

Ask a Leader

**March 2013**

**Alisa Druzba**

*Alisa Druzba is the director of the New Hampshire State Office of Rural Health, a position she has held for nearly seven years. She is also the President-Elect of NOSORH.*

**You've said that you spend about 8% of your time on grants—applying for grants for your SORH and assisting with grants from other DHHS programs. Is grantwriting part of your job description?**

It's part of being a SORH director. My office is small and understaffed. I have not had a Rural Health Manager (Flex Coordinator) since July 2011. We include grantwriting in our position descriptions. Some SORHs may have at least one other person to help with it. How important are grants for your funding? My total staff is three FTE: a secretary paid by a portion of three grants; a primary care workforce coordinator who is paid by state funds and the PCO grant; and me, the SORH and PCO Director (and the Flex Coordinator and SHIP director). We represent one of the smallest SORHs in the country covering four FORHP grants, the PCO grant, a SLRP, and Conrad 30 program.

**How did you learn about applying for grants?**

I learned in my Master's in Community and Social Psychology program—grantwriting and program evaluation were two of the required courses (the students provided free labor for local nonprofits, by writing grants for them). I started as the Flex program manager here because they knew I had the experience in writing grants.

**Other than a similar Master's program, where can people learn about grantwriting?**

NOSORH offers a grantwriting course – which is wonderful and an easy way to get it. Also, many states have nonprofits associations and offer grantwriting courses. Universities often have courses that will include grantwriting as part of the work (like social work) – someone could audit that kind of course.

**Is there anything you enjoy about the grantwriting process?**

I like the needs statement of it—it's a chance to regroup and remind myself of what the needs are, refresh my memory on what's going on in the state. There is a place for creative writing inside grants—you don't want them to be dry and matter of fact—you want your concern for your population to come through, not just putting nuts and bolts together. Recently I had an epiphany about logic models—it's like I'm a religious convert.