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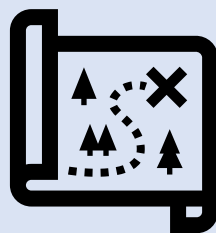
How to Build a Grants Program

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The Donation Cycle
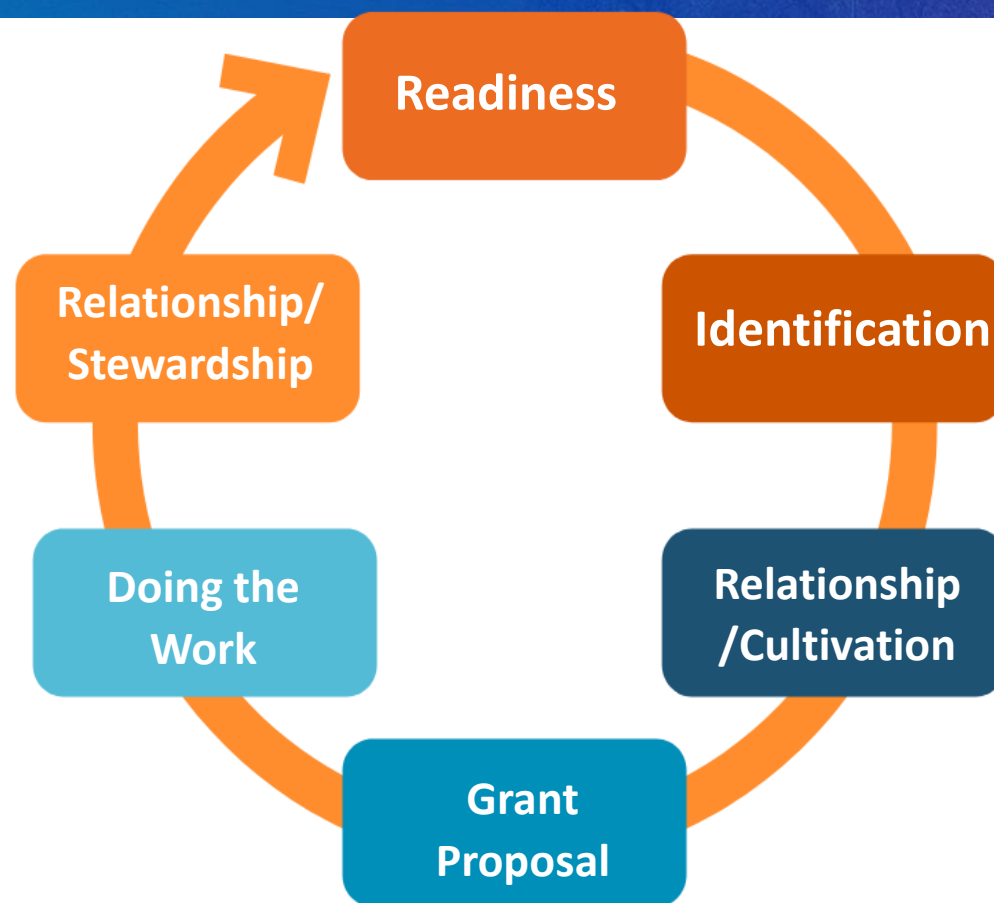
Why (or why not) Grants?

- Helps diversify your revenue
- Can secure a large amount of money for your NAMI
- Can build a long-term relationship with funders who have set processes for giving
- It's a Grantmaker's job to give away money

Why (or why not) Grants?

Considerations:

- Timing

- Restricted funds

- Requirements of funding

- Mission Creep

How to find a grant

There are two main ways to find grants:

- **You're invited**

- **Prospect Research:** Building a list of Grantmakers who may be interested in funding your NAMI

How to find a grant

Where to Look

1. **A community search**: Community Foundations; reviewing grants similar, local organizations have received; connections from your board or stakeholders

2. **Candid's Foundation Directory:** https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/

3. **Grantmakers.io:** https://www.grantmakers.io/

How to find a grant

What to Ask

1. Does the funder give in my geographic area and to support the work we are doing (mental health, wellbeing, etc.)?

2. Is the grant size something my NAMI can utilize in a way that will be successful?

3. Is the funder listed as "by invitation-only?"

4. Does your organization have a connection to this funder?

The Dating Game
Cultivation

Introductory Framework

Introduce yourself and your organization

Discuss your work and how it fits with the funder's priorities

Ask the funder if they feel your work is a fit

Listen for feedback

Be prepared for a curveball

Confirm deadlines, process, ask amount, etc.

Thank the funder for their time!

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Putting Together Your Application

First, is there an LOI?

Common Information You'll Need for Your Grant
- **Need:** Why is your project important? What need will it address? Has the community it will help expressed interest in this program?

- **Impact/Outcomes:** What difference will this project make in the community? What will be changed or improved because of it?

Putting Together Your Application

Common Information You'll Need for Your Grant (cont'd)

- **Evaluation:** How will you know if the project has been successful? How will you receive feedback from those who benefit from the project? How many people will the project reach?

- **Budget:** How much will the project cost? Do you have a line-item budget for the costs? Have you secured other sources of revenue to support the project?

Putting Together Your Application

Best Practices for Writing Your Application:

o Be clear, concise, and specific.

o Adhere to all requirements, including word and character counts and answering all the questions. You do not want for your grant to be penalized because you are over word count.

o Appeal to the funder's head and heart. Use stats and stories to build your case for funding.

o Create a very specific and realistic budget.

o Include administrative costs in your budget.

o Pay attention to all instructions, especially for the budget.

Putting Together Your Application

Common Application Attachments

o 990/Audited Financials

o Organizational Budget

o IRS Determination Letter

o Board of Directors List

o Letter of Support from the community served or partners collaborating on the project

o Signed W-9

The Grant Cycle

Notification

- It often takes **between 3 and 9 months for your grant to be awarded or declined**.

- You will receive notification of your grant status. You grant will either be awarded or declined.

- If you grant is awarded, you will **usually receive a grant award letter** that often requires a signature. You will also receive information about required reports.

The Grant Cycle

Reporting

Common requirements for reports include:

- The impact of the project: how many people you reached, what is better because of the project?

- Stories from individuals impacted

- Challenges and successes

- Lessons learned

- An accounting report showing that all the grant funds have been spent

The Grant Cycle

Stewardship

Steward your donor throughout the grant cycle.

- Invite them to see the impact of their work

- Invite them to hear from program staff or NAMI leadership

- Send them additional evidence of their impact, such as e-newsletters, short videos, or testimonials from beneficiaries

Questions?