
April 15, 2009: Board Grant Seeking Role

Desperate times may call for more desperate measures but boards should resist the tendency to slack off on oversight of revenue generating activities. With new federal funds available in the U.S., there is a temptation to re-engage in the "rock-throwing school of grant writing" - if we just through enough rocks in good directions, then we are bound to hit something! The emergence of this temptation should alert board members: now is the time to review grant seeking policy and parameters. Following are five basic questions that staffs are hopefully asking when looking at new funding sources. Board members need to periodically insure that these questions are being asked.

- 1)
Will this project divert us from our community role/niche/integrity or values and guiding principles?
- 2) Do we have the matching funds and staff/service/administrative capacity to comfortably operate this grant, could it possibly strain or reduce our core productivity?
- 3) Is this program really the best fit for us, does it further attainment of our strategic goals, and do we look like the sort of poster child that the funding source is looking for?
- 4) What happens when the new funding stops: can we continue this with other funding sources or should we be seeking a more ongoing revenue flow such as earned income or a contract?
- 5) Do we have adequate time, partners or other resources to plan and submit a competitive proposal?