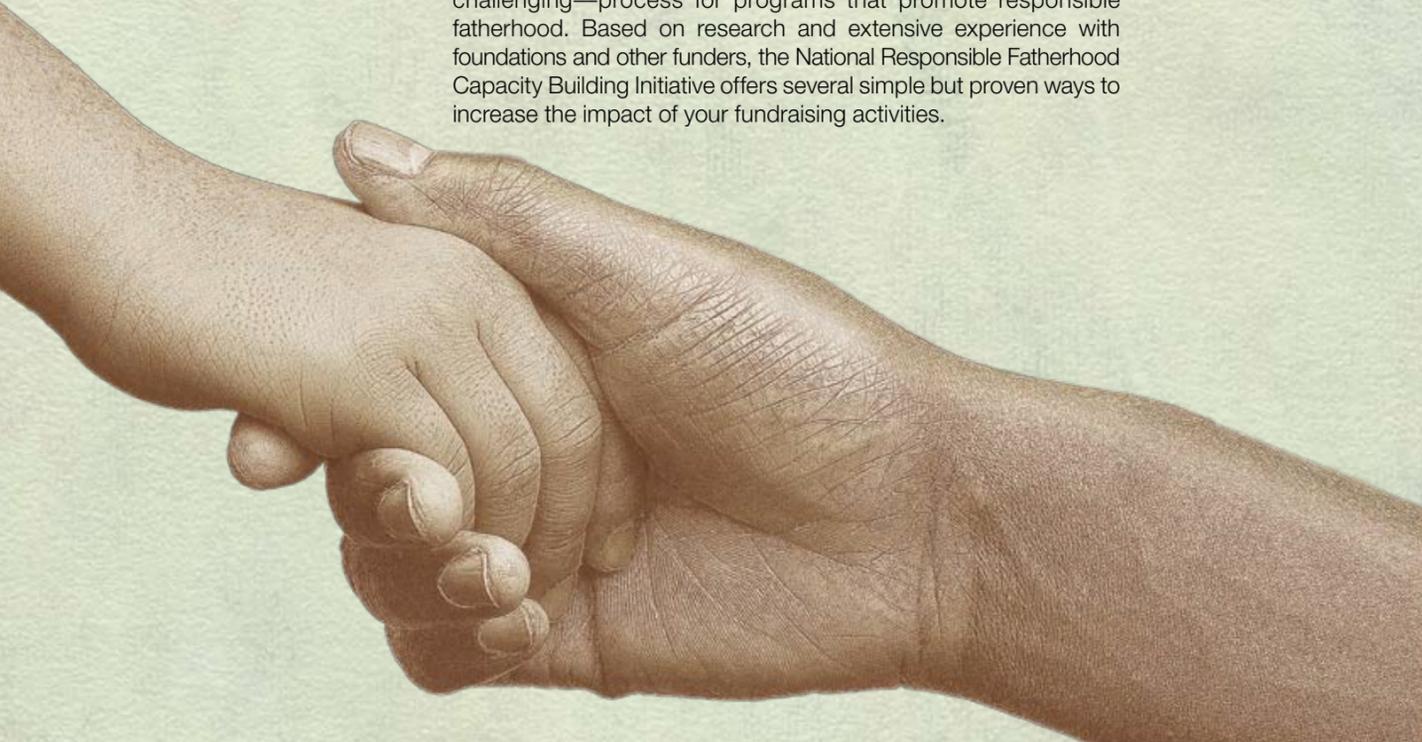


9

Steps Programs Can Take to Strengthen Fundraising with Foundations

Gaining support from foundations can be a rewarding—but challenging—process for programs that promote responsible fatherhood. Based on research and extensive experience with foundations and other funders, the National Responsible Fatherhood Capacity Building Initiative offers several simple but proven ways to increase the impact of your fundraising activities.



Building Capacity for Programs that Promote Responsible Fatherhood...

Leadership Development

Organizational Improvement

Program Enhancement

Community Engagement



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance

National Responsible Fatherhood Capacity Building Initiative
101 Lake Forest Blvd., Suite 360
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
Phone: 301.948.0599
Fax: 301.948.4325
www.fatherhood.org/capacitybuilding

National Responsible Fatherhood Capacity Building Initiative subawardees are encouraged to request technical assistance for organizational capacity building by contacting the National Fatherhood Initiative.

This project is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance to assist States and communities as they promote and support responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage. All opinions are those of the authors and do not reflect the opinion of the sponsoring agency.

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Ways

to Secure

Foundation Funds



NATIONAL RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD
CAPACITY BUILDING
I N I T I A T I V E

1 Do Your Homework

Past support reflects a foundation's priorities and is a strong indicator of future funding direction. So learn as much as you can about foundations that might fund your program. Begin your research with a review of the foundation's annual report. If a foundation does not publish an annual report, obtain a copy of its 990PF form, which lists grantees and funding amounts. You also will find names of key staff and project officers for specific grant categories. Contact them directly for information about the types of partners the foundation looks for, details about how awards are made, or assistance with your grant application. A proposal should not be released until you are confident you have collected as much information as possible about a potential funding partner.

2 Make a Plan

Scattered efforts waste time and precious program resources. Based on your research, prepare a comprehensive plan to guide your approach to foundations. The plan should be very specific about the scope of foundations you want to reach (local? national?), their focus (one primary concentration? multiple interests?), and how you will try to gain access (phone call? send materials?). Determine how many foundations your organization will contact in the first year and compile a ranked list of target foundations. Make sure timelines and staff assignments appear for all foundation-related fundraising activities outlined in the plan. But even before you start, assess whether you will need technical assistance to formulate an effective plan.

3 Get Organized

Successful fundraising to sustain and enhance programming requires a thorough, ongoing effort that can stretch resources and overload staff. Think about the structure of your program and how it operates, and be open-minded about changes that might be necessary to carry out your fundraising plan. Decide on the most productive way to implement your plan with the assets available. For example, will an individual be responsible for approaching foundations, reporting progress at periodic staff meetings? Or will a committee be organized, possibly with subcommittees assigned to focus on specific foundations? Be prepared to allocate resources and personnel over the long term because reaching foundations can be a lengthy process.

4 Recognize a Foundation's Culture

Foundations have unique missions and visions that affect their funding interests. A large national foundation might support projects that have an impact on broad policy or can be replicated across the country. However, community foundations often emphasize local and grassroots issues, while family foundations frequently back programs in a specific field, such as the arts, literacy, education, or computer skills. Foundations affiliated with corporations often sponsor scholarships or tackle poverty through job training programs. They tend to fund projects that position the company positively and boost name recognition among consumers. In general, a program that is in harmony with a foundation's mission and vision has a greater probability of gaining funding. Therefore, understand a foundation's philosophy and demonstrate how your program complements it.

5 Identify Insiders

Submitting an unsolicited multi-page proposal to a foundation is a cold call strategy that usually will leave the recipient feeling cold about your program. Instead, use your research to pinpoint at least one foundation manager or staffer who has an established relationship with someone in your program (former colleague? served on same committees? neighbor?). That insider can be the first point of contact for introducing your program, outlining your goals and objectives, and putting you in touch with funding decision-makers within the foundation.

6 Cultivate Relationships

The foundation decision-makers you reach through insiders are valuable sources of information that will help you present a powerful application for funding. Solid relationships with key foundation representatives can deliver insight into priorities, funding patterns, expectations for partners, and other details you can use to develop and distinguish your proposal.

7 Find a Partner

Locate other nonprofit and community organizations that have been awarded grants from the target foundations in the past and learn what specific services or initiatives were funded. Partnering with groups that have received foundation funding can increase your program's credibility. If your budget allows, also consider working with consultants or other technical assistance providers who have experience addressing the challenges of obtaining foundation funding.

8 Be Realistic

With a foundation's funding record in mind, set reasonable expectations for a response to your proposal or other fundraising activities. While some foundations make multimillion dollar awards, most projects, particularly first-time grantees, receive between \$25,000 and \$350,000. Also understand that foundations often defer funding decisions while they review your materials, consult with advisors, and perhaps reassess priorities.

9 Persevere

Do not be discouraged if a foundation does not fund your program immediately. Check back with the foundation representatives with whom you have built relationships to discuss how your application can be improved and the optimum schedule for submitting a revised proposal. Follow up with your contacts periodically to learn if the foundation's priorities have shifted and to demonstrate your continued interest in launching a partnership.