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The Hospital Grantsmanship Center: A New Role for Hospital Librarians

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Abstract

Securing external support from competitive grants, corporate sponsorships, and fund raising is a growing area of interest in many types of non-profit organizations, including health care. Many different types of grants are available from both public and private agencies at the national, state, and local levels which can provide additional support to the hospital's mission of patient care, teaching, and research. Patient care professionals as well as administrators are often unaware of what external funding opportunities are available, and how to secure those funds. Hospital Librarians have the opportunity to establish new roles as resources for information about grants which are available by developing library resources and expanding their expertise about the grant writing process. Hospital librarians are ideally suited to promote grantsmanship in their organizations, and can make a valuable contribution by teaching the grant writing process. The Grants Information Service established by the Governors State University Library is a model that can be adapted by hospital librarians for hospital libraries.

KEYWORDS: Grant writing, librarian role, research support, library instruction, grants, funding

Introduction

Health care financing is tighter than ever, and there is fierce competition for allocation of funds in the hospital budget between administrative, patient care, and support services areas. Many hospitals are fortunate to have fund raising as part of

infrastructure of the organization, which typically includes auxiliaries and volunteer groups, or are fortunate to enjoy support from external sources such as community foundations and businesses, providing a supplemental source of funds for special projects, equipment, buildings, and services. New sources of revenue is always welcome, and auxiliary groups lead the way with gift shops, thrift shops, and gala fund raising events. These fund raising groups are an important part of community support for the hospital's mission and for communicating the hospitals goals and plans to the community.

The hospital may also have a foundation as part of the structure of the organization, with paid staff. The foundation focuses on securing financial resources for the hospital and investing funds to provide an endowment for future needs. The foundation's staff may also provide expertise for grant writing and managing grant funds.

An emerging role

At the October 2005 Health Science Librarians of Illinois conference held in Bloomington, IL, a continuing education course on grant writing was well attended. Although the course focused on grant writing for medical library programs and services, the librarians who attended, many from rural and community hospitals, expressed growing interest in their hospitals for grant writing to support research and scholarship. Participants took note that a new role for hospital librarians seems to be emerging in Illinois. In one community, a hospital librarian who had worked between two hospitals was forced to close one of his libraries. The corporate office of the other hospital, located in another city, asked him to come work in their foundation office to undertake the

research of potential foundation support during the hours he previously worked at the closed hospital library. The corporation is operated by a religious order and runs institutions in several Midwestern states. He reports that his work thus far is to research potential funders and their giving interests, and what programs they have funded previously in order to determine if they would be a potential partner for the foundation. At the time of this writing, he anticipates becoming directly involved in writing grant proposals in the near future.

Many hospitals are not so fortunate to have extensive fund raising and endowment functions, or have extensive volunteer networks, much less have staff experienced in grant writing. However, many potential sources of seed money, research funds, and supplemental support for the hospital's programs and services go untapped or unrecognized simply because no one knows about them. Further, there is a lack of basic understanding of how many different types of funding are available, and how external funding can be brought into the organization. External support in the form of grants should not be overlooked by hospital staff who are seeking ways to improve patient care, expand services, support patient care research, or to support professional development.

The grant writing consulting group Miner & Associates, Inc., has identified 24 different types of grants¹:

- Capacity Building Grant: money to build the infrastructure of an organization
- Challenge Grant: money used as a magnet to attract additional funds
- Conference Grant: money to cover the expenses of holding a conference seminar, or workshop
- Construction Grant: money for constructing new physical facilities
- Consulting Grant: money to hire consultants for an organization or project
- Demonstration Grant: money to document that a particular project or idea actually works

- Dissemination Grant: money to spread the outcomes of a successful project to key stakeholders
- Endowment Grant: money kept permanently and invested to provide continued income to an organization
- Equipment Grant: money to purchase new or replacement equipment or instruments
- Exhibition Grant: money to prepare and publicly present an exhibit
- General Purpose Grant: unrestricted money to further the general work of an organization, as opposed to restricted funds for a specific purpose
- Land Acquisition Grant: money to purchase real estate property
- Matching Grant: money to attract funds provide by another donor
- Operating Grant: money to cover the daily costs of running an existing program or organization
- Planning Grant: money to assess the need for and develop plans to implement a project
- Publication Grant: money to publish a report, book, or magazine
- Renovation Grant: money to renovate, remodel, or rehabilitate property
- Research Grant: money to cover the costs of investigations or clinical trials
- Scholarship Grant: money to cover the education expenses of students
- Seed Grant: money to start up or begin a new project or organization
- Special Project Grant: money to support specific projects or programs as opposed to general purpose grants
- Subvention Grant: money to offset commercial publication costs
- Training Grant: money to train or instruct others in a method, technique, or procedure
- Travel Grant: money to cover travel expenses

Rosalind Dudden's article in Vol. 1 (3) of the Journal of Hospital Librarianship, "Grant Writing and the Hospital Librarian", focuses on the hospital librarian's efforts as a grant writer to promote and expand library-based services². I envision that hospital librarians can become grantsmanship experts for the entire hospital and teachers of the grant writing process. The University Library of Governors State University (GSU) has established a model for providing grants information and teaching the grants process which can be easily adapted to the hospital library setting. This article will set forth a model and strategies for a grantsmanship center based on the GSU library experience, and discuss some early trends among hospital librarians in Illinois.

Organizing a Grants Information Service

In 2003, the provost asked the University Library to designate a librarian as the distributor of grant announcements to interested grant writers on campus, pending the establishment of an external funding office. These particular alerts are published by the Grants Resource Center (GRC) of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and are a benefit of membership. This 400 member organization is based in Washington, D.C., and advocates for higher education on behalf of its membership at the federal level. GRC staff members provide additional consultation services and liaison between the AASCU membership and federal agency staff.

Establishing the Grants Information Service has been a learning process, but response over the past 3 years has been positive from constituents. Many books and online resources have been invaluable to the library faculty in learning more about the grant writing process and to develop services and resources. The library itself has been successful in writing library grants in recent years, lending substance and credibility to the grants information librarian role.

In addition to distributing alerts provided by the GRC, the Grants Information Librarian publishes a web page at <http://www.govst.edu/library/grant> which sets forth additional services. This grants web page contains a bibliography of the library's grant writing books, and a list of online resources. The grants librarian provides training on how to use the library's grants databases, and consults with proposal writers on specific grant projects. A brochure was produced in Word format which markets the Grants Information Service to new faculty and staff. The Grants Information Librarian has also

organized faculty workshops on various topics, and has developed and taught a brief 2 hour workshop on the basics of grant writing. All of these services can be provided by the hospital librarian at minimal cost. The key to understanding the grants process is to learn about the primary sources of available funding.

Federal Governmental Sources

For the hospital librarian, many sources of grants information from federal, state, and local governments are available for free via the World Wide Web. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA), published by the General Services Administration (GSA), is “a database of all federal programs available to state and local governments (including the District of Columbia); federally-recognized Indian tribal governments; territories (and possessions) of the United States; domestic public, quasi-public, and private profit and nonprofit organizations and institutions; specialized groups; and individuals.”³ It is published online at www.gsa.gov/cfda and is available to purchase in print format. The CFDA is a central repository for all government aid programs, including competitive grant programs which are the focus of this article. Specific announcements and application procedures are available from the specific government agency who administers the program. The CFDA and specific agencies often have written guides and tutorials to assist the grant writer in the proposal writing process readily available on their web sites.

The application process for federal grants is currently transitioning from a paper based application process to online. Grants.gov (www.grants.gov) is growing in importance as a clearinghouse for grants announcements and contracting information

from federal agencies. Specific information, instructions, policy directives, and grants administration manuals concerning funding opportunities are typically found from the specific agency's web site, such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which publishes its own Grantsnet web site at www.hhs.gov/grantsnet. The GrantsNet web site explains that HHS has approximately 300 grant programs, most of which are administered in a decentralized manner. GrantsNet is not a central repository for all of the HHS grant programs; the grant seeker is referred back to the CFDA.

Grants and contract programs from specific HHS agencies will be of interest to hospitals and health care systems. Agency web sites, such as the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and National Institutes of Health (NIH) have specific program areas. HRSA currently has these program focus areas:

- Primary Health Care
- HIV/AIDS
- Health Facilities
- Health Professions
- Healthcare Systems
- Maternal and Child Health
- Organ Transplantation
- Rural Health
- Special Programs
- Tele-Health.

Email alert profiles can be set up by anyone with an email address according to specific criteria from the specific agency, or from grants.gov. A hospital librarian could easily create email alerts, edit the alerts once received, and forward them to interested local grant writers.

Registering with the Federal Government

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Both the department of Health and Human Services and the National Science Foundation (NSF) (www.nsf.gov) also issues funding announcements on Grants.gov. Not all agencies use Grants.gov exclusively for grants submission online. However, the NSF currently uses both Grants.gov and its own online application platform, Fastlane, for online applications. Currently, cooperative agreement proposals to the NSF can only be submitted to the NSF Fastlane service.

Grants.gov and the NSF both require the institution to register as an e-business point of contact, and designate an Authorized Organizational Representative <AOR>. In online grant submissions, the grant writer may submit the online application, but part of the grant application process is completed by another representative of the institution, the AOR. In order to register, your institution also must have a DUNS number. DUNS stands for Data Universal Number System, and is a unique nine-character number provided by the company Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). A number can be requested by calling 1-866-705-5711. Another number which is requested in grant applications is the FEIN number (Federal Employer Identification Number), which is provided by the Internal Revenue Service upon application.

State and local governments

State and local government agencies also publish and distribute grant opportunity announcements which are of interest to hospitals, and may also serve as clearinghouses for federal funding. Places to look for health care government funding announcements on the web are:

- State departments of public health example, the Washington State Department of Health, Office of Community and Rural Health grants page: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/ocrh/grantfunding.htm>

- Local public health departments
- The Rural Assistance Center (www.raconline.org)
- State boards of education and higher education
- State governors and executive officers web sites (Word of mouth news is that the Illinois Lieutenant Governor distributes grants announcements on interest to health and human services via an informal email list)
- State and local legislators

Federal and state agency web sites often provide extensive information about funding cycles, program focus, deadlines, and upcoming initiatives. If you can't find an answer online, don't be afraid to contact the program officer or department directly by phone or email. Liaisons such as those of the GRC can be a valuable source of background information, and may provide consultation regarding your grant project. If you have no liaison type person with the state or federal agency, by all means contact the agency directly and discuss your funding search.

Legislators and their office staff can be important sources of information about state and federal funding opportunities, or they can help create those funding opportunities which are needed. The Donors Forum of Chicago publishes the "Advocate's Guide to the Illinois State Budget"⁴ which details how the budget process in Illinois works, and how to work with legislators to develop budgetary priorities. A timeline of the Illinois budget process is published in a poster form further illustrates the process of funding public policy priorities.⁵

Earmarks

The availability of funding for hospital projects through federal and state legislators should be considered. "Earmarks" are a time honored means of funding local programs and projects outside of federal and state agency oversight. From swimming

pools to street lights, earmark funds can make things happen locally. Also (negatively) referred to as “pork barrel” appropriations, requesting earmark funds might be a means to get seed money for a desperately needed local program or capital equipment.

At GSU, the library received \$35,000 as part of a recent state earmark to develop a Center for Excellence in the Health Professions within the College of Health Professions. The library was asked to submit a proposal for supporting the center and its initiative to advance online learning in the health professions programs. The library documented a need to increase access to online journals and e-books in nursing and allied health subjects, and proposed funds to build a collection to support the training of faculty in online pedagogical methods in the health professions. The \$35,000 award was a substantial boost to the library’s materials budget, which had lost over \$1 million in funds in the past 5 years due to reduced state appropriations.

Securing earmark funding involves the development of a relationship with a legislator and the legislator’s staff, inviting them to your hospital, discussing with them your organization’s needs, and working with them to get things done. Since you are a constituent, the legislators will at least welcome the opportunity to hear about your local need. Earmarks go through periodic scrutiny and criticism in public policy debates, but have a long legislative history, go back to the days of the founding fathers.⁶

Foundation and Business (Private) Sources

Information about foundation and business grants is also available for free or minimal cost through the internet. The Foundation Center (fdncenter.org) publishes the Philanthropy News Digest for free on their web page which includes grant

announcements and email alerts. Their web site publishes open access to a foundation directory, and a database of IRS 990 filings for free. Other open access directories, such as GrantsStar <www.grantstar.org> have similar information. Of course, more specific grant searches can be conducted in their subscription databases.

Regional grantsmanship centers, such as the Donors Forum of Chicago, may provide additional free online resources and email alerts.

Another strategy I have used is to search Google News and create news alerts. From the news alert, ideas for potential funders are generated. Local newspapers should be monitored for grants information. For example, the Chicago Tribune publishes a weekly column on grants and giving in the “At Random” column, often written by the staff writer Charles Storch. This column reports charitable giving in the Chicago metro area. As the GSU library has online access to the Chicago Tribune, it is possible to set up email alerts of this column as well.

Grant writing consultants such as L. Miner and Associates (<http://www.minerandassociates.com>) might publish newsletters online. Miner and Associates newsletters have helpful grant writing tips, for free.

In addition to the great online resources which have been presented, some thought should be given to adding print resources to the hospital library collection. Inexpensive monographs on the grants process are readily available, and print directories are useful when using the computer is not feasible.

Teaching the Grants Process

After the librarian develops familiarity with the sources of grants and other external funding, teaching the process to others becomes possible. Many folks just don't have time to find a book, or attend an all day grant writing workshop at the local junior college. The cost of attending an all day workshop may also be prohibitive.

Teaching the grants process based on your own comfort level and competency will be of great benefit to others. Many free grant writing tutorials and other resources are available on the web which can be used to improve knowledge. The Foundation Center and the Chicago Donors Forum provide excellent examples (see below for descriptions and URL's). Attending a workshop on grant writing can be helpful as well. If there is a grantsmanship center in your community, it may make sense to develop a relationship with them and refer people to them. You, however, know your organization and its needs and goals. You can develop a workshop based on the specific needs of your users and make it as long or short as you would like. At GSU, I have developed and taught an "Introduction to the Basics" workshop which is 2 hours in length. In this workshop, I cover these topics:

- Types of funding sources
- GSU Information Resources
- Project planning
- Components of a proposal
- Characteristics of a good proposal
- How Funding Decisions are Made
- Successful management of a grant award

The purpose of this workshop is to give a good basis for the participant to continue their own research and to set them on the right track. Two hours seems to be an appropriate length for a "free" workshop, and busy faculty, staff, and students can more easily work it into their schedules. The workshop in its current form consists of a

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presentation and open discussion, with power point slide handouts. Hands-on exercises could be added but would add to the length of the workshop. The library's Grant Writing page provides additional support and information at www.govst.edu/library/grant .

The workshop that I teach is open to the faculty, staff, and students, as well as community members. Preregistration is requested but not required, and it is free. Opening your workshops to no-profit organizations in your service area could help build linkages to your wider community.

Creating Organizational Support for Grant Funding

The Foundation Center provides excellent statistical reports and analysis of foundation support through open access publications on its web site. *Health Policy Research and Foundation Grantmaking* is an example of several health related trends reports which document how foundation support to health care continues to grow (<http://fdncenter.org/gainknowledge/research/specialtrends.html>). In addition, statistical reports on grants makers and grants provide substantial information on funding for health care. A recently published series of reports which spotlight the state of Ohio illustrate the extent of support which is available from private foundations for health care organizations. Also, a report on the Top 50 foundations for healthcare shows that the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation is the largest private foundation which supports healthcare. Reports are available for each state, broken down by subject focus area.

The hospital should have some infrastructure in place to handle grant support in terms of policy and procedure, and an understanding of what needs to be done to secure and administer a grant. The Federal Grants Management Handbook, a loose leaf update

resource available from Thompson Learning, is one publication which specifies policies and procedures which are needed.⁷ The publisher also will provide institutional support in answering particular questions as part of the subscription. In the proposal writing process, there needs to be a clear picture of what approvals are needed, the business office procedures for accepting the funds and accounting for them, a record keeping process, and a coordination of what proposals move forward and to whom. I have heard that in organizations that have no central grants office, it is easy for several departments to approach the same foundation, agency, or company with a request without knowing that the other one has done it.

An external funding office will be established at Governors State with the hiring of an Interim director with years of experience in running a grants office. As this office is established and developed, the Grants Information Librarian's role will continue to evolve, although it is expected that information services will most likely continue, and the library will work collaboratively with the external funding office. It would be useful for some office to keep a file of grant submissions and rejections, and to use successful grant projects as evidence in securing future grants. A librarian can help collect basic demographic data that all grant writers might need such as demographics of the community and hospital staff <racial, ethnic, socio-demographic data>, population, bed census, etc. A history of the organization is useful in grant proposals. A list of the ID numbers such as DUNS, FEIN, tax ID number, etc. is also helpful. A contact list of successful grant writers who would be willing to mentor the novice grant writer would also be useful.

Conclusion

The establishment of the library as a center for grantsmanship will take time and effort, but has the potential to give the library new constituents to serve. Planning for new services and learning about the grants process from reading, attending workshops, and talking to successful grant writers will help point the way to provide new support for research, scholarship, and programs for the hospital. Teaching the grants process will strengthen the librarian as a vital part of the hospital's staff, and a team player in reaching the organization's goals.

More Resources

Video

“How to Teach Grant Seeking to Others”, 1997. 20 minute video. “This program shows how to develop courses and supplements that teach successful grant seeking. It discusses building a curriculum, integrating outside speakers, creating a proposal development workshop, and using research technology. It describes techniques for generating ideas and addresses follow-up and evaluation. Available from Insight Media. www.insight-media.com .

Books

Kaderka, SR, Editor. Government Grant Writing for Nonprofits. Austin, TX: Alex eSolutions, Inc., 2004. Loose-leaf.

Thompson Learning, et al. Federal Grants Management Handbook. Washington: Grants Management Advisory Service. Loose-leaf, monthly updates. Also available online. Available from Thompson Learning, www.thompson.com . Guides grantees through the administrative requirements associated with winning a Federal grant. While the Federal Grants Management Handbook covers regulations and policies that affect grants management government-wide, you also may subscribe to one or more Federal Agency Reference Chapters to find out details about individual agencies.

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Online Tutorials

Foundation Center Learning Lab <http://fdncenter.org/learn>

Includes a Virtual Classroom, Online Librarian, Online Bookshelf, and Training for Grantseekers.

Donors Forum of Chicago Library <http://www.donorsforum.org/library/library.html>

The Donors Forum of Chicago Library is a cooperating collection of the Foundation Center. Their “Grantseekers Toolbox” and online video “Fundraising Journey” are published on their website.

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