

Service-Learning Tip Sheet

Funding

One of the questions NYLC is asked most frequently is “How can I find funding for my service-learning program?” While some school districts that have embraced service-learning include related costs in the regular school-year budget, many do not.

Following are tips for those new to fund-raising and/or proposal-writing:

Involve young people in the process. Young people apply a range of language arts and speech skills when they present and/or write a proposal, and nothing is more satisfying than a piece of persuasive writing resulting in funding. Youths who present material professionally also tend to be more successful at persuading a prospective funder than adults.

Think locally. The best funder for a project may be the one that is closest; consider contacting your local fraternal organizations such as Kiwanis or Lion’s Club. Businesses are often able to make substantial “in-kind” gifts of supplies that would be harder to secure via a funding request. They can also serve as partners in a range of other capacities.

Use the Web. A simple query can reap all sorts of local, federal, even international sources that are both public (governmental agencies) and private (corporations and foundations).

Understand the prospective funder’s focus, and don’t try to change it — even with an outstanding proposal. The funder’s of emphasis are usually determined by a board of directors, so are pre-established.

Make the case simply, clearly, and concisely.

Proposal-writing is not a discreet science. It is more important that your proposal is easy to read and addresses all the areas requested by the funder, than that it is a beautiful piece of prose.

Locate funding. While the Corporation for National and Community Service is the primary federal funding source for service-learning, (www.nationalservice.org), and most states have a state agency that administers these funds, it is important to remember that service-learning proposals fit with a range of public and private sources.

The following list of federal agencies also have funded service-learning, and often have a state-level equivalent:

- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Other Resources:

Youth Service America has identified grants available for National Youth Service Day projects at www.ysa.org.

NYLC and State Farm co-sponsor Project Ignition, which provides grants to schools to develop driver-safety educational media. Visit www.projectignition.com.

The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse compiles funding opportunities at www.service-learning.org.

For more information on service-learning, visit NYLC at www.nylc.org, call (651) 631-3672, or write nylcinfo@nylc.org.

www.nylc.org