

Get More Funding: How to Find and Apply for Grants for Your Health and Counseling Center

Notes from the online roundtable session held Wednesday, April 2, 2008 at 2:00 p.m. EDT. Presenter: Diana J. Martin, Ph.D.

At what stage should I turn a request for funds over to the Advancement department or a grant writer?

- Very early on in the process, start a conversation with the department. Find out what resources they have. The fewer they have, the more work you will have to do first.
- Make sure you are clear exactly what needs you are trying to address with the request for funds. Remember, organizations don't have needs, individuals do. The need needs to be couched not in terms of your health center but in terms of your students or other clients.
- Depending on the resources in the Advancement department, you may have to do the research and find a potential source of funds first, but they will generally help you shape the proposal.

The Advancement Department and/or grant writer(s) may be far too busy with priorities other than mine. How do I work to make my priorities their priorities?

- This is key to the whole process. There are priorities built into this department's budget, so you need to make their job easier:
 - Develop a mission statement for your health or counseling center that is independent of the mission statement of the entire college or university. Remember that a mission statement outlines the reason that you exist. It should be compelling and sell your health or counseling center to others in under a minute.
 - See if you can find the strategic plan of the advancement department and if your need is in line with part of their plan – they are more likely to make it a priority if so.
 - Do your homework and identify the sources that the advancement department often gets funding from. See if they will be a good match for your needs.
- Alternatively, if you haven't got the resources on campus, there are foundations in your area that might be able to help. Look for a nonprofit with the name of your city (or the nearest large city) and the designation "Area Foundation." Many of them have free resources such as free seminars on how to write a grant proposal, and often they will have funds that are available only to organizations within that locality or region.

Are federal grants a good source of funding for college health and counseling centers?

- The federal grants landscape is likely to change after the next election. Federal grants usually depend on legislation.
- The federal register has a list of grants at www.grants.gov. You can browse the health category, by agency, or search for a particular opportunity.
- Foundation grants tend to change less than federal grants.
- The format and content of federal grant proposals are often significantly different than those for private foundation proposals. For more information about Federal Grant format and procedures, you can try this site:
http://12.46.245.173/pls/portal30/CATALOG.GRANT_PROPOSAL_DYN.show

How successful are grant applications to pharmaceutical companies? How about insurance companies?

- As is true with other types of private grants, it is best to start with vendors and those individuals who best know your organization (advisory board members, clients, donors who might have a "link" to a pharmaceutical company).
- Pharmaceutical companies tend to react to bad publicity by providing grants; so for example, if there have been news items recently about people on anti-depressants committing suicide, they are more likely to fund suicide prevention programs.
- Your Advancement department should have a subscription to the corporate section of the Foundation Center: <http://foundationcenter.org/> where you can find a list of pharmaceutical or insurance companies offering grants.
- There's also a search engine that you can use to find grants by topic: <http://www.grantsalert.com/>
- Most of the major insurance companies have major corporate giving programs. Your vendors are always a good place to start. Approach the insurance company that your university uses.

We tend to bump up against our Foundation office which tends to pursue corporate giving for the good of the entire university rather than a specific area (with the exception of athletics!). Any tips?

- The concern is that the same donors will be asked and they will give to you and then won't give to the university for the Foundation's priorities.
- The best way to tackle this is to research and identify sources that are very specific to the needs that you are trying to meet and that wouldn't necessarily give to the university for a general cause. The more specific the match is between your need and their funding source, the easier it will be to show that you are not in competition for funds.

We want to raise funds for an EMR for our Campus Health Clinic. What would you recommend?

- If you can make a clear case for it (and generally you can make a good business case for automating your health center), you should be able to get funding. Corporate grants may be a good source of funds for this.
- Nuesoft Xpress is currently offering a grant for health and counseling centers that wish to automate - it can be used toward a practice management system or an EMR. See www.nuesoftxpress.com/scholarship for details.

Sources of further information

- The Foundation Center is a great place to start gathering information. As well as listing available grants, it provides links to other resources and even provides free online courses, including one that will help you if you're actually planning to write the grant application yourself. Take a look at <http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/index.html>
- www.grants.gov is the place to research federal funds.
- www.healthinschools.org also features a current list of available grants. The site is for high schools and elementary schools as well as colleges, but some grants are relevant for all categories
- <http://www.philanthropy.com> is a great site with news and resources that calls itself "the newspaper for nonprofits".