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It's Time to Recognize and Celebrate Grant Professionals

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As the CEO of the Grant Professionals Association, I have the pleasure of meeting and knowing the people who help make grants work. They work for municipalities and other governments, making a difference for citizens and those who serve them including all those involved in Public Safety. They work in small nonprofit organizations human services agencies, meeting the needs of those who need assistance in a number of ways. They work in schools and school districts - making a difference in children's lives. They work in and with Tribal Nations, impacting people in tribal nations across the land. They work in colleges and universities, assisting researchers to find support for discoveries that affect how we live and work. They live and work in cities, small towns, and rural areas across the world.

Yet, they have one thing in common: the desire to tell the story. The story of the agency, community, school, nation, or researcher to help grantmakers understand the value of the work done. The story starts with the research and grant proposal writing process and continues after the grant is awarded by telling the story of how the grant has been used to maximize the impact on the agency's work, the citizens of the community, the students in the school, the members of the tribal nation, or the results of research. The stories they share are of the people served by grants. The stories are about others, not about the work the grant professional has done to make sure grant funds are used in an ethical way. It is not about the volumes of data that form the outcomes of the impact of the grant that the grant professional has digested and summarized for the grant maker. It is simply a story about how grants change lives.

Often the only celebration for grant professionals is the moment when they are notified of the grant award, and that celebration is often short, as the work of implementing and managing the grant award starts right away. Even if someone else is responsible for the implementation, there is another grant opportunity worth exploring and the research and development process starts again and a new story comes to life.

The Grant Professionals Association (GPA) is an international membership association for everyone in the grants industry. GPA and its affiliates work to advance the profession, certify professionals, and fund professionalism. GPA offers continuing professional development through local chapter meetings, regular webinars, the GPA Journal, and an annual conference. The Grant Professionals Certification Institute oversees the GPC credential based on a body of knowledge for the profession. The Grant Professionals Foundation provides scholarships to individuals to advance their career in the grants profession. Find out more at www.GrantProfessionals.org.

So, I ask you to take a few minutes this Friday, March 18, 2016 on International Grant Professionals Day to **thank the grant professional on your staff**. Whether they have written one grant proposal or hundreds, managed one grant award or millions of dollars of grant awards, let them know the story they tell of the successes of grants would not be possible without their efforts! They will appreciate it more than you can know.