



# GUIDE TO FOUNDATION FUNDRAISING

UNIVERSITY CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION RELATIONS  
OFFICE OF ALUMNI AND DEVELOPMENT  
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## OFFICE OF CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION RELATIONS

The Office of Corporate & Foundation Relations works with Columbia University faculty and administrators, foundations and corporations to develop partnerships that advance Columbia's research, scholarship and strategic initiatives, and support the university's core mission to serving its students, faculty, and the world.

Our office can work with you on all stages of foundation fundraising, from prospect research, to cultivation, to solicitation/ask, and stewardship. We can work with you to:

- Advise you on the best strategies for finding support for your work
- Keep you informed when private funding opportunities arise in your field
- Provide detailed profiles of foundations
- Let you know when existing Columbia contacts can make a difference for your approach
- Help you coordinate your approach with other Schools/departments
- Connect you with Foundation representatives and help you cultivate relationships that may lead to funding
- Provide briefings and scheduling assistance for meetings with foundation representatives
- Provide support with development of letters of inquiry and proposals
- Provide supporting documents, budget assistance, and other requirements for proposal submission
- Help you navigate university and funder policies and procedures
- Liaise with sponsors and develop and manage relationships
- Steward existing partnerships with foundations

### **Restricted Foundations**

Some foundations:

- prefer to interact with a limited number of contacts at the university
- accept one application at a time from each institution
- expect funding discussions to center on institutional priorities and have explicitly asked that funding requests carry the endorsement of the president/provost/dean and be conveyed through Foundation Relations

To safeguard our good relationships with foundations and ensure that activity can be made known to other fundraisers who may also be working with a foundation, please contact us if you have interest in any of the foundations listed below:

Foundation	Prospect Manager
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation	Farhana Mather
Arthur Vining Davis Foundations	Cynthia Anne Helton
Atlantic Philanthropies	Dimitra Koutsantoni
Bernard Osher Foundation	Paul Keenan
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Farhana Mather
Bloomberg Philanthropies	Farhana Mather
Carnegie Corporation of New York	Farhana Mather
Chan Zuckerberg Initiative	Farhana Mather
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation	Dimitra Koutsantoni
Ford Foundation	Dimitra Koutsantoni
Henry Luce Foundation	Dimitra Koutsantoni
Kavli Foundation	Meghan Fay
Kresge Foundation	Dimitra Koutsantoni
Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust	Amelia J. Alverson
MacArthur Foundation	Farhana Mather
Rockefeller Foundation	Farhana Mather
Sherman Fairchild Foundation	Catherine Murray Dwyer
Simons Foundation	Kristen Mahood
Starr Foundation	NO PM
Stavros Niarchos Foundation	Catherine Murray Dwyer
Tow Foundation	Catherine Murray Dwyer
W.M. Keck Foundation	Dimitra Koutsantoni
William Randolph Hearst Foundation	Dimitra Koutsantoni

**CONTACT:**

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## OTHER OFFICES INVOLVED IN FOUNDATION FUNDRAISING

Many university offices work together in the process of applying and securing foundation funding, and managing awarded foundation funds.

**Sponsored Project Administration (SPA)** is a university-wide office that serves as a central research administration resource for the research community at Columbia University. SPA provides support and a number of services throughout the life cycle of a sponsored project. This includes assistance with identifying funding opportunities, proposal development consultation, proposal review and submission, award setup and support during sponsored project monitoring and closeout. SPA also ensures that project proposals and awards comply with University and sponsor policies. Our office works closely with SPA in determining if awards are gifts or grant and for approval and sign off of proposals and pre-approvals.

**The Office of Research Initiatives (ORI)** handles proposals to Foundations that will only allow one submission per institution. ORI disseminates such opportunities as they arise, and organize the internal review process.

More information on limited submissions can be found here:

<https://research.columbia.edu/content/limitedsubmissions>

### **Office of the Controller**

#### **Sponsored Projects Finance (SPF)**

Sponsored Projects Finance (SPF) provides principal investigators and their administrators with post-award financial administration support services for sponsored programs such as the submission of financial status reports to sponsors, billing of sponsors, collection of payment from sponsors, and application of cash to projects upon receipt.

#### **Endowment Administration and Compliance**

Also part of Part of the Office of the Controller, this is the centralized resource for the administration and compliance of endowment funds. Endowments provide Columbia with a permanent source of funding to support professorships, financial aid, research, capital projects, schools, departments, institutes, centers, and more

## ABOUT FOUNDATIONS

Foundations play a huge role in the world of philanthropy. There are thousands of foundations in the US, and in 2017 foundations gave an estimated \$66.90 billion to the charitable sector.

A foundation is defined as an entity that supports charitable activities by making grants to unrelated organizations or institutions or to individuals for scientific, educational, cultural, religious, or other charitable purposes. While foundations are often primarily engaged in grantmaking activities, some may engage in their own direct charitable activities or programs.

### Types of Grantmaking Organizations

**Community Foundation** - Community foundations are composed primarily of permanent funds established by many separate donors for the long-term benefit of the residents of a defined geographic area. Typically, a community foundation serves an area no larger than a state. Community foundations also provide services to donors who wish to establish endowed funds (commonly called [donor-advised funds](#)) without incurring the administrative and legal costs of starting independent foundations. The New York Community Trust was the first such fund, started in 1931.

**Company-sponsored or Corporate Foundation** - These are private foundations that derive their assets from a for-profit company. They are separate entities from their parent company and subject to the same regulations as other private foundations. **Corporate giving programs**, on the other hand, are administered within the parent company and their assets depend directly on that corporation's bottom line. Also, unlike foundations, corporate giving programs are not required to make their grantmaking activities public.

**Donor-advised Funds** - These are for donors who prefer to give through third-party charities rather than incur the expense and time commitment of opening a foundation and managing it administratively. In addition to the administrative convenience of conducting one's grantmaking through the fund, there are cost savings and tax advantages.

**Family Foundation** - A private family foundation is a type of private foundation set up by a family, funded with the family's assets and often run by family members who can also participate in its charitable grantmaking. It can last as long as the family needs it to serve its philanthropic ambitions, and it can adapt as the family's composition and charitable focus change.

**International foundations** - These are foundations based outside the United States that make grants in their own countries and overseas. The term "international foundations" also can refer to foundations in any country that primarily engage in cross-border giving. Not all foundations that engage in cross-border giving are private foundations; many are established as public charities. Under U.S. law, contributions from U.S. donors and corporations are not eligible for a charitable deduction if the organization is not formed in the United States or recognized by the United States as charitable.

**Operating Foundation** - These are private foundations whose primary mandate is to conduct research, promote social welfare, or perform other nonprofit activities that may even be secondary to grantmaking. Open Society Institute is an example of an operating foundation.

**Private or Independent Foundation** - To the IRS, “private” or “independent” are umbrella terms for tax-exempt grant-makers (usually with a single funding source, such as an individual or family) that are restricted by certain rules. For example, a private foundation is required to give away five percent of the average market value of its total assets each year in grants and gifts. They are also required to file an IRS form 990 which is publicly accessible and lists their income and disbursements, including grants. Within the nonprofit community, the terms “private” or “independent” usually refer to an organization with a professional board of directors or trustees and a professional program staff. Independent foundations usually give within specific program guidelines that are aligned with a larger mission, such as eliminating poverty or improving higher education.

**Public charity** - A public charity is an organization that is tax-exempt under code section 501(c) and is classified by the IRS as a public charity and not a private foundation. Although some public charities engage in grantmaking activities, most conduct direct service or other tax-exempt activities. Some are also referred to as "public foundations" or "publicly supported organizations" and might use the term "foundation" in their names. The Pew Charitable Trusts and Doctors without Borders are examples of public charities.

### **New trends**

Since 2015, when Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced he would transfer 99 percent of his Facebook shares to the new Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, we have seen increasing interest in philanthropies using LLCs to make grants. This contrasts with the more traditional private foundations, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which are organized as 501(c)(3)s under the tax code.

**(Charitable) LLC** – A charitable LLC does not have tax-exempt status and since it isn't legally charitable, there's no requirement to report its charitable activities to the IRS. Money can be withdrawn from the LLC at any time for any purpose with no tax consequences. There are no restrictions on donations, investments or income and much looser restrictions on political activities than those governing charities. The donor has near total flexibility to change the LLC's mission or projects at any time and has wide latitude to engage in self-dealing and make charitable use of the resources of any business s/he may own. The LLC's taxable status also means that its losses can be written off against the donor's other income. Examples of LLCs are the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and Arnold Ventures.

## PROSPECT RESEARCH

A **prospect** is an individual or philanthropic entity, such as a **foundation**, with the potential to provide funding to Columbia. Prospects may be new to Columbia or may have funded projects in the past.

Prospect research is a method used by nonprofit organizations to learn more about potential or existing donors' personal backgrounds, giving histories, wealth indicators, and philanthropic motivations to evaluate a prospect's ability to give (capacity) and warmth (affinity) toward an organization. In the foundation world, prospect research starts with the identification of foundations that may be interested in supporting an identified project /program/ initiative/ Center/ Institute.

Most Columbia foundation prospects have a **Prospect Manager**, who must be contracted before any outreach to the Foundation.

Good prospect research begins with a clear idea of the project to be funded, therefore it is often best to start by answering the following basic questions:

- What problems will the program or research address?
- Who is the project leader and what is their area of expertise?
- What are the planned activities?
- Who will benefit from the project?

Foundation prospect research should also take into account the below three factors:

- **Linkage:** Does the foundation accept unsolicited applications? Do we have a connection that could help us understand the foundation better or advocate for us?
- **Inclination:** Do we fit within a program or interest of the foundation? Have they given to similar organizations?
- **Ability:** What are the grant amounts? Do they have exclusions? Do they make multi-year pledges?

### Where to Look for Prospects

- **[Foundation Directory Online](#)** (FDO): This is a database of both foundation and corporate grantmakers in the United States, searchable by various categories and offering information from IRS 990 forms to boards of directors, full listings of projects and locations the grantmaker funds. Foundation Directory profiles are available in PDF and can be saved and printed. FDO can be accessed through the Columbia libraries' database collection. Sign up to receive FDO alerts. For a detailed guide to using the Foundation Directory, see the website's Help page: <http://fconline.foundationcenter.org/help/>
- **[Pivot](#):** Pivot connects researchers to financial support by leveraging the most comprehensive global source of sponsored funding opportunities, coupled with scholarly profiles to match researchers with financial partners and collaborators.

Pivot is available to all Columbia University faculty, students and administrators. Sign up for an account using your Columbia University email address. Training resources to get you started are here: <https://research.columbia.edu/find-funding-using-pivot>

- **[Philanthropy News Digest](#)**: Philanthropy News Digest publishes RFPs and notices of awards as a free service for U.S.-based grant-making organizations and nonprofits. Sign up to receive daily PND alerts
- **[Inside Philanthropy Grantfinder](#)**: Inside Philanthropy's Grant Finder is a search tool of thousands of profiles of institutional and individual funders
- **Individual foundations' mailing lists**: Once you have identified relevant foundations, get on their mailing lists to receive RFPs and news.
- **Research for programs engaged in similar activities**, to identify and then research their funders. This approach can be time consuming, but organization websites and annual reports will often publicly acknowledge their donors.

### Making the Match: Tips

- **Check the foundation's website for additional guidelines and limitations.** Guidelines can hold important clues to what the foundation is looking for in a grantee, project, letter of inquiry and/or proposal, and how the foundation operates. The success of your application may well depend on whether you pay attention to them.

Guidelines can be as simple as a deadline for submission. But even foundations that have rolling deadlines will sometimes reveal in their guidelines when their boards meet to make funding decisions. This is useful information if the funding you seek is time-sensitive, for example, support for an upcoming conference.

You'll also learn how the foundation wishes to be approached for the first time. Many foundations prefer that a letter of intent precede a full proposal, a step can save the applicant a great deal of time and trouble. Some prefer correspondence in hard copy, while other foundations have online templates for entering data, or uploading Word or PDF documents.

Additionally, some foundations will only accept one proposal at a time from a single university. Others impose a waiting period wherein no new proposals will be accepted once a grant has been awarded. Columbia has carefully cultivated relationships with select foundations.

- **Research the foundation's board of directors and staff lists** (in the *People* section of the Foundation Directory profile) for possible affiliations with the University. Columbia alumni are everywhere!
- **Research the foundation's grants database** to get an idea of which organizations they have funded in the past, average amounts and topics.

- **Query Advance or Athena to learn about Columbia's relationship with the foundation**, including prior grants, open proposals, and recent contact reports.
- If you need more in-depth research on a specific Foundation (a detailed foundation profile), please contact our office.
- Before reaching out to a potential funder, contact the Foundation's prospect manager or our office. This is especially important in the case of larger foundations, many of whom are key institutional partners, handled with special attention. Also, some foundations restrict the number or timing of proposals they will accept from a single entity. Compliance with these rules is essential to maintaining the institutional relationship.

## THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process varies from foundation to foundation. Most foundations use online forms for both LOIs and full proposals. Some foundations issue explicit instructions, word limits and even typeface requirements for proposal writers. The following is a set of general best practices. Remember to read the guidelines of each foundation carefully.

### **STEP 1:**

#### **Letters of Inquiry/Interest (LOI)**

The LOI is a brief summary of the proposed project. It contains many of the same elements as a full proposal but offers only enough details to pique the reader's interest in:

- the problem the project is intended to solve
- how it will be implemented
- what the project's goals are, and
- why Columbia University is qualified to solve the problem and meet those goals.

LOIs can be in the form of an online form, or a letter to be submitted as an email attachment to the Foundation.

The purpose of the LOI is to begin a conversation, so be sure to include your contact information and encourage the recipient to contact you with questions. Close with an offer to follow up by phone or suggest that a meeting be arranged.

#### **LOI Tips**

##### **Should the letter ask for money?**

While an LOI can include an ask, it isn't necessary. Sometimes reference can be made to the size of the project, conversationally. But the aim of an LOI is to engage the funder, ideally leading to a meeting or site visit, which in turn may lead to an invitation to submit a full proposal.

##### **To whom should the LOI be addressed?**

Just as you would not send a cover letter for a job application "to whom it may concern," LOI's should always be addressed to a specific person. If the foundation has professional program officers, identify the person responsible for the appropriate area of interest and write to him or her. Ideally, the letter should go to someone who works directly with grantees, who has some amount of influence over granting decisions, and who can be reached by phone or email. Letters to smaller foundations can be sent to the president or executive director. The person at the head of a very small foundation might read these letters personally. Otherwise, they will be delegated to other staff members.

##### **Who should sign the letter?**

Usually the signature of the principal investigator is best at this stage. Depending on the size and scope of the work and its priority within the university, however, obtaining the signature of a dean, the provost, or the president may be appropriate. Some things to consider: does the rank of the recipient match the rank of the signatory? The president of Columbia should write to the top person at the foundation, for example. Also, more often than not, funders like to have direct contact with those involved in doing the actual work they may support and so outreach

from a development professional tends to not be as well received as a query made by a faculty member or University leader.

### **The letter is submitted. Now what?**

Foundation processes can be very slow and it may take a few weeks or months to receive a reply. That doesn't mean you have to sit on your hands. After two or three weeks, call/email the foundation to make sure they received the letter.

If the goal of the LOI is to start a conversation, the goal of a follow-up call is to move the conversation forward. The objective is to make plans for a face-to-face meeting, a longer telephone conversation, or be invited to submit a full proposal. Of course, decisive action is not the end result of most follow-up calls. Don't be disheartened if you can't get the program officer on the phone... repeatedly. Wait a week; call again and again if necessary. Your persistence will be rewarded at least with a direct answer to the inquiry. The rule of thumb for outreach is in the range of five or six attempts.

## **STEP 2: FULL PROPOSAL**

### **Proposals: The Key Elements**

Proposals tend to follow a common format that includes certain key elements/sections.

A proposal should:

- Emphasize what is **innovative** about the work—a unique concept or a problem that has never before been adequately addressed.
- Demonstrate **rigorous** methods; this is an obvious strength of academic research, but programs of all kinds need to show rigor in the services they provide and in the way they evaluate that work.
- Put the project in **context** and show the need. Clear and succinct explanation of what is already known about your specific field will not only provide necessary information to reviewers who might have backgrounds in other areas, but also will demonstrate that the project you propose is grounded in the latest thinking on the subject.
- Show how the proposed project/program **aligns** with the Foundation's mission, vision and strategic objectives and demonstrate the potential to fulfill mutual goals

Avoid jargon or overly technical language. Not everyone at the foundation will be an expert in the field. Be concise but detailed so that the reader isn't left with a list of questions by the end. Again, always review the foundation's guidelines and write the proposal so that the convergence between your project and the foundation's priorities is very clear!

The below are some sections that are customarily parts of a proposal:

### **Proposal Summary**

This is a brief paragraph that includes the official request and purpose of the grant, as in this hypothetical example:

*The Department of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University respectfully requests \$50,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation toward a two-day conference on Middle Eastern Voices in Contemporary Literature in collaboration with Princeton University. The conference will add significant knowledge in Middle Eastern literature and lay the foundation for a new curriculum at both institutions.*

### **Statement of Need**

What problem or problems will the project attempt to solve? Imagine that you are a journalist and the problem you want to address is your story. The statement of need is the “lede” of the proposal and your best chance to impress upon the reader the importance of the project. Your objective is to tell the story in a way that compels him or her to keep reading. Make your case stronger by using facts, statistics and, as applicable, real-life examples to create a sense of importance and immediacy.

### **Program Description**

What plan of action do you propose to solve the problem? What population will the project serve? Introduce and describe the program using clear language and concrete terms. Explain why your team and Columbia University are uniquely suited to accomplish the task, referring to past successes, varying levels of expertise, etc. Including data and statistics makes the case that much more persuasive and demonstrates that the successes of the past are likely to prevail in the proposed project.

### **Goals and Objectives**

What are the goals of the project? The objectives section is crucial because when reporting on the progress of the project post-award, the objectives become a kind of checklist for measuring success. The goals should be ambitious, but realistic and clearly defined.

### **Evaluation**

Foundations want to see a return on their investment for every grant—not just how the money was spent, but what impact it had. A proposal should provide a plan for how the project will be evaluated, what the benchmarks are, and how success will be measured. Success will mean different things to different projects. For example, the evaluation plan can be as simple as a survey of constituents about their experience with the program. Evaluation for research speaks to how closely the hypothesis is answered. In short, did you as the grantee do what the grantor expected and as you proposed you would in your submission?

### **Budget**

A budget needs to clarify how the funds will be spent and should show that you have carefully considered the types of costs that will be needed to effectively execute the proposed program in the proposed time period. Items may include personnel costs (principal investigators, co-investigators, research assistants, post doc fellows, etc.), fringe benefits, equipment, materials and supplies, travel and meeting costs, etc.

Any project undertaken at Columbia incurs administrative or indirect costs: sometimes referred to as overhead, these costs include infrastructure and administrative costs such as computers, telecom, office space, electricity, and administrative/clerical salaries. Some foundations will not contribute to administrative or indirect costs. Others will only pay a specified indirect cost rate. Unless the foundation has a published indirect cost policy, the University will negotiate the rate with the sponsor on a case by case basis.

If an RFP has a specific budget cap, it is important to stay below or at the cap specified.

Foundations may sometimes look for cost-sharing, or the project leader may think this is a way to demonstrate that the university has confidence in the project and willingly contributes to it.

Before any cost sharing is committed to, please obtain approval by your Department Chair or Dean.

### **What are foundations looking for in a proposal?**

Philanthropy is increasingly perceived as an investment. Grant-makers are looking for programs that are efficiently run, well thought out, and that have the potential to make a lasting difference. The following are some of the qualities foundations look for in a successful application:

While some foundations still make gifts with no strings attached, more often they expect some kind of assessment and **evaluation**, often in the form periodic reports that explain the activities and outcomes of the project. I.e., did the money granted reach the goals outlined in the proposal? Proposals should address how the work will be evaluated.

**Collaboration** refers to grantee activities in partnership with other institutions, community groups, academic centers, and researchers in the same or complementary fields. While far from mandatory, collaborative projects appeal to grant-makers because they can approach a problem from an interdisciplinary perspective and potentially reach a larger audience at a lower cost.

If the program under consideration is one that has no natural end date, foundations may look for a demonstration of **sustainability**. Will the program outlive the foundation's initial support? Will the university assume responsibility for support? Is there potential for the project to bring in revenue? Many foundations will help launch a program but don't have the resources to keep it running in the long-term. Their deliberations will include discussion of what will occur when their funding ends. Partnership (i.e., cost sharing) with the nonprofit during the term of the grant is favorably viewed.

Another way that foundations measure success is through **replication**, also called "scaling up". When a program gets good results, it can become a model to be replicated and thereby, serve a larger population. (Of course, not every grant lends itself to this action.) Foundations will sometimes seek out proven programs that can be replicated for a greater return on their investments.

As you research potential foundation funders, you will start to see other trends in various areas of giving, and across the world of institutional giving. As always, however, we urge any fundraiser to carefully consider how each foundation is singular, paying close attention to the requirements of each individual funder. Few things are more annoying to foundation program officers than outreach that does not convey the grant seeker has done the "homework" and understands the foundation, its processes, mission and style. Studying the foundation website prior to outreach is highly recommended.

The Foundation Center offers an excellent tutorial on proposal writing:  
<http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/index.html>

### **Administrative aspects of a submission**

Foundations often require some or all of the below for a full proposal submission. Our office is available to help with gathering them:

- Institutional sign-off (Foundations may ask for Presidential sign off or Sponsored Projects Administration sign off)
- Institutional documents such as:
  - IRS letter
  - Audited financial statements
- List of Trustees
- Organizational mission and fact sheet
- Institutional letters of support

### **Working with Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA)**

When Institutional sign off is required the proposal has to be reviewed and signed off by Columbia's Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA). Our office can help you navigate this space, connect you with the right SPA Project Officer and let you know what is required.

## POST-AWARD ADMINISTRATION

### Receiving and accepting the award

If your proposal is successful, you will receive a notice of award (or NOA). This will be in either a letter form (award letter) or in a grant or gift agreement.

### Gifts vs. Grants

Institutional support from foundations can come as either a gift or a grant. This defines which Columbia University office will process the funds.

**Gifts** are voluntary, irrevocable, gratuitous transfers of money or other property to support Columbia programs or activities. Gifts can be restricted to a particular purpose or unrestricted. Generally, funds from private, nongovernmental sources are to be administered as gifts when the funding source neither expects nor requires consideration in return for the transfer of funds to Columbia.

Gifts are processed by Gifts Systems, who will review, negotiate and execute a Gift Agreement. Gift systems will also create an account for the gift.

**Grants**, alternatively, involve conditions that the funding recipient agrees to uphold in exchange for support. Grants are defined by one or more of the following characteristics:

- They may commit the recipient to a specific line of scholarly or scientific inquiry.
- They may require the submission and approval of a budget.
- They may be intended to accomplish specific goals (as opposed to general support) within a certain period of time.
- They may require deliverables such as detailed technical or financial reports or some other product.
- They may include stipulations regarding tangible or intellectual property rights, including data, copyrights, or inventions developed in the course of the activity.
- They may require the return of unexpended funds at the end of the activity.

Grants are processed by Sponsored Projects Administration who will review, negotiate and execute a Research Grant Agreement. SPA will create an account for the grant

### Receiving and spending the funds

The University creates a unique project account for each grant and gift to ensure proper accounting. Funds are received by Gift Systems or SPF and are deposited in the project account. Although SPA processes grants, when payments are received, Columbia will count them in development and Campaign totals and record them in Advance.

PIs and their administrators are able to see the project balance on Columbia's online accounting system, ARC.

All grant accounts are managed by Columbia's Sponsored Projects Finance who ensure compliance with Accounting Standards and University and sponsor financial guidelines.

## STEWARDSHIP

Good stewardship of an award cannot be underestimated. Stewardship is an investment in the next gift/grant, with the goal of further engaging donors and motivating them to continue giving and increase their commitment.

Stewarding *after* a donation is like *cultivating* before a donation: it is a process by which the organization develops an ever-stronger relationship with the donor, and involves constant communication to deepen the relationship.

When it comes to Foundations, remember that you cannot steward an organization. You can only steward a *person*. Corporations and foundations can be donors to Columbia, but the real way to steward that relationship is to develop deeper connections with the person or persons who serve as your primary contacts and advocates at those organizations... meaning that you're really always stewarding relationships with *people*, even if it is a corporation or foundation who is writing the actual checks.

The stewardship process may differ depending on whether the award is designated a gift or a grant. The award letter is key in this regard and generally will stipulate what sort of reporting, if any, is expected by the institutional funder and on what time table. Rule of thumb is to stay in communication with the funder. Be sure that changes to the program, adjustments to the project's direction and/or leadership are known to the funder beforehand (or very soon thereafter). Surprises are generally not appreciated and may create unnecessary problems at the end of a project/program or when asking for a renewal on the award.

Formal stewardship of institutional awards can take the below forms:

### **Acknowledgement Letters**

An acknowledgement letter should thank the donor with a few well-considered paragraphs expressing appreciation for the support. The letter can explain something about what the grant will fund and why it is important. It should mention the donor's generosity and "commitment" to the area of funding. Acknowledgements of foundation grants can be addressed to the president, CEO, or executive director and written to the foundation as a whole on behalf of the university as a whole. If a program officer was involved in the process, he or she should be copied on the letter. Acknowledgement letters can be signed by a dean, executive vice president (in the case of Arts and Science departments) or the president.

Acknowledgment letters for the Arts & Sciences departments are handled by the Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations in collaboration with the Stewardship and Donor Relations team.

Other Schools and departments have in-house teams to work on such letters (e.g. Business School, MSPH, P&S).

Please note that SPA does not write or send such letters.

### **Annual and Final Progress Reports**

The majority of foundations require interim annual reports on the project's activity and a final report upon project completion. The due dates, format and submission method will be specified in the NOA. Reports should be submitted on time, especially as some funders will not issue subsequent or final payments if the report is late.

The Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations tracks due dates for all Arts & Sciences departments' reports and will work with PIs and their teams on their timely submission.

Other Schools and departments may have their own tracking systems or this may be handled solely by the PI. If you require assistance and support with annual reporting, we will be happy to help you.

### **Annual and Final Expenditure/financial reports**

The majority of foundations require annual and final financial accounting reports for grants. These reports are produced by Sponsored Projects Finance after validation of project expenses by the PI.

Expenditure/financial reports should never be submitted without SPF review and sign off as accurate financial reporting is key to continuing relationships with foundations. This is especially important if you have unused balance and you need to ask for carryover of balance into the next year, or an extension of the end date of your award at no additional cost.

Please note that SPF does not handle financial reporting for gifts. Even though this is rarely required, when it is, it is handled by the department which owns the gift.

### **Comprehensive impact reports**

Such reports are handled by Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations in collaboration with the Stewardship and Donor Relations team and are produced periodically for major Foundation supporters who fund projects across the University.

### **Endowed professorship reports**

Such reports are handled by the Stewardship and Donor Relations team and signed through the Provost's or President's office.

### **Meetings and site visits**

Meetings and site visits can be a major part of both the cultivation and stewardship processes. For a project that is ongoing, a site visit provides an opportunity for prospects to experience firsthand some of the results of a grant. If a foundation or corporate donor requests a visit to campus, please contact us so that University leaders can be included and we can assist with scheduling, and preparation of briefing materials for all involved.

## WHEN THE FUNDER DECLINES

When a foundation rejects your LOI or proposal, don't take it personally and keep trying! Foundation grantmaking is very competitive business and foundations turn down most of the applications they receive. Consider it an opportunity to build a relationship with the foundation. The relationship that you are able to build through an application, even when the grant is not awarded, is important and will certainly help you with your next interaction with that foundation, or that program officer.

Some steps you can take:

1. Send a reply thanking them for responding. Request a copy of the reviewer's comments or ask for feedback on the proposal and reasons it was rejected.
2. Ask if you can resubmit in the next funding cycle and how you can strengthen your proposal. Not getting a grant doesn't necessarily mean a door has been permanently closed. Most grant makers say that if the agency is a fit, they will encourage the organization to come back with another proposal.
3. Extend an invitation for them to visit Columbia and see your programs in action.
4. Include the Foundation leadership and staff in your mailing lists for newsletters, reports other promotional/outreach materials, and events.
5. Research the Competition. Learn from the strengths of other successful proposals and try to apply them to your grant writing.

## CONTACT

**For further information please contact:**

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