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GRANT MONEY THROUGH COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

NANCY KALIKOW MAXWELL

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In her thirty-year library career, **Nancy Kalikow Maxwell** has participated in successful grant projects totaling more than ten million dollars, with more than one million of those dollars flowing directly to the library. Formerly library director at Miami Dade College and Barry University, Maxwell currently owns and operates Kaliwell, Inc. (www.librarygrants.org), a grant development company that specializes in locating, writing, and evaluating grants for libraries and other educational organizations. A prolific writer, Maxwell has been published in the *National Catholic Reporter, Jewish Forward, Lilith, Moment,* and other periodicals. Her library publishing credits include the best seller *Sacred Stacks: The Higher Purpose of Libraries and Librarianship* (2006) and, as a contributor, *Writing and Publishing: The Librarian's Handbook* (2010) and *Librarians as Community Partners: An Outreach Handbook* (2010). A frequent contributor to *American Libraries* magazine, she has also authored two ALA Techsource *Library Technology Reports.* Maxwell can be reached at kaliwell@kaliwellinc.com.

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1

INTRODUCTION

Groan. Not another book on library grants. Here you are struggling to run your library with 40 percent less than you received last year (and you are thankful you got that). The three-year hiring freeze has chilled your relationship with the staff to the point that even the ones who like you are grumbling. You want to retire, but the financial meltdown frizzled your funds to nothing. And now you are supposed to write grants. Fat chance, you say.

Save your disgruntlement for something more important—like getting a vanilla latte when you ordered chai tea. This book is not going to guilt-trip you over not bringing in grant money. And you won't be toiling over a tedious grant proposal, either. Instead, you will learn how to watch others do the toiling. Not that you'll be sitting back and doing nothing, but at least you'll benefit from the work of others who are writing grants. In this book, librarians will learn how to infiltrate the grant development process of other organizations and garner grant funds through them.

The idea for this book—like so much of life—came through happenstance. Though I am a highly successful grant writer—having helped bring in more than ten million dollars in grant funding for my library and college—my initial efforts at grant writing were failures. Lots of failures, if you must know.

But I persevered. After many grant-writing workshops and more disastrous grant attempts, I finally crafted my first successful proposal. The USDA—of all places—approved a grant for more than $150,000 to improve the science resources and services at my community college library.

My successful proposal not only garnered much-needed library materials but also elicited praise from the campus administrative dean. Personally, I was more interested in pleasing the dean than improving library resources, but it was nice to have accomplished both.

"You did an outstanding job with the USDA grant proposal," she wrote in an e-mail. "I was very impressed when I finished reading the entire proposal." Her compliment made my day, but what followed turned out to be of more lasting import.

"We are now working on a Title V grant," she explained. "A grant writing company has been hired to assist us. They have a lot of experience, but they will be requiring information from us periodically."[1]

They will be requiring information from us periodically.

That sentence changed the course of the library and my career. From those few words, I was able to participate in grant proposals netting more than ten million dollars to the college, with one million going directly to the library. Even better, I was able to write the book which you now hold in your hand (or view on your screen).

They will be requiring information from us periodically has become my maxim.

The need for information brought me to the grant table, where I was able to insert library funding into the grants under development. Being at the table made all the difference.

I am far from the first person to realize the importance of being where the action is, where money is discussed and divvied. The late visionary and library science professor Kathleen de la Peña McCook came to the same conclusion more than ten years ago. *A Place at the Table* she titled her plea, urging librarians to be present when decisions are made to build lasting communities.[2]

Years before McCook's book was published, two other librarian-authors—Patricia Senn Breivik and E. Burr Gibson—exhorted librarians to insinuate themselves into the process of garnering new funds from others.

"The library is uniquely suited to fare well in cooperative projects," they explained. "Library services and resources can be clearly shown in support of almost any aspect or program." However, the trick is to get the library included—either formally or informally—in the process. How reassuring, if not a little depressing, to find this suggestion in a 1979 ALA book entitled *Funding Alternatives for Libraries*.[3] Yes, we have been talking about finding other sources of revenue for decades.

LIBRARIES BRING IN MONEY

Libraries deserve to benefit financially from the work of others. As recent data shows, libraries contribute mightily to the economic value of those they serve. According to a study by the University of Pennsylvania, the Free Library of Philadelphia improved the economic value of the communities it served by more than $31 million.[4] Six million of those dollars resulted from workforce development activities, $3.8 million from business development activities, and the rest from improving reading and literacy skills.

The study also showed that, in Philadelphia, homes within a quarter mile of a library are worth $9,000 more than homes outside this range. Evidently, homeowners wanting to boost the value of their homes would be better off lobbying for a library branch in their neighborhood than upgrading their kitchen.

Though libraries are economic engines for their surrounding communities, they have yet to capitalize on their impact. The root problem, according to Steve Coffman, vice president at the library consulting firm LSSI (Library Systems and Services), is that the public library "is one of the few cultural or educational institutions to remain almost entirely dependent on local and state tax dollars." While museums, theaters, and zoos have diversified their revenue streams, libraries have yet to tap what he calls "plural funding," through gifts, fundraising, and foundations.[5]

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Along with Coffman's suggestions, this book proposes another potential stream of funding for libraries to tap. By exploiting one of its greatest strengths—research ability—libraries can maneuver to the grant development table. For many librarians, conducting research is preferable to soliciting major gifts or forming a nonprofit to raise funds. Once at the table to present their results, they can divert some of the forthcoming funds to the library. The rest of this book provides instructions on how to go about accomplishing this.

HOW LIBRARIANS AND GRANT DEVELOPERS CAN HELP EACH OTHER: AN OVERVIEW

How Grant Developers Can Help Librarians

More Funding for the Library

Libraries can earn additional funds by being included in the grant development process of others. These funds could be used for library materials, equipment, staff, or programs. Or best of all, they could go directly into the library's general coffers for the library to use as it sees fit.

Of course, there is no guarantee a proposal will be successful. Even the most perfectly crafted applications are often turned down. As Stephen Seward, philanthropy director at the Nature Conservancy, notes, successful grant writing can seem like winning the lottery because it appears so illogical.[6]

It may look as if grants are awarded at random, but techniques and strategies exist to improve one's chances of success. Libraries can play a huge role increasing a grant's chances. As discussed below, libraries can help identify exactly the right grant opportunity for the applying institution. They can dramatically improve the proposal with solid research data. The librarian can keep the group on track and working within deadline. The library can create a new library activity or service, thereby improving the proposal along with the library. Once funds are appropriated, the library can help administer or evaluate portions of the project. Any of these avenues would improve the grant, potentially bringing in more funds to both the nonprofit organization and the library.

Strengthened Organizational Relationships

Even if the grant is not successful and no funds are awarded, the process of working with another organization to craft a grant proposal will enhance the relationship between the library staff and grant developer. Grant development usually includes intense, fevered work concentrated into a short span of time. Frequent meetings—via phone or e-mail, or face-to-face—are required to develop plans, share information, and review drafts. Assuming the library representative participating is congenial and effective (hopefully a correct assumption), the end result will be an enhanced relationship with the grant-seeking organization. Even if the initial venture is not successful, the next grant the organization embarks upon may include a library component, which could result in additional library funding.

Confidence to Develop Library Grants

When asked why they don't write grants, many librarians report the task is too daunting. The verb *daunt* (who knew that was a verb?) means "to drain the courage of, to intimidate

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or to dishearten"—an apt description of how many librarians feel when confronting a forty-page grant request-for-proposal due in three weeks. One book on the topic is called *Demystifying Grant Seeking,*[7] a title that suggests an unknowable, almost otherworldly pursuit.

After more than fifteen major grant initiatives, I still get a pit in my stomach when I review a new grant announcement. I can only imagine the aversion those not familiar with grant development must experience when contemplating the endeavor. Daunting, indeed.

But participating in someone else's grant provides an opportunity to learn the process without bearing the brunt of responsibility for the entire undertaking. Learning through observation—and participating on a more limited basis—allows neophytes to gain the confidence to undertake their own grant-writing projects in the future.

How Librarians Can Help Grant Developers

It is easy to see how new library funding, improved relationships, and grant-writing confidence benefit the library. What is less obvious is how the grant developer can benefit from the participation of the library. Though these benefits can be substantial, they usually go unrecognized. The burden, then, lies with the librarian to prove it. To use the business parlance of the day, libraries must convince others (and themselves) that they add value to the grant development process.

Research, Research, Research

All grants need some form of research to support the proposal. The ability of librarians to locate information will endear library professionals to grant developers forever. I do not use the word *endear* lightly. Many a reference librarian can recount an exuberant reaction to information they have produced.

Though it was years ago, I still remember one student's passionate response when I helped him locate information he was seeking. Standing over him at the computer, I suggested he try a combination of terms for his search. When he saw the citations that he needed appear, he bolted from his chair, grabbed my shoulders, and kissed me.

I have yet to be similarly embraced at any grant development meetings, but the presentation of data has often been met with the same kind of enthusiasm. When I distributed a copy of employment projections at one meeting, a faculty member kissed his fingers, saluted, and pronounced (in a fake foreign accent), "This is exactamemte what we need." Not exactly a smooch, but it felt good nonetheless.

Ready-Made Collaborative Partner

Libraries also bring to grant developers an organization to partner with. The trend in government granting and philanthropic giving is to require collaborative partners. To maximize effectiveness (known in plain English as getting more bang for the buck), many new funding sources require that more than one organization be included in and benefit from the project.

Making matters even worse for grant developers, announcements of grants requiring partners are often released with extremely tight deadlines. Because there isn't sufficient time to both find a partner and create a solid proposal, many grant developers simply pass on the possibility of applying for funding.

By simply being there as part of the process, the library could serve as the required partner. Much like those classic old movies where the beautiful young starlet comes into the

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room at exactly the right moment, libraries could have their moment in the spotlight just by being in the right place at the right time.

Source of Last-Minute Expenditures

Libraries could save the day by spending money!

To be deemed successful, grant-funded projects must not only attain the goals and objectives of the stated project but also spend all of the allocated funds within the granting period. One of the most egregious sins that a grant administrator can commit is to return unused funds to the granting agency. I have known more than one grant administrator who was terminated because large sums of grant funds went unexpended.

Libraries offer grant-funded projects an easy avenue to expend unused funds. Library materials can be purchased quickly and in varying amounts that would help out the grant project while also improving the library.

Stronger Relationship with the Library

Just as stronger relationships between collaborative partners benefit the library, so do they further the goals of the grant-developing organization. It is hard to imagine a nonprofit group, educational institution, hospital, or other organization that would not be improved through collaboration with a library. By availing themselves of library resources, services, publicity, and programming, such organizations will be able to fulfill their missions through closer interactions with the libraries that serve them.

Let's now look at the grant development process in more detail to see how organizations can work together and libraries can benefit from other people's money.

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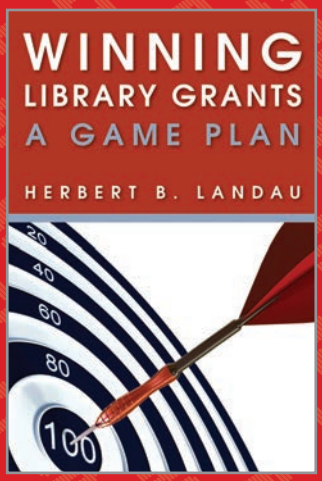

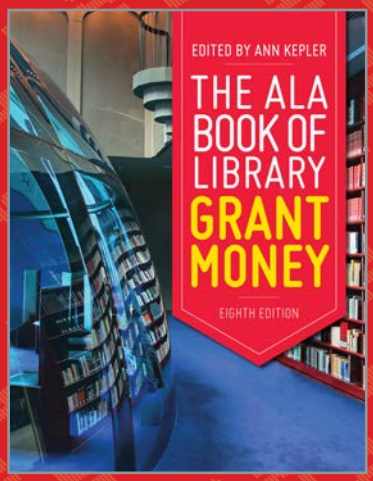

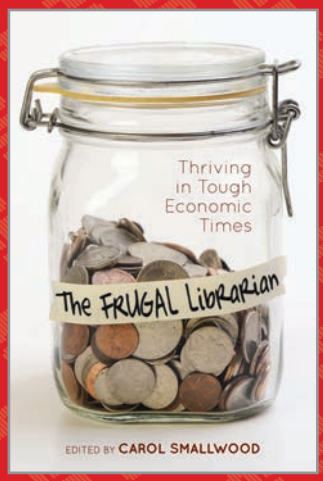

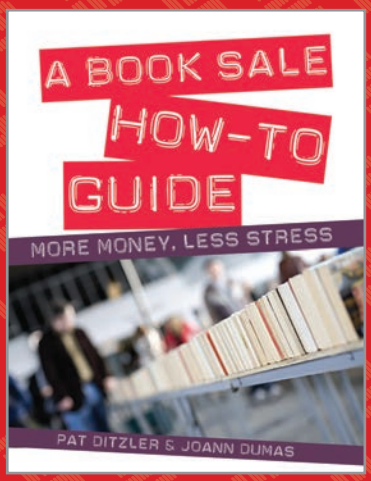

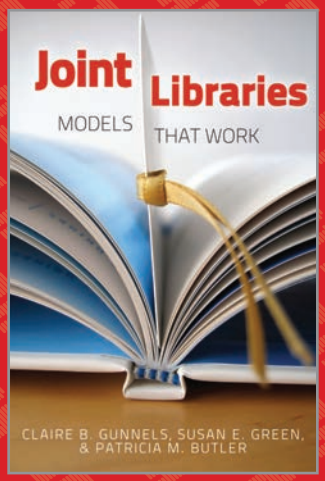

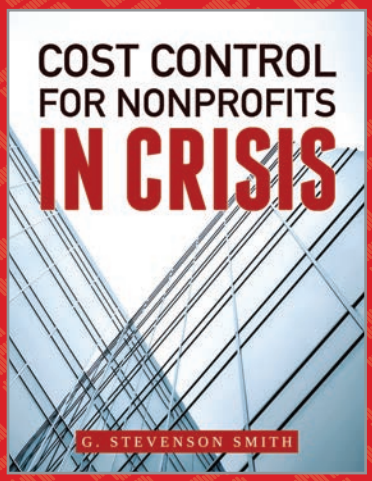

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In her thirty-year library career, **Nancy Kalikow Maxwell** has participated in successful grant projects totaling more than ten million dollars, with more than one million of those dollars flowing directly to the library. Formerly library director at Miami Dade College and Barry University, Maxwell currently owns and operates Kaliwell, Inc. (www.librarygrants.org), a grant development company that specializes in locating, writing, and evaluating grants for libraries and other educational organizations. A prolific writer, Maxwell has been published in the *National Catholic Reporter, Jewish Forward, Lilith, Moment,* and other periodicals. Her library publishing credits include the best seller *Sacred Stacks: The Higher Purpose of Libraries and Librarianship* (2006) and, as a contributor, *Writing and Publishing: The Librarian's Handbook* (2010) and *Librarians as Community Partners: An Outreach Handbook* (2010). A frequent contributor to *American Libraries* magazine, she has also authored two ALA Techsource *Library Technology Reports.* Maxwell can be reached at kaliwell@kaliwellinc.com.

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1

INTRODUCTION

Groan. Not another book on library grants. Here you are struggling to run your library with 40 percent less than you received last year (and you are thankful you got that). The three-year hiring freeze has chilled your relationship with the staff to the point that even the ones who like you are grumbling. You want to retire, but the financial meltdown frizzled your funds to nothing. And now you are supposed to write grants. Fat chance, you say.

Save your disgruntlement for something more important—like getting a vanilla latte when you ordered chai tea. This book is not going to guilt-trip you over not bringing in grant money. And you won't be toiling over a tedious grant proposal, either. Instead, you will learn how to watch others do the toiling. Not that you'll be sitting back and doing nothing, but at least you'll benefit from the work of others who are writing grants. In this book, librarians will learn how to infiltrate the grant development process of other organizations and garner grant funds through them.

The idea for this book—like so much of life—came through happenstance. Though I am a highly successful grant writer—having helped bring in more than ten million dollars in grant funding for my library and college—my initial efforts at grant writing were failures. Lots of failures, if you must know.

But I persevered. After many grant-writing workshops and more disastrous grant attempts, I finally crafted my first successful proposal. The USDA—of all places—approved a grant for more than $150,000 to improve the science resources and services at my community college library.

My successful proposal not only garnered much-needed library materials but also elicited praise from the campus administrative dean. Personally, I was more interested in pleasing the dean than improving library resources, but it was nice to have accomplished both.

"You did an outstanding job with the USDA grant proposal," she wrote in an e-mail. "I was very impressed when I finished reading the entire proposal." Her compliment made my day, but what followed turned out to be of more lasting import.

"We are now working on a Title V grant," she explained. "A grant writing company has been hired to assist us. They have a lot of experience, but they will be requiring information from us periodically."[1]

They will be requiring information from us periodically.

That sentence changed the course of the library and my career. From those few words, I was able to participate in grant proposals netting more than ten million dollars to the college, with one million going directly to the library. Even better, I was able to write the book which you now hold in your hand (or view on your screen).

They will be requiring information from us periodically has become my maxim.

The need for information brought me to the grant table, where I was able to insert library funding into the grants under development. Being at the table made all the difference.

I am far from the first person to realize the importance of being where the action is, where money is discussed and divvied. The late visionary and library science professor Kathleen de la Peña McCook came to the same conclusion more than ten years ago. *A Place at the Table* she titled her plea, urging librarians to be present when decisions are made to build lasting communities.[2]

Years before McCook's book was published, two other librarian-authors—Patricia Senn Breivik and E. Burr Gibson—exhorted librarians to insinuate themselves into the process of garnering new funds from others.

"The library is uniquely suited to fare well in cooperative projects," they explained. "Library services and resources can be clearly shown in support of almost any aspect or program." However, the trick is to get the library included—either formally or informally—in the process. How reassuring, if not a little depressing, to find this suggestion in a 1979 ALA book entitled *Funding Alternatives for Libraries*.[3] Yes, we have been talking about finding other sources of revenue for decades.

LIBRARIES BRING IN MONEY

Libraries deserve to benefit financially from the work of others. As recent data shows, libraries contribute mightily to the economic value of those they serve. According to a study by the University of Pennsylvania, the Free Library of Philadelphia improved the economic value of the communities it served by more than $31 million.[4] Six million of those dollars resulted from workforce development activities, $3.8 million from business development activities, and the rest from improving reading and literacy skills.

The study also showed that, in Philadelphia, homes within a quarter mile of a library are worth $9,000 more than homes outside this range. Evidently, homeowners wanting to boost the value of their homes would be better off lobbying for a library branch in their neighborhood than upgrading their kitchen.

Though libraries are economic engines for their surrounding communities, they have yet to capitalize on their impact. The root problem, according to Steve Coffman, vice president at the library consulting firm LSSI (Library Systems and Services), is that the public library "is one of the few cultural or educational institutions to remain almost entirely dependent on local and state tax dollars." While museums, theaters, and zoos have diversified their revenue streams, libraries have yet to tap what he calls "plural funding," through gifts, fundraising, and foundations.[5]

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Along with Coffman's suggestions, this book proposes another potential stream of funding for libraries to tap. By exploiting one of its greatest strengths—research ability—libraries can maneuver to the grant development table. For many librarians, conducting research is preferable to soliciting major gifts or forming a nonprofit to raise funds. Once at the table to present their results, they can divert some of the forthcoming funds to the library. The rest of this book provides instructions on how to go about accomplishing this.

HOW LIBRARIANS AND GRANT DEVELOPERS CAN HELP EACH OTHER: AN OVERVIEW

How Grant Developers Can Help Librarians

More Funding for the Library

Libraries can earn additional funds by being included in the grant development process of others. These funds could be used for library materials, equipment, staff, or programs. Or best of all, they could go directly into the library's general coffers for the library to use as it sees fit.

Of course, there is no guarantee a proposal will be successful. Even the most perfectly crafted applications are often turned down. As Stephen Seward, philanthropy director at the Nature Conservancy, notes, successful grant writing can seem like winning the lottery because it appears so illogical.[6]

It may look as if grants are awarded at random, but techniques and strategies exist to improve one's chances of success. Libraries can play a huge role increasing a grant's chances. As discussed below, libraries can help identify exactly the right grant opportunity for the applying institution. They can dramatically improve the proposal with solid research data. The librarian can keep the group on track and working within deadline. The library can create a new library activity or service, thereby improving the proposal along with the library. Once funds are appropriated, the library can help administer or evaluate portions of the project. Any of these avenues would improve the grant, potentially bringing in more funds to both the nonprofit organization and the library.

Strengthened Organizational Relationships

Even if the grant is not successful and no funds are awarded, the process of working with another organization to craft a grant proposal will enhance the relationship between the library staff and grant developer. Grant development usually includes intense, fevered work concentrated into a short span of time. Frequent meetings—via phone or e-mail, or face-to-face—are required to develop plans, share information, and review drafts. Assuming the library representative participating is congenial and effective (hopefully a correct assumption), the end result will be an enhanced relationship with the grant-seeking organization. Even if the initial venture is not successful, the next grant the organization embarks upon may include a library component, which could result in additional library funding.

Confidence to Develop Library Grants

When asked why they don't write grants, many librarians report the task is too daunting. The verb *daunt* (who knew that was a verb?) means "to drain the courage of, to intimidate

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or to dishearten"—an apt description of how many librarians feel when confronting a forty-page grant request-for-proposal due in three weeks. One book on the topic is called *Demystifying Grant Seeking,*[7] a title that suggests an unknowable, almost otherworldly pursuit.

After more than fifteen major grant initiatives, I still get a pit in my stomach when I review a new grant announcement. I can only imagine the aversion those not familiar with grant development must experience when contemplating the endeavor. Daunting, indeed.

But participating in someone else's grant provides an opportunity to learn the process without bearing the brunt of responsibility for the entire undertaking. Learning through observation—and participating on a more limited basis—allows neophytes to gain the confidence to undertake their own grant-writing projects in the future.

How Librarians Can Help Grant Developers

It is easy to see how new library funding, improved relationships, and grant-writing confidence benefit the library. What is less obvious is how the grant developer can benefit from the participation of the library. Though these benefits can be substantial, they usually go unrecognized. The burden, then, lies with the librarian to prove it. To use the business parlance of the day, libraries must convince others (and themselves) that they add value to the grant development process.

Research, Research, Research

All grants need some form of research to support the proposal. The ability of librarians to locate information will endear library professionals to grant developers forever. I do not use the word *endear* lightly. Many a reference librarian can recount an exuberant reaction to information they have produced.

Though it was years ago, I still remember one student's passionate response when I helped him locate information he was seeking. Standing over him at the computer, I suggested he try a combination of terms for his search. When he saw the citations that he needed appear, he bolted from his chair, grabbed my shoulders, and kissed me.

I have yet to be similarly embraced at any grant development meetings, but the presentation of data has often been met with the same kind of enthusiasm. When I distributed a copy of employment projections at one meeting, a faculty member kissed his fingers, saluted, and pronounced (in a fake foreign accent), "This is exactamemte what we need." Not exactly a smooch, but it felt good nonetheless.

Ready-Made Collaborative Partner

Libraries also bring to grant developers an organization to partner with. The trend in government granting and philanthropic giving is to require collaborative partners. To maximize effectiveness (known in plain English as getting more bang for the buck), many new funding sources require that more than one organization be included in and benefit from the project.

Making matters even worse for grant developers, announcements of grants requiring partners are often released with extremely tight deadlines. Because there isn't sufficient time to both find a partner and create a solid proposal, many grant developers simply pass on the possibility of applying for funding.

By simply being there as part of the process, the library could serve as the required partner. Much like those classic old movies where the beautiful young starlet comes into the

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room at exactly the right moment, libraries could have their moment in the spotlight just by being in the right place at the right time.

Source of Last-Minute Expenditures

Libraries could save the day by spending money!

To be deemed successful, grant-funded projects must not only attain the goals and objectives of the stated project but also spend all of the allocated funds within the granting period. One of the most egregious sins that a grant administrator can commit is to return unused funds to the granting agency. I have known more than one grant administrator who was terminated because large sums of grant funds went unexpended.

Libraries offer grant-funded projects an easy avenue to expend unused funds. Library materials can be purchased quickly and in varying amounts that would help out the grant project while also improving the library.

Stronger Relationship with the Library

Just as stronger relationships between collaborative partners benefit the library, so do they further the goals of the grant-developing organization. It is hard to imagine a nonprofit group, educational institution, hospital, or other organization that would not be improved through collaboration with a library. By availing themselves of library resources, services, publicity, and programming, such organizations will be able to fulfill their missions through closer interactions with the libraries that serve them.

Let's now look at the grant development process in more detail to see how organizations can work together and libraries can benefit from other people's money.

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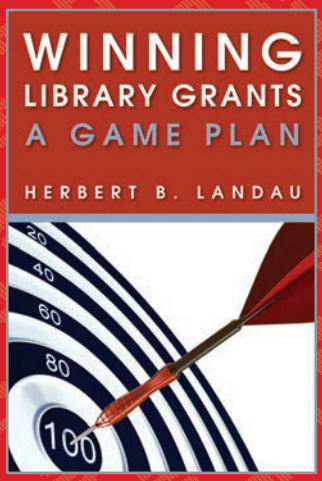

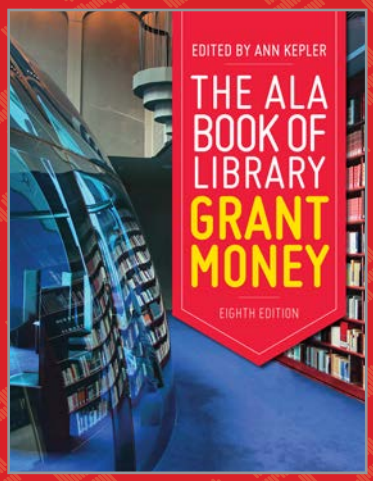

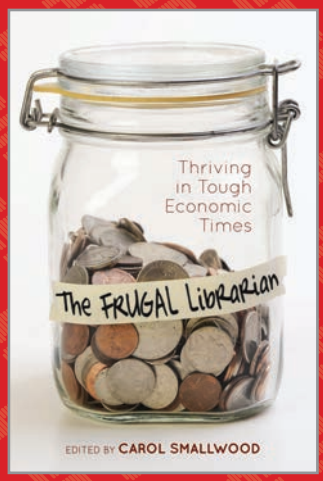

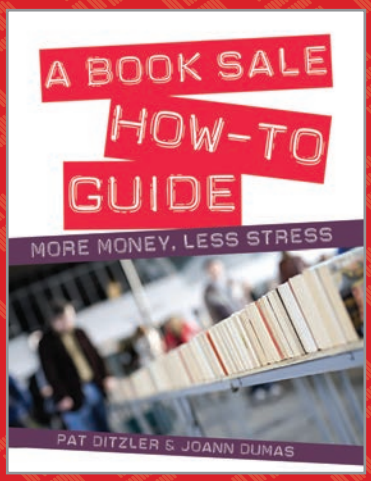

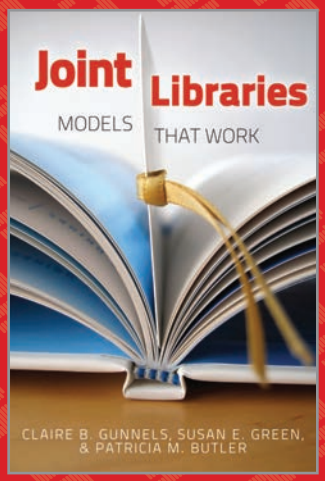

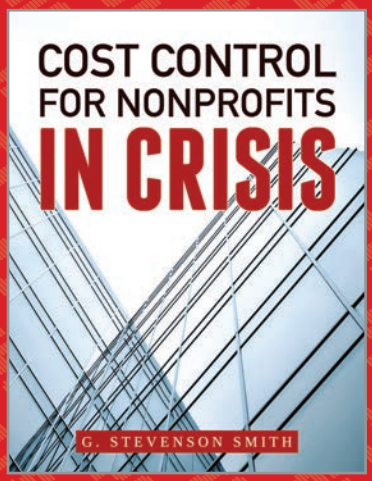

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