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Competition charges non-profits with a challenge

BY DUNHAM FUND

The Dunham Fund, a private foundation established by Aurora businessman and philanthropist John C. Dunham, announced a grant proposal competition for non-profit organizations called the Challenge for Change. The Challenge for Change is a grant proposal writing competition for 501 (c)(3) non-profit organizations.

"The Challenge for Change was inspired by the principles that John Dunham followed in his own very successful business life," said Ryan Maley, Dunham advisor. "We need to listen to those organizations that deal with the challenges facing our community on a daily basis. We believe that providing those organizations with incentives for innovative thinking and high-quality planning will help the Dunham Fund realize its mission of helping people reach new heights of achievement."

Non-profits rewarded

To encourage the investment of time and resources to develop a program concept, the Dunham Fund is offering non-profit organizations financial awards of \$100,000 for first place, \$50,000 for second place and \$15,000 for third place for the best grant proposals.

"Although inspired by and incorporating some of the elements of the MacArthur Foundation's Innovation Awards for digital media and learning and the X-Prize Foundation's awards to stem the effects of climate change, the challenge differs from these competitions in that it is not focused on one foundation identified problem, but challenges the more experienced and community-savvy

non-profit organization to identify and document a critical need and to propose a solution," said Bob Vaughan, Dunham Fund executive director.

'High-impact' writing

"Although cost may be a significant factor in the eventual implementation of the proposed program, the awards will be made for grant proposals that effectively express an innovative, collaborative and high-impact program concept, regardless of future implementation," Vaughan said.

The program initiatives of the challenge award recipients will automatically be considered by the Dunham Fund for further funding in its next grant making cycle and the fund will encourage other foundations and funders to review and support the implementation of these program concepts, Vaughan said.

As part of the Dunham Fund's effort to encourage positive change and to develop the capabilities of non-profits, Dunham Fund Board Chairman William Skoglund also offered non-profit leadership the opportunity to participate in a two-day non-profit institute Nov. 18 and 19 at North Island Center, 8 E. Galena Blvd., Aurora.

The training is fully funded by the Dunham Fund and presented by Keystone Research Corporation in conjunction with the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley and Fox Valley United Way.

To download the Challenge for Change application, visit www.dunhamfund.org. The deadline to submit the application is Jan. 15, 2009. For more information, call the Dunham Fund office at 630-844-2774.

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