COMMON GRANT APPLICATION
Simplifying the Art & Science of Giving ®

Welcome to a quarterly newsletter that is dedicated to talking about the Common Grant Application and topical issues for the grantmaking community. This issue includes:

- Survey
- The Value of Online Grantmaking
- New Feature – Electronic Grant Agreement
- CGA Tips – Managing Applications
- Upcoming Events
- Feedback

Survey

The Common Grant Application has been online for some time. We have learned quite a bit about what works and doesn't work. With those lessons in mind we plan on making some changes to the site in the Fall, to improve the user experience for both grantseekers and grantmakers. We'd love to collect your thoughts and comments as part of this process. This is your chance to help us improve the site. We've put together a short online survey at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QG8DCQS. If you have 5 - 10 minutes, we'd like to invite you to fill out the survey. As we work on some of our changes we may like to solicit opinions from some of our users. If you are willing to be contacted and would like to get an early look at some of our new features please let us know. We'll add you to our list.

The Value of Online Grantmaking

Managing applications and grants takes time and costs money which will vary depending on the size of your organization, the number of applications you receive and your particular grantmaking process. Online grant management systems can be an important part of any strategy for improving your application and grant management process. Most grant management processes consist of one or two steps. A one step process requires the grantseeker to simply submit an application. A two step process requires the grantseeker to submit a LOI, which if approved, is then followed by an application. For either process, you will typically receive and acknowledge the application; assign the application to the appropriate staff or board members for review; review and evaluate the application; reach a decision on which applications to approve or reject; send out and get back grant agreements; make payments and then collect and review interim and final grant reports. With the Common Grant Application grantseekers enter their applications and upload their documents through the Web. Changes made by you to the status of an application are reported to the grantseeker in real-time. The effort to manage and collate paper and documents; enter information into your database; summarize and format information; make sure things are getting taken care of and let grantseekers know what is going on is greatly reduced. Whether you are a small or large organization, and whether you receive a few or many applications, the time and cost to manage an application is significantly reduced, the accuracy of the information is improved and the transparency of your grantmaking process is improved. This means you can spend more time focused on the broader and more interesting activities of your organization and the grantseekers you are working with, and not be bogged down in as many of the day-to-day operational details of managing your grants and applications.

New Feature – Electronic Grant Agreement

We received a request from a grantmaker to support Web-based grant agreements. They had grantees all around the world and didn't want to manage the process of sending out, getting back and keeping track of paper grant agreements. Their attorney didn't need an ink signature on the grant agreement and was fine with receiving electronic approvals from grantseekers. We listened and now offer Web-based grant agreements. At the time an application is approved, or even afterwards, the grantmaker can upload the text of their grant agreement so that it becomes part of the approved application. The text can be the same or different for each approved application. The grantseeker is informed of the pending grant agreement by email, and can then either elect to reject or accept the agreement from their Web browser by simply checking a box and clicking on a button. This is very similar to how many commercial software license agreements are accepted on the Web. All Common Grant Application user accounts have unique user names and are password protected. When an agreement is approved the name, date, time and location of the person accepting the grant agreement as well as the text of the agreement are recorded and attached to the application. The grantmaker is informed by email of the accepted agreement which can then be reviewed online at any time by the grantseeker or grantmaker . This new feature simplifies the process of managing grant agreements and saves time for both the grantseeker and grantmaker.

CGA Tips – Evaluating Applications

The Common Grant Application provides a complete set of capabilities to evaluate applications. Each grantmaker program can be configured with its own evaluation criteria as well as its own group of evaluators. The account owner or administrator can setup the evaluation criteria and evaluators. The Program setup page is used to select between a list of fixed standard evaluation rules and a user designed custom evaluation matrix. The standard evaluation rules offer a number of different rating and ranking scales. The custom evaluation matrix supports user specified questions, scoring ranges and formatting. After selecting the evaluation rules the owner or administrator can create and manage evaluator groups. Users that have evaluator privileges can be assigned to one or more evaluator groups. There is no limit to the number of users that can be assigned to a single evaluator group. Evaluators can be configured to see only their own scores and comments or to see all other evaluator's scores and comments. As applications are received, the evaluation rules and evaluators are assigned to the application. Evaluators can easily review and work on their applications at their convenience. The owner or administrator can review and track the status of all evaluations (what has been started, what has been completed, etc.) as well as review and print the scoring of all evaluations. If necessary, the owner or administrator can also move an application to a different program, evaluator group or set of evaluation rules if something changes after an application is received. Typically, the setup of the evaluation rules and evaluator groups occurs once, when you initially create your account, and rarely needs to be changed afterwards.

Upcoming Events

The Common Grant Application will be hosting a Webinar for grantmakers on June 23 and July 20 and a Webinar for grantseekers on June 15. Check our Web site www.commongrantapplication.com for further information.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback, questions, comments, and suggestions for future topics. We can be reached by email at: info@commongrantapplication.com or by phone at: +1 (310) 490-1277. To stop receiving these emails, send an email to info@commongrantapplication.com with the Subject of "unsubscribe".