Request for Proposals
On Childhood Literacy
From University of Tennessee Learning by Giving Initiative

OVERVIEW

What: Proposals are solicited for grants to be awarded by University of Tennessee students studying nonprofits and philanthropy. Students are expected to award 1-5 grants with a combined total of $30,000. In alignment with this year's ConnectKnox community-wide priority, the funding this year will be centered around childhood literacy. http://connectknox.com/

Why: The primary purpose of these grants is to provide students with hands-on experience in evaluating and funding nonprofits. The amounts to be awarded are appropriately small given this primary goal. Applicants are encouraged to creatively consider how these small grants can be leveraged by *building organizational capacity*.

Given the limited funds available, we prefer to avoid funding ongoing operations or program delivery. Instead, we prefer to leverage our limited funds by supporting capacity building as broadly defined here:
https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/what-capacity-building

We are especially interested in supporting efforts to build resources and knowledge about collaboration between nonprofits as a strategic capacity-building tool for nonprofits as illustrated here:
http://www.lodestarfoundation.org/grants

Who: This solicitation is open to any team of two or more nonprofit members of the Alliance for Better Nonprofits. (If your organization is not a member of ABN, membership information can be found at www.betternonprofits.org)

When: Letters of interest (limited to one page) are due June 15, 2018. The letter should describe the capacity development students are being asked to fund, and why this funding would address childhood literacy. On June 16, 2018, up to 12 proposals will be solicited for more detailed proposals (limited to five pages plus supporting documents) due August 1, 2018. As part of the competitive process, students will conduct site visits and interviews during Fall Term 2018. Grant awards will be announced by December 1, 2018. Work funded by the grant should normally be completed between January 1 and July 1 of 2019 with a brief report on outcomes due 30 days after completion of the funded activities.

Contact Information: Email any questions or submissions to Kitty Pat Cornett, Program Manager, kpcornett@utk.edu

FURTHER DETAILS

The Funds: A total of $30,000 will be distributed in one or more grants. (Over the past two years, 9 grants have been made, ranging in size from less than $3,000 to almost $9,000.) The funds students will be giving away are gifts from the Buffet family's Learning by Giving Foundation www.learningbygivingfoundation.org, and local philanthropists. These funds have been given to the Haslam College of Business in order for University of Tennessee students to gain firsthand experience in funding nonprofits.

Use of Grants: This year's focus for our grant making is Childhood Literacy. This is in keeping with the community priority identified by ConnectKnox. http://connectknox.com/ Given the small amounts of money involved, we prefer to fund indirect expenses related to capacity building rather than normal operations or direct expenses for delivery of programs. Examples of capacity building include training, improved infrastructure, planning, research, or any other activities meant to enable better program delivery without directly funding program delivery as discussed here: https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/what-capacity-building

Eligibility:
- Only teams of two or more nonprofit member organizations of the Alliance for Better Nonprofits may submit proposals. Organizations may not participate on more than one proposal team per year.
- The only restriction on the problems or opportunities targeted for the team's work is that they address the causes of, or solutions to, childhood literacy,
- Beyond the suggestions to focus on capacity building and childhood literacy, there are no restrictions on the use of the funds other than that they must comply with all laws normally guiding nonprofits with documented 501(c)(3) status.
- All nonprofits accepting funds must agree to participate in reasonable press releases and other publicity associated with the grants and the work they support.
- Past recipients of the Learning by Giving grants are eligible to compete again this year.

Letters of Interest: Letters of interest (limited to one page) are due June 15, 2018. They should describe the proposed use of the funds, explain the anticipated impact, and be signed by, and cc'd to, the senior-most executive at each participating nonprofit. Email the letter as a PDF file attached to an email with "Letter of Interest" in its subject line. Send to: Kitty Pat Cornett, Program Manager, Consortium for Social Enterprise Effectiveness Program, Haslam College of Business, University of Tennessee, at kpcornett@utk.edu

Proposal Solicitations: After reviewing the letters of interest, up to 12 proposals will be solicited June 16, 2018.

Proposals: Solicited proposals are due August 1, 2018. These relatively simple proposals should be no more than five pages long (not including tables, exhibits, and supporting documents). Details on the proposal will be included in the proposal invitations sent out by June 16, 2018.

Competitive Process
- Students in UT's Learning by Giving nonprofit management course, working under faculty supervision, will carry out the competitive review process, and make the final selection of grant recipients.
- As part of student learning and the selection process, students will make site visits and interview applicants during September and October 2018.
- If the students opt to fund a given team's work at a scale different from what was proposed, dialogue and negotiations with the team will take place in November 2018.
- Final decisions and awards will be announced by December 1, 2018. Funds will be made available January 1, 2019. Work funded by the grant should normally be completed by July 1, 2019. A brief report on the work accomplished through use of the funds will be due 30 days after the deadline for completing the work as specified in the proposal.