

THE INSIDE OF FOUNDATION FUNDING

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Types of Foundations

- Community Foundation
- Corporate Foundation (Company-Sponsored Foundation)
- Corporate Giving Program (Direct Giving Program)
- Family Foundation
- Independent Foundation (Private Foundation)
- Operating Foundation

Identifying Funders

- Identify if there is an organization that exists to serve community non-profits in your area.
- If so, set up a meeting to discuss local funding opportunities and resources that exist to identify such opportunities.

Resources

The following websites are authoritative and credible sources regarding the field of philanthropy in the United States:

- Foundation Center - www.foundationcenter.org
- Council on Foundations - www.cof.org
- Environmental Grantmakers Association - www.ega.org
- Grantmakers for Education - www.edfunders.org
- Guide Star - www.guidestar.org
- Southeastern Council of Foundations - www.secf.org

Determine a foundation's funding interests

- Website
- Annual Report
- Take a look at the Foundation's IRS form 990 to see what organizations have received grants in the past
- Call the Foundation and ask

How to approach a foundation for financial support

- **Identify** the correct person to talk to – typically a Program Officer/Assistant
- **Contact** the individual (via e-mail or a phone call), provide basic background information and explain why your organization is interested in funding
- Some foundations will provide feedback before an official request is made. If so, let them enlighten you on any history the Foundation has with similar requests
- **Communicate** throughout the grant process. Don't be afraid to **ask questions**

What foundations are looking for from a recipient

- **Staff capacity** – Is the staff an appropriate size and does it possess the necessary qualities to carry out the organization’s mission?
- **Sound fiscal policy and responsible financial management** – Do the organization’s financial statements, IRS form 990 and audit reflect a stable financial situation? Are there any red flags?
- **Engaged Board of Directors which reflects the organization’s constituencies** – How often does the Board meet and what is the average attendance? Does every Board member contribute financially to the organization? How does the organization ensure the Board reflects and understands the needs of the populations served?
- **Collaboration and cooperation with other organizations** – Is collaboration business as usual or done only when seeking funding?
- **A strong and diversified base of community and financial support** – Is the organization reliant on a few funding streams or do they have diverse sources of income? What percentage of funding comes from individual donors? Does the organization have any earned income? How many volunteers does the organization have?

The process of seeking foundation assistance

- Every Foundation is different, the best place to start is the website and the Program Officer
- Some foundations require a letter of intent, some foundations issue a request for proposals, some foundations require an initial meeting, other foundations simply accept the application
- Typically applications go through a review and then a site visit
- The application will then go to the governing entity that will make the grant award
- Some program officers make recommendations on grants others do not
- If you are awarded funding, you should be diligent with follow-up reporting

Expectations of foundations

- Provide accurate, complete information about the organization and the project when applying
- Provide candid, objective feedback when completing evaluations. We care about what didn't work just as much as what did work.
- Maintain communication throughout the application, project progression, and follow-up
- Listen to feedback and do your best to incorporate the suggestions of the Foundation

Do ...

- Try to determine if your organization is eligible to apply prior to beginning the process
- Align your request with the grantmaker's priorities
- Ensure your organization can accept funds from the grantmaker
- Read the instructions/questions carefully and submit the application documents in the order, and completeness that is requested
- Proofread, spell and grammar check
- Contact the Program Staff to get clarification on any questions or problems you may have
- Submit the application (early if possible), save the proposal a number of ways, and keep a copy of everything you submit

Do ...

- Ask if the Program Staff knows why a proposal wasn't funded, if they would recommend you re-submitting, and what, if any, improvements could be made to the application
- Incorporate suggestions from the Program Staff
- Read grant contracts carefully and ensure report dates are feasible
- Report on the work of the project and the organization after the grant period
- Send copies of any media coverage the grant receives
- Maintain a relationship with the Program Staff
- Be persistent even if you aren't funded the first time

DON'T...

- Wait until the last minute
- Burn bridges if you aren't funded
- Get discouraged and never apply again
- Be intimidated by the process or the Program Staff



Thank you!



LYNDHURST
FOUNDATION



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF
GREATER CHATTANOOGA