

## Searching for Funding to Attend Alternatives 2005

Dear Alternatives 2005 Participant,

The National Empowerment Center would like to encourage everyone to be able to attend Alternatives 2005 regardless of income. If you are looking for financial assistance to attend, the time to start is **now!** Enclosed are some ideas and resources for you to use in your search for funding. We hope you find these useful.

### **NEC strongly encourages you to seek funding now at the local and state level.**

Included are two letters that may assist you in obtaining funding. (1) A sample of a letter from you or your group that you may change as you wish. We encourage you to make a direct contact with a potential funder by composing your own letter, but to also feel free to show a funder how NEC also believes in and values financial support of Alternatives with (2) A letter from NEC for you to share with potential funding sources.

### **Some ideas of possible sources of funding include:**

- Your employer, for work-related training opportunities
- Committees of which you are a part, including:
  - State Mental Health Planning Councils
  - Consumer advisory boards of provider organizations or local mental health authorities
  - State Protection & Advocacy (P&A) boards
  - State Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) advisory boards
- City or county mental health authorities
- National or State Organizations such as NAMI or Mental Health Association chapters.
- State Departments of mental health
  - Community Support Program Office
  - Officer of Consumer Affairs
- Provider agencies, including community mental health providers and managed care organizations.
- Consumer groups (a fundraising event like a car wash can help establish a scholarship fund)
- Civic, service, or religious organizations
- Private businesses; such as, Bank of America or Walmart may contribute to an organization, yet not individuals. Many businesses want to give to a local organization in their community.

National scholarships may be sought when local and state sources have been exhausted. A limited number of scholarships will be provided by the Center for Mental Health Services/SAMHSA and the NAMI STAR Center through AFYA, Inc. The scholarship application is available at [www.power2u.org](http://www.power2u.org) and is due June 30, 2005.

**The vast majority of people who have secured funding to attend Alternatives conferences have done so at the local or state level as federal funding is limited.**

## **When asking for funding:**

### **1. Determine your financial needs as accurately as possible, including Registration, Lodging, Transportation, and Food:**

**A. Registration:** Early-bird (deadline August 1) \$300.00;

Pre-registration (deadline October 14) \$325.00; On-site registration: \$350.00

The full registration fee includes the morning and afternoon conference sessions, supplies and two meals per day (breakfast and lunch). For more information call Horizon Meetings 1-800-776-1286.

**B. Hotel accommodations:** Most people will stay 4 nights at the hotel. Special rate room costs per night are as follows: \$109 single, \$129 double (\$64.50 per person for 2 persons in a room), \$139 triple (\$46.34 for 3 in room), \$149 quad (\$37.25 for 4 in room). Tax will be additional.

Reservations for this discounted rate may be made online now [www.power2u.org](http://www.power2u.org) or by calling Hyatt reservations at 888-421-1442 and ask for the Alternatives rate. The Phoenix Hyatt Regency has many handicapped-accessible rooms.

**C. Spending Money:** We recommend \$40 per day to cover additional expenses, such as the evening meal.

#### **D. Transportation:**

**Bus Transportation:** Greyhound bus tickets to Phoenix may be purchased in advance for less at [www.greyhound.com](http://www.greyhound.com).

**Airfare:** Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (PHX) is served by 23 airlines providing nonstop service from 89 cities in the United States and 17 cities in Canada, Latin America and Europe. Good airfares may be found on the internet.

**Ground Transportation:** Transportation on the shuttle van service is available from the airport to the hotel for \$8 each way (a distance of less than five miles). Phoenix City buses are also an option for getting to the hotel as well as getting around Phoenix. Information is available at: [www.valleymetro.org/default.asp](http://www.valleymetro.org/default.asp)

**Driving:** Parking is available at the hotel for \$14 per day.

### **2. Make your initial approach by either making a phone call or writing a letter.**

A. If you know someone in the organization, contact that person. If you do not know anyone at the organization, call to find out the name of the most appropriate person to ask for financial assistance with conference fees and then contact that person. \*If you feel that talking to a possible funding source is not something you are comfortable with, you might ask a friend, peer, or drop-in/self-help contact person to help you with this, and/or accompany you.

B. Discuss your goals and motivations for attending Alternatives 2005. Be sure to stress the well-established value of the Alternatives conference as a source of technical assistance on consumer-delivered services. The attached letter from NEC might be helpful.

C. Follow up on your initial contact. It is unlikely that just a letter or a telephone call will get you the money you need to attend the conference. Try to schedule a meeting with the person you contacted. After the meeting, write a letter to thank the person for his or her time and summarize the points covered in the meeting. This will document what you agreed upon. Ask for help with this if needed.

**3. Start immediately.** Alternatives 2005 will be October 26 to 30. The early bird registration deadline is August 1, 2005. Some companies or organizations may have money left at end of their fiscal year that they need to spend during the summer; this could be a good time to seek support. Let the potential funding sources know that you need their decision as soon as possible so that you can make your arrangements. The longer you wait to make hotel and flight reservations, the more expensive they may become. You also run the risk of not being able to make reservations at all if you wait too long.

**4. Be persistent.** Don't give up. You may need to ask several places before you obtain funding. If you can raise part of the money yourself, a funding source may be willing to help with part of the expense to attend this worthwhile conference.

Sample Letter

Your Name

Your Address

County, State Zipcode

Date

Local Mental Health Program or other possible funding source

Address

County, State Zipcode

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

I am a mental health consumer and attend the local mental health program. I have been involved in ....

*(We recommend including information on your mental health involvement and reasons they might sponsor you.)*

The Alternatives Conference is a national conference organized by and for mental health consumers & survivors to share ideas and experiences to transform our lives and the mental health system. Information is enclosed on the Alternatives conference.

I am requesting financial support to attend the Alternatives Conference in Phoenix, Arizona from October 26 – 30, 2005 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The cost of registration is: \_\_\_\_\_; Travel to the conference: \_\_\_\_\_; hotel cost \_\_\_\_\_. I am able to pay for \_\_\_\_\_.

*(Please add information that you think is important.)*

I would appreciate any assistance that you can provide for my attendance to the Alternatives Conference.

Sincerely,



1-800-POWER-2-U

599 Canal Street Lawrence, MA 01840

We are inviting you to support this year's upcoming Alternatives Conference – **Leading the Transformation to Recovery** at the Hyatt Regency Phoenix, Arizona from October 26 to October 30, 2005, sponsored by the National Empowerment Center and funded by SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Health Services Administration), Department of Health and Human Services.

We are contacting you because you have been an advocate of **changes in the mental health system**, changes which are now helping more and more persons with mental illness to live lives of recovery in the community.

Our country's leaders join with you in your concern about barriers and disconnects in the traditional journey through the public mental health system, and the kinds of alternatives that need to help make this experience a life-enhancing one.

**The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health** studied the problems and gaps in the mental health system and made concrete recommendations for immediate improvements. From the Commission's Executive Summary of these findings, we read:

"...the system is not oriented to the single most important goal of the people it serves - the hope of recovery....Successfully transforming the mental health service delivery system rests on two principles:

- **First, services and treatments must be consumer and family centered**, geared to give consumers real and meaningful choices about treatment options and providers - not oriented to the requirements of bureaucracies.
- **Second, care must focus on increasing consumers' ability to successfully cope with life's challenges, on facilitating recovery, and on building resilience**, not just on managing symptoms."

Both the individual recovery and the dramatic systems change described above require partnerships with the consumer/survivor movement at the local, state, and national level. You probably are familiar with **Alternatives**, the yearly national conference of self-help, empowerment, and systems change that has encouraged and organized thousands of mental health consumers since 1985.

How might you or your organization get involved in changing the face and outcome of American mental health treatment? Will you consider?

- Supporting local consumers to attend Alternatives
- Attending Alternatives to learn more about the consumer/survivor movement
- Sponsoring a table promoting your organization or business at the Alternatives' display booths

Thank you for your interest and support.

Sincerely,

Judene Shelley, MPH, Director

Daniel Fisher, MD, PhD, Executive Director

1-800-TTY-POWER / 978-681-6426 / [www.power2u.org](http://www.power2u.org)

TTY

FAX

WEBSITE