

Beginning Your Rural
Grantseeking Journey—
It's Not About Writing Grants

Allen Smart,
PhilanthropywoRx



allen@ruralphilanthropy.net
www.linkedin.com/in/allensmart

Allen Smart
and
PhilanthropywoRx



- More than 20 years of grantmaking in the rural south
- National advocate for better rural philanthropic practice
- Consultant to funders, funder groups, national and state-based non-profits on rural

Outline for the Day



- Resourcing
- Starting up relationships
- Funders thinking about rural and how to respond
- Hot topics in rural from a funder perspective
- Audience examples

A close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of a person's hands writing on a document. The person is wearing a red and black plaid shirt and a black watch. They are holding a black pen and writing on a white sheet of paper that is part of a blue folder. The desk is made of light-colored wood. In the background, there is a light blue mug, a pen holder with several pens, and some colorful sticky notes. The text "Grantwriting: The Last Step" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Grantwriting: The Last Step

Are You Ready for
Grant Seeking?



Researching The Philanthropic Environment



Peers and networks



Grantseeking services
and information sources

The Different Types of Funders



- Local family and corporate funders
- Health conversion foundations
- Local, state and governmental sources
- Individual donors

Starting
to Develop A Philanthropy
Plan



The ideal funding
mix



Trajectory

Resourcing Your Grant Seeking Efforts



Grantwriters

Sharing with others?

In-house or contract
development staff

What is Different About Rural Grant Seeking?





Funders Perceptions About Rural America

- It is demographically homeogenous
- Innovation is not happening
- Scale cannot be achieved

A hand is shown from the bottom left, palm up, holding a glowing, multi-colored, geometric lightbulb. The lightbulb is composed of many small triangles in shades of yellow, orange, red, and pink. The base of the lightbulb is blue and also geometric. The background is a light blue gradient with various abstract elements: white lines, circles, and arrows, as well as faint molecular structures like hexagons and pentagons. A white banner with a black border is positioned in the upper right, containing the title. To the right of the banner, on a dark grey background, is a list of three bullet points.

Responses to Funder Perceptions

- Shifting demographics
- Rural creates innovation and adaptation
- Rural is great for piloting and testing

A woman with curly hair, wearing a pink blazer over a white shirt, stands and points at a chart on a desk. A man with a beard, wearing a green shirt, sits at the desk looking at the chart. The desk is cluttered with papers, a laptop, and a pencil. The background shows an office setting with a computer monitor and a desk chair.

Resources

- Rural Resource Hub
(<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org>)
- Daily Yonder
(<https://dailyyonder.com>)
- Giving Compass
(<https://givingcompass.org>)
- Office of Rural Health Policy
(<https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/index.html>)

The Difference Between Relational and Transactional Approaches



How to Begin
to Develop Relationships?



- Invites
- Comment on Funders Work
- Meet Them Where They Are

How Partnerships Can Leverage Relationships with Philanthropy



- For many funders, the more the merrier
- Your partners and friends
- Current grant and donor relationships

Board Members
and
Friends



- Your Board members know more people than they think they do!
- Helping Board members reach out

The Difference Between
Governmental and Private
Philanthropy



- Funding from an application vs a relationship

What NOT To Do

- Badger funder staff with “threats” to talk to their Board members
- Be a pest
- Pitch ideas to funders that have not demonstrated prior interest



Hot Topics For Rural
Interested
Fundors



Cross-Sectoral Work

A man with dark skin and short hair, wearing a blue button-down shirt and grey pants, is driving a green tractor. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The tractor is inside a large, open-sided barn with wooden posts and a corrugated metal roof. In the background, several black and white cows are visible behind metal railings. The ground is dirt and covered with some hay or straw. The lighting is bright, suggesting daytime.

Rural Communities of Color

The background features a complex pattern of thin, blue, curved lines that appear to be fiber optic cables or data paths, converging towards the center. A dark gray rectangular box is positioned in the middle of the image, containing the word "Broadband" in white text.

Broadband

An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood. The image shows several houses with varying roof colors (grey, brown, blue) interspersed among lush green trees. Winding asphalt roads and driveways cut through the landscape. Some houses have swimming pools or backyards with outdoor lighting. The overall scene is a typical residential area.

Affordable Housing

A close-up photograph of a pregnant woman's midsection. She is wearing a vibrant, multi-colored floral dress with large red, orange, and blue flowers. Her hands are gently resting on her pregnant belly, with fingers slightly interlaced. A silver ring is visible on her left ring finger. The background is softly blurred, showing hints of a domestic setting with a white tablecloth and some greenery.

Maternal Mortality

A wide-angle photograph of the United States Capitol building in Washington, D.C. The building's iconic white dome is the central focus, topped with a statue. The building's facade features numerous windows and classical columns. In the foreground, a large, green lawn stretches across the bottom of the frame, with a few people walking on the wide stone steps leading up to the building. The sky is a deep blue with scattered white clouds. A semi-transparent black rectangular box is centered over the middle of the image, containing the text "Federal Funding Partnership" in white.

Federal Funding Partnership

A photograph of a diverse group of people in a modern office setting, seen from behind. Several individuals have their hands raised, indicating active participation in a meeting or presentation. The background features large windows with a grid pattern, letting in bright light. A semi-transparent dark grey rectangle is centered over the image, containing the text 'Audience Participation' in white.

Audience Participation



More Resources

Thank you and Good Luck!



PHILANTHROPYWoRx™

allen@rualphilanthropy.net • www.linkedin.com/in/allensmart