



Bar Foundation Best Practices: Let's Get Personal

It's personal. From board development to fundraising to grant making, the foundation's ability to build relationships with board members, funders, and grantees is one of the primary keys to its success. The impact of each relationship moves individuals and organizations from supporters to strong advocates of the foundation's mission.

Board of directors. Effective board recruitment, orientation, and training are crucial in building board member's ownership and responsibility in the foundation. Board members who are personally engaged with the foundation's mission are better able to convey the foundation's important work to the public.

Fundraising. Research suggests that many major gift donors have a personal and emotional commitment to the causes they support. The foundation's task is to identify individuals committed to its mission. Personal contact is not only central to developing and maintaining effective major gift programs and planned giving programs, but key in cultivating fellows and donors as potential major donors.

Grantees. The grant process provides a number of opportunities for foundations to develop personal connections to current and potential grantees. Foundations utilize grantee reports and testimonials in the foundation's brochure and website, and donor support materials expose more people to grantees' missions and work. Foundations also collaborate with multiple grantees to maximize training and development opportunities for the grantees.

"If you step back for a moment and think about your marketing and development campaigns, it's worth asking if any of them are built in a way that reflect how people—real people—develop relationships."
Association of Fundraising Professionals

Tips from Bar Foundation Executives:

- Sharpen your message; make the message more personal: "the need is greater now more than ever"
- Seek out partnerships with other grantmakers/grantee organizations to increase ability to support the communities you serve
- Develop pre-submission grant process; provide feedback and opportunity for corrections to applications
- On-going communication and collaboration with bar associations; encourage bar association members to volunteer with grantees
- Work with grantees to provide testimonials to potential grantees
- Keep board members engaged through board retreats and other board development activities
- Appreciate your board of directors, donors, and grantees publicly and often

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References:

ALPS Foundation Services, www.foundationsservices.com

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

Association of Fundraising Professionals, <http://www.afpnet.org/>

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

Foundation Center, <http://foundationcenter.org/>



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