

## ***TIMELY TIPS from Just Grant! Arizona***

***Simplicity Counts:*** A strong proposal is a simple proposal. Don't waste words. Funders are looking for a project that will succeed -- and they have hundreds of proposals to wade through. So keep things clear, concise, concrete and *compelling*.

***The 12-12-12 Rule:*** Imagine that a reviewer is about to sit down to work on reading proposals. She's already put in a 12-hour workday. It's now 12 midnight. And your proposal is the 12th one in the stack before her. Question: What does your proposal need to be, have, do, say and look like in order not only to keep this reader awake, but to engage her interest, enthusiasm and excitement -- in other words, to help her fall in love with your proposal?

***Managing Proposal Deadlines:*** Responsible for developing a team or partnership proposal against a tight deadline? Set an internal deadline at least a week before the actual submission date -- then let all the team members know that *this* is the drop-dead date for having the proposal assembled and ready to go.

***Go for It -- With Gusto:*** According to *Grant Making Basics: A Field Guide for Funders*, an exemplary proposal "bristles with enthusiasm, urgency, passion. It suggests a group of people who can barely contain their eagerness to begin working. As a reader, you find yourself inspired and excited by their plans." So let your passion speak out!

***Federal Grants for Public Agencies:*** If you work with a county or municipal agency and you're interested in Federal funding opportunities, be sure to check out the Public Administrators Grants Network website at [www.pagnet.info](http://www.pagnet.info). Among the services: A daily posting of Federal notices pertinent to county and municipal grantseekers -- sometimes even before they're posted at the Federal websites!

***About Philanthropic Mission:*** Never make the mistake of thinking that a grantmaker's philanthropic mission is to give away money. *Mission* is always about creating change in the world -- providing opportunities for at-risk youth, protecting the environment, etc. Making grants to agencies with the know-how to create that change is simply the *strategy* the grantmaker uses to fulfill its philanthropic mission.

***MORE GRANTS RESEARCH ON THE WEB: What Doesn't Work*** -- Trying to search for prospective grantmakers using a generic search engine (Yahoo, Excite, etc.) and plugging in something like "grants for youth in Arizona."  
***What Does Work*** -- Subscribing to a credible, high-quality on-line funder database to search for appropriate private grantmakers -- then using the Web to learn more about those grantmakers you identify as a potential good match.

***GRANTS RESEARCH ON THE WEB: What doesn't work?*** Thinking of the Web as a magic wand that will instantly resolve all your grants-research issues, resulting in enormous awards with little or no effort on your part. ***What does work:*** Thinking of the Web as another research tool that can be very valuable when applied appropriately in the context of common sense and good people skills.

***Do Your Homework!:*** Research potential funders *thoroughly*. A quick look through a foundation guide isn't good enough. Call or write for guidelines, samples, and other publications. Check the funder's website. And check out recent tax filings at [GuideStar](http://www.guidestar.com) or [GrantSmart](http://www.grantsmart.com). Then apply what you've learned. Don't ignore or distort a funder's guidelines in hopes of forcing your proposal into their niche.

***Look for Person-to-Person Connections:*** Corporations in particular are interested in supporting agencies with which they have a personal connection. Who do you know who knows somebody who . . . ? Look to your board members, your volunteers, your staff and other constituents for linkages between your organization and the funder you'd like to approach.

***Keep Key Documents Handy:*** Plan ahead to save stress! Create a file with standard attachments -- such as organization charts, job descriptions, board member lists, and so on -- and keep it updated. Now when a deadline looms you can simply pull out the documents you need to submit with that proposal, rather than scrambling to locate a key document at the last minute.

**The Five-Finger Rule:** Imagine that your hand represents all the time you spend putting together a winning proposal. The four fingers -- fully 80% -- is time you should spend on various *planning activities*. Only 20% is actual writing -- but that 20% is the thumb, the part that makes all the rest work!

**Want State Dollars?:** To qualify for grants and contracts from most State of Arizona offices, you must register as a vendor with the State Procurement Office. Call (602) 542-5511, or [click here](#) for application and a list of current contract offerings.

**Funder Tax Filings:** Did you know that private grantmakers are required to make their annual federal tax filings public? Two free websites where you can check out recent 990-PFs for thousands of foundations: [GrantSmart](#) and [GuideStar](#).

**Making Your Case:** What's a "case statement"? A one-piece, written document telling your organization's story -- past, present, and future -- the way you and your stakeholders want it told. Why do you need one? Because you'll use the language every time a grantmaker's application materials ask: "Who are you? What are you all about? And how do we know we can trust you?"

**How to Ask for Feedback:** Yes, ask for feedback if your proposal is turned down. But don't ask why it was rejected - often, the dynamics of the decision process make it difficult to say. Instead, politely ask whether any suggestions or comments came up during the review that could help you strengthen or improve your proposal.

**Valuing Volunteers:** When putting together a project or program budget, be sure you include the fair-market value of all the time your volunteers will contribute. "Fair-market value" means exactly what it says: What you'd have to pay someone to perform the same work your volunteers are providing for free.