

Identifying & Approaching Foundations

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Some differences

- Majority do not post RFPs
- Guidelines vary
- Sometimes there are no guidelines
- Relationships important
- Initial Approach
 - Phone call
 - LOI (Letter of Inquiry/Letter of Intent)
 - Email
- Will not pay Overhead/Indirect Costs

Is your project right for foundation funding?

- ✓ Is it doable?
- ✓ Does it have a beginning, a middle, and an end (or plans for sustaining after the grant ends)?
- ✓ Does it have a focused goal?
- ✓ Can you answer the question, “So what?”

Is your project right for foundation funding?

- ✓ Can you identify who benefits? Is this an appropriate population to benefit?
- ✓ Does it have measurable objectives?
- ✓ How will you know when you've met your goal?

Get organized

- Define goal
- Describe project and its objectives
- Explain rationale for project and how it relates to what others are doing
- Expected outcome – immediate and long-term
- Potential collaborators
- List qualifications
- Project timetable
- Estimate budget, including amount requested from the funder and other anticipated sources of support
- Plans for evaluation (and dissemination of findings)
- Plans for sustaining project after funding ends

Thinking about funders

- Overview
 - Widen your search, broaden your terms
 - Talk to everyone – read everything
 - Never limit yourself to RFPs
 - Know your potential partners
 - Know who has funded similar projects
 - Be aware of motivations of grantmakers

Thinking about funders

- Review regularly
 - Local newspapers (business sections) & area business journals (www.bizjournals.com)
 - Funder websites ~ note foundation history and funding patterns
 - Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations
 - Annual reports & newsletters of funders
 - *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*
 - Foundation Center Newsletters
 - *Philanthropy News Digest*
 - *Health Funding Watch* or *Education Funding Watch*

Building a prospect list

- **Gather as much information as possible**
 - Visit the Foundation Center online
 - Study 990PF tax returns and annual reports
 - Study funder web sites – **READ ENTIRE SITE ~** note focus, trends, programs
 - Network with colleagues
 - Note sponsors of similar programs

Building a prospect list

- **Consider:**

- Funders priorities and areas of interest
- Restrictions (geographical and others)
- Types of support (research, operating, endowment)
- Grantmaker's patterns (review 990s)
- Deadlines
- Form of initial contact

Starting points for research

- **Advancement research links**

<http://www.advancement.vcu.edu/faculty/corporate/resources.html>

- **The Foundation Center**

– <http://foundationcenter.org>

- **Guide to Virginia Foundations**

– <http://www.grantsconnection.com>

- **Office of Sponsored Programs (SPIN)**

– <http://www.research.vcu.edu/osp/fs.htm>

The Foundation Center

- **Foundation Finder**
<http://lnp.foundationcenter.org/finder.html>
- **990 Finder**
<http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/990finder/>
- **RFPs** - <http://foundationcenter.org/pnd/rfp/>
- **Foundation Center's Cooperating Collections**
<http://foundationcenter.org/collections/>
- **Foundation Directory Online**
<http://fconline.fdncenter.org/>



FOUNDATION DIRECTORY ONLINE

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- ◆ Free Newsletters
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- ◆ Blog
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Welcome, Virginia Commonwealth University. Let's get started.

[Search Grantmakers](#) [Search Companies](#) [Search Grants](#) [Search 990s](#)

E-Mail Alerts

Enter your e-mail address to receive monthly FDO Update Alerts about changes made to the grantmaker database:

[Visit Update Central»](#)

You Spoke, We Listened

By popular request, FDO's grantmaker profiles are now available in an alternate "compact" format! Just click the Compact View link at the top of any grantmaker profile to switch views for the remainder of your current session. To switch back at any time, click the Standard View link. You'll notice that more of a grantmaker's profile information will appear above the "fold" of your screen in Compact View and you'll use less paper when printing. We know many of you have requested this preference option and we're happy to deliver.

Headlines

Gates Foundation Awards \$19.4 Million to Mercy Corps for Microfinance Project
The grant will support Mercy Corps' MAXIS project in Indonesia, which is working to create a commercial "bank of banks" that will

RFPs

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Announces Maximizing Enrollment for Kids: Making Medicaid and SCHIP Work Program
Four-year grants of up to \$1 million will be

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Search Grantmakers



Saved Searches



Last Search

Grantmaker Name

[view index](#)

Grantmaker Location

State

[view index](#)

County

[view index](#)

City

[view index](#)

Metro Area

[view index](#)

Zip Code

Fields of Interest

[view index](#)

Types of Support

[view index](#)

Geographic Focus

[view index](#)

Trustees, Officers, and Donors

[view index](#)

Type of Grantmaker

[view index](#)

Total Giving

From: To:

Keyword Search

Exclude grantmakers not accepting applications.

Search

Clear



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Fields of Interest

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P R
S T U V W Y Z

H

- Haiti (26)
- Health care (7964)
- Health care, blood supply (13)
- Health care, burn centers (27)
- Health care, clinics/centers (339)
- Health care, cost containment (10)
- Health care, counseling/pastoral care (8)
- Health care, emergency transport services (31)
- Health care, EMS (25)
- Health care, financing (39)
- Health care, HMO financing (1)
- Health care, HMOs (3)
- Health care, home services (69)
- Health care, infants (63)
- Health care, insurance (27)
- Health care, organ/tissue banks (16)
- Health care, patient services (93)
- Health care, rural areas (9)
- Health care, support services (47)

Search Grantmakers

Saved Searches Last Search

Grantmaker Name
view index

Grantmaker Location

State
view index

County
view index

City
view index

Metro Area
view index

Zip Code

Fields of Interest
view index

Types of Support
view index

Geographic Focus
view index

Trustees, Officers, and Donors
view index


Corporate Research Resources

- Company website, corporate giving guidelines, & Annual Reports
- Hoover's Online <http://hoovers.com/free/>
- Prospect Research Online (Advancement Office)
- Dun & Bradstreet (VCU Libraries)
- Standard & Poor's (VCU Libraries)
- Factiva (VCU Libraries)
- Lexis-Nexis (VCU Libraries)
- Marquis Who's Who (Advancement Office)
- FC Search (Advancement Office)
- Business news journals
- Wall Street Executive Library: Compilation of business sites ~ www.executivelibrary.com/index.asp#websearch
- Virginia State Corporation Commission ~ www.state.va.us/scc/cis

In your own backyard

- Presidential connections
- Recruiting and career services
- Alumni relations
- Athletics
- Former faculty
- Sponsored research
- Formal internships
- Consulting contracts
- Continuing Education
- Adjuncts
- Board representation

Preparing to approach

- Really check out the potential funder
 - Examine 990PFs  GuideStar.org
 - Know your organization's history with the funder
- Make list of brief questions
- Elevator pitch -- prepare nutshell description of project, emphasizing points related to foundation's stated interests
- Contact your school's development officer
- Determine appropriate initial contact ~ LOI, phone, email

A few reminders

- Don't ask questions that can be answered by reading the foundation's literature
- Understand upcoming budget cycles
- Be confident of your project needs
- Be straightforward about commitments from other agencies
- Follow up – do just what you say you will do

The letter of inquiry (LOI)

- Saves everyone time
- More than 75% prefer a letter of introduction or inquiry over a phone call
- Foundations that do not accept unsolicited proposals may review an LOI
- Max 2 pages – grab them up front
- Attach an outline of major details
- Follow-up by telephone or email to determine interest level and next steps

What goes in a letter of inquiry

- Refer to any prior contact
- **Briefly:**
 - Describe organization & how project addresses need
 - List amount needed & other funding sources
 - Describe evaluative measures
 - Tell how the project will be sustained
- Put best foot forward; start with bullets and expand from there

For additional information,

VCU Office of University Advancement – Faculty corporate process

<http://www.advancement.vcu.edu/faculty/corporate/process/index.html#five>

Tips on Writing (LOI & Proposal)

- Outline
- **Follow their guidelines!**
- AVOID jargon (www.emcf.org/pub/jargon/words)
- AVOID vacant sentences
- AVOID passive tense
- Be compelling, but don't be dramatic
- A picture is worth a 1,000 words – diagrams, images, charts
- Keep It Simple; Keep It Brief; **Remember Your Audience**
- Revise and edit

THE PROPOSAL



The Foundation Center's
Guide to Proposal Writing, 5th Edition
and
Guide to Winning Proposals

Websites

VCU's Office of Advancement ~

<http://www.advancement.vcu.edu/faculty/corporate/process.html>

University of Michigan *Proposal Writer's Guide* ~

<http://www.research.umich.edu/proposals/pwg/pwgparts.html>

Components of a proposal

- Executive Summary and cover letter
- Statement of need
- Project description
- Budget
- Organizational information
- Conclusion
- Appendix - CVs

Executive Summary

An umbrella statement of your case and summary of entire proposal
(1 page)

- ☑ Problem
- ☑ Solution
- ☑ Funding requirements
- ☑ Organization and its expertise

Need statement

Why this project is necessary

- Include statistics and examples
- Use data that supports your case
- Decide
 - Is this a model? If so, defend that statement.
 - Is the problem acute? Is it solvable?
 - Comparable projects? Is yours similar or better?

Begins the process by which an organization builds its case and tells its story

Need Statement

- Relate area of need to priorities of RFP or foundation.
- State how your proposed project will help address this need.
- Describe why your organization is the best for providing this service or meeting this need.

Local versus national impact

- Does your project impact the local community or a larger geographic region?
- Will it focus on the local community with possibilities for replication elsewhere?
- Will the results be shared with others? How?

Project description (overview)

Answers: Who, What, When, Where, and How

- What do you want to accomplish?
 - Goal(s)
 - Objectives / Outcomes
- How will you accomplish your objectives?
 - Activities
 - Timeline
- Who will carry out the project?
 - Qualifications
- Evaluation – How do you know how you are doing?
- Sustainability?
 - What happens at the end of the grant?

Goal vs. Objective

Goal: Offer an after-school program to help children read better.

Objective: Our after-school *remedial* education program will assist *fifty children* in improving their *reading scores by one grade level* as demonstrated on *standardized reading tests* administered after participating in the program for *one year*.

Objectives are Outcomes

- **Outcomes are specific and measurable**
 - Provide breast cancer information and educational materials to 50 low income women in Richmond.
 - Provide breast cancer screenings to 50 uninsured women over age 40.
 - Train 50 underserved women to do monthly breast self-examination.
- **Outcomes are tied to evaluation**

Project Activities

- Who?
 - Target population
 - Staff
- What?
- When?
 - Timeline
- Where?
- How?
- How often?

Evaluation

- Include a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of your project.
 - Depending on project, can include pre- and post-testing
 - Tie measures to outcomes
- Annually and after the grant period
- Did you accomplish what you proposed?
 - If not, why?
 - What could you have done differently?

Sustainability

- How will the project be funded in the future?
- How will the organization be funded in the future?
- Provides grantmaker assurance
 - Valuable investment
 - Other funders are in the mix

Your organization

- Provide background information on your organization
 - History and mission
 - Organizational structure, programs, services
 - Info about staff and board
 - Audience/population served by agency
- List past successes
- List expertise; show why your org. is the right one for addressing need
- Check guidelines—
 - Some funders request this info earlier in proposal, e.g. after Executive Summary

Budget

Financial description of project plus explanatory notes

- Expense Information
 - Personnel
 - Non-personnel
 - Overhead (if allowed)
- Income Information
 - Other grants, gifts
 - In-kind – what your organization is providing
 - Fees
- Budget Narrative

Budget

- **Be realistic**—
 - Base on real numbers; e.g. real salaries
 - Include % effort— will project director and staff give 100% of time to this project? Not likely, so how much?
 - Get estimates for printing, marketing, travel
 - List all personnel involved
- **Be honest** about other funders supporting the project—
 - Are you asking them for the entire cost or a portion?
 - If a portion, who else has committed funds?
 - Do you have other proposals pending?

Putting it all together...

- Be kind, **DO NOT BIND**
- Double-check guidelines
 - Watch formatting –
 - Font – 12 pt
 - Margins – usually 1 inch
 - Page or word count limits
 - Attachments/Appendix – allowed or not?
 - Deadlines – Is it *received by* or *postmarked*?

Keys to success

- **Do your homework!**
 - Get to know the funder; make inquiries
 - Make sure the funder is a good match for your project
- **Make sure the reader understands what you propose to do and how you will accomplish it.**
 - Have someone unfamiliar with your project (e.g. friend or family) read your proposal
- **Follow the guidelines! Address all questions.**
- **Effective NEED statement**
 - Ask yourself: So what?

From the funder's perspective

- Does your proposed project or program
 - Address a significant issue?
 - Project outcomes?
 - Match your school/department's mission?
 - Demonstrate your experience and expertise?
 - Display your ability and capacity to accomplish your goals?

Paths to Foundation Funding

- Understand private philanthropy
- Research potential funding matches
- Work with university and foundation staff
- Learn to develop fundable proposals
- Evaluate, promote, and EXTEND funded projects

Questions

