2013

Book Reviews-Monographic Musings

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Recommended Citation
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6531
The very first class I took in library school was a library management class. Our final project consisted of writing a fake grant application, complete with SMART goals, objectives, and an assessment plan. At the time, hardly any of us in the class had ever had to write a grant, or even consult a grant directory. Now, years later, I look back upon that exercise as nothing short of genius; our professor, Dr. Charles Curran, knew what an important practice (or “opportunity,” as he often called assignments) a fake grant application would be. The exercise instilled a certain confidence in those of us taking his library management course. It allowed us realize that confidence in those of us taking his library management class. Our first and the last are the introduction and conclusion, respectively. In between are over 60 pages packed with information that guide the reader in understanding the basics of grant development, finding and working with grant developers, using libraries’ research expertise in the grant process, and working with grant developers, using libraries’ research expertise in the grant process.

Fast forward fifteen (or so) years: it is difficult for me to imagine that anyone working in a library hasn’t come across a grant guide in one flavor or another. Moreover, with the increasing trend of cut budgets, the likelihood is extremely high that librarians and library fundraisers have thought about or actually sought grant funding. In such endeavors, The ALA Book of Library Grant Money, edited by Ann Kepler, provides a useful collection of grantor profiles and grants information. Its primary arrangement is alphabetical by foundation name or the foundation’s parent company name. For each agency it offers contact and descriptive information, grant types (in this context, “grant type” refers to the type of projects that are grant-funded and not the type of agency that provides the funding), typical and past grant recipients, grant values, requirements and restrictions, and application procedures. When appropriate, named grants are also listed and described. When available, grant contacts and grant-specific Websites are listed. Several indices complete the book: grantors by total grant value, grantors by state, named grants, and professional library organization grantors. One humble suggestion for the next edition: a grant type index might be helpful.

So what makes the eighth edition of The ALA Book of Library Grant Money so special? Obviously, this title focuses on funds for librarians and those who work in libraries. Whether grant monies are directed towards facilities, technology, professional development/conference attendance, or general support, the benefits included in this volume award financial assistance to library-related projects and initiatives — so there’s no need to wade through larger grant directories that have a wider scope. Also, the press release for The ALA Book of Library Grant Money claims that it has been “completely overhauled since its last edition.” Indeed, this volume is compact and straightforward; in fact, its succinctness is one of the things that makes it easy to navigate. Out with the oft-overwhelming Big Book of Library Grant Money and in with Kepler’s relatively slim new edition.

So what makes The ALA Book of Library Grant Money better than an online source? Truthfully, it might not be better than an online source. However, some — particularly those who are not well-versed in the art of grant writing, like this reviewer — might find online sources challenging to navigate. Some might not have access to subscription online founda-
tion directories. Some might just prefer to use a good, old-fashioned book (though this one comes in eBook format as well!). Sometimes, it comes down to preference.

Preference is also critical when it comes time to prepare a grant proposal. While some might prefer to work alone, some — again, like this reviewer — might prefer to work as a part of a team. A cooperative approach to seeking grant funding is explored in Nancy Kalikow Maxwell’s work, Grant Money through Collaborative Partnerships. Maxwell is a stranger neither to grant writing (she has had success in grant projects totally more than ten million dollars), to collaborating on grant projects (she owns and operates a grant development company), nor to publishing (her first book, Sacred Stacks, was reviewed in the September 2006 edition of ATG). Her witty writing style makes the subject of grant writing partnerships utterly delightful, a word that most folks might not immediately think of to describe the process of grant planning.

Maxwell’s book, part of the ALA Editions Special Reports series, is comprised of ten chapters. The first and the last are the introduction and conclusion, respectively. In between are over 60 pages packed with information that guide the reader in understanding the basics of grant development, finding and working with grant developers, using librarians’ research expertise in the grant process, requesting that library support is included in the grant budget proposal, offering library support and services as part of the grant project, finding and proposing partnerships between the library and other organizations, and considering grant-writing careers. Each chapter concludes with bibliographic notes; a selected bibliography and works cited appears at the end of the book. After her bibliography, Maxwell offers a helpful list of additional sources: blogs, grant sources, professional associations, and more. A thorough index wraps up her work. Simply put, reading Maxwell’s book is inspiring. Are you looking

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for motivation to expand your library’s community partnerships? Do you want to work with an agency outside of your organization to meet the programming and information needs of your population? Are you interested in creating a grant-writing team but you’ve been too daunted to try? Grab a copy of 
Grant Money through Collaborative Partnerships.
It will give you the information and confidence to move forward, and it’s a good read to boot.

These two books explore grant funding from very different angles. While 
Kepler’s edition identifies numerous grant sources, 
Maxwell’s book is more of a manual for understanding the grant development process and navigating the grant partnership journey. Alone, they each provide a solid springboard for researching and starting a grant application. Together, though, they offer a holistic view of the sources, approaches, and steps to take to apply for and receive a grant. The pair would be an advantageous addition to any library manager’s desk collection. As well, 
The ALA Book of Library Grant Money should be included in any collection that supports a library school program.

SAGE also has a recent release that a number of folks will want to follow up on as well as a second edition that is set for a July launch. 

Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Social Sciences (9781412986892, $350) “is the first of its kind in bringing together philosophy and the social sciences. It is not only about the philosophy of the social sciences but, going beyond that, it is also about the relationship between philosophy and the social sciences…” The Entries cover topics of central significance but also those that are both controversial and on the cutting-edge, underlining the unique mark of this 
Encyclopedia: the interrelationship between philosophy and the social sciences, especially as it is found in fresh ideas and unprecedented hybrid disciplinary areas.”

The first edition was published in 2004 and this new version “captures what has been going on in the news and behind the scenes with new articles and updates to past articles.” Events like “the largest Ponzi scheme in history (Madoff), an ecological disaster caused by 
British Petroleum and its subcontractors (Gulf Oil Spill), and U.S. Defense Department contractors operating like vigilantes in Iraq (Blackwater)” are discussed in this new edition.

Most, if not all, of these titles will be available electronically. Visit the appropriate Websites for further information.