

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

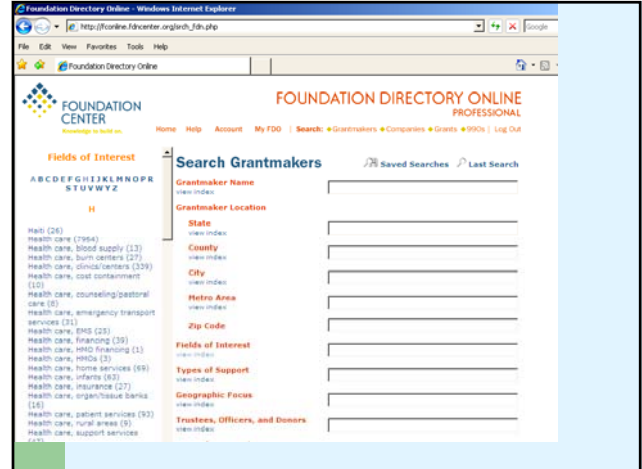
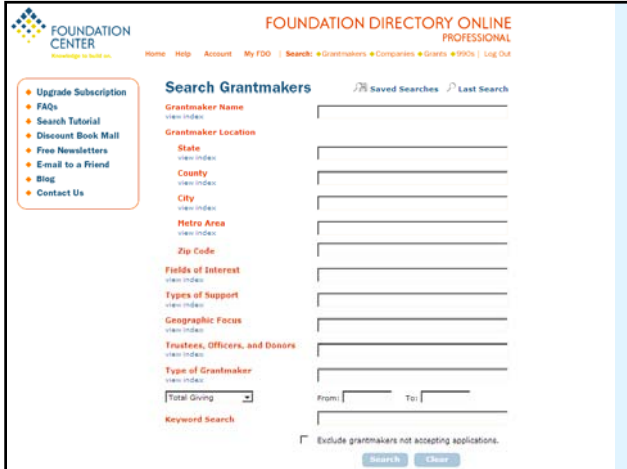
Starting points for research

- **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://inp.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/>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Foundation Directory Online Professional website. The browser address bar displays <http://online.fdncenter.org/online.php?fp=>. The page features a navigation menu with links for Home, Help, Account, My FDO, and Search. A search bar is located at the top right. Below the navigation, there is a large banner image showing a group of people in blue and white uniforms performing a cheer or dance on a red field. The banner text reads "Welcome, Virginia Commonwealth University. Let's get started." Below the banner are four search buttons: Search Grantmakers, Search Companies, Search Grants, and Search 990s. On the left side, there is a sidebar with links for Upgrade Subscription, FAQs, Search Tutorial, Discard Book Mark, Free Newsletters, Email to a Friend, Blog, and Contact Us. Below the sidebar, there is an "E-Mail Alerts" section with a "Submit" button. The main content area includes a "You Spoke, We Listened" section with a "Submit" button, a "Headlines" section with a "View Update Central" button, and an "RFPs" section. The "Headlines" section contains a link to "Duke Foundation Awards \$19.4 Million to Henry Carpe for Microfinance Project" and a link to "Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Announces Reimprinting Commitment for Kids: Making Medicaid and CHIP Work Program". The "RFPs" section contains a link to "Four-year awards of up to \$1 million will be".



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](http://www.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)
<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