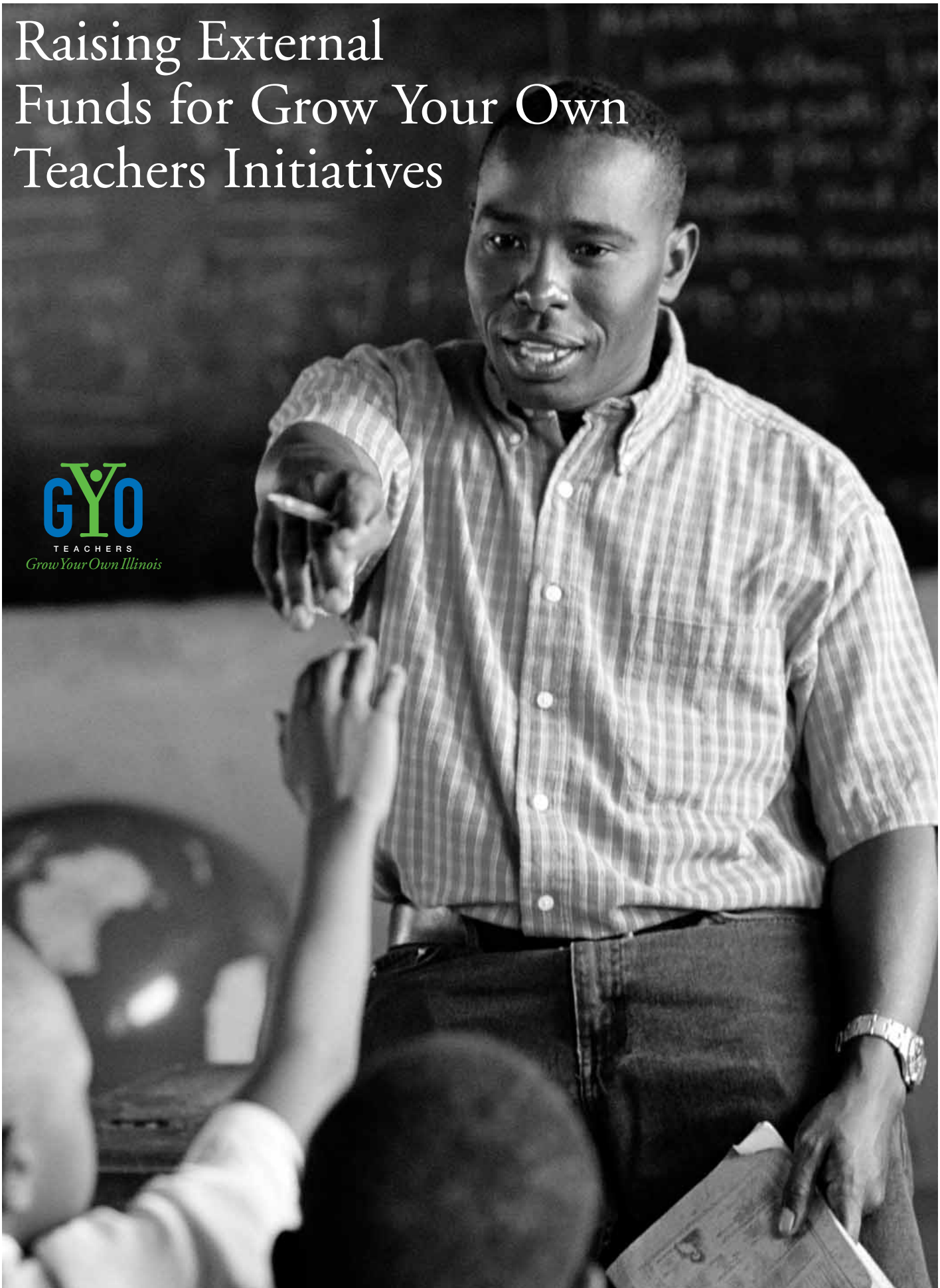


Raising External Funds for Grow Your Own Teachers Initiatives



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Raising External Funds for Grow Your Own Teachers Projects: Elements of a Plan for Support

Introduction

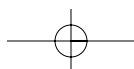
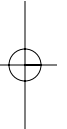
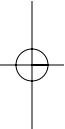
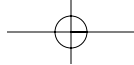
The Grow Your Own (GYO) Teachers initiative in Illinois is an innovative partnership of community organizations, higher education institutions, and school districts that support parents, community members, and paraprofessionals in low-income communities to become highly qualified teachers. The initiative is funded by an annual state appropriation which covers essential operating costs. However, it is probable that many GYO consortia will need funds in addition to those provided by the state. This document provides helpful information about fundraising for GYO projects.

Fundraising is not just about asking; it is also about inspiring people to invest in an opportunity. Fundraising should first appeal to a person's emotions. Logic exists to reinforce the appeal. Fundraising is about opportunities, not simply achievements. People applaud achievement but give to change and save lives. This is the reason that great fundraisers are also great storytellers who can pull in the audience and tell the story in a way to which they can relate. Your best fundraising assets are your GYO teacher candidates because each of them has a compelling story to tell and an inspiring motivation for entering the program.

Potential donors may be cultivated through such things as special events, receptions with opportunities to meet your GYO teacher candidates, advisory boards, memberships and membership benefits, and support groups. Most professional fundraisers advise asking for a gift only after you have had a chance to inform and educate a prospective donor.

If possible, think of the needs of your donor. What interests the donor and how will the donor benefit from giving? Perhaps the donor seeks good will in the community. In that case, you will wish to find appropriate ways to publicize the gift. Make the case larger than the organization. It is important to show prospects not only how they will benefit from contributing to the success of Grow Your Own, but also how their children and their community will benefit. In this way, their gift is an "investment" in the future.

In this guide, we make suggestions for ways to get started, for essential elements of a fundraising plan, for pitfalls to avoid, and about what to ask for. We will continue to refine this document, so we welcome your suggestions at responses@growyourown teachers.org.



Getting Started

Understand your needs

The first step in fundraising is to know clearly what your needs are, so you can explain them, in this case in the context of your Grow Your Own Teachers initiative. Before you begin to talk to grant makers you are in the strongest possible position, if you: 1) have worked out a thoughtful prioritized wish list of objectives that can't be met with existing funding as well as; 2) listed the objectives that fit the logic of your own Grow Your Own project; and 3) decided which objectives involve commitments that will not distract you from the main task of implementing GYO. (Because this is so important, we have devoted Section III of the handbook to this issue.) Once this preliminary thinking is done you are ready to get organized.

Convene a committee

Since the consortium includes a college or university, a school district and a community based organization, representatives of these groups should talk over any unmet needs and appoint members of their organizations, as well as outside members from the community, to a fundraising committee. Members of this fundraising or finance committee may include prominent individuals who have many community contacts such as a business person, public official, or member of the clergy. But contacts are not the whole criterion—you want personable, hardworking individuals who, once they give their word that they will complete a task, have the reputation for seeing it through to the end.

The committee should be big enough to share the work involved, but not so large as to be unwieldy and unable to make good decisions. At the first meeting, you may want to distribute copies of this guide and talk over some of the following topics.

Develop a decision-making process

While it's always important to involve various participants (staff, board members, program participants) in a fundraising effort, in a consortium the issue of involvement is especially complicated. Decisions need to be collective, and both the effort and rewards need to be shared, but it's also important to identify one person who will make sure that a coordinated strategy is actually implemented, stay on top of deadlines and other calendar issues, get the proposal written, and procure signatures. If at all possible, this work should be compensated. Fundraising is an actual job, and while Grow Your Own projects don't need a full-time fundraiser, the consortium steering group might do well to budget for this activity, for example, as 25 percent of one person's time, depending on kinds and amount of support you are seeking.

Choose a fiscal agent

The committee will need to address the question of choosing the fiscal agent for a particular project. The practical answer may depend on where the "center" of the proposed activity is (in the case of a grant to provide mentoring stipends for teachers, this would be the school district). But sometimes the key issues are procedural or legal: if you are asking for funds for rental of adjunct facilities, for example, it may be easier for the community organization to be the fiscal agent because of the legal hurdles that public education institutions have in leasing space and other kinds of procurement. Of course, the community organization must have a federal tax-exempt (501 (c) 3) designation to be eligible for grants. Some funders stipulate NO grants to public educational institutions at all (though some of these may be willing to contribute to scholarship funds dispensed by a university).

“write a compelling and exciting description of the program.”

Tap into your strength

Another question for the committee is more subtle—who makes the approach, cultivates the contacts, goes to the meetings? On the whole, it probably makes sense for a group from your consortium to visit funders, so that they can see the remarkable achievement involved in sustaining a working consortium. But it is also necessary to assess the strengths of the members of the consortium in this area (in preliminary calling, face-to-face presentations, proposal writing and budgeting) as well as their prior experience with particular corporate and foundation staffs, and make assignments based on this information.

Create a Budget

The first step in developing a fundraising plan is to develop a budget. A budget is simply a list of items on which you will spend money (expenses) and a list of sources from which you will receive money (income). Most donors like to see that they are not the only source being asked for a donation; that you are actively seeking other sources of funds in addition to your request to them.

Then you will want to estimate the total amount of money to be raised from a variety of different donors: for example, individual donors, private foundations, governmental funds, and corporations.



From this you will be able to decide how many donors you need to meet your goals and set goals for different groups of givers. Let's say that you have one substantial foundation to approach for \$10,000, eight local businesses for \$500 each, and you think that you may be able to get 40 individual contributions of \$25, thereby raising a total of \$15,000. Work the numbers until all members on the committee are agreed that the goal is doable.

Create a Timeline

Many funding processes take anywhere from 3-12 months to complete so give yourself as much time as possible to write a compelling and exciting description of the proposed program. In the first draft of your program description, include whom it will serve, how it came into being, the purpose of the plan for recruiting and supporting neighborhood teacher candidates, and why this consortium is committed and ready to do this job.

Put the plan on a timeline and then generate a “to do” list with the right individuals who will accept responsibility for them. Include a calendar of your future events with deadlines and timeframes for your most likely donors.

In the material that follows, we share a list of possible fundable projects which are divided into three categories: (1) “unrestricted” funding, (2) funding that supplements state grant expenditures, and (3) funding that allows the project to support work beyond that supported by the state. We've also highlighted where relevant a distinction that matters a great deal to private grant makers: funding for one-time expenditures versus funding for services or materials that will need to be supported through the life of the project. In the latter case, many contributors will want to see a plan for “sustaining” the work after the grant is over.

One cautionary note: any time a project is using two or more funding sources, it is very important to be able to distinguish particular activities when it comes time to do the financial reporting. And one caveat: although we've made suggestions that we hope will be helpful, this is simply a guide. As a consortium, you are in the best position to recognize which approach and what targets are the most viable in your own community.

What to ask for

General (“unrestricted”) project funding

It could be argued that soliciting and receiving unrestricted funds to support Grow Your Own projects gives projects the best of all possible worlds—flexibility and the ability to plug resource gaps as they occur. But within a consortium environment, such contributions may be more trouble than they’re worth. For one thing, the collaborating organizations will have to establish a process for prioritizing, allocating, and accounting for these funds. In addition, it may be difficult to persuade donors to fund your work if there is no specificity about how the money will be spent.

Another negative is that it may be difficult to track unrestricted gifts in your financial reporting. Auditors are not an enemy for well-run projects, but one must make the assumption that an auditor will look carefully at your implementation grant project, and will pay particular attention if it appears that you have used state funds to pay for something that has already been paid for through other funds. Thus it is necessary to keep a careful expense record for unrestricted grants to show where the money actually went.

Additional resources in areas already funded

When you ask for money to supplement state resources, it is important to demonstrate that there is a significant gap between the direct needs of the project and the available resources. It is also important, where possible, to have some way for the donor to identify the direct results of the specific contribution. Here are some possible categories for such funding.

Scholarship money

You might ask a number of businesses to provide a fixed scholarship amount (\$500 per year for example) for one or more candidates. This reduces the amount of the candidates’ forgivable loans and allows the program to apply those funds elsewhere. Another approach would be to create a fund for writing off candidates’ prior student loans.

Adjunct space

If your project requires an office in the community where the coordinators and tutors can work with candidates, a funder might be willing to contribute this either through cash or an in-kind donation of existing space.



Alternatively, if a school is providing this space, a funder could cover additional personnel costs for periods when the building would not otherwise be open.

Tutoring and learning resources

Grow Your Own projects utilize large amounts of academic support. But since this is a major funding category for the use of implementation grant funds, most funders are going to want to see how your specific request supplements the grant—making tutors available at more times, in different locations, or for different subject matter; or purchasing specific software or other learning support tools (e.g. test preparation materials for the Basic Skills Test).

“a one-time grant will refurbish and equip a space for childcare.”

Childcare and child care facility

Here again, funders might have a reasonable expectation that the grant will cover costs in this area, because it is part of the basic model as described in the law. So the need has to be carefully documented for your actual cohort: One possibility is to ask for a one-time grant that will refurbish and equip a space for the childcare function.

Collaboration costs and opportunities

Some funders like to pay for meetings or celebrations, e.g. a year-beginning retreat for candidates and staff or a year-ending celebration of progress. Others might be interested in paying for ongoing communications, e.g. a project newsletter and/or online presence.

Transportation

In some projects, not all of the necessary coursework can be delivered in the community. In Chicago, for instance, some projects have already determined that instruction will take place in three or four different locations in any given term, depending on the candidate's progress. One possibility would be for a project to contract with a service for x number of trips between two locations in the project. The ability to depend on such transportation is a contribution that corporations in the automotive business might be willing to support, both to enable candidates to forgo driving their own vehicles and in recognition that the family car may be needed by another family member.

Evaluation

Foundations and corporations are often willing to support evaluation work. A one-time grant could pay for a consultant to help the project lay the groundwork for the ongoing internal evaluation; an ongoing grant could pay for the time and expenses of an external review committee.

Resources for things not explicitly covered by the grant

Many of us are already thinking about the implications of Grow Your Own Teachers for other community-based school improvement efforts. However, an important first step is to get funders to understand Grow Your Own for what it is. Therefore, the following projects, while stressing innovation, should demonstrate that they contribute directly either to support for candidates as they move towards graduation and certification, or to preparation of the groundwork for additional cohorts. But within these limits there is much room for ideas that will capture the attention of funders—ideas that demonstrate that you have thought through your project beyond the categories specifically envisioned in the law.

Resources for the schools

The law and the rules for the Grow Your Own program do not make provision for resources for the individual schools that have to be identified in order to show eligibility. But it is critical to the success of the project that the GYO candidates have relationships with these schools, either as employees or as volunteers gaining classroom experience. The relationship can work both ways—school personnel can help candidates understand and learn from their experiences; and candidates can work on projects that benefit the school.

Funders might be interested in one of these ideas:

- Mentoring stipends for teachers who agree to work closely with specific candidates
- A fund to provide resources to help candidates to carry out special projects in particular schools—expenses for a school play, for example. (Here's an interesting opportunity for innovative thinking. Once a candidate is teaching, he/she will have many opportunities to apply for project funding from a variety of sources, but very few teacher preparation programs give their students the experience of developing ideas, writing short proposals, etc.)



“giving computers to GYO students is adventurous.”

So applying for such funds can be an add-on to the curriculum, as well as benefiting the schools and the candidates.) Another example might be a retreat of school board or Local School Council members, community and parent leaders, teachers, administrators, and representatives of other partners to develop ideas on community involvement at specific schools, with candidates participating and doing at least some of the preparation work.

Technology

Grants to purchase and sustain the information technology components of a project are popular with some grant makers, and anathema to others. Not surprisingly, technology companies are often interested in this kind of contribution (though beware of companies that want to contribute a solution to a problem you don't have.) Here are some ideas for proposals in this category:

● *Computers for students*

The idea of giving computers to Grow Your Own students is both adventurous and a natural extension of the program's commitments, so much so that we've used this idea as the main idea in the sample documents section of this document. Here are some notes on the idea:

Laptop computers have many advantages, but a similar case could be made for desktop computers, depending on the support for laptop computing at the facilities where classes will be held. Note that any grant for purchase of computers should include standard software, strong warranties with repair facilities accessible, and instruction and support. (Knowledgeable grant makers will look to see if you have taking advantage of operating system and software discounts available to nonprofits.) Given the importance of the use of microcomputers in education generally, it may be possible to argue that high quality (though not extravagant) equipment is a good investment rather than purchasing the cheapest computer on the market. The machines should have good wireless cards and plenty of memory. Under some conditions, a lease arrangement may be preferable to a purchase; however, for private funders, a one-time purchase grant may be preferable to an multi-year commitment to leasing fees.

● *Home broadband access for students*

The other key piece of technology for today's college students is access to the internet at what is termed “broadband” speed. Actual providers of broadband services might be approached for a blanket contribution to support this service for the students in your cohort.

● *Connectivity for the adjunct space*

If a specific school or community center is being used on an ongoing basis for classes, tutoring, and/or cohort gatherings, it could be useful to provide broadband access through a wireless network on the site.

● *The cohort virtual community—design, hosting, resources*

Nearly all universities, and many community colleges, have the facilities to support the creation of virtual communities at the class or program level. But a Grow Your Own project has some requirements that may be unusual in these environments—especially the need to function across institutions. A funder (perhaps a corporation that sells software used in such efforts) might be willing to support the design and debugging of the additional features.

A parent “pipeline” to involve parents in classrooms and build the next cohort.

The Logan Square Neighborhood Association prototype for Grow Your Own Teachers programs (Nueva Generación) did not happen in a vacuum. It was the culmination of several efforts involving parents in the school—the collective effort to create and sustain community schools in the neighborhood, and then a series of programs (parent mentor, literacy ambassadors) aimed at giving neighborhood parents opportunities to participate in the life of the schools in progressively more sophisticated ways. It is the “alumnae” of these programs who have constituted the main group of Nueva Generación's students and the organization's new cohort for 2007.

Obviously, the first cohort of candidates in most Illinois programs did not come through this strategy, but some grant makers might be responsive to the general concept of a pipeline and the notion of preparing for a new cohort in two or three years.

Where to Look for Donations

Foundations

Illinois is home to hundreds of foundations. Today, most of them have web sites which contain the information that you will need to decide whether or not a particular foundation is a match for your consortium.

Community foundations pool resources from many private donors and then make grants to specific communities.

www.communityfoundationsofillinois.org/foundations.asp is a list of Illinois community foundations, including those that serve East St. Louis, Rock Island, Moline, Rockford, and the Springfield area. A good example is the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (www.cfnil.org), which serves the Rockford area. If you look at the web site, and in particular at the most recent annual report you'll see that they have interests in many components of community development and service, and spend a major part of their resources on scholarship programs. Note also that community foundations, which accept funds from individuals in lieu of their setting up their own private foundations, often let the donors have a strong say in managing what is done with donations based on their funds ("donor-managed funds").

Staffed foundations have a full time staff and a formal proposal and decision-making process. The best starting point for information about these foundations in Illinois is the Donors Forum of Illinois (www.donorsforum.org). Family foundations provide a mechanism for the charitable giving interests of the contributors—one of the largest and most famous is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which does not accept unsolicited proposals, but many are much smaller and in some cases the application process is more like the solicitation of individual donations.

giving programs are very specific about the areas of activity in which they are most interested. In the case of corporations there is sometimes a substantive connection, for example technology companies providing technology assistance to nonprofits, food companies helping food depositories and related programs. The grants lists on web sites and in annual reports are almost always framed by categories.

In the Grow Your Own context, one key question may be whether the funder supports community-based organizations. A few foundations actually concentrate on this category of activity and recipient.

Restrictions: One of the most important statements any foundation or similar program makes is about the activities it won't fund. Many groups will not fund scholarships, for example. Others, as noted above, will not give grant money to public institutions. The foundation may fund internationally, or just in the US, or just in Illinois, or just in one local region. For example, the Steans Family Foundation in Chicago has decided that it can be most effective by confining its giving to one community within the city. The "selected areas" model is quite often used by corporations that want to fund in areas where they have significant facilities. So look around your community and see if there is a business or employer that is large enough to support a staffed foundation office.

Businesses/Corporations

Many American corporations have a staffed "corporate contributions" department which oversees grants to good causes in order to build good will in the community. If a corporation of a size to have a staffed department is located in your community, you should follow the same process as you would in applying for a grant from a foundation or an individual. In the case of corporate contributions, the staff usually have the ability to make a decision, and it is often not necessary to go through a foundation Board of Directors for approval.

Categories of interest: Some foundations and corporate

Most American businesses are not of a size to staff a corporate contributions department, and the owner makes decisions about what corporate contributions will be made in order to maintain and enhance the corporation's good will. The important process of building a relationship with a number of small business leaders who will make regular contributions to the consortium is well worth the time that it takes to set up a plan and execute it. (See Donations from individuals which follows.)

Donations from Individuals

In any community there are individuals who are able to make donations—and they do it all the time. Most people contribute to their church or to a cause, or to a political candidate whom they support. As you refine your list of people from whom to request funds, here are some of the ideas to keep in mind.

People give when they are asked—preferably face to face by someone with whom they have a relationship. It does not matter if the person being approached is the bank president or the foundation executive, it is important to have established a connection. If a personal contact is not possible or has not been made, at least make a contact through emails and phone calls.

For this reason, you want to establish the worthiness of the GYO initiative and candidates. Assemble information and articles about Grow Your Own Illinois, especially those you feel are relevant to the cause. Find individuals from the community to provide testimony about the need for high quality teachers in low-income schools who will not leave every year: perhaps the head of human resources at the school district, or the superintendent.

Even when people are asked, they don't always give. Therefore, you need to ask many more individuals for money than the amount you need to raise. Don't take it personally if someone says "no." In other words, you need a thick skin.

In order for donors to become repeat contributors, they need to be thanked and kept posted on what your cohort is doing with their money. **THIS IS CRUCIAL.** Always thank your contributors, and send them quarterly updates about the work.

As you increase your circle of supporters and enthusiasts for the cause, the fundraising will become easier and easier as time goes on because the team of people willing and able to help will grow. Those who have already contributed will become repeat contributors because now they have an investment to protect.

Begin at the beginning: use your fundraising committee (a group of friends of GYO who think creatively) to create a list of prospects, starting with lists of friends, organizational colleagues, everybody's e-mail or similar list.

Once you have a list of potential contributors, draft a solicitation letter which includes a brief statement of need, a description of the program, and a forthright request for a donation. Some professional fundraisers believe that it is important to keep this letter to one page; others are of the school that the longer the letter, the better. Use your judgment.

Plan to follow the letter with a friendly phone call from one of your committee members. This call should take place within a week or two of receipt of the letter; the caller may ask the potential donor if they have any questions about the program, or may include information about how close the GYO committee is to its goal of X dollars raised, and again should include a friendly, but direct, ask: "May we count on you for a contribution?"

“In-kind donations are often valuable.”

In some cases, fundraisers divide lists of individuals into categories of major givers and donors. If you have contacts with affluent members of the community, e.g., “major givers,” it is often worth while to make an appointment to call upon them individually, before the letters to donors are mailed, and to make a pitch for them to make a substantial contribution in order to initiate the campaign. In some cases, the signature on the bottom of the solicitation letter makes a difference to recipients, and you might want to ask one of your major donors to sign the solicitation letter on behalf of GYO.

Events

In many cases, the time and the effort that it takes to create an event to attract the right number of participants, and to sponsor a dinner, or luncheon, or party of the sort generally called a fundraiser is not worth your time. However, if you have individuals who like to do this kind of organizing, who have experience in generating the right lists and planning the right event, then, by all means, ask them to go ahead full steam.

In-kind donations

In-kind donations refer to donations of goods in lieu of cash. These donations can often be very valuable. It is necessary for your consortium to keep accurate records of such donations, and to show on your financial statements, any in-kind donations made to your consortium, both for your records, and for your donors, who may be entitled to a tax credit for donations made to your organization. Here are some obvious categories of in-kind material:

Food

Every successful meeting of the consortium will help to develop and cement the relationships among all of the partners and all of the candidates. Food—cheese and crackers, pizza, or sandwiches—is a means of socializing in our culture and as such add to the feeling of family that you want to create. Therefore, if you have a small business in town that could make an in-kind donation of food or soft drinks, that amounts to a major contribution.

Recycled hardware

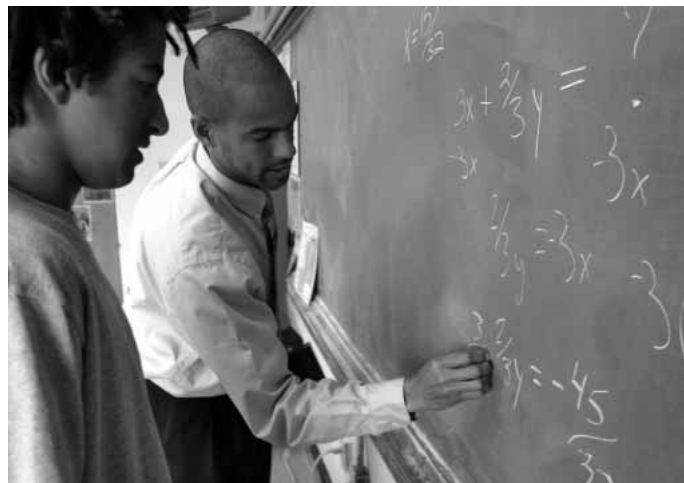
When a business gets new computers for its employees, it will need to dispose of the “old” computers, which were running perfectly fine the day before they were replaced. By making a donation of old computers to your consortium, they may be able to receive a tax credit for the donation. However, unless you take the time to ask, (and it may be that you will be told that the changeover will not occur for another year or eighteen months) you will not receive these computers when they do become available, and they will go to some other good cause.

Space

Donated space may be an in-kind donation that had not occurred to you. You will need space for meetings of the partners, and you will need space for get-togethers and for study periods by the consortium candidates. An organization or a business in town may have unused office space that they are willing to donate on an in-kind basis.

Government Sources

Because Grow Your Own is funded by the State of Illinois, it is likely that the implementation money from this source will provide the bulk of the funding for your consortium. However, it is possible that other government grant opportunities may be available at many levels. Since an institution of higher education is part of your consortium, it is likely that they have a person on staff even more familiar with these sources than the authors of this guide.



“An elaborate on-line system for federal education grants exists.”

Federal

Entire documents have been written about locating and applying for federal grants, and entire careers are spent ferreting out appropriate opportunities. The government, however, does make some effort to help. There is an elaborate online system for looking for federal education grants, at www.ed.gov/fund/landing.jhtml. Using this tool, you can search for grants—by recipient type, by subject (look at the categories of “Teacher Education” and “Teachers”.) When you get to a program that looks promising, follow the links to a variety of pages that define the program. Locate the deadlines, the amount of funds available for new projects (very important, since many programs stay in the catalog even though no new funds are available.) You can get the name(s) and contact information for the federal staff person responsible for the program, and the bewildering array of forms that that project requires. Perhaps most important, you can get, from a link usually titled “Awards”, a list of recent grants under this competition, including the grant amounts.

Federal programs are directed at fairly well defined categories of organizations. For example, nearly all the money, which is specified for teacher preparation, goes to higher education institutions or state agencies. (Some goes directly to the states according to formula and is allocated by them, such as the large “Improving Teacher Quality” program, where the formula gives Illinois around \$100,000,000 per year.) Other money goes directly to school districts. But if you do a search at the web location above for programs that allow grants to nonprofit organizations, the list will be fairly long, with some surprising possibilities.

One example is apropos: on the list of funding possibilities for nonprofit organizations is the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education. The “Comprehensive” program offered new grants in 2006. If you look at past grants under this system, you will see that most are multi-year projects, that many are collaborations between higher education, and a surprising number have to do with teacher preparation.

The “Improving Teacher Quality” program should not to be confused with “Teacher Quality Enhancement”, which is Title II of No Child Left Behind. Several institutions in Illinois are participating in, or have completed, work on Title II projects. If you read carefully you will see that there is no current money for new projects in this category, but this has been a relevant program in the past so it is worth marking for future research.

Other State Funding

The conflict of using other state funding sources to support work on a Grow Your Own state grant is not insurmountable, but there are both audit and political issues. The latter set of issues has to do with the fact that “teacher preparation” in Illinois is the purview of a small number of institutions and programs that watch each other closely. If it appears that Grow Your Own programs are systematically “raiding” a funding source that has generally gone for a different group of programs (private colleges, for instance, or “alternative certification”) the negative repercussions may not be acceptable.

Other government funding

Here are a few other notes on how resources could be requested from other agencies:

The Regional Offices of Education in Illinois generally don’t give grants, but a look at the offerings of your ROE or intermediate service center may suggest some training options that should be requested—for instance training and support for current teachers who could be mentors of GYO candidates.

Local governments (county and city) may have ways to assist you with individual supports for the candidates—access to low-cost mortgages, child-care assistance for candidates who can’t use the program-provided services, income support programs related to property tax or energy costs, etc. (The community organization in your consortium may already have a pretty good list of these programs and contacts for them.)

Conclusion

The authors of this brochure, Steve Andrews and Diana Nelson, have written from their personal experience in fundraising and have attempted to share with you the results of their collective wisdom, but you know your own community best. You know what will work and who will make it happen. Our suggestions are intended to stimulate your thinking, so that as you work as a collaborative with your own cohort of candidates to become Grow Your Own teachers, you will develop good ideas about raising additional dollars to provide the support needed for their success. Indeed, your cohort's success will, over time, make it easier and easier to raise money because donors want to get on the bandwagon of a community program designed to create effective teachers who remain in their community.

Without repeating what we have said earlier, we'd like to remind you that you have an important and captivating story to tell. When individuals, who make decisions about giving donations all the time, are approached about Grow Your Own, enthusiasm runs high. We have already seen this in the votes in the Illinois legislature for the state's funding: to date, those bills fly through unopposed. And the embodiment of this story is your candidates themselves—whenever you can tell their stories, or better yet, have them tell their own, people will be captivated and motivated to support you.

What we are suggesting is hard work, and yet at the same time, richly rewarding fun. We wish you good hunting and great success!



Appendices

Typical Proposal Materials

The formal guidelines of staffed foundations are often quite explicit as to the points that must be addressed in a proposal, and the safest bet is to use an outline that is a clearly recognizable mirror of what the guidelines specify, so that the readers know when you are addressing specific required points. However, you should also note that many funders have strict length limits—with the maximum number of pages, and often the specification of font sizes and margins, so you must plan carefully how you will work within those limits.

Basic Grant Proposal Outline

1. *Executive summary:*

- Statement of your case and summary of the entire proposal
- Problem: hard to staff schools
- Solution: our consortium/GYO candidates
- Funding requirements: How much do you need to raise?
Organization and its expertise: About you, your leaders and staff

2. *Statement of Need:*

- Why this project is necessary
- Decide which facts or statistics best support the project
- Determine whether it is reasonable to portray the need as acute
- Put your project forward as a model by showing that your program addresses the need differently or better than other projects that preceded it.

3. *Project Description:*

- Nuts and bolts of how the project will be implemented and evaluated (Note: many funders use their own terminology— e.g. “benchmarks”, “milestones”—in place of the language below—use the funders’ language wherever possible.)

- a. Objectives must be measurable and can be:
 - Behavioral—a human action is anticipated
 - Performance—a specific time frame within which a behavior, at an expected proficiency level, is anticipated
 - Process—The manner in which something occurs can be an end in itself
 - Product—A tangible item will result

b. Methods to achieve objectives

- How will you achieve each objective?
- Why these methods?
- When (timeline)?

c. Staffing/Administration

- Evaluation tied to objectives—many funders want to know not only the measures of success but also the methods used.
- Sustainability (Many funders want you to show that you will be able to get by without their help at some point in the future.)
 - Project
 - Organization

4. *Budget:*

- Financial description of the project plus explanatory notes, prepared after the Project Description
- Project revenue and expense figures
- Project budget narrative
- Other sources of funds

5. *Organization Information:*

- History and governing structure of the non-profit; its primary activities, its audiences, and its services.
 - a. History
 - b. Mission
 - c. Types of programs provided.
 - d. Board of Directors

6. *Conclusion*

Common Support Materials

- Organization Operating Budget for Last Fiscal Year
- Organization Operating Budget for Current Fiscal year
- Individual Project Descriptions and Budgets
- Audited Financial Statements for Last Fiscal year
- Un-audited Financial Statements for Most Recently Completed Fiscal Year
- Latest Monthly Financial Statements
- Other Donors—for Last Three and Current Fiscal Years
- Board of Directors List
- Staff List, Qualifications, Resume and Job Description of project director
- IRS Letter of 501(c)(3)

Sample Letter of Inquiry

Let's assume that you've identified a corporation or foundation that is a potential funder for computer hardware and internet connectivity for the candidates. You've decided that the community organization is the best contact for this funder. The group requires a letter of inquiry prior to a full proposal, as a way of gauging whether a project is worthy of future effort. (Pay attention to deadlines in foundation guidelines: some of them want letters of inquiry by a particular date to qualify for a proposal round at a later date.)

The letter must get basic information to the funder very efficiently. It should also show an understanding of the specific grant process. Finally, it should be very clear about the size and period of the request.

Sample Letter of Inquiry

Dear friends (or a specific name if you know one).

Through this letter of inquiry, the XYZ Community Organization is requesting \$15,000 from the Money Money Money Fund for laptop computers and internet access for the 40 candidates in Centerville's Grow Your Own Teachers program, beginning in the Spring of 2006.

This fall, the Grow Your Own Teachers program is coming to our community. Thanks to funding from the Illinois Legislature, the XYZ Community Organization is partnering with ABC University and the Centerville Public Schools to identify and provide a fully accredited program of study to 40 community residents who have committed to a three-to-five year process which, if they are successful, will lead to a bachelor's degree and initial state certification as a teacher and a commitment to at least five years of teaching in low-income schools with high teacher turnover in our district. If they fulfill this commitment, the candidates will have the loan which the program provides to cover tuition and fees forgiven.

One of our candidates is Mary Jones, a thirty-six year old wife and mother of two, who has lived in the north center neighborhood all her life. At age 19, she left the community college that she had attended for a year when her mother became ill. At age 26, when her first child entered kindergarten, she became involved in her local school as a volunteer and later as a member of the PTA. Four years ago, she became a teacher aide, and is now regarded as one of the best classroom assistants in the school. The principal strongly recommended that she join the Grow Your Own Teachers program, and after a series of orientations and testing sessions she accepted.

In today's world of higher education, serious students cannot function without having a computer—and preferably one that can be carried to class and used at home, with internet access in the home setting. Many college classes carry out much of their work online, and our program also requires the development over the years of instruction of an online portfolio that represents the totality of the candidate's knowledge and expertise. Email is also a critical tool in our ongoing communication with candidates.

Unfortunately, the state grant does not permit us to pay for this critical instructional tool, so we are reaching out to a number of private funders to help us cover the approximately \$42,000 for purchase of hardware and software, home internet access, and support. The refurbished, current technology laptops will come from a program called "TechHelp" which upgrades used equipment for nonprofit use, at a cost, with software, of approximately \$600 per unit. An inexpensive community-based broadband internet service is available at @\$20 per month, for a total of \$9,600 per year. Additional commodities, parts, and communications services of \$8,000 round out the budget. In future years, the requirement will be less, given the expected life of 3+ years for each of the machines.

The Byte Corporation has already committed \$10,000 to this effort. We hope that the Money Money Money Fund can provide \$15,000, and several other funders have been approached.

The Fund has been extremely generous us to us in past efforts. Thank you for that help, and for considering this request.

Sincerely

Executive Director

Resources

Donors Forum of Illinois:
www.donorsforum.org

Foundation Center:
www.foundationcenter.org

Grow Your Own Illinois Organizational Members 2006

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)

Angela Mojekwu
ilacorngyow@acorn.org

Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform

Diana Nelson
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Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO)

Shannon Bennett
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Logan Square Neighborhood Association

Bridget Murphy
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Southwest Organizing Project

Stephanie Garza
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Target Area Development Corporation

Angelique Orr-Gordon
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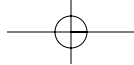
GYO Illinois

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Visit our website
www.growyourownteachers.org





GYO
TEACHERS
Grow Your Own Illinois

