Nonprofit Financial Managers

A Resource for the areas of Finance, IT, Human Resources, and Office/Facilities Management

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For information, go to **npfm.org**, or contact Mitzi Fennel at 617-547-1063 x235 or Jessica Zander at 617-956-0215

Mark Your Calendars

All of our meetings take place on the **last <u>THURSDAY</u>** of each month. **No pre-registration required.** Upcoming dates:

- **April 25: Compensation Strategies on a Tight Budget**
- **May 30: I am not a Lawyer: How to Effectively Review a Contract**

NPFM Membership Information

The annual membership fee of $100 covers monthly mailings and other operating expenses. The membership period is from September to August. A part-year membership for $60 is offered for those joining after January 1, which covers membership through August. Full-time students are welcome to join at any time without paying a fee.

In addition to attendance at monthly meetings, members receive a monthly newsletter and access to the NPFM e-mail forum. Lunch is provided for all attendees at meetings. <u>There is a $20 meeting fee for non-members</u>, and since membership is by organization, there is no limit of individuals from any one organization who may attend the meetings.

<u>RSVPs for the meetings are not required</u>.

For renewals or new membership fees, please make your check out to:
Nonprofit Financial Managers
C/O Child Care Resource Center
130 Bishop Allen Drive
Cambridge, MA 02139

Contact Mitzi Fennel at 617-547-1063, x235 for more information.

The Next Meeting

Topic: Meet the Regulators!
Date: Thursday, March 28, 2013
Location: United South End Settlements
566 Columbus Ave., Boston
Time: 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

<u>Meet the Regulators!</u>
MA AG's Public Charities Division

Is the sum total of your relationship with the Attorney General's office the annual filing of the Form PC? If so, here is a great opportunity to meet and chat with the managers of the AG's Nonprofit Organizations/Public Charities Division about the regulation of the nonprofit sector, and about their priorities to support a vibrant nonprofit sector and how they hope to work with you, as nonprofit leaders, to prevent misuse of charitable funds and protect nonprofits and their donors from fraud and loss.

Assistant Attorneys General Mary Beckman and Nora Mann, Chief and Deputy Chief of the Public Charities Division, will speak candidly about their work and give some real-life examples of cases their office has seen. They will discuss how to avoid common pitfalls and identify red flags to support a constructive relationship with the Division, and they look forward to hearing from you about how you, as financial managers, view filing the Form PC and otherwise working with the Attorney General's office. Come to this presentation with your questions and ideas.

Recap of February Meeting

<u>Hiring the Right Consultant</u>

Arshad Merchant, partner at Wellspring Consulting, gave a presentation about the elements for a useful

Request for Proposals ("RFP") to set a consulting project on track for success and whether an RFP is always necessary. Too often nonprofits spend their scarce resources on consulting projects that do not answer the fundamental questions that need to be addressed. Ensuring you hire the best consultants for the specific job and get exactly what your organization needs for the money spent starts with understanding the needs of the organization and writing an effective RFP.

The first step for hiring the right consultant for a project or for developing and effective RFP is to clearly articulate the purpose of the project and what you want the end result to be. Sometimes the organization should be focused on the outcomes it desires, but other times, you might be interested more interested in hiring a consultant who will direct the process, rather than achieving an outcome. RFPs that outline the process specifically, but do not state what the outcome should be, are often ineffective. It restricts the potential consultant's creativity in devising a meaningful process to reach the goals. A formal RFP is not always necessary to hiring a consultant, but a scope of services is. Also you need to be clear in the RFP or informal process who the decision makers at the organization will be – who will the consultant answer to? Who will be the point person on staff? Next, you should list key meeting requirement up front. Who will the consultant be meeting with – the Board, staff, other stakeholders? The consultant can recommend a timeline for these meetings.

When interviewing prospective consultants it is important to ask about the process involved in the project and why each step is necessary. Questions asked by the prospective consultant can indicate whether or not he/she understands what you want and can provide you with deeper insight about the proposed project. You should have a clear expectation about your price range in advance. This budget will determine the depth and breadth of the work that can be done. Generally, you get what you pay for. You need to be realistic about what your proposed budget can purchase. Check references upfront before interviewing consultants so as to not waste anybody's time. Proposals are "living documents' before they are formalized into a signed agreement. Consider the first draft of a proposal to be a work in progress. Your scope and price might be unrealistic or there might other issues raised during the interview process that need to be considered.

The main goal in hiring a consultant is to get the right person for the job. What one or two things really stand out for a particular candidate over other candidates? You need to think carefully about whether you need a specialist or a generalist. A generalist can usually work with any kind of organization or situation whereas the project may call for someone with specialized expertise. Also, the consultant needs to understand the business that you are in. Consultants with strictly for-profit experience often have an approach very different than those who have worked with nonprofits. In Wellspring's experience, 80% of strategic planning proposals are funded through a grant, two-thirds of which have received funding in advance or a verbal commitment. It is very important that you and the consultant are comfortable and trust each other. Much of the work derives from communications which is greatly enhanced when the organization and the consultant have a good working relationship.

Job Openings…

The NPFM group has a section on their website for job postings. Check out our website at www.npfm.org for a complete list of jobs. Contact David Richardson at dr44@verizon.net with questions or postings.

NPFM E-mail Forum

One of the benefits of membership in NPFM is a subscription to our e-mail listserv. We encourage members to post questions, announcements and new developments in finance and administration. All new members who provide e-mail addresses are automatically subscribed. To post messages send to npfm@topica.com. If your membership is current and you do not have access to the listserv, please contact Karen Kelley Gill, at kgill@cedac.org.

NPFM Steering Committee

The Steering Committee consists of several members who are responsible for the meeting topics, speakers, and other details surrounding the group. If you are interested in joining the steering committee, or in submitting ideas for future sessions, please contact any of the existing members, by email or in person at a meeting.