Grants and the Grantseeking Process

Charitable grants are cash or in-kind gifts to nonprofit organizations from a funding organization, gifted in order to achieve a charitable purpose. Charitable purposes include goals such as improving services to people living in poverty, performing research to discover treatments and cures for diseases, or creating a vibrant community life through arts programs. Charitable purposes vary widely.

While most grantseekers focus primarily on the proposal, it is critical to note that this is just one part of a larger grantseeking process that involves careful program planning, foundation research, relationship building, and stewardship. The following describes and highlights the importance of each component in the grantseeking process:

Grantseeking Process

- **Program and budget planning**—Careful planning of your project, including well thought out goals, objectives, and a reasonable and well developed budget, is a critical step towards clearly communicating a project or program to a funder.

- **Grantmaker research**—On the internet, in the community, and at the GIFT Center, there are many tools available to find the perfect funder, and that help narrow down a field of over 100,000 grantmakers to a short list of possible matches for a specific UA program.

- **Proposal writing**—A proposal is a written document that makes the case for receiving a specific grant. In charitable grantseeking, there are almost as many different grant proposal/application guidelines as there are funders. Successful grantseekers review all the funder guidelines, carefully follow their directions, and ALWAYS submit proposals before the deadline.

- **Responsible program management and implementation**—Grantseekers are obligated to use private grant funding in the manner that was proposed. Best practices include: maintaining program and financial records, submitting reports as agreed, and communicating unforeseen challenges with funders (along with triumphs!).

- **Stewardship**—Successful grantseekers ensure that a grant is appropriately acknowledged and that the grantmaker hears its investment has made an impact. Depending on guidelines and requirements, this can happen through a formal reporting process, a more personal level of communication, or both.