

## State SAHE Grantees Conference

Query – 06.28.2006

**Query:**

I am considering hosting a **“share” conference for Kentucky’s eight subgrantees** this year. Does anyone else do this kind of thing and what advice could you give if you do?

I am thinking of a 24-hour format in which each project has about 45 minutes to highlight a particularly successful part of their endeavor, with time for Q&A. I would like to ask each project director to bring maybe an additional faculty member and at least two teachers who can provide insight as to how and why the project was successful. Half of the projects would be one afternoon, the other half the following morning, with a reception and dinner in between. I would also like to invite our universities to send teams of individuals (including previously applicants who were not selected) so that examples of successful projects could be highlighted, hopefully enhancing and encouraging future projects, and showcasing higher education’s commitment to high-quality professional development for teachers.

I would appreciate any advice anyone might have, as I am in the earliest thinking stages. Also, does anyone have a suggestion for a good dinner speaker in this area?

**From:** Kentucky

**Responses:**

Georgia	Georgia has done something like this on two occasions, once at the outset of Eisenhower and again at the outset of Teacher Quality. It can be expensive with Administration funds being so tight. We did it for "sharing" reasons like those below but also to "advertise" the then new programs and their guidelines. For us it turned out quite well.
South Carolina	I have also been thinking about doing something like this and I look forward to the responses from those who have done this.
Utah	I think that professional development is good by definition. However, a few questions come to mind: 1. Do you think the real beneficiaries might be those that aspire to write a successful NCLB proposal? 2. How about looking at the weaknesses in proposals in order to strengthen future proposals. 3. Assessment practices are worth looking at. In other words, how do grant recipients know they have reached their goals? My suggestion, for what it is worth, is that you hold a half day meeting to cover issues of strengthening proposals (what areas tend to be weak) and assessment. Also, invite people who want to write better proposals.
Puerto Rico	We have not done that in PR but it is a great idea. As a matter of fact, we are planning something similar but with project external evaluators, in an activity where proven experienced evaluators whose reports have been comprehensive and complete will share with others with less experience the strategies, methods, instruments, etc. they have used to guarantee that an external evaluation report will address all aspects of accountability (responsibility in providing what was proposed and designed in the project and on time, effectiveness in making a difference in participants, and impact on students and schools). My suggestion would be to

	consider giving time to this topic in his activity.
Rhode Island	RI is doing a shorter version of what you suggest. We are listening to project directors talk about their projects, having a lunch, and then training prospective proposal writers how to write a good proposal.
Puerto Rico	We had three Symposiums in the past three years in which there were plenary sessions and speakers on topics related to the projects, followed by sessions where some project directors, participants and their students presented their achievements attributed to the projects' activities. The attendants to the Symposiums have been mostly school teachers, Higher Education faculty, principals, and other school professionals. The Symposiums have been for a day with snacks in the morning and lunch. We learned from the first two Symposiums that a late lunch at the end of the activity is better than lunch followed by more sessions in order to maintain the group for all sessions.
Indiana	We hosted a similar conference for the first time this year and received very positive feedback. Our focus was on new and current programs and what information they could gain from one another. I think if you want to focus more on technical assistance for those that are applying for a grant, rather than those that already have one, that's a good focus too—just a different meeting.
Minnesota	<p>I have consistently held two types of meetings for the SAHE grant program –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) I hold technical assistance sessions (4-6) throughout the state at the start of the grant cycle for interested program applicants. These meetings are held on campuses and they last about 3 hours. I discuss program requirements, the proposal process, past program successes, and I answer questions from potential applicants during the group session and one-on-one after the group session has ended.</li> <li>2) I hold a program directors meeting about 9 months after the awarding of the grants. This meeting is a chance for project directors to get to know each other, share information and concerns, and to report on program activities. Prior to the program directors meetings I ask them to be prepared to discuss and to turn in a written response to the following questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) What have been the three most notable accomplishment of your project during the past nine months?</li> <li>b) What are the three greatest concerns, challenges, and/or major issues faced by your project in the coming year?</li> <li>c) What are the three most promising new opportunities/activities your project faces?</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>I cannot remember the source of the questions. I know I saw questions like this and I borrowed and reworded for my use. The project directors say that they have found the project director's meeting to be meaningful and a good use of their time.</p> <p>The way I structured my meetings has been based on the money, time, and resources that I have to support the SAHE Title II program. This has worked for me. I know that states with more admin money and more staff to support the Title II program have held larger meetings and conferences with invited speakers. Overall, I think a state conference should be based on what supports program needs in that state. Good luck to John and perhaps we could do more formal reporting on format of grantee conferences and the outcomes of those conferences.</p>