Developing Financial Resources for School Arts Programs.

Institutions, Arts, Education, and Americans, Inc., New York, N.Y.


Abstract: This document provides a sampling of financial resources for fine arts programs in the schools and lists methods for submitting proposals and dealing with sponsors of funds. Financial sources for arts programs include school districts, organizations and institutions, special events, direct mail, individuals, associations and clubs, businesses and corporations, unions, foundations, state and local arts councils, and federal agencies. The document not only lists appropriate agencies but also discusses how they can assist in an arts program. General suggestions for contacting the sources involve cataloging motivations, skills, and available resources, preparing a succinct program description, researching the organization to whom the proposal is submitted, beginning with modest resource needs and expanding the program step-by-step, networking, letting the program speak for itself, and looking for ways to match resources with other resources. (KC)
Developing financial resources for school arts programs

By Alan C. Green and Nancy Morison Ambler

A series of reports from The Arts, Education, and Americans, Inc.
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FOREWORD

Despite the unprecedented flourishing of the arts in America today, arts programs in the nation's schools have not experienced a corresponding expansion. In fact, with nationwide public attention focused on such problems as declining enrollment, vandalism, low test scores, and spiraling inflation, budgetary priorities are dictating the reduction of school arts programs. In some school districts, arts programs are being eliminated entirely.

We believe that school arts programs are basic to individual development and a sound education. Further, we believe that the arts should be used to stimulate learning and self-expression and recognized as valid ways to learn. If school arts programs are to continue and expand, they require the support of educators, school board members, parents, artists, arts administrators, students, community leaders, legislators, and government agencies.

The Arts, Education, and Americans, Inc (AEA) has established a National Advocacy Program for Arts in Education. Addressed to these groups of individual advocates, AEA is a national organization formed in 1977 following the publication of Coming To Our Senses, the Report of the National Panel on The Arts, Education, and Americans, David Rockefeller, Jr., Chairman.

The AEA Advocacy Program, which encourages the cooperative action of these groups to ensure local level support for school arts programs, includes a public awareness campaign and consumer information service. The service provides Advocacy Program enrollees with a variety of arts in education information—the AEA newsletter, access to the AEA speaker referral service, informal consultation, and monographs that address pertinent arts in education issues and topics.

This monograph, part of an ongoing series, speaks to one or more of the aforementioned school arts support groups. While we recognize that few monographs will speak directly to everyone, we attempt in each to address a variety of individuals. We hope this monograph will prove helpful to you in your support of arts in education. If you are not yet enrolled in the AEA National Advocacy Program and would like to do so, write to:

The Arts, Education, and Americans, Inc.
Box 5297, Grand Central Station
New York, New York 10016

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We are deeply grateful to the following organizations for helping to make possible AEA's National Advocacy Program for Arts in Education and, as part of that program, the ongoing monograph series, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Alcoa Foundation.

AEA's Board of Directors and Advocacy Advisory Group provided insight on the shaping of the Advocacy Program, and the Advisory Group in particular spent many hours reviewing monograph outlines and drafts.

Finally, we acknowledge with gratitude the hundreds of artists, arts administrators, community leaders, educators, federal, state, and local government administrators, parents, and school board members who continue to share with us their knowledge and myriad experiences in the realm of school arts programs. Without their patient and detailed explanations of how their own programs are designed, managed, and expanded—without their special vignettes about these programs—we would be unable to produce the monographs.
An introduction

The development of financial resources—whether monetary or in-kind contributions, informal consultations, formal partnerships, or technical assistance—is crucial if school arts programs are to continue and expand in scope. The process of resource development—whether for the arts, education, health, recreation, or other human benefit—is in part a science and in large part an art.

We offer here suggestions gleaned from the literature of the field and from the experiences of those who, challenged, have succeeded in resource development. As you probably know, and will strongly suspect after reading this monograph, resource development is time-consuming and hard work. However, you can begin the task with some confidence. The chances of meeting realistic development goals are not as bleak as the national economy might imply.

When the arts sounded for a "return to basics," a large number of educators nationwide increasingly are ranking the arts among those subjects "basic" to a sound and complete education. In fact, the basic skills task force of the U.S. Department of Education (formerly the U.S. Office of Education) has included arts in its definitions and program officers from the arts in its meetings. More and more, the importance of arts in the schools is addressed at the state and national level. Many local school boards now are introducing policy resolutions supporting arts programs in their districts. In addition, there is new momentum to involve major educational groups (e.g., the National School Boards Association and the Congress of Parents and Teachers) in dialogue on the subject.

In many instances, educators and the community at large are becoming more convinced that school arts programs are important. As a result, there is a growing availability of program financial resources—local corporations and civic organizations, for example. Arts organizations are blossoming nationwide, too, and with their growth come greater opportunities for school/community partnerships. Furthermore, as parents and community leaders study increased attendance and decreased behavior problems after the introduction of arts in schools, they themselves are more likely to support these programs.
So there is reason for optimism in developing financial resources for your own school arts program. This monograph is directed to individuals and groups both inside and outside the school system. It is our hope that the information given here will be of use as you plan, develop, and expand school arts programs.

Part I of this monograph offers a sampling of financial resources together with ways in which they can assist your program. Part II is a catalog of generic hints for your consideration in contacting resource persons and organizations, proposal submission and follow-up, dealings with sponsors, and other aspects of resource development.

In addition, we direct your attention to Ideas and Money for Expanding School Arts Programs, the fourth in our series of reports on arts in education topics. Much of the information in Developing Financial Resources parallels that found in Ideas and Money, and we hope the two to be useful companion pieces.

Part I: Resources and Development Strategies

School districts

School arts programs rarely succeed without support from their local districts. To secure support from your district, however, you must act well in advance of the date when you have to receive the resources. Nine months is the amount of lead time necessary for you to reap a share of program operating funds from your school district. In other words, if you need funds for the school year 1983-84, you must enter the district budget-making process in the fall of 1982. The budgetary process is a lengthy one, and it is crucial that you participate from its early stages.

Before you submit a program funding proposal, be thoroughly familiar with your district budget for the current operating year. What level of funding is allocated for arts specialists, arts supervisors, visiting artists, and arts materials? Are arts programs funded for gifted and handicapped children? Is there a separate line item for a Department of Performing Arts? What governmental funding programs already in place in your district offer opportunities for arts programs? The funds you seek may be present in the budget, perhaps hidden in the guise of a line item such as ESFA Title IV-C.

When you are in a position to discuss the budget, meet with your district administration to test your project proposal. Remind the administrators of the importance of a strong arts program, and appeal to their own self-interest. Stress the inherent importance of art for art's sake, the role of the arts in teaching and learning basic skills, and the value of the arts in helping students develop creativity, self-esteem, and self-discipline. Remind the administrators of the public relations value arts programs have to offer: higher attendance rates (on the part of students and teachers), decreased vandalism, positive community offerings (exhibits and performances), and the opportunity for school/community partnerships.

Ask the administration to help you draft a program budget and present it to the school board for ratification. Remember that district funds need not represent the entire funding package, but only serve as an indication of school administrative and board support.

District support is crucial if your program is to receive support from other sources. Be sure to apprise board members of the importance of the program, and have them sign letters to the district to witness the program firsthand. Encourage program participants (administrators, program advisory board members, teachers, students) to attend board meetings to demonstrate their support. Inform the press of the dates of crucial board budget meetings, and follow up to ensure that they attend.

If it becomes clear that the board is unable or unwilling to allocate operating funds for your program, set a different tack. Ask the district to make in-kind allocations. Then, when the board has established a precedent for supporting school arts programs, even via in-kind allocations, it will be in your best interest to fund program operating expenses at a later date. The in-kind option is also your best bet for support if it is June and late to request district funds for the fall semester and you need a brilliant idea for a December arts program!
Arts organizations and institutions
Throughout the United States, public, private, and parochial schools are connecting with the educational and outreach programs of local cultural organizations and institutions. In so doing, they not only utilize myriad local resources and stretch their budgets, but also increase their funding potential by teaming up for proposals and other grant-related projects. Dance and opera companies, symphony orchestras, mime troupes, museums, and arts centers—these are just a few of the collaborative possibilities for your school arts program. Your local museum need not be New York's Metropolitan, nor your local orchestra the Los Angeles Philharmonic for you to experience first-hand the excitement and advantage of visual and performing arts. For example, a hometown Tennessee bluegrass band can help teach local and regional history through folk songs. No matter how great the distance of your community from a metropolitan city, partnership possibilities do not exist for your program and its participants if you are considering a school community collaboration. First inventory the local possibilities. In fact, a compendium of local resources may already exist. Next, investigate effective collaborative possibilities in other communities—or within your own district—and learn from the mistakes and successes of others.

Collaboration does not offer a replacement for school arts programs. A truly successful partnership will require true commitment—of time, skill, and, ideally, funds—on the part of both the school and community organization involved. Strong individual leadership and a mix of people—teachers, parents, artists, and school and institutional administrators—are essential to ensure successful planning, day-to-day operation, and evaluation of a collaborative venture.

Special events and admission fees
From A to Z—auctions to others—you can imagine dozens of special events designed to raise money for your school arts program. Arts fairs, awards dinners, bazaars, fashion shows, sporting events, theatre parties, tours. Before you decide to stage such an event, however, consider these points: Are you truly committed to the weeks—in some cases, months—of preparation required? Do you have the requisite volunteers who are equally dedicated? Do you have enough lead time to adequately plan for and publicize the event? Will your net profit be worth the amount of time and energy necessary to actualize it? Of course, special events can contribute more than dollars to your program. They can focus community attention on the program and raise the significance of the community regarding the importance of arts in education.

You know your community and, best of all, determine that special event with the greatest earning potential for your program. If the local symphony and museum each holds an annual gala fundraising ball, then certainly you need not compete. In fact, you may not feel such an event best serves your needs, and you might consider instead an event which includes the whole family—a movie a benefit, for instance.

If you have never participated in a fundraising event from the administrative side, you may find it useful to talk with the pros in your community before you proceed with plans. Why reinvent the wheel when their experience probably can help ease the stress and preliminary confusion? A few key issues you might discuss: How far in advance must you begin planning—and publicity? How many volunteers will you need, and where? Committees? What individuals, organizations, and companies should you include on your mailing list? What percentage of attendees might you expect based on the

Direct mail
In most cases, at the outset of a development campaign, direct mail is not a significant means of quickly obtaining substantial contributions. Personal solicitation is a better method of fundraising in the early stages. However, after two or three years of fundraising you wish to broaden your funding base and supplement earlier contributions, you may want to consider direct mail. Remember that consumer response to direct mail generally is only 2-3 percent. Your appeal, sent by mail to individuals who may or may not be familiar with your school arts program, will likely be in competition with appeals from the local symphony, ballet, museum, hospital, church, college zoo, children's home, disabled war veterans, and other charitable organizations. Before you pursue the direct mail fundraising route, then, consider with care the costs involved. Brochure design and production, mailing lists and labels, handling fees (affixing labels and sorting brochures by zip code order), and postal fees (postage and a bulk rate postal permit)

If, after considering these factors, you are determined to forge ahead, here are some clues to help you reap the best return on your investment. First, your brochure must make the recipient want to read it—beginning to end. We live in a society characterized by the visual image. If your brochure is unable to compete, you need not produce it. The press agent's classic stance is: "It's my show, it's the greatest!" Through copy and graphics, you must be able to convince others of your program's merit and importance to your community. Second, acquire and utilize those lists with the largest possible percentage for return. The best possible list is your "house list"—those who already have demonstrated an interest in your program—parents, community leaders, teachers, arts administrators, attendees at all special and scheduled events—and others who know the program. Also consider using lists of local arts organizations (e.g., symphony, museum, architectural league, theatre group, literary society, summer arts festival, public radio or television station, or professional organizations of artists, educators, doctors, lawyers, and bankers). You may be able to trade your list for others.

After you have developed lists adequate to ensure a break-even return, code all returnable forms in your brochures before printing and mailing them. Check with the post office to make certain your bulk mailing
permit is in order, and have the permit number (indicium) printed on the brochure itself.

Determining the best mailing date is important, too. Once delivered to the post office and mailed bulk rate, it will take your brochures three to four weeks to reach their destination. Early September or the spring probably would be ideal mailing dates, so long as you are not in conflict with major local fund drives, such as the United Way of America or American Red Cross.

When responses are in (allow 6-8 weeks), analyze them according to the predetermined codes. Then begin planning your next mailing according to the most productive lists. Remember that direct mail is not a one-time endeavor. The more mailings you undertake, the more responses you receive. Likewise, the more responses you receive, the more productive will be the lists you compile from those very responses.

Individuals

- Individuals - community leaders and supporters of the arts and humanities - are excellent candidates to make financial or in-kind contributions to your program. Parents of students or alumni of schools in your district, or other neighborhood residents, are best bets. One individual may be interested in contributing the requisite funds for a class or entire school to attend a performance by the local symphony. Another individual might donate cameras or a piano -new or used.

- Whether you contact an individual community resident, or the contributions representative of a local club, business, arts organization, foundation, or government agency, here are some points you will want to make as you solicit their contributions:
  1. The contribution will be matched or supplemented by others.
  2. The program already has a broad base of financial support. (Name the contributors.)
  3. The program is not the pet project of only a few enthusiasts. Rather, many influential local residents have participated in the planning and decision-making process.
  4. The program has the support of local school district administrators and board members. It represents a school-community partnership.
  5. The program plan (or the program itself) is underway.

Associations and clubs

Professional art education associations at the local, state, and national level are sources of support and ideas for your school arts program. Groups like the National Art Education Association and the Music Educators National Conference can prove invaluable as you connect with others across the county who are concerned about school arts programs. The professional organizations can help put you in touch with these people and their ideas and programs.

- Your own professional, fraternal, or service club - or that of a friend - also is a good place to look for local program support. Club members may be willing to make financial or in-kind contributions, co-sponsor a program segment, or offer a small challenge grant. Other groups may be willing to make a contribution if they are introduced to the program through a live visual or musical presentation at a monthly meeting. Some organizations, like the Junior League, have an established background in arts in education. Others, such as an ethnic heritage organization or a local chapter of a professional society (e.g., the American Institute of Architects), may sponsor education programs that might well be coordinated with your own program.

Consider, too, joining forces to seek funding with nonprofit "people-serving" organizations such as a YWCA or YWCA, Boys and Girls Club, senior citizens group, association for handicapped or learning-disabled children, day care center, or community renewal program. Reach beyond the traditional sources of program support, and remember that school arts programs can be supported under a variety of rubrics if in the end you meet your needs - and are not forced to compromise your objectives in the process.

Sponsors like to find ventures in which their contributions have the capacity for expanded impact - programs which demonstrate a more efficient use of money. Collaboration certainly offers these funding opportunities.

Businesses and corporations

Business and corporate giving generally is determined by the value of the contribution to the corporation itself, its employees, and the community at large. Corporate executives are aware that a community's schools and cultural assets are important in attracting employees to that locale, and improving the quality of life for the families of employees...
already living there. Rare is the business that contributes to a program located hundreds of miles from its employees. For this reason, it is important that you approach a corporation headquartered—or with branch offices, a plant, or a factory—in the geographic area of your school arts program. Be aware, also, that businesses expect you to deal with them as a fellow businessperson. You must market your program just as a corporation would its products. If you are positive and enthusiastic about what you are asking an executive to “purchase,” chances are the response will be positive. Corporations often view arts-related programs as poorly managed and unbusinesslike—in short, a poor investment. It is up to you to counter this image. Be prepared to demonstrate efficient and effective program administration and financial management. Request funds for the budget of the succeeding year, and try never to request funds earmarked to cover a deficit in the budget for the current year. Corporate executives must line up with the budgets they project, and they feel you should, too.

If a business indicates an unwillingness or inability to make a financial donation, suggest an in-kind contribution. There are literally hundreds of such possibilities, and you should be as specific in your request for an in-kind contribution as for a cash contribution. In the area of on-premises contributions, you might request a company provide office space and supplies, including business machines, telephones, and pens and paper, publicity in newsletters and on bulletin boards, exhibition space for student artwork, rehearsal or work space. In the way of products, you might suggest equipment in the form of a gift, new products manufactured by the company, such as photographic equipment, art supplies, tools, wood and light stage sets, clothing for uniforms and costumes, a bus for transportation to cultural events, instruments: catering a reception celebrating the opening of an exhibit or play. As for company services, you might suggest printing flyers, tickets, or posters, providing management, financial, or legal consultation, constructing or renovating a theatre, art room, or chorus and orchestra rehearsal area, recording a performance on tape or film for later distribution on records or to television stations. You might also consider approaching a company about an executive loan. Increasingly, companies are permitting their employees release time from the workplace to do community social service work, and your program might benefit from such executive services as administration, management, accounting, fundraising, marketing, and public relations, or personal development.

The success of an executive loan is largely dependent upon the planning you do before you request assistance. First, assess your personnel needs and develop a specific job description for the proposed volunteer. Contact your local Volunteer Action Center (VAC)—there are over 300 nationwide—for help in identifying and contacting prospective corporations. If there is not a VAC in your community, research executive loans yourself and contact the prospective business as you would in asking for any other sort of contribution.

In addition to approaching businesses for executive loans, consider other sources of executive talent. National organizations like Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts or Volunteer Accountants for the Arts offer temporary consulting services to arts programs and groups. Contact your local Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) chapter or similar organization. RSVPs recruit retirees to volunteer for work with nonprofit organizations.

Unions

Unions traditionally have been concerned with the standard of living of their members and their families, with community betterment in general. What specific services does your program need that one of many diverse local unions might provide at no charge or in cooperation with another union? For example, you may need an art room, risers for a chorus or orchestra, or back stage equipment for a theatre. Contact your local labor council, or the community services representative or a board member of the carpenters', floorlayers', masons', metalworkers', electricians', and painters' unions. They may be willing to supply the labor free of charge, as well as the materials, either free or at cost. Unions may also contribute personnel leadership and other types of administrative training. In addition, unions can be effective in helping publicize various aspects of your school arts programs and mobilizing membership support for it.

Foundations

There are over 22,000 foundations—corporate, community, and independent—in the United States. Some limit the geographic area within which they award grants. Some support only predetermined populations, such as minorities, the handicapped, the elderly, or the economically disadvantaged. Some award funds only to certain organizations—schools, hospitals, or museums, for instance. Still others restrict the ways in which their grant money can be used (not for operating costs, or only for photography, they might specify). How do you identify those foundations which are most likely to award a grant to your organization?

Start close to home. The vast percentage of grants awarded annually are distributed within the home state of the foundation. Contact the Foundation Center in New York or Washington, D.C., or one of its cooperating collections in each of the 50 states. For information on your local and regional foundations, consult the Foundation Directory, published by the Center, and state and regional foundation directories for the foundations in your area, and their specific areas of interest and the projects they currently support.
fund. Such directories are available both through The Foundation Center collections and at many public libraries.

Next, contact directly those foundations which you feel offer a good possibility for an award. Ask to receive their annual report and, if one is produced, their newsletter. For even more up-to-date information on their funding programs, check for news clippings on file at your local library. If information on a foundation eludes you entirely, check for the availability of its Internal Revenue Service forms on file at Foundation Center collections.

Then proceed in much the same way you would were you soliciting a corporation for funds. Add the foundation to your mailing list and send fliers, news releases, and articles in publications. When you are ready to call for an appointment to discuss your proposed project, you will already be known to the organization.

After you develop a clear idea of the project for which you will apply for funding, meet with the foundation executive director or a program officer regarding your application. Then follow up with a personal invitation for foundation officers to see your program in action.

State and local arts councils

Applying for state and local arts council funds before seeking funding at the national level 'not only will the competition be less intense but chances are your state and local councils may be familiar with your program. Each state council or agency designs its own funding programs and criteria, tailoring them to local and regional needs, preferences, and resources. In addition to acting as key funding organizations, state arts councils can put you in touch with local and regional artists' arts groups, and other potential resources for your school arts program.

Contact the American Council for the Arts, headquartered in New York, for the address of your state agency. Then get in touch with the agency itself for information regarding the eligibility of your program for council funding. An agency staff member may be able to assist you in the development of a funding proposal, or simply answer your specific questions about completing the agency application. Even if you feel confident about proposal development and submission, it is always a good idea to establish a personal contact with your potential funder.

Not counting state arts councils, there are over 2,000 local (or community) arts agencies in the United States. In some locales, the agency will be totally funded by the local government; in others, it will be funded in part with government and in part with private funds; and in still others, the agency will be totally funded by local corporations, organizations, and individuals. Needless to say, the services offered by these agencies are as diverse as their funding mixes.

Many agencies publish newsletters, coordinate scheduling of local arts organization activities, provide technical assistance, and offer such services as centralized purchasing, computerization of mailings, and management consultation for the member institutions. Some act as an umbrella funding organization for their members, conducting annual major fund drives or applying for major grants for a consortium of arts organizations.

Your school arts program may be eligible for local arts council resources, services, and funding, either individually or in conjunction with a community arts organization such as a museum or dance troupe. For the address of your local agency, contact the National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies, headquartered in Washington, D.C.

State and local government agencies

Each State Department of Education has resources to support pilot or demonstration projects, curriculum development models, and ongoing school arts programs. There are probably a number of funding categories in your state department budget under which you may qualify. To determine exactly which these are, however, it is essential that you read closely the Department's funding guidelines. Funding possibilities may be masked in the titles or descriptions of the categories. Be sure to speak directly with a Department funding officer to ensure that you do not overlook a potential funding category because of jargon or your possible inexperience with the "mix and match" of funding packages. In other words, it is quite possible that you can fund part of your program under, say, the Department funding category for the handicapped, and another part under its minority cultures category.

Look, too, to other state agencies for program support. Your State Department of Parks and Recreation—or its local equivalent—may just be the agency to fund a summer arts in the Parks program for students. Similarly, your State Department for Historic Preservation—or your local historical...
II. DEVELOPING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Part II: A catalog of development hints

Know thyself

Before you begin resource development catalog your own motivations, skills, and available resources. Why do you care about the proposed arts program? Does your motivation strengthen your chances to sell it? Do you enjoy meeting people? Do you write well? Are you articulate? What skills do others possess which can strengthen your financial development efforts? For example, maybe someone else is a more effective salesperson while you are better qualified to write funding proposals, disseminate program information, arrange meetings, and handle other administrative matters.

Do you and your colleagues know key people who will help - school board members, the superintendent of schools, local business and cultural leaders, an editor? Who else can help you and what are their skills? Have you access to secretarial help, mailing lists and facilities, funds for travel to meet potential sponsors? These are basic but essential issues to consider before launching a resource development program.

Know thy program

Prepare a succinct, one- to two-page program description that includes pertinent factual information on the following points: goals, timetable, participants, art forms, administrative support, expenditures, earned and unearned income, resources required and available, benefits to individuals served, accomplishments to date, and reasons for support. This analysis will help you think through your program and familiarize yourself with it. Its philosophy and direction will thus become more clear to you. In addition, a brief project statement is essential when introducing your program to a potential sponsor and for publicity purposes - both formal and informal.

Know thy sponsor

Never approach a prospective sponsor blind. In other words, do your homework on a service organization, business, foundation, or the school district before presenting a
appropriately directed, your chances of success increase. Be sure to clarify the points before you apply, the deadline (if there is one), funding opportunities, and the target audience. Also, be sure to clarify these points before you apply, the deadline (if there is one) for applications: the number of application copies requested, additional material required, specific grant restrictions, special funding competitions, and for which you may be eligible.

Any grant you receive, even a small one, is a sign of support and you should be pleased that the donor took the time requisite to research your program. If your program meets the expectations of the donor, chances of receiving further funds are high. If a prospective donor completely turns you down, don’t give up hope. Keep in touch with the sponsor, and review your application and timing.

Whether or not you receive a contribution, it is important that you reapply for funding for the next year. A contribution to the program is a sign of support and you should be pleased that the donor took the time requisite to research your program. If your program meets the expectations of the donor, chances of receiving further funds are high. If a prospective donor completely turns you down, don’t give up hope. Keep in touch with the sponsor, and review your application and timing.

Networking
As in any field, there are networks in resource development—people who know people who know which organizations are supporting what programs. Sometimes these networks are formally structured organizations, arts council networks, and arts education organizations. Sometimes these networks are informal organizations, arts council networks, and arts education organizations. For example, they are informal organizations composed of individuals who keep in touch with others through meetings, conferences, and workshops.

It is important that you become a part of the arts and education networks in your region. You may wish to expand your contacts to include those involved with national organizations and others working across the country to advocate school arts programs. A good place to start is with conferences that bring together those with similar interests. You can find information about upcoming conferences through organizational newsletters and calendars of conferences and workshops.
To begin, find a couple of local sources (including the school district, PTA, civic clubs) and add to them one or two regional sources (a corporation, arts council, family foundation). Then, after your program is underway and you have something exciting to show, apply for state and national funding.

Plan ahead for your campaign

Once you are thoroughly familiar with the program for which you plan a development campaign, spend some time planning how you will go about it. You should be able to answer the following questions before you begin writing proposals and contacting potential sponsors.

- What do you advocate? What will you accomplish? Who will participate? What are the benefits? What resources are needed? (These points should be covered in your aforementioned project description)
- What individual members of your program’s advisory committee? (Such a group is crucial to the planning and day-to-day operation of your program.)
- Who are your allies (e.g., educators, artists, school board members, community leaders, arts administrators, parents)?

That first impression

You rarely have a second chance to make a good first impression, and your introductory letter to a prospective contributor must demonstrate immediately your professionalism and the importance of your program. Always tailor such a letter to the organization you are soliciting. Never send a form letter. Use your program’s letterhead stationery which lists the director or advisory board members. You may wish to have an influential community official sign the initial letter, and then you and your fellow fundraisers can follow up on it.

The letter, two to three pages in length, should include: program description, total contributions requested (including a breakdown of estimated contributions from the public, nonprofit, and private sectors), contribution requested, and brief background of your organization...

Most potential donors prefer a succinct introduction to your program. Except for a government grant request where a formal, detailed proposal is required, it generally is counterproductive to deluge a potential sponsor with too much information too soon. You are more likely to receive a speedy indication of interest if the sponsor can review your idea and grasp the concept quickly. Wading through bundles of information at the preliminary fundraising stage will only delay a response. Most sponsors appreciate just enough information to determine whether or not a project merits further review.

With the initial letter, however, you may wish to include Internal Revenue Service forms declaring your program’s nonprofit, tax-exempt status, and financial reports for the past fiscal year.

As the conclusion of the letter, mention that you welcome the opportunity to present further information regarding your program. You or a fellow solicitor should follow up the letter with a phone call a week to ten days after the letter has been received. Arrange an appointment to make the presentation which might include: financial flip charts, a
slide show (it need not be elaborate, but effective and exciting enough to help you dramatize the importance of your program), and even a teacher, artist, or student with firsthand program experience.

After your presentation, write a letter thanking the prospective contributor for his or her interest, and extend an invitation to attend a school art exhibit, play, or concert. The invitation should be for a specific date and time, and you should escort the sponsor to the event. Then let the program speak for itself.

Let your program speak for itself

Arts and young people are a winning combination and can be their own best representatives. Let your program speak for itself—both as an introduction to potential sponsors and as a way of keeping donors up to date on how their contributions are being used. Even if you do not receive support in response to your first request, you may wish to reapply later. Therefore, you should keep potential sponsors informed of what you have accomplished, albeit without their help. If possible, take students and their art directly to a donor or potential sponsor. A choir offers an excellent program for a civic club, and photos, slides, or original artwork lend excitement to any fundraising meeting. Why not have a student or teacher (or both) talk about what they have accomplished through a school arts program, and why your proposed project is important? Invite donors and potential sponsors to attend a performance, view an exhibit, or visit a classroom so that they are firsthand witnesses—and then advocates—of what you are promoting. This tactic is especially effective if you are soliciting contributions to expand an existing program. Special invitations and preferred seating at such events are a way of expressing your appreciation for sponsors' support. Make sure donors and potential sponsors are on your mailing list for newsletters and announcements. Send them press clippings and other public information on the program. When there is good news, for example, a matching grant or an award, let them know. Information marked FYI—for your information—is a way of cultivating potential donors and continuing support. If the situation permits, develop a personal, informal rapport with your grantors. Drop a note or pick up the phone and let them know how things are going.

A big thank you

At the conclusion of a formal development campaign or at appropriate times during an informal campaign, send a personal letter of thanks to everyone—donors, solicitors, and even prospective sponsors who declined to make a contribution at the present time. Thank them for their time and say that you will keep them informed of the progress of the program. You may wish to have the letters signed by the program board chairperson or honorary chairperson. A public thank you is another way of expressing appreciation to your donors. Work with their public relations or executive directors to develop press releases and feature articles which announce their contributions and the ways in which they will be used. Organizations—whether corporate, public, or private—are concerned about community perception of their work. An article in a local newspaper demonstrating an organization's community conscience can only help your chances of receiving a subsequent contribution from that organization.

For program donors, satisfaction comes with the knowledge that their contributions are producing the desired results. If your program is meeting its stated goals, its grantors will be more likely to consider favorably subsequent contributions requests.

Leverage

This is a favorite term in the development business. Those soliciting contributions are always looking for leverage—that is, ways to match resources with, or "lever," other resources. Those seeking contributions also care about leverage. They like to see their contributions used to attract other program support. In fact, the decision regarding a grant or contribution will often be based on the amount of additional resources it is likely to generate. You will find yourself in the position of saying, for instance, to a potential donor, "If you contribute $100 to our program, then Acme Stores will agree to contribute $100 in matching funds."

Remember that the match need not be cash per se; in-kind contributions can be of equal value, and volunteer time, space, materials, administrative or managerial assistance, printing, or telephone access, for example, almost always can be useful.

DEVELOPING FINANCIAL RESOURCES
Why hide your light?

Sponsors like to read about the projects they support in newspapers, newsletters, and professional journals and to hear about them on radio and television. Therefore, a companion part of your development efforts should be a publicity campaign.

It need not be elaborate or costly. However, when program components (such as an exhibit, field trip, or artist visiting a school) offer newsworthy opportunities, let your local media know. Write a press release, including the date, time, place, and brief description of the event. Do not forget to include a contact name (and telephone number) the press can call for further details. Send the release four to six weeks prior to the event to local arts, education, and features editors of newspapers, and news and assignment directors of local radio and television stations.

Follow up the release with a telephone call to make certain it was received, when it will be printed or aired, and if the event itself will be covered. Find out if a photographer will be present, and make sure you have a photographer on hand “just in case.” On the day of the event, call the papers and stations to remind them of the time and place. If possible, arrange to have participants interviewed. If the press is unable to cover the story because of last-minute fast-breaking news, offer to file a report yourself, along with the photos.

Also, encourage those directly involved in the program to write an article for a professional journal or newsletter. You or a colleague can “ghost author” the piece, but it may be more exciting if written from first-hand participation.

Publicity performs several functions. First, it reminds current sponsors of the value of the program they support. Always alert your sponsors to radio and television coverage, and, when articles appear in papers and journals, send copies to your sponsors.

Second, it informs prospective donors of the program, and provides them with evidence of a cause that is real and lively, of general interest and importance. Copies of news articles and transcripts of radio and television reports are useful to submit with proposals, and lend credence to your program.

In conclusion

The general resources we cite here, and the specific examples, are intended to provide you with an elemental framework within which to pursue your resource development. Incorporating our hints into your own strategies and goals, letting your creativity take wing from the examples we provide and from others with which you are familiar in these and other ways we hope this monograph will prove helpful to you. We, of course, can provide enthusiasm and general suggestions for your resource development work. You must fill in the blanks and provide the requisite imagination, time, and commitment for such development.

PHOTO CREDITS


Page 7: Courtesy of Arts Are Basic program, School, Marblehead, Massachusetts.


Page 18: Photo by Julius Williams courtesy of Alvarado Art Workshop, Inc., San Francisco, California.

Page 21: Courtesy of Western Opera Theater, the touring and educational subsidiary of San Francisco Opera, San Francisco, California.

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