

Before You Begin: Questions About You and Your Grant Project

Excerpted from *Foundation Fundamentals*, Foundation Center, 8th ed., 2008

What is your organization's mission?

- Know your organization's guiding principals and fundamental goals
- Know how these key phrases might connect to funders with similar missions or stated programmatic interests.

Is your organization tax exempt?

- Most foundation funding is given to tax-exempt nonprofit organizations
- The funder will ask for a copy of your organization's Letter of Determination from the IRS

Can you describe the audiences served by your organization's programs?

- General population or a specific group?
- An important aspect of making a match with funders' interests is serving audiences they care about.

Where does your organization operate its programs?

- You should be able to describe the geographic scope of your activities
- Many funders limit their giving to recipients in particular geographic regions.

Do you have a clear picture of the purpose of the program or project for which you are seeking support?

- Have a detailed outline of your project or a preliminary proposal in hand before you begin research.
- What you have written will equip you with the facts and terminology you need to find funders with similar interests.

What are the distinctive features of your project/organization?

- Do you collaborate with or are affiliated with another organization?
- Does your organization provide direct services, or are you an advocacy or research group?

Has your organization previously received foundation funding?

- Getting the first foundation grant is usually challenging because there are no relationships established yet.
- Set modest foundation fundraising goals at the outset.

Do you know the total dollar amount needed from foundations for your organization or project?

- You must create a budget to determine the amount of money you need for your project
- Will you need to seek funding from one or more foundation to meet your budget needs?

What is the grant amount you are seeking?

- Consider the size of the grants you are seeking and the amount already in your budget.
- Will you need to seek funding from one or more foundation to meet your budget needs?

Is in-kind support more appropriate than a cash grant?

- Many corporations provide product donations, executives on loan, employee volunteer programs, or other types of in-kind support in place of or in addition to cash funding.
- This type of grant may lead the way to other types of funding later on.