

Section 4.3

The Politics of Grantgetting

As prospective grant writers, why is it important for you to about the politics, about policy, and about government?

Because virtually every aspect of the grantmaking process is political, from the legislative process, with the passage of authorization language and appropriations funds, through the promulgation of regulatory language which governs the process while defining program priorities.

In sum, grantmaking, whether public (governmental) or private (foundation, corporate, individual) is the business of allocating scarce resources.

Working with the System

- Follow the development of legislation carefully (federal, state, local), and statutory/regulatory issues as they relate to private philanthropy (Foundation, Corporate Giving).
- Carefully research the background of any program, government or private, in which you have an interest. Who are the players? Who supports this program? Who influenced its development, and ultimately its realization as a grantmaking program?
- Be aware of the political process, public and private.
- Become familiar and stay abreast of prevailing program priorities, trends, funding patterns, accepted political and program phraseology; these change frequently.
- Read the regulations carefully.
- Read the RFP, Program Announcement, Application Kit, and all ancillary information carefully.
- Know the granting agency, its history, funding patterns, priorities, key individuals. (In corporate settings, follow ownership and stockholding actions as they influence corporate giving activities.)
- Develop and maintain funding agency contacts.
- Know the cognizant Program Officers and other personnel. Meet them, and stay in touch.
- Who did they fund last year? For what? Why?
- What are the current politics of the agency, organization, program?
- Obtain letters of support. Develop and maintain your place in the grantmaking network.
- Develop political support for your organization and applications for funding (as appropriate).