

Notes from Foundation Roundtable Workshop at the VRHA Conference Dec. 9, 2011

Presentation and facilitation by Sarah Jane Stewart, Program Officer, Virginia Health Care Foundation

Tips:

1. Call the foundation first to express your interest in applying for a grant.
2. The grant application process is relational. The applicant gets to know the foundation, and the foundation wants to know about the applicant. The John Randolph Foundation has a monthly information session for potential grantees. Make an appointment with the program officer to lay out your plans and get feedback.
3. When writing your concept paper or proposal, be succinct on the first page. Don't repeat yourself.
4. Follow the guidelines of the foundation. Read the instructions!
5. Make sure your budget adds up and that it relates to what you have outlined in your proposal. Make it reasonable; don't ask for too much.
6. Start with the needs statement of local data and show how you intend to meet the need.
7. Know your neighbors and "competitors". Make partnerships instead of competitions wherever possible. Collaborate.
8. Write the proposal as if you are talking to someone who knows nothing about your organization or your project.
9. Common mistakes or omissions:
 - a. Not following instructions – number of copies, right forms, using clips or staples,
 - b. Not knowing how much to ask for; inflating numbers in the budget
 - c. Numbers in the budget not adding up
 - d. Not asking for help from the foundation
 - e. Not following advice of program officer
 - f. Not proofreading for grammar and spelling. Have someone else review it. Don't wait 'til the last minute when you don't have time to check for errors.
 - g. Changing the proposal from what was stated in the concept paper.
10. What do you tell applicants whose proposals you reject?
 - a. Tell the truth
 - b. Applicants may call the program officer, especially if the letter invites you to do so.
 - c. The "no" may be about strategic readiness. Continue the dialog with the foundation.
 - d. Some foundations offer to meet with the rejected grantee and offer help, as with creating a business plan. It's an opportunity to help them be stronger.

Foundations Represented:

Augusta Health Foundation – Linda Johnson

Bedford Health Foundation – Donna Proctor

Cameron Foundation – Athan Lindsay

John Randolph Foundation – Lisa Sharpe

Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth – Henry Harper

Wythe-Bland Community Foundation - Gail Catron