

FOCUS

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community health care services foundation, inc.
*the premier educational resource
for home care and hospice*

2005 Calendar

CHC's 2005 Calendar of Education is included with this issue of *Focus*. If you have suggestions for program topics, please let us know: 518/463-1167 or chc@chcforum.org.

Look for more web conferencing from CHC

CHCHC will extensively employ the use of technology in combination with traditional onsite education during the presentation of the 2005 Calendar of Education. CHC has enjoyed widespread success in presenting audio programming over the past two years and plans to continue offering sessions on various topics using this method. In addition to basic audio presentations and onsite programs, CHC will incorporate web conferencing on its calendar for some programs offered in 2005.

With just a telephone, computer and an Internet connection, web conferencing uses the power of the Internet to reduce costs and at the same time offer high quality educational sessions with top-notch speakers and detailed session materials in an easy-to-use manner. Travel to a meeting site is completely eliminated when you meet on the Internet. Time and travel expenses are saved and the convenience of using a phone line and computer in combination makes this modern day approach highly valuable. Here's a brief overview of how webcasting works and what it can offer.

Collaboration. Projects can be discussed in real time by all participants. All attendees can view information

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Getting your grant: first steps

By Charissa Ashman

Several readers have contacted me to discuss various project ideas that they have for their organizations or to get assistance with identifying some funding sources and help with various grant proposal components.

As a result, the next few issues of *Focus* will contain some general information on the proposal writing process and provide you with some writing tips from grantees who have written successful proposals as well as from foundations that have funded them. Now let's get started.

In the beginning

Anyone who has put together a grant knows that this process can be overwhelming! A successful grant is one that is well-written, organized according to the funder's specific criteria and thoughtfully planned out. Those of you who have never written a grant proposal may find it useful to attend a grant-writing workshop.

When you have an idea, be sure to determine if this idea has been awarded in the past for the same geographic area that you are proposing it for. You will want to ensure that there are significant differences or improvements in the proposed project

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First steps . . .

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and that these can be clearly identified. A good question to ask is “why is this program or project needed in my community?” You will need to provide a summary of such need in your proposal.

You will also want to make sure that your project is well-aligned with your organization’s mission and that your organization can effectively deliver the project if and when it is funded. Make sure you have letters of support early on from a number of private, public, and government agencies as well as public officials in the community. If you have space limitations for your grant proposal, it is always good to list the various letters of support, including any financial contributions being made to the grant from any of these organizations. One useful way to obtain community support is through the formation of a forum or a task force that brings together various organizations in the community that are concerned with the project.

Components of a Proposal

The type of proposal you write will depend upon the funding source(s) that you identify for your project. Some will require an initial letter of intent or a project summary while some require a full-blown, formal proposal. Either way, you will want to become familiar with some of the basic components of a grant proposal. The following section provides a brief overview of these components:

Executive or Proposal Summary: The executive summary briefly outlines (one page or less) the proposed project and key summary points. This is typically prepared after the proposal has been developed because it summarizes the entire proposal for the reviewer(s). The initial impression given by your summary will likely be critical to the success of your request for funding.

Organizational Description: Most proposals require a description of your organization somewhere in the proposal or in the Appendix section. Key features to highlight are the mission and goals of your organization; major accomplishments; prior experience with administering grants; programs and activities you undertake; and qualifications of your staff or Board.

Who might fund your project?

It is important to have an idea of the general types of funding sources that exist. Also, you will need to carefully research the interests of each grantmaker, the types of projects it has funded in the past as well as the award sizes, and the funding guidelines. It is a good idea to call the contact telephone number if you feel there is a good fit. Having a foundation contact helps open the lines of communication. The contact may offer suggestions, criticisms, and advice for your project.

A summary of common funding sources:

Private foundations are established to maintain or aid social, educational, religious, or other charitable activities primarily through grants. A private foundation is a nongovernmental, nonprofit organization with an endowment (usually donated from a single source, such as an individual, family, or corporation) and program managed by its own trustees or directors. Foundations have annual reports and guidelines available on their websites. Most foundations will *not* fund projects requesting 100 percent funding. Therefore, it is important to seek funding from a variety of sources.

Government grants are issued through a “Request for Applications” process, generally posted in the *Federal Register* or on State or Federal websites. Most grants go to nonprofit organizations that meet the various requirements of the grant. There are usually deadlines for submitting applications that are often not negotiable. Each government agency has different programs that you need to investigate in order to determine if a fit exists.

Corporations include company-sponsored foundations and corporate giving programs. A company-sponsored foundation (also referred to as a corporate foundation) is a private foundation whose assets are derived primarily from the contributions of a for-profit business. Corporate giving programs are grantmaking programs established and administered within a for-profit business organization. The key to obtaining this support is convincing the corporation that your program complements its business and that the corporation will get something positive out of it (publicity, recognition, market share, etc.). These grants may require less formality than foundation and government grants.

Community foundations are 501(c)(3) organizations that make grants for charitable purposes in a specific community or region. The funds available to a community foundation are usually derived from many donors and held in an endowment that is independently administered; income earned by the endowment is then used to make grants. While the award sizes may vary from region to region, these grants are typically less sizeable than other grantmaking types.

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The Problem Statement: This is a key component of your proposal because it provides a background on why you want to undertake the project to begin with. Sometimes called a “needs assessment,” this section should clearly and concisely demonstrate the problem(s) that exist for a particular geographic area. You will want to provide as much data or empirical evidence as possible to support your claims.

Project Objectives and Goals: Project objectives refer to specific accomplishments that you will need to achieve the overall project goals. Objectives should be measurable and tied to a finite time-period. Goals are the prospective outcomes the project will help reach.

Methods (Work plan): These are the specific activities that you will undertake in order to meet your defined objectives. Here, you will tell the reviewer just how you will go about carrying out your project and also provide a timeline for each activity.

Evaluation: The funding source may or may not require an external evaluator. Either way, you will want to outline just how you will measure the results that are attributed to the project as well as the extent to which the project has satisfied its desired objectives. You will also want to evaluate the effectiveness of various activities that were performed. Most evaluations are done at the end of the grant period; however, ongoing data collection and refinements throughout the life of the grant are required.

Sustainability: You will want to describe your plans for continuing the project beyond the grant period and what the average annual expenses are to sustain it. Discussion

Provide as much data or empirical evidence as possible to support your claims.

of other potential funding sources should be highlighted here as well as any in-kind contributions that you expect to receive.

Budget: For the project budget, you will need to itemize all expenses associated with the project and provide a justification for each expense. While each funding source may require a slightly different format, common budget categories include: personnel, equipment, supplies, consultants, travel and indirect costs. Also, some funding institutions do not cover any indirect expenses.

Appendices: There will most likely be a page limit for this section. Some relevant items to include are letters of support; resumes or job descriptions of key personnel; evaluation design and data sources; and relevant financial information.

While writing a grant may appear scary at first, once you have assembled some of the components of a generic proposal, you have made a good start. In future issues of *Focus*, we will delve into each of the above proposal components in greater detail. For relevant websites and alerts about grant opportunities, HCP members can access the Grant Center in the *Members Only* section of the HCP website (www.nyshcp.org/members).

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Web conferencing . . .

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simultaneously, as if everyone was gathered around one table. An example of where this function might be used is in group discussions about the session topic.

Sharing. It is easy to access a web conference using your computer and the Internet. Application sharing allows you to share information from any software program, regardless of what applications are on your own computer.

Presentation. Adding a PowerPoint presentation to a webcast improves the level of communication. This distance learning method supplies participants with nearly the same components offered in traditional onsite sessions. Other software applications can also be used instead of PowerPoint or in addition to it.

Archive. Web meetings can be saved for review by those who could not attend the original session. For CHC’s educational presentations this feature allows the creation of a “library” of education.

Additional Benefits. Webcasting generally allows additional people from an agency to participate on a single registration fee. It also allows CHC the freedom to consider using speakers from any part of the country without incurring the cost of bringing them to New York. Evaluations of CHC programs have indicated that increasingly busy home care and hospice executives appreciate receiving crucial education and training with the added benefit of virtually zero travel time and expense.

Maximize your educational experiences

By Ellen Dollard



educational programs and seminars are outstanding opportunities for learning and personal growth. CHC programs offer timely, relevant information designed to help you do your job better. What you learn at CHC programs adds to your personal and professional knowledge base and should be taken back to your agency, applied and shared with your colleagues.

The objective is to learn. Don't focus on what you already know...watch and listen for one or two new ideas from the presenter. By the end of the session you may have a dozen new facts, resources or inspirations. You may hear something that could change your understanding, alter your approach to a project or be a motivating fact for you or a colleague.

Don't be reluctant to ask questions if you get lost or need something repeated.

As you listen, try to apply the presenter's concepts. Think about how the session information applies to you, your agency, your personality and goals. New information can add value in many areas of your life.

Lower your sensitivity meter. You are attending to gain information, not to be sensitive to specific remarks or a person's style of speaking. If you expect perfection, you might be disappointed. Try not to criticize the presenter; instead help make the session dynamic by listening carefully and responding to the presentation. Speakers enjoy attendees who ask questions.

Understand the program. Before arriving at the meeting site, review the program brochure and read the speaker's biography. You will arrive better prepared and ready to learn. You can always call CHC prior to the session to have your questions about the program answered.

Sit with a stranger and make a new acquaintance . . .networking with colleagues is a popular benefit of attending CHC programs.

Listen with the intent to understand. A willing listener will absorb more information than a critic. Don't be reluctant to ask questions if you get lost or need something repeated. Presenters genuinely care that their audience understand the material they are presenting. You might be asking a question for others attending the program who are too shy to speak up.

and CHC and take additional notes to make the material "yours." Review the program materials and notes when you return to your agency. Upon returning to work, describe the session to a colleague—this exercise will help make the information yours.

Take notes. Use the materials prepared by the speaker

Sit next to someone you don't know. If you sit with people you know, you'll be tempted to chat—a big distraction from listening and learning. Sit with a stranger and make a new acquaintance. At refreshment breaks make a point of meeting at least one other new person. Networking with industry colleagues is a popular benefit of attending CHC programs.

Turn off distractions. Put away your calendar, newspaper and cell phone. Take full, uninterrupted advantage of your time and investment in this program by eliminating distractions. It will benefit you and others will appreciate your courtesies.

Find the best seat. The best seat for you is the one you choose. Arrive early enough at the meeting site to have the luxury of choosing your "best" seat.

Think about where you would see and hear the presenter most clearly and make that space yours.

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