

Cultivating Funding and Financial Stability

Overview

All organizations need financial resources to successfully fulfill their missions. For non-profit and other non-income generating organizations, cultivating diverse funding to build financial stability is essential to maintaining a viable organization. Many child victim serving organizations and agencies are faced with this reality, and because of the nature of the work, need considerable and diverse financial resources to become and remain successful.

In today's environment, being required to do more with less is something that many child victim serving organizations are accustomed to. Attempting to implement a large-scale, system change, such as Linking Systems of Care, takes extensive resources, both human and financial. This document will discuss strategies child victim serving organizations can implement to cultivate funding and build the financial stability necessary to participate in a large-scale system change.

For many organizations, including child victim serving organizations, cultivating funding for the organization is often the responsibility of the organization's leadership and/or board of directors. Some organizations are fortunate enough to have a position or entire department dedicated to raising funds for the organization. One example of such a position is that of a development officers that, under the direction of organizational leadership, seek funds for both general and specific purposes. Those purposes can range from basic operational costs to very specific initiatives, such as capital projects (e.g., new construction, implementation of new systems). Some organizations create a committee for fundraising and building financial stability. The committee is then charged with all of the activities related to cultivating funding and it reports to someone in a leadership capacity.

Seeking and Securing External Resources

For many non-profit and governmental organizations, external financial resources such as grant funds are vital for operations and even more so for special initiatives. Finding and securing external resources can be difficult. Strict guidelines from sponsors on

areas of focus, organizational eligibility, selection processes, and award requirements can exclude many organizations. Understanding your organization's mission and structure is important for determining what types of external resources to appeal to for support.

Grants

The most common external financial resource for organizations comes in the form of grants. A grant is a financial award made to a qualified organization to fund a specific project or purpose. Grants can be awarded by governments (federal, state, and local), corporations, and other non-profit organizations. For the most part, grants are used to complete work that an organization may not otherwise be able to support, and therefore are used to advance an organization's work beyond its general operations. For child victim serving organizations seeking to build a network, grant funds could provide the necessary financial support.

Before you decide to apply for a grant, it is important to make sure that your organization meets the eligibility requirements and has the ability to meet the funder's post-award requirements. Funding requirements vary by funder and may require an organization to be a 501(c)(3) organization in order to be eligible. In addition to meeting eligibility requirements, funders also may require the organization to have specific organizational capacity, such as the ability to track funds in a separate account and meet other accounting standards.

For organizations that desire to collaborate or develop collaboration, it is important to determine which organization or grantee will be the lead because that organization will bear all of the responsibility, programmatically, financially, and legally.

While grants can be applied for at any stage of a project, it is highly recommended the group of stakeholders are identified as early as possible and remain engaged throughout the project. The group of stakeholder should be responsible for targeting grants appropriate for the project, helping to match grants with the needs of the project, and understanding the guidelines provided by the funder.

While grants can be wonderful tools to help you accomplish a specific goal, grants are extremely hard to obtain. Most grants aren't funded, and it often takes multiple submissions to receive an award. If you have little experience in grant writing, it can be learned, and many resources exist to assist in the grant writing process. Developing a plan based on the funder's guidelines is the first step to seeking and securing external financial support.

While grants are one of the more common strategies used by organizations seeking external funding, there are many other ways organizations can bolster their financial support. Some of those additional strategies include developing partnerships, marketing specific services of the organization (fee-for-service), and fundraising. In many organizations, the board of directors is responsible for conducting fundraising activities

and cultivating relationships with donors who provide financial support to the organization. For smaller organizations, often the senior leadership cultivates donors and targeted requests for financial support.

Additional Resources:

Community Toolbox: [Applying for a Grant: The General Approach and Writing a Grant](#)

The Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center: [Grant Writing and Other Funding Strategies for Victim Service Providers](#)

Grants.gov: [Grants Learning Center](#)

Virginia Heals: [Grant Application Development Menu for Funders](#)

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