

20 TIPS EVERY STRATEGIC GRANT SEEKER SHOULD KNOW



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Introduction

Sesame Street would not have come to fruition without the progressive insight of a grant maker. There is no better way of underscoring the importance of benevolent donors than using an example responsible for educating generations of children worldwide. Many other progressive and innovative examples exist of this type of forward-thinking support, from the expansive Gates Health Initiatives to the Soros Foundation's support of Internet activities promoting Open Societies early in the technology's mass appeal.

Still, donor support logic eludes many grant seekers who are passionate about their issues, and may have excellent projects, but still have difficulty securing donor support. This guide is designed to shed some light on the process, providing practical insight and advice to grant seekers who wish to "Step up their game" and be more strategic in their approach. It is written from *firsthand experience* by a grant maker, grant seeker and founding board member of an operating foundation. It is effective because it follows the Native American adage, "don't judge any man until you have walked two moons in his moccasins".

20 Tips Every Strategic Grant Seeker should know explores the issues from a *grant maker's* perspective, providing grant seekers insight into the dynamics of the donor decision making process and the reasoning behind it. Most importantly, it provides the grant seeker strategies to leverage these dynamics. The twenty-four page guide is written in *very* practical terms. Each page describes a distinct donor behavior or practice, a brief description of why it occurs, its effect, and finally a strategy for the grant seeker to leverage or avoid it.

No doubt, readers will immediately recognize some donor behaviors in experiences they've had seeking grants. Other times a particular tip may not apply to a donor. Keep in mind there are tens of thousands of individual donor institutions spanning corporations, governments, communities and private individuals. Each has its own unique institutional culture. These tips define behavioral trends and dynamics typical of *the donor sector*, and not every individual donor. Nor are they based on any particular institution. Some tips are more universal, like the important elements to put in a grant proposal. If there is a "21st Tip" it is to be cognizant of the organizational dynamics of the solicited institution, and apply the appropriate tips based on intelligence gained from firsthand experience and peer institutions.

Readers will also note some of the same points made in multiple tips. This is to demonstrate how the tips relate to each other and reinforce the overall behavioral dynamics common to the grant giving sector. Expect to have at least one "A-Ha" moment reading the tips and accumulating insight into donor behavior not previously considered.

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