



FRONT PAGE

Capacity-Building News to Use for Wiregrass Organizations



HOT TOPIC **Transparency**

Recently, the BBB Wise Giving Alliance released its first-ever listing of their nonprofit **Top 10 Transparency Dodgers**. Imagine waking up in the morning and finding your organization on a list like that! If you have seen this story in the news, you already know that being on this list was not an actual indictment of the nonprofits—some were included simply because they did not see their invitation to participate in the BBBWGA survey, or chose not to do so. But whatever the cause, that kind of headline, if not a public relations nightmare, is at least a significant headache and major distractor for the directors, staff, and board members of these organizations.

Dictionary definitions of the word “transparent” include the following: able to be seen through; easy to notice or understand; honest and open; not secretive. For those of us in the nonprofit world, transparency means that everything we do should be open for public review. In point of fact---nearly everything already IS. Just try “googling” the name of your organization and see what turns up. You will get everything from occasional news releases, to links to your web and Facebook pages, to full-fledge nonprofit trackers like Charity Navigator, National Center for Charitable Statistics, and Guidestar.

Nonprofits take transparency very seriously. It is the law. It also is the best way to insure that information publicly available is honest and accurate. Some quick tips to help safeguard an organization’s public profile:

- ✓ Consider thoughtfully what will be gained or lost by participating or not participating in requests for info.
 - ✓ Monitor social media sites—if our organization has a FB page, check it frequently. (Even if we don’t use FB, check occasionally to see who else has mentioned our organization.)
 - ✓ Insure accuracy and timeliness of our websites.
 - ✓ Be intentional about allowing use of our logos and names. In this rapid-fire information age, it is assumed that we support anything with which we are associated.
- AND
- ✓ Check, recheck, and triple-check our 990’s. Financial information must be accurate for government reporting, but every line, every statement should be 100% accurate. Nonprofit trackers, as well as prospective donors, use the 990 as their base of information.

GRANTS UPDATE **(June and August Meetings)**

Impact Alabama—*Focus First*
\$15,000

Medical AIDS Outreach—*Distance Learning Ctr.*
\$14,334

ACOM—*First Patient Memorial* (matching grant)
\$500,000

Wiregrass United Way—*Campaign Challenge*
\$411,111

Family Services Center—*HIPPY*
\$100,948

\$32,883 in Micro-grants to eight organizations



MILESTONES **Publicity Guidelines**

WF takes transparency to heart. All of our grant awards, past and present, are included on our website and in our Annual Reports. But transparency also is impacted by what is or is not reported in the local media. WF wants to keep the focus of any project on the exceptional work being accomplished by our grantees. However, we are learning that this practice sometimes leads to the public not knowing or understanding what WF is or what we help to do. We want to be a quiet partner, but not an invisible one. So we have developed *Grant Publicity Guidelines* to try to strike that balance. The *Guidelines* include requests on how you might reference a WF grant if you are planning a news release, a notation on your webpage or FB page, or a public celebration for your project. As always, it is not necessary for you to create publicity for any grant program—that is totally at your discretion. But if you do choose to publicize, including us as one of your partners will help the community to know WF. It is our hope that organizations will better understand WF and will consider talking to us as they develop new initiatives to improve Wiregrass health, education, and quality of life. The *Guidelines* are available on our website, and copies will be included with all future grant agreements and award notifications. But if you ever have any questions, please give us a call.