

HOW TO FIND, RESEARCH, AND APPLY FOR PRIVATE FUNDING

Private funding offered through corporate, organization, and private foundations can be a valuable resource for sustaining human trafficking programs. The financial awards range from small, one-time seed money to multi-year, comprehensive financial support. Private funding may also offer organizations financial support for activities that are unallowable under federal funding. Every funding opportunity is unique.

Foundation Funding

Foundations are nonprofit corporations and charitable trusts that make grants to institutions, organizations, or individuals for philanthropic purposes. Private foundations, supported by the generous funding of an individual or family, must give away a certain percentage of assets each year. Public foundations—also called grant-making, public charities—receive money from different sources.

While private grants tend to be smaller and less likely to cover all project costs, private grants may focus on emerging issues and special interests. These niche offerings can present unique and collaborative opportunities, allowing for experimental activities in the field.

Finding Private Grants

Finding information about private grant opportunities can be challenging. While creative web-searching may yield some information, the tools listed below may also be helpful in an organization's search.

Foundation Directory Online

The Foundation Center, a resource for nonprofit organizations seeking funding, maintains an online database of more than 77,000 organizations currently funding more than 400,000 grants. For a

moderate fee, the database is searchable by multiple criteria and provides in-depth information on private grant-making organizations and their leaders and key decision makers. [GrantSpace](#) is the Foundation Center's learning community, which provides easy-to-use self-service tools and resources to help nonprofits become more viable grant applicants. It also helps with building strong, sustainable organizations.

Regional Foundation Centers

Some cities, counties, and states maintain directories of foundations that make grants to local nonprofit organizations, which can be used to research potential private grant opportunities. The Foundation Center partners with some of these regional organizations to provide free access to its online directory during business hours.

Local Grant-Maker Organizations

Most major metropolitan areas have local associations of grant-makers. While some may be specific to certain mission areas, consider contacting these associations to request a membership list and grant guidelines for each member. Ask if they host any events that allow local nonprofits to present to or meet with members.

Prospect Research

Prospect research is the next step in identifying which foundation grant(s) is the best match with an organization and its anti-trafficking work. Prospect research involves gathering information about a foundation's giving history, philanthropic motivations, personal backgrounds of donors, and the grants they are offering. Most foundations care about an organization's mission, programs, and the population(s) and location(s) served. The prospect research process helps an organization determine which foundations are most likely to give money to support its work.

Managing Prospect Research Data

It is important to manage the information collected during prospect research in special software, a database, or an in-house system. Information that may be useful to track includes the following—

- Basic contact information including name, address, and a contact person at the foundation;
- Financial data of the foundation including total assets and grants awarded;
- Areas of commonalities the organization has with the foundation;
- Determination if the foundation is a good match with the organization;
- Application information for any current or future grants from the foundation;
- Sources of information including 990-PF forms, annual reports, the foundation's website, and any grant indexes or directories; and
- Recommended next steps for the organization related to the foundation.

Applying for Private Funds

Conveying the value of an organization's work, staff, vision, and long-term sustainability is critical in a funding proposal. Below are some planning tips—

- Brainstorm project ideas and expanded services;
- Research the project idea(s) to determine operations, benefits, and cost estimates;
- Match project needs with funding opportunities;
- Review the funding solicitation eligibility and requirements; and
- Manage the application process to include drafting an action plan, creating a schedule, and managing time to submit the proposal before the deadline.

Prior to applying for funding, organizations should ensure their information is current on the various nonprofit rating sites. Funders may use these ratings to determine which organizations to fund.

Additional Information

Contact the Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center at contact@ovc-htcbc.org or 1-844-682-0411.