



Bar Foundation Best Practices: Taking Grantmaking to the Next Level: Impact on Mission

The act of making grants has the potential to impact the mission of a legal foundation in several ways. Legal foundations select grantees with missions closely aligned to their own, and the grantees use the funds to achieve the mission through direct services. Successful grantmaking foundations also provide other support (infrastructure, development, capacity-building) to their grantees, allowing the grantees to maximize their impact on the mission. The most innovative foundations collaborate and partner with other organizations to create lasting, systemic solutions, minimize duplication of services, and ensure sustainability of outstanding nonprofits.

Here are tips from legal foundation executives and grantmaking experts from across the country:

Attract the right applicants

- Ensure that application guidelines match the foundation's mission, vision, and values

"Grantmakers are only successful to the extent that the nonprofits they support achieve meaningful results. So it follows that it is in every grantmaker's best interest to improve the context in which grantees do their work." *Grantmakers for Effective Organizations*

Build relationships with grantees

- Overview the foundation's expectations of grantees, including ethical and legal requirements
- Utilize and maximize grantee reports and testimonials
- Fund collaborative efforts
- Provide trainings, technical assistance, conferences, and workshops on topics of interest to grantees
- Produce publications of best practices
- Use the foundation's influence in the grantmaking community: introduce grantees to other funders; collaborate with funders to create systemic change
- Provide flexible support, including general operating funding and multi-year support

Market the foundation's work

- Through events, newsletters, websites, and press releases, share the successes of the foundation and its grantees
- Make sure the foundation's major donors, and potential donors know the impact of their donations and future donations

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Foundation Services

References:

ALPS Foundation Services, www.foundationsservices.com

American Bar Association, <http://www.abanet.org/>

Association of Fundraising Professionals, http://www.afpnet.org/resource_center/resource_tools

Council on Foundations, <http://www.cof.org/>

Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, <http://www.geofunders.org/home.aspx>



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