

# GRANT SEEKING TIPS

## 8 Important Steps to Obtaining Grants for Your Child Care Program

Information to Share with Child Care Providers

Adapted from Childcare Online – [www.childcare.net](http://www.childcare.net)

### Step 1. Conduct Research

Begin with a search for local, provincial/state, federal and private funders. Most of your research can be conducted online. We've set up a complete **Grants** section to get you started.

Your first stop should be your local licensing office, child care resource and referral agency, and child care organizations. They'll have the scoop on local initiatives as well as the other major funding programs such as:

- Head Start
- Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and TANF
- Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Even Start
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

While the list above represents the vast majority of funding for child care, you may be able to unearth a valuable grantor right in your own community from such community service organizations as the Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, United Way, Junior League, college fraternities and sororities, and so on. Check your local telephone Yellow Pages under "Clubs" for these and other service organizations in your area.

County or city governments may have special funding initiatives for child care, as may local early childhood professional organizations or child care resource and referral agencies. If your program serves families from a core group of employers in your community, you may consider asking these companies, and any professional organizations associated with them, for assistance.

In addition to monetary resources, you may wish to investigate possibilities for "in-kind" contributions from these same sources. Volunteer services, goods, materials, or equipment may be offered to assist program development or operation. Again, your local Yellow Pages may list Fundraising Counselors and Organizations that can provide further technical assistance in your search for child care funding.

Write down every funding lead you find using a **Grant Search Lead** form, like the one available on **childcare.net**. This will allow you to gather the sources in a logical way and help you to determine if the lead is worth pursuing.

While you're on the hunt for potential funders through the avenues listed below, there are a number of online resources that can help you make your way through the grantseeking maze.

- **Local Community Funders** (United Way, service clubs, Chamber or Commerce and Women's business groups, unions, other organizations that make charitable contributions to your community)

- **Corporations** (Sponsorships, employee contribution programs, in-kind donations and services, joint promotions, etc.)
- **Public charities** (Foundations, government programs, etc.)
- **Individuals** (Drives through local campaigns for public support, which could include bingo, raffles, direct mail donation cards, door-to-door canvassing, etc.).

You can learn more about the fundraising strategies listed above in the best seller used by fundraisers, household name charities, and neighbourhood groups in Canada, America, and worldwide: **Fundraising for Non-Profit Groups**, available from **childcare.net** in our Online Catalog.

## Online Research Sources

### Canada

▶Charity Village - Nonprofit Neighbourhood - <http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/nonpr/index.asp>

▶CharityVillage.com - Government Departments and Agencies

▶University of British Columbia's Office of Research Services - Funding Resources - <http://www.orsil.ubc.ca/funding/index.htm>

### U.S.

▶The Foundation Center - <http://fdncenter.org/funders/grantmaker/index.html>

▶The Craftsman Center Funding Resources - <http://www.tgci.com/funding/resources.asp>

## Step 2. Requesting Guidelines and Applications

Once you have completed your initial research to find potential funders, Step 2 involves contacting the ones you checked off to pursue and request their latest application and funding guidelines. If the program is operated by a foundation, also request their annual report. You want to do as much research on the Funder as possible. This will help you to determine if there is a good fit between your needs and the funder's criteria for doling out the money. To further your research you can also review the funder's IRS Form 990 using online sources such as GuideStar ( <http://www.guidestar.org>), or GrantSmart.com (<http://www.grantsmart.com/search/search001.html>).

It might help you to view some common grant applications online so you know what to look for when your information comes in. You can do so by visiting the **Foundation Centre** at: <http://fdncenter.org/funders/cga/index.html>

You're probably wondering why you need to do so much research just to find the money to fund your program. Author Lisa L. Hollis, explains it perfectly in her booklet, **Writing Grants**, (The Center for Nonprofit Resources). "Prospect research helps to determine:

- whether a prospect's interests match your organization's or project's purpose
- how and when to approach the prospect (grant application guidelines)
- how much money to request and for what ."

## Step 3. Grant/Funder Information Processing

As the funding and application guidelines trickle in, read them carefully and make notes about specific guideline information such as:

- The type of program funded
- Eligibility requirements
- Location and populations served
- Application deadlines, and so on.

To assist you with this part of your project, **childcare.net** has developed a **Grant/Funder Information Form** that will help you lay out the important points in an easy to follow fashion. The forms will also help you to view the information for each source at a glance, so you can eliminate the ones that obviously won't coincide with your proposal. You're looking for strong leads, not ones that will have you wasting your time and the funder's time. The **Grant/Funder Information Form** also have space for you to compile a to-do list or to write down any questions you might want to ask a particular Funder if you need clarification on something.

#### **Step 4. Write a Brief Program Description**

Write a brief description of your program and why the funds are needed. In their book, **Fundraising for Non-Profit Groups**, authors Joyce Young, Ken Wyman and John Swaigen offer this simple outline for your funding proposal.

"To begin planning, determine the following:

- Why should the project be done? (Prove it hasn't already been done.) Help the donor understand what societal problem you are trying to fix.
- How will it be done?
- How long will it take?
- How much will it cost?
- Who will do the work and why they are the right people?
- What end product or impact will result and how will it be measured and evaluated?"

Resource: **Fundraising for Non-Profit Groups**,  
by Joyce Young, Ken Wyman and John Swaigen. Self-Counsel Press Page 53, Section 2.3.

#### **Step 5. Contact Funders Directly**

Call the prospective funders you've short-listed. If you have a list of questions prepared on your **Grant/Funder Information Form**, have these ready. Let the contact person know you'll only take up a few moment's of their time but that you'd like to be certain there's an actual fit before you send in a proposal. Most funders will appreciate your effort in getting all the facts before submitting a proposal.

#### **Step 6. Get organized**

Make a folder for each Funder you are now going to pursue and put all the other information you've gathered away for the time being. You want to focus your attention now on getting your proposal completed and submitting your information to the funders in an appropriate time frame or before their closing deadline. Make notes of deadlines on a calendar so you don't miss any opportunities.

#### **Step 7. Prepare Your Proposal and Cover Letter**

Now is the time to draft up your proposal. Take what you've outlined above and expand on why you need the funds, who will benefit from the award, and how you plan to spend the money. This is your sales pitch to the Funder. You need to plead your case on paper and make the Funder take notice.

*"Donors, especially major donors, almost invariably fall into one of two groups: Those who are personally touched, inspired, or motivated by the organization's programs and services; Those who, while not personally touched by an organization, are influenced and impressed by what it does." **Tony Pederis - Fundraising Forum***

Your final Proposal should include the following:

- A brief cover letter explaining the proposal. Don't forget to include your contact information.
- The reason for your proposal. Tell the reader what problem you are addressing, who it affects and how it affects them, and what solutions you are putting forth to help correct the situation.
- The benefits of your program to the population you will serve. Clearly demonstrate how the funding will have a positive impact your parents or children. In other words, lay out your objectives by describing what you want to accomplish and the methods you will use to accomplish it.
- Statistics, demographics, successful outcomes from other similar programs that will prove why the funding will make a difference in your community. Demonstrate that you know your community and its needs well.
- An explanation of how you will measure the results of your proposal and know if you have accomplished what you set out to. Let the Funder know how you will evaluate your progress, how you will verify these results, and what procedures you have in place to ensure the desired outcome.
- Details of your background, competencies and dedication to your cause, as well as those of your key personnel and, if applicable, your Board of Directors. Funders want to know you and your team have the skills to accomplish your goals and are totally committed to seeing the project through not only the funding period, but as long as it takes to solve the problem you set out.
- Attach any letters of support you have received from parents, other organizations, or professionals that can demonstrate a need for your proposal. You should also include a breakdown of the key personnel involved in your program, such as your board of directors, assistance from other organizations, etc.
- Financial information such as a detailed and finely tuned budget, financial statements, and tax exemption paperwork. Ensure that your figures are painstakingly accurate and that only those items that are truly necessary to operate your program are listed. Funders watch for attention to detail and will reject any proposal that has the slightest hint of budget padding. Sample budgets can be found in **Fundraising for Non-Profit Groups**, by Joyce Young, Ken Wyman and John Swaigen. Self-Counsel Press
- Any forms or documents specifically requested in the funder's guidelines. The last thing you want is to have your proposal or application send back to you because it was "incomplete".

Finally, have your proposal proofread by a third party. You want to make a good impression. Typos, bad grammar, spelling mistakes, inaccurate calculations could all cost you the funding you've worked so hard to receive. You should put the proposal into someone else's hands for a few days after you have it completed. That will give you a much needed break from your work, and give you a fresh pair of eyes for that final review before you ensure all the necessary signatures are on the document and you send it off.

### **Step 8: Don't Give Up**

The best advice you can receive as you begin your quest for funding for your child care program is not to become discouraged. Funders typically receive a lot more proposals than they fund. So apply to more than one funding organization, and follow each organization's instructions very

carefully as to what they want in a proposal, and you'll have a much better chance of obtaining funding for your child care project.

**Resources:**

- ▶ Grants & Funding Sources for Child Care
- ▶ Canadian Grant & Funding Sources
- ▶ American Grant & Funding Sources
- ▶ Financing Child Care Sources
- ▶ Grant/Funder Information Form
  
- Fundraising for Non-Profit Groups, By Joyce Young, Ken Wyman and John Swaigen. Self-Counsel Press.
- ▶ It's a Great Day to Fund-Raise!, by Tony Pederis.  
Tony offers some great advice and a lot of valuable information both in his book, and on his Website: [raise-funds.com](http://raise-funds.com).
- ▶ Tony Pederis - Fundraising Forum
- ▶ Finding and Writing Grants, by Lisa L. Hollis The Center for Nonprofit Resources 3801 Canal Street, Suite 309 New Orleans, LA 70119 - [www.nonprofitresources.org](http://www.nonprofitresources.org)
- ▶ Glossary of Terms used by Grantmakers and Grantseekers, from