



# FOUNDATION CENTER

Knowledge to build on.

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

# Become a Cooperating Collection of the Foundation Center

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The Foundation Center supports a network of more than 360 Cooperating Collections across the country. These funding information centers—available to grantseekers at no cost at public, academic, or special libraries, community foundations, and other nonprofit resource centers—provide access to *The Foundation Directory Online*, the leading grantseeking database on the web, along with a core collection of Foundation Center directories and publications. Cooperating Collections (CCs) also provide a wide selection of supplementary materials and services in areas useful to grantseekers. The CCs also offer educational sessions for the public, including classes on the basics of grantseeking and dialogues with local donors. They also serve as hosts for the Center's fee-based, full-day grantseeker training courses.

A key initiative of the Foundation Center is to expand the CC network to ensure that grantseekers across the nation have access to high-quality resources and expertise, enabling them to attract and sustain support for their organizations. An important objective for the Foundation Center is to provide help to under-resourced agencies that deliver services to underserved populations throughout the United States who are in need of useful information and training to build organizational capacity. One of the ways we plan to accomplish this goal is to designate many new Cooperating Collections where they can do the most good and where staff has the ability to serve nonprofit communities in need of Foundation Center resources.

We are in the process of accepting proposals from qualified institutions. These may include but are not limited to: public, academic, or special libraries, nonprofit resource centers, community or other foundations, state associations, and United Way agencies. The determining factors in designating a new Cooperating Collection are the commitment and readiness of the host organization to work with the Foundation Center to reach organizations and individuals whose needs are not currently being met.

## Guidelines

Eligible host institutions must:

- Be open to the public without restriction, at least 25 hours per week
- Be located in an area serving at least 100 nonprofit organizations
- Provide access to a computer(s) connected to the Internet for public use
- Have staff available to become expert in foundation funding resources and to assist the public in their use

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- Be prepared to offer training on the basics of grantseeking
- Send a representative to regional and/or national meetings of Cooperating Collection supervisors held at various locations

### Fees and Membership Services

**Membership Fee**—All Cooperating Collections are required to pay an annual membership fee of \$995. Collections receive an invoice for that amount upon designation as a CC. CC membership is billed on a calendar year basis (January–December) and covers the following resources and services.

#### Core Collection

Electronic resources:

- *The Foundation Directory Online Professional*  
AND
- *Foundation Grants to Individuals Online*

Print publications:

- *Board Member's Book* (2003)
- *The Foundation Center's Guide to Proposal Writing* (2007)
- *The Foundation Center's Guide to Winning Proposals* (2003)
- *The Grantseeker's Guide to Winning Proposals* (2008)
- *The Foundation Directory* (2008)
- *The Foundation Directory, Part 2* (2008)
- *The Foundation Directory Part 3* (2008)
- *The Foundation Directory Supplement* (2008)
- *Foundation Fundamentals* (2008)
- *Foundation Grants to Individuals* (2008)
- *The Foundations Today Series* (2008)
- *Guía para Escribir Propuestas* (2008)
- *Guide to Funding for International and Foreign Programs* (2008)
- *International Grantmaking IV* (2008)
- *Philanthropy Annual* (2008)
- *Securing Your Organization's Future* (2001)
- *Social Justice Grantmaking II* (2008)

**CCNet**—Cooperating Collections are expected to visit and use CCNet, a special web site designed by the Foundation Center for Cooperating Collections. Information and materials provided there enhance the ability of CC supervisors and staff to assist patrons and stay informed about the latest developments at the Foundation Center. CCNet includes training and promotional support, important news, brochure and publication order forms, calendars of upcoming events, a networking directory, and an electronic message board. Since the most expedient, cost-effective communications are electronic, our CC supervisors must have both Internet and e-mail access.

**Ready Reference**—Cooperating Collection staff at the Center’s headquarters in New York—as well as staff at the Center’s four regional locations—are to provide “ready reference” services to all Cooperating Collections via CCNet, e-mail, phone, or fax. Upon request, we fax single copies of articles from our extensive library collection.

**Brochures and Supporting Materials**—Informational brochures, network address lists, and Foundation Center catalogs are available for bulk shipment to Cooperating Collections for their use as handouts in meetings or seminars. There is no charge for these materials. In addition, user guides and supporting training materials developed by the Foundation Center are made available to CCs through CCNet.

**Training Opportunities**—The Center provides numerous opportunities for CC supervisors and staff to attend free training sessions offered at our libraries, appropriate regional meetings, and Network Days, our annual conference for Cooperating Collections. Supervisors are also awarded free tuition for the Center’s fee-based full-day grantseeker training courses (as space permits) and they have free access to the Center’s online training courses and webinars.

Center staff regularly conducts site visits to Cooperating Collections, during which they give workshops for the public and staff. Cooperating Collections are invited to arrange for short classes or full-day workshops for the public in their own locales, working with the Center’s Coordinator of Cooperating Collections and regional trainers.

## **Preparing Your Proposal**

Please include the following information in your proposal:

**How did you first find out about the Cooperating Collection Network?**—Were you referred by an existing CC or some other individual? Did you come across it on the Center’s web site? Did you receive a letter or e-mail about the initiative? If so, from whom?

**Location**—What is the population of your city and/or county? How many nonprofit organizations are located in your area? (Please be specific: submit estimate and source.) Would anyone who walks in the door be able to use your resources?

**Access**—How accessible is your location? Is access to the building interior barrier free? Is public transportation available to your site? Is there parking available? If so, is there a fee? What type of security checks are involved? Will there be a sign-in or registration process for people who use the collection? *Please note: applicants whose institutions require appointments to use the resources will not be considered for membership.*

**Host Institution**—Please indicate if yours is a public, academic, or special library, a nonprofit resource center, a foundation, or other type of institution. What is your IRS exemption status? How many visitors do you now serve, and how do you expect becoming a Cooperating Collection will affect this number? Who will support the cost of the yearly membership fee and future enhancements to the collection? Please submit your annual report, budget, etc.

**Populations Served and Special Services**—What are the demographics of the community you serve? Provide us with details on how your organization serves under-resourced populations (economically disadvantaged, disabled, specific ethnic populations, etc.). Have you conducted a needs assessment or user survey of any kind in recent years? What outreach efforts does your library engage in to reach new audiences? Do you offer services that encourage use by under-resourced groups, such as foreign language materials? Do you employ staff who speak other languages or are uniquely qualified to assist these populations? Do you have special equipment for disabled visitors?

**Physical Layout of the Collection**—The Foundation Center requires Cooperating Collections to identify themselves as easily identifiable units of their host institutions. Please indicate your intent to post prominent signage, have all CC materials in one place, provide adequate seating, and to have shelving, computer, and photocopy equipment nearby. Please submit a floor plan indicating the proposed location of the collection.

**Technology**—Included with the core collection of Foundation Center resources is a subscription to *The Foundation Directory Online Professional*. This searchable database contains information on more than 90,000 U.S. grantmakers and their grants. The Center's web site is another vital source of useful fundraising information. Appropriate technology must be in place to make the Center's database and its web site accessible to patrons. Cooperating Collections may request IP addressing for computers in their facility, *as long as they reside in the same building*. Please indicate how many terminals will be designated to provide access to the Center's database. On the required floor plan, please indicate the proximity of these terminals to the reference staff and the rest of the CC resources. Do you have access to a computer lab and/or training facilities and equipment for Internet and computer demonstrations?

**Books, Reference Works, Periodicals**—Each Cooperating Collection will receive a complete and up-to-date core collection of Foundation Center publications. Duplicate copies of core Foundation Center print publications and copies of publications that are not part of the core collection can be ordered at a special discount, as long as they are intended for use by visitors to the Collection. Each CC is required to subscribe to one or two fundraising or "grantmanship" periodicals, and purchase basic reference works issued by other publishers, and monographs on foundations, nonprofit management, and fundraising that are published annually. CCs should also gather news items and annual reports for those foundations in their geographic area. Please submit a bibliography of current relevant holdings, as well as plans to enhance the core collection with future acquisitions.

**Services**—The Foundation Center requires that all Cooperating Collections provide reference assistance to the public, staffed at a minimum of 25 hours per week. Most CCs far exceed that minimum requirement. How many hours per week will your CC be open to the public? Will you be open during evening or weekend hours? Will you provide mail, telephone, and/or e-mail reference service? If so, will that be free of charge?

**Public Trainings**—The Foundation Center requires that each CC offer at least two community workshops or orientations on the funding research process each year for local nonprofit organizations. The Center provides training support (including PowerPoint presentations, scripts, and handouts) and staff members will be happy to assist you in scheduling workshops. How frequently will your CC offer orientations and workshops for grantseekers in your community? Do you plan to collaborate with other libraries, agencies, technical assistance providers, or other nonprofits?

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**Staff Trainings**—The Foundation Center requires Cooperating Collections to allocate travel funds for the supervisor to attend at least one regional CC meeting or one annual Network Days every other year. New collections are required to send the supervisor to Network Days in the first year they are designated. (In 2008 Network Days will be held in Cleveland, OH on June 5–6 and in New York City on October 10–11.) Please indicate your preparedness to provide funding for travel to one of these locations.

**Staffing**—At least one designated staff member, well versed in the use of core materials, is required for the Cooperating Collection. The Foundation Center prefers that a professional librarian, with an MLS degree, serve as CC supervisor. If this is not possible, the designated supervisor must be knowledgeable about nonprofits and have experience working with the public. The supervisor will be the contact person for the Foundation Center and will be responsible for informing the Center of changes and concerns related to the collection. Familiarity with Internet and database searching is helpful. The supervisor is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the CC, and for regular reports on the use of the collection.

Please address the following:

- Who will oversee the collection?
- Will s/he work full-time or part-time in that position?
- What steps will be taken to ensure s/he is knowledgeable about the collection and the field of philanthropy?
- How many staff members will work with the collection?
- What training and support will be provided to them?

**Outreach**—It is critical to let the community of local nonprofits know about the new funding resources available. How will you publicize your collection? Do you have a web site? The Foundation Center requires that you indicate your affiliation with the Center on your web site. Do you have a newsletter, mailing list, or regular contact with the media? Does your organization have a public relations officer who will help promote the collection? Are there other organizations you will partner with who will help you present orientations, workshops, and seminars? What other community involvement will there be? Please submit detailed plans.

**Letters of Support**—Please submit two to three letters of support from organizations in your community including nonprofits who will use your collection and grantmakers who will support it, if applicable. Please indicate ongoing support or any special funding your collection is likely to receive.

## How to Submit a Proposal

A proposal should come from the institution that plans to house the Cooperating Collection. It should be submitted and signed by a member of that institution's administration.

Proposals for CC designation are reviewed on a regular basis, with designations made each month. Host institutions are welcome to submit a proposal at any time during the year. Keep in mind that the annual, not pro-rated, membership fee of \$995 will apply, no matter when during the year you submit your proposal. Please be sure your proposal includes all required information as outlined above.

Submit **two copies** of your proposal, with all attachments to:

**Coordinator of Cooperating Collections  
The Foundation Center  
79 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10003**

For more information, contact Kief Schladweiler, Coordinator of Cooperating Collections, at **212-807-2417** or [cks@foundationcenter.org](mailto:cks@foundationcenter.org).

**We look forward to hearing from you.**

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