



# Supporting a Rural Philanthropic Strategy

## GET TO KNOW YOUR PHILANTHROPIC LANDSCAPE

Local and state funders serve as a hub—your state undoubtedly has a wider range of grant makers than is initially apparent. Become familiar with the funders in your state by incorporating the following into your weekly routines:

- Most states have a statewide association of grantmakers that serve as funder information and education hubs. Frequent their websites—pay attention to the funders that have similar rural interests—and reach out to get on funders' email distribution lists.
- For updates and contacts on issues in a specific rural context around the country, establish contact with one or more of the national issue-based funder groups like Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees and Grantmakers in Health. Most of these groups are members of the United Philanthropy Forum. [www.unitedphilforum.org](http://www.unitedphilforum.org)
- Reach out to your current partners and learn about their funder relationships.
- Keep up with the rural aspects of the philanthropic media via Giving Compass at [www.givingcompass.org](http://www.givingcompass.org), Inside Philanthropy at [www.insidephilanthropy.com](http://www.insidephilanthropy.com), and Philanthropy News Digest at [www.philanthropynewsdigest.org/](http://www.philanthropynewsdigest.org/)
- Utilize the philanthropic data search resources at GuideStar. [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org) and Candid [www.candid.org](http://www.candid.org)

## GET YOUR INTERNAL HOUSE IN ORDER

- Develop a series of brief one/two page summaries of key rural health issues and proposed responses that would be a quick read for a funder.
- Work to ensure that a team is ready to go when short grant deadlines necessitate quick action.
- Understand and formalize internal processes necessary to get permissions for submissions to include preparation of budgets and requests for letters of support.
- Understand whether your State Office of Rural Health (SORH) can submit grant proposals directly; on behalf of others or be written into other grant seekers' budgets.
- Develop a short list of vetted grantseeking resources like grantwriters and technical experts if not available in-house.

## TIPS FOR CREATING RELATIONSHIPS WITH FUNDERS

- On an annual or semi-annual basis, connect with communications staff at funders and let them know what you are working on!
- Attend funder sponsored public events.
- Send personal emails to funder staff that have authored rural postings or reports of interest.
- Suggest joint site visits with funders when you are supporting the same organizations.



*Continued*

# Supporting a Rural Philanthropic Strategy

## QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ANSWER BEFORE APPROACHING ANY FUNDER

- Does the funder have any record of funding in your areas of interest?
- Do they support areas like research, advocacy and capital?
- Will they accept preliminary draft concepts?
- Are grants accepted from external sources or are they by “invitation-only”?
- Are grants accepted on a rigid schedule or on a rolling basis?
- Is their interest in rural explicit? Do they actually have a record of funding rural-themed work?
- Is the funder’s strategy heavily dependent on the support of community collaboratives or partnerships?
- Will the funder support ongoing work or only new/enhanced efforts?
- Does the funder have any record of providing matching support?
- Is there an expectation that you will be receiving funding from other sources?

## HOW YOU CAN HELP FUNDERS

- Offer to serve as grant reviewers.
- Offer to serve as technical experts to various foundation initiatives.
- Introduce funders to your on-the-ground rural partners.
- Discuss scaling their innovative pilot work.
- Introduce funders to state and federal representatives.

## IMPORTANT PARTNERS TO CONSIDER IN DEVELOPING PHILANTHROPIC PRESENCE

- Non-health organizations on both state and local levels like:
  - K-12 educational systems
  - Food system advocates
  - Physical activity leaders
  - Statewide early childhood groups
- Governmental anchors like libraries and community colleges.
- Rural research communities at both universities and state/national research organizations.
- Evaluation practitioners expert in rural.
- Non-profit on-line media sources like those under the LION umbrella. [www.lionpublishers.com](http://www.lionpublishers.com)

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