Changing the future of communities one grant at a time

The Situation
Nonprofits, educational, and government organizations struggle to find the resources to fund priority projects. According to The Foundation Directory (Candid), foundation dollars available for all subjects in Kansas increased 462% from 2014 to 2018. Grant writing workshops were created to help communities find funders to create change. Individuals in every Kansas community want to make a difference; when they come together in grant writing workshops, they discover shared goals and untapped resources.

What We Did
From November 2016 to November 2020 local agents hosted 60 grant writing workshops in all four quadrants of the state to 1,714 people. In 2021, 10 online grant writing courses served an additional 248 participants, proving online access gives participants the opportunity to choose a workshop which fit their schedule instead of their geography. Fifty percent of grant workshop participants have never written a grant before; 29% have written local grants, 14% have written federal grants, 7% identified as “other experience.” We can document participation from 95 of 105 counties.

Outcomes
Participants at grant workshops reported:
• 95% have greater confidence to write a successful grant.
• 99% learned new sources of data to document community need.
• 99% learned new sources for finding grants.
• 93% have greater confidence to evaluate and measure their grant success.
• 89% gained confidence at writing a grant budget.

Of the 533 participants who responded to the survey 6-12 months after their grant workshop (36% response), 55% said they had made new partnerships as a result of the workshop, $51.6 million of grants were written, and $27.9 million of successful grants (54% success) came into the community to fund child care, technology, education, prevention programs, emergency assistance to low income families, arts, parks, preventive health, and non-profits. To put the success rate into perspective, one grant expert predicted “An organization should expect a success rate of between 50 and 60 percent if submitting applications to a combination of existing and new funders. This will be much lower if it is funding to a new source or an organization with less structural or fiscal soundness.”

You are a great teacher and mentor, and it’s a training session that I will never forget. Literally changed my life by building my confidence in knowing how to do this grant writing thing!

Colette M. Black, Chief Development Officer
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References:
1 Lipten, David, PhD Retrieved from internet 8-8-19: https://fundingforgood.org/about-grant-writer-success-rates/

Success Stories

Julie Kent’s grant writing efforts were covered in an article in the Parson’s Sun titled, “Grants Help Erie City Public Library Expand Its Services.” Erie’s population is 1,150. Kent wrote, “Just wanted to thank you for the great grant writing program that I attended in 2018. I have to admit that I was still a bit overwhelmed with writing a grant but [in] November 2020, I bit the bullet and wrote a Neosho County grant for the Erie City Public Library to purchase a greenhouse for the library to help with “food insecurity” in our town. Amazingly I followed your grant worksheet and wrote a narrative that I have used for subsequent successful grants in the past 6 months. We have been approved for nearly $45,000 in grants for this greenhouse, a mobile kitchen for the library, exercise equipment for the Senior Center, a pavilion for the library to use for outside programming, and equipment to complete these projects.” Kent says she is amazed when people walk into the library and say, “You’re that lady who is good at grants.”

Donna Jackson, a Burden (population 535) PRIDE member attended the grant workshop once and brought others back with her the next year. When grant workshops came online, she attended a third time. Jackson wrote grants that would enable playground enhancements at the elementary school and worked hard on a $580,000 afterschool grant that the school ultimately didn’t pursue. Jackson writes, “...as much as I enjoyed helping the local school district, I am most thrilled to know that I have prompted others to seek and make grant applications. After I substantially completed a major grant application for the local school district last year, they took the initiative this year to complete the application themselves. This happened again with the local Kansas Pride-Burden organization. After I completed the very first grant application for them, they stepped up and did another grant application that got funded! I have also worked with the local fire chief and police chief individually for grants for their departments that they themselves have completed successfully! I am continuing to look for bigger needs in my community--think housing, businesses, etc.--for which grant funding is available and make the proper grant application. And, I continue to use what I have learned from your grant writing workshop.”

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“You brought a positive, relevant, well-researched presentation which sent a clear message: This topic is worth the effort. It’s important. You also delivered it with real skill and thoughtfulness, which sent another message: We were worth the effort.”
Tom Emerson, Business Manager,
The Chamber Players Community Theatre, Garnett, KS