented along with the data to help guide the presentation. Be clear about where you are in the process and let them know what kind of input you'd like from them. Since every situation is different, you will have to decide who to inform and whether some decisions need to be made at top management or board levels before proceeding.

Congratulations! The hard task of assessing "where you are" has been done and your team members now fully understand your current reality. You are now ready to begin creating your actual resource development plan, one based on the information you've gathered so far and where you'd like to be in the future.

Example

Summary of Information To Gather During Internal and External Review

Internal Factors	Partner Agencies	Local/Regional/ National Issues
Clarity of program/agency mission, vision, goals	Identify your partners (formal and informal)	Review local or state community needs assessments, benchmarks
Clearly identified population being served	Partner responsibilities to mentoring program	Identify how your program meets community needs
Level of board commitment, assets of board members	Level of partner engagement and commitment	Identify other programs serving your populations
Organizational or administrative factors affecting sustainability	Strengths/challenges of partnerships that impact sustainability	Other mentoring programs in area: competition or cooperation?
Relationship of mentoring program to larger organization	Connections between your staff/board and those of partner agencies	Other community groups/ businesses/individuals who care about youth and families
Current funding and in-kind resources	Common vision/interests (potential for shared fundraising)	Understand local, state, and federal agencies serving children and families
Staff skills, capacity, availability for resource development	Partner's position in community (e.g., image, connections)	City, county, state government officials who are committed to youth services
Program successes and challenges	Partnership successes and challenges	Identify foundations, businesses, and individuals who give to children's issues

Section II.

Creating and Implementing a Resource Development Plan

The resource development plan that you craft will provide your program with short- and long-term goals, objectives, and activities that reflect your newly assessed strengths, limitations, and opportunities. This document will become a road map for your program's progress toward sustainability. Just as you make detours when following a road map, the plan you create is likely to need modifications as you begin to implement it. Having clear goals and knowing when you have reached them will help keep the plan on track even when changes in direction need to occur.

The following steps offer a framework for your process. Your unique situation will dictate the specifics: who needs to be involved, approval steps, the overall scope of your plan, the timeframe for completion, and how the plan will be implemented.

Step 1. Identify your primary reason for developing resources

This may seem obvious, but there are really three primary reasons that agencies launch a resource development drive:

- To maintain current service levels
- To grow current service levels to provide more services within your current scope
- To expand the scope of services, take on new challenges, or enter a new market area

If your team has done its work, the results of your internal and external assessments will help you determine which of these three reasons is motivating the sustainability drive. Each of these directions requires considerable planning and effort, so avoid trying to set goals for all three. Be sure if you plan to grow or expand your program that you are not risking the stability of current services. Your board of directors and top administrators should be fully involved in deciding which direction to take.

Step 2. Develop and clarify your priorities for ensuring a sustainable program

It's important to remember that sustainability is not just about raising money, though that is certainly a significant part of every resource development plan. For example, a program with an excellent fundraising committee that can stage successful money-making events may ultimately fail if the program lacks administrative capacity, has poor program outcomes, or is not visible in the larger community.

If your ultimate goal is to develop resources that will last, be sure to look at the internal and external information you gathered earlier and identify some priorities. For some programs, these priorities will fall into place almost naturally, while others will be more difficult to pinpoint. Priorities may fall into several categories, including:

- Organizational priorities, such as developing clear roles and responsibilities for resource development, or creating a better fiscal review process
- Programmatic priorities, such as improving the overall quality of mentoring services in order to improve program outcomes, thus improving its chances for obtaining financial support
- Funding priorities, such as developing a more diverse funding base or filling an immediate financial need before looking for long-range support
- Public relations priorities, such as developing visibility in the community prior to launching a new fundraising initiative.

Have your planning team think about the strengths and challenges that were identified in your information-gathering phase. Ask yourselves questions such as:

- What needs to be in place internally for us to be a strong, stable, and sustainable program?
- What work do we need to do in the community to support our goal of sustainability?

- What should be the emphasis of our fundraising plan—to diversify over time or to fill an immediate financial need?
- What should be our highest priority as we develop a specific plan of action? What is the second highest priority?

Establishing priorities will help immensely as you develop specific goals, objectives, and activities for your resource development plan. For example, if your assessment has clearly identified that you lack community visibility, then public relations should be a significant priority for your effort, and at least one of your goals should relate to improving in this area.

Step 3. Review and understand primary resource development options

Before you begin to talk about specific goals, objectives, and activities, be sure that you and your team have a basic understanding of the primary types of funding sources and which are most likely to be appropriate for your own situation. If you're lucky, you already have someone with development experience on your team, or at least as an advisor. This might be a grant writer, events planner, corporate gifts manager, or simply a staff person with background in fund development. If your team lacks this expertise, it's time to get it.

The remaining sections of this guidebook provide an overview of each of the primary sources of funding:

- Direct support from corporations and businesses
- Foundations
- Government sources
- Individual giving
- Events and other local support

You don't have to be expert in these areas, but it's important to know the pros and cons of each; how likely they are to generate the kind of income you require; the amount of staff time, up-front resources, and organizational capacity needed to be successful; and other considerations.

Step 4. Develop goals and measurable objectives based on your assessment and identified priorities

By now, if you have worked through the steps outlined above, you should have some ideas about the specific goals and objectives that will lead you to a sustainable mentoring program. This is the exciting part, the building of a clear road map that will take you from knowing where you are to knowing where you want to go and how to get there.

Identifying goals and objectives can be an exciting and dynamic process for your team, and one that requires careful facilitation and enough time to really examine these important ideas. Goals should be brainstormed, discussed, and prioritized first, before you get into the more detailed work of listing specific objectives and activities. Make sure you have a clear process that will allow initial creativity and good discussion, followed by a means of narrowing the ideas into a few that respond best to your stated priorities and your assessment results.

To create meaningful goals and objectives, keep these definitions in mind:

Goals are broad statements that describe the change you hope to achieve. They are more abstract than objectives but they should be specific enough to allow you to know when you have achieved success. Examples of goals, based on the sample priorities above, might be as broad as these:

- *Achieve stable and diversified resources to support current service levels*
- *Develop a comprehensive marketing plan to increase local program visibility*

Or as specific as this:

- *Replace 75 percent of government grant with local resources to ensure continuous revenue after 2008*

Objectives describe the specific, measurable, tangible steps you will take to achieve your goals. The SMART acronym defines objectives as:

Specific – addressing the "what, when, and how much" questions

Measurable – so that you know what it looks like when you get there

Achievable – within the capacity of your organization to carry out the objective

Realistic – given your current internal and external reality

Time-bound – providing a definite endpoint for accomplishing the objective

Consider these two examples:

- By June 30, 2008, raise $100,000 in new funding to replace federal grant through a combination of local public and private grants and fundraising events in the local community.
- Develop a marketing toolkit that provides a consistent image of our organization to be used to recruit volunteers and solicit funds beginning January 1, 2008.

These objectives tell you what is going to happen, when it will be done, and how we will know if it has been accomplished. Objectives do not describe specific activities that will be used to achieve the desired outcome, but they do provide a framework that will help you identify specific activities, assign responsibilities, and create timelines to track progress. The example on page 28 shows how goals and objectives can be organized visually in your plan.

Step 5. Develop activities with realistic timelines, and assign roles for accountability

It's time to get specific! Your team has developed a clear path, from establishing priorities for sustainability, to identifying some important goals, to crafting specific, measurable objectives that support these goals. The activities and timelines that you now develop are the nuts and bolts of moving from planning to action—the blueprint that gives staff, board, and stakeholders specific tasks, responsibilities, and milestones to measure success.

As with the other steps, involve and inform your primary staff, board, or advisory group of the ideas you come up with. Check with people within and beyond your agency to see if your goals and objectives are realistic, and make sure you have the resources you need to carry them out. It's easy to get excited by a really great strategy, only to realize down the road that it's beyond your current capacity to make it work.

To get a sense of how activities relate to goals, let's look again at our previous example:

Goal: Achieve stable and diversified resources to support current service levels

Objective: By June 30, 2009, raise $100,000 in new funding to replace federal grant through a combination of local public and private grants and fundraising events in the local community.

Activity 1: Obtain private foundation funding in the amount of $25,000 by December 30, 2008

- Talk to agency grant writer and school district development director to obtain ideas and advice, and get them to commit to spending time on this project
- Research local and regional private foundations and identify five to approach for funding
- Develop a boilerplate grant application for submission to private foundations

As you can see, activities need to be further broken down into specific tasks that should also have deadlines and a person or persons assigned to carry out each task. These tasks will form an action plan for each activity identified. The charts on the next page, using the above example, provide a way to first identify activities that will help you reach your objective, and then keep track of each activity and the tasks associated with it. All activities are then collected on a master timeline that can keep everyone on schedule during the plan's implementation.

Choosing the "Right" Resource Development Activities

One of the most important things you can do when developing specific resource development activities is to assess whether each is "right" for your program. Use the internal and external assessment information you gathered as a starting point to see if the goals and objectives you have established make sense. As you consider a specific direction to take, consider these questions:

- Does the funding source fit your vision and mission? Some programs develop a set of ethical considerations that help them decide whether a particular funding source is a good fit for their program (see Appendix B).
- Does the funding strategy meet the objectives you have identified in the timeframe you have set?
- Does your program have the capacity to take on a particular strategy: money, staff time, connections, administrative support, board strengths, and so on?
- Does getting the grant/donation entail so much red tape from the funding source that it compromises your program?
- Will the fundraising strategy help you diversify your funding mix rather than simply extend a single source? Does the funding fit with your other sources?

The following pages offer an example of how goals, objectives, activities, and timelines might be organized visually in a final resource development plan. Blank versions that your program can use are found in Appendix C.

Step 6. Develop your final document

Once you have finalized your plan, be sure that all the pieces are collected in one place in a format that is accessible to the people who need the information. This may be as simple as putting all documents and notes into a binder and making sure that it is updated as plans change. Your Board of Directors may want to see a formal report that you can also share with others who have been involved in the planning process and can adapt for use in grant proposals. Other options might include having a shared electronic document that all staff can view, creating a series of posters or a PowerPoint show for use with staff and board members. However you decide to document your plan, remember that its primary characteristic should be functionality—it is a practical tool to help the implementation of all your activities.

Tips for Developing Action Plans

Creating clear action plans and timelines is one of your most important tasks, because it documents your road map to success, milestones that measure progress, and the person who is in charge of each task. To make an action plan that is useful and realistic, be sure that:

- The person identified as having primary responsibility for a specific activity is fully involved in developing task lists and timelines
- Activities relate directly to one or more of the objectives you have established, and tasks relate directly to the activities identified
- All activities and tasks are within the capacity of current staff skills and agency resources
- Timelines are realistic but not lax—there is a balance between maintaining a level of pressure to get the jobs done and stressing out you and your staff so much that they are destined to fail
- Each task is measurable so that you know when it's been accomplished and can cross it off the list

Sample Goal

GOAL: Achieve stable and diversified resources to support current service levels

Objective 1	Activities To Reach Objective	Timeline	Key Staff Involved
Raise $100,000 in new funding to replace federal grant	Implement annual fund drive to raise $25,000 from individual donors	6/30/09	Samantha Johnson
	Apply for three new foundation grants to obtain $40,000	Grant 1: 1/30/09 Grant 2: 3/30/09 Grant 3: 6/30/09	Judy Green & Joe Thomas
	Hold annual auction to raise $30,000	11/10/09	Jane Dough

Objective 2	Activities To Reach Objective	Timeline	Key Staff Involved
Establishing corporate giving program that will raise $50,000 annually beginning in 2009	Make list of largest current corporate donors	03/15/09	Samantha Johnson
	Make initial contacts and presentations to potential donors	06/15/09	Agency Director & Board Chair
	Solicit final contributions at fundraising dinner	08/15/09	Samantha Johnson & Agency Director

Objective 3	Activities To Reach Objective	Timeline	Key Staff Involved
Form partnerships that provide $10,000 worth of in-kind resources (paper, printers, copiers, office furniture, etc.)	Talk with three local office supply/office equipment businesses to obtain in-kind donations	1/15/09	Joseph Smithers

Sample

Action Plan

Objective:

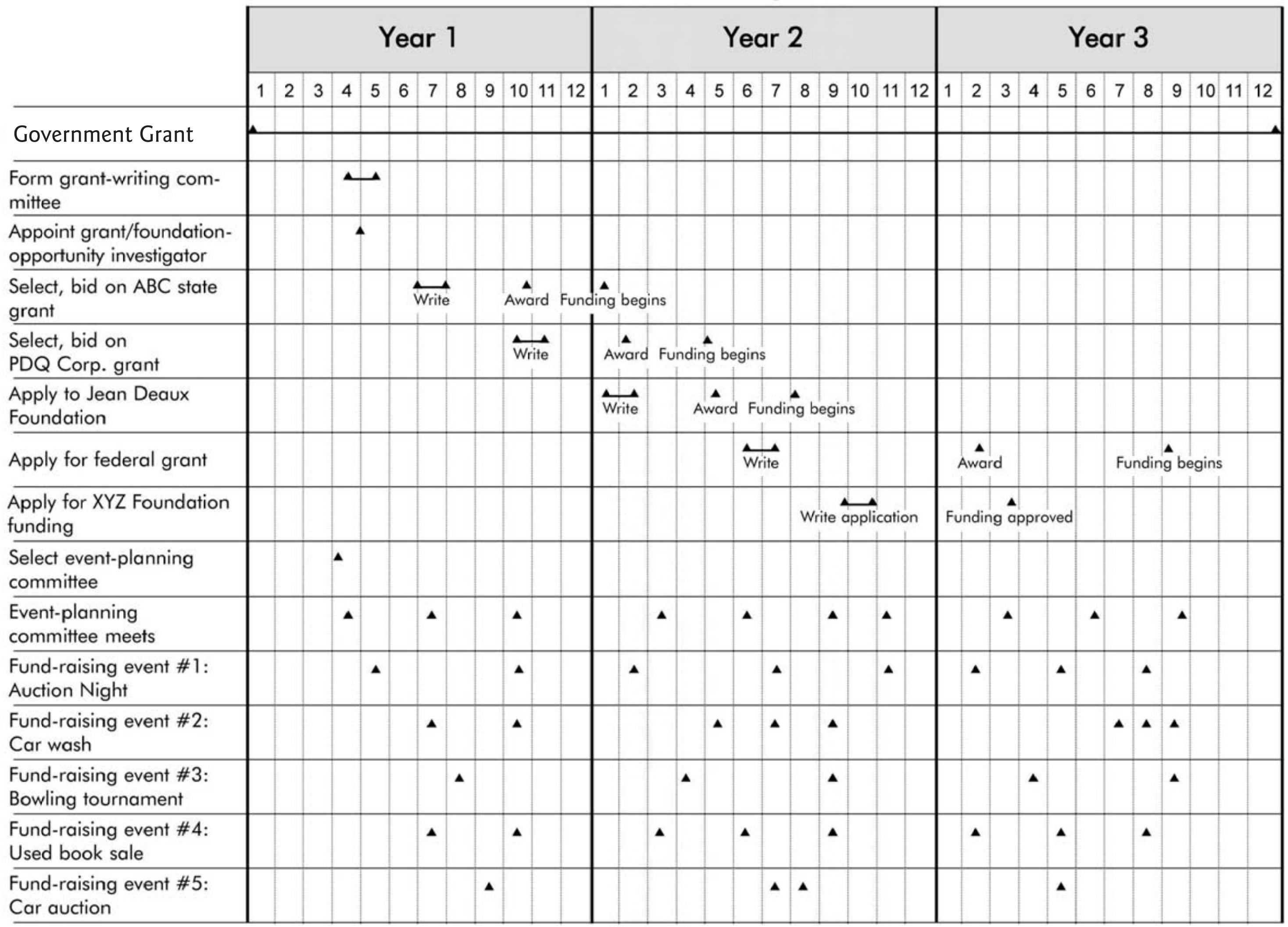
By June 30, 2009, raise $100,000 in new funding to replace federal grant through a combination of local public and private grants and fundraising events in the local community.

Activity 1:

Obtain private foundation funding in the amount of $40,000 by December 30, 2008.

Action Steps	Owner	Due Date
Talk to Joan Jones (agency grant writer) to get ideas and advice, and obtain commitment to spending time on researching foundations	Samantha Johnson	March 1, 2008
Talk to school district development director to obtain ideas and advice, and obtain commitment to provide consulting time (4 hours per month)	Samantha Johnson	March 1, 2008
Research local and regional private foundations and identify five to approach for funding	Joan Jones	May 1, 2008
Make a list of each foundation, with submission requirements, deadlines, tentative amount to be requested from each, and purpose of requests	Joan, with input from Mike Brown (mentoring director)	May 15, 2008
Develop a boilerplate grant application for submission to private foundations	Samantha, with input from Joan	June 1, 2008
Develop one-page budget for use in grant applications	Henry Gates (finance officer)	June 1, 2008
Send draft boilerplate and budget to director, board treasurer, and school district development director for review and comment	Mike Brown	June 15, 2008
Begin grant submissions based on deadlines of identified foundations	Samantha, with help from team	July 1, 2008

Fundraising Timeline



. . . and so on

Step 7. Implement the action plan

Once you have breathed a sigh of relief that your plan is done, keep the momentum rolling because the real work is just beginning! Check in with everyone who has responsibilities for the action plan you have developed and make sure everyone understands their roles and timelines. If different leadership is involved in turning the plan into reality, be sure to pass the torch and fill that new person in on what has been developed. If you are the one who will be guiding the implementation plan, avoid taking on the whole show. Your planning team, your Board of Directors or advisory committee, and other staff and volunteers who have agreed to help are important to the success of the effort—encourage and support their work.

Step 8. Monitor, review, and celebrate your progress

Your planning team should create a process to regularly monitor the implementation of the plan you've spent so long developing. This should include:

- ***Dedicated meetings for reviewing progress.*** Review meetings should have representation from all staff members who have responsibility for one or more of the activities being implemented. Your planning team may decide to disband as clear leadership for the implementation phase is identified, but ideally some of the original team will continue to take a leadership role in ensuring that the intent of the plan is being met. These meetings should focus on updates from everyone involved in order to determine if the plan is on track or needs adjustments. Participants should feel comfortable with the notion that adjustments are normal and not a sign of failure.

- ***A process for adjusting your plan.*** Adjusting your plan keeps it alive and avoids frustrations that can develop when reality conflicts with outlined goals and objectives. These changes need to be managed in order to preserve the integrity of your plan. For example, if your original timeline for obtaining private foundation funding is thrown off by the deadlines of the foundations you have identified, your implementation team will need to review the implications of this and make strategic adjustments to your plan. Such a review will usually involve: (1) identifying the need for change, (2) developing alternative strategies, (3) agreeing on a new strategy and getting approval to make the changes if necessary, and (4) implementing and monitoring the new strategy.

- ***A celebration of successes along the way!*** Too often the ongoing management of a resource development plan can focus on problems and next steps without taking a moment to pause and consider your accomplishments. It is important not to let this happen to your team as you implement your plan. Stop and take the time to celebrate each achievement, no matter how small. Celebrating success can be as simple as bringing in a cake when milestones are reached or occasional "thank-you" cards from the board chair, or more significant celebrations, such as a special luncheon or recognition at an all-agency event. Celebrating major milestones can also be a great way to promote your program to the larger community, through press releases in local papers or stories in a program newsletter.

Section III.

Specific Funding Sources

This section of the workbook presents chapters authored by experts in the fields of youth mentoring, youth development, and non-profit management. Each author covers one of the common funding sources mentoring programs usually decide to pursue:

- Direct support from corporations and businesses
- Foundations
- Government sources
- Individual giving
- Events and other local support

Each chapter presents principles, lessons learned, self-assessment questions, and steps to getting started, enriched with the advice of experts who have been “in the trenches.” While each topic is presented as a singular approach, it is our hope that you will view each of the chapters as part of the rich tapestry of your potential funding diversity.

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Direct Support From Corporations and Business

By Dr. Susan Weinberger

Corporate support of mentoring is on the rise, especially in those corporations with a long history of social responsibility and giving back to the communities in which they do business. They are responding positively to the call for increased support of mentoring and are eager to get involved—when properly courted. This section explores their motivations for involvement and what your program can do to encourage corporate support.

What Does Corporate Support Look Like?

Corporate support can come in the form of direct dollars, in-kind donations of materials and supplies, or volunteer mentors from among their employees. All are valuable, and you'll need to decide which will be most useful to ask for from corporate partners.

Corporate Mentors

The birth of school-based mentoring two decades ago initiated a trend that is increasingly common: corporate employees being released during the workday to spend an hour or so mentoring a youth in a neighborhood school, afterschool program, community center, YMCA, or Boys & Girls Club. We know that these mentors are getting a lot out of the experience.

In my career, I've conducted research with many corporate mentoring programs, using a pre/post-evaluation instrument created by Northwestern University. In three large studies I conducted[1], mentors who were matched with youth in these site-based programs returned to work happier for having had an impact on a young person's life. They improved their morale and job satisfaction, got along better with their own spouses and children, improved their attitudes at work, got fresh perspectives on their lives, and agreed that small social and educational programs do make a difference. This is good news, news you can use in your corporate pitches.

Another outcome of this type of corporate participation is that the mentors had the chance to view, personally, what was happening in the programs through which they were mentoring. They began to see the needs, and even frustrations, of nonprofit life. They saw the constant need for financial support and material goods to augment and improve the programs. The end result in many of these programs was that the mentors went to bat for the program, approaching their own workplace leaders for more direct support of their favorite cause. When you get employees involved in your

[1] These studies examined the outcomes of the Allstate Mentoring Program, the EDULINX Mentoring Program, and the Buddy Program Mentoring Program. All three of these studies are available from the Mentoring Consulting Group (write to drmentor@aol.com).

program, chances are they will help you open doors to the right people in their company for other kinds of financial support.

This touches on the important lesson in seeking support in the corporate arena: sometimes "friend raising," not fundraising, is the important first step to success. Here's a great example from my hometown of Norwalk, Connecticut:

> *The towel and tissue division of James River Corporation had decided to get involved with mentoring. Within one year of its involvement in the mentoring program in the public schools, it boasted 60 mentors at their partner school, Brookside Elementary. The relationship among the mentors, school staff, and youth was exceptional. The program was making friends. . . .*

Several years later, when the school received approval from the city for a much-needed addition to its building, mentors knew how much the teachers wanted a computer room. They prepared a proposal, representing the wishes of the principal, teaching staff, and their mentees. They presented it to the company's management team. The decisionmakers at James River could not say no when their own employees asked. They helped to build the computer room and purchased all the computers and other equipment for the new building. Examples such as this show why you should not overlook these kinds of employee relationships.

Direct corporate support

That said, not every corporation will release their employees for mentoring. They may prefer to support your program in more direct ways. Some may give you dollars for operating expenses or may prefer to help you pay for staff, space, and equipment.

In my experience, corporations and local businesses would prefer to give to a specific cause or need, rather than to your general operating budget. Some may be interested in exploring how they might earmark a gift to a specific aspect of your program. This might include such things as contributing to afterschool activities for youth in your program, arranging transportation to and from various program functions, funding summer programs, or sponsoring group activities for your matches.

I have had tremendous success designing mentoring programs with scholarship components. Businesses are asked to contribute annually to a separate tax-deductible scholarship fund that enables youth who reach the senior year of high school with their mentor to pursue post-secondary education. Corporations and local businesses are particularly interested in this approach, especially if their own employees are also mentors. The scholarships are a great incentive and reward for their mentors who have been engaged in a long-term relationship with a youth—they can see tangible outcomes from the effort.

In-kind support

Even if they can't give you employees or dollars, corporations may still be able to help you through in-kind donations. This can include space for activities, equipment (such as computers or furniture), or pro bono services (designing your brochure, or hosting your Web site, for example). Just about every business has something they can contribute if you help them figure out the logical connections. Take some time to brainstorm all the material things your program needs, both for day-to-day operations and for one-time events, and see how many of them you may be able to get free as an in-kind donation.

Whatever kind of corporate support you get, make sure that all gifts are properly acknowledged, both privately and publicly, unless the corporation wishes to remain anonymous. And always remember to say "thank you"—it goes a long way to ensuring continued support of your program.

Getting Started

If you are going to get any kind of support from a corporation, you're going to have to build a relationship with them. You're going to need to make a connection, get their attention, and make your pitch. You'll need to appeal to an individual, typically the CEO or someone carrying the title of Director of Human/Public/Community Relations. But no matter who you are speaking with, you need an "in."

Your board members are an excellent starting point for making connections. No doubt your program, whether large or small, has a Board of Directors or advisory committee. Explore their connections and address books to their fullest!

Once you've identified some potential corporate partners, it is time to get to work. You'll need to arrange a meeting and make your presentation. I call the presentation the "ask." My 10 Rules for a Successful Ask appear below. But before you get there, keep a few things in mind:

Most corporations will not want, or be allowed, to provide your program with financial support unless you qualify as a nonprofit, typically as a 501(c)(3) or similar entity. Make sure this important detail is in place before visiting with a corporation.

Practice your "ask" over and over again before your visit. Give your corporate presentation in front of the mirror, to your family, colleagues, friends, and even the family dog. Time it, too. Time will be of the essence once you have your foot in the door.

Soliciting Corporate Giving: 10 Rules for a Successful "Ask"

Rule 1: Do not make a cold call on a company without doing your homework.

Read the corporation's annual report. Familiarize yourself with their history of giving, grant guidelines, and the timeline of their fiscal year. You are in the business of youth, education, and mentoring. Make sure your program focus is compatible with the focus area of the corporation's giving. If the company primarily supports environmental causes, your program is likely not a good fit. Get a full understanding of their mission and goals, geographic focus, the type of support they normally give, and their grant range. This is public information that you can request. The annual report of the company will contain the specifics that can help you determine if they are a good fit for your "ask."

Rule 2: Timing is everything.

If your research shows the company to be a good fit, call for an appointment at least six months before the beginning of their fiscal year. You need to get in on the ground floor with their budget cycle. If you are submitting a formal proposal, do so during the first two quarters of the fiscal year. At the end of the year, there are typically few philanthropic dollars left to give out, even if the company likes your mission. Make sure you ask for an opportunity to make your presentation in person whenever possible. Written proposals and e-mails are too easily ignored.

Rule 3: Send supplementary information about your program in advance.

If they do agree to meet with you, send a cover letter acknowledging when and where you will be meeting with the company representative. Make sure to include any articles, newsletters, awards, or testimonials about your program, which will help to familiarize the company's decisionmakers with who you are. It would be a good idea to include your current budget and anticipated income and expenses, as well as the current sources of your revenue. If the company already has employees involved in your mentoring program, make sure to brainstorm with these mentors about the best way to approach the company. Perhaps one of their mentors wants to give your contact a "heads-up" about how great you are or even join you at the meeting.

Rule 4: Invite the key contact to visit your program.

While there is no guarantee that they will accept your invitation, it is a real plus if the person whom you will be visiting, or even their designee, is also able to see what your program is all about for themselves. Seeing your program in action is often much more effective than just talking about its successes. If the contact is unable to do so before your visit to their headquarters, you can always extend the invitation at your meeting.

Rule 5: What you know is less important than how you communicate it.

Mentoring program coordinators often spend many nervous hours preparing for the presentation to corporate representatives. No matter how well you know your subject matter, the needs of your youth, your financial status, and your measurable outcomes, if you cannot make these things understandable to other people, they will not serve any purpose. Prior to the meeting, find out how much time you have been given. Stick to that timeframe! Never go over the limit. Most likely the person you are meeting with is very busy. Even though you are excited, enthusiastic, and passionate about your program, keep your message brief.

In my mind, presentations are 50 percent visual (how you look), 40 percent oratory (how you talk and sound), and about 7 percent verbal content (what you say). That doesn't mean you don't need to know subject matter, but it does mean your presentation skills are very important. Professionalism is at a premium during an "ask."

The basic rule on the content of your "ask" is to make sure that you answer the five Ws: who (you serve), what (you do with them), where and when (your services happen), and why (the corporation needs to get involved).

Rule 6: Be prepared to offer the company a return on their investment.

The company may well ask, "What's in it for us?" The person you will be meeting with may want to know how their corporation can benefit, in terms of publicity and recognition, if they decide to support your program. Perhaps you have established a "corporate honor roll" and they will be publicly honored once a year during a National Mentoring Month celebration. Maybe their name and logo will appear on all your written program materials. Whatever it is, be prepared before the meeting as to what you can give back in exchange for the company's support (see the later section on Events and Other Local Support for more ideas on offering incentives to businesses).

Rule 7: Get to the presentation room early.

This is especially true if you know you will be meeting with a committee rather than just one person. Chances are that the participants will be filtering in slowly. This is my favorite time for what I call the "walkabout." Walk around the room, introduce yourself, meet folks, ask them about their position and interests, and if they know anything about mentoring. Typically there is always someone who was once a Big Brother, or had a formal or informal mentor in their life, or is currently volunteering as a mentor. I always find someone who fits into one of these categories. This is your chance to acknowledge them and their personal history as part of your comments during the presentation to the group. They will love being recognized! So be sure to identify individuals you meet by name in your presentation whenever possible. This step of "working the room" is a big part of the "friend-raising" philosophy.

Rule 8: The method of presentation depends on the number of people who will be meeting with you.

If the meeting to discuss your proposal has been scheduled with just one person, a formal PowerPoint presentation may be overkill. Preparing handouts of a simple, concise slide presentation, which you can review with your contact throughout the meeting, may be much more helpful. Have extra hard copies available for them; they can be left behind as a reference. Whatever formats you present your information in, make sure it covers the aforementioned five Ws.

Rule 9: The first 30 seconds and last 15 seconds are the most important ones.

The "ask" visit has four basic phases:

- The *opening*, which consists of five minutes of pleasantries and interesting tidbits
- The *involvement*, which includes any information you have acquired about the company's interests and prior support
- The *case presentation*, in which you describe both the need for your services and your program's impact
- And the *closing*, which finalizes what you are looking in terms of a commitment.

At the beginning of the meeting, you may decide to tell a story about one of your matches that is relevant to your discussion and solicitation. Make it short and sweet, so you can get to the point of the meeting.

It might be equally powerful to end with a line that relates to the opening, so that the listener will remember that initial story. If you open with a "grabber," such as an incredibly powerful statistic, you may want to mention it again at the end of the discussion. I always like to end with my favorite quote, from Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." It works almost every time. . . .

Rule 10: Never leave a presentation without "next steps."

You will want to end by asking or telling your audience where you might go from here. It is important to bring some sort of closure to the discussion. There are a number of alternative endings to the meeting. If your contact indicates that she will think about your "ask," find out when or how you can check on her decision. If she indicates that the amount you have suggested is not within their budget, this is the time for a possible negotiation. Remind them that a moderate level of giving over a longer term can also have a tremendous impact on the program.

A quick word about PowerPoint presentations . . .

Don't ever use it, even for a larger group presentation, unless you are completely comfortable with your computer and the LCD projector. There are many problems—from computer glitches to burned-out projector bulbs—that can ruin the proceedings, leaving the audience without the information they need to make a decision, and the presenter befuddled and embarrassed. I saw this happen just recently at a meeting of a large corporation that was considering becoming involved in the local mentoring program. The PowerPoint presentation crashed, a team of tech support staff rushed to the scene, and the whole thing suffered as we sat, endlessly waiting for the equipment to be fixed.

But what if, in spite of all your efforts, the proposal is rejected? While this may be disappointing, it could be for a lot of legitimate reasons. When this is the case, do not feel dejected, and do not give up. Keep the following in mind if your proposal is rejected:

- Find out what could have been improved in the proposal.
- Ask about a potential date to resubmit the proposal.
- Continue to touch base with the corporation, informing your contact of the program's milestones and progress. Give them room to change their mind down the road.

You may be disappointed if your corporate "ask" did not turn out the way you hoped. Sometimes the corporation is just not interested in supporting a program's operations.

Maybe they are looking for a different kind of fit. When this is the case, remember that you should have a prepared laundry list of ways that the company may be able to assist you other than writing a check.

Good luck!

Remember that you are the face of your program. If you are going to win corporate support, it's going to be because of the personal connections you make. So maximize your community connections and start practicing your "ask."

Corporate "Ask" Checklist

- ☑ Demonstrate proof of your nonprofit status
- ☑ Rely on members of your Board of Directors to open doors
- ☑ Become familiar with the company's mission and giving history
- ☑ Learn the dates of the budget cycle; don't wait until the end of the cycle
- ☑ Practice your "ask" more than once, and keep it brief
- ☑ List ways the company will receive a potential return on its investment
- ☑ Bring closure to the "ask"
- ☑ If you are denied, try, try again

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Foundation Funding

By Phyllis McGrath

As you continue your search for support to carry on your mentoring program, one possible source is foundations. But what are foundations? And how does a small nonprofit program or agency approach a foundation? How do successful mentoring programs get money from foundations?

In my career, I've worked on both sides of the foundation fence—as someone who was seeking funds, as well as someone who held the purse strings on substantial amounts of foundation money. Based on my experience, many mentoring programs and small nonprofits begin their pursuit of foundation money from the same starting point:

> *You've heard people talk about charitable foundations, and you've heard that foundations give away money. Just this morning you saw a picture in your local newspaper, of a smiling person presenting a check to the head of a not-for-profit education program. The caption said the check giver represents the local ABC Family Foundation, which you've never thought about, or even heard of.*
>
> *Envious? Of course you are. You, your staff, and your board are concerned about the sustainability of your program and have had many meetings discussing possible solutions.*
>
> *Is it too late to call the ABC Family Foundation and ask if they'll give you money, too? Probably.*
>
> *You shrug your shoulders and think, "Oh well, another missed opportunity."*

You're right, there's a chance that you have missed an opportunity. But you also weren't prepared to take advantage of that opportunity. As you well know if you're reading this guide, raising funds isn't easy, whether you're asking an individual, the government, a company, or a foundation. As with any potential funding source, the keys to successful fundraising from foundations are doing your homework, being prepared, and having patience.

What Is a Foundation?

A charitable foundation is a nonprofit organization. Like your own mentoring program or parent organization, a charitable foundation is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3), but it is a grant-making charity rather than a grant-seeking one.

There are three broad types of foundations, all of which may be of interest to you:

- A **family**, or **private, foundation** is a nonprofit charitable organization created by an individual or a family, to fulfill their personal philanthropic goals. Usually, the donor who establishes a foundation is a "high wealth" person, but they're not all Rockefellers or Fords. At the annual Family Foundation conference hosted by the Council on Foundations, I meet hundreds of "ordinary people." They might be someone who sold a small business and created a foundation with the proceeds. His or her motivation is two-pronged—a sense of caring about society and a need to minimize the tax impact of the business sale. Another may be someone who made a lot of money during the dot com boom of the mid-1990s and wanted to do good with that money, rather than see it sink back into the stock market. Often, it is someone who simply has a passion for an issue—for example, someone in his or her family may have faced a particular serious illness. So keep in mind that foundations are often created by rather everyday folks.

- A **corporate foundation** is a nonprofit charitable organization created by a for-profit corporation. Many of the largest corporations in the United States have charitable foundations. While many were originally formed so that the corporations could realize a tax benefit, many were also created to carry out the corporation's mission of good citizenship and to build goodwill for the corporation within the community.

  Corporations give both directly and through their foundations. The advantage of making charitable contributions through their foundation is that the contributions are more stable and consistent—better able to weather the ups and downs of the business's success or struggle. The large corporations that have foundations also typically make contributions directly from their operating budgets. In fact, this may be the best source of funds for you, as those contributions tend to be local and somewhat smaller. (See the previous section on direct corporate support.)

- A **community foundation** is also a nonprofit charitable organization. Community foundations are funded by many people and groups to support a wide range of charitable activities in the community—or communities—the foundation serves. The first community foundation was established in Cleveland, in 1914. Today there are more than 660 across the United States.

  A particular type of community foundation that could be a good source of support for a mentoring program is what's known as a local education foundation (LEF). LEFs are nonprofit organizations whose boards are usually made up of local community and education leaders. These LEFs often are formed to provide nonpublic funding for a public school or public school district.

Learning About Foundations

There are nearly 76,000 foundations operating in the United States.[2] So how does an organization looking for funds find out which of them to contact and which are the best prospects for grants? The answer is simple: *Do your homework.*

The successful fundraiser does his or her best work behind the scenes, long before any contact is made with a foundation. Research, research, research. Know your target. You have to go back to the basics and answer the questions:

- Where?
- What?
- Who?
- When?

Let's begin with the first two—*where* and *what*—and how to explore this information.

[2] Source: IRS Business Master File 12/2004 (with modifications by the National Center for Charitable Statistics at the Urban Institute). http://nccsdataweb.urban.org/NCCS/Public/

Where: The Geography Must Fit Yours

A corporate foundation based in Oregon is not likely to consider giving money to a mentoring program in Tennessee if the corporation has no business interest there. A community foundation typically only gives in its own or neighboring communities, unless a donor makes a specific request. And family foundations usually make their donations in the location where the family is based. Sure, every so often you come across a family foundation with a distant but powerful cousin living in another part of the country. However, the general rule of thumb is that foundations make grants to nonprofits that are located where the foundation is based.

Once you have isolated those based in your state or region, you need to narrow the list down further. That Oregon-based foundation may only fund in one part of the state, or in one city or county.

A good starting place is conducting a search on Google (or another quality search engine). Use terms like "foundations," or "charitable foundations." I recently helped a Connecticut-based client investigate funding possibilities. We typed in "Connecticut Charitable Foundations." Even a simple search such as this can find sources and help develop a long list of initial possibilities.

Collect details as you conduct this research. Find the contact information on the foundation Web sites you visit. Keep a record of which ones you research—if you find a foundation that meets your initial screen, you'll be going back to it. It may be helpful to develop a spreadsheet like the one on page 44. Start with these columns and add others for additional contact information, networking details (for example, information about the person who helped you initially approach the foundation), and ongoing activities (such as scheduled follow-up meetings). The spreadsheet should become an ongoing list of the foundations you have contacted, those you've rejected, and those you might contact in the future. You may choose, at some point, to go to a more sophisticated fundraising software package, such as Raiser's Edge or one of the many others on the market. Customize any software used to incorporate and continue tracking the information from your initial spreadsheet.

What: Finding Matching Interests Between You and a Funder

You've developed a list of foundations that fund in your location. But, if they only fund senior citizens programs or soup kitchens, then they are likely of little help to you. Even those that say they fund "education" must be culled from ones that only target, for example, early childhood programs, or postdoctoral grants. In all my years as a funder, the most annoying e-mails and calls were from nonprofits outside our funding scopes and interests. Those programs were hurting themselves through poor research.

Read the foundation's Web site carefully. Let me repeat that—read the Web site carefully. If the foundation only funds health care and not education, don't bother writing or calling them. If the foundation's instructions say e-mail inquiries only, don't phone them, and if they say call first, don't waste the postage on a letter.

Larger foundations hire staff whose job it is to do the initial screening of incoming letters, calls, and e-mails. One of the corporate foundations I worked for was the charitable arm of a very well-known company. Because the company name was a household word, every morning the mail carts would come rumbling down the hall overflowing with mail. The foundation received more mail than any other department at corporate headquarters. And no one was

Sample

Foundation Tracking Spreadsheet

Foundation	Site	Issues	URL	Rules	Contact	Sent	Reply	Action	Notes
Jones Co.	New Orleans	K–12	www.jones.org	$5–10K quarterly	Jo Jones	3/11/05	No		Friend of Nat Bower
Elm City	Elm City	Intergeneration	www.elmc.org	5 pages projects	Liz Doe	12/2/04	Send more info.	Mailed 1/13/05	Site visit
My family	LA	Minority ed., math, science	www.mfam.org	College-bound urban	B.J. Kim	3/22/05	Request site visit	Met 4/16/06	Interested in named scholars
JackJill	Iowa	Technology	www.jjfound.org	Software	Ed Smith	2/7/05	No		Revise and resubmit
Brown	Missouri	K–12	www.brownf.org	Throughout the South	Ken Lee	3/17/05	Refer to local office	Wait two weeks then call	

counting the e-mails and phone calls. Hundreds of requests for money poured in, most from very worthy organizations and causes, and most were never going to get read by a person with grant-making authority or get a dollar from the foundation because they simply didn't meet the funder's basic criteria. Do not let your inquiries find a similar fate.

"How much time do I spend on this part?" is a question you have to ask yourself as you proceed with your research. What I have described so far is basic Web surfing and reference work. But there is additional information out there, if you're willing to pay for it:

- You could hire a research firm to do the digging for you—there are many for-profit businesses that do this type of work.
- You could purchase a resource like Foundation Fundamentals from the Foundation Center (http://www.fdncenter.org). This book gives you a good basic education in the funding research process, how to use research databases, and good proposal writing.
- You could also purchase one of the packages that provide access to their Foundation Directory Online (http://fconline.fdncenter.org/). There are also regionally focused versions of their particular database available.
- For individual states, you can purchase one or more directories. For example, if you are looking for California foundations, you might try the California Guide to Grants Online, which provides online profiles of more than 5,000 foundations and corporations. Foundation DataBooks are available for California, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Washington. For each state, they provide listings of all the grantmaking foundations, all the grants they made in the most recent year, and the purpose of the grants. These resources range from $100 to $175, depending on the length and if there is a CD-ROM version included (http://www.foundationdatabook.com).
- There are free and fee-based sources for narrower geographic listings. For example, if you are in California, CompassPoint (http://www.compasspoint.org) is a free source of information on foundations in Santa Clara and Monterey counties. For $75 a year you could also buy a membership accessing the Guide to Funders in Southern California from the Volunteer Center of Orange County (http://www.volunteercenter.org). Do online research to find out if there are more local directories available to you.

Keep in mind that many of these resources can be accessed for free in the reference section of your local public library.

Yet another strategy for getting information is to contact a Regional Association of Grantmakers (RAG). There are RAGs in most states or regions across the country (you can find the ones in your area here: http://www.givingforum.org/ralocator.html). Their Web sites are often full of useful information.

Who: Do You Know?

"Who" is a key part of the puzzle. Are you a networker? Have you learned from experience that who you know, rather than what you know, can make all the difference in life? I know, you're going to say "But how could I know someone at a foundation? I don't know these people." Of course you do! They live in your community. At the very least, someone you know knows someone who can be your connection.

Start with your Board of Directors, or any advisory group you have. Give them your list of the foundations that are in your state and fund education or youth services. If you can, include the names of the foundations' directors and key staff. One nonprofit board that I serve on circulates this list at every board meeting. Maybe someone plays bridge with the spouse of someone on the list. Or golf. Or lives next door. Or went to college together . . . you get the picture.

Try the list out on your staff members and on your own circle of friends and acquaintances. Maybe your friend, the real estate agent, sold one of them a house. Or your neighbor, the owner of the local jewelry shop, has a client on the list.

Get out in the community and talk to people. Tell them about your program and how many kids you've helped. Give them one or two of the most dramatic success stories you have. And by all means, tell them that your greatest challenge is fundraising.

Why go through this exercise? Well, tell me how far I'd get if I cold-called your office or sent you an e-mail or letter. Unless my first words were "So and so said I should contact you," you're likely to be too busy to reply to me. Either you will toss the message or it will go at the bottom of your in-box. But if I said, "Jill Jones, your neighbor, suggested I call," out of courtesy you'll answer me.

Formatting guidelines matter too . . .

I once issued an RFP (Request for Proposals) specifying that proposals should be three to five pages long. When I received one that was 10 or 20 pages long, it was automatically turned down. As a program manager, I felt that if the requester couldn't follow instructions on submissions, they would probably be difficult to work with if they became a grantee. So pay attention to any formatting requirements and follow them to the letter.

Let's go back and take another look at that corporate foundation. We saw that a low-level staff person read all the unaddressed mail. But if you have a name, the letter goes directly to the named person. For example, the letter might say:

> *Dear Mr. Decker: Paula Spring, my son's kindergarten teacher, thought you might be interested in my program. She's one of your neighbors and she suggested I get in touch with you.*

Trust me, that letter will get to Mr. Decker. This is what's called getting your foot in the door.

When: Following the Foundation's Timeline

"When" is a crucial part of your homework. Pay attention to the timelines associated with foundation funding cycles. Many foundations review proposals on a specific schedule. Some do it quarterly, some annually. Whatever their schedule, make sure you have submitted your request well in advance of their deadline. Then give them enough time after that deadline to send you a response.

That brings me to a very important lesson. Don't be impatient. Don't hound the program manager or the foundation head. Do not send a proposal and call three days later to ask whether they received it. And don't call after 10 days to find out whether they liked it. Give them breathing space. Remember that huge cart of mail that is delivered to their offices. Your proposal is the most important thing in your world, but it's not in theirs.

Wait several weeks before calling or e-mailing to see if they received it and if they need any additional information or material. You can ask when you might get a reading at this time, but you shouldn't ask anything more.

How To Construct a Formal Proposal

The basic rules for writing proposals apply whether you are approaching an individual, corporate, or community foundation.

Your proposal must be clear, well organized, free of spelling and grammatical errors, and written in the format requested—i.e., single space, number of pages, etc. It should be sent on stationery that has your organization or program letterhead (preferably with the list of your board of directors down the lefthand side). You should also enclose a copy of your 501(c)(3) letter with every proposal as well as any other documentation required by the foundation.

Every proposal should have an executive summary of no more than one page or, at least, a blurb at the top describing the project for which funding is being sought. There are not enough hours in the day or week for a foundation staffer to thoroughly read every word of every proposal they receive, so you have to help them out. In a short executive summary or introduction, cover the following:

- A very brief description of your project
- When your project will begin and how long it will run
- Why they should favor your mentoring program over other options
- Who the key players will be—identify the sources of students and mentors, and who the administrator will be
- How much money you need

What you're giving them is a highly condensed version of what will follow in the full proposal.

The golden rule of proposal delivery is: don't get too fancy. Over the years, I have received proposals that must have cost a fortune to produce. Many colors, heavy paper stock, fancy bindings and covers. Quite frankly, those often went directly into the rejection pile. The money that the organization spent on all that glitz should have been spent on the children they wanted our money to help.

Before you prepare a proposal, read the foundation's Web site or print materials to determine the size of grants they typically award. You don't want to ask for $100,000 if all their grants are in the $10,000–25,000 range. But they might go for a $35,000 project. Why lose an opportunity to get a big grant because you asked for too little? You can also bundle several projects together if they add up to a grant of an appropriate size.

To most fundraisers, the ideal grant is a multiyear one. A pledge of a specific amount during the next three to five years locks money into the budget, helps with planning, saves manpower, and helps reduce your stress level. A funder will very rarely cancel a multiyear commitment, except in dire situations.

Be specific about how you plan to utilize the money, and over what period of time.

Should we pursue multiple foundation sources?

A question many nonprofits ask is whether they can approach several foundations simultaneously. The answer is a definite "yes." If you didn't, it would take you much too long to raise the money you need. The proposal process is typically a long one—from identifying targets to getting the final approval or rejection, the process typically takes months. You don't have that much time to spare if you have to begin all over again. Funders assume you are not giving them an exclusive and, in fact, may ask you who else you're soliciting. Often they are open to partnering, although corporate foundations will want right of first refusal for particular partners because they won't, or can't, team with a competitor.

If this foundation makes grants for operating expenses, and that's what you're most in need of, ask for it, and provide a detailed budget for your current and anticipated operating expenses. If they want to "own" a part of your program—in other words be able to point proudly to a specific activity or product as theirs—get your staff together and brainstorm ideas.

For example, you could propose that the funder underwrite your newsletter. Or they could host your annual celebration event for students and mentors. If they are a technology company, you might want to ask for hardware or software, or training for IT staff. No matter what you ask for in terms of support, you must provide justification. For example, you need the newsletter to communicate with teachers, mentors, and community leaders.

It's very important to determine whether the foundation wants visibility or not. If they do, look for naming opportunities to offer them. You could call the annual picnic the XYZ Bank Picnic, or you could call certain set of students "XYZ Bank Scholars." However, be sure that's what the funder wants—there are many who prefer anonymity. One of my long-time clients, a multigeneration family foundation, refuses to have publicity for its grants, and the founder refuses all honors. Of course, if you want his money, you play by his rules. It's a matter of respecting the donor's wishes.

Meeting With the Foundation

Congratulations! You have passed the first test. A program manager at the foundation has read your proposal and wants to meet with you and perhaps make a site visit.

Be cool! It's very tempting to get overly excited at this point. I worked with a nonprofit that jumped when they got the call. I had to stop them as they began congratulating one another —they were still a long way from approval of a grant.

No matter how busy you are, or what your calendar looks like, set up the appointment with the foundation program manager at his or her convenience. This is important enough for you to be flexible.

Find out the names and positions of the person or persons who will be meeting with you. Learn anything you can about their experience in philanthropy.

If the meeting is to be held at the foundation, be on time. In fact, get there about five minutes early. Do not bring a large team. My rule is one or two people, but I will make one exception—if you can bring one of your students with you, by all means do. Kids are the greatest assets you have. They tug at the heartstrings of adults.

Rehearse what you plan to say and what each of the people you bring with you is to say. Don't read from a script. If you have a PowerPoint presentation, call ahead to be sure the foundation has any equipment you will need. If you have handouts, bring extras just in case you get a larger audience than you anticipated. Plan to talk for no more than 20 minutes. If the funder has allotted an hour for your meeting, you should spend five minutes on introductions and pleasantries, then make your 20-minute presentation, and then answer questions and talk for the remaining time. If the funder interrupts your presentation, don't get flustered. Keep track of where you were in your remarks. At the end of the hour, prepare to leave.

If the foundation folks visit your site, you should also plan carefully. Find out how many are coming and who they are. Send them clear travel and parking directions. Find out how much time they can give you.

Bring the visitors into your office and spend 10–15 minutes giving them the lay of the land. Introduce them to staff as you pass them. Sit them down and go over the highlights of your program. If you have a videotape about your program, you can show it to them if it is short. Then take them out to see the program in action. Have them observe the mentors and their pupils. Let them chat with whomever they want, but stand by in case you need to help with the answer to a question. At the end of the tour, find a quiet place to answer any final questions, reinforce the points you want them to leave with, and ask them what the next step is. Also ask them when you might expect to hear some news from them. Conclude the visit within the time they allotted.

Within a week of the visit—whether to your site or theirs—send a short thank-you note. In it, you should again (very briefly) reinforce your key points.

Then, you wait. . . . If they ask for more input, provide it. If not, wait until after the date you've been told they will take action. If you've heard nothing a week after that date, then you can ask them about your status.

"Congratulations, You're Getting the Grant!"

Shortly after the foundation has adjourned its board meeting, you get a call from your contact there. Having been a funder, I can tell you that the people who are to get "yes" calls get them right away. Making the "no" calls is not a pleasant task, and program managers may delay making them (or may even send the news by mail).

But, your proposal and your hard work have earned the "yes" phone call. Your diligence, your research, and your attention to detail have paid off. After the call, you will receive written confirmation of the foundation's decision, sometimes with the first check enclosed! You should send an official thank-you to the foundation, asking them whether they have any additional requirements of you going forward, and also asking them whether they want public recognition for their gift. If so, you should work with them on a press release

Steps to Getting Started . . .

1. First, think about your fundraising. How much money do you need to raise, and for what?

2. Decide who will do the work, whether you need money to complete the necessary tasks, and how much time you can allot to fundraising.

3. Through online and library research, identify foundations that make grants in your town or city and that fund projects in education.

4. Read the foundation's instructions carefully and put together a clear, concise proposal that incorporates everything requested.

5. Do a "who-do-you-know" inventory of board members, staff, and friends before you approach a foundation. If you find someone who knows someone, use that contact.

6. Submit materials on time, resist the urge to pester the foundation, and respond promptly when asked for more information or for additional meetings or site visits.

7. Establish a high-quality record-keeping system to receive and administer the grants you will be awarded.

or event to announce the grant. Most foundations prefer that press releases go out on the nonprofit's letterhead rather than their own, but they can often provide assistance with the writing.

If it is appropriate to plan an event to announce the grant (such as a press conference or visit to a mentoring site), you should work with the foundation on arrangements. You want the highest representation from the foundation, so you need to coordinate a date and time. You need a plan for inviting, and then hosting, any media people who attend.

Lastly, you begin the process of handling the funds and setting the proposed work in motion. Set up a procedure for providing all required reports to the foundation, including any financial reports they may require, and for keeping them informed on the overall progress of the program. Your new goal is to make them so proud of awarding the grant, and so pleased with the outcomes, that they do it again the next time you ask.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Do we understand what a foundation is and what the different types of foundations are?

Can we make a well-documented case to a foundation convincing them that our project is important and that we are the best organization to accomplish the objective?

Have we spent enough time at the library (or online) doing research on the foundation?

Have we thought of everyone we know who might know someone at a foundation?

Do we keep records of who we've contacted, when we contacted them, and what their response was?

Do we listen and follow instructions on proposal specifics?

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Government Funding Sources

By Beth Senger

Here in El Paso, Texas, one of the poorest cities in the United States, government funding is critical to our program. It has made all the difference in the work we do. When I first helped get my agency off the ground, I had to wear many hats, which is typical for start-up organizations. I was the executive director, case manager, fundraiser, accountant, and program director! Designing and implementing program services was a full-time job, so grant writing was something I tackled on evenings and weekends as best I could. If not for government funding, I wouldn't be wearing any of those hats today, and the hundreds of at-risk kids in our program who have stayed off drugs and alcohol and away from gangs, would never have been introduced to their mentors.

While government funding can be a tremendous source of revenue in providing services to youth in your community, there are a number of things to consider when it comes to seeking funding from federal, state, or local government entities. I've tried to cover some of the key information, based on my experience, that you will need moving forward:

- A basic understanding of some of the different levels of government funding (state, federal, and local)
- The good, bad, and ugly lessons learned, both from my experience and the experiences of others
- My "Top 10 Pointers" for writing government grant proposals
- Gauging your readiness level for pursuing government grants
- Specific advice on how to get started

It's impossible to be all-inclusive on this topic; most of what I've included is simply based on lessons learned (often through agonizing trial and error) in our program.

Why Would an Agency Choose To Seek Government Funding?

The better question is: Why not? You have almost nothing to lose by applying for these funds and so much to gain. Government funding can be a vital source of revenue, both for start-up efforts and for established programs that are looking to grow, expand, or try a new idea. Often, government funding provides the most substantive opportunities for multiyear revenue. If your resource development plan involves multiple funding streams, as it should, government funding should never be overlooked. There's plenty of diversity within the world of government funding—it's not unusual for a program to rely solely on government funding, yet consider itself quite diversified.

For example, in the first year of our program operations, I was fortunate enough to secure a three-year federal grant (JUMP), a three-year state grant (through our Department of Protective Services), a two-year state grant (through our Criminal Justice Division), and a one-year local grant through our Juvenile Probation Department. That seemed pretty diverse to me! Government funding sources provided 95 percent of our program's operating budget the first year, laying the foundation for mentoring services in what, at the time, was the largest city in the United States without a one-to-one mentoring program. Six years and hundreds of mentored youth later, those initial funding sources have ended, but varied government funding continues to represent 90 percent of our operating budget.

There are three bottom-line requirements for a program to seek funding from any source:

1. A compelling need in the community
2. A well-structured and comprehensive plan for providing effective services
3. A passion for the mission

If any of these three elements is missing, securing government funding will be impossible. The first two are common elements required to be described in detail in government grant solicitations. The third is necessary to prepare a government grant proposal—especially if resources for researching and writing the grant are scarce. However, as daunting as many RFPs (Requests for Proposals) may seem at first glance, preparing proposals for government funding is quite manageable once the process is demystified.

Let's start by looking at the government funding landscape.

Levels of Government Funding

Whether you're getting support from your city council members' discretionary funds or accessing hundreds of thousands (or millions, if the project is large enough) of federal dollars, some of the same general rules and tips apply to *all* government funding. In the following section, you'll see information about state, federal, and local government opportunities, and I'll share what worked for us and some of the lessons learned in the process, both in writing the grant and carrying out the project.

State and Federal Government Opportunities

State and federal dollars are often very appealing. They can offer reasonable, even generous, project dollars, and for multiple years, making the proposal well worth the effort to apply. The challenge with state and federal dollars, at least in my experience, has been that finding replacement dollars after having a substantial government grant for three years can be a frightening struggle. Many federal funding streams require you to write a bit into the proposal about how you will sustain the program after the nonrenewable funding cycle is over.

As mentioned earlier, direct state and federal dollars have become our program's primary method of sustainability, and there are many government funding opportunities available at this level. Some may result in you partnering with others on the application and the work; others may be quite feasible to apply for on your own. Based on your mission, the target population you work with, and other factors, you should be able to identify a number of federal and state-level entities you will want to research for grant opportunities.

To see what's coming down the pike, or what already has received federal funding, check out the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (http://www.cfda.gov/). This enormous database lists all the programs being funded by the federal government, and some for which funding is anticipated in future budget cycles. Another "catch-all" Web site is grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov), which acts as a portal to many federal grants and their downloadable application packets.

You can also check for funding opportunities within the federal departments themselves. Even if you find an opportunity via grants.gov, sometimes the specific departments' Web sites have additional information. Specific departments and "offices" are usually housed within larger federal agencies (for example, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is part of the larger Justice Department), but most provide opportunities to check their sites individually for grant opportunities. Some logical entities that have historically funded mentoring or similar programs include:

- Department of Justice
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
- Department of Education
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Administration for Children, Youth, and Families
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Department of Labor

You can look for state funding opportunities in the state-level departments that correlate to the federal agencies/organizations listed above. If you have a unique twist on mentoring—let's say your mentoring relationships involve the arts or environmental education—you can expand your search to government entities that focus on those areas.

Once you've found a source, download the guidelines and application forms. You can call to request hard copies if your agency doesn't have access to the Internet, but you're better off if you can find someone who will download all the materials for you. State and federal grant application guidelines are most commonly called RFPs (Request for Proposals) and are generally pretty substantial documents in themselves. The nice thing is you can use the RFP during breaks in writing to tone up with a few bicep curls! The other nice thing, though, is that the RFP gives you extremely detailed guidelines on preparing your proposal—it's really a treasure map to the money.

What about federal and state funding worked for us? We've been really lucky, especially in initially receiving funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP). It was the first federal grant I'd ever written, so I remember it well. I think what made our application work was that I paid a great deal of attention to the wording and requirements outlined in the RFP. My agency was very new and had never worked closely with schools, which was a requirement for that project. The JUMP funding helped us to further refine and develop our program approach in order to serve more youth. From writing the proposal to seeing the project actually unfold, the process was more time-consuming, yet rewarding, than I had expected. It really laid the foundation for everything we did after that.

Lessons learned. Many of the lessons I learned from the JUMP experience are reflected in the Top 10 Tips that follow this section. But in general, my key lessons on the JUMP grant related to people and money. While it's terrific news when a grant is funded, it takes quality personnel to make the project fly. From the beginning, I tried to build budgets that would allow me to pay a professional living wage—something I later learned was not too common among youth-serving nonprofits. Since low pay can lead to staff turnover, and since turnover can be serious trouble for your program, my advice is to build your budgets accordingly. I also learned to try to build more start-up time into proposals in an effort to keep the scope of work realistic. I got to see just how far dollars can be stretched and the importance of building

State and Federal Government Funding

The Good	The Not-So-Good	The Concerns
Reasonable, sometimes generous, multiyear dollars for your program. Detailed guidelines for completing your proposal—a treasure map to the money. Unless your project is enormous, you're unlikely to have terribly burdensome accountability and evaluation requirements or monitoring visits—especially on federal grants. Completely impartial review process means your proposal is truly evaluated on its merits alone. Just the process of writing the proposal is a good exercise in defining and selling your program.	Once the project is finished, you're facing a big gap in your budget. Tailoring your program to their guidelines and requirements may mean you have to incorporate new elements into your project and revise forms, policies, and procedures accordingly. Sometimes require matching funds. It can be challenging coordinating your project with funding sources that are not local.	These proposals usually require tremendous amounts of paperwork and details. Putting together a winning proposal can be very time- consuming. If you're not very well prepared, you could find yourself struggling to maintain accountability and meet the project requirements. If you didn't have a lot of input into the grant proposal, you may find that the terms, the project design, or the government's demands are beyond your capacity.

solid, realistic budgets that keep personnel and budget issues from hurting the project.

Local Government Opportunities

Local government funding comes in many varieties. Sometimes the dollars for local opportunities are actually pass-through dollars from the federal government. Sometimes they're truly generated locally, through taxes, levies, etc. Regardless of the originating cash source, local government opportunities are developed and cultivated through relationships in your community.

You'd be surprised how many organizations in your community have the potential for embracing you as a formal partner on their own government application or who might have government dollars to subcontract to your organization. In many cases, these organizations will be eligible to apply for dollars that you might be ineligible to access.

Based on the focus of your mentoring program, the target population you work with, and other factors, there may be a wide variety of local youth-serving, educational, or nonprofit organizations you could approach for possible contracting on government projects for which they already have grants or new ones they intend to pursue. Here are some avenues you might want to explore:

- Juvenile probation departments
- School districts
- City agencies
- County agencies
- Police department
- Alcohol/drug treatment centers
- Youth recreational programs
- Housing authority
- Public health institutions
- Colleges and universities
- Protective services/foster care
- Workforce development boards

Although there will be opportunities for applying for local government dollars on your own, the chart on page 56 is based on what I think is the more effective strategy for accessing those dollars: partnering and subcontracting with others.

What about local-level government funding worked for us? We were lucky enough to receive a contract through our local Juvenile Probation Department to serve youth in zip codes that were "spotlighted" due to their high crime statistics. Although it was a challenge to do separate tracking and record keeping for the youth in these locations, the contract helped provide critical financial support for our agency and new opportunities for outreach in our first full year of operation.

Lessons learned. When this project was up for renewal, there was a delay of two months into the next project cycle before funding levels were determined. We didn't want to suspend services to the kids we were already helping, so we crossed our fingers and kept the staff assigned to the project on board. Unfortunately, there were severe budget cuts with the lead agency and we were unable to be recontracted, resulting in rapid layoffs. The lead agency was, however, extremely good to us, and reimbursed us for the time we'd kept employees on in anticipation of renewal. Local contracts often fall into the "don't count your chickens 'til they're hatched" category. When you're subcontracting, unless your contribution is pivotal to the project's success, your services may be the first sacrifice that simply, regrettably, must be made when funding evaporates.

Local Government Funding (Through Partnerships)

The Good	The Not-So-Good	The Concerns
If you partner, there will be time and money saved compared to pursuing a grant on your own. Partnering can also result in a strengthened proposal based on the assets of each contributing partner. Partnerships may yield other benefits that will make your life easier (larger infrastructure and community contacts for managing grants and accessing program participants, etc). Ultimately, you can access dollars from funding sources you would be ineligible to pursue on your own.	Awards are small compared to the federal or state grants. Partnering means less control over the final product/project. Your cut of an award may be less than you might get if you pursued funding individually. Sometimes finding local partners or local government funding is excruciatingly political.	Various partners may be unable to fulfill their commitments and those failures may jeopardize the success and potential continuation of the entire project. If partners mess up on their fiscal management of the grant, you could find yourself facing auditing trouble.

The Top 10 Tips for Responding to Government RFPs

People might think that working for an established organization like Big Brothers Big Sisters means that securing government funding is easy. The reality, as is often the case, is quite different. Every Big Brothers Big Sisters agency is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization required to sustain itself. This means each BBBS agency is competing against other BBBS agencies, along with countless other mentoring organizations—most offering high-quality, comparable programming. When competition is so high, it's especially important to pay attention to the critical, small details that will help your application survive the process and receive the highest possible score.

Think of it this way: You work for the federal government and have to do a preliminary eligibility screening of proposals before divvying them up among dozens of grant reviewers. Your desk overflows with more than 1,500 three-inch sets (one original and two copies, please, from each applicant!) of grant proposals from well-meaning, and probably deserving, programs across the country. What to do? Well, you screen out as many as possible on technicalities! Missing a form? Margins too narrow? Forgot your page numbers? The RFPs makes no bones about this: If any of the requirements are not adhered to, your proposal will not be reviewed. It's the circular file for you. The good news about this? You may end up beating out one-third of your competition simply by playing by the rules.

Whether it's national, state, or local, the following are the most critical pointers I can think of for approaching your government proposals and getting those government dollars.

1. Seek and Find

Generally speaking, anyone in a mentoring organization can be the catalyst to seeking out and securing government grants. If you're reading this chapter, you probably have the passion for the mission that is so necessary to securing services for the youth in your community.

In addition to the Web sites and listservs mentioned previously, ask yourself: "Who in our community cares about youth? Who has an interest in the results mentoring is proven to have on youth?" Once you answer those questions, you'll find a wealth of potential funders whose missions can be supported by your work with youth. Also, be sure that you are tapped into other national resources that announce government dollars, such as the National Mentoring Center's MentorExchange listserv, the MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership's many e-newsletters, and state or local education or volunteerism message boards.

2. Carefully Read the Request for Proposals

Reading, word for word, every page, every form, every footnote of the RFP has to be the single most important step you take before even thinking about researching or beginning to write your proposal. Many a time, I've downloaded an RFP that seemed just perfect only to find that on page 53, paragraph 3, there's a statement that either makes the grant unrealistic or my agency ineligible. So read it thoroughly. Highlight key points and develop an outline of required documents (don't trust the one they provide you— they miss things sometimes). Innocent-looking forms can hold cleverly disguised requirements that may mean extra documentation, signatures, or other items that can't be taken care of at the last minute. Plus, honestly examine the scope and purpose of the grant. If it's not for you, don't put in for it. Stay true to your mission, even when the urge to build an octopus-like empire is overwhelming. Do what you do well, and stick with it.

By the way, if the deadline on a federal grant is in three days, don't even think about it—just put it down and walk away. It's too late. I will not be responsible for your hair loss if you decide to go for it less than three weeks before the deadline!

3. Talk About It

Open a dialogue with key people who will either be helping prepare or approve the proposal. If you're working within a larger organization, find out how the proposal fits within their mission and vision and try to find a way for the funding to benefit the larger organization and your program within. Talk to everyone who will have a potential stake in the project. If you have trusted key staff members who will have to implement the project, get them to help develop the scope, objectives, and other key elements. Discuss budget details like compensation levels, supplies needed, gaps in current funding, and how liability issues may affect your risk management costs.

As mentioned many times in this guide, be especially careful that the grant's focus and your own are compatible. Don't try to build an empire just because the money's available. When you hear about organizations having to "give back" dollars to the government, it's usually because whoever wrote the grant didn't have sufficient buy-in or knowledge of potential problems with how the project would actually be carried out. They knew how to write a good grant, but the organization simply wasn't adequately prepared to carry out the proposed work.

4. Get a Sample

This is a simple tip, but many people don't bother to do it. Many funders will mention in the RFP that they have a sample available to download online or that you can request a print copy of a previously successful proposal. Absolutely, positively take the time to do this. It can save you many hours in trying to decipher and second-guess what the RFP is asking you to provide. However, when reviewing the sample I would strongly caution you to avoid thinking that it represents the ideal proposal and that you should follow it as closely as possible. The sample is not about your program. Write to your mission. You also must be aware that in the time between when that older grant application was approved and now, the RFP has probably changed a bit. A sample will not save you the trouble of painstakingly ensuring that your proposal meets the criteria outlined in the current RFP.

5. Divide and Conquer

There are three functional areas to work on in most government proposals—the forms, the budget, and the narrative description of the services you'll be providing. This is detail-oriented work, so get some help. Unless you're truly flying solo, everyone can help with some aspect of the proposal: filling in forms, gathering data and statistics, working on the budget, figuring out how to structure the project. The more buy-in and investment you have from those who help you prepare the grant, the more success you'll have when the project is funded. It also means that everyone on your team will have a better understanding of exactly what it means to write one of these proposals.

6. Forms First!

The forms—I can't emphasize this enough—are not to be left to the last minute. Of course, you would probably never dream of doing that, but I once did. In the first federal proposal I put together, I left the forms for the last two days before the deadline. After all, they were just simple fill-in-the-blank things and checkboxes—how hard could they be? I was so very wrong to make that assumption. Not only did one checkbox lead me to have to research and write three additional pages on how I was planning to approach the protection of the participants, another checkbox meant I had to include an attachment—an approved motion by my board of directors stating that they supported the proposal and would accept responsibility for financial accountability. Oops. Thank heavens for my background in research and a flexible and accessible board of directors or else the many, many hours of labor I'd already poured into the 25-page narrative would have been lost.

7. Create a Realistic Budget

The budget forms can also look deceptively simple—another case of filling in the blanks. But you may find that a detailed budget narrative often must accompany that simple, one-page fill-in-the-blanks budget. This was puzzling to me at first: how do you go about writing a narrative about numbers? Well, this cycles back to Tip 3—get a sample. Or call the point of contact listed on the proposal and get clarification. The level of detail required varies greatly from funder to funder. You may have to actually type out calculations for each line item or may only have to give a broad descriptor. For example, one grant I wrote required extensive detail and justification of the dollars spent on every position proposed for funding (see Sample 1 on page 60), while another allowed very little detail or description (see Sample 2, same page). In addition to the staffing budget, most grants require itemization of benefits, cost of living increases, and facilities. Many require a three-year budget.

8. Identify Elements of the Narrative

You've read the RFP, you have buy-in from stakeholders, and you've completed your forms and started the budget. Now the real writing of the proposal begins. The narrative is the heart and soul of your proposal; it's your sales pitch. In this section, you have to pull out all the stops and knock the socks off neutral grant reviewers, scattered all over the country, who have never heard of you.

Most narratives have numerous formatting and length requirements. One of the most common I've run across is a limitation of 25 pages, double-spaced in 12-point font. That sounds like a lot of space to fill . . . until you really start describing everything they want you to share with them!

My first step before I start writing the narrative is to build an outline based on their description of what is required. That way I have a skeleton and all I have to do is flesh it out. I use the RFP's own words and phrases as much as possible. For example, if the RFP says that the mission in providing funding is to "improve academic opportunities for marginal, underprivileged, or underserved youth," well, I say that our program is going to "improve academic opportunities for marginal, underprivileged, or underserved youth by. . . . " That way the grant reviewer can simply check off that box on their checklist. The less you make the grant reviewers dig through or have to read between the lines of your proposal for the key elements, the more likely you are to receive maximum points. This is not about simply jumping through verbal hoops to get dollars; it just means that you are working with the grant reviewer in a sense, focusing your information in a way that facilitates a positive review process.

There are several common elements you can expect to find in virtually every government grant you prepare. You should be able to recycle at least some of what you write over and over again—even for other purposes, such as your agency's marketing materials. The length of the sections, sometimes even the number of words

Sample 1

Budget Narrative

Executive Director/CEO: This person is responsible for program oversight, program compliance, and administration of grants and fiscal matters. Additionally, the ED supervises the Case Managers and support staff to ensure that mentoring services meet minimum standards set by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA). The ED spends the vast majority of his/her time in direct grant-related activities including leadership and oversight of the at-risk mentoring program, program administration, financial management, sustainability, and accountability. The ED/CEO resolves case management and program problems as they arise. Although a portion of the ED/CEO's time is spent on financial development and fundraising, this is estimated to be less than 5 percent of his/her time and primarily consists of coordinating those initiatives, which are the primary responsibility of the Board of Directors.

There is a second program operating at Big Brothers Big Sisters of El Paso, as reflected on Form 2037. This program, entitled JUMP, has a full-time Project Director who works primarily off-site in schools around the El Paso area. Although this program is housed in our offices, the percentage of time spent on this program has historically been 7–8 percent for the ED/CEO. The individual who directs this grant works largely autonomously and seeks out his own mentors and youth participants; therefore, telephone and paperwork traffic in our office related to that grant is minimal. The ED/CEO must complete quarterly one-page reports on this grant and must maintain fiscal accountability. The JUMP program currently has 18 matches beginning in September and hopes to eventually have the projected 75 referenced on Form 2037; however, the ED/CEO's level of involvement in that grant will remain stable, as the growth in volunteers and youth enrolled in that program does not impact the reporting and accountability processes for that grant. These variables have all been taken into consideration in calculating the percentage of reimbursable salary allocated to TDPRS, which still provides our agency's single largest at-risk mentoring service to the community, from which hundreds of youth have benefited since April 1, 2000.

The salary for this position is calculated based on an average monthly salary of $3828.37 x 12 months = $45,940.44, 87.07 percent of which is TDPRS reimbursable. Calculation is 45940.44 x 87.07% = $40,000.34, 100% of which is TDPRS reimbursable (5940.10 other).

Sample 2

Budget Narrative

Personnel: The total expenditure for personnel salaries is $120,000. The costs include salaries for the Project Director, Match Support Specialists, and the CEO. Managing a highly structured mentoring program and providing direct, comprehensive services to those children with the greatest need in our community takes trained, experienced professionals. All employees on this grant are high-caliber degreed and/or licensed professionals who have the organizational and interpersonal skills to construct and carry out this project.

The CEO will be the Project Director and will allocate 50 percent of her time to general administrative oversight and management of this project and the financial requirements.

The Development Director will allocate 100 percent of her time to fulfilling the requirements of this project, supervising staff, and coordinating with the school districts. She has managed similar projects with the school districts in the past.

Two Match Support Specialists will dedicate 80 percent and 100 percent of their time to this project. Both have years of experience working with families, youth, school personnel, and volunteer mentors in our organization.

you can use is often dictated by the RFP. Stick within their guidelines or you'll get rejected. The five most common elements to the narrative are the:

- Statement of need
- Goals and objectives
- Program design
- Key staff qualifications/agency's capability
- Plan for evaluation

Each section generally has a different weight assigned out of 100 points. As a general rule of thumb, you'll probably want to give more space in the 25 pages to those categories with more weight. Here are my suggestions regarding each of these sections (the starter questions on page 63 can also help guide your content).

Statement of Need. Base this on the focus of the funder (academics, violence prevention, etc.), and conduct research to find the most compelling statistics related to that focus. Get information from your school districts, juvenile probation department, police, and even the youth you already serve to build a compelling picture of need for services in your community.

Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes. Often, the funder has established these for you in the RFP. You have to decide how your program can address the funder's needs and quantify the results you anticipate. Discuss these with your staff and make sure you come up with measurable goals that they feel they can achieve if the project is funded. Don't overextend or overinflate your projections. Shooting for the moon means you'll have to reach the moon on a shoestring budget.

Goals in an RFP represent the big picture; the objectives are the steps you'll take toward achieving them; and the outcomes are the impact you anticipate having on the target population by virtue of achieving the goal:

Goal:

Mentored youth will demonstrate improved academic performance.

Objectives:

a. Mentors will be briefed regarding the specific core academic subjects in which his/her mentee needs support and assistance.

b. Incentives and rewards will be provided for mentees whose academic performance progresses.

c. Match Support Specialists will ensure youth struggling with core academic subjects are aware of and encouraged to attend tutoring opportunities.

Outcome:

Seventy percent of youth mentored for at least six months will demonstrate an improvement in academic performance in core subjects.

Program Design. Usually the section with the most points and requiring the most space in your narrative, the program design is your opportunity to demonstrate that you have a tight system for providing services. The RFP will generally lead you to tell the funder what they want to hear. Commonly, it will ask you to describe your system for recruiting and screening volunteers, making matches, supporting mentoring relationships, etc.

Key Staff Qualifications/Agency's Capability for Carrying out the Project. This section is your chance to brag about the terrific people who will be working on this project—or the type of staff you will hire. Write a succinct agency description that focuses on your proven record in complying with grants and handling projects similar in scope. If you're still new enough not to have those bragging rights, focus on the mission and vision the agency has for itself and the reasons it came into being.

Plan for Evaluation. For some people, anything to do with program evaluation is pretty scary—nightmares from your college research courses may surface as you write this section of the grant. If you don't have a background in program evaluation, it's a good idea to get some help on this section, just to make sure you don't bite off more than you can chew. In fact, you may want to find a contractor you can write into the proposal as an evaluator if the grant is funded. They may be willing to contribute to this section if they get a piece of the pie.

Whether you're planning to hire someone to do evaluation or not, the plain and simple fact is that your evaluation methods are directly linked to your goals, objectives, and outcomes. In fact, I try to only project outcomes I feel pretty confident I can evaluate without having to contract out. Based on the example I gave you for Goals/ Objectives/ Outcomes above, it makes perfect sense that you would evaluate your outcomes by collecting report cards on program participants. Now, I don't want to make that sound easy—the logistics can be tricky based on the level of cooperation from parents or the school. Then you have to calculate and enter those grades, determine GPAs, and develop a pre-post comparison of the results. Your narrative for this task would need to be quite specific. Here's an example from one of the evaluation plans I had to write for a federal proposal:

> *Goal accomplishment will be measured via methodology employed and developed by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America and/ or those required by the Department. The methods will include the employment of 1) the Program Outcome Evaluation (POE) tool, a Likert-scale questionnaire administered to mentors, teachers, parents, and match support specialists to assess the individual progress of each child on 21 asset indicators at the 6 and 12 month point of their match, 2) compilation of program assessment surveys administered in conjunction with the POE form, 3) compilation of baseline data through records reviews of enrolled youth to include historical data of tardiness/absenteeism, academic performance, disciplinary referrals, etc., and 4) periodic collection of the same data at the grading intervals of each school district. Project professionals will meet quarterly to review quantitative and qualitative data collected. Plans for strengthening project implementation will be devised as necessary.*

9. Know what you do well and prove it

A big piece of successfully applying for government funding is knowing your program. Young programs sometimes struggle with really knowing and "owning" what they do. It's impossible to argue effectively for dollars unless you've truly spent time thoroughly examining your capacity and ability to carry out services. Once you know what you do well, prove it. In our first year of operations, I knew I wanted to be able to say what our agency did well—not just what other similar agencies or other mentoring programs in general did well. I wanted to be able to personalize our grant applications with local findings. To help your program get started building your case, take the time to come up with even a simple survey instrument or questionnaire that your staff can easily administer to program participants. Keep track of how many people attend activities and events. Write down quotes from participants that are particularly meaningful. Take time to write anecdotes about your most touching stories. Keep a file with the results of all these things so you can pull out personal quotes.

Starter Questions for the Key Elements to Most Proposal Narratives

Heading	Ask Yourself
Statement of Need	What meaningful statistics can I find to persuade them that we need this project in our community? What are the needs of the community as a whole and the youth we plan to serve?
Goals and Objectives	What can we realistically say we'll accomplish based on past experience or research on programs similar to ours? What goals are being dictated by the funder? Is it feasible to believe we can make those happen? What steps will we take to do so?
Program Design	What do we do and how do we go about it? Who are we partnering with who will help the program work? How broad will the RFP allow us to be in our approach? Are we putting in enough elements to satisfy their goals in providing funding, yet not box us into a corner programmatically?
Key Staff Qualifications	Will someone from our existing staff be heading this project? If not, or if their qualifications aren't very strong, what will we require the key qualifications of the Program Director to be? What about the key qualifications of any partners we plan to work with on this project?
Plan for Evaluation	Do we have the in-house skills to conduct the evaluation of the outcomes for our participants? Who could we contract with to manage the evaluation process? What evaluation requirements does the funder have for the project? How much will we have to modify our current way of doing business to collect the data they want to see? Who will we have to partner with to make sure we can access the data, if we're not collecting it ourselves?

Not every grant proposal will lend itself to a personal touch, but you can often find ways to integrate customer satisfaction survey results and meaningful scenarios to help your proposal "come alive."

10. Proofread, Proofread, Proofread!

I list this three times because that is the minimum number of readers who should go through your full proposal and checklist before you stick it in the mail. Tell them you want them to verify the following:

- Grammar and spelling are correct
- Page numbering is sequential
- Forms are completed
- Table of contents matches the correct page numbers
- All attachments are accounted for
- Narrative flow makes sense and reads well
- Budget is calculated correctly and the budget narrative matches the forms
- Budget is feasible
- Goals, objectives, and outcomes make sense and are livable

Steps to Getting Started . . .

1. Open a dialogue with key members of your organization about exploring government funding.
2. Offer to help search for appropriate opportunities among local, state, and federal agencies that might support mentoring.
3. Examine opportunities with your eyes wide open. By all means, look the gift horse in the mouth if the reins are too tight.
4. Have a good idea of how far a budget can stretch.
5. Invest the time it takes to produce a quality proposal the program can find success with.

Do NOT do this yourself! It makes no sense to proofread the proposal you've sweated and worked on until you're cross-eyed. If you've looked at something long enough, it becomes almost impossible to see mistakes.

At some level, writing a government grant is taking a leap of faith—faith in yourself, in your program, in your staff. It's a major investment of time, energy, and resources, and that's often hard to come by. And because writing a government proposal sometimes feels like writing a graduate thesis, I often feel the need for a bit of pomp and circumstance when I complete one. So, before that hefty application package goes out the door, everyone in the building is required to lay hands on it and give it their good wishes and blessings, calling upon providence, karma, mother nature, and gods from every faith to give it the final push to success! It's been working for us in El Paso so far. . . .

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

If you've found a government funding source you think is a good sustainability opportunity for your agency, here are some questions to ask yourself:

1. Do you have the buy-in from the Executive Director and other team members for pursuing the grant?
2. Is the deadline reasonable for completion of the application? Does your agency have the expertise to write the grant, or must it be outsourced?
3. Is the project's scope realistic in your community and with the targeted population you intend to serve?
4. Does the budget offer reasonable dollars for the services you intend to provide?
5. Do you have the capacity and infrastructure to support the project in ways the budget will not stretch to cover?
6. If you'll be facing a gap in time between major funding sources, do you have resources to sustain yourself in the interim?

When Beth is not hiking or hanging out with her kids and mentee, she is the CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of El Paso. She has written the state and federal grants that provide over 90 percent of the funding for her agency since 2000. Beth has a master's degree in social work and has been a professional writer and trainer for 20 years.

Individual Giving: Building a Powerful Constituency

By Craig Bowman

Part I. Changing the Game

IF MENTORING PROGRAMS ARE GOING TO GET serious about sustainability they need to get serious about asking people for the resources they need to do it. In this section, I hope to change the way you think about fundraising. I am going to convince you that asking people for money is easier than you think and the rewards are always greater than you expect. And I'm going to show you how to do it.

Let me begin by telling you up front that I love asking people for money. You think I'm crazy, but I really do enjoy it. It creates an opportunity to strengthen relationships and build a broader base of support for the critical work being done in our programs.

Throughout this section, I will be talking about raising money because that is what most of our programs need. Sometimes, however, we could benefit from other kinds of resources. So when I write about money here, go ahead and think time, talent, and money (or rather, treasure).

I want to help you find new and creative ways to identify and recruit new mentors and other volunteers; tap into their wisdom, experience, and skill sets for the benefit of your program; and most important, raise all the money your program needs to both survive and thrive!

Heart + Head = Passion-Raising

I believe that raising money from individuals involves two key elements. The more important of these elements involves the heart (yours and theirs) and speaks to the passion, caring, and commitment that people bring when stepping up to get involved with issues and concerns they care about. The second element involves your head and requires a commitment to creating the right system for managing your resource development program.

Let's start by talking about passion—the true heart side of this equation. Most of us get into mentoring work because it connects us directly to things we care about. In my workshops, I ask folks to include in their introductions one thing about which they are passionate—personal or professional. What gets them up in the morning and is in their thoughts as they go to sleep at night.

Take a moment and ask yourself, right now. What drives you to push yourself, to exceed expectations, to dream big dreams?

This may be one of the most important lessons I have to offer so I hope you reflected on the question. If you did, I'll bet you're sitting there right now with a big smile on your face. If you were feeling tired, I'll bet you have more energy all of a sudden. You're probably feeling warm, maybe a little anxious, and perhaps even restless. You want to get up and get moving! That's what passion does. It wakes us up. It drives us. It changes us and it changes the world.

I think the measure of a truly spectacular person—a leader in their field, a devoted parent, a gifted child, a teacher, an agent of change—is always reflected best in their connection to their own passion. Our work in the social-profit sector[3] is about making the world a better place for the people who are hurting and suffering now and those who will inhabit the world when we are gone.

Passion fuels our work. It sparks our dreams. It gives us hope. It fires our imaginations. Passion gives us the courage to do, to give, and to share. Forget the language of raising funds, talk about raising passion! The money will come. The volunteers and their time and their wisdom will come. The resources you need will come when you are in the business of raising the passions of the people connected to your work.

As for the second element—the head part of the equation—you need to be able to identify these connected people (your prospects) and track their passion and their giving. You'll want to be able to express gratitude to these individuals regularly so you'll need to manage their contact information. And you'll want to learn and remember why and how they got connected so you can build and strengthen these relationships over time. You'll need some sort of system. It does not have to be complicated or expensive. You can start simple and small and the system can change, and adapt, and expand as the passion for your work grows. (I'll offer you some tools for this part of the work later in this section.)

This "system" piece often causes organizations so much anxiety that any effort to begin building a constituency of individuals gets sidetracked by fears of not being ready. Don't be afraid to talk to the people who care about your work; and don't be afraid to ask them for help. They don't need your system (or you) to be perfect. They do need to know that their resources will be put to good use and that the organization is well-managed. More important, though, they need to see your passion and they need you to help unlock their own.

Part II. Shifting the Paradigm

When I'm teaching people how to raise money from individuals, I spend a lot of time proving to participants that it is worth the effort to shift their thinking when it comes to raising money. I'm going to do the same here and I ask that you really spend some time thinking about what you are going to read. Suspend your disbelief for a few minutes and imagine that what I'm going to share with you might actually be true!

Now if you were with me in a workshop, I would begin by asking you if you know where the money that funds your program actually comes from—how it breaks down by source or stream. Do you know?

This is information that you need to have regardless of your role in the organization. If you don't have the answers, the next time you're in the office, ask someone who does.

Why is this breakdown important? Where the money comes from usually affects how the program has developed, how it operates, and how decisions get made, all of which may affect sustainability.

Knowing where your money comes from now is a key to helping you make better-informed decisions about fundraising strategy in the future. Specifically, the percentages I will discuss are important indicators of your potential for creating a diversified—and therefore more sustainable—resource base.

[3] I will use social-profit, rather than non-profit, throughout this piece to emphasize the importance of our sector. Our work actively creates benefits for society, it generates a new kind of profit, and it adds value. This language better captures the work that we do and it often resonates well with individual donors.

For most organizations, the percentages from private sector sources are heavily skewed in favor of corporate and foundation dollars. Assuming this is true of your organization as well, let's get started by taking a few minutes to help you understand how you measure up against actual giving statistics in the United States.

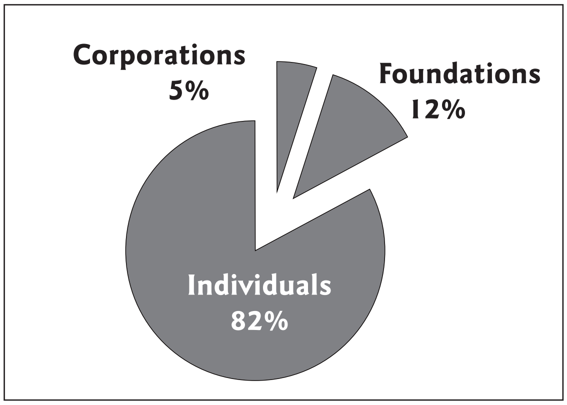
Paradigm Shift One: Show Me the Money

If you're like most people, you'll be surprised at just how much private money is donated to charitable organizations (including religious institutions) on an annual basis. This is money that comes from individuals, foundations, and corporations. It does not include government money.

There are many great sources for these data, but I prefer the analyses offered by two organizations, Independent Sector (http://www.independentsector.org) and the Giving USA Foundation of the American Association of Fundraising Counsel (http://www.aafrc.org).

According to the Giving USA Foundation, Americans gave just over $260 billion dollars to charitable causes in 2005. This is a lot of money!

Who Gives?



Source: Giving USA, a publication of Giving USA Foundation™, researched and written by the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. http://www.aafrc.org/gusa/

Now that we know just how much money is out there for us to tap into, we need to know who's giving it:

The primary sources of charitable contributions can be broken down into three primary streams: corporate, foundation, and individual (including planned after-death) giving.

In 2006, corporate giving only amounted to about 5.3 percent of the $260 billion total. Foundation giving was about 12 percent in the same year. Individuals accounted for the rest of the contributions, a whopping $200 billion, or 82 percent of total giving!

A few other interesting statistics about individuals and giving (from Independent Sector's Web site):

- Nearly nine out of 10 U.S. families make charitable contributions (89%).
- Americans report that being asked to give makes a substantial difference in the size of their gifts. Yet, 44 percent of households were not asked to contribute, indicating untapped potential to increase giving.
- In the United States, more people donate money than vote in national elections.
- Two-thirds of U.S. donors (86 million) file the IRS short form and do not receive a deduction for their charitable giving.
- When donors do itemize (at every income level) they give at least 40 percent more.

So what's my point? Why do I care so much about individual giving? Perhaps the well-known 1950s bank robber, Willie Sutton, answered it best when asked why he robbed banks: "Because that's where the money is!"

Now let's look at who gets what all these groups give. According to the USA Giving Foundation, religious institutions receive over 35 percent of all charitable contributions, more than educational, environmental, and health-related organizations *combined*.

It is probably no surprise to you that religious institutions receive the biggest chunk of contributions in the United States. Why? *They ask at every opportunity and they ask with a sense of purpose, with passion, and with an expectation that congregants will find meaning in their gifts.*

Faith communities engender a sense of ownership among their congregants and this is a powerful tool for mobilizing resources. It is the members of a church that build the cathedrals and turn on the lights and decorate the altar and pay the staff and feed the hungry and clothe the poor.

Religious institutions know that you give people an amazing gift when you ask them for their time, talent, or treasure. You honor them with your request. You strengthen your relationship. You support their other interests and commitments (including their faith). And you embrace and share a belief in their power to make a difference in the world. This is why individual giving is more about raising passions than raising funds. Which leads us to . . .

Paradigm Shift Two: Excite Their Passions and Raise More Money

Our spiritual leaders understand the necessary connection between resources and making the world a better place. They have gotten over the fear of asking by trusting their faith and believing that raising money from people is not "a necessary evil," as many of us often think. They know that raising money is part and parcel of the mission of their church. It is why they have missionaries. Giving control of one's self over to a higher power and giving of one's resources to the church has become a sacred part of the tradition and an integral component of the faith for millions around the world (regardless of the denomination).

Our work serving youth is sacred, too. We know that people want to be a part of something wonderful that is larger than themselves. They want to direct the abundant resources they have in their life toward the things they care about most. They want their own lives to have purpose and meaning and they want to uncover and discover their own passions, hopes, and dreams. Some may already do this from within their faith tradition and that is wonderful. They probably love the way that makes them feel and they want to experience that feeling more often. They will step up when asked.

Others whose spiritual practices are more private may be longing for a public way to express their own desire to be a part of the solution, part of a community's response to the problems facing it. Your role with these folks is to take a powerful stand with your own life. Remember that who you are and how you live your life speaks more loudly than the words you say. Make your life an intense example. Let yourself feel the love you have in your heart for every young person whose life is changed by your program; and demand of yourself every action that you can take to help your prospective donors experience that same love.

I promise you that when you bring your authentic self into those asking moments, you will always elevate the quality of the relationship. You may still hear your prospect say no, but they will have changed. You will have brought them closer to their own passion and that is powerful. That is your mission in action. That is you building a community of committed, passionate, concerned individuals who want the world to be better. If they don't ultimately invest in your work, they will find the right and perfect place to share their abundance. Your role in this powerful result will be rewarded.

One of the best ways to excite someone's passion is through the art and practice of storytelling. In the "Getting Started" section below, I'll help you think about the stories that capture the essence of your organization's powerful work. You'll learn to tap into your own authenticity and use your passion to move prospective individual donors into powerful relationships with your program.

Paradigm Shift Three: Embrace Sufficiency, Forget Scarcity and Suffering

Using leading government sources (such as the World Bank and the U.S. Federal Reserve) for the most recent data available, we can estimate that in 2003 there was a worldwide money supply of approximately $47 trillion with $11 trillion of that total actually in the United States and much more controlled by U.S. citizens in other parts of the world. It is worth noting that while U.S. citizens control between 25 and 30 percent of the world's gross domestic product, we represent less than 5 percent of the world's population.

Given these numbers, you would think that we could easily see the potential in asking our friends and family, colleagues and fellow congregants, neighbors and new acquaintances to invest in our work. Yet for some reason, *we let our fear that they may say "no" frighten us into never asking.* Instead we suffer in the misery brought on by not having enough to do our critical, life-changing, mission-driven work.

One of my closest teachers and mentors, Lynne Twist, is an incredible fundraiser. Lynne has a theory about "the myth of scarcity" (excerpted here from a 1996 interview by Michael Toms for the New Dimensions World Broadcasting Network):

> *We don't just think things are scarce, we think from a condition of scarcity. It's not just that we believe there might not be enough; we actually have a mindset or a frame of reference that no matter what's happening there is not enough.*
>
> *Picture yourself going through a day. When you wake up in the morning, no matter what time you went to bed, and no matter what time you're waking up, the first thought almost everybody has is, "I didn't get enough sleep." And then the next thought you have is: "I don't have enough time to get myself to work on time," or "There's not enough milk in the refrigerator," or "We don't have enough money to do the things we want," or, if you're running a volunteer organization, "There aren't enough volunteers," or if you're running a for-profit organization, "We don't have enough profits." It's the frame of reference for life, particularly in the industrialized societies, but it's pretty much that way all over the planet.*
>
> *No matter who you talk to, you can get agreement on this, and you can get a whole conversation going about "There isn't enough of this," and "I don't have enough of that." It's a frame of reference for the way we live and think. And money is the great lightning rod for this scarcity notion.*

I believe that Lynne is right about the pervasiveness of the scarcity mentality as a way of life. When I'm talking to people about how to excite passion and attract new investors, I'm always met with concerns that are rooted in people's fears about not having . . .

- Enough staff or time to talk to individuals
- Any rich people we can ask for money

- More people in the community who will help us
- The ability to compete with other organizations
- The money to print nice materials or go to training, or hire a consultant, or host an event, or . . .

You get the idea.

These are all probably true statements, but they are also all excuses based on the mentality of scarcity. Don't get me wrong. I have been in that moment where it feels like nothing will ever change, that we just need a break, a bit of good luck, a little more money. In the end, though, I got through that moment when I focused on doing better with what we already had. Refocusing people's time. Changing priorities. Giving people room to be creative.

Richard Bach, one of my favorite authors, writes in his book, *Illusions*, "Argue for your limitations, and sure enough, they're yours." I have come to believe that we need to re-orient ourselves from within a condition of sufficiency—a "place" or condition where we have enough and where enough is just the right amount to meet our needs. Believe that you have everything you need to start building a constituency of individual donors. Your passion will get you started and people will notice the change. We want to be around people who are hopeful, who have faith in change.

So your job is to change the conversations you have with yourself and that you permit others to carry on around you. Help them to see the unbelievable bounty you already have. Later I'll give you activities to do with your team that will show them all the people who are already connected to your organization and who already care about what you're doing.

Paradigm Shift Four: It's Not About Knowing Rich People

If I could choose to change just one misperception about raising money from individuals it would be the notion that not knowing people with wealth is a roadblock to being successful in your efforts. Wealthy people have money to give and you should ask them. That's easy. We agree.

What frustrates me about this conversation, however, is that most of that $260 billion in annual charitable giving comes from middle-income, working-class, and poor people. This also happens to be most of the nation's population! Your universe of prospective donors is huge. There are 300 million people living in the United States and most of them have incomes like yours and mine.

Another person who has significantly affected my thinking about individual giving is Kim Klein, publisher of the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal* (http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org) and author of several books, including *Fundraising for Social Change.*

In 1997, Kim published an article titled "You Already Know All the People You Need to Know to Raise All the Money You Want to Raise." Brilliant! This says it all. Stop your constant (scarcity mentality) fretting about not knowing rich people.

You should focus on the people you already know: the people who care about you and your organization and the things you care about. It is likely that your passions will connect. This will make your asking easier and more successful.

Paradigm Shift Five: You're Not Asking for a Gift, You're Giving One

By asking the people you know to invest in your work, you are actually helping them to give attention to problems they can't take care of on their own.[4] You are offering them a chance to put the resources they have in abundance in their life (time, treasure, or talent) to work on the issues they care about most. You are giving them a chance to work through you and your organization—to take a stand with their life by directing their resources to your organization's critical work.

My friend Lynne believes that there are four key elements involved in successful fundraising conversations. Powerful contributions are made when:

1. People are in touch with themselves, with their own vision and magnificence, and with the difference they can make
2. People see that the work you are asking them to support really makes a difference
3. People see that their money makes a difference
4. Someone asks, giving them the opportunity to invest

Your job is to ask. Their job is to decide.

I'll focus more on this concept in the next section, but in the meantime, you can practice by asking yourself: What do you expect to hear when being asked to contribute to an organization? How does it make you feel? What are the factors that you consider? The answer to these questions will help you quantify the "gift" your program can offer its donors.

Paradigm Shift Six: The Worst They Can Do Is Say No!

I think the thought of actually asking people for the things organizations need has probably created more anxiety than any other aspect of fundraising. Somehow we have gotten it into our heads that asking for what we need is rude or impolite or not dignified. I don't know where this started, but it has to stop.

Your organization is performing life-changing work. You are solving problems that are worthy of support. You deserve to have the resources to do more of this work and to do it better. Remember what I told you above? You are doing sacred work. It is OK to act like it.

If you agree with my premise, that the worst they can do is say no, then you are ready to embrace some new ways of thinking about asking people for their time, talent, and especially their treasure. I want you to accept the following:

1. It is your job to boldly ask. It is the prospective donor's job to decide yes or no. Ask and then be quiet. Listen. Answer their questions. Thank them genuinely, regardless of their answer.
2. You will not define your success by the number of people who say yes and give, but rather by the number of people who say no!
3. You will not avoid asking your friends and family.
4. You will not be afraid to ask people for what your organization needs.

[4] By now, you've noticed that I use the word investment, rather than gift, most of the time. This is intentional and you should do the same when talking with your prospective donors. You are not interested in charity. You don't want guilt money. You don't want to take money from people with whom you wouldn't want to go for a walk in the park!

You want people to invest and to become involved. You want donors who share your values, your excitement, and your passion. They are directing their abundance to you and placing their dreams for a better future in your hands. You are becoming partners. They are investing in your work. They are investing in you.

Case Study:

Kids Are Natural Passion-Raisers

When my godson Kitu was about nine, I was at dinner with him and his folks just before his birthday. He wanted a new bike. A Schwinn 10-speed if my memory serves.

Growing up, Kitu has always been really shy, quiet, and easygoing with a gentle, sensitive, and caring spirit. I've never seen him throw a tantrum or pout. He doesn't yell and he is very protective of his younger brothers and sisters. I think of him as a little Gandhi bringing peace and calm into any room he enters.

So you can imagine my surprise at dinner that night when I asked him what he wanted for his birthday and his eyes lit up and he started talking about that bike. This is a kid who until that moment never asked for anything. It was generally like pulling teeth to get him to talk about presents he might want for Christmas or his birthday.

But there was something about that birthday and that bike that got him talking. In fact, it was like all of a sudden I wasn't even in the room. It was clear that I created the opening, but he saw this as his chance to persuade mom and dad that they should get him that bike.

I'm not sure I've ever seen an "ask" as effective as his was that night. He was fearless and in two minutes he had covered all the bases:

- I've been really good.
- I can ride my bike to the store for you.
- You won't have to drive me everywhere anymore.
- I really need it.
- My friends all have bikes and they've been letting me practice.
- I'll wear a helmet.
- There's one almost like the one I like best that is on sale. That would be OK.
- The other kids can ride it when they get older (he has three siblings).
- Riding a bike is good exercise. It will give me bigger bones.

I think it was that last comment about building bigger bones that alerted me to the fact that I was in the presence of genius! Here was this nine-year-old kid who had created an amazing "ask" by combining basic facts, simple logic, and genuine emotion. This was a brilliant pitch. His passion was overwhelming.

And yes, his parents got him that bike for his birthday.

5. Whenever you are asking someone to invest, you will speak only 25 percent of the time and really listen during the rest of the conversation.

6. Your belief in your organization will always exceed your fear of asking.

7. You will always remember that if you don't have the time to express your gratitude, you don't have the time to have real people as donors.

These rules are simple and straightforward. If you follow them, you will be successful in raising people's passions and the resources you need. It may not happen overnight, but you'll be surprised at how quickly you can transform your giving program using these strategies.

Paradigm Shift Seven: The Power of Gratitude

If there is anything I have learned from raising money these many years, it is about the awesome power present in simple acts of gratitude: Taking someone's hand and looking them in the eye while you thank them for their investment. A handwritten thank-you note. A phone call for no other reason than letting someone know how important they are to your organization.

You would be surprised at how these simple acts can transform your organization's constituency of donors. I promise that more than anything else you can do, learning how to thank people will make the most profound difference in your efforts.

Melody Beattle said that "gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."

The case study that follows (pages 74–76) illustrates one idea that's worked for me:

Part III: Self-Assessment and Getting Started

Confucius said that "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." The same is true when it comes to building a powerful constituency of committed and passionate individual donors. If you're still reading, my guess is that you probably have what it takes to be successful in raising money from real live people just like you and me.

You're also beginning to understand that my intention is not to give you a step-by-step plan, but rather to change your way of thinking. The system is important, but it is secondary to embracing the philosophy of passion-raising I've put forward. I want you to shake it up and let go of old ways of thinking about money and fundraising.

Do Your Homework

1. As you get started, begin by pulling together a small group of stakeholders who share your interest and passion for developing a constituency of individual donors. This small group will act as a kind of development team, so be sure it includes staff and board members. This group can also include donors, volunteers, and young people. It really is up to you, though I would start with a smaller team that can always expand.

2. Review your organization's annual budget.

3. Familiarize yourself with the organization's revenues and expenses.

4. Know how much you get from individual donors vs. corporations and foundations.

Case Study:
NYAC Thank-a-Thon

The end-of-the-year holidays are a great time to ask people to invest resources in your organization. Most people are starting to wind down a bit at work and generally seem a little more receptive to thinking about others. Some will be experiencing the "joys of the season" and others will just be grateful the year is over!

If you've invested the time in cultivating your individual donors and prospects, the end-of-the-year holidays (it is also the end of the tax year) can be an appropriate time to ask people to invest in your organization's important work. You'll want to plan ahead as you aren't the only one who hopes to benefit from the holiday spirit.

There are countless ways to do an end-of-the-year appeal and it really just depends on the resources available to you. As has become a consistent theme for me here, I would recommend a simple approach. We used this two-step method (based on an idea from Terry Axlerod and Raising More Money™—more about Terry and her work follows later in this section) in my own organization, the National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC) this past year and it was a phenomenal success.

This is the e-mail I sent to our staff explaining step one of the concept and defining the parameters of the activity:

```
To:    All Staff and Board
From:  Development Team
Re:    Holiday Thank-a-Thon

I know Thanksgiving is here and we're all very busy, but
let's remember what this season is all about! We've had
a tough year like so many, but we're still here and our
work is better than it has ever been! Fortunately, we
have had a lot of people in our corner helping us.

Most of us remember when someone tells us "Thanks" and
really means it, and as the holiday season begins, what
could be better than expressing our gratitude to the
people who make our work possible. NYAC has had hundreds
of donors this past year, and we are going to call them
all.

YES! All of them, just to say THANKS!

Holiday cards are great (and our biggest supporters will
be getting those and handwritten notes, too), but a
personal phone call makes an impression, it leaves a warm
feeling behind.
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Continued . . .

So our development team is pulling together the list and we have scheduled next _______________ for NYAC's First Annual Thank-a-Thon!! We'll start at 11am, break for a potluck lunch at 12:30pm, and then finish the calls between 2 and 5pm! Board members will be making calls from their homes in the evening that same week.

We want everyone to be excited and well organized. It is important that we all tap into our own holiday spirit and bring our most positive energy that day! Everyone will be participating. We'll all be making calls from our desks and leaving messages will be fine.
We don't expect to reach everyone in person.

What are you telling the donor with this call?

- We noticed you invested in NYAC.
- It means a great deal to us.
- We appreciate you very much.

The actual script looks like this:

> "Hi, may I please speak to __________________? My name is ___________. I'm a member of the staff/board of NYAC—the National Youth Advocacy Coalition. I'm just calling to say thank you for your wonderful support this year and in the past. It has been a really tough 2004, especially lately, but your involvement has helped us to stay in the fight!
>
> This year we've grown. We've been able to offer terrific new resources and technical assistance to youth organizations all around the country; and we've made a real difference in the lives of thousands of LGBTQ young people. Your support helped to make that possible. Don't hesitate to be in touch with us if you have any questions or ideas. You can find us on the Web at ___________________________ or please give our development director a call at _______________. Thank You and Happy Holidays!"

You'll need to stick to the secular "Happy Holidays" as we don't know who believes what, but you can feel free to personalize the thank-you as much as you would like.

Continued . . .

If you actually reach a real person, they may chat a bit. You should be prepared with a few general facts, but don't think you need to take a crash course before you're qualified to get on the phone. You can always refer specific questions to someone else for a call back. If some one has a complaint or wants to make a gift right now, __________________ will handle those calls right away—just buzz them with the quick details and they will pick up the call.

That's it. Simple, right? I promise that this will be a day that all of us will remember. Gratitude is a blessing that is shared by everyone who experiences it. And remember:

"To educate yourself for the feeling of gratitude means to take nothing for granted, but to always seek out and value the kind that will stand behind the action. Nothing that is done for you is a matter of course. Everything originates in a will for the good, which is directed at you. Train yourself never to put off the word or action for the expression of gratitude." ~ Albert Schweitzer ~

"Gratitude is something of which none of us can give too much. For on the smiles, the thanks we give, our little gestures of appreciation, our neighbors build their philosophy of life." ~ A. J. Cronin ~

When the day came, we met as a team for a few minutes in the morning to pass out lists, answer any questions, and really get people excited about what they were about to do. By lunchtime, I could tell it was a huge success. Staff members were telling stories about their conversations and talking about how great it was just to tell people thanks. I think I underestimated the positive impact this event would have on staff and board members' morale. We also heard from all kinds of people about how impressed they were with this simple event. We received lots of feedback like this e-mail message:

> *"Dear Craig, A quick note to say thank you for the phone message you left last week and for the holiday card. I've been around the not-for-profit world a long time and your call and card are acts of generosity not often seen."*

This particular donor asked to meet in person and a month later made a $1,500 investment in our organization—six times what he had ever done before! Now, I can't promise results like this one every time, but I can tell you that more people had positive things to say about this year-end appeal than ever before.

Step two of this strategy consisted of our regular year-end newsletter mailing one week later and the end-of-the-year direct mail appeal just days after that. The entire approach worked beautifully.

5. If you don't have a copy of your organization's development plan, ask for one.

6. If your organization doesn't have a development plan, you will need to create it. This is essentially your road map for generating the revenue your program needs to thrive. If this is your first development plan, I would recommend you spend some time on this step before moving on. The first sections of this guidebook offer an excellent starting point.

   Whatever type of resource development plan you create, it should help you keep your passion raising on track by forcing you to:

   - Set realistic revenue goals in your budget
   - Create clear expectations for staff and board about their roles and responsibilities
   - Monitor, assess, and revise your revenue projections throughout the year
   - Help you devise appropriate campaigns for reaching your goals

   A good development plan covers all your revenue streams, but puts extra emphasis on your efforts at building a strong and committed constituency of individuals who are investing in your mission-critical work.

7. Review (or develop) a one-page external case statement to assist you in approaching donors. The case statement is essentially your organization's mission, vision, and values in writing. It should be passionate and powerful. You want this statement, which is often the only thing prospective donors will read, to spark their imaginations by showing them exactly how their involvement and their investment will make a real difference. When she trains fundraisers, my friend Lynne suggests we motivate donors by asking them to stand with us in "the gap"—the space between the amazing work your program is accomplishing right now and what would be possible with a specific, tangible investment by the donor. Your case statement will help define the gap, though it is never a substitute for real, live conversations with your prospective donors.

8. Once this work is complete, the next step is to assess your prospects—both organizationally and individually. I suggest the two activities that follow to help you begin to see the universe of prospects you already know and are in relationship with right now.

Activity 1

Map Your Prospects

One of the best ways to begin preparing your organization to embrace individual giving as an integral part of your resource development activities is to help your team recognize all the people and organizations that already care about your work. Many organizations believe that they aren't connected to enough people to make individual giving a viable strategy for raising money. This simple activity will not only show this belief to be false, but will also provide some important information as to how to structure your efforts.

People have been using "webbing" or web maps as learning tools for decades. Webs are visual maps that show how different categories of information relate to one another. They provide structure for ideas and facts and provide a flexible framework for organizing and prioritizing information.[5]

For this activity, you will place your organization at the center of the web. Links from the center will connect your key stakeholders and core constituencies as well as track details about their connections to you.

Begin by convening a small group of the people responsible for raising money for your organization. It would be terrific if you could include your executive director, all of your development staff (even if that is just one person), perhaps a couple of key board members, senior program staff, and anyone else who brings passion and energy to your organization's work. Don't get too hung up on who is in the room. There is no right or wrong formula and you can always repeat the activity with more people as your donor work progresses.

I've already shown you the statistics related to charitable giving in the United States and I would suggest that you share that information as a preamble to this small-group activity. The statistics are powerful and they begin to help lay the groundwork for some of the key concepts I have been discussing in more detail here.

Once folks are ready:

1. Draw a circle in the middle of a large piece of newsprint taped to a wall so all can see. In that circle, write the name of your program.
2. Next, ask your participants to shout out the names of organizations and groups of individuals that have a connection (even a slight one) to your program. Don't limit yourselves. Think of this as a kind of brainstorming and don't censor anyone's ideas.
3. Now, spend a few minutes listing all the resources that each group has in abundance (i.e., knowledge, experience, access, space, ideas, MONEY).
4. The next step for your group is to spend some time discussing the self-interest of the people and groups you have identified. Why are they connected to your program? What's in it for them? Or potentially in it for them if you strengthened or changed that connection?

At this point, your small group should be getting excited! You have a tremendous amount of information about a lot of people who are already connected to your program. These are your potential donors. You already know all the people you need to launch and sustain your individual giving program and you know how and why they are connected to you. This is all you need. The only thing left to do is start asking!

But before you do, spend a few minutes in your group talking about what you learned from the activity. Let group members process the experience so as to reinforce the key points of the exercise. If you have enough time, you may even want individuals to do their own personal prospect map. Terry suggests that we each do our own map every three–four months. It helps us to stay connected to our existing prospects and it helps us to identify new ones more quickly. I've followed her advice with great success.

The sample on page 80 should give you some ideas as to what yours may look like.

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[5] It is important here to credit another of the most amazing fundraisers I've ever known, Terry Axlerod of Raising More Money™, for adapting web maps for use in fundraising. Much of what I have learned about raising money from individuals is rooted in my relationship with Terry and it is her "Treasure Map"™ activity that started it all for me.

Activity 2

Reflect on Your Own Giving

Whether your team members do a personal prospect map or not, it is important that each member individually take stock of their own relationships, identify potential prospects from their list, develop an asking strategy, and then go forth and ask! Not only will this generate new revenues, it will also help you address the anxiety around asking. These are people they know and who know them—friendly faces.

One way of doing this step is to have each person get a blank sheet of paper and turn it horizontally. On the sheet, have your team members draw vertical lines to create seven columns. Make columns one and five a little wider. Allowing two–three minutes for each step (a little longer for steps one and five), tell them to do the following (one step at a time):

1. In column one, write down the names of the first 25 people who come to your mind—friends, family, colleagues, politicians, bankers, teachers, clergy. Don't censor yourself. This will begin to create a list of donor prospects, but don't put someone on the list, or leave them off, because of what you know about their ability to give or your concerns about asking.

2. In column two, put a checkmark next to the names of people you know and who know you. Circle the checkmarks for the 10 "strongest" relationships. You decide what strongest means.

3. In column three, put a checkmark next to the names of people that you personally know give of their time, talent, and treasure (to any organization).

4. In column four, put a checkmark next to the names of people you think would be interested in the work of your organization.

5. In column five, next to any name you checked in the last step, write down what you think is that person's self-interest for getting involved or investing in your organization. Be really candid here. This person won't be seeing your list!

6. In column six, I want you to set a financial goal for what you could ask this person to invest in your organization. If you had to do it, knowing what you know now, how much could you ask them for? Take a deep breath. Write it down.

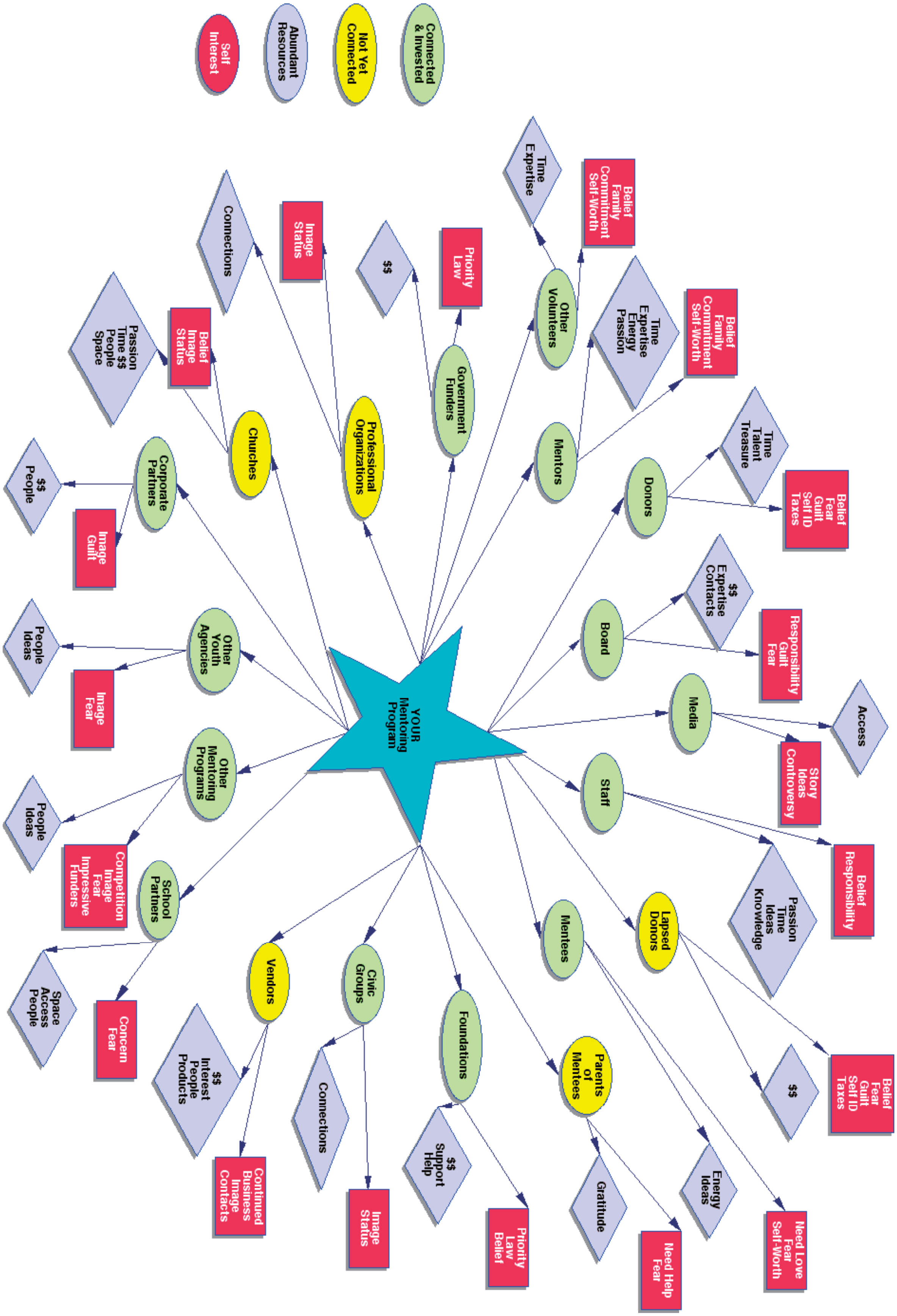
7. Finally, look at the amounts you just wrote down. If you wrote down an amount $200 or less in column six, triple it and write it down in column seven. If the amount is greater than $200, double it and write that down in column seven.

Now spend a few minutes asking people to process this activity. What did they learn? What were the surprises or the "Aha!" moments for them? How did it feel to put target amounts next to people's names? How did it feel when you told them to aim higher?

After a few minutes, give your team members the following homework. Have them look at those checkmarks they circled in column two. These are the people they need to ask very soon. At least three asks within the next week. Some prospects may need more cultivation. That's fine. But all of us have at least three people who are ripe and ready right now.

Sample:

Prospect Map



The "Ask"

The next step is to plan for those asking moments you're about to have! Even with all the experience I have asking people for money, I cannot tell you how it will go exactly. But I can tell you a few things that will be helpful. You should also reread Paradigm Shifts Five and Six as you prepare.

As I see it, there are six things that all prospective donors will want to know before they decide whether to invest in your work or not. These questions are relevant whether you are asking in person, over the phone, in a letter, or at an event:

- *Who are you?* How are you connected to the organization? Why are you here?
- *What does your organization do?* What is the mission and vision? What are the organization's values? What is its history?
- *What is your organizational story?* Why would a donor care? How does your organization's work connect to what the prospect cares about—what they are passionate about?
- *What is the gap?* What amazing work are you doing now? What else could you do if this donor invested time, talent, or treasure?
- *What specifically are you asking this donor to invest?* Do you know what you want? Have you done your homework? Can you quantify what you need from them?
- *What will the donor receive for their investment?* Are you offering recognition? Have you imagined how you will thank them for their generosity? How will the organization express its gratitude?

Now preparing answers for most of this will be fairly easy. It requires work, but if you have taken the steps I've outlined, much of it is already done. But one piece requires a little more effort. This is the piece that allows the life-changing work of your agency to shine through with all the emotion and passion you experience in doing the work.

The Magic Number

When it comes to deciding how much to ask for from a prospective investor, let me tell you a story with a valuable lesson. Early in my fundraising career, I was at lunch with a prospect. We both knew I would be asking for money and we were both prepared. When the time came (I knew this because my heart started beating through my chest), I gathered my composure and asked him for $5,000. This was more than he had done previously, but I was really confident he could do it.

After I asked, I sat back, proud of myself, remained quiet as you should do, and waited for his answer. Two seconds later he said "Sure!" and then he added "What a relief . . . I thought you were going to ask me for $10,000." I smiled awkwardly. "I would have given you $10,000," he said, "if you had asked for it."

"Can we start over?" I asked hopefully. "Next time," he said.

You had better believe that I have never left money on the table since that moment. The worst thing they can do is say no, remember? Your job is to ask, their job is to decide. It is OK for you to make their decision difficult; not impossible, just difficult.

Telling Your Story

Most of our organizations already have them—they are the stories that we tell over and over again. The ones that still bring tears to our eyes. They have become mythical. We don't even know sometimes if they are true, but they have awesome power to move people to action. The activity below can help you develop a story that speaks to your organization.

That's it! There is probably more I could tell you, but this is enough for now. You are sufficiently prepared to start cultivating a constituency of passionate and committed individual investors. Jump in with both feet. Take some risks. Ask for help when you need it—people, especially donors, love to offer advice.

Don't wait until the system is perfect—it will never be perfect. And don't let your fear about hearing no stop you from asking for what you need. Get out there and ask again. And again. Ask until your program has all it needs to carry on its life-changing work!

Activity 3

Write a Two-Minute Speech

I want you to come up with a new story. A story from where you sit within your program. I don't mean you had to necessarily experience it firsthand, but you need to have been close to it and it needs to have touched you, personally. What have you experienced in your program that chokes you up, that makes you mad or hopeful, what is it that brings you to work every day with an unstoppable desire to do more for the young people you serve. This is the story you should tell. This is the one that will cause your prospective donors to stand in the gap with you, investing and involving themselves in the amazing, life-changing work of your organization.

There is no real formula for the activity of developing the story—your two-minute speech. I suggest you find an hour or two where you can sit alone without interruption. Get yourself into a space where you can be reflective. Relax. Think about why you do what you do. Try to remember why you got involved in the first place. Think about those moments when the work is unbearably difficult—when you might be thinking about changing jobs—what keeps you there? What motivates you to tough it out?

Is there a person that comes to mind? A young person who said "thanks" one day? A kid whose life was a mess when he first came to your program and now he is succeeding in ways unimaginable? Is it a mentor who pops into your head? Is there a volunteer whose life has been changed?

When the story becomes clear (and it will), write it down and practice telling it. First, practice in front of the mirror. Then in front of a colleague or two, maybe a young person, practice in front of your significant other.

Ask them for their feedback. You want this story to be powerful. It needs to be brief—two minutes at most! And you want to tell the story in a way that will move even you every time you tell it. It can't be phony—I don't want you to pretend to cry. This isn't about making people feel guilty or sorry for the kids you're working to help. This is the real deal—heartfelt emotion turned into passionate commitment. You don't need to fake it. When it's real, you'll know it, and the people listening to you will know it, too.

For over 15 years, Craig Bowman and his firm, Common Ground Consulting,™ have been providing world-class consulting services for community-based and national nonprofit organizations. Craig is an expert in organizational assessment, development, and management issues; and has provided on-site technical assistance and capacity building to nonprofits in the United States and abroad. On the Web at http://www.consultcommonground.com.

Events and Other Local Support

By Miki Hodge

Events can provide your organization with community partners, amazing public relations, new volunteers and, of course, money. Unfortunately, very few of the people who lead fundraising events in mentoring programs have ever been taught how to do them well. In this section, I hope to show you that finding local support through events can be done with minimal staff, budget, and expertise.

My background with events and fundraising is derived from both corporate and nonprofit perspectives. I have worked as a board member, director, staff member, and volunteer. I was the founder and director of a community-based mentoring initiative in the rural central mountains of Colorado, where I raised more than $265,000 in two years through grants and local contributions. Events were a huge part of that local effort.

This section will offer guiding principles that can help maximize your returns and streamline your efforts in generating local support through events. The lessons in this section are ones I have learned through trial and error from my 13 years of coordinating events for both the private and public sectors. There is no magic formula for successful local fundraising and event planning, but the steps in this section can save you plenty of headaches and help you be more prepared for the events you choose to do. Just keep in mind that event planning is always about building important relationships and presenting opportunities for potential funders to become involved with what you are doing.

Part I. The Mindset for Generating Local Support

Positioning Your Organization as a "Business Equal"

First, accept responsibility for changing how your local business community perceives mentoring programs and nonprofits in general. The mentoring programs and community nonprofits that have come before you might not have left the best impressions. Always remember: Do not shy away from thinking of your program in business terms. Your organization exists to meet concrete needs in your community and has tremendous value. You have the ability to approach businesses and engage them in what you are doing.

Second, show your organization to be a business equal. I recommend joining your local Chamber of Commerce. This opened the door for my organization to attend Business Chamber Mixers, advertise for mentors in Chamber newsletters, and attend member meetings. Another benefit of joining the Chamber of Commerce is their Web site. Our local Chamber features various businesses every month—this is great way to advertise your efforts.

Third, involve as many businesspeople as you can in the governing of your organization. This brings diverse skills and connections, such as an understanding of the business community at large, an excellent networking base, knowledge of effective management and financial practices, and creative marketing ideas.

Telling Your Story

Does your community know that mentoring is a great prevention strategy for many "at-risk" factors facing youth, or that investing a small amount per child now could save tens of thousands of dollars in incarceration fees later? Maybe, maybe not…this depends on how established your organization is, the capacity you can serve, and how well you've told your story. My community didn't know the "story of mentoring" at all. Prior to starting my program, only one other mentoring program had attempted to start up in our small mountain valley (total population: 17,000). This first effort folded before its one-year anniversary citing "lack of funding." I was hired to reestablish mentoring with a one-time $25,000 start-up donation of seed money from county government and contributing banks.

My community did not know why mentoring was a cost-effective strategy, but they could relate to the act of mentoring in itself. Mentoring is easily understandable, and I've found it to be an "easy sell." In the first 10 minutes of any presentation I make to the public about mentoring, I ask my audience to reflect on a special person from their childhood who gave them that extra time. I ask for volunteers to share their stories. I begin to hear about coaches, teachers, special neighbors, or family relatives who gave help with a problem or taught a new skill. Once you hear that from the crowd: SOLD! The term "mentoring" has now taken on a personal meaning, and I can move into what my organization does and what I'm asking for. This "sell" of mentoring is something that cuts across all funding aspects, but it is especially important with local events, where personal contact and connections are what makes or breaks the effort.

Part II. Best Practices for Event Planning

1. Develop Guiding Principles

Many people see event planning as a fun, light-hearted subject. In reality, one should enter into events with the highest business standards and sense of strategic planning. Your organization might already be leery of entering into another low-return event because of past experience. The first thing you should do is to create your organization's "Guiding Principles for Fundraising" to prevent mistakes and oversights. These principles will help guide your decision making through the entire event/fundraising process.

Example: Guiding Principles for Fundraising Events Sponsored by XYZ Mentoring Program:

- Provide positive community relationships and great visibility for the organization
- Limit yourself to the number that the organization can effectively carry out
- Generate significant revenue for the amount of time staff and volunteers invest
- Provide great satisfaction for current volunteers and provide leads for new volunteers and donors
- Be appropriately evaluated to determine future involvement

Personally, I feel it is better to do one event very well than attempt to do numerous small events poorly. Ask yourself, "Is this the best use of our staff and volunteer time? Is it providing maximum benefit for our cause?" Putting your energies in the right place is vital. Constantly asking board members and volunteers to help with small functions may help your exposure but can deplete motivation. If your organization is currently involved with numerous efforts, you may want to rethink this approach. Events should be about quality rather than quantity.

2. Develop Clear Goals for the Event

Once your guiding principles are in place, you should begin setting goals for your event. What is your event's purpose? Raising money? Generating donor prospects or volunteers? Creating public awareness? It is important to determine your primary focus and your financial net goals immediately. This, in turn, identifies the people to whom you will be marketing the event.

During the first year running my mentoring organization, I decided we'd try a golf tournament. After researching the event history in the community, I discovered that no one was holding a golf tournament to benefit youth. Thus "Golf for Kids" was born. I was met with skepticism and concern that I would be eliminating a large portion of the community by holding what some consider an "upscale" event. But my goal was clear: to raise dollars. My homework told me the local golf club had many business owners, community leaders, and retired citizens as members. Increasing public awareness was not my first priority. I did add a community silent auction the night before the tournament at the golf clubhouse. This was open to the general public, had wonderful items to bid on, and generated interest because the location enticed people who didn't play golf. So, in a way, I appeased the skeptics by not eliminating my "grassroots" supporters, while attracting even more sponsors during the event's two days.

My first annual golf tournament fundraising goal was a modest $5,000 (the local Rotary Club told me I would never raise more than $500). Happily the event raised $12,000, generated great word of mouth, added 200 new names/potential donors to my mailing list, and set a new first-time fundraiser record in my community. Because I did my research, set appropriate goals, and followed my guiding principles, this event will serve as our signature fundraising event for years to come.

Questions to consider in the early planning phase:

- What do you want the event to accomplish for your organization?
- How much money do you want to make?
- How many people do you plan to reach?
- Are your goals achievable?

Goal examples:

1. To expose the community to the importance of XYZ Mentoring and our mission to provide youth guidance, support, and friendship through positive mentoring relationships.
2. To raise $15,000 for XYZ Mentoring to support mentor/mentee relationships in activities, training, and transportation needs.

3. How To Choose the Right Event

There are many possible fundraising events. Choosing the ones that are right for your organization can be difficult. Events can be expensive and time intensive. Most failures are simply a result of choosing the wrong type of event. Ask yourself, "Does the event match the needs and resources of this organization?" Too many organizations waste creative energy trying to come up with new ideas that may or may not work. You get no extra points in fundraising for originality, only for productivity. While ideas sometimes get worn out from overuse, consider borrowing a tried-and-true event (such as an auction) or collaborating with an existing event.

Consider the following when choosing your event:

- Who is your audience for the event? (Age, gender, interests, schedules?)
- Do you have enough time to plan a good event? (12 weeks minimum.)
- Brainstorm every event you and your staff have ever attended. (Note special impressions it made on you from entry to exit and, most important, how much money you spent.)
- Research the last three years of event calendars from your local Chamber of Commerce. Who's doing what, when, where, and how? Who were their sponsors? Do your homework to possibly collaborate with other events.
- What are your projected costs?
- What are your resources? (Money, time, and number of people to help? Service clubs, such as Rotary and Kiwanis, are good to approach on collaboration.)
- Limit the number of events your organization can effectively carry out each year.
- Be mindful of other fundraising efforts. For instance, the United Way has "blackout" periods for agencies receiving funds from them. Programs are not allowed to do fundraising in conflict with United Way's annual campaigns.

4. Get Organized

Depending on the type and size of event you have selected you may have a small amount of work ahead of you, or you might have more than you ever imagined. Events can be orchestrated with a minimal staff, so long as each person understands their role and how to represent your organization appropriately.

Tips for planning your event[6]

- Develop an event committee: Include staff, volunteers, Board members, current partners/sponsors, and community officials.
- Identify strategic issues that will put your event in the forefront: For example, acknowledging the challenge of increasing local sponsorships.
- Create goals and objectives that can be shared by entire committee: This includes how much money you want to raise by having the event, and how the community can help achieve this by participating.
- Establish strategies to reach your goals: In considering these strategies, focus first on immediate and short-term goals. If we use a goal of developing 20 different local sponsorships, strategies could include utilizing existing sponsors to open doors, using board members' contacts, and working with media to cross sell opportunities and leverage more value for sponsorships.

[6] These steps are adapted from Allison, M., & Kaye, J. (1997). *Strategic planning for non-profit organizations: A practical guide and workbook* (2nd Ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Events I've Seen Work

Soup for the Soul. This winter event works with local ceramic artists to create soup bowls. Attendees buy the bowl and in return get to sample several soups, homemade breads, and desserts donated by local restaurants. Combining a silent auction with this event makes for a great evening.

Microphone Marathon. Working with your favorite local radio station, get DJs on board to sell donated items in this live auction-type approach. Talk about exposure for mentoring! Several phones are set up at the radio station to take callers' bids, and the DJ helps promote your cause between songs and advertising from sponsors. The "marathon" portion keeps the DJs working until your organization has raised its auction goals. This event is great during the holiday season when people are in the mood for shopping.

Taste of (your town's name). Food can draw a crowd and is a relatively low-cost donation for most restaurants. Maneuvering local chefs to compete with one another offers a great incentive for restaurants and attracts media. This type of event is already very popular and it can be a low-cost effort. Sponsors abound for these types of events.

Black Tie Gala with a $$ Twist! I went to a gala that raised $20,000 due to a unique theme. Tickets were $100, and only 250 tickets were available. Attendees received a great meal and live music. The twist? One lucky person would walk out with $5,000 that night! The odds for winning were good, one in 250! Simply get your location, dinner, and music donated and give away a portion of your ticket sales. This event is a huge hit year after year. The hotel that donates the space and food receives an average of 200 people paying to stay in their hotel for the night.

Cardboard Derby/Wacky Craft Races. Strange as it may seem, people love to build wacky crafts out of odd materials and maneuver them over snow, water, grass, and parking lots. This event draws curious onlookers, vendor interest, and sponsors' attention, especially if you are creative with the event materials (for example, invitations made out of the same materials the cars are made out of). This event offers silly fun while bringing in the bucks.

Business Scavenger Hunts. Get local businesses to sponsor their own "team building" event by competing in an afternoon Scavenger Hunt against other local groups. You outfit the teams with digital or Polaroid cameras to take pictures of themselves with each item they need to find on their list. Businesses love to compete for the obnoxious trophy (that your program youth make!) and crave the media attention they get while supporting your effort. Program kids and mentors can also participate.

Silent Auctions. Include creative bidding items, such as the mayor taking the highest bidder fishing, the sheriff staying one night in a cell, a famous local chef making dinner in your home, a principal doing homework with your child. Have fun with silent auction potential.

Bid on a "Dream Date" with local celebrity bachelors/bachelorettes. Provides great dinners and activities to a Dating Game type of event.

Golf Tournaments (can range from serious to silly formats)

Chocolate Extravaganzas. Local dessert chefs, chocolate shops participate with any food that can be chocolate! Tickets are sold to chocolate lovers to come sample an extravaganza of different chocolate desserts and drinks. The event is great to hold on Valentine's Day!

Run/Bike/Walk/Swim Events

Tailgate-a-Thon. If your town has serious sports fans, find out if they have a "tailgate party organizer" for the sports team or facility where the sports are played. Tailgaters obtain donations for consecutive hours tailgating before the big game.

Bowling/Karaoke-a-Thon. Ask your local bowling league if they would hold a tournament to benefit your mentoring efforts. Attach a Karaoke contest and the event is fun for everyone!

Dine Out for Youth Night (numerous restaurants donate a percentage of the proceeds)

Music Festivals

Dive-In Movies (at your local swimming pool . . . *Jaws!*)

Casino Nights

- Establish project budget: Include the cost of everything, even if you are working on donated dollars and resources—you may have to pay for it this time or next.
- Develop your action plan: Include specific timeframes and responsibilities on who will do what by what date.
- Develop your evaluation plan: Although it may seem like your plan ends when the event is over, you still need a way to determine if you have succeeded in achieving your goals.
- Review your event, and move forward: Remember to always debrief the event with all event staff and make a list immediately about what you would do differently the following year. Remember, the key is to ask yourself "what do you want the event to accomplish for your organization" and design from there.

5. Things About Events I Learned the Hard Way

The following list offers lessons about events that my organization learned the hard way. If you have these lessons in mind from the beginning, life will be much easier:

In general, event day always brings last-minute issues. I've simply come to expect it. Event leaders need a high threshold for stress and the ability to improvise, and need to have on-the-spot decision-making skills (with sometimes very difficult people). Whatever techniques you use, just remember to include stress management principles! Managing that stress will help deal with issues such as:

- ***Deposits.*** When speaking with event site managers, supply rental groups, and entertainers in general, always ask if they require a deposit.
- ***Insurance for events.*** Always check with your insurance carrier about event coverage for your organization.
- ***"Additionally insured"*** issues. When using a site for an event, check with owners and managers if they require you to show an "Additionally Insured" certificate from your insurance company.
- ***Money/change.*** If your event is going to be selling products to the public make sure you have enough change to work with. Nothing's worse than running out of $1 bills when selling raffle tickets or food.
- ***Liquor service.*** If your event is going to serve liquor you're entering a dangerous area. Check all insurance liability for your organization and make sure you have a Special Event Liquor Service License if holding an event in a place that doesn't already have one (i.e., the park). If you are collaborating with a group that will be serving liquor, make sure it's in writing that your organization is not liable for any portion of the liquor sales and service.
- ***Understanding fire codes.*** Most facilities that people rent have this issue under control. However, I once used an event tent that didn't come with rules or capacity limits. The fire department almost shut me down because I had so many people in a closed space with not enough exits.
- ***Health Department.*** If your event is going to sell food, or hire vendors to sell food, make sure you have hand-washing areas that are up to health code standards. Many port-a-potty rentals now have hand-washing stations you can rent.

FAQs About Charitable Solicitation Laws

Are there any laws or regulations I need to be sure to follow?

This is a hard one. Many states have what are called “charitable solicitation” laws, but each state is different. Some cities and counties have similar regulations and it can be difficult to find out exactly how they might apply to your plans. A great resource for this topic is the Nonprofit FAQ Web site: http://www.idealist.org/if/idealist/en/FAQ/Nonprofit/Home/default.

Is there a state-specific resource site?

The state rules are summarized at http://www.multistatefiling.org. This Web site was created to help big organizations that ask for donations in lots of states, but the state-by-state index of regulations will give you a sense of whether you need to talk with your local charity oversight officials before starting your campaign.

Are the gifts people give to my campaign tax deductible?

That depends. First of all, it depends on the donor’s own tax situation. Careful fundraisers never say “You can take a tax deduction.” What they say (when it’s true) is “You may be able to deduct this from your personal income taxes.” Consult with your tax advisor or review the IRS regulations that apply to your situation to determine whether or not a deduction is allowed. Tax deductions can only be taken for certain kinds of gifts. If you know your campaign isn’t about raising money for a tax-deductible purpose, you need to tell people that up front.

The recipient organization must be recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3)—or be an established church. (Churches don’t have to register with the government, but they do have to meet certain standards about how they operate. If you have any doubts, ask.)

Gifts to individuals, no matter how urgent the need, are never tax deductible. This rule often comes as a surprise to people, but it’s well established. Once again, the Nonprofit FAQ Web site has great advice on this topic at: http://www.nonprofits.org/npofaq/16/56.html.

- ***Parking capacity.*** Always inform your local police department that you are having an event. They will let you know about any parking issues in the area, especially if it’s a residential area.
- ***Clean-up agreements.*** I’ve been slapped with extra cleaning bills that I never anticipated because I didn’t ask enough questions. Get it in writing, especially around issues of garbage removal.
- ***Electricity capability.*** If you’re hiring a band to play at your event make sure you ask how much electricity they require to plug it all in. This issue alone has devastated events. A band blowing breakers and circuits can really dampen the mood. Always do a walk-through on how many electrical outlets you will need for the entire event.

- ***Floor plan.*** Make sure you always have enough seating and tables, and your entire team has a copy of the floor plan, just in case.
- ***Restroom capacity.*** A lack of adequate restroom capacity can create lines of unhappy guests.
- ***Vendor agreements.*** If you're going to have someone selling, say, cotton candy at your event, they should give you a portion of the sales. They might argue they are doing all the work, but you can argue your work got them customers. Collect at least 20 percent.
- ***Get it all in writing = Terms of Agreement Contract.*** Never underestimate the power of asking for agreements in writing. These contracts should always highlight what your organization is going to provide and what the partners and vendors are going to provide.

Part III. Securing Business Sponsorships

When I planned events and marketing opportunities within the ski industry I was frequently approached by nonprofits for free tickets, free lodging, free weekend packages, etc. Many times the sense of entitlement by these individuals was off the charts! They saw me as "moneybags." What I really was, was a screener. If they didn't offer any marketing opportunities for my company their requests were lost in the proverbial "shuffle." I wanted to know how their event would drive traffic to the ski business, my business. Always offer exposure and good publicity for sponsors; it's a win/win for all.

Remember:

- Finding sponsors is about building relationships and presenting opportunities.
- Ask all Board members, volunteers, and staff what business contacts they have.
- Pitch your event as a great opportunity for marketing and making a difference, never as a "please, we need the money for the kids."
- Have prepared event materials ready with sponsorship levels defined.
- Have ideas at the ready as to how your event can bring traffic to potential sponsors' businesses.

Designing Sponsorship Levels

It's a good idea to have a wide range of sponsorship levels so that smaller businesses, as well as larger companies, can find a level that suits them. Be flexible and available to customize levels to meet donors' needs.

Let the business you are approaching know how many people you are expecting and the impressions the sponsorship will yield. For instance, say your event is going to draw 250 people—that equates to 250 impressions of their logo on the banner. Their name in your organization's newsletter equals another 250 impressions; their logo on the event poster is at least another 300 impressions. Each impression has value.

How To Approach Potential Sponsors

Perhaps the best way to approach potential sponsors is through plenty of old-fashioned phone calls pitching your event. Since your time is probably limited, be brief and concise. Tell them your name, your organization's name, and that you have a wonderful marketing opportunity for their business at an important upcoming event you're hosting. If they are interested, ask if you can send them information on sponsorship levels available.

Samples of Sponsorship Levels

Below are sponsorship-level examples from a "Golf for Kids" tournament for a program in a small, rural town. The more creative you can be in creating and naming levels, the better.

Golf for Kids – TOURNAMENT-LEVEL SPONSOR – $300

Incentives: Your business name on all printed materials and radio spots. Your banner prominently displayed in golf clubhouse during all tournament activities, your business Web site hot linked on program Web site, free food and beverages during silent auction event, free continental breakfast before tournament and award luncheon. Decorated golf carts during event.

Golf for Kids – TEAM-LEVEL SPONSOR – $100

Incentives: Your business name given to a team in the tournament, your business name in program brochure, free food and beverage at silent auction event, free continental breakfast before tournament and award luncheon; your business name thanked in local newspapers.

Golf for Kids – HOLE/GREEN-LEVEL SPONSOR – $25

Incentives: Your business name displayed on one green; your business name thanked in local newspapers.

There is another "level" of sponsorship that programs should be aware of even though it can be difficult to use for small events or events where you need support from many sources: exclusivity sponsorships. This level offers a guarantee to sponsors that once they sign on, none of their competitors will be allowed to sponsor. The event will place their business name in the event title. Sponsor receives all media and advertising exposure, prominent on-site event exposure, and all VIP treatments (e.g., box seats, beverage service, backstage access, etc.). This level of support will only happen if you tap into a business with significant financial resources and a real desire to garner public recognition. Work with repeat small-donation sponsors to reach this level of giving.

Making this list of interested parties takes a lot of time, but it can also save your organization money. Instead of blindly sending out proposals to hundreds of businesses, ignoring their guidelines and focus areas, you can send dozens of proposals to companies that have already expressed interest in your event. If there's time, I always try to drop off the information personally. Be sure to personalize your letter with a quick handwritten note saying "thanks for your time talking today and your interest in our event!"

Always follow up with interested donors within a week after materials are sent or dropped off to see if they have any questions about sponsorship opportunities.

Who Should We Approach?

- Corporations—even in the smallest towns, corporations are everywhere!
- Leading employer groups
- Banks
- Insurance groups
- Real estate offices
- Law offices
- Hospitals
- Construction/land developers
- Service organizations (may provide people to help run your event!)
- Mental health providers
- Automobile sales
- Retail stores and grocery chains

Cultivate Relationships With Sponsors

Make sure sponsors see that you value their support. Once a company has agreed to sponsor, send them a thank-you letter that recaps the benefits at the level they've chosen. After you receive their check, send another thank-you. If your organization has a newsletter, begin sending it to them. I took a photo of our program kids rafting and made it into an Appreciation Certificate, framed it, and most businesses placed it in customer view (great marketing for us!). Six months later, we sent all the sponsors a holiday card (with great photos of the program youth) reminding them they were appreciated again for making our organization's efforts a reality in the past year.

The overarching key to success with events is that they are realistic and doable within the context of your other sustainability work and in the context of your community as a whole. It can take the time to find the right event for your needs, but once you do you have a surefire money maker that can also impact your recruitment, your marketing, and all the other work you do building a sustainable program.

Miki Hodge currently lives in beautiful Salida, Colorado. Her professional background includes nonprofit management, corporate sponsorship, marketing and event orchestration. This diverse combination aided Miki in creating a vibrant rural community-based mentoring program with 34 matches and over $265,000 raised in grants and fundraising efforts in just two years of operation. Miki's nonprofit background includes grant writing, field instruction, and program development for the Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center, Colorado Outward School, and the Summit Prevention Alliance. Her corporate experience includes training, event orchestration, and sponsorship design for Colorado ski resorts Copper Mountain and Keystone. She has provided training for youth mentoring programs through the National Mentoring Center since 2002.

Appendix A.

The Role of the Board in Resource Development

by Craig Bowman

It has been said that "A great board is a victory, not a gift," and I agree. It requires a tremendous amount of time, energy, hard work, and commitment to develop and maintain a strong board of directors.[7] It is not easy, but I can promise you that the rewards are well worth it.

So much has been written about board development that I hesitate to undertake an effort that attempts to reinvent the wheel. Therefore, it is simply my goal to offer a few essential tools to help you as you work to involve your board members in sustainability planning. My hope is that introducing and using these tools will create opportunities for your board to embrace the roles and responsibilities that are critical to your organization's overall success.

Many years ago, the National Center for Non-Profit Boards (now known as BoardSource[8]) first published a list of the top 10 responsibilities of social-profit[9] boards of directors. I am going to use a slightly modified version of that framework to articulate my thoughts on the key aspects of a board's work. Once we have a clear understanding of these 10 roles, I will offer several tools to help you improve the functioning of your board and move them into a sustainability mindset.

[7] If your program does not have a formal board, some of the lessons in this section can also be used to strengthen advisory committees and other similar stewardship groups (although those individuals do not have as much formal responsibility as formal board members).

[8] BoardSource is a tremendous resource for staff and board members of social-profit organizations. They offer publications, training, technical assistance, consulting, and many other useful resources. On the Web at: http://www.boardsource.org/.

[9] As with my earlier section on individual giving, I will use the term social-profit (rather than nonprofit) throughout this piece to emphasize the importance of our sector's work. Our work actively creates benefits for society, it generates a new kind of profit, and it adds value. This language better captures the work that we do.

The Top 10 Responsibilities of a Social-Profit Board

1. ***Determine the organization's mission, vision, strategic goals, and values.*** Every organization has a purpose and usually social-profits call this the mission. It is essentially why you exist—the "condition" your work addresses. Some organizations have articulated vision statements that describe how you would like the world to look if your mission was achieved. I am going to assume that you have defined goals and objectives (essential ingredients for sustainability). And, finally, I will tell you that your organization has its own unique set of values, even if they have not been put on paper.

   All these aspects of your organization, though they may begin elsewhere, are ultimately the purview of the board. They have the final say. The buck stops with them. It is their job to define these elements, refine or redefine them when necessary, and ultimately ensure that they are guiding the work of your organization.

2. ***Select the chief executive (executive director).*** One of the most important responsibilities of any social-profit board is the selection of the chief executive, known in many organizations as the executive director. This person is responsible for managing the organization's day-to-day operations and serves as the primary person responsible for carrying out the board's policies and implementing its vision.

   The selection of the chief executive requires careful consideration of a variety of factors and should follow a well-developed and agreed-upon selection framework. Board members must be cognizant of the organization's mission, vision, goals, and values; as well as staff morale and needs, current constituency data, programmatic considerations, financial condition, etc. The board is responsible for developing the chief executive's job description, managing a clearly defined search and selection process, and ultimately negotiating and contracting with the desired candidate.

3. ***Support the chief executive and assess his or her performance.*** The board's responsibilities with the chief executive only begin with that person's selection and hiring. It is incumbent upon the board, especially the board chair/president

and other officers to provide ongoing support to the person in this role. The job of chief executive is not easy and it can be isolating as this person is both responsible to groups of people (the board and stakeholders) and responsible for groups of people (staff and volunteers).

The board's job is to ensure the organization's overall success and yet must, by design, turn over much of its ability to affect change to the chief executive. This requires a positive and healthy working relationship and a considerable amount of trust in both directions.

At the same time, it is also the board's job to assess the chief executive's performance and take action when that person is not meeting his or her obligations to the organization or is in violation of the organization's policies or values. These are never easy decisions, but they do represent a clear area of responsibility for a well-functioning board of directors.

4. ***Ensure that effective organizational planning takes place.*** When organizations talk about planning, they could mean any number of things—short-term programmatic goal setting, the creation of fundraising or financial benchmarks, the development of staff work plans or program timelines, etc.

   When it comes to this aspect of the board's work, I am primarily talking about formal strategic planning, the kind of planning that usually involves hiring a consultant (which in this case I recommend), authorizing a planning committee, gathering extensive internal and external data, involving a wide variety of stakeholders, convening meetings and retreats, and ultimately developing a long-term (I recommend three-year) planning tool.

   Strategic planning requires a tremendous amount of work and it involves everyone in the organization at particular points. It is the board's job to determine and manage that process.

5. ***Ensure that there are adequate organizational resources.*** Another of the essential elements of an effective board is its ability to contribute time, talent, and treasure—especially treasure! It is absolutely necessary for every board member to be a financial investor in your organization. Every single board member must be an investor. It sends a powerful message when they are and an even more powerful message when they are not.

Having said that, the amount of their investment is less important than the fact that they simply give. Don't get me wrong, their giving should be a stretch. It should not be easy. It should match their passion for the critical, life-changing work of your organization. But the most important goal here is 100 percent of them should be giving.

I've written a lot about raising money from individuals in another chapter in this book, which I encourage you to read. Your board members should also read that chapter! Ensuring adequate resources means learning to be comfortable asking people for the things your organization needs to do its work. This is the job of the board. It is the job of the chief executive. It is the job of the development staff as well as the program staff. It is everyone's job.

But it is the board's responsibility.

6. ***Ensure that organizational resources are managed effectively.*** Hand in hand with raising money and securing resources is paying attention to how those resources are managed. Here again, this is the job of many people, but it is the board that must assume final authority and ultimate responsibility. The fiduciary responsibilities of managing a social-profit organization are numerous. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) affords organizations like ours certain benefits in exchange for improving the public good. They also require us to operate according to explicit guidelines and generally accepted accounting practices. Our foundation and corporate partners and our individual investors all have certain expectations and sometimes clear conditions for how their resources are used. It is likely they will expect that a formal audit be conducted and it is the board's job to solicit bids and engage an audit firm.

   The board is the fiduciary authority for the organization and they are responsible collectively and even individually for the financial actions of the organization. In many states, a board member's personal assets are at risk if an organization he or she serves operates improperly. Being a social-profit board member has many rewards and its share of risks. It demands commitment, understanding, engagement, and passion. Every board member must be up for the challenge.

7. ***Monitor programs in relation to mission, vision, strategic goals, and values.*** Although I am not a big fan

of board involvement in programmatic issues, it is important that the board ensure that the organization does not stray far from its articulated priorities. Opportunities always present themselves and staff members are always working to do more, often with less. Funding opportunities or shifting donor priorities, for example, can cause organizations to stretch and twist to meet budget targets. Sometimes it is necessary. Sometimes it causes organizations to lose focus.

The board should know about the organization's programs, where it is soliciting funds, and how the work aligns with the board's priorities. I recommend that the board require the chief executive to provide this information as part of his or her formal reporting process; and that the board exercise due diligence in reviewing the program's initiatives whenever possible.

8. ***Enhance the organization's public standing.*** It is always important for social-profit organizations to carefully manage their public image. Our ability to build interest in our work is often tied to how well-known we are in our communities. Board members can and must play a central role in introducing the organization to their friends, family, colleagues, and associates. They must act as ambassadors, even missionaries, for your great work whenever and wherever they can.

   They will need information about your programs and access to your best thinking about how to characterize your work. It will be helpful to offer them training in how to speak about the impact of your efforts and it will be important to send them frequent updates.

   Board members should assess the opportunities they have in their life to make their involvement and commitment to your organization known. In the chapter earlier in this book on individual donors, I offer a mapping tool that could be helpful for this process. Another approach would be to ask your board members to set up meetings between their contacts and key staff, clients, or volunteers. Perhaps they can represent your organization at meetings, conferences, or community events. This is their chance to share their passion for your work with the people in their lives.

9. ***Maintain accountability and ensure legal and ethical integrity.*** As the board is the fiduciary authority when it comes to finances, so too is it the organization's legal authority, contract agent, and responsible party. It is the board's job to

ensure that the organization operates in accordance with local, state, and federal laws at all times. It should establish appropriate monitoring policies and retain competent legal representation when necessary.

The board's policies should be developed with attention to legal and ethical issues and it should pay close attention to legal developments in the social-profit sector. Social-profit organizations should also pay extra attention to their risk management practices, seeking assistance from experts when appropriate. It is the role of the board to get the information it needs from staff or other sources to protect the organization, its reputation, and its assets.

Finally, boards are responsible for making sure that the organization makes ethical decisions that are consistent with its mission, vision, and values. For example, I've written another chapter in this publication that looks at ethical considerations related to your fundraising practices. Another area of concern would focus on personnel policies and staff and volunteer management. There are others and they are all the responsibility of your board.

10. ***Recruit and orient new members and assess overall board performance.*** If a board does not assess its own performance, who is going to do it? The chief executive reports to the board and other staff report to the chief executive. It doesn't seem like good process for them to do it. Stakeholders could play a role, but they probably don't have all the information they would need. Evaluation of the board's performance by funders, donors, supporters, or members seems potentially awkward.

    The board must evaluate itself. There are many tools to assist them in doing it. I'm sure they could spend a lot of money on consultants and processes that could help, and I'm as sure they can do it without a lot of fanfare or expense. Later in this chapter, I'll give you a simple self-assessment tool that board members can use to start this process. It will give you some ideas about areas where it might be helpful to focus your improvement efforts.

Boards also are responsible for perpetuating themselves. They should articulate a clear process for recruitment, nomination, and selection. There should be criteria. The board should create a matrix that indicates the kinds of skills, assets, demographics, experiences, or other things that you want to see represented on your board. The matrix should list current members and what they bring.

> This will show you what you're missing; and provide a means of establishing your recruitment goals. I believe that a strong board is always thinking about new members. It is a year-round process and it is essential when planning for sustainability.

Given their myriad roles and responsibilities, I believe that it is critical for board members to find ways to hold themselves accountable to the organization, themselves, and each other. In my work with many boards over the years (and as a member of many boards), I have found it useful to create job descriptions (in the form of contracts, signed pledge statements, and codes of conduct) that boards can use to enforce certain standards of involvement. Of course, you'll also need to create the appropriate enforcement mechanisms and identify the person or people charged with that responsibility (usually the board chair/president or other officers).

The following contract encompasses the "Top 10 Responsibilities" from above, creating a clear job description for your board of directors. Before using it, you should modify the document to reflect your board's specific policies and protocols. A pledge form, with space for signatures, and a sample code of conduct follow this contract.

Statement of Board Member Responsibilities: A Contract for Success

Those who serve on the [Our Organization] board of directors have considerable responsibilities extending well beyond the basic expectations of attending meetings, establishing policy, and personal giving. All board members must:

I. Ensure That [Our Organization] Remains True to Itself and Accountable to the Larger Community

Each board member has primary responsibility for ensuring that [Our Organization] remains true to its mission, vision, goals, and values, always acting first in the interests of our primary stakeholders. It is [Our Organization]'s board of directors that is responsible for maintaining the professional and ethical policies and standards that will ensure that we remain a powerful force for change.

Every board member agrees to comply with [Our Organization]'s Board Member Code of Conduct (Attached).

II. Assume Fiscal and Legal Responsibility

Membership on the board brings with it both fiduciary and legal responsibilities. An important aspect of serving as a trustee is protecting assets and ensuring that current income is managed properly. Because [Our Organization] is incorporated and granted tax exempt status to fulfill a public need, the board must assume full responsibility for our financial viability.

Moreover, our staff, our supporters, and school and community service partners depend on the sustainability of our organization. Accordingly, each board member should insist on and carefully review financial monitoring reports prepared by the chief executive; and actively participate in the annual audit and budget preparation/review processes. Board members must also give careful consideration to major expenditures by the organization. In particular, the treasurer of the board should be responsible for making other members aware of the agency's financial position on an ongoing and regular basis.

As trustees, board members are also legally responsible for the organization, and assume full responsibility in all contract and other legal matters. It is the board's responsibility to arrange for appropriate legal counsel for matters that may require legal advice.

It is also the board's responsibility to decide whether to obtain what is commonly known as directors' and officers' liability insurance (or D&O insurance).

III. Ensure Adequate Resources

Each board member, regardless of whether he or she is serving on the development committee, must accept the idea that fundraising is an essential element of being a board member. At a basic level, each board member must contribute personally to [Our Organization] each year to the extent that she or he is able, and should assist in identifying and evaluating fundraising prospects including individual, foundation, and corporate contacts, as well as participating in [Our Organization]'s special events.

Each board member is expected to complete the "Board Member Resource Commitment Form" (Attached) annually.

IV. Act as an Ambassador for [Our Organization]

In the most basic sense, each board member is required to demonstrate his or her concern for the organization and take both the work of [Our Organization] and his or her role as a board member seriously. During day-to-day activities, each board member should always be looking for opportunities to help [Our Organization] either personally or through professional contacts and networking.

Each board member should know the organization's mission, vision, purposes, goals, policies, programs, services, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and values. Board members should also keep in mind the organization's priorities, and make decisions that will affect the agency only when appropriate and consistent with established procedures.

Each board member must also support the chief executive (and help review his or her performance), support the board chair/president or co-chairs and other board members, and honestly assess his or her own (and, when appropriate, the entire board's) performance.

Board members are also encouraged to volunteer in other capacities within [Our Organization] to the extent that doing so does not interfere with a board member's primary responsibilities.

V. Actively Participate in Board Meetings

In order to ensure that [Our Organization] is working toward defined ends, it is essential that every board member attend board meetings. Absent special circumstances, board members are considered resigned if [Insert Your Policy Here]. If a board member is unable to attend a board meeting, she or he should contact the board chair/president prior to the meeting.

It is fundamental to board governance that each board member participates fully in full board and committee meetings. This assumes that each board member prepares for meetings and reads all minutes and other materials that are distributed in advance. To the maximum extent possible, reports to the board should be prepared and circulated prior to a board meeting and should be presented in a way that focuses the board on the salient issues. Each board member should make an effort to follow and discuss trends relating to [Our Organization]'s work.

The [Our Organization] board is also responsible for determining agency priorities and supporting the chief executive by leading strategic planning efforts.

VI. Fulfill Committee and/or Officer Responsibilities

Each board member should have specific committee and/or officer roles and responsibilities. Each board member is expected to participate in committee meetings and fulfill committee and/or officer responsibilities that are in line with his or her own areas of expertise. To the extent possible, board members should assist other committees and participate in the various ad hoc committees and work groups that may be created by the board.

The board is also primarily responsible for its own membership and current members will be asked to recommend, assess, and invite new members when vacancies occur. A strong Board recognizes the need to be engaged in recruitment efforts year-round.

VII. Foster Group Cohesiveness

To work together as an effective team, every board member should:

1. Accept every other board member with a due appreciation of his or her strengths, a tolerance of his or her quirks and weaknesses, and a respect for his or her differences
2. Remember that the board as a whole is more important than any of its parts
3. Make every effort to resolve dissent and discord, or if it cannot be resolved, to keep it in perspective of larger issues
4. Accept and conform to the policies and procedures previously established by [Our Organization].

Board members should also take responsibility, both individually and collectively, for the board's overall development. Members should look to improve their own skills and must commit to participating in at least two board development activities each year. These will include at least one retreat to be scheduled by the board chair/president or co-chairs. Board members are also expected to participate in internal needs assessment activities and an annual self and board evaluation process.

Board Member Pledge

I have carefully read and fully understand my responsibilities as a member of the Board of Directors of [Our Organization]. In affixing my signature below, I pledge to fully honor my commitment to the organization during my tenure as a board member and to fulfill the responsibilities and obligations set forth in the "Statement of Board Member Responsibilities," and in [Our Organization]'s board policy manual (If your organization has one).

As a Board Member for [Our Organization], I will:

I. Ensure that [Our Organization] remains true to itself and accountable to the larger community

II. Assume fiscal and legal responsibility

III. Ensure adequate resources

IV. Act as an ambassador

V. Actively participate in board meetings

VI. Fulfill committee and/or officer responsibilities

VII. Work to foster group cohesiveness

To these ends, I will specifically do the following during 2008:

1. Complete the Board Resource Commitment Form (Attached).
2. ____ .
3. ____ .
4. ____ .

In addition, I pledge to seek other means of supporting [Our Organization]'s important work, and will do all that I can to ensure our continuing success.

______________________________ ______________
Board Member Date

______________________________ ______________
Executive Director Date

______________________________ ______________
Board Chair Date

Board Member Code of Conduct

The successful operation and sustainability of [Our Organization] is built upon a principle of ethical conduct on the part of its board members, employees, and volunteers. Our reputation for integrity and excellence requires scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity.

The continued success of [Our Organization] depends on our stakeholders' trust and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. We owe a duty to [Our Organization], its constituents, and stakeholders to act in a way that will merit public confidence.

[Our Organization] will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its directors, officers, employees, and volunteers to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct.

In general, good use of judgment, based on high ethical principles, will guide you with respect to lines of acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed openly with the board chair/president or another officer.

As a board member, you are an ambassador for the organization and your actions reflect upon [Our Organization]. There is complete confidence that you will function responsibly and that your actions will have only positive effects on [Our Organization]; however, situations may arise where you may be unsure of how to proceed. This policy is designed to help.

A board member is considered to be on "[Our Organization] Time" during any scheduled or planned activity or when you are directly acting in the capacity of a board member. For example, a board member is considered to be on duty during a board meeting, at a training, fundraiser, board dinner, conference, or other organizational event.

The [Our Organization] board recognizes and values the need for board members to have personal and down time from their [Our Organization] responsibilities. However, there are times during which a board member is not on "[Our Organization] Time" but is still being viewed as a representative of the organization by the public. These times may include when a board member is in close proximity to a [Our Organization] event, such as unscheduled time during board meeting, conference weekend, or other [Our Organization] sponsored event. In these situations, board members should be aware that their actions may still directly affect the organization.

In cases where board member actions could (or do) have a negative effect on the organization, it may be cause for removal from the board.

While it is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable, the following are examples of infractions that are not in line with the behavior of a board member:

- Theft or removal of [Our Organization]'s or another board member's property
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs while on "[Our Organization] Time"
- Fighting, making threats, or acting violently
- Negligent or improper conduct leading to damage of [Our Organization] property
- Smoking in prohibited areas
- Sexual, racial, or other unlawful harassment or intimidation
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information
- Violation of [Our Organization]'s policies

As I discussed previously, one of the most important roles for any social-profit board member is raising money. It also tends to be one of the most stressful aspects of the job for many people.

In the previous section in this book on individual giving campaigns, I recommended several activities that you can do with your board; and I am including a sample board resource commitment form in this section. I suggest that you set aside time at a board meeting to discuss the board's role in fundraising for the organization and provide an opportunity to do the exercises and for each board member to complete this form.

Most boards of directors establish a development committee whose job is to manage these efforts. If you have a board development committee chair, ask him or her to lead this process. If not, first think about creating that committee; in the meantime, ask a board officer (the treasurer or president are usually the best choices) to walk people through the process.

There is a school of thought that believes that these forms (or at least the goals they include) should be made public to other board members and key staff. The idea is that this assists in accountability. I like this approach as long as everyone understands that their contributions are important regardless of the level of their giving. Some board members will be able to do more than others and yet every board member's investments are critical and must be viewed as equally valuable. One of the most important external measures of an organization's success (and a board's viability) is whether the board has 100 percent giving. The amount of the giving can vary, but every single board member must be an investor.

Board Member Resource Commitment Form

Board Member's Name: ____

[Our Organization] recognizes the many and diverse contributions and skills that its board members give to the organization, including time, talent, and treasure. The organization encourages creative investments and sees them as essential to our growth and sustainability. In addition, [Our Organization] recognizes the importance of board participation in fundraising.

My commitment to [Our Organization] consists of the following pledges:

1. Personal Gift

I will personally invest $________________ in [Our Organization] in 2008.

I would like to make this investment in the following manner. I understand that it is beneficial to [Our Organization] to fulfill this pledge before the last month of the fiscal year (_________); and that every board member must make a personal gift according to their ability.

I would like to make my contribution in one payment on: ________, 2008.

I would like to make monthly contributions of $____________, beginning in _____________, 2008.

2. Raising Money

My goal is to raise $_______________ (Not my own money) in the following ways.

House Party:

- ☐ I will host a fundraising party at my home. I will attempt to hold this party in the month of _________ 2008, in the city of ________________ (for regional or national organizations).
- ☐ I will help organize such a party at someone else's home.

Donor Solicitation – Existing Donors:

- ☐ I will visit donors to ask them for a gift. Number of visits I will make: ___________ in 2008.
- ☐ I will make visits in the following geographical area(s) (Will you be traveling this year? Please use other side if necessary):
- ☐ If possible, I would like to do one or two visits with an experienced solicitor.
- ☐ I will call ________ (number) existing donors to thank them or ask them to renew their pledge. I understand that I may need to call each donor several times in an attempt to have a conversation with him or her.

Donor Solicitation – New Donors:

- ☐ My goal is to bring in ____________ new donors.
- ☐ I will solicit people I know personally who are not already donors to [Our Organization].

Names of people I'd like to solicit with a target gift amount (Please use back if necessary. This list will remain confidential):

____

____

____

I will solicit these people through:

- ☐ A personal letter
- ☐ An in-person meeting
- ☐ A telephone call
- ☐ An e-mail or fax
- ☐ Prospective lists you can share with us for a mailing (Clubs, spiritual groups, professional organizations, friends and family, etc.):

Foundation Contacts:

- ☐ I will write letters of support to foundations where I have contacts.
- ☐ I will meet with foundation officers that I know.

My contacts at foundations include (Please list, even if you think we know):

____

____

____

3. In-Kind Donations

- ☐ I will make the following in-kind donations (Frequent flyer miles are very useful!):

4. Training

- ☐ I am interested in offering trainings to board and/or staff in the following area(s):
- ☐ I am interested in receiving training in the following area(s):
- ☐ I will offer my expertise and /or contacts to [Our Organization]'s staff in the following areas (Please include expertise with particular geographic issues and/or community groups, writing articles, editing materials, etc.):

____

____

____

5. Other

- ☐ I would also like to contribute to [Our Organization] in the following way(s):

____

____

____

Signature:______________________________ Date: ____________________

As I discussed earlier, the board is responsible for evaluating itself at least annually; and there are a variety of tools and mechanisms available for managing this kind of process. I believe the best way to start is with individual self-assessments (see the following page for an example you can adapt for your own board). I suggest that you ask board members to complete the tool prior to a board meeting where time can be set aside to discuss the results. From the discussion, I recommend that the board's leadership set a few key priorities for improvement. These may include working with a consultant, scheduling training, purchasing support materials, etc.

Board Self-Assessment

1. What do you see as the primary responsibilities of a social-profit board member?

2. As a [Our Organization] board member, how would you describe your primary role? Is it consistent with the responsibilities you described in question number one? Are you satisfied with your own level of involvement? How about the board in general?

3. What are your expectations (personally and as a full board) concerning fundraising for the organization? Are you personally committed to supporting the organization financially as well as with your time and talent?

4. In your opinion, what are the primary issues facing [Our Organization] as we move into this year?

5. In your opinion, what is the primary issue facing [Our Organization]'s board of directors this year?

6. What does the board need in order to be more successful? What do you need from staff to support your work?

From time to time, I have worked with the leadership of various social-profit organizations who believe that a weak board will make managing the day-to-day operations easier. They become frustrated when boards require attention and occasionally come to resent the board's role, viewing it as intrusive or meddlesome. These are serious problems.

The health and sustainability of a social-profit organization requires all aspects of the organization to be strong and acting in accordance with defined roles and responsibilities. Your board of directors is an asset that needs attention and protection. You want your board members to feel connected and you want to benefit from the time, talent, and treasure they have to offer.

The information we've covered in this section should give you a head start on improving your board's role in sustainability planning. Now it's time to identify a starting point and get moving. It really doesn't matter where you choose to begin, only that you *do*!

Appendix B.

Ethical Considerations in Fundraising

by Craig Bowman

Mentoring programs are built to serve young people. Individual organizational missions, your program's structure, the populations you serve may all vary, but in the end, the goal is always to help young people successfully navigate their journeys through life.

To facilitate this work and sustain your program, you have to raise money. I am of the opinion that the "best" money is money that comes from individuals because those investors likely share your organization's passion for youth mentoring. This money generally comes with fewer strings and it is more sustainable than government, corporate, or even foundation support.

But, I am also an executive director and I understand the need to create and maintain diverse funding streams in order to realize our mission and vision and leverage important relationships. The challenge comes in doing this work in a way that is consistent with our organizational values.

In deciding whether to pursue or accept corporate contributions or enter into a new partnership agreement, an organization must ground itself in who it is and who it is ultimately accountable to—young people and their families. These are the stakeholders you must be most concerned about in terms of the impact of your decisions.

Accordingly, you should strive to develop fundraising practices that reflect your values and strategic goals and do not work at cross purposes with your mission and vision. Usually, these issues arise most often when discussing potential corporate contributions, especially funding from companies that offer products and services that are generally illegal for use by young people—alcohol, tobacco, guns—but also companies that are perceived to target or exploit young people or have questionable corporate practices. These companies can be more difficult to identify, but you'll certainly recognize them when community controversy explodes.

As these are very difficult issues for all youth programs, I recommend creating a set of guidelines that can be used in evaluating any kind of corporate or private contribution as well as other kinds of partnerships. If you have a policy that you use consistently, it will help to minimize any negative reactions you may receive once the decision is made and announced (or discovered).

I recommend that your Board of Directors, which is ultimately responsible for policy decisions, create a set of criteria that will guide your decision making, as well as a set of tools (tests) to help guide the Executive Director and the staff responsible for implementing the policy. It is forward thinking on their part, if they consult key stakeholders (including staff), both as these criteria are being developed and before their adoption as policy.

Every mentoring program develops in a unique way. We have a specific purpose or mission, our own way of framing the future and our vision for it, and each of our organizations has a set of values (whether we articulate them or not) that guide our day-to-day decisions and our long-term planning.

The issues your program views as critical and in need of addressing are specific to you. As a result, your corporate contributions (or partnership) policy will need to be specific to you as well. In the next section, I am going to give you some information about my former organization as an example of how you get from mission, vision, and values to a clearly articulated framework for making difficult fundraising decisions. Remember, however, this was *our* policy, it reflected our work and our values. *Your* policy will likely look different and that will require effort and tough conversations on your part. Use this as an opportunity to engage your Board of Directors and strengthen your program's infrastructure. This is at the heart of what it means to build sustainable programs.

Case Study: The National Youth Advocacy Coalition

At the National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC), where I was the Executive Director until 2007, we defined ourselves as a social justice organization fighting injustice against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth and advocating to ensure their physical and emotional well-being. NYAC is committed to supporting local and national organizing within a multi-issue, social justice framework, whereby LGBTQ youth of all races, ethnicities, class backgrounds, and gender identities live to their fullest potential.

With this guiding their deliberations, our board adopted guidelines very similar to the following:

> *We will strive to solicit and accept contributions only from corporate and private entities that meet our criteria. Therefore, reasonable steps will be taken by staff to gather information related to these criteria prior to soliciting or accepting contributions. NYAC will actively seek support from corporations and private entities that are engaged in:*
>
> - *Producing and promoting products or acts that are supportive of the health or well-being of youth-at-large and LGBTQ youth in particular;*
> - *Overturning overtly racist, sexist, class-based, or homophobic acts or policies;*
> - *Maintaining strong community-based involvement;*
> - *Fighting or avoiding large-scale labor and human-rights abuses; and*
> - *Fighting or avoiding large-scale environmental destruction as a by-product of their work.*
>
> *Decisions regarding investments of $500 or more will be decided on a case-by- case basis by the executive director in accordance with the criteria laid out in this policy. Potential investments equal to or greater than 10 percent of NYAC's current operating budget will be brought before the full board for review.*
>
> *The Executive Director (and/or appropriate staff) will review potential contributions using a series of "tests" to help determine their viability given the value statements above.*
>
> ***1. The "Abundance" Test***
>
> - *If we were not stretched and in need of meeting endless programmatic and community demands, would we even consider this?*
> - *What are our other options for getting this money (private donors, less controversial companies, foundations)?*

- *If this was just "icing on the cake," would we pass instead?*

2. ***The "Legitimacy" Test***

- *Are we being paid to legitimize a certain practice or tradition on the part of this company to our constituency?*
- *Does the association with us buy the corporation some kind of respectability that makes us uncomfortable?*
- *Will our organization's leadership as an advocate for youth and broader social justice issues be compromised by this association?*

3. ***The "Strings" Test***

- *Does this relationship require us to jump through hoops that conflict with our mission, our constituents, or our core values?*
- *What is the company requiring us to do (recognition, logo placement, advertising, public support, use of their products or services, etc.)?*

4. ***The "Consequences" Test***

- *What will this money enable us to do? What is the potential benefit for the young people we serve or represent?*
- *What will happen if we don't take this money? Will we be making a positive statement? Will we have to eliminate a program? Will our allies disapprove?*

Clearly, there are no "right" answers to these questions. In fact, any program that decides to face these issues directly will likely have to revisit their decisions from time to time depending on changing cultural and community norms, changes in organizational leadership, or changes in an organization's mission, vision, or strategic goals. By tying the policy to organizational values, however, it is likely that policy revisions will be minimal.

Case Study: The National 4-H Council and Philip Morris USA

As your organization begins to grapple with creating policy related to your fundraising efforts, you will undoubtedly face the dilemma of whether or not to create blanket prohibitions against things like alcohol and tobacco funding. There is a school of thought that argues that any program serving young people should not take funding from companies whose products are illegal and potentially dangerous for that population. Another school of thought argues that using money from these companies to do good, positive work for youth mitigates the potential danger of these products in the hands of young people.

This is not an easy decision and despite the well-crafted arguments that can be made on either side, the ultimate decision needs to be grounded in your organization's values as it relates to meeting the needs of young people. The tests I've provided above offer a framework for managing the discussions (and others that may be specific to your organization), but please do not believe they will be easy conversations.

For example, let's take a look at some of the key arguments in favor of a blanket prohibition against youth programs taking tobacco company funding. Most of the groups and individuals who advocate against taking money from tobacco companies begin with a history lesson. They remind us that for decades, tobacco companies, according to their own industry documents, specifically targeted young people through their marketing and advertising. They knew even then, advocates argue, that 90 percent of regular smokers begin the habit before their 18th birthday. They recognize that future generations must become addicted in order for them to make money.

Many in youth services feel that it is wrong to use "blood money," as some call it, even if the programs it supports have health-positive goals. They believe that the ends do not justify the means. They believe that the tobacco companies' efforts now are too little, too late; and worse, that they are only contributing money to try to polish their severely tarnished images.

One study published in the *Journal of Family Practice* [10] found that the "Helping Youth Say No" program, funded with tobacco company dollars, could actually encourage youth to smoke through its suggestion that tobacco use is an adult activity.

[10] DiFranza, J.R., & McAfee, T. The Tobacco Institute: Helping Youth Say "Yes" to Tobacco, *Journal of Family Practice, 34*(6):694–6 (June 1992).

As you can see, arguments on this side of the question are powerful and persuasive. On the other hand, the National 4-H Council made a decision in 1999 to accept a $4.3 million grant from Philip Morris, one of the nation's largest tobacco companies, so it could develop a youth tobacco prevention program.

The leadership at 4-H contended that Philip Morris would have no control over the curriculum, program design, its implementation or its evaluation, and that the program would focus on positive youth development and life skills development as an approach to preparing young people to make healthful lifestyle choices.

The guiding voice for the proposed program, they argued, would be a national-level group of youth and adult partners representing 4-H/Cooperative Extension, other youth organizations, education, government, health, and the social-profit and business sectors. The National 4-H Council believed that the past was the past and that Philip Morris USA was recognizing its responsibility to prevent underage smoking by making a commitment to fully fund this program for two years.

Again, these are powerful and thought-provoking arguments, but this time on the other side of the debate. Regardless of the decisions you make when considering tobacco funding, or alcohol company dollars, or gun company support, etc., the conversations that will be required to make them will add tremendous value to your program. It will give your organization the chance to discuss and debate key aspects of your organization's mission, vision, and values; and it will make you stronger.

Finally, it is important for you to remember that according to the American Association of Fundraising Counsel (AAFRC), corporate giving in the United States amounts to only 5.3 percent of total giving, or about $14 of the $260 million given in 2006.[11] It is also true that most of this money comes from the corporation's marketing departments, not their foundations.

These facts are important for three reasons.

First, as you can see from the numbers, the amount of available money is tremendously limited and the competition is fierce. It is not easy to develop corporate partnerships that lead to significant revenue for your organization.

Second, because the funds come largely from marketing departments, they are usually tied to annual marketing plans. This makes it unlikely

[11] Source: *Giving USA 2006*, USA Giving Foundation. http://www.aafrc.org/gusa/

that corporate dollars will lead to long-term sustainability. The money can be great in a year when fundraising is tough, but for relatively small programs with limited development resources, investing a lot of your time in raising corporate money rarely pays off. These dollars also have many strings.

Third, because these decisions are not easy and can be polarizing, your leadership should conduct an informal cost-benefit analysis before placing tough decisions in front of the entire organization. In fact, it is likely that your program staff will see these decisions in a very particular way, while your managerial, development, and administrative teams may have a different view. Their roles and responsibilities are quite different and may at times feel at odds. They aren't, of course, but organizations must do a lot of hard work to bridge the gap than can exist between the people responsible for raising the money and those responsible for spending it. If the decision you ultimately make isn't a consensus decision, it can have repercussions that can last for a very long time.

I can tell you that the National 4-H Council has spent an unbelievable amount of time defending its decision to accept the funds from Philip Morris; and dozens of their affiliates around the country have had to struggle with whether to implement the program. Even today, almost eight years later, the 4-H decision is still receiving attention.

• • •

Having said all this, perhaps it boils down to a couple of simple points: Every decision your program makes should revolve around your key stakeholders—youth and their families; and clearly articulated policies provide consistency, imply (and we hope, represent) careful forethought, and offer the best chance you have for making the "right" decision.

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Appendix C.

Worksheets and Tools for Planning

Sustainability Planning Checklist

Preparation

- ☐ Get approval and buy-in from key decisionmakers to engage in your planning process
- ☐ Identify leadership for the planning effort
- ☐ Recruit and establish a planning team
- ☐ Clarify your team's role and scope of their work

Assess the current internal and external factors that impact sustainability

- ☐ Conduct an internal assessment, including:
    - ☐ Goals, objectives, and outcomes to date
    - ☐ Current funding, budget, and other resources
    - ☐ Organizational capacity and limitations
    - ☐ Involvement of Board of Directors or advisory boards
- ☐ Conduct an assessment of your partnerships, including:
    - ☐ Responsibilities of partners
    - ☐ Strengths and challenges of partnerships
    - ☐ Potential for enhancing existing partnerships
- ☐ Conduct an assessment of the broader community and record the results
    - ☐ Community needs and priorities
    - ☐ Current mix of services offered and how your services support them
    - ☐ Potential new partners
    - ☐ Funding resources in your community
- ☐ Record findings and identify key themes, issues, strengths, and challenges

Develop a lasting plan—the eight steps to sustainability

- ☐ Know your primary reason for developing resources
- ☐ Develop and clarify your priorities for ensuring a sustainable program
- ☐ Review and understand primary resource development options
- ☐ Develop goals and measurable objectives based on your assessment and identified priorities
- ☐ Develop activities with realistic timelines, and assign roles for accountability
- ☐ Develop a final, written resource development plan
- ☐ Implement the action plan
- ☐ Monitor, review, and celebrate your progress

Implement, review, and adjust your plan

- ☐ Develop a final document and share it with everyone
- ☐ Monitor your progress and continue to meet with planning team
- ☐ Adjust and modify the plan as needed
- ☐ Celebrate and publicize your successes

Assessing Internal and External Assets: People and Organizations

Skills needed:		
	Internet research Grant writing PR/marketing Fundraising Desktop publishing and printing coordination	Events planning Direct mail coordination Database development Reproduction and mailing Staffing events Others

Board member	Works where	Relevant skills	Community contacts	Availability	Tasks willing to take on	Personal pledge

Partner agency	Contributions	Amount	Contact

Staff member	Sustainability-related skills/strengths	% of time available

Assessing Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

Internal

Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities

Partnerships

Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities

Broader Community

Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities

Goals, Objectives, and Activities Worksheet

Goal:

Objective 1	Activities To Reach Objective	Timeline	Key Staff Involved

Objective 2	Activities To Reach Objective	Timeline	Key Staff Involved

Objective 3	Activities To Reach Objective	Timeline	Key Staff Involved

Objective 4	Activities To Reach Objective	Timeline	Key Staff Involved

Action Plan Tracking Tool

Instructions: For each objective, enter all activities that have been identified, then enter the specific action steps for each activity, along with the planned timeframe and person responsible. Use as many sheets as necessary to record all activities and action steps.

Objective:

Activity 1:

Action Steps	Owner	Due Date
a.		
b.		
c.		
d.		
e.		
f.		

Activity 2:

Action Steps	Owner	Due Date
a.		
b.		
c.		
d.		
e.		
f.		

Template

Fundraising Timeline

	Year 1												Year 2												Year 3											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Appendix D.

Additional Resources and Reading

Select Print Publications on Sustainability and Organizational Development

Effective fundraising for nonprofits: Real-world strategies that work. Bray, I. (2005). Berkeley, CA: Nolo Press.

This book efficiently covers everything a beginning fundraiser or new nonprofit manager needs to get started on building a strong development program. Chapter topics include "Fundraising Tools" and "Developing Your Plan," as well as getting grants, designing donor-friendly Web sites, raising money through business activities, and bequests and planned gifts. Handy checklists, highlighted tips, and forms and templates to get you started make this book highly user-friendly and practical.

Fearless fundraising for nonprofit boards, Rev. ed. Worth, G. (2003). Washington, DC: BoardSource.

Written for the individual board member as well as board chairs, development committee chairs, and chief executives, this brief book presents ways to motivate and empower board members so they wholeheartedly involve themselves in fundraising activities.

Foundation fundamentals: A guide for grantseekers, 7th ed. Schladweiler, K. (2004). New York, NY: Foundation Center.

A comprehensive guide on how to identify and cultivate foundation and corporate funding. It includes historical information on foundations, information on Internet searches, presentation strategies, planning tools, and a comprehensive list of fundraising resources.

FriendRaising: Community engagement strategies for boards who hate fundraising but love making friends. Gottlieb, H. (2006). Tucson, AZ: Renaissance Press.

This workbook is devoted to helping board members of nonprofit organizations become comfortable with the concept of "friend-raising" rather than "fundraising," offering specific activities that board members can use to expand and deepen community involvement in the organization. Based on the author's personal experiences, the workbook can be particularly helpful for boards of new nonprofits and those that are having difficulty sustaining themselves.

Fundraising for the long haul. Klein, K. (2000). Berkeley, CA: Chardon Press.

This book is an excellent resource on developing a comprehensive fundraising strategy for any grassroots organization.

The grass roots fundraising book: How to raise money in your community, Updated and Rev. ed. Flanagan, J. (1992). Chicago, IL: Contemporary Books.

This is an indispensable resource for novice community fundraisers. Flanagan includes foolproof money-making strategies already tested by hundreds of successful fundraisers, the basics of organizing special events, advice on approaching philanthropists, a step-by-step guide to direct mailing, and much more.

Grassroots fundraising journal.

An outstanding periodical with practical advice for busy nonprofit and community leaders. Subscribe or download back issue articles at: http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/

Grassroots grants: An activist's guide to grantseeking, 2nd ed. Robinson, A. (2004). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

An excellent resource on applying for grants and how to incorporate grant funding into an overall sustainability plan.

Insider's guide to grantmaking: How foundations find, fund, and manage effective programs. Orosz, J.J. (2000). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Written from the foundation staffer's perspective, this book has a lot of useful information for any program seeking foundation funds.

Secrets of successful fundraising: The best from the non-profit pros. Weisman, C. (Ed.). (2000). St. Louis, MO: F.E. Robbins & Sons Press.

This book offers fundraising tips from 19 nonprofit consultants and leaders on topics such as planned giving, hiring consultants, direct mail, grants, corporate giving, Internet fundraising, and donor recognition.

Securing your organization's future: A complete guide to fundraising strategies, Rev. ed. Selzer, M. (2001). New York, NY: Foundation Center.

This guide describes how to strengthen your nonprofit's capacity to raise funds and promote long-term stability and shows how to determine the best mix of funding resources for the long term. Worksheets and case studies help you formulate your own plan. An annotated bibliography is included.

Special events: Proven strategies for nonprofit fundraising, 2nd ed. Wendroff, A.L. (2003). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

This book provides a logical and comprehensive outline of event planning, with a special emphasis on fitting these events into the larger framework of the nonprofit's organizational goals. An accompanying CD includes sample timelines, worksheets, checklists, budgets, writing examples, decision tables, and contracts.

Select Online Publications on Sustainability and Organizational Development

Developing a sustainability plan for Weed & Seed sites. (2005). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs.

This guidebook, originally designed for local Weed & Seed programs funded by the Department of Justice, has excellent advice and a process that could easily be adapted by OSDFS mentoring programs as they plan for their post-grant services.
http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/pub/pdf/ncj210462.pdf

Effective capacity building in nonprofit organizations. Silverman, L., Taliento, L., Baumann, H., Salinas, D., McCabe, R., and Banos, M. (2001). Reston, VA: Venture Philanthropy Partners.

This comprehensive guide can help mentoring programs assess where their services fit in the community and how they can engage resources to sustain the program. Especially useful is the appendix, which features a self-assessment grid that can help a program identify areas of need beyond just funding.
http://www.dol.gov/cfbci/tlc/docs/SustainabilityLibrary_SectionD_1/Mckinsey-fullreport.pdf

Finding funding: A guide to federal sources for out-of-school time and community school initiatives, Rev. and updated ed. Padgette, H.C. (2003). Washington, DC: Finance Project.

A comprehensive resource on finding federal funding with useful tips that any program will find useful.
http://www.financeproject.org/Publications/FundingGuide2003.pdf

Fundraising ideas that work for grassroots groups. Wyman, K. (1995). Ottawa, Canada: Department of Canadian Heritage, Voluntary Action Program.

An excellent overall review of local fundraising strategies, especially for nonprofits with limited resources.
http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pc-cp/pubs/e/pdfdocs/Fr4grass.pdf

Guide to funding research. (2006). New York, NY: Foundation Center.

An excellent overview of Foundation Center resources and the basics of beginning the search for funding opportunities.
http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/gfr/

Guide to special events fundraising, 2nd ed. Wyman, K. (1990). Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Heritage, Voluntary Action Program.

This resource is a very detailed and comprehensive guide to event planning for nonprofits.
http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pc-cp/pubs/e/pdfdocs/SpecEv.pdf

The road to sustainability: Sustainability workbook. (n.d.). Flint, MI: National Center for Community Education.

This 51-page workbook includes planning tools and worksheets for developing a sus-

tainability plan, information on major funding sources for afterschool programs, and a list of resources for further learning.
http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/sustain.pdf

Rural fundraising: Success stories for CASA/GAL programs. Klein, K. (2006). Seattle, WA: National CASA Association Resource Library.

This guide describes successful and easy-to-imitate fundraising strategies for rural programs. An introductory essay titled "Raising Money in Rural Communities" is followed by 15 examples of successful strategies, from direct mail to events to earned income. Examples are described in detail, and most are accompanied by sample materials.
http://www.casanet.org/program-management/resource-dev/rural-fundraising.htm

Show us the money! Fundraising fundamentals for mentoring programs. Mentoring Plus Workshop Series. Webster, B.E. (2001). Folsom, CA: The EMT Group.

A large training resource that is also useful as a stand-alone resource, this curriculum covers many aspects of fundraising, such as grants, events, individual donations, and long-term planning.
http://emt.org/userfiles/ShowUsSeries3.pdf

Using NCLB funds to support extended learning time: Opportunities for afterschool programs [Strategy Brief]. Fortune, A., Padgette, H.C., and Fickel, L. (2005). Washington, DC: Finance Project.

This resource covers many different funding streams, such as comprehensive school reform, supplemental services, and other innovative programs.
http://www.financeproject.org/publications/usingnclbfunds.pdf

Select Organizations, Resources, and Search Tools Related to Sustainability

The American Association of Fundraising Counsel promotes and supports ethics, excellence, and leadership in advancing philanthropy. It also has a private foundation that publishes an annual report called Giving USA and keeps track of philanthropic news and trends.
http://www.aafrc.org

Business Week online has a section devoted to philanthropy, including an interactive chart of top corporate donors that shows cash and in-kind gifts, percent of gross revenue and net profits, and general giving priorities.
http://www.businessweek.com/bwdaily/philanthropy/index.html

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance is a searchable database that lists all federal funding opportunities, including some that are anticipated to be funded. Also provided are links to other government sites and tips on grantwriting.
http://www.cfda.gov

The Chronicle of Philanthropy's guide to grants, including an electronic database (fee required for use) of corporate and foundation grants.
http://philanthropy.com/

The Coalition for Community Schools advocates for community schools as the vehicle for strengthening schools, families and communities. Their Web site includes a great page on funding collaborative school-community programs, with links to additional online resources.
http://www.communityschools.org/funding.html

The Council on Foundations has an excellent free searchable database of local community foundations. If you aren't aware of the community foundations in your area, this is one way to find them quickly.
http://www.cof.org/Locator/index.cfm?menuContainerID=34&crumb=2

The Finance Project is a nonprofit research, consulting, technical assistance, and training firm for public and private sector leaders. Their Information Resource Center has useful resources on sustainability planning, including a database of promising practices.
http://www.financeproject.org/irc/promising.asp
http://www.financeproject.org/index.asp

The Foundation Center has fundraising information and links to the sites of hundreds of grantmakers. The site has a quick search engine that's available at no cost and a more comprehensive searchable database available by subscription. It also offers workshops in grantwriting and other services. Their proposal-writing tips are especially useful for novice grantwriters.
http://foundationcenter.org

The Giving Institute (formerly the Association of Fundraising Professionals) promotes best practices in the field of philanthropy. Its Web site has useful information on all kinds of resource development strategies and posts an annual report on giving in the United States.
http://www.afpnet.org/index.cfm

Grants.gov allows organizations to electronically find and apply for current competitive grant opportunities from all federal grant-making agencies. Grants.gov is the single access point for over 900 grant programs offered by the 26 federal grant-making agencies.
http://www.grants.gov

The Grantsmanship Center offers workshops in grantsmanship, fundraising publications, a free newsletter, a link to the daily digest of grant opportunities from the Federal Register, and state-by-state information on public and private funding sources.
http://www.tgci.com

Philanthropy News Network Online is a daily online news service that reports on nonprofit agencies and philanthropy.
http://www.pnnonline.org

SchoolGrants Index to Sample Proposals provides copies of successfully funded proposals for a wide variety of youth and educational initiatives.
http://www.k12grants.org/samples/samples_index.htm

United Way's site describes its national priorities and has a zip code search to find your local organization.
http://national.unitedway.org/

Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory is a tool for assessing the factors that influence the success of a collaborative partnership between two organizations. This can be a useful tool for programs seeking new partners for increased sustainability.
http://surveys.wilder.org/public_cfi/index.php

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