



Webinar for VISTA

Researching Grants: Finding the Right Opportunities for Your Project

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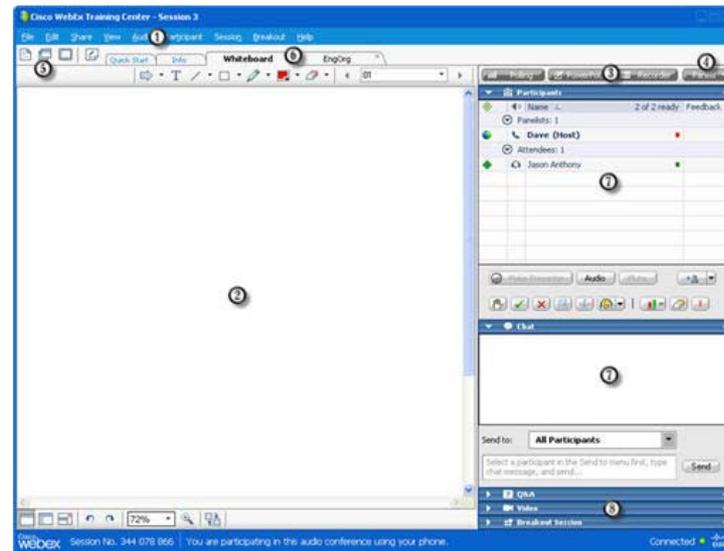
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This session will begin shortly



Tips for Participating

- Submit questions to the presenter at any time using the Q & A feature.
- Share tips, resources, and ideas with other attendees using the Chat feature.
- The phone line will be open later in the presentation for Questions and Answers.



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Welcome to Researching Grants: Finding the Right Opportunities for Your Project



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Today's Team...



Andy King
VISTA Training
Specialist
CNCS



Robyn Stegman
Project Specialist
Campaign
Consultation, Inc.



Shannon McGarry
Project Specialist
Campaign
Consultation, Inc.



Danielle Ricks
Social Media
Specialist
Campaign
Consultation, Inc.

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Today's Agenda

- What's your experience?
- A Four-Step Process
- Examples from VISTAs
- Effective Practices
- Q&A

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Today's Presenters



Lois Morgan

Blended Learning Instructional Designer

Bank Street College of Education

New York, NY

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Learning Outcomes

By the end of today's webinar, you will be able to:

- Determine appropriate methods/activities for researching grants for *your* organization, in *your* community, with *your* program needs.
- Start researching grants for your project.

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A Real Post From a VISTA Campus Forum

“ Hi, I just started my year of service and I am supposed to be researching new grants/contracts..... I have no idea what to do or what I am doing. Does anyone know of a good book...or any websites? Thanks!”

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Let's Begin With a Poll

Which best describes your situation with researching grants?

- No experience and alone
- No experience and support from colleagues
- Some experience, would like some guidance
- Lots of experience, feel comfortable

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Defining Our Terms: What Do We Mean by “Researching” Grants?

Discovering and cultivating funding opportunities– up to the actual grant writing phase.

Usually encompasses 2 broad categories of activities:

- Online research/exploration
- Engaging with the local community by talking with people and meeting with people

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Today's Presenters



Mo Hyman
Executive Director
College Access Plan
Pasadena, CA

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So, what are the best ways to research grants?



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Use a 4-Step Process

**Uncover
Opportunities**

Dig Deeper

**Build
Relationships**

**Respond to
Deadlines in
Timely Fashion**

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Uncover Opportunities



- Talk with people in the community (including people in your organization) or
- Do online searches

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Talking with People

Have conversations with:

- Organization's staff and volunteers (from part-time people to CEO) about previous grants. Contacts?
- Other VISTA members, leaders, supervisors
- Local retail stores, banks, etc. (about modest funding opportunities)
- Other non-profits in your area doing similar work—who are/have been their funders?



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VISTA: MJ Matson



Volunteer Coordinator

Urban Roots

Reno, Nevada

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VISTA: MJ 's Experience

**The Wounded Warrior Project: \$25,000 grant
(to help fund a Veterans Garden at local center)**

- ✓ Learned about the opportunity from a fellow volunteer coordinator and outreach specialist
- ✓ Followed up on lead by looking at the website and discovered grant was coming up
- ✓ Contacted and spoke with woman at VA
- ✓ Wrote LOI (Letter of intent)
- ✓ Now we're invited to submit full grant application

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MJ's Tip

“Be persistent, but not annoying”

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VISTA: Jannelle Knaus



Marketing Director

Truth or Consequences Boys and Girls Club

New Mexico

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VISTA: Jannelle 's Experience

**21st Century Grant for Afterschool Program:
\$280,000 per year for 4 years**

- ✓ Learned about opportunity from knowing the organization's history: they had this grant previously, but lost it
- ✓ Followed up via online research—checked website every day (2-week turnaround)
- ✓ Timing was an issue
- ✓ Status

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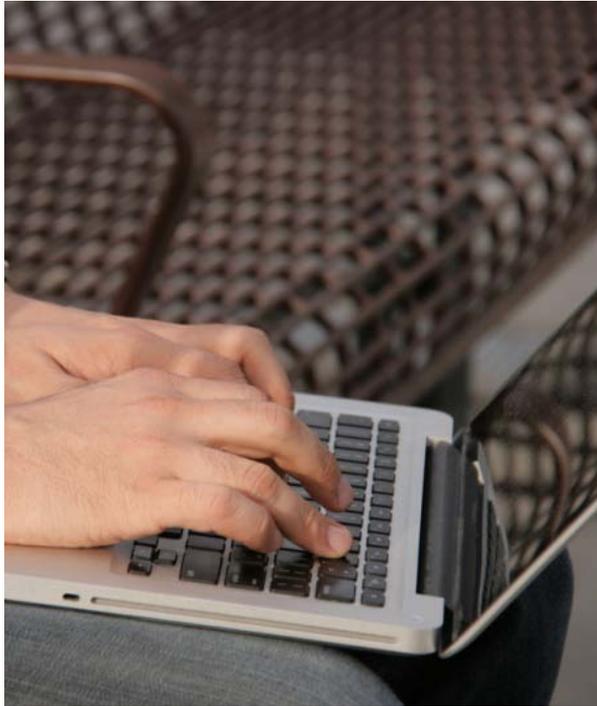
Jannelle's tips....

- “Start local”
 - Town Hall meetings
 - Look at who the funding sources are for similar programs in the area
 - Look at copies of successful grants (public records)

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Online Searches



Survey grants that are coming up in:

- Federal government agencies
- State government agencies
- Foundations
- Corporations
- Collaborations with other nonprofits

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Useful Online Resources for Finding Funders

- The Foundation Center: foundationcenter.org
- Grantspace.org
- GrantsAlert.com (for education grants)
- Grants.gov (for federal grants)
- Guidestar.org (clearinghouse for every nonprofit in the US—up-to-date info and 990s)

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VISTA: Jared Boze



Resource Developer
Greater Baltimore Urban League
Maryland

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VISTA: Jared 's Experience

Abell Foundation Grant: \$75,000 (to support "Saturday Leadership Program")

- ✓ Talked with Supervisor and president of organization, who suggested I explore the Abell Foundation for possible funds
- ✓ Went to foundation's website looking for:
 - Program areas they focus on
 - Past grantees
 - Most recent grantees
- ✓ Wrote Letter of Inquiry, now under review
- ✓ Waiting to hear back (end of August?)

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Jared's Tips...

- Go to your **local library**, with access to Foundation Center database and other resources: do funder search (be very specific)
- Check the websites of foundations and nonprofits for **list of donors** to get a better feel for the scene.
- When using online databases, **enter specific searches**; don't go looking up foundations in bulk and try to sort through them.

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How to Prioritize your Online Search?

1. Start local
2. Look for foundations/corporations interested *specifically* in what you do
3. Check 990 for grants to similar organizations
4. Use the 1,2,3 system of prioritization
5. Obtain and adhere to deadlines

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Looking for Traps

For example...

- Foundations that don't accept unsolicited proposals (check 990)
- Grantmaker has very specific focus within broader funding category (STEM vs general education)
- Corporate funders *always* have a trap!
 - Talk with them first, before you submit anything
 - Talk with community members or other nonprofits

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Digging Deeper



Do additional research on promising opportunities

- Gather relevant information from website about proposal process, etc.
- Call other organizations-- do deep outreach
- Assess how much work involved vs. payout
- Adjust priority given, as necessary

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VISTA: Joe Barbaree



Development Specialist

Rural Action

The Plains, Ohio

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Joe's Experience

Ohio Dept. of Agriculture "Specialty Crop Block Grant": \$50,000

- ✓ Learned about opportunity from online update announcement
- ✓ Followed link to proposal details and reviewed carefully
- ✓ Talked with supervisor and Ex. Dir. regarding emphasis ODA is favoring and did effort vs payout analysis
- ✓ Out of comfort zone, but worth the try
- ✓ Found it, but didn't get it (geared toward typical agriculture)

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Joe's Tips....

“Creating connections is a tough process, but really necessary”

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Building Relationships



Once you've initially contacted potential grantmakers, how will you best establish a productive relationship?

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Effective Approaches for Talking with a Program Officer

- Get the right person on the phone
- Have a specific and brief list of pertinent questions
- Be cautious with phone calls to Executive Directors of foundations:
 - You may want to have *your* program director make the initial call
 - Get clearance if you'll be making the call

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Responding to Deadlines in a Timely Fashion

You'll need to watch out for deadlines, and you will need to meet them to have a fighting chance!

- *LOI*
- Other information or documents, as requested (990; recent organization budget; project budget)



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Summary of Effective Practices

Uncover
Opportunities

Dig Deeper

Build
Relationships

Respond to
Deadlines in
Timely Fashion

- Don't make phone calls without a decent sense of what you're looking for
- Have a good sense of your organization's history with funders
- Learn about who are potential collaborators or partners in the community

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Next Steps

- Explore the online module (Researching Grants) on the Campus
- Identify libraries and centers with research tools you can use
- Create an organization system (spreadsheet) using 1,2,3 method for recording your findings
- Gather internal documents (501c3 letter, etc.)

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The Work

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Search

LIFE AS A VISTA

THE WORK

Working with Volunteers

Fundraising

Communications & Marketing

Workplace & Service Site

Building Partnerships

Community Development

VISTA Program Areas

Poverty in America

Project Management

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Campus Catalog

Browse our list of resources

Member Handbook



Working with Volunteers



Fundraising



Communications & Marketing



Workplace & Service Site



Building Partnerships



Community Development



VISTA Program Areas



Poverty in America



Project Management

Evaluation

Please take a few moments to share your feedback. How can we improve these sessions? What topics should we include in future webinars?

Thank you very much for your time and participation!

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THANK YOU

For Your Participation!

If you have further questions or for more information, contact us:

VISTAWebinars@cns.gov

Mapping Assets to Build Community
August 21, 2013 from 2-3:30PM ET

Visit the Ongoing Learning page on the VISTA Campus for a complete schedule of VISTA webshops

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