

# **GRANT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT MANUAL**

**A guide for developing an effective grant  
program at the chapter and district levels**

**J. E. Greenfield**

**Harmony Foundation**

**Barbershop Harmony Society**

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## Chapter 1

# Workshop Objectives and Expectations

### Objectives

- To provide each attendee with sufficient information and confidence to efficiently initiate a successful chapter or district grant program
- To provide each attendee with a head start toward their first grant application by providing some actual experience in searching for grant sources, preparing a grant proposal, and in providing some useful take-home resources, including an understandable Grant Manual and a few samples of typical grant guidelines, proposal forms, and successful barbershop grant proposals

This workshop instructs attendees in the nature of the grant world, how it can be accessed through a logical, efficient approach, how a chapter or district can effectively match its needs to various grant source objectives, and how grants can be administered to encourage continuing funding year after year.

Although District Grant Workshops will vary somewhat, depending on the approach of each individual instructor, most will include:

- An explanation of public and private grants, how the application process works, and how they are administered
- A thorough discussion of typical chapter and district programs and projects that are likely to be attractive to various grant programs
- Guidance on developing and sustaining a grant program in the chapter and district, and also with the various funding organizations

### Expectations

Each attendee should leave with a solid working knowledge of some of their own grant opportunities and how to search for more. Attendees should become sufficiently confident to proceed on their own to complete a grant proposal and should actually have a head start on developing their first proposal. The take-home Grant Workshop Manual and Proposal Examples, together with continuing access to the faculty's experience and knowledge, should also add to the attendee's confidence.

Because searching for and developing public and private grants are substantially different, Chapters 3 through 7 contain separate guidance for each type of grant. Although both sources have the potential to bring significant funding to a chapter or district, public funding is almost always the better starting point because it is easier to research, more likely to bring immediate success, and leads to more benefits from the community relationships it builds.

## Chapter 2

# Understanding Grant Programs

A wide range of both public and private agencies, institutions, and corporations engage in grant programs in support of their own special interest or agenda. Sometimes the agenda is very general and philanthropic in nature, but often it is quite specific and focused. Among the many agendas specified by both public and private grantors is the encouragement and nurturing of the performing arts.

Public funding for the arts, based on public taxation, is identified as a line item in the federal, state, and most county, regional, and city budgets throughout the United States. At each level of government grant funding usually is a blend of funding from higher levels with funding budgeted at the local level. Local government programs at the county or city level are often identified as re-granting programs, because state and federal funds are such a large component of the grant budget. Most of these funds are administered through some kind of competitive grant program whereby granting decisions are based on peer review panels of knowledgeable citizens. Occasionally, in cities or smaller counties, an agency of government actually administers the grant program. In most cases however, the state, area, region, county, or city has an appointed citizen arts council or similar organization who retains a staff and administers the grant program. Most grant programs apply only to specific geographical areas and are intended to address specified community or institutional needs. Grant cycles typically involve a year or more from the first articulation of a proposed project until funding is actually available. This is one area where long-range planning really pays.

Private funding for the arts is among the priorities of a surprisingly large number of private foundations, corporations, and individuals. Much of this funding is derived from individuals' or corporations' interest in philanthropy or the enrichment of their community environments. Some of this funding is provided by a contemporary, current interest of a corporation or individual, but even more comes from trust and foundation proceeds based on a managed principal fund intended to sustain a permanent income stream for perpetual grant funding.

Generally speaking, all grant proposals are noticed and evaluated by:

- How well the proposed project matches the objectives of the funding agency
- How clearly, succinctly, and logically the proposal communicates the purpose, methodology, value, and measurement of the project's success
- How much the application stands out among the rest of the competition by the quality of the proposal itself and by the applicant's artistic merit, community support and impact, and administrative competence

## Chapter 3

# Discovering Public Grant Sources

Because public grants are open to all eligible applicants, public granting agencies try to guarantee objectivity and protect themselves from public criticism by adhering to a well defined application process based on outside peer review. Public grant programs at all levels of government tend to be administered through very similar protocols with common forms, budget structures and procedures. Nowhere is the distinction between public and private grant sources more apparent than in how a chapter or district goes about finding them.

- Full information about public grants is easily obtainable and a prospective applicant is able to easily understand all of the programs for which a chapter or district is eligible to apply. By contrast, there are so many and varied potential sources of private grants that an applicant must be very selective about which to investigate and come to understand.
- Public grants are evaluated by peer review panels and governed by well defined protocols that are reasonably objective and subject to public scrutiny. Private grants often have less prescribed structure to the application process and are more subject to the judgment or perhaps bias of individual trustees or administrators. They are not subject to public scrutiny and objectivity is not guaranteed by the same regulations that govern government agencies and public institutions.
- Although public grant proposals benefit from strong endorsements from knowledgeable people, private grants benefit even more from having a personal contact among the trustees or staff.
- Because organizations previously funded by public granting agencies will be local and probably known to new prospective applicants, it may be much easier for a new applicant to understand how well they can measure up and compete. Private grant recipients may be more varied, more geographically diverse and otherwise much harder to evaluate.

Although federal grant programs abound, most would not be accessible to chapters or districts because they require national or at least regional impact. Barbershop chapters and districts are encouraged to look first at the range of public grants available to them in their own state, county, and city. Although most states have multiple public grant programs for the performing arts, some have more than others and the amount of funding available varies considerably. In some parts of the country there are also regional consortiums that administer grant programs to a multi-state area. Most states offer some kind of re-granting program to counties, groups of counties, and cities whereby state funds are added to local

funds in support of competitive local grant programs. While many larger municipalities offer competitive grant programs, many do not. That is not to say that even smaller cities, lacking the resources to justify a competitive grant program, do not fund arts organizations on a selective basis through their regular appropriation process. While most counties offer competitive grant programs, either alone or as part of a multi-county region, there are some states with very low population densities that have no programs.

Because all SPEBSQSA chapters and districts are already determined by the Internal Revenue Service to be 501(c)(3) corporations, they are fully eligible for public funding at all levels. Moreover, many ongoing chapter and district activities already fit under the project criteria and priorities used by almost all public funding sources.

Generally speaking, public grant programs have many common features:

- Almost all give credence to artistic merit, although the level of performance tends to be less critical at the local level.
- All are concerned with both the support of the community and the impact and benefit of the proposal on the community. Often, extra value is assigned to projects that serve the culturally disadvantaged or under served.
- Because public funds are being entrusted to the applicant organization, all grantors are concerned with administrative integrity, continuity, and competence.
- Most public grant programs use a standard format for proposals that include:
  - A set of perhaps 6 to 8 forms
  - A narrative section whereby the applicant addresses certain subject matter or issues
  - A list of required attachments or support materials
  - An opportunity to attach other support materials that contribute to the merit of the applicant organization or the proposed project
- Almost all public granting agencies use the same budget line items and definitions.
- Most granting agencies require a level of required matching funds from the applicant organization, usually at least dollar for dollar on either a cash basis or a prescribed mixture of cash and in-kind contribution.

- With rare exceptions, public funding agency staff stand ready to encourage and assist first-time applicants. Most offer grant workshops, without cost and open to all prospective applicants.
- Although some public agencies are willing to fund general operating expenses for stable well-known organizations, most prefer to fund specific projects. Fortunately for barbershop chapters and districts, these need not be new ventures. Many ongoing barbershop activities make excellent projects.
- All public grant programs are easy to access and are similar with regard to a specified proposal form, a clear and well defined procedure, and a common budget format.

Chapters with strong choruses and quartets performing at a high level of musical achievement should consider applying to both their state and local levels. In some states, however, chapters are required to choose between the state and local programs. Generally, districts will only be eligible to apply at the state level. Exceptions may exist however, where a district might apply for support for an event or activity that benefits one county or city disproportionately, such as a district convention or public performance. The majority of chapters should begin by applying at the local level, where they will be competing with other organizations and institutions that serve the local community. Artistic merit tends to be much less significant at the local level, where community service and strong local support are much more important.

Public funding for the arts is much more accessible, predictable, and efficient to pursue as an initial effort than private sources. The exception might be a case where a member of the chapter or district is very well connected with an officer of a private corporation or trustee of a private foundation. Public funding tends also to be much more dependable year after year, as the funding agency becomes acquainted with the chapter and its ability to manage grants successfully.

Participation in public grant programs, depending upon the size of the community and presence of other arts organizations, brings the barbershop chapter into frequent contact with other arts organizations and their staffs. This networking often produces much more familiarity with barbershop music and brings with it new performance opportunities, invitations for artistic collaborations, and added stature for the chapter, its chorus, and its quartets throughout the community. This benefit is enhanced of course, when the level of musical performance is high and in communities with many other performing arts organizations.

The internet is an excellent place to begin your search for public grant sources. Information about grant programs offered at the state level is always accessible through the state agency's website. Also, many of the county, area, regional, and city programs also have websites with grant program information. Some even have interactive application forms to facilitate completely on-line applications.

- Begin by searching for a key phrase involving various combinations of terms. Begin with the name of the state, then add the most likely adjective such as “arts” or “cultural”, and finish with the most likely noun such as “council”, “commission”, or “alliance”. Although “arts council” is the most likely nomenclature, try other combinations of adjectives and nouns as well.
- If all else fails, try opening the state government’s agency directory page and begin looking for the agency or department of government responsible for arts or culture.
- After finding the arts agency or council, open the section entitled “grants”, “grant programs”, or “funding opportunities”.
- The opening screen of either the state or local website will usually be an overview of the website’s contents. There might be a grant program summary that provides a brief description of each program, a more detailed description of each grant program entitled “guidelines”, a set of forms for submitting a proposal, and a section containing all other grant requirements.
- Somewhere on one of the screens in the state arts agency website there should be a reference to local arts programs, agencies, or re-granting programs. Opening this screen will usually provide a list of all the county, area, regional, or city granting agencies in the state, together with addresses, telephone numbers, website addresses, and email addresses. When this information is not on the state website, it can be accessed with a call or email inquiry to the state agency.
- Approximately half the local grant programs are available on the Internet. Information about the others, however, will have to be mailed in response to a request. If your local grant agency does not maintain a website or if you are unsuccessful in finding it, there are other ways to access this information.
- A local arts council or similar organization can be found under county or city government in the telephone directory. If the arts agency is not listed, a call to the local government office will help. There are a few counties and many cities that have no arts grant program and are not part of an area or regional program.
- Other local arts organizations already receiving public grants might also be of considerable assistance in locating the local arts agencies. These might include community bands, symphony orchestras, theaters, performing arts centers, or museums.

A chapter or district's first contact with a public funding agency should not be a letter, telephone, or email request for information. Rather, it should be a personal visit by appointment, for which the chapter or district representative is properly prepared. This point will be addressed more fully in Chapter Five of this manual dealing with the application process itself.

## Chapter 4

### Discovering Private Grant Sources

Like public funding sources, most private sources are limited to the support of only specific activities and geographic area that reflect a corporation or foundation's mission, interests, and charter. Often, however, these interests include activities of interest to barbershop chapters and districts, such as the community's cultural development, the development of the arts, arts education, or outreach to special constituencies such as youth, youth at risk, the economically disadvantaged, minorities, and the like. Private organizations engaged in philanthropic or charitable giving are much more numerous than public sources and the diversity of their size and interests makes them much more difficult to explore, evaluate, and cultivate. Private organizations may also be less objective in the allocation of their grant funding and may rely more on the personal knowledge and relationship of their staff or trustees with the applicant. This may require that the applicant invest more time and effort in cultivating the private source and exercise more patience in proving their worthiness. Also, private sources of funding are more likely to shift short term priorities when local conditions change dramatically or when disasters occur.

In general, private grant funding sources with stated interests that appear to embrace the proposed project need to be identified. Most private grant source references and search services provide enough information to find these organizations. Unfortunately, the state interests of most philanthropic organizations may be out-of-date and too broad to be indicative of their current priorities. The trick is to find a private funding source whose current objectives and immediate priorities closely match the applicant's proposed project. The task remains for the applicant to convince the funding agency that the result of the project will materially address the funding agency's interests. Unless specifically prohibited, an exploratory telephone call can be helpful in exploring an organization's current interests. Be sure, however, that you are prepared to describe the proposed project, including its likely contribution to the need in which the funding agency is most interested.

There are a bewildering number of private foundations, corporations, and other organizations providing private funding for the performing arts. Because of the time and effort it may require to develop a relationship with a prospective funding source, it is essential to quickly narrow the field of prospective sources to those that might justify development. The reference section of most large public libraries have several publications that list philanthropic and grant-making organizations sorted by geographic scope, subject matter, and size. Some contain information about their grant-making history and what arts organizations have been recently funded. Often the subject matter is sorted only at the "arts" or "cultural" levels. The organization's interest in vocal music and the role of music in serving the community will only be discerned by studying the list of recent grant recipients.

Another source of private grant funding is The Foundation Center, a non-profit service organization providing publications, CDs, and on-line grant information for a nominal fee.

They also offer a grant service on a real-time basis, entitled The Foundation Directory Online, at \$19.95 per month for frequent and intensive users who need up-to-date information on an ongoing basis. This level of information service is not needed by barbershop chapters and districts because their Foundation Yearbook is almost certainly available as a reference in larger public libraries. Other on-line assistance can be found on the internet under “philanthropy organizations” and “grant-making foundations”.

Be prepared to make multiple applications to a funding organization as you learn more of their interests and are able to modify your project interest to address them. If you are patient and sincere with the source organization’s staff to cultivate trust and conviction, you may be able to develop a fuller appreciation for proposed projects. Be alert to the fact that private organizations often have a tiered system, sometimes beginning with a verbal screening interview, followed by a letter of intent, and finally involving a formal proposal by invitation. Although the process is usually competitive with existing and other new applicants, the adjudication itself is a private matter among the staff or trustees and is not subject to the public scrutiny guaranteed in the public sector competition.

### **Source Organizations:**

There are several kinds of private grant sources available to non-profit organizations, each with its own characteristics:

#### **Community Foundations**

Community foundations serve almost all counties in the United States and function as cooperatives, comprised of many small charitable and philanthropic trusts and endowments, each with an insufficient volume of funding to justify an administrative staff of their own. Collectively, these organizations can afford to retain a staff and administer a grant program that serves them all. Although they are actually private institutions, community foundations behave very much like public granting agencies because they are accountable to so many contributing organizations. Because the conduct of their grant programs is subject to such broadbased scrutiny, community foundations employ a more formal and objective application process than many individual private organizations. Community foundations usually address the performing arts, are local in nature, and represent excellent sources of funding for barbershop chapters and districts.

#### **Regional Foundations**

Arts organizations in most locations are also served by multi-state, regional foundations. These organizations function very much like the larger national foundations, but give special priority to regional needs. While most provide support for the arts, the competition for funding is fierce and is usually limited to the major arts organizations in member states. Realistically, these organizations are unlikely to be fruitful sources of funding for barbershop chapters or districts.

## **National Multi-Purpose Foundations**

There are many large, national or international foundations established to address a very broad range of interests that provide funding for the performing arts or the development of arts and culture. The Ford or Rockefeller Foundations are good examples. These sources often will consider only large, broadbased projects of regional or national significance. It would be very difficult to access these programs at the chapter or district level.

## **Special Purpose Foundations, Local Foundations, and Family Trusts**

Private foundations can be very important to barbershop chapters and districts, but success depends heavily upon finding those that are interested in the performing arts and on having some kind of personal relationship with the foundation's staff or trustees. Every public library reference section contains one or more index to foundations, sorted geographically, by size, and by purpose. Deciding which have potential for your organization can be a daunting task, unless you are already aware of some with which some member of your chapter or district might have a contact.

## **Corporations or Corporate Foundations**

Some companies manage their program of philanthropy and community support through an office within the company created for that purpose, such as community relations or charitable giving. Others have established and endowed independent foundations for that purpose. Generally speaking, companies serving or dependent upon the same community impacted by the barbershop chapter or district will be better prospects. Although some have only special interest in social services, most extend their field of eligibility to the performing arts. This is particularly true when a performing arts project serves another corporate interest such education or bringing opportunities to the culturally underserved. Remember that local offices of national companies, particularly retail organizations, often have considerable delegated grant authority at the local level and might have excellent access to their company's national program.

Corporations tend to follow one of two patterns of philanthropy. Either they are very selective and give relatively large amounts to relatively few beneficiaries or they spread their funding among a very large number of beneficiaries through numerous small grants.

## **Choosing Target Sources**

The importance of thoroughly researching potential private funding sources cannot be over-emphasized. The objective of the research is to:

- Identify as many potential funding sources for each project idea as possible.
- Gather enough information for making knowledgeable choices about which offer the best potential.

- Develop solid background information about the funding organization's interests and priorities, to enable the development of a sound strategy for contacting and impressing the best prospects.
- Be prepared to be persistent and take whatever time it might require to build a relationship with the targeted grant sources.

## Chapter 5

# The Public Grant Application Process

Because public grants are administered by government agencies and are open to all eligible applicants, they try to guarantee objectivity and protect themselves from public criticism by adhering to a well-defined application process. Moreover, public grant programs at all levels tend to be administered by very similar protocols, forms, and procedures. Because public agencies are administering public funds, the procedure for submitting proposals and their deadlines must be strictly enforced and must comply with public information laws giving equal notice and opportunity to all qualified entities. Any qualified applicant for a public grant has the opportunity to have a proposal evaluated through a prescribed application and review process designed to insure objectivity and to withstand public scrutiny. Private grantors are usually less constrained by prescribed procedures and have more leeway in how their programs are administered. Cultivating a good relationship with the staff of any grant agency helps to establish the credibility of the chapter or district and to gain their confidence in your seriousness of purpose, commitment, and accountability.

The grant application process begins as soon as a chapter or district identifies the state, regional, area, county, and city agencies that offer funding for the performing arts and for arts education. In most locations, a chapter is free to pursue grants from multiple funding sources simultaneously. A few states allow only a single source, however, making it incumbent on the applicant to elect using either the state or local program, but not both. The applicant must decide which program has the most potential immediately and in the long run.

There are some potential problems of perception related to the barbershop art form that may confront the early phase of your quest for grant funding. A chapter or district might occasionally encounter a funding source staff member or panelist who considers barbershop music as a folk art or who has a strong preference for classical music. Others might prefer funding professional artists or arts organizations under professional management. All of these genre biases can be overcome, however, by demonstrating that your chapter takes its music seriously, is oriented to public service and community entertainment, and has the endorsement and support of many of the other music and cultural organizations or institutions in the community. Generally speaking, genre bias is most pronounced at the state level, where the chapter or district's contribution to and acceptance by the local community is less obvious. These problems can definitely be overcome with the right support from the community and through your persistence.

### Local or State Arts Agency Visits

It is very important to call ahead for an appointment and then to make an initial, personal visit to the funding agency's office. Be prepared to explain clearly who you are, how your chapter fits into the worldwide barbershop society, what your chapter and its chorus and

quartets are contributing to your community, and how serious you are about becoming a more effective member of the cultural community. Try to convey a seriousness of purpose, commitment to musical development, dedication to the improvement of the community, interest in music education and other positive attributes of your chapter or district. It is important that a granting organization develop confidence in the person with whom they will be dealing and in the administrative ability of the organization. This is particularly true for all volunteer organizations. If you have already downloaded the agency's guidelines and become familiar with them, suggest one or two projects that are important to you and clearly match the priorities of the granting agency.

Granting agencies usually offer several kinds of programs that may include grants for:

- First-time applicants
- Small organizations
- Projects
- General operating support
- Arts in education
- Technical assistance
- Touring
- International programs
- Underserved communities
- Arts service organizations

Some grant programs provide for multiple-year funding. This may be the case for grants that provide general operating support or where the proposed project spans more than one grant cycle. Very large and complex projects are the most likely candidates for longer-term grant-funding in the private sector. Most project grants are for a single year only, however.

Projects need not be new initiatives for the chapter or district. For example, ongoing activities such as adding more coaching time, improving the director's compensation, conducting teaching retreats, obtaining better learning tapes, commissioning new arrangements, and other musical activities, might be bundled together into a Musical Development Project for grant seeking purposes. Many other chapter or district activities,

such as administrative development, youth outreach and education, and membership recruitment, also make excellent grant projects. Most granting organizations limit an applicant to only one grant program per year. Many do allow two proposals when one is for Arts in Education, however.

If the grant program guidelines were not available on the Internet, ask for a copy of the grant guidelines, application forms, and a schedule of any grant workshops the agency might conduct. If last year's guidelines are being replaced and the new ones are not yet available, ask for the old

ones nonetheless. They seldom change much from year to year and may enable you to get a good early start. Be sure to be placed on the permanent mailing list so you will receive all notices, announcements, and other grant related communications. Ask also for a chance to review some successful grant proposals from years past from other vocal ensembles or other performing arts organizations. These are in the public domain and should be open to inspection there in the grant agency's office. Successful grant proposals will help illustrate how a good proposal is put together and may provide hints and fresh ideas about what to include and how to express yourself.

Also, volunteer to get involved in supporting the agency's events, activities, and programs. You may be asked to serve on a committee for planning an arts council program or provide a strolling quartet for an arts council event, for example. You can help establish yourself further by making a standing offer of complementary tickets to your barbershop show productions, leaving some CD or tape recordings, adding your brochure to their literature rack, or putting them on the mailing list for your chapter bulletin and other mailings. Think of yourselves as full partners in your city or county's arts community and make up your mind to becoming a regular player in art and cultural activities. Be a contributor to the community and its civic and philanthropic interests.

Start thinking of the arts council staff as part of your barbershop family and they will almost certainly reciprocate. With few exceptions, staff members want to see you succeed and welcome developing reliable, trustworthy relationships with their grantees. Everyone needs to be needed, and that is certainly true for the arts council staff members. Be sure to go out of your way to express your appreciation for their assistance and encouragement.

Be ever mindful, however, that you must put your best foot forward whenever you represent the barbershop craft to the public and its funding agencies. For example, if your best available quartet for an arts council event is just not up to snuff, go outside the chapter for a quartet that will demonstrate barbershop music in its best light.

### **Preparation and Follow-up**

After consulting with the arts agency staff and reviewing the grant guidelines, the chapter or district will have to choose among the various grant programs offered. This choice should be based on any guidance received from the staff, the amount of funding for which the chapter is eligible under each program, and the degree to which the chapter's activities match the grant program criteria. In many cases, the size of the chapter or district budget

will be the major factor in determining the maximum amount that can be requested. Small chapters may be restricted to only the mini-grant program or a special program for small organizations. These programs allow a smaller organization to apply for a larger fraction of their total budget than would be allowed in the larger grant programs. Some granting agencies require first-time applicants of any size to apply for smaller grants, until their reliability can be better established.

Although Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of this manual more fully address identifying good grant projects and writing compelling proposals, there are some administrative functions that need to be fully appreciated and addressed:

If there is still an opportunity, attend the panel meeting that adjudicates the prior year's grant proposals. You will learn much about how panelists will be looking at your proposal next year and get a feel for the kinds of questions that are asked of applicants.

- Attend any grant workshops conducted by or recommended by the grant agency staff.
- Meet all application and other deadlines early, with time to spare.
- Be sure to read all the rules and requirements contained in your funding agency's guidelines and supplemental materials that accompany your first grant. Make sure you clearly understand each and every detail, pay strict attention to each, and strictly adhere to every requirement and deadline involved in the application, acceptance, and reporting processes.
- Attend the grant adjudication panel and be ready to respond to questions the panelists may have.
- When notified of your grant's approval, promptly return the grant contract and any other documents or requests for information.
- Make sure you look for opportunities to give the granting agency recognition, using their name and logo whenever possible in show programs, news releases, stage announcements, media interviews, brochures, and other publications.
- Keep receipts for expenses and other documentation on all transactions associated with each grant. Although support documentation is usually not required by the granting agency, it must be on file in case your grant is ever audited. The granting agency will advise you concerning how long support documentation must be kept on file.

- Become familiar with the granting agency's policy and process for amending an approved grant, should it ever be necessary to modify the project or who the expenses are allocated among the line items in the budget.
- Continue to look for ways to show your appreciation to the arts council members and the staff. Thank you notes and letters are always appreciated.
- Submit any required interim and final progress reports a little early, to allow time to correct any deficiencies that might occur. Seek the guidance of the agency staff, if there is any question about the content of the interim or final report.
- Save copies of everything, including the proposal, attachments, related correspondence, grant amendments, grant funding disbursements, receipts and invoices for grant-funded or matching fund expenses, interim reports and final reports. Next year's application will be much easier if your records are complete. In fact, you may only need to update the proposal if the next year's funding is in support of the same or highly related project. Also, if your funding agency should be audited, there is always a chance that your project might also be selected for audit.

## Chapter 6

# The Private Grant Application Process

In applying to foundations, corporations, and other private funding sources, the personal interests of key people, who either do the initial proposal screening or who later review and evaluate proposals, may be extremely important. The stated interests and priorities of private funding agencies is usually too broad to offer many clues to what might be the private interests of their key staff members or trustees. It is very important that the applicant organization take the time, directly or through their grant contractor, to get to know the funding organization. It is only through discussion and exploration that staff members' individual priorities and interests will be discovered. You may be sure that staff members' priorities will reflect those of the trustees or directors for whom they work.

Be sure to obtain a good understanding of the application protocol preferred by the funding agency. Some prefer a letter of intent or the submission of a proposal abstract for initial screening and as a condition of submitting a full proposal. In many cases, only applicants who pass this initial screening will be invited or allowed to apply with a full proposal. Sometimes specific, printed guidelines and forms are provided, but sometimes they are not. With larger organizations there will always be some kind of formal application process.

Pay strict attention to all application requirements and ask for extensions of deadlines and exceptions of all kinds only when absolutely necessary. This is particularly important in the early years of a relationship, when a chapter or district's administrative competence may be called into question. It is already somewhat unnerving to funding agencies that barbershop organizations almost never employ professional administrative staff. They will be looking for signs of careless management so often associated with all-volunteer organizations. Follow the funding agency's process to the letter and in every detail. When in doubt about the application process or the proposal requirements, seek the guidance of the agency's staff.

Use the support of friends and acquaintances who might be on foundation boards or are employed as staff members. Encourage chapter members and others to help identify contacts with foundations and try to "ask around" for useful contacts. Personal contact is often the key to learning about the smaller private foundations in your area and in finding useful contacts. Once a proposal is submitted, be sure to be prompt and highly responsive to any further questions they might have or in providing any further information they might request.

## Chapter 7

### Developing Fundable Projects

Although some funding sources will make grants for general operating expenses, the vast majority of both public and private funding organizations require or prefer funding a specific project with a definable goal, methodology, date of completion, and measurable results. This is particularly true for new applicants whose performance and administrative record is not well-known to the granting agency. Grant projects need not be whole new areas of endeavor for the chapter or district. Many of the regular, ongoing activities of almost every barbershop chapter and district will clearly qualify for grant funding, particularly if the project involves some expansion or improvement in the activity.

Eligible subject matter, allowable expenses, and other project parameters are always well defined in public grant guidelines. Pay strict attention to the funding agency's definition and explanation of allowable expenses and stay away from anything that tends to raise a red flag. Generally speaking, out of state or foreign travel, entertainment, food and beverages, scholarships, awards, and social events all tend to attract attention.

Public grant agencies always offer separate programs for different kinds of assistance, such as those listed in Chapter 5 of this manual. Private grant sources generally have defined areas of general interest as dictated by their charter and bylaws, but often with less specificity with regard to potential project concepts themselves. While more important in private grant seeking, it is always best to propose projects that are clearly responsive to the granting agencies interests and priorities, that meet specific and easily understood needs of the applicant organization, that employ logical and self-explanatory methodology, and that result in clear and measurable benefits. It is critically important that the connection between the project and the goals of both the applicant and funding agency is crystal clear, and that the chances of success are high and worth the investment of the funding agency.

Granting agencies, public or private always take comfort when an applicant shows evidence of good long-term planning, with well-defined long-term objectives, short-term goals, and a process for measuring progress and making adjustments. Funding prospects for a project proposal are always enhanced when it can be evaluated within the context of an ongoing long-range plan.

Although some public and many private grant sources do not require or allow credit for in-kind match, it is always impressive when it is present. The contributed time of volunteer singers and support personnel, together with private property contributions, always serve to demonstrate the commitment of the membership and the community. Similarly, cash match in excess of the amount actually required further demonstrates commitment and sincerity of purpose. Many funding organizations like to see their grants used as seed money for projects that will become self-sustaining in the future. Funding prospects are always enhanced whenever prospects are good for project continuity beyond the initial funding.

## Chapter 8

# Writing Compelling Grant Proposals

The fundamental merit of the proposed project, in terms of its contribution to your organization, the funding agency, and the community, together with its cost effectiveness, is central to all good grant proposals. So, too, however, is the skill with which it is written and the overall impression the proposal makes on the reader. All grant proposals share certain common elements that are extremely important in making a good first impression.

- The mission statement should describe, in only a sentence or two, the basic purpose of the applicant organization and its major long term goals.
- The project summary must quickly capture the attention of the reader and succinctly describe what is to be done, why it is needed, how it will be accomplished, what will be the results.
- The project summary should obviously track with both the chapter or district mission statement and one of the priorities of the funding agency to which the proposal is addressed.
- The benefit derived from the successful completion of the project to the applicant organization, the funding agency, and the community must be crystal clear.
- All terminology and concepts used in the proposal should be understandable without tedious explanations or copious footnotes.
- The proposal should strictly comply with all the granting agency's guidance regarding cover, type of binding, number of pages, use of color, font size and style, number of attachments, and all other specifications.
- Within the granting agency's parameters, the proposal should be printed in clear type on good quality paper, have numbered pages, have headings that correspond to required subjects specified in the grant guidelines, and appear generally uncluttered and neat.

Grant agency staff and panelists alike often comment about the poor impression left by misspellings, improper grammar, handwritten corrections, and other signs of carelessness. It is always a good idea to have grant proposals proofread and even edited by people familiar with the chapter or district who can pick up inconsistencies, omissions, and the like. It is even more important to have the proposal read by others with no prior knowledge of the applicant organization. This is the only way to detect terms and concepts that are

unclear to the uninitiated, or to discover if the logic and flow of the proposal makes sense to the uninformed reader. In most cases, neither the agency staff nor their review and evaluation panelists will know much about the world of barbershop music or its organizations.

Public and private grant programs differ considerably in certain aspects, requiring somewhat different emphasis on certain subjects and sections of the proposal. In general, qualified organizations meeting certain basic criteria for eligibility are automatically considered for public funding and are certain to be read and at least considered by both staff personnel and evaluation panelists. There is still a premium on attractive, succinct proposals, however, because they will receive higher scores, are more likely to be recommended for funding, and will generally receive a higher portion of the funding requested.

Private granting organizations are not required to read or carefully evaluate all the proposals they receive. There is a real premium on having an attractive, attention getting, and well articulated project proposals. The proposals that are immediately compelling go to the top of the stack and are most likely to be read thoroughly. If the cover letter, letter of intent, project summary, and mission statement don't command attention, action on the proposal may well be delayed or postponed indefinitely. The need to stand out places special emphasis on knowing priorities and current interests of the granting agency, as well as the interests of the staff personnel that do the initial screening and that will be reading the better proposals in more detail.

### **Introductory or Cover Letters**

Many grant agencies, public and private, require some kind of introductory letter, as either a precursor to the proposal itself for initial screening purposes, as a cover letter introducing the proposal, or as an appended statement from the chief executive of the applicant organization. Introductory letters, regardless of where they appear in the application process, are extremely important and deserve the applicant's best effort.

The importance of a letter of intent, requested as a means of screening the proposal concept for basic eligibility and merit, is obvious. If an applicant doesn't succeed at the screening level, the organization will not be invited to submit a full proposal. Assuming that the chapter or district has researched each private funding source, it is best to write a separate letter of intent or letter proposal to each individual source. Each should emphasize the project benefits that best address the objectives of the funding organization. Emphasize also the elements of the proposal that the funding source will find most motivating. Discuss the benefits to the funding agency's target beneficiaries and de-emphasize the mechanical aspects and other details. Because brevity is very important, a two page letter should suffice. Never exceed any limit suggested by the source agency and always comply completely with their format and approach.

A cover letter that serves as an introduction of an attached proposal will be the very first thing read and can peak interest and stimulate a thorough reading of the full proposal in the

case of a private grant application. Although somewhat less critical for a public grant application, it nonetheless creates that all-important first impression and sets the tone of how the granting agency's staff views the proposal as it moves forward to the evaluation panelists.

When a letter from the applicant's chief executive is either requested or suggested as an attachment to the proposal, it can serve the very important role of helping readers finalize their impression of the proposal by summarizing the project, reinforcing its importance to the goals of the grantor and grantee organizations, and conveying confidence in the organization's administrative ability and commitment.

As with project summaries, good letters of introduction are equally important in establishing certain key attributes and characteristics of your chapter or district. Whenever possible, letters of introduction or support should:

- Be brief and to the point, never exceeding two pages
- Very quickly capture the attention of the granting agency by the compelling need, innovative approach, or high likelihood of success associated with your proposal
- Be obviously relevant to the funding agency's long-term mission and current goals
- Demonstrate a sound approach problem using clear and logical methodology
- Convey the impression of a competent and administratively responsible organization
- Be signed by either the chief executive officer, the chairman of the board of directors, or both

Whenever possible, the introductory or cover letter might also highlight any outstanding endorsements or really noteworthy accomplishments of the applicant organization. Private grant applications particularly benefit from pointing out anything that is unique or innovative about the project and the urgency of the project and the need it addresses.

If the letter is intended to introduce the proposal, it will produce the very first impression of your organization and the proposed project. Many proposals in the private sector never get past the screening stage, in which only the introductory or cover letter may be actually read. If it is an appended statement from your organization's CEO or board chairman, it represents an opportunity to summarize and confirm the impression made earlier in the proposal.

## **The Architecture of Public Grant Proposals**

Public grant guidelines tend to be very similar in nature and the majority require, in one form or another, four distinct component sections including:

- Forms for obtaining basic qualification information
- A narrative section in which the applicant is requested to respond to certain specified subjects
- Required attachments
- Optional attachments

### **Forms:**

The forms used by most public grant agencies establish the applicant's identity, size, status as a non-profit corporation, location, purpose, and the project for which funds are requested. The forms usually contain a space for your chapter or district's mission statement and project summary, two extremely important statements. Sometimes the forms call for the proposed project budget and the organization's complete budget as well. The use of prescribed forms by private foundations and other granting organizations are usually less complex, but no less important. Initial reviewers or screeners may get no further than the information provided on the forms if they are not able to command attention.

### **Narrative:**

Although most public grant formats call for a separate narrative section requesting the applicant to respond to certain issues, some include these brief descriptive narratives in the forms themselves. It is very important to address all narrative subjects, while being as brief and to the point as possible. Typical issues that must be addressed in the narrative section include:

- The organization's history
- The last, present and next performance season
- The organization's last, present and next annual budget
- A very brief biography of key artistic and administrative personnel
- The organization's service area
- The demographics of the organization's service area, membership, and audiences

- A full description of the project and its methodology
- The project's community impact
- The project's benefit to local artists
- Any planned collaboration with other artistic or community organizations
- Educational activities associated with the project
- Marketing plans for the project, if appropriate
- The project's relationship to the organization's mission
- How the project will be planned, managed, and evaluated

Because public funding agencies must make certain that the benefits of their grant funded projects benefit the entire public, it is always good to identify any special constituencies or audiences that are being served by the proposed project. These might include rural audiences, culturally or economically depressed communities, ethnic or racial groups or neighborhoods, and others who are disadvantaged or to which the arts are inaccessible.

**Required and Optional Attachments:**

While the number and types of required supplemental materials vary among funding sources according to what has already been required in the proposal narrative, the following are typical of what might be either required or suggested. Some of these may be required while others, however helpful, are discretionary and optional.

- The organization's last, present, and next planned annual budget
- Budget detail, showing how the amount on each line of the project budget was determined
- A brief biographical paragraph to establish the credentials of the chapter or district's key artistic and administrative personnel
- The names and affiliations of the organization's officers and board of directors
- A table of organization
- A copy of the organization's long range plan, preferably spanning a five-year period

- For chapters, the chorus's last, present, and next performance season
- Estimates of the demographic profile of the organization, its audiences, and the community service area
- In-kind match detail showing evaluation methods
- A demonstration audio or video tape demonstrating the level of musical performance achieved by both the chorus and perhaps its better quartets
- Newspaper reviews or feature articles
- Letters of artistic endorsement or support, particularly from the community's most respected musical and other artistic organizations or authorities
- Letters of appreciation from benefactor organizations or paid performance clients for whom the chorus or quartets have performed
- Letters of political support where appropriate and acceptable to the funding agency
- A good photograph of the chorus and its quartets
- Anything else that contributes to the credibility and stature of the organization or the project and its merit

Many granting agencies limit the number of attachments that can be appended to their grant proposals. Be sure to honor any restrictions and be very selective in what is included. Again, a third party less familiar with barbershopping can be helpful in deciding what supporting materials are most compelling.

### **Creating Compelling Private Grant Proposals**

Unlike applications to public funding sources, private grant organizations are not compelled to give careful consideration to all applications and are held to the same standard of fairness and objectivity. It is easy to lose sight of the fact that a private funding source must choose among many prospective grantees and that the successful grantee is the one which really stands out from the rest. Even if the proposal itself is attractive and attention getting, the key to differentiating your chapter or district from the other applicants is how well you capitalize on your unique capabilities and ability to relate to a compelling need that is consistent with the funding agency's primary goals.

If you brainstorm a list of characteristics or activities that are unique to your chapter or district, or that you do particularly well, you should discover project ideas that have merit

and that will guide you in seeking private funding sources with objectives consistent with your strengths. Your outstanding capabilities may be found in the appeal of your music to certain audiences, the capabilities of your leadership corp, or your charitable, community outreach, or educational goals, for example.

There is a difference in the order in which subject matter is presented in a project proposal to a private funding source and the order in which it is likely to be read, particularly in the initial screening process. Since many private funding organizations do not specify the format and content of proposals, it is very important that an applicant present the project in its best context and in a clear and logical framework.

### **Order of proposal development:**

The following outline for developing the project proposal is recommended as a means of insuring that the process moves logically from start to finish, in a way that covers each subject in the most efficient order:

- Chapter or District Mission Statement

Begin by writing a brief statement about your chapter or district explaining why you were founded, what constitutes your goals and objectives, what you actually do, and where you are plan to go as an organization. The purpose of a mission statement is to briefly demonstrate to the public or a funding agency why you are worthy of an investment. Sometimes, a more expansive statement, beyond a one or two sentence mission statement is requested. In all cases, however, give a lot of thought to how clearly and concisely you make this very important statement.

- Statement of the need the project addresses

Whether or not a statement of need is requested as part of the application form or in the narrative outline, it is always a good idea to make the granting agency aware of the problem or opportunity your project addresses, and why it is important to your organization, the funding agency, and the community at-large. Be sure to present any data, endorsements, and other supporting evidence that makes the need real and believable. A statement of need is much stronger when it is based on factual information of the opinion of expert authorities than on the personal opinion of the applicant. The chance of being funded depends in part upon creating a sense of urgency about your project. A well developed assessment of need is the basis for and leads logically to the project proposal for funding.

- Statement of the project's goal and objectives and how it addresses the proposed funding agency's goals

The project description should begin with its basic goal, proceed to its measurable component objectives, and end with the relationship between the completion of the objective to the project goal, and also to one or more of the funding agency's goal.

The linkage between the various components of the project, its final goal, and the funding agency's goal should be made as obvious and unmistakable as possible.

Always remember that the project objectives are intermediate sub-goals, each capable of measurement with a finite point of termination.

- Project methodology

Project methodology should describe the activities that will have to take place to accomplish each objective. It should also portray the flow and inter-relationship of sequential and concurrent activities associated with each objective. Sometimes, a time-line is helpful in describing these relationships. Anything that can be done verbally or graphically to make the project concept more easily understood is worth the effort.

- Method for evaluating the project's success

There are two important reasons for evaluating the progress and completion of the project. Since no project proceeds exactly as it was planned, the chapter or district needs to be aware whenever the project changes significantly to where the funding agency needs to be alerted and the grant contract amended. Usually, the allowable variation in the project and its budget will be spelled out in the grant guidelines or the contract itself. Funding agencies vary in how much change in project content or variation from planned expense will be allowed without filing an amendment. Occasionally, a funding agency will have no provision for amending projects. Also, funding agencies want the applicant to predetermine how overall project success will be measured, so as to insure that their funds will result in useful benefits. It is always best to have established measurable objectives so that success can be reported item by item. Whenever possible, try to quantify measures of success, such as audience size, net growth in membership, increased revenues, number of performances for target audiences, and the like. It is also important to track and report how closely the methodology followed the planned strategy in the proposal.

- Provisions and likelihood of project continuity, beyond the initial funding period

Since many funding agencies give priority to development or venture projects that have the potential for continuing to grow and prosper in their

own right, it is to the applicant's advantage to suggest how the project will continue in the future when the grant funding expires. Often, private funding can be secured for more than one year in order to get the continuing projects off to a good start. Sometimes, the funding is provided on a gradually diminishing scale over perhaps two to five years. In private grant seeking, it is very important to recognize these situations well in advance, so the project is discussed in that light from the very beginning. Future funding for project continuity might include such sources as grants from other agencies, performance fees, ticket sales, membership fees, gifts and contributions, endowments, and other fund raising mechanisms. Provision for future continuity can be a powerful motivation to a funding agency because they can see the longer term benefit of providing current seed money.

- Plan for disseminating the results of the project or in applying it to other activities

It is always beneficial to demonstrate how the benefits from the proposed project can be extended and augmented to other potential beneficiaries. If the project has application to other barbershop chapters or districts, or to other performing arts organizations, the applicant should indicate how the project's success can be publicized. Articles for the print media, arts publications, and the Society's *Harmonizer* and district bulletins are obvious possibilities. So, too, are workshops or seminars conducted for local arts council members or district barbershop events. Again, a funding agency will be favorably impressed if an applicant demonstrates that this subject has been given some prior thought and that the applicant has an inherent sense of public responsibility and community benefit.

- The project budget, complete with cash and in-kind match by the applicant, whether required or not

Although a preferred format for presenting budget information will usually be specified, some private grant sources leave that issue to the discretion of the applicant. There are really only four key issues that must be kept in mind in preparing a project budget. First, the budget should be built around the cost of the activities described in the methodology and should not include expenses or income that do not relate to the project itself. Second, the budget should be in sufficient detail to demonstrate that expenses are reasonable, customary, and necessary, so that the granting agency can see that it is not inflated and does not fund any ineligible activities. Third, the budget should reflect the applicant's matching contributions to the project, both in cash and in in-kind contributions. The time barbershoppers spend as volunteer musicians in rehearsal and performances, and the travel and

other expenses they pay from their own resources, count heavily as in-kind match. Whether or not it is required, it is always beneficial to convey the notion that the applicant organization and its membership are helping to support the project.

- Support materials and attachments which could strengthen the proposal

There is always a conflict between the benefit of keeping the project proposal concise, readable, and immediately compelling, and the potential benefit of attaching supporting materials and documentation to lend greater stature and conviction to the applicant or the project. The best guidance in determining how much support material should be attached might come from any third party, uninitiated reviewers that read the draft proposal. If letters of support from artistic or community leaders, recognized artistic authorities, or celebrities are effective to the outside reviewer, they are probably worth including in the proposal. The same test might be applied to newspaper reviews or features, letters of political support, and letters of appreciation from recognized community or civic organizations. At least one photograph of the chorus and quartets would probably be beneficial. Because of the special problem barbershoppers sometimes encounter with genre bias, endorsements from recognized classical music organizations, such as symphony orchestras or masterworks chorals, can be very, very helpful. So, too, can endorsements from recognized music educators.

- Introductory section of the proposal

The introduction is where the chapter or district has the opportunity to convince the private funding source that it is the best organization to address the identified problem. Its purpose is both to generate interest on the part of the funding agency, to find out more about the applicant organization, and to provide motivation to read further through the proposal. The introduction should describe the applicant organization and what it does, briefly state the applicant's goals and accomplishments, describe the relationship between the proposed project and organization's long range goals, highlight the background and competence of the applicant's personnel and other resources, contain any truly outstanding endorsements or accreditations, list the applicant's major sources of revenue and other outside funding, mention any other credibility builders, and describe how the organization's credentials and experience relate directly to its ability to carry out the proposed project successfully.

- Title page

Although a form is usually provided as a title page for public grant proposals, it is often left to the applicant by private grant sources. Since it is the very first thing read upon receipt, it is critical that the project title

itself commands interest and clearly communicates what the project is all about. While recognizing the importance of brevity, it is nonetheless important that the title is descriptive, suggests the end result, and implies benefits. Clearly, a proposal title can only hint at these three issues, all the while making the reader want to know more. The best titles are styled like newspaper headlines that are both descriptive and to the point. For example, a project intended to improve the musical performance level of a chapter chorus in order to better entertain the community audiences might read, “Musical Development, the Key to Entertaining Community Concerts”. Sometimes it is best to ask someone less familiar with barbershop music to read the project summary and create a title that has more meaning to the uninitiated. It is probably acceptable to use up to ten or more words in a title if, and only if, each word makes a clear and meaningful contribution to the reader’s understanding. Avoid using any ambiguous, technical, or jargonistic terms, abbreviations, slang, or acronyms in the title.

- Project summary

Since the project summary is probably the single most important component of a grant proposal, it should be left until the end of the proposal development process. Beyond the title and perhaps mission statement it will be the first substantive thing read and may determine how much further into the proposal the reader will go. It is here that a basic judgment about both the applicant and the project is likely to be made. Some funding sources may have explicit directions or limited space for completing a summary, while others may leave the format open ended. The summary must be succinct and compelling, motivating the reader to go on into the details of the proposal. A good summary will establish the credibility of the applicant organization, the importance of the need or opportunity the project addresses, the overall goal and subordinate objectives of the project, the activities or methods that will be used in conducting the project, the cost of the project, the portion requested as a grant, the likely outcome or result of the project, and the benefit of the project to the community. Be sure to read and re-read the project summary to be sure it truly summarizes, but does not explain, what is presented later in more detail. Stay concentrated on the major focus of the proposal and resist the temptation to wander off into detail in the summary.

- Cover letter

Because a cover or introductory letter is sometimes required as a precursor to a full proposal, this subject was addressed at the beginning of the proposal writing section.

Note that the development of the proposal follows a markedly different sequence than the order in which these sections appear in the written proposal. In the absence of specific guidance on content or format from the private granting agency, the following sequence of subject sections is recommended:

- Cover or introductory letter
- Title page
- Project summary
- Project introduction
- Problem or need statement
- Project goal and objectives
- Project methodology
- Project results evaluation
- Prospects for future continuity and funding
- Dissemination and applications for project results
- Project budget, with cash and in-kind match
- Support materials and attachments

## Chapter 9

# Preparation And Support Documentation

Grant programs vary considerably with regard to the kind of support materials that are required, recommended, or considered optional. These materials include such things as letters of support or appreciation, artistic work samples, certifications, publications, and any other evidence or documentation supporting the claims made for the chapter or district in the proposal. Support material provides the applicant an opportunity to display some of the most compelling information about the organization's activities and successes. Because many potential attachments require substantial lead time to develop, applicant organizations should work throughout the year to solicit and prepare the best possible support materials. For example, recording and producing a good sample of a chapter's musical performance and requesting letters of support from political, artistic, or community service sources might take several months.

Required support materials are usually specified, along with suggested materials in the grant program guidelines. If not, an examination of other successful proposals from prior time periods will provide a strong indication of what is desirable. Private grant sources may be less specific about support materials and past proposals from other successful applicants may not be available for inspection. In rare cases, an applicant may have to rely on good judgment after assessing what the grantor might like to have by way of documentation and evidence of community support.

Some of the support materials most commonly required are:

- Organization chart

Make the chapter or district organization chart as simple and conventional as possible. Be sure to include all the major committees and task forces, as well as the officers. Set aside all barbershop terminology and use conventional terms to describe functions. Make sure that the terms actually convey meaning and won't leave the reader wondering for what a position is actually responsible. Use only one page.

- Board of directors

List the full names of your board members complete with titles. Include their addresses and business affiliations. If retired, include their former profession or vocation. The idea is to convey confidence in the ability and experience of your governing body.

- Budget detail

Include only enough detail to demonstrate that the expenses were actually calculated based on the work that is proposed in carrying out the project. Use pay scales and other costs that look reasonable and uninflated.

- Long range plan

All funding agencies prefer to fund organizations that do meaningful planning, both short and long range. If the chapter or district does not have a plan with at least a five year horizon, the needs of the grant program may become a triggering mechanism. Good plans not only describe what the organization hopes to accomplish, but also describes the means for doing it and who is the responsible person or office in the organization.

- Last completed, current, and next year's anticipated performance seasons

In most cases, the performing arts season begins in September and ends in May or June. It roughly corresponds to the traditional school year. If requested to provide your last season, be sure to include significant quartet performances, athletic event pre-game performances, paid and charitable performances, and even regional or district competitions open to the public. District shows that follow district events should also be included. Sometimes barbershop chapters fail to show all of their activity throughout the year, activity that has an impact on a public audience or local community. If the current or next season is not yet fully planned or booked, estimate what is likely to occur. Above all, try to avoid the appearance of noninvolvement in the community or in a declining level of performance activity.

- Last completed, current, and next year's anticipated budget

Most funding organizations are interested in a chapter or district's overall budget situation. Be sure to revise the budget to conform with the line item descriptions required by the granting agency. Usually, funding agencies require a simpler budget than the one by which the chapter or district is actually operating. As always, don't be afraid to estimate the balance of the current and next budget year. Applicants must get used to using the budget format of the funding agencies. Most are remarkably similar.

Other support materials might be very helpful, particularly if they are no more than two years old. These might include:

- An audio or video artistic work sample

Make sure that your work sample displays your very best performance level and that it is presented in a clean, high quality format. A CD is better than an audio cassette, for example, and not that expensive. The cost of good digital recording is not very expensive and well worth the effort. Since choreography can look amateurish and forced, an audio recording is often better than a video recording. The funding agency will most likely suggest the length of the work sample, often in the five to fifteen minute range. Provide an index with song titles so a reviewer can queue the music he or she wants to hear.

- Newspaper feature articles or performance reviews

Any favorable and fairly recent publicity the chapter or district has received for one of its events or activities is well worth including. Make sure that the copy and photographs are clean, crisp, and highly legible.

- Letters of artistic support

Try to obtain letters from the most prestigious and recognized musicians and organizations you can find. Most fellow artists are more than willing to say something supportive about your music or contribution to the arts and the community. Because of potential genre bias against barbershop music, it is helpful to have the endorsement of symphony orchestras, masterworks chorales, music school administrators, and the like.

- Letters of appreciation

Again, letters expressing appreciation for your charitable, civic, or even paid performances add much to the credibility of your significance to the community. Almost everyone is more than willing to write a good letter on their letterhead if they know it is useful and important. Don't forget to include letters on behalf of quartet performances as well.

- Letters of political support, when appropriate

Letters of support from local legislators, particularly if they serve on committees that govern funding for the arts, can be very useful at the state level. So, too, can letters from county or city commissioners. It is best to check with the public granting agency to make sure that political support letters are acceptable. In some cases, they might not be appropriate.

- Letters of support from recognized celebrities, particularly renowned musicians

Support from celebrities, even outside music or the performing arts, can be helpful. It can help demonstrate that you are noticed and broadly recognized.

- Statistics demonstrating community involvement, organizational growth, or any other positive characteristics

Data on the number of quartet performances, the time dedicated to rehearsal and performance by volunteer musicians, the size of the applicant's audiences, and anything else that might add weight to the proposal can be presented as tables or charts among the attachments. Try to be creative in finding ways to present information that further strengthens the case for funding.

- Photographs of performances in prestigious venues or collaborators

Good photographs of the chorus or quartets in formal wear can help convey a favorable impression. Try to avoid pictures in comical poses or in novelty costumes. Since much of the traditional competition has come from classical music organizations, it probably helps to look dignified.

It may take considerable time and effort to assemble some of this information, particularly for the chapter or district's first grant proposal. The Treasurer, for example, may have to generate some new budget line items to correspond with the arts community's categories and definitions. It might be necessary to schedule a planning retreat to create or update the organization's long-range plan. Busy people, however cooperative and supportive, can sometimes take months to respond to a request for a letter of support and may expect guidance on what it should address. All of these take time and certainly benefit from long lead times and a lot of anticipation.

You might also want to identify advocates for your organization, generally or for your project proposal specifically, who might be willing to call or visit key administrative staff, board members, or trustees of the funding agency. This is more likely to be appropriate, and even necessary, when applying to foundations or corporations in the private sector. It must be used with great discretion in the public sector, however, because it can be so easily construed as inappropriate lobbying. Generally speaking, advocates are most useful through letters of support in the public sector.

## Chapter 10

# Grant Administration and Reporting

Grant administration really begins the moment the chapter or district decides to submit a proposal to a funding agency. Proposals for public funding require staff review for eligibility, compliance with all requirements, and completeness, before they are forwarded to an independent grant panel for review and scoring. All public funding agencies use an outside panel to evaluate proposals for their programmatic value, contribution to the community, cost effectiveness, likelihood of success, and consistency with stated agency goals and objectives. The panel meeting is announced well in advance and applicant organizations are usually encouraged to have a representative attend to answer any remaining questions panel members might have. Sometimes, the representative of the applicant organization is given an opportunity to add any recent, relevant developments since the proposal was submitted. The entire process usually takes two to three months after the deadline for submitting proposals.

- Attend any grant workshops offered by the granting agency to which you are applying.
- Attend the panel meeting that evaluates the prior year's applications if the timing is right for doing so. Much can be learned about what panelists are looking for and how they react to other proposals.
- Be sure to meet deadlines for submitting proposals with time to spare. There are no exceptions for rejecting late proposals.
- Be sure to respond promptly and fully to any requests for further information from the granting agency staff.
- Be sure also to have someone knowledgeable in attendance at the grant panel meeting if given the opportunity.
- If successful, express appreciation to the panel at the end of the meeting if given the opportunity.
- If less than fully successful, remain upbeat and appreciative and let them know you will be back with an improved application in the next cycle.
- When notified of the grant's approval and the amount you will receive, promptly return the grant agreement and any other required documentation.

- Notify your treasurer and inform him of how he is to submit billings. He will need to set up a separate account for each grant and maintain support documentation such as receipts for expenses accordingly.
- Document your in-kind match. Since most chapters and districts will be using volunteer time at minimum wage as the basis for their match, chapters should keep careful records of attendance and time on the risers at both rehearsals and performances. Districts need to document the hours their volunteer officers and committee staff spend on their respective activities. Although volunteered time can be supported after the fact by affidavit, it is far better to use actual attendance records.
- Submit the interim report, if required, and the final report on time. Include any documentation that support the success of the project. If the project was only partially successful, be sure to explain what happened and how it can be imported in the future. Seek the guidance of the agency staff if there are any questions.
- Be sure that all grant expenditures and other activities are within the grant time frame. Keep documentation of all expenses and revenues from the grant project. Although the backup documentation is not required with the final report, it must be on file for three years to satisfy potential audits.
- Become familiar with the granting agency's policy and procedure for amending the grant should it become necessary. Project modifications requiring a formal amendment usually are spelled out in the grant agreement.
- Throughout the grant period and beyond, look for ways to recognize the funding agency in public announcements, performance programs, news releases, and other communications to the public. Use the funding agency's full name and logo in printed materials, if available.
- Look for opportunities to show your appreciation to the staff, board members, or trustees of funding organizations by offering complementary tickets to show productions, recordings, and invitations to social functions.

Private grant processes are often less prescribed by definite review periods and decision points. If a chapter or district hears nothing during the first month or two following the submission of the proposal, a follow-up inquiry is in order. One of the advantages of having become acquainted with the private funding agency's staff, is sensing when it is appropriate to inquire without becoming a nuisance. If a good advocate for the proposal has been identified, an expression of continued interest and support might be helpful in moving the proposal to the top of the pile. Again, the wisdom of using outside assistance must be carefully evaluated based on a careful assessment of each individual situation.

## Chapter 11

# Maintaining Funding Support

Funding agencies all experience intense seasonal favor by their beneficiary organizations when the new grant cycle is announced. They report, however, a marked decline in interest the rest of the year, including times when they need community support. Between the time that grant applications are due and the deadline for final reports, most grant recipients place their grant programs on the back burner while busily engaged in their own programs and activities. After a few months of intensive work between the proposal deadline and the actual awarding of the last grant, most granting agencies are hard at work building community relations, lobbying for increased funding, and promoting the arts generally. This is a time when they need the continuing support of their beneficiary organizations the most.

There are a number of things a grant recipient might be able to do throughout the year to enhance the strength of the granting organization. Although grant recipients might be called on to participate in or support certain activities, it is always a good idea to volunteer some ongoing support for a chapter or district's benefactors.

Consider volunteering to do one or more of the following supportive activities:

- Provide appropriate entertainment for the funding agency's events such as receptions, awards ceremonies, staff parties, donor appreciation events, and the like.
- Offer complementary tickets for your shows and other productions for the funding agency's staff and board members or trustees.
- Include recognition for your funding agency in any features you obtain from your newspapers or radio and television stations.
- Include the funding agency's office staff among your complementary singing valentines.
- Arts councils and other public funding agencies expect their grant recipients to express their appreciation for public funding by writing letters of appreciation to the governmental bodies providing their funding. It is always wise to copy the arts council to confirm that you are interested and appreciative of their involvement. While letters of appreciation indicating what public funding has done for the chapter or district are always a good idea, be ever mindful that you must avoid even the appearance of lobbying, an activity that is in violation of the Society's code of ethics.

- Either during the project itself or long afterward, write up any special successes that occur as a result of the grant and forward them to the funding agency for inclusion in their own newsletter. These agencies need to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their grant programs in benefiting the community.
- Prepare and distribute newsworthy press releases featuring the grant project, its accomplishments, and the funding agency that made it all possible.
- When you receive funding from private foundations or corporations, be sure to write a letter of appreciation to the trustees and CEO complementing the staff and expressing appreciation for their support of your proposal. Be sure to point out how the project contributed to the community and the mission of the funding organization. Letters are much more appreciated than telephone calls or email messages.
- Look for ways to inform the funding agency of how the project grant is leading to an expanded or continuing program, beyond the life of the grant project itself. All grantors like to see their funding used to seed worthwhile programs that take on a life of their own.

## Chapter 12

# Grant Program Serendipity

Although the advantages of improving a chapter or district's programming with added funding from public and private grant sources is clear, other significant advantages from grant participation may be less appreciated. As a chapter becomes a regular participant in local arts grant programs, the chapter's grant manager will usually become better acquainted in the arts community and there will be more and more awareness of the chapter's chorus and quartet activity in the community. Successful grant applicants are usually invited to serve on some kind of advisory board to the larger arts councils. The chapter grant manager also becomes much better acquainted with the arts council and community foundation staff personnel. All of these contacts lead invariably to new performance opportunities in new and better venues, to performances for new audiences unfamiliar with barbershop music, and to collaborations with other performing arts organizations. These associations may lead also to new sources of private funding that would not have been otherwise discovered. As a chapter's artistic stature grows, so, too, should membership, show ticket prices, paid performance fees, and more prestigious civic and charitable benefit performances. While these advantages are more significant for the better performing choruses and quartets and larger metropolitan areas, they are important to some degree for all chapters.

The same kind of principle holds true for districts as well. As the district gains credibility and recognition at the state level for its educational and outreach programs, program accountability, and management continuity, new opportunities are bound to arise for the participation of the district's better ensembles in various public programs and in coming to the attention of new sources of funding.

The consistent participation by chapters and districts in local and statewide grant programs probably does more for public awareness and the prestige of barbershop music than most of our directed public relations efforts. Being listed in newspapers as recipients of public grants or prestigious private grants speaks volumes about a chapter's credibility as a musical organization. So, too, recognition of various funding benefactors and the use of their logos in the chapter's show programs, brochures, posters, and press releases will lend artistic credibility to the organization and barbershopping in general.

As a chapter or district participates consistently in a grant program, the applicant tends to become accepted and well known to the granting organization, so that an application is expected each year. At that stage, grant panelists can see that the applicant has a standing history of participation and they will become very reluctant to deny or even reduce funding. Grant income therefore, can become one of the most stable components of a chapter or district's annual budget.

## Chapter 13

### Other Considerations

There are a few other issues or concepts not mentioned elsewhere in the Workshop Manual that are worth considering:

- If a chapter or district has no one interested, willing, or able to search for available grant programs, identify fundable projects within the organization, and write and monitor grant project proposals, it might be possible to utilize the services of a professional grant writer or contractor. Since almost the same amount of work is required for a small grant as a large one, the cost to a small chapter seeking only five digit grant income probably will be prohibitive. A chapter with a large budget or a district might find it feasible to retain the services of a grant writer or contractor, perhaps to do only the writing itself. It is best to find someone already familiar with arts grants, hopefully involving musical performance, and someone with a proven track record with other musical organizations. Since a professional grant writer will have to invest some time to learn your organizations activities, budget, and aspirations, it is best to assure them of the likelihood of a continuing relationship. The local arts council or commission may be able to help you locate competent contractors with the kind of background you are looking for.
- As they develop, consider using your grant writing skills as a tool for tapping funding sources to which you do not have access by offering to write a grant proposal in their name for another barbershop chapter, Sweet Adeline chapter, or other organizations in need of a guest artist. In so doing, you have the opportunity to demonstrate the advantages of having a grant program to another chapter, while tapping their source of local funding unavailable to you and writing yourself into a proposal to be paid your customary performance fee to appear on the applicant's show or other event. This is a situation in which everyone can benefit.
- In situations where funding limits are based on the size of the applicant's budget, it is to a chapter or district's advantage to include as much activity expense as possible within the organization's budget. For example, instead of donating charitable and benefit performances, ask your benefactor to pay your normal performance fee with the understanding that you will make a cash donation in the same or greater amount. Also, instead of asking members to buy their own uniforms, costuming, hotel rooms, airline tickets, registrations, etc. on their own, have them pay the chapter or district and let

the organization pay the bills. Another opportunity exists when non-members donate their professional time to the chapter or district. Try to pay them their commercial rate or fee and suggest that they make a cash contribution of like amount.

Look for these opportunities to let your budget reflect more of the activity that is actually taking place. This takes more time and effort but can pay big dividends with higher grant limits.

- Many barbershop chapters involve significant membership or performance activity in more than one county or city, and the majority of districts involve more than one state.

In some cases, a chapter can simply apply to each county independently where they can justify strong involvement. In other cases, it might be better to divide the same project between two or more counties by prorating the grant request according to relative impact. This is particularly true for districts with single programs and projects benefiting members in multiple states. This is an issue best discussed with the respective granting agencies.

- Most states make some kind of distinction among grant programs that benefit performing arts organizations, other arts organizations, arts in education, and arts organizations that do not perform in and of themselves, but do offer services to performing organizations. In general, barbershop chapters are considered performing arts organizations while districts are considered arts service organizations. Both chapters and districts can qualify for arts in education grant programs if they have an outreach program to or through the community's schools. Most often, the arts in education grant program is a separate grant program within the arts agencies portfolio. Sometimes, however, arts in education grants will be found instead in the state department of education's purview.
- Because no one associated with any organization can be completely objective about the organization, it is best to find someone familiar with grant making, but with no prior knowledge of your organization or subject matter, to read a draft of your grant proposals for review and comment. Granting agency personnel involved in either the initial screening of your proposal or its later substantive evaluation are probably going to be in this very same position. It is critical that your proposal can stand alone without interpretation or explanation. Critical peer and outside review is the surest approach to making sure that your proposal is succinct, clear, well understood, and compelling.

- There is a very important advantage to both the applicant and funding organization to have only one individual as the primary grant contact point in the chapter or district. It is even more important that this individual serves in his role over enough time to develop a solid relationship with the funding organizations with whom he works. As the individual becomes known, trusted and comfortable to the funding agency, he is also becoming familiar and comfortable with the agency staff. The grant recipient will find that he and your organization are becoming part of the arts community family and future funding will be even more assured. Trustworthiness and continuity of the individuals involved are the keys to the relationship.

## Chapter 14

# Grant Program Examples

Because it is impractical to include many complete examples of grant proposals, only three proposals are included with this manual. Two are proposals from the Sunshine District to a State of Florida arts grant program: one requesting funding for an ongoing high school vocal music workshop program and the other to fund the startup of a new collegiate level workshop program. Both proposals were funded and continue to be funded each year. Both districts and individual chapters engaged in this kind of educational outreach activity would also be eligible to submit like proposals to either their state or local funding sources. The third example is a Tampa chapter proposal to its local county arts organization to provide assistance with general operating expenses. Most funding agencies want to see an organization successfully complete two or more project grants before considering proposals for non-project specific assistance with general operating expenses.

While these examples address only a few of the possible combinations of grant proposal subjects and funding sources, they should serve to demonstrate the general level of detail required, together with insight into how typical questions and subjects might be handled. City and county grant application forms and guidelines are usually patterned after their state's guidelines and are very similar with regard to requirements. Moreover, public sector grant application requirements are essentially the same from state to state throughout the United States.

Previously successful grant proposals from other musical organizations from previous years are usually available for review in the offices of public grant agencies as common public knowledge. These will provide considerable insight into how other successful organizations treat various subject matter and provide an appreciation for the quality and style of other high scoring proposals.

### **Attached Examples:**

- ***Collegiate Vocal Music Workshops***  
A Cultural Support Grant Proposal to the Division of Cultural Affairs, Florida Department of State, October 17, 2005, from the Sunshine District Association of Chapters, SPEBSQSA, Inc.
- ***Vocal Music Workshop/Clinics for Florida County Schools***  
An Arts in Education Project Proposal to the Division of Cultural Affairs, Florida Department of State, November 10, 2005, from the Sunshine District Association of Chapters, SPEBSQSA, Inc.

- ***General Operating Support***

A Cultural Development Grant Proposal to the Arts Council of Hillsborough County, Florida, April 10, 2000, from the Tampa Chapter, SPEBSQSA, Inc.

Hopefully, these proposals will help illustrate how regular, ongoing barbershop activities can be packaged into fundable projects for grant proposals, and how barbershop programs and activities have been successfully described so as to qualify for public funding.