

BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Collaborative grant-seeking: a practical guide for librarians. Bess G. de Farber. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield; 2016. Hardcover: 164 p. ISBN: 978-1-4422-6326-0. Price: USD\$99.00. Available from: <https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781442263284/>

Grants are an essential part of the library world, allowing librarians to undertake innovative and progressive projects that would otherwise not be realized without necessary funding. The American Library Association publishes a directory of library funding sources with hundreds of entries proving that there is grant money available for those who show up to get it, but to have a grant one must first have a grant proposal [1]. Because the process of grant-seeking can sometimes be viewed as more arduous than the grant's intended project itself, grant-seeking is not always a librarian's first thought when undertaking a new project.

According to Bess G. de Farber in *Collaborative Grant-Seeking: A Practical Guide for Librarians*, grant-seeking is an important tool for librarians who strive to respond to constantly changing library and information landscapes. She holds the opinion that grants are untapped resources and opportunities for librarians to improve the quality of service and programming in their libraries. She emphasizes not only the importance of developing competence in grant-writing for library-specific projects, but also that librarians are better able to serve their clients who are grant-seeking when they themselves have a better understanding of grant-seeking. This aspect of the book is particularly pertinent to health librarians because grant-seeking within health research is pervasive.

The author has been the grants manager at the University of Florida Libraries since 2008 and previously held similar positions. She has extensive experience as a grant-writer and grant-manager. Writing from the context of a library system with a well-developed grant-seeking program, her context may not be relevant to all readers, but she also brings with her the useful perspective of being on several grant review panels, including the National Endowment for the Arts and Florida Division of Cultural Affairs. She shows she speaks from experience about what grant review panelists are looking for in reviewing grant applications when she

notes, "it can be quite annoying for a reviewer to have to read proposals loaded with pronouns" [2].

de Farber offers a number of possible reasons for the lack of grant-seeking in many libraries including, but not limited to lack of time, resources, and proficiency. The book is intended to lessen these barriers by providing an overview of the grant-seeking process with specific recommendations to make grant-seeking efforts a success.

The book is organized into seven chapters with an inverted pyramid structure beginning with broad information in opening chapters, and then with each chapter the information becomes more specific, with the final chapters providing detailed instructions and tips on how to complete grant applications. The value of collaboration in grant-seeking is underscored by its mention in the title, but the book's content is not exclusively relevant to collaborative projects. It includes everything relating to grant-seeking from a history of funding for American libraries and description of grantsmanship and grant-seeking, to a sample budget narrative document. Although much of the content of the book insofar as description of context has an American focus, the recommendations for grant-writing and examples of documents provided are universally relevant.

In chapter three, de Farber discusses a process for developing an internal "mini-grant" program within an organization. She outlines practical steps to develop an internal program the primary purpose of which is "to develop knowledge, skills, and interests in pursuing grant-related experiences" [2]. She provides detailed real-world examples in this chapter by listing library systems that have mini-grant programs. She also gives further insight into how such programs work by summarizing projects within her own organization funded by their mini-grant program. The number of examples provided allows the reader to have a clear understanding of how such a program and its projects could be implemented.

The book is intended as a practical guide for librarians, as the title would suggest. Although the author is writing from an academic libraries perspective, she includes various examples of grant-seeking in public and academic libraries to appeal to a wider range of librarian experiences. Because the author attempts to encompass all aspects of grant-seeking within the book, I believe that the various

chapters could have distinct intended audiences. For example, the chapters “Creating a Library Grant-Seeking Program” and “Ways to Grow a Culture of Grantsmanship” appear to be aimed at those library management who seek to encourage their librarians to participate in grant-seeking activities, while other chapters such as “Strategies for Completing Application Components” and “Grant-Writing Tips and Potential Errors to Avoid” are targeted to librarians in the process of applying for grants.

The book is conveniently organized in a way that allows its reader to jump to useful information on the aspects of grant-seeking of that are of interest to them without needing to read other parts of the book which may not apply. After reading this book, any librarian can be more eager and less intimidated to pursue grant-seeking opportunities because of the way the author demystifies the process of developing a grant proposal. I would recommend the purchase of this book to any librarian or library wishing to develop an understanding of grant-seeking because it will provide you with a step by step guide to achieve that goal.

References

1. Maxwell N, American Library Association. The ALA book of library grant money [Internet]. 9th ed. Chicago (IL): ALA Editions; 2014 [cited 2016 Nov 30]. 372 p. Available from: eBook Collection (EBSCOhost).
2. de Farber BG. Collaborative grant-seeking: a practical guide for librarians. Lanham (MD): Rowman & Littlefield; 2016. 164 p.

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