

Common Cents[®]

creators of the **Penny Harvest[®]**

Guide to the Organization Finder: The Perfect Profile

Thank you for taking the time to update your profile. This is the beginning of a wonderful conversation with children, **mostly elementary school age**, about what you do. This is your opportunity to help students who want to **fund you** understand and feel passionate about your work. Please read the following carefully for our best practices.

Part 1: Your Organization Overview

This is the first section students see on the site, so it is crucially important that it draws children in. Please review this example of an organization overview that an animal related organization called Bideawee created, paying special attention to how they structured it. Please see the boxes for further explanation:

Explain briefly what your organization does by calling out to the students for help.

Use the story to show what happens in your organization on a more general level.

Have you ever looked into the scared, hungry, eyes of a stray cat or dog and wondered what you can do? Bideawee needs kids like you to help us shelter, feed and give medical care to homeless animals. Your pennies will allow us to continue finding homes for over 1,000 animals each year. Animals, like Toby, the little dog found wandering the streets in the middle of a bitter cold winter. With his leg seriously hurt by a car, Toby had to have painful surgery and rehabilitation at Bideawee to be able to walk again. Now he's in a loving home and playing fetch with his new family. Miracles like this happen everyday at Bideawee.

Relate the problem your organization addresses to the students.

Tell a story. It does not have to be this long!

Tips:

- Keep your profile to 3-5 sentences. You need only **spark interest**, not tell everything!
- Pretend this is a conversation. **Define difficult terminology** for children!
- Three key words: **short, simple, and fun**. The average age of students is 10, so just tell them why your organization needs to exist and how it helps the people you work with.
- It is always good to relate what your organization does to **justice and fairness, as we've all heard kids say** "That's not fair!"
- Don't shy away from the problem your organization addresses. Like a children's story, set up the problem as the bad guy and set up **your organization** as the **hero**.
- The profile is **opening the door** to a longer conversation, so if you don't say everything you want to say, it's ok!

Part 2: Your Cash Grants Section

Tell students **how the funding will be used**. Each roundtable has a budget of \$1000. Some split their funds among many organizations, and some choose only one. Try to give a few examples of what different sums could purchase. Of course, your organization has many needs, but think about needs that no other sources of funding would support and would be most interesting and tangible to children.

For example, a children's hospital may list:

State ball-park figure

Explain why you need it.

- **\$100:** New art supplies for the waiting rooms, including crayons, markers, and construction paper. Every day, 500 kids come through these waiting rooms.
- **\$500:** Blankets for 100 children.
- **\$1000:** 10 birthday parties for kids in the hospital



Describe what you need.

Part 3: Your Service Project Opportunities

Students prefer organizations that have service opportunities listed. These will help your organization secure closer relationships with schools. Service doesn't have to be complicated, doesn't have to cost money, and can be done in addition to or in place of a cash grant. Generally, the best service projects are those that are unique to kids. Notice how the **above cash grant examples can easily be converted into service projects**:

- We need new art supplies for the waiting rooms. Since you know what art supplies kids like better than we do, use your grant money to **buy whatever you think they would like**.
- Kids in the hospital are comforted by blankets just as you are. **Host knitting parties at your school and donate the blankets** to the hospital.
- Some kids have to celebrate their birthday in the hospital. **Make cards** for those kids to wish them a happy birthday like you would for your friends.

Have students purchase what you need...

...Use their school as a collection center...

...and tap into their unique talents to help your organization.

Final and Extremely Important Tips

- Make sure **all the issue areas** your organization deals with are checked off. The more, the better, as your organization will come up in more search results.
- Create a profile that is **professional**. Please make sure your **grammar and spelling** are correct. This is a learning tool for the students.
- Make sure your **introduction section** talks about **what you do** in your organization, not what your organization does.
- **Save your profile in a Word Document** just in case the system doesn't save your changes. Please allow 24-48 hours for your profile to be approved.

Follow up: After You Receive Grants

Think about how you can continue to build relationships with the schools who donate to you. The following are a few suggestions:

- **Always send a thank you note.** Make sure it is personalized, not a form letter you send to all your grantors.
- **Workplace harvest** in the fall. Donating pennies to support a past grantor's Harvest is a great way to show your support and remind students that your organization still needs help! They will be touched with even a jar or a bag. Suggest to the coach that you can bring pennies to a Kick-Off Assembly (usually in late October/early November) and present your organization to the entire school.
- **Invite** students to participate in walk-a-thons, collection drives, performances, art projects or any other events your organization sponsors throughout the year.

Thank you for taking the time to read these suggestions. Please feel free to contact orgfinder@commoncents.org with any questions. Or, for more information about being a Penny Harvest Grantee, visit www.PennyHarvest.org/grantees.