



## ***The Uniquely Abled Academy® Replication Guide***

### ***Element 10 – Provide Funding***

#### ***Exhibit 10.5 - Possible Sources of Funds***

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Our intention is that a UAA program be offered at no cost to the students.

As an example, for an existing program, funding of these costs is as follows:

- Tuition for the skills training: Covered by California Department of Rehabilitation (CA DOR) if the student qualifies (which most do). As a backup, the Verdugo Job Center offered to cover tuition costs. Goodwill – Southern California acted as a third backup
- Cost of the job readiness training: conducted at no cost by the Verdugo Job Center,
- Books, supplies, parking permits, etc.: Covered either by CA DOR, Verdugo Job Center, or by funds from a donation.
- Cost of the Job placement services: covered by local Regional Center or CA DOR,
- Cost of the Job Coach: covered by local Regional Center or CA DOR, already existing state programs.

### **Notes**

Funding requirements vary depending on whether the Uniquely Abled Academy is an informal association of agencies around an existing training facility or a separate non-profit organization. We expect most of the UAAs to be the former.

If you are going to raise donations or grants directly for the UAA, the UAA probably needs to be or be associated with a non-profit corporation (such as a community college) so the donor can take a tax-deduction.

Be aware that if funds are received through a foundation associated with a community college, even though designated for the UAA it may be that the funds may have to be designated for scholarships only, leaving a problem in raising funds for operating expenses and additional salary expenses.

While these services may end up being donated it is much better for the UAA to have funds available for these purposes. This means that in raising funds donors should be requested allow their donation to be used for non-scholarship purposes, such as



operations, and marketing. It may be possible to assess the partner agencies a dollar value that can support an operations budget including marketing, job coaching, and supplies.

Sources of funds to cover costs include:

- State and Federal agencies
- Donations and Contributions
- Grants
- Private-pay Tuition
- Endowment

See **Exhibit 10.6 – Names of Possible Sources of Funds.**

### ***1. State and Federal agencies***

Often the UAA primary funding source is the state vocational rehabilitation agency, or federal workforce training funds funneled through a local agency, such a Workforce Investment Board.

It is highly recommended that such potential sources of funding be involved with the UAA as soon as possible, e.g., members of the Formation Committee. They certainly should be members of the UAA Project Team.

A UAA is often a highly attractive investment for a vocational rehab agency. They are usually frustrated by the lack of ability to place their consumers in well-paid (life-supporting) career jobs. Because of the lack of successful career training programs for the uniquely abled, vocational rehab agency clients often end up in retail jobs, which are typically not careers or well paid and may not be a good fit. Thus, the agency finds itself unable to close the case on clients, i.e., the client does not become self-supporting in a career job.

The UAA has a unique track record of success. To be able to invest only \$3-5,000 per consumer with an almost 100% chance of being able to close their case (because the job placement was successful) after only less than 6 months is highly attractive to the agencies.

### ***2. Donations and Contributions***

Traditional fundraising is also an important part of the total financial approach to an UAA.

If the UAA is a separate corporation, the Board of Directors often takes a primary responsibility for fundraising activities, leveraging personal and professional relationships to obtain individual donations, corporate sponsors, and grants from



foundations. Activities include direct board member contributions, annual and recurrent solicitations from each board member's network of individuals and corporations where the board member has influence and seeking out benefactors willing to make personal multi-year pledges.

A UAA can also reach out for foundation support through a board volunteer-based grant research and writing process.

The UAA can conduct an annual appeal and/or a gala event to which a broad array of industry and nonprofit attendees are invited.

Because most people are not familiar with CNC machines, or possibly the high unemployment rate among those with ASD, some portion of fundraising material should probably be educational. The Uniquely Abled Project posts useful educational and fundraising material on its website for use by individual UAAs. Very useful are testimonials from local students and employers.

All material ideally appears on websites as well as DVDs and includes a "Donate Now" button so that viewers can easily and efficiently donate.

Site visits to the UAA can be extremely beneficial in messaging to donors and foundations. Point out any state-of-the-art technology selected for compatibility with current industry needs. During each site visit, ensure that students rise to greet and shake hands with visitors and present their individual work, which further supports the efficacy of the UAA's Technical and Work readiness curricula. Students are the best ambassadors of the program, and they are a testimony to UAP's efforts to change the global mindset about the ability of people with autism to contribute meaningfully to society.

Another source of possible donations includes companies that manufacture or support CNC machines, such as the Gene Haas Foundation<sup>1</sup>. However, the Gene Haas Foundation will only provide scholarship funding.

Given the high demand for CNC operators, another possible source of funds are potential employers. For example, the UAA might request \$4500 for a potential employer, in return for which they get first opportunity to recruit the graduates (see Job Placement for various 1-night job placement fairs). There may be undesirable consequences of this approach for a non-profit (check with your accountant).

### **3. Grants**

Foundation research and grant writing can be a major component of fundraising. Over

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ghaasfoundation.org/>



time, financial stability and successful program growth will facilitate your ability to attract new foundations without pre-existing personal connections. As well, significant grant awards from respected, well-known local and national foundations will help you obtain support from new foundations.

Generally, grant writers are hired on a limited, hourly basis to support the grant acquisition process. Grant funding can be obtained from government and regionally based foundations, as well as national foundations and organizations supporting education and vocational training for youths and adults with developmental disabilities.

Most grant letters of intent and proposals follow a predictable format unless the funder has a required format of their own. They usually contain a first paragraph identifying “the ask” (i.e., how much money is being requested and what it is for.), followed by program history, description and accomplishments, a compelling statement of need, and a summary/closing. A key factor in the success of grant writing effort can be a shift away from templates towards greater customization to address the goals and guidelines of each potential funding source, as well as enhanced integration of financial data and metrics into your letters of intent and full grant proposals. Electronic applications to foundations offering online submissions can make full use of this approach.

See [Exhibit 10.6 – Example Grant Application Language](#).

Typically the UAA team includes government agencies, and they can also apply to state and federal agencies for grants.

#### **4. *Private-pay Tuition***

In California community college tuition is relatively low and often parents are willing to pay the tuition directly.

#### **5. *Endowment***

An endowment is a fund whose earnings may be used for operations and capital spending. This allows a non-profit organization to free itself somewhat from yearly ups-and-downs of contributions. Donors can contribute to the endowment fund, usually based on bequests or contribution of assets, such as stock.

To have an endowment, one must be a separate non-profit corporation.