

1Minute with 1Vision

Foundations are People, Too

It's fall and another round of grant making is about to happen. Nonprofits around the globe are awaiting the distribution of wealth stored up in American private and public foundations. Anyone in the nonprofit world wonders how he or she can share, too.

The first point to remember is that Foundations, no matter their portfolio size or mission scope, are comprised of PEOPLE. Duh, you might say. Yet, take a look at your proposals. Is your tone personal and winning – or cold and clinical?

5 More Points To Help You Win the Granting Game

- ❑ **Do Your Homework.** Review the foundation's grant guidelines and online info for a sense of what they fund or don't fund. Be prepared to ask clarifying questions, but not questions whose answers can be found on their website.
- ❑ **Call Second.** Foundations have executives and board members who love to help. They wouldn't be in that position if their hearts weren't oversized! And they know more about their organization, its history and expectations, than you do. You'll be surprised at their eagerness to make a successful match.
- ❑ **Seek to Understand.** Coming in with a set need amount and detailed project may seem like the intuitive thing to do. We have seen it work exactly opposite, however. If you begin by learning the foundation's goals, you may end up a completely different (and better) project outcome.
- ❑ **Be Flexible.** This point is much like the one above it – with a sharper point. The suggestions you get from the foundation representatives may alter your original view, but it often results in a win/win.
- ❑ **Learn from Your Proposals.** Don't take a one-and-done mentality into this process. Foundations manage their assets to be around for decades. Think of your relationship in those terms, too.

"If your application wasn't funded, it's a natural tendency to ask the funder why. But even proposals that are funded could probably be improved. Don't be afraid to contact the funder and ask for feedback on both declined and approved proposals. It'll put you in a better position if you use a similar proposal with another funder." This advice is from Tom Wickersham, Program Director, Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa. Thanks, Tom!

Sincerely,



Blake Conover, President