WVUF Corporate & Foundation Relations - Standard Operating Procedure

Philanthropic Grants from External Foundations

Updated: February 2, 2026

Purpose: To establish a uniform process for all WVUF development staff, university faculty and staff seeking philanthropic grant funding from external foundations. This procedure ensures a coordinated approach through WVUF's Corporate and Foundation Relations (CFR) team, which centrally manages all external grant portal access and application submissions.

Scope: This procedure applies to all WVUF development officers, university staff, faculty, principal investigators (PIs), and department heads involved in submitting applications for philanthropic grants to external foundations.

Definitions: *Principal Investigator (PI)* – lead researcher or project manager for a grant-funded project**;** *CFR Team* – Corporate and Foundation Relations team within WVUF responsible for managing relationships and applications with external foundations; *External Foundation* – grant-making organization that is not part of WVU; *Institutional Login* – single, standardized login and password used by the CFR team to access external foundation portals; *Development Officer (DO)* -- director of development responsible for leading and executing fundraising and donor relations efforts specifically for a particular college, school, clinical unit within the university or health system; *Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP)* – WVU's OSP reviews and accepts proposals *only* on behalf of WVU and WVU Research Corporation.

Responsibilities:
- *Principal Investigator (PI)***:** Identifies potential grant opportunities, develops the project narrative, and collaborates with the CFR team to prepare the full proposal.

- *Department Head/Dean***:** Approves the PI's request to pursue funding and ensures the project aligns with departmental priorities.

- *CFR Team***:**
    - Serves as the central point of contact for institutional engagement with external foundations, private and corporate philanthropic organizations. As a central point of contact, the CFR team prevents conflicting appeals to funders, aligns individual proposals with university priorities, and leverages the office's expertise to increase the likelihood of securing funding. This central role ensures that the university presents a unified and strategic front to foundations, manages the entire grant process, and helps internal departments navigate institutional policies.
    - Manages the institutional login credentials and user access for all external foundation portals.
    - Submits all grant applications.
    - Maintains a database of all external foundation relationships, applications, and portal information.
    - Extension and modification requests.

Phase 1: Opportunity Identification and Intake

- *PI/Faculty Action*: The PI identifies a potential funding opportunity and notifies their Department Head or Dean for initial approval.
- *Internal Funding Request*: The PI completes the WVUF "Funder Engagement and Proposal Development Request" form which includes details about the project/program such as grant name, institutional approval, submission deadline, project abstract, and requested amount. The form can be found on Foundation Services (New Request→Development→CFR Service Request) or in "Services" on the CFR webpage @ https://wvuf.org/ways-to-give/corporate-and-foundation-relations.
- *CFR Team Review*: The CFR team logs the request, checks for existing institutional relationships with the funder, and confirms the grant falls under the team's purview. The appropriate DO, ED, or Senior Leadership Team member will be notified. If the grant falls under the purview of the WVU Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP), the **Executive Director of CFR** will consult with OSP and work with the PI to determine next steps. If OSP is going to proceed with an application, the development officer needs to make note in the CRM plan that the proposal will be submitted by OSP. The Executive Director of CFR, or the appropriate CFR team member, will follow up with OSP following the submission date to ensure all parties are satisfied and assist as needed.

Phase 2: Proposal Development

- *Kick-off Meeting*: The CFR team schedules a meeting with the PI and their department leadership to discuss the project, the external foundation's requirements, and funding priority alignment.
- *Accessing Grant Materials:* The CFR team uses the centralized institutional login to access the grant portal and download all necessary guidelines, forms, and templates. These documents are provided to the PI.
- *PI Develops Content*: The PI drafts the project narrative, scope of work, and key personnel information.
- *Budget Creation*: The PI and their department develop the project budget. The CFR team provides any budget forms required by the external foundation.
- *CFR Team Reviews and Formats*: The CFR team reviews the proposal submission draft for alignment with the funder's requirements, consistency in university messaging, and overall quality. The team translates the information into the foundation's online portal or application forms and provides the PI a final draft for review.

Phase 3: Submission and Final Approval

- *Internal Approval*: The PI secures all necessary internal signatures from their Department Head, Dean, and other relevant offices.
- *Final Review*: After approval of final draft by the PI, the CFR team conducts a final review of the completed application before submission either through the portal, by mail, or by email.

- *CFR Team Submits*: The CFR team, as the authorized institutional representative, submits the application. If by portal, using the WVUF institutional login and providing the PI with a confirmation receipt, and the funder with any follow up documentation/edits requested at the time of submission.

Phase 4: Post-Award Management
- ***Award Notification*:** When a grant is awarded or declined and the funder notifies the CFR team, the team immediately informs the PI and relevant university offices. Should notice be directed from a funder directly to the PI, they should quickly notify CFR to instigate the WVUF post-award process. Refer to the ***Grant Acceptance SOP***.
- ***Award Acceptance*:** The CFR team coordinates the official acceptance of the award, handling all necessary portal-based and paper agreements. Refer to the ***Grant Acceptance SOP***.
- ***Ongoing Reporting*:** The CFR team tracks reporting deadlines and uses the institutional login to submit progress reports. PIs need to provide content to the CFR team well in advance of all due dates.
- ***Relationship Management*:** The CFR team continues to serve as the central point of contact for the foundation, managing communications, updates, and future opportunities.
- ***Database Management:*** CRM plan owner (primary solicitor) ensures that the donor record in CRM is updated to reflect the submission by completing relevant plan steps and uploading submission documentation to the plan.

Records:
The CFR team maintains a database of all grant-related activities, including
- Original "Funder Engagement and Proposal Development Request" form.
- Final submitted application and all attachments.
- Confirmation of submission.
- Award notification or rejection letter.
- All communication with the external foundation.
- Copies of all submitted progress and final reports.
- Any changes to the grant award.