



# FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL ENDOWMENT

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KATHRYN W. MIREE & ASSOCIATES, INC.  
PHILANTHROPIC ADVISORY SERVICES

**Kathryn W. Miree**  
**Kathryn W. Miree & Associates, Inc.**  
**P. O. Box 130846**  
**Birmingham, Alabama 35213**  
**205-939-0003**  
**205-939-3781 (fax)**  
[kwmiree@kathrynmireeandassociates.com](mailto:kwmiree@kathrynmireeandassociates.com)  
[www.kathrynmireeandassociates.com](http://www.kathrynmireeandassociates.com)

## ABOUT THE PRESENTER

**KATHRYN W. MIREE**  
**PRESIDENT**  
**KATHRYN W. MIREE & ASSOCIATES, INC.**

Kathryn W. Miree is President of Kathryn W. Miree & Associates, Inc., a consulting firm that works with nonprofits to develop planned giving programs. She received her undergraduate degree from Emory University and her law degree from The University of Alabama School of Law. She spent 15 years in various positions in the Trust Division of AmSouth Bank where she was the manager of the Personal Trust Department before joining Sterne, Agee & Leach, Inc. to start its trust company. She established Kathryn W. Miree & Associates, Inc. in 1997.

Ms. Miree is a past President of the National Committee on Planned Giving, the founding President of the Alabama Planned Giving Council, a Past President of the Estate Planning Council of Birmingham, Inc. and a past member of the Board of the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils. In addition to those professional associations, she currently serves on a number of volunteer boards, including the Leave A Legacy Program of Birmingham, United Way of Central Alabama, the McWane Foundation, the James Foundation, the Capstone Foundation, the University of Alabama President's Cabinet, the Altamont School and The Women's Fund. She is a member of the editorial advisory boards of *Planned Giving Today* and the Planned Giving Design Center ([www.pgdc.net](http://www.pgdc.net)).

Ms. Miree is a frequent lecturer and has co-authored *The Family Foundation Handbook* with Jerry McCoy (Panel Publishers, 2001) and has authored *The Professional Advisor's Guide to Planned Giving* (Panel Publishers 2001). Her clients include a variety of nonprofits across the nation.

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**MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF NONPROFIT SUSTAINABILITY:  
FIVE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL ENDOWMENT**

Ten years ago, an endowment signaled an embarrassment of riches. Organizations that held endowments were considered overfunded and were chastised for holding funds rather than spending those dollars on critical current needs. As a result, boards were often ambivalent about an endowment, torn between the need to justify its existence and spending the assets to meet current needs. Now endowments are a sign of a fiscally responsible, well-prepared and forward-looking nonprofit, ready to weather economic downturns and ensure a long-term survival.

Endowments have never been more important than today. Gift income is down. Government grants are down. Corporate and foundation grants are down. Stock gifts are down. Those nonprofits that cannot count on an endowment resource in difficult times may be forced to cut staff and programs, or even cease to exist.

Building a strong endowment is a proactive, not reactive, process. The organization must have clear goals, spending policies, asset building strategies and an investment management process that reflects those objectives.

**I. How Well Do You Know Your Endowment’s Vital Statistics? – A Quiz for Nonprofit Managers and Development Staff**

Take this quick quiz to determine if you are prepared to talk with donors about your endowment:

1. Does your organization have an endowment?
2. What is the market value of your endowment?
3. What is the current asset allocation of your endowment?
4. How has that asset allocation changed over the last year with the dramatic changes in the stock market?
5. What was the total return on your endowment last year? (And, what is total return?) What was the total return over the last five years?
6. How do your total returns compare to the blended index return?
7. What is the spending policy for your endowment?
8. Are there any restrictions on terms a donor can impose on endowment gifts?
9. Are there any restrictions on the type of assets that can be contributed to your endowment?
10. Who makes decisions about distributions from your endowment?

Think through the answers you would give a donor if asked. Mark the questions you can answer, and then check the scoring results in Table 1.

**TABLE ONE  
SCORING RESULTS FOR ENDOWMENT QUIZ**

<i>Number of Questions You Can Answer</i>	<i>Scoring</i>
9-11	Well prepared genius - your donors will be impressed
5-8	Moderately prepared - you will survive the conversation
3-4	Not good enough - prepare to be humbled
0-2	Do you really work there?

## II. The Role of Endowment

### A. Defining Endowment

The term “endowment” is broadly used throughout this discussion to describe funds set aside for the long-term benefit of the nonprofit (rather than for current operations). While operating funds are generally invested in cash equivalents and short-term bonds to maximize current income, endowment funds are invested in equities and longer-term bonds to achieve growth and an increasing stream of income.

#### 1. The Need to Define Endowment

One of the difficulties in having a discussion about endowment is that each nonprofit defines the concept in its own way. This leads to confusion when comparing practices among institutions or trying to establish a baseline for moving forward.

One of the difficulties in discussing and marketing endowment is that each individual and charity defines the concept in its own way. Endowments may be separately held funds within the charity, or separately established nonprofits holding long-term funds, generally referred to as supporting organizations to the charity. This leads to confusion when comparing practices among institutions or trying to establish a baseline for moving forward.

Some charities define the concept using a statutory legal definition and include only those funds legally restricted as endowment. Others have not attempted to define the term at all and have funds comprising “endowment” scattered among a variety of accounts, each with its own investment structure. Therefore, the first step in creating a successful endowment is to define the term.

#### 1. The Legal and Practical Definitions

There is no real legal definition of endowment. The following dictionary entries are common:

*endowment* n. the creation of a fund, often by gift or bequest from a dead person's estate, for the maintenance of a public institution, particularly a college, university, or scholarship.<sup>1</sup>

**ENDOWMENT:** The bestowing or assuring of a dower to a woman. It is sometimes used: metaphorically, for the setting a provision for a charitable institution, as the endowment of a hospital.<sup>2</sup>

**Endowment:** A permanent fund bestowed upon an individual or institution, such as a university, museum, hospital, or foundation, to be used for a specific purpose. Endowments may be separately held funds within the charity, or separately established nonprofits holding long-term funds, generally referred to as supporting organizations to the charity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Endowments>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://legal.laborlawtalk.com/endowment>.

<sup>3</sup> [investorwords.com, www.investorwords.com/1707/endowment.html](http://investorwords.com/www.investorwords.com/1707/endowment.html).

## 2. Types of Endowment

There are three types of arrangements generally referred to as endowments: true endowments; quasi-endowments; and term endowments.

### a. True Endowment

A true endowment consists of funds permanently set aside (by document or otherwise legally restricted) to generate income for the nonprofit. Principal may not be spent. Income may be narrowly defined as the dividends, interest, and rental income from the endowed assets, or more broadly to include realized or unrealized capital gain, depending on state law and the governing document for the funds.

When a donor or a court limits the use of endowed funds to a specific purpose, the endowment gift is considered restricted. When the donor leaves spending discretion to the nonprofit, the gift is considered unrestricted. Most endowments consist of a pool of unrestricted funds as well as many small groups of restricted funds pooled for investment purposes.

**EXAMPLE:** Jerry Jones left a bequest of \$250,000 to Northwestern University to provide scholarships for Chicago students attending Northwestern with grade point averages of 3.8 or better on a 4.0 scale. His will specifically provided that the corpus of the gift was to be preserved and that income only was to be used for scholarships.

### b. Quasi-endowment

While a permanent endowment has restrictions on the use of principal, a quasi-endowment does not. Quasi-endowed funds are funds committed to long-term use (endowment) generally by board resolution. Board-restricted funds may include unrestricted bequests or planned gifts received by the nonprofit, surplus funds available at year-end (that are not needed for operating reserves), or funds resulting from the sale of an asset. Since the donor did not restrict the funds, the board can remove its self-imposed restriction and make the principal available for use. Normally, the board will establish procedures to govern distribution of income and withdrawal of principal.

**EXAMPLE:** Jerry Jones left a bequest of \$250,000 to Northwestern University. Although he had contributed to the scholarship program throughout his life, he placed no restrictions on the use of the bequest gift. The board of the University, after discussion, decided to allocate the funds for scholarship purposes to reflect Mr. Jones' lifelong interests.

### c. Term Endowment

A term endowment is a gift in which the principal is restricted for a specific period of time or term. For example, a donor may create a gift for ten years to benefit a particular university program, or to fund a need for a limited period of time. Alternatively, a donor may contribute funds to amortize a bond issue and tie the term to the life of the bonds. After the expiration of the time, the board may use the principal or allocate it to a quasi-endowment.

### d. Pooled Endowments

Nonprofits pool endowed funds to achieve efficiency in investing the assets. Pooling endowed assets requires special accounting – either by use of an internal spreadsheet or other software – to segregate and track income from restricted funds or term-endowments. Tracking can be difficult when the endowment has hundreds of sub-accounts and income restrictions vary from fund to fund. Therefore, most nonprofits establish minimums for restricted funds and term endowments such as \$50,000 to \$100,000.

## **B. Why Is There So Much Talk About Endowment?**

Many charities that never considered endowment in the past are now realizing a perpetual pool of invested funds may be critical to long-term survival. Consider these factors:

### **1. The Economy is Tough and Taking a Toll on Donors**

The economic news has been uncertain or gloomy since 2000. Lower stock values, higher gas prices, fewer jobs, and the related economic turmoil have affected all donors. Even the wealthy – especially those holding concentrations in financial stocks, automotive stocks, mortgage backed bonds, or real estate – are feeling the pinch. This increased strain on donors has – or will – affect your ability to raise annual funds.

### **2. Government Grants are Disappearing – Greater Needs with Less Available Funds**

The National Association of State Budget Officers conducts a “The Fiscal Survey of States” each year, and the most recent was published in June 2008.<sup>4</sup> Using data from this report, the Center of Budget and Policy Priorities estimates a \$48 billion shortfall for the 2009 budget year.<sup>5</sup> The report found that at least 29 states and the District of Columbia expect budget shortfalls, while three other states cite potential budget problems.<sup>6</sup>

State shortfalls can be attributed to downturns in property values, retail sales, and similar factors, all of which reduce governmental tax revenues and reduce available grant and nonprofit funds. At the same time state revenues are dropping, the same economic factors are driving up the needs of each state’s poorest citizens. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities projects the most likely state services to be cut include:<sup>7</sup>

- Public health programs
- Programs for the elderly and disabled
- K-12 education
- Colleges and universities
- State work force

States governments are not the only government experiencing revenue problems. The Federal government’s debt is now at an historically high level. In President Bush’s most recent budget he recommended dramatically reducing certain types of grants to states and cities such as Community Development Block Grants, Child Care Development Block Grants, Social Services Block Grants, home-

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<sup>4</sup> “The Fiscal Survey of States, June 2008,” National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO), 444 North Capital Street, Suite 267, Washington, DC 20001-1512, [www.nasbo.org](http://www.nasbo.org).

<sup>5</sup> McNichol, Elizabeth C. and Iris J. Lav, “29 States Face Total Budget Shortfall of At Least \$48 Billion in 2009,” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (June 20, 2008), [www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org).

<sup>6</sup> The states list in the report include Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Those states projecting budget gaps in FY 2010 or beyond include Missouri, Texas, and Washington.

<sup>7</sup> Johnson, Nicholas and Elizabeth Hudgins, “Facing Deficits, Many States are Imposing Cuts that Hurt Vulnerable Residents,” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (July 2, 2008), [www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org).

energy assistance and similar programs. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities projects these payments will be reduced by 7.4 percent in 2009, or \$18.9 billion on an inflation-adjusted basis.<sup>8</sup> These cuts will dramatically affect nonprofits that operate using those funds

### 3. Private Foundation Grants Are Shrinking

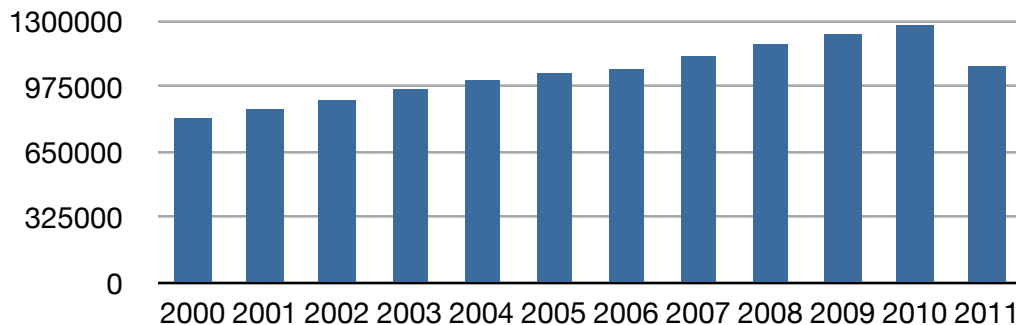
The stock markets have fallen precipitously over the last twelve months. Private foundations – the source of most foundation grants – are required to make an annual distribution equal to five percent of their investment assets. If a foundation fails to distribute the full five percent, it has until the end of the following tax year to do so or a still penalty is imposed. These grants are also decreasing for two reasons:

- 1) A decrease in the financial markets means a decrease in the foundation’s assets, resulting in a smaller 5% required distribution calculation.
- 2) Foundations are making grants on a more conservative basis to protect their investment base. This means fewer serial grants, reduced grantmaking for those foundations that have over-distributed in the previous five years and have credits, and even delayed grant payouts.

### 4. The Number of Charities Reaching Out To Your Donors Is Increasing

If it seems as if there is more competition for the donor’s philanthropic dollar, there is. The most recent count of nonprofit organizations in the IRS Data Book shows a steadily increasing number of nonprofits as shown in Table 1. These figures do not include 300,000 to 400,000 churches and similar organizations not required to file for tax-exempt status. The figures dropped off in 2011 because the IRS removed approximately 250,000 charities from its rolls for failure to file annual tax returns.

**TABLE 1  
NUMBER OF NONPROFIT ENTITIES 2000 - 2010<sup>9</sup>**



<sup>8</sup> Jensen, Brennen and Suzanne Perry, “Struggles in the States,” *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* (February 21, 2008), <http://philanthropy.com>.

<sup>9</sup> 2012 IRS Data Book, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).



## 5. Boards Have a Fiduciary Duty to Prepare for the Future

Charities are perpetual entities, and have long-term purposes. The boards of those organizations are responsible for ensuring the charity achieves its mission in the most effective manner and ensuring there are sufficient funds for operations. When a drop in current revenue results in a reduction of staff and services, it leaves dependent clients unserved. If this continues year over year, the board has compromised its fiduciary duty. One way to protect the organization against dips in income.

### C. Do You Need Endowment?

There is no purely objective test that leads an organization to decide to establish an endowment. The following questions may help a board remain focused on objective, rather than emotional, issues in making the decision. Positive answers to any of these questions may lead the organization to consider the creation of an endowment:

- *Does the organization serve a purpose or need that is likely to exist on a long-term basis?*
- *Do cyclical economic variances impact the receipt of annual or special event gifts?*
- *Does the organization face increasing operating costs?*
- *Does the organization currently have new programs related to its purpose that cannot be operated because they lack funding?*
- *Does the organization anticipate future needs for programs that may not be met for lack of funding?*
- *Does the organization face increasing competition for annual gifts?*
- *Is the organization dependent upon government or private grants for its organizational expenses? .*
- *Has the organization lost major annual gifts through attrition of its donors?*

### D. The Link Between Endowment and Planned Giving

A diversified fundraising platform that includes planned gifts is not simply a nice idea – it is an essential concept for building endowment, weathering long-term economic changes, and supporting the growth of healthy, expanding, evolving programs. Most charities are focused on current programs – following the easiest paths for funding available. These may be funded by government grants (federal or state funding), membership revenue, direct mail revenue, or a few “angel” donors. Sooner or later, this easy funding structure will give way and your charity may be left without critical funds.

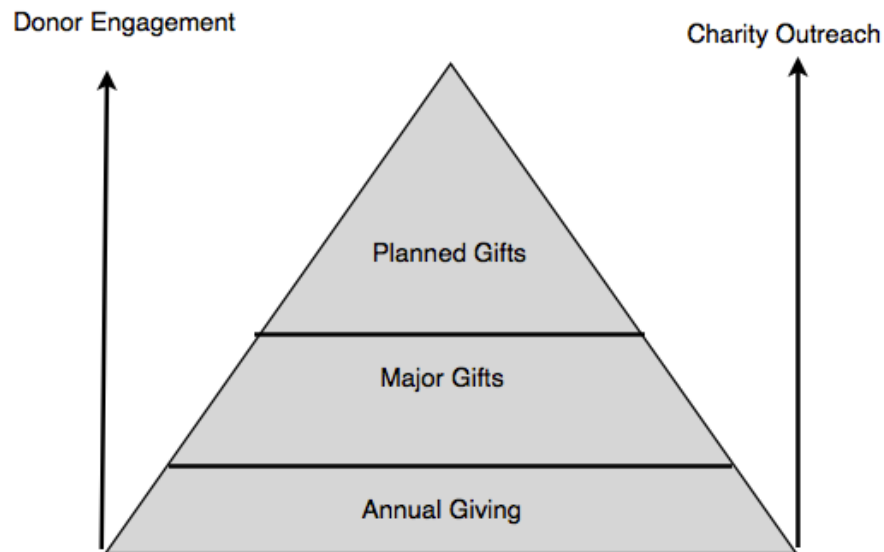
It is very difficult to build endowment when you are in crisis, you are forced to cut staff and programs, and your future is at stake. The best time to begin to build a strong, diversified fundraising program is when your charity is stable, your board is engaged, and you have the time to establish the critical structure and messaging.

The clearest model of how planned giving relates to an organization's fund raising is found in James M. Greenfield's book *Fund-Raising Fundamentals*.<sup>10</sup> That model reflects a progression of giving based on a donor's relationship with the charity. Table 2 summarizes this model which focuses on the role of increasing engagement by your charity, and the increasing commitment on the part of the donor.

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<sup>10</sup> Greenfield, James M., *Fund-Raising Fundamentals: A Guide to Annual Giving for Professionals and Volunteers* (1994, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)

TABLE 2  
TRADITIONAL DONOR PYRAMID



The sections of this pyramid can be described as follows:

- **Membership.** Many organizations have members, those who make annual contributions to ensure they have access to the organization's services. While this involves an annual financial contribution, memberships are generally perceived as contributions in exchange for services rather than philanthropic gifts.
- **Annual Giving.** Annual Giving is the most basic fund-raising function and is designed to raise funds for annual operating costs. Most of the development officer's efforts in the annual campaign are dedicated to identifying potential donors. Annual campaigns may take the form of calling, letter writing, direct mail, or personal solicitation. Large numbers of volunteers and personal contacts generally breed success.

More advanced annual gift programs incorporate special events, membership societies, and support groups. Special events come in all forms and sizes. The event may be as simple as a raffle, conducted through a mail campaign, or as complex as an event attracting thousands of participants.

Direct mail and public solicitations may also be one method of reaching donors outside the normal circles of the charity. Strategies will depend upon the size of the potential donor base, the funds available for the campaign, and the number of volunteers available to the nonprofit. Ultimately, these efforts raise money, identify donors and educate donors but they do not ask much of a donor beyond a small contribution of cash.

- **Major Giving.** Major giving also gets significant attention from nonprofits due to the size of the potential gifts. Major giving, which takes the donors to the next level of interest and involvement in the nonprofit, may be a part of a capital, endowment or annual campaign. The solicitation of a major gift requires a great deal of planning and preparation. Your organization must develop a strong case statement for support. This case statement must be based upon a clear organizational mission and a long-term strategic plan. The solicitor must conduct research on the donor, the donor's family, the donor's goals and the donor's case history. And finally, the development officer and calling volunteer make a personal visit to ask for the gift. Major gift solicitations represent an efficient way of raising large sums of money and identifying new donors. Many nonprofits now staff a major gift position within the development office, or assign responsibility for major gift development to an existing position.
- **Planned Giving.** Planned giving is often the last element of the development plan, although it is rapidly taking its place as an "essential" part of the overall fund-raising effort. Planned giving differs from annual and major giving in that it is an ongoing, rather than an event oriented activity. Annual campaigns have a season. Major gift solicitations associated with capital campaigns or endowment campaigns have an anticipated completion date. Planned giving continues through all other campaigns and exists in the absence of a campaign. Planned gifts are generally the result of an ongoing relationship between the nonprofit and the donor. Donors that invest in the future of the charity through a planned gift must have confidence that the mission is important, that the charity will continue to meet that mission in the future, and that the donor's gift is critical to the ability of the charity to discharge that mission. Where a major gift requires confidence in present leadership, a planned gift requires confidence in future leadership.

## **E. A Strategic Assessment of the Task**

Before preparing a plan, it is important to make an assessment of your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges in building endowment. This will allow you to build on your strengths and maximize your opportunities, while planning to overcome your weaknesses and addressing your challenges in your implementation plan.

### **1. Your Strengths**

- 1) Your nonprofit is visible in the community, and can show an impact on lives and an impact on the community over your time in operation.
- 2) You have an opportunity to network with other development officers pursuing endowment and support each other.
- 3) You know the needs of of your organization well and its vision for the future.
- 4) You have an active fundraising program on which to build.
- 5) You have years of information about your donors.

### **2. Your Weaknesses**

- 1) You may be new to the process of building endowment. You may not have the infrastructure and policies to support the process, or a board that understands the issues.
- 2) You may have limited staff.

- 3) Further, you may not be trained in the more complex gift transactions that add flexibility and range to donors in making endowment gifts.
- 4) You may not have the time to build the infrastructure, assemble and manage the volunteer team, and expand the marketing.

### **3. Your Opportunities**

- 1) Through your endowment, you can create a long-term resource that allows you to sustain your programs and outreach through periods of revenue fluctuations. This allows you to grow staff and programs without the fear you may have a year requiring layoffs or service pull backs.
- 2) An endowment provides funds to capitalize on opportunities, or expand strategically.
- 3) An endowment provides the resources to respond quickly to critical and urgent needs.
- 4) An endowment provides funds to take on new ventures otherwise not covered through annual operating revenue.
- 5) The process of building endowment allows you to build stronger relationships with your donors, and sets the stage for ongoing communications.
- 6) If you are just beginning, you have the opportunity to do it right – creating an accountable, transparent, and energizing endowment.
- 7) There is an enormous transfer of wealth underway. Researchers at the Boston College Social Welfare Research Institute published a study projecting the intergenerational transfer of wealth expected to occur between 1998 and 2052.<sup>11</sup> That study estimates the transfer will range from a low of \$41 trillion to a high of \$136 trillion, figures substantially higher than the frequently used \$10.4 trillion figure developed in the 1990's by Robert Avery and Michael Rendall of Cornell.

### **4. Your Challenges**

- 1) Articulating the case for endowment, and integrating that case into your solicitations of donors.
- 2) Finding the time to prioritize endowment and giving the work the time it requires to thrive.
- 3) Changing the culture of your organization to build donor relationships and solicit multi-faceted gifts from your donors.
- 4) Positioning endowment to encourage donors to make annual, capital, and endowed gifts.

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<sup>11</sup> A summary of the study can be found at <[www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/gsas/swri/](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/gsas/swri/)> in the article entitled "Millionaires and the Millennium: New Estimates of the Forthcoming Wealth Transfer and the Prospects for a Golden Age of Philanthropy."

## F. Ready to Go?

If you are ready to go, here are the five steps to endowment success:

- Step One:* Create a case for endowment.
- Step Two:* Build an infrastructure for endowment.
- Step Three:* Build the team to build endowment.
- Step Four:* Market the endowment and begin to talk with donors.
- Step Five:* Make a plan to create and build endowment and set goals.

## III. Step One: Make the Case for Endowment

### A. The Internal Case for Support – Why Your Organization Needs an Endowment

You will need to make the internal case to your board and staff to help them understand the role and impact of endowment and Legacy giving on your organization’s capacity to achieve mission. That case must be compelling, urgent, and relate to outcomes as a result of the investment. Without internal buy in, you will find it difficult to impossible to maintain a consistent, effective program.

Do not assume that your board and staff agree that endowment is appropriate. Nonprofits often create endowments by accident rather than by design. An accidental endowment results from a gift – usually a planned gift – left to the organization by a donor for a specific purpose. The donor’s objectives may be to create an income stream to replace his annual gift to the organization, to start or endow a scholarship, or to provide start-up funds for a new program. When the charity receives the restricted funds and sets them apart to comply with the donor’s directives, an endowment is born.

Planned endowments result from a board action to establish a fund and resolution to build it. It may be funded first through a transfer of surplus operating funds or matured planned gifts. The board’s goals may be to ensure future funding for the organization or to encourage donors to make endowed gifts. Endowments may also be intentionally created as part of a capital campaign. Capital campaigns that involve new buildings, a new campus, or even new programs require additional operational dollars for maintenance of facilities and programs. An endowment may be the only way to ensure that additional income is available to meet operating needs. Often, this endowment funding is built into the campaign goals.

The most common objections held by board members include the following:

**TABLE 3  
THE SIX GREATEST BOARD CONCERNS ABOUT LEGACY GIVING**

<i>Common Board Concern/Myth</i>	<i>The Answers!</i>
1. How can we justify planning for/soliciting gifts for tomorrow when there are so many unmet needs today? Shouldn’t we allocate every dollar we can raise to address today’s problems?	Boards have a fiduciary duty to ensure continuity of services. An endowment allows the board to continue services through fluctuations in the economy, to expand programs strategically and with certainty the funding will be there to continue those programs, and to have resources when there are emergencies or disasters.
2. An endowment may make the organization appear rich? How do we get donors to continue giving annually if we have an endowment?	The endowment must have structure and purpose, including long-term goals. Once these are established, donors will understand the purpose and context of their gift, and the role of endowment.

3. How do we get donors to give us unrestricted dollars? We really don't want dollars directed to specific purposes because it will be too restrictive.	Structure the endowment to allow donors to give to broad areas of mission without restricting dollars to specific programs or activities. Long-term this will give their Legacy gifts the greatest impact.
4. Won't donors quit giving to us annually, or in capital campaigns, if they make an endowment gift? How do we avoid this?	Donors will not quit giving annually unless you ask them to do so! Make it clear their annual gifts are critical in supporting current mission, and you do not want them to make an endowment gift it will compromise that annual gift. Keep annual, capital, and endowment giving separate – recognize them separately in your giving societies and annual report.
5. Endowment and legacy giving are complicated concepts. Why don't we just stick to the basics, such as outright cash gifts?	If donors are restricted to cash, their options are limited. By expanding gift asset options, and gift form options, you increase the likelihood the donor will be able to participate.
6. How do we justify the costs for staff, marketing, and support of the Legacy program? You've told us these Legacy gifts will not be realized for many years.	Investing in Legacy and endowment giving is an investment in the future of your organization, as critical a contribution as the dollars that operate your programs today. Because there is a lag time between program start up and the realization of significant cash flow, you cannot wait until you are in crisis to begin.

## B. The External Case for Support – Why Donors Should Make an Endowment Gift

The external case for support should communicate to donors why they should consider and create an endowment gift. This statement should motivate the donor, excite and inspire the donor, and clearly communicate that donor's role in the future your organization and the community.

One of the clearest, most compelling cases for endowment was made by Ray Lynn Wilbur, President of Stanford University at the outset of the University's 1922 Campaign:<sup>12</sup>

*Stanford University is making a new decision which will determine its future for all time. The University has reached the limit made possible by the Stanford Fortune. If it is to go forward and upward it can only do so through the support of every member of the Stanford Family and of the public in general. Stanford now takes its place among the great national universities of this country. . .*

*Independent, self-contained, apparently rich, the University has gone its way to the best of its ability, making limitations in various ways, including the number of students accepted, so that the work done could be on a satisfactory plane. Not to grow is in part to die. The University must have increased facilities, more buildings, and more advantages; must keep step with educational progress, just as a growing boy must have new clothes and new facilities as his capacity to do more increases with age. . .*

*There is every reason to anticipate that we can obtain the same help that has come to similar institutions elsewhere. Stanford is the one great privately endowed university west of St. Louis. Certainly from this vast territory there will come the interest and help that is needed. . .*

*If we can work together for Stanford and Stanford's progress we can rest assured that within another generation no institution in the country will have better facilities, a better reputation, or achieve better results in education.*

<sup>12</sup>1 Annual Report of the President of Stanford University For the Academic Year Ending August 31 1922. (Stanford University, CA; Stanford University Press, 1922) Lane Medical Library. Lane Medical Archives., pp. 19-22.

This statement has vision. It draws on the university's strategic plan (think of your community's "Next 100 Years" plan.) It challenges and engages those invested in Stanford. It is short and easy to read. It overcomes perceptions the University is rich. It clearly describes the outcome of the donor's investment.

#### **IV. Step Two: Build a Strong Infrastructure for Endowment**

##### **A. The Perfect Profile for Success**

Not every charity is ready for an endowment. It's difficult to make a case for long-term support of the organization if the charity is struggling to keep its doors open on a day-to-day basis. It must also be prepared to manage and account for the fund entrusted to it.

Indicators of success might include the following:

1. An organization that has been in existence for at least 8-10 years.
2. A history of strong program growth over the period of existence.
3. A solid fundraising program that has grown over the period of existence. Key elements should include a growing annual fund program, a solid base of repeat donors, major gifts and a readiness or entry into planned giving.
4. Stable nonprofit staff, again showing growth commensurate with its program and fundraising growth.
5. A financial officer or other staff member responsible for managing or providing oversight of the endowment.
6. Commitment by the board of directors to build endowment.

##### **B. A Survey of Managers: The Most Common Problems**

While many of the endowment problems I see are related to large charities - those with the largest endowments - smaller charities struggle with the same issues, just not on the same scale. These are the most often-cited problems:

- 1) **Administrative costs that represent too large a percent of the revenue produced by endowment.** Managing an endowment takes time, money, people, and systems to account for the funds (especially segregated funds for specific purposes), allocate revenue to the purpose and document it, investment the monies, allocate gains/losses/fees/additions/distributions to each of the segregated funds in appropriate ratios, report to donors, provide information in audits, report the fund balances appropriately on the financial statement, and in some cases, produce reports on individual funds.
- 2) **Proliferating and scattered funds.** Many charities allow donors to restrict income, and provide segregated funds at levels as low as \$5,000. This leads to a spiraling number of funds, dramatically increases the costs of management, opens the door for missteps in use of funds, and invariably limits the effectiveness with which the charity can report to donors.
- 3) **Managing the paperwork.** Harvard, at my last count, had 11,600 endowment funds. That's a lot of paperwork. Some charities don't think about how the documents will be housed, how they can be accessed (although with scanning, the answer is easy), and who is responsible for holding them, producing them when needed, and overseeing their safety.

- 4) **Allocating restricted funds to designated purposes (and proving it!).** Allocating the funds, and documenting that allocating in a way that makes it easy to audit, and easy to produce in the event of a challenge to the use of funds, is harder than it looks, especially when there are so many funds. A \$5,000 fund will distribute \$200/year with a 4% distribution rate. It will cost more than \$200 to separately track the fund, allocate the revenue, document that allocation, and report to the donor. It is easy to drift off course if someone is paying close attention.
- 5) **Funds that outlive their purpose.** For charities, it is difficult when endowments require that the charity offer and operate programs that are no longer used to achieve mission, or the needs have changed in a way that the fund no longer has value for the charity. The earlier cautionary tales involving Princeton, the Barnes Foundation and Tulane make this point.
- 6) **Negative investment returns.** Many planning sessions for charities assume endowment values will go up. As we have learned in the last decade (see Table 3) this is not always the case. In fact, the DJIA, in August 2010, is lower than its value at the end of 2000, a decade earlier. Under Uniform Management of Institutional Funds Act (UMIFA), spending was limited when endowments were underwater (under the historic dollar value limitation). In the last 4 years, most (but not all) states have moved to the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA) which removed the historic dollar value rule and instead allowed nonprofits to exercise discretion (and prudence) in making distribution decisions. Neither help if negative returns continually shrink the non-inflation-adjusted value of the endowment funds.
- 7) **Litigious donors.** Finally, litigious donors create problems for charities. The lawsuits discussed earlier add one perspective, but a parade of unhappy endowment donors can be just as debilitating.

The charity's goals should be to anticipate these common problems, and create an endowment creation, administration, and spending structure that heads off bad results.

## **C. The Endowment Structure**

### **1. Form**

Once the nonprofit decides that it needs an endowment, it must determine the form of that endowment. The alternatives vary in the degree of protection afforded to the assets, access available to the board, complexity of the endowment form, and costs of administration. There are basically three choices:

- a. Segregated account within the charity governed by clear policies and procedures;
- b. Stand alone foundation (likely a supporting organization rather than a private foundation); or
- c. An endowment account with a local community foundation.

The pros and cons of these forms are set out in Table 4.



**TABLE 4  
PROS AND CONS OF VARIOUS ENDOWMENT FORMS**

<i>Type of Entity</i>	<i>Pros</i>	<i>Cons</i>
Segregated account within the charity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low cost - do not have to create separate entity and file annual return</li> <li>- Flexible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More vulnerable in times of need - easier for the board to use assets for operating</li> <li>- May be vulnerable if boards change</li> <li>- May be liable for organization liabilities</li> </ul>
Stand alone foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More protection from organizational liabilities</li> <li>- More protection from urgent organizational needs</li> <li>- May avoid restrictions on use of funds imposed by state</li> <li>- Allows you to use more volunteers in board slots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High cost of creating and operating entity</li> <li>- Supporting organizations under scrutiny by Congress - may be changes in the law</li> <li>- Must operate separate entity - takes more time</li> </ul>
Community Foundation account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community foundation invests assets, does fund accounting, manages acceptance of gifts, has depth in development area</li> <li>- If community foundation is visible and credible, may strengthen the credibility and case for endowment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The assets must be turned over to the community foundation - the college will no longer own them</li> <li>- The college will no longer have any input (or will have limited input) on investment and spending decisions.</li> <li>- Unless you have language in the governing document, the assets can not be transferred back to the college.</li> </ul>

## 2. Consolidation

Consolidating the endowed assets in a single location is critically important to the long-term success of the endowment. When endowment assets are scattered in a variety of brokerage houses, banks, checking accounts, or certificates of deposit, it is difficult effectively manage costs and maintain consistency in spending and investment management policies. The chief financial officer may also have difficulty in generating a single report detailing fund earnings, funds available for expenditure, and historical information on use of funds and to report to donors. Consolidation allows the nonprofit to focus on performance, purpose, and long-term goals.

## 3. Designated Gifts

Designated gifts are a necessary part of the overall endowment structure. This does not mean that all planned gifts are endowed, but it does mean that donors enjoy specifying the fund use and charities should expect that many gifts would arrive with restrictions. Allowing designated gifts, however, does not mean that donors can contribute gifts of any size with restrictions.

### b. The Issues

The nonprofit should adopt gift policies that provide clear guidance on the most common issues related to designated gifts.

- *Size.* The charity should set a minimum size for an endowment that is accounted for separately. Separate accounting includes annual valuation of the account and tracking annual distributions of income and/or principal. Since the requirements for separate accounting are expensive (whether handled in-house or by a third party), the minimum size should be set at a fairly high level such as

\$50,000, or preferably \$100,000. Smaller accounts can be recognized by name in the annual report, but should be combined with a pool of accounts with a similar purpose.

- *Limited Purpose.* There are many cautionary tales about donors who made gifts for narrow purposes, only to have that purpose change or diminish over time. Most nonprofit gift policies simply state that the nonprofit will not accept any gift that is counter or not in keeping with its long-term mission, or any gift that is too difficult to administer.
- *Accounting Cost.* The final consideration in designated gifts is the cost to account for the gift. Obviously, if the fund holds \$100,000 or more, the costs will represent only a small percentage of the fund. If instead the fund is only \$5,000, the costs may represent 2%, 3% or more of the fund. The accounting costs may easily exceed the amount of income to be distributed. While this observation is driven by common sense, practical matters are illusive when planning a gift the donor is excited about.

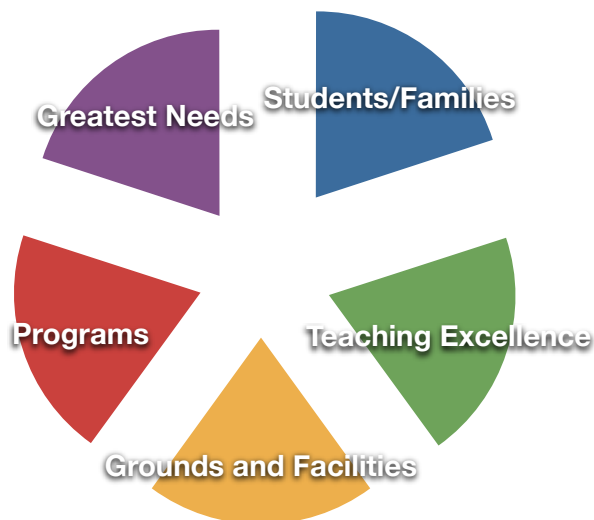
## **b. The Solutions**

How do you encourage your donors to design gifts that fit your guidelines? Incorporate the information in your marketing and discussions, and take proactive steps to make the process comfortable and rewarding to donors.

### **i. Broad Areas of Endowment Support**

Organize the endowment in the four to five sectors that reflect the organization's work. These should be broad sectors that will not change over time. The sectors should be defined enough to allow donors to know how their funds will be used, but flexible enough to allow the nonprofit to spend broadly within that sector. Consider this example for a college preparatory school:

**TABLE 5  
REPRESENTATIVE ENDOWMENT STRUCTURE**



## **ii. Brainstorm to Develop Goals for Each Sector**

Once you have determined the appropriate sectors, group all current funds within the appropriate sector. Then, brainstorm about future needs for each sector, thinking generally about the types of resources the organization will need. Determine how much cash flow you will need for each of those ideas, and total them for the sector. Determine the principal you will need by multiply the cash flow by 25 (this will equate to a 4% revenue stream). Add the sectors together, and you have an endowment goal.

Once these categories are established, smaller accounts can be combined under the appropriate category. This is not as simply as it sounds, of course. Some funds may be restricted, and the charity may need to get the restrictions released. And families should be contacted to seek permission (or inform, as appropriate) for the change.

### **4. Allow Gift Options at All Levels**

#### **a. Create Giving Options at All Levels**

One of the biggest mistakes most charities make is to focus on large endowment gifts. This is often done in order to prevent having small funds with restrictions, which clearly creates problems. Open endowment to all donors by creating a pooled fund in each sector that can receive gifts from \$1 to the minimum required for a segregated fund. This allows donors with small gifts to allocate their gift to the sector of greatest interest. The pooled funds allow the donor to select an area of interest without requiring the funds be segregated in a fund for that purpose.

#### **b. Limit Restricted Purposes to Funds of \$250,000 or More**

Set the minimum for more narrowly restricted funds at a minimum of \$250,000 (some charities use figures as high as \$1 million). Donors below that level can allocate their gifts to one of the five sectors, but if the donor is to restrict the gift more narrowly than the sector, it must be large enough to justify the costs. Large funds will have the name selected by the donor, will produce annual reports for the fund, and will require the funds be allocated and verified.

#### **c. Recognition Opportunities**

Allow donors to name gifts at \$50,000. For these gifts between \$50,000 and \$249,999<sup>13</sup>, the donor's name will not be tied to a segregated fund, but to the sector to which the gift is directed. For example, if Kathryn and Ben Miree made a \$50,000 contribution to the Teaching Excellence sector, the "Kathryn and Ben Miree Teaching Excellence Fund" would be attached to the sector in the annual report in perpetuity (or for a named period), in addition to other \$50,000 - \$249,999 gifts committed to that sector. A summary of these recommendations is set out in Table 6.

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<sup>13</sup> If the limit for a segregated fund is \$1 million, I would suggest setting the naming opportunity at \$100,000 or \$200,000.

**TABLE 6**  
**GIVING LEVELS AND RECOGNITION STANDARDS FOR ENDOWMENT GIFTS**

<i>Level of Giving</i>	<i>Designation of Use</i>	<i>Recognition</i>
\$1 - \$49,999	May designate gift to sector to be added to the pool.	Recognized in annual report as a gift to endowment in the year of gift.
\$50,000 - \$249,999	May designate gift to sector to be added to the pool.	Recognized in annual report as a gift to endowment in the year of gift; name selected by donor (generic to sector) recognized in perpetuity (or for a term) associated with the sector.
\$250,000+	May designate the gift sector and a more narrow purpose within the sector; will receive annual statement about use and performance of funds.	Recognized in annual report as a gift to endowment in the year of gift; name selected by donor recognized in perpetuity with the named fund and its purpose.

## 5. Gift Acceptance Policies

The primary benefit of gift acceptance policies is to maintain discipline in gift acceptance and administration. Discipline prevents the acceptance of gifts that will cost the nonprofit organization time, money, and possibly its reputation, by reminding the organization when to say, “no.” Gift acceptance policies are rarely adopted at the inception of a nonprofit organization’s fundraising program. Early development activities usually focus on cash, and occasionally marketable securities. There is little discussion of, or involvement with, other gift forms.

Rather, gift acceptance policies are a product of capital campaigns or endowment campaigns in which planned giving concepts, such as gifts made from assets, split interest gifts, and deferred gifts, are introduced. Policies also serve to educate the nonprofit organization’s staff and board about critical issues triggered by certain gifts. It is difficult to absorb and appreciate the practical issues associated with acceptance of certain gift forms without working through them and making choices about how to handle them. The process gives the board a chance to make decisions about policy without the distraction of a pending gift to blind its collective judgment. Why is this important?

- *First, decisions based on case-by-case scenarios breed inconsistency.* The results reflect the personal opinions of board members, not consistent policy. Nonprofit boards change annually. While some board members remain from year to year, the full group always changes over a three- to five-year period. Since each of us brings different personal experience and attitudes to the table when making decisions, judgments change as the committee changes.
- *Second, the glittering appeal of the potential gift obfuscates good judgment.* It is difficult to make a list of potential problems and issues while you stare at the gift. The tendency of the planned giving or development officer is to do everything possible to accept the asset.
- *Third, without established policy a nonprofit may send mixed signals to potential donors.* Suppose the planned giving officer receives what can only be described as a wretched gift, and thanks the donor profusely. Later, after sorting through the issues, he finds that the gift must be rejected. The donor is left to wonder why the initial excitement changed to a disapproving “no.” A better way to handle gift acceptance is to tell a donor the organization appreciates the gift, but its policies require a review of certain assets to ensure proper handling. A timely review, even with a resulting “no” is easier to understand.

- *Fourth, it is important to note that a good set of policies and checklists will also prevent donors from making mistakes.* Too often a donor's accountant or attorney is not familiar with details such as the related use rules, the valuation requirements, or pre-arranged sale issues. Raising questions in the gift acceptance process may save a donor from disappointment when the time comes to file his or her income tax return.

## **6. Spending Policies**

### **a. Spending Policy for Endowed Funds**

Spending policies are normally set as a percentage of a rolling 12-quarter average or a variation on that theme. The "look back" and average assures the spending policy remains relatively stable, but in difficult times, spending policies may decrease so as not to put too great a burden on the principal. In good times, most spending policies hover in the 5% to 6% range; in difficult economies those spending policies fall to the 4% to 4.5% range. The spending policy for true endowment should comply with the state's UMIFA or UPMIFA standards.

### **b. Principle Distributions from Quasi-Endowment**

It is easy to simply reach into quasi-endowment and spend it down during tough economic times. Adopt policies that make it possible - but difficult to do so. Establish clear parameters in policies - before the economic crisis arises - that clearly establish the circumstances under which quasi-endowment can be spent as operational funds and who must approve that use. Do not keep operating reserves in endowment. Operating reserve funds are generally invested in a more long-term position than operating funds (which, if invested, are in overnight cash) but they are not suited for funds invested with a 8-10 year horizon.

## **7. Clear Investment Policies**

### **a. Laws Governing Investment Management – UMIFA and UPMIFA<sup>14</sup>**

In 2006, The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws adopted the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA), applicable to charities organized as nonprofit corporations.<sup>15</sup> This Act updated the Uniform Management of Institutional Funds Act (UMIFA) in place since 1972, and comes close to creating one set of investment standards for all charitable funds whether held in trust or nonprofit corporation form. Table 7 provides the current status of UMIFA and UPMIFA by state. Please be sure to use these as a starting point and check your state's current status. These laws have changed quickly since 2006.

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<sup>14</sup> See the most recent list of state adoption of UMIFA or UPMIFA and statutory references. These state statutes change quickly, so always check your state's current status.

<sup>15</sup> National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, [http://www.law.upenn.edu/bll/ulc/umoifa/2006final\\_act.htm](http://www.law.upenn.edu/bll/ulc/umoifa/2006final_act.htm).

**TABLE 7  
CURRENT STATUS OF UMIFA AND UPMIFA BY STATE**

<b>States That Have Adopted UPMIFA in Whole or in Part</b>			
<b>State</b>	<b>Code Section</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Code Section</b>
Alabama	§§ 19-3C-1 to 19-3C-10	Montana	§§72-30-101 to 72-30-103, 72-30-207 to 72-30-213
Alaska	§§13.65.010 to 13.65.095		
Arizona	§§10-11801 to 10-11806	Nebraska	§§58-610 to 58-619
Arkansas	§§28-69-801 to 28-69-810	Nevada	§§164.640 to 164.680
California	Probate Code §§18501 to 18510		
Colorado	§§15-1-1101 to 15-1-1110	New Hampshire	§§292-B:1 to 292B:10
Connecticut	§§45a-535 to 45a-535i	New Jersey	§§15:18-25 to 15:18-34
Delaware	12 §4701 to 12 §4710	New Mexico	Art. 9 §§ 46-9-1 to 46-9-12
District of Columbia	§§44-1631 to 44-1639	New York	Art. 5-A NPC §§550-558
		North Carolina	§§36E-1 to 36E-11
Georgia	§§44-15-1 to 44-15-8	North Dakota	HB 1074 enacted in 2009
Hawaii	§§517E-1 to 517E-9	Ohio	§§1715.51 to 1715.59
Idaho	§§33-5001 to 33-5010	Oklahoma	§§60-300.12 to 60-300.20
Illinois	760 ILCS 51/1 to 760 ILCS 51/11	Oregon	§§128.305 to 128.336
Indiana	§§30-2-12 to 30-2-18 <sup>39</sup>	Rhode Island	§§18-12.1-1 to 18-12.1-10
Iowa	§§540A.101 to 540A.109	South Carolina	§§34-6-10 to 34-6-100
Kansas	§§58-3611 to 58-3620	South Dakota	§§55-14A-1 to 55-14A-12
Kentucky	§§273.600 to 273.645 <sup>40</sup>	Tennessee	§§35-10-201 to 35-10-210
Louisiana	§§9.2337.1 to 9.2337.10	Texas	Property Code §§163.001 to 163.011
Maine	13 §5101 to 13 §5111	Utah	§§51-8-101 to 51-8-604
Maryland	Est. & Tr., §§ 15-401 to 15-410	Vermont	14 §§3411 to 3420
Massachusetts	Chapter 180A	Virginia	§§55-268.11 to 55-268.20
Michigan	§§451.921 to 451.931	Washington	§§ 24.55.005 to 24.55.900
Minnesota	§§309.62 to 309.71	West Virginia	§§44-6A-1 to 44-6A-10
		Wisconsin	§§112.11(1) to 112.11(11)
Missouri	§§402.130 to 402.146	Wyoming	§§17-7-301 to 17-7-307
<b>States Without UPMIFA</b>			
Pennsylvania			

The 2006 UPMIFA makes three major changes. First, it updates the prudence standards for investments to more closely mirror the Uniform Prudent Investor Act. Second, it removes the concept of historic dollar value from the spending policy and substitutes a set of standards to govern discretionary decisions about

spending. Third, it gives charities more flexibility in long-term management of funds by expanding on the release or modification of donor gift restrictions in Section 6.

- **The Change in Prudence Standards.** UPMIFA provides greater guidance to charities in the factors they should consider in investing funds. The Commissioners list the following in their comments to the draft:<sup>16</sup>
  - Preservation of the endowment fund;
  - Donor intent as expressed in a gift instrument;
  - Good faith actions characterized by the care an ordinarily prudent person would exercise;
  - Reasonable costs in investing and fund management;
  - Reasonable effort to determine and verify relevant facts;
  - Decision making about assets in the context of the portfolio as a whole and that portfolio's investment strategy;
  - Diversification, unless special circumstances make diversification inappropriate;
  - Disposing of unsuitable assets; and
  - Using a strategy appropriate for the charity.
  
- **The Spending Policy.** UMIFA allows a spending policy that distributes both accounting income and appreciation so long as the fund does not drop below its "historic dollar value." However, the Commissioners felt this policy created several problems for charities:
  - ✓ The historic dollar value was fixed at an arbitrary point in time, often based on the donor's death. If it was fixed as the market moved up, the charity had some flexibility; if it was fixed as the market moved down, the charity would be limited in its ability to use the funds.
  - ✓ After a period of time—especially when the endowment has far outstripped its historic dollar value—the mark becomes less relevant. Indeed, charities may be tempted to spend well over judicious amounts believing they should spend the balance down to its historic dollar value.
  - ✓ Charities with individual funds—and entire endowment funds—that are "underwater" (below the historic dollar value) have struggled to remedy the situation while following the donor's directions. UMIFA provides little guidance on what to do in these situations.

Therefore, UPMIFA changed the spending policy in Section 4 by removing the reference to historic dollar value and substituting the following standards to guide the charities judgment in making distribution decisions:

- ▶ The duration and preservation of the endowment fund;
- ▶ The purposes of the institution and the endowment fund;
- ▶ General economic conditions;
- ▶ The possible effect of inflation or deflation;
- ▶ The expected total return from income and the appreciation of investments;

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<sup>16</sup> UPMIFA, Prefatory Note, [http://www.law.upenn.edu/bll/ulc/umoifa/2006final\\_act.htm](http://www.law.upenn.edu/bll/ulc/umoifa/2006final_act.htm).

- ▶ Other resources of the institution; and
  - ▶ The investment policy of the institution.
- **Changing and Releasing the Use or Purpose of the Fund.** Specifically, the 2006 model UPMIFA allows changes to the use or purpose of a fund under 4 circumstances:

- ✓ *Donor Release:* “With the donor’s consent in a record,” the charity can release a restriction in whole or in part, so long as the gift is still used for the organization’s charitable purposes.<sup>17</sup>
- ✓ *Doctrine of Deviation:* If a modification to a gift agreement/document will enhance the furtherance of the donor’s purposes, or a restriction is “impracticable or wasteful and impairs the management or investment of the fund,” the charity can ask a court to modify the restriction. The Attorney General must be notified and allowed to be heard, and the modification must reflect the donor’s “probable intention.”<sup>18</sup>
- ✓ *Doctrine of Cy Pres:* If the purpose or restriction becomes “unlawful, impracticable, impossible to achieve, or wasteful,” the court may use the cy pres doctrine to modify the fund purposes. The Attorney General must be notified and allowed to be heard.
- ✓ *Small Funds:* For funds with a value less than \$25,000 that have been in place more than 20 years, court action is not required if the charity determines a restriction is “unlawful, impracticable, impossible to achieve, or wasteful” so long as the charity waits 60 days after notice to the state Attorney General of the intention to make the change, and the change is designed to be a good faith reflection of the expressed charitable purposes.<sup>19</sup> Some states have raised the \$25,000 small fund amount to as much as \$100,000 in enacting the uniform statute.

**b. Other Considerations**

- a) Adopt written investment policies that guide asset allocation, restrictions on risky assets, and clear objectives and statements of risk.
- b) Begin the manager selection process by reviewing and clearly articulating goals for the investment of the endowment. For example:

- The goal of the investment process is to protect the assets and to increase the principal value to keep up with inflation.
- The goal of the investment process is to produce maximum annual income for the operation of the nonprofit. The second priority is to increase the underlying value without compromising the principal value of the fund.
- The goal of the investment process is to grow the endowment assets at a rate equal to 5% in excess of the inflation rate.

This instruction should be given to the investment manager (not determined by the investment manager) and strongly impacts the course of action taken by the manager.

- c) Use a qualified professional investment manager to manage the funds.

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<sup>17</sup> UMIFA 2005, Section 6(b).

<sup>18</sup> UMIFA 2005, Section 6(c).

<sup>19</sup> UPMIFA 2006, Section 6(e).



- d) Monitor the professional manager (using the policies as your standard) on a regular basis; do not be afraid to ask questions and understand the management philosophy.
- e) Do not invest in any asset you do not understand. If you do not understand how the asset is structure or how it performs, you will be unable to monitor its performance.

## **8. The Endowment Agreement**

The endowment agreement sets out the terms of the gift and defines its purposes and limitations. While many gifts come to the charity without an agreement (for example, through a will), those gifts made during life or even gifts given at death but planned during life can be governed by an endowment agreement. There are two key benefits to the agreement: the charity and the donor can reach agreement on the goals of the gift, and the charity can build in a mechanism for change, if needed.

### **a. The Importance of Shared Expectations with Donors**

Donors are often driven to make endowed gifts because of specific visions they have on the use of the funds. Some donors are able to express these goals in a very articulate fashion, while others are vague. There's a benefit to the charity entering the discussion with the donor. It's a great opportunity to know more about the donor's goals and objectives, and to reshape those goals if they are too narrow or will be too difficult to accomplish.

### **b. Creating Flexibility**

One of the greatest challenges faced by nonprofits are the restrictions donors place on use of funds. Restricting a gift to conform to the donor's personal attitudes on investment management or use of funds is almost irresistible but often hampers the charity's ability to maximize use of the funds. Consider these two examples.

**EXAMPLE:** A donor in the 1940s made a major contribution to a community foundation to provide support for homes for unwed mothers. In the 1940s, there were numerous such homes designed to shelter unwed mothers during pregnancy and avoid the shame of having the community learn of their situation. In the year 2001, there are few such homes since society's attitudes toward unwed mothers are more accommodating. Counseling and help is provided to those in need, but it is largely through agencies that work with the women in their own homes.

**EXAMPLE:** A donor made a bequest of \$500,000 to the Botanical Society to maintain a specific building constructed by her father. Several years after her death, the Botanical Gardens was renovated; the named building was torn down and a garden installed on the spot. The Botanical Gardens must now go to court to have the restrictions removed and the funds allocated to maintenance of the new buildings.

### **c. Solving Problems with Current Documents**

#### **i. Typical Problems**

Sometimes documents have provisions that create significant administrative problems and a change must take place to reduce costs or increase the effectiveness of the funds. Consider the most common problems and solution options.

- *Investment Restrictions.* Sometimes - especially in older documents with conservative donors - investments are restricted to specific assets, the document requires a formula distribution such as "80

percent of the earnings shall be distributed and 20% of the earnings shall be reinvested to provide growth for the underlying funds.” Any type of investment restriction limits the charity’s ability to pool the funds for long-term investment purposes and automatically requires that the fund be segregated and invested separately.

- *Distribution Restrictions.* In other cases, there are distribution restrictions. The restriction usually relates to how the funds are used, but may also direct a specific annual distribution (such as 5%). Restrictions may state the funds are to be used solely for a specific program which no longer exists or is fully funded or the funds may be restricted for a broader purpose which is no longer a nonprofit priority.
- *Small Funds.* One of the most vexing problems may be small funds. The definition of “small funds” may vary from institution to institution, but are generally funds of \$100,000 or less. (Some may define as \$25,000 or less.) These funds may not be a problem in the early years of endowment when every dollar is welcome, and segregated funds are offered at low levels. It does become a problem as the number of funds increases to several hundred and then several thousand requiring more and more time to account and report.

## ii. Options in Solving Problems

Once charities begin to struggle with endowment restrictions and the number of funds, options may be limited. Here are the current alternatives. Review your documents now so that if there are problems that may create difficulty down the road, you have the greatest number of options.

- *Document Solutions.* An obvious solution would be to include a provision for dissolution of small funds in the governing document. The provision can direct that when the fund gets to a certain dollar value the charity can expend the balance for the fund’s purpose, can pool the funds with the charity’s unrestricted endowment, or can combine the fund with any of the charity’s larger segregated funds that comes as close as possible to the fund’s purpose.
- *Living Donors.* UMIFA and UPMIFA allow living donors to make modifications. This is the second simplest, non-judicial way to make a change to the document.
- *Statutory Solutions.* If the donor is not living, and the fund has existed for a long enough period to qualify for one of the other solutions under UPMIFA, the charity may find this a viable option. Read your state statute to determine under which circumstances changes can be made. The state attorney general must receive notice and have time to respond to the proposed change, but it may offer a solution.
- *Judicial Solutions.* The final option - and the only one available for many funds - is to take the documents to a court of equity and ask the court to intervene to solve the problems. This is the only solution for some problems, such as larger funds with investment restrictions. Some charities, after review of all endowment documents, have taken in groups of documents in a single hearing, all with the same issue. Other funds - especially if they are large - are taken in singly to seek resolution. The state’s Attorney General is a party to these proceedings representing the public’s charitable interest.

The simplest way to provide flexibility in ongoing use of funds and yet preserve the donor’s original intent, is to anticipate change in the governing document. The governing document may be an

endowment agreement executed on delivery of the gift, language in a will or trust creating the gift, or simply a verbal acknowledgement recognized in writing on receipt of the gift.

## **9. Accounting and Accountability**

Charities that accept endowed funds must be able to account to donors, donors' families, and the public for the management and use of the funds committed to endowment. In addition, the charity must ensure that distributions are made in accordance with the terms laid down by the donor or the board. Some fund agreements may restrict distributions to accounting income, others may allow a total return/spending policy approach, and some may permit principal distributions for specific purposes. The use of the funds must also be tracked and document. When the distributions are restricted to specific purposes, the nonprofit has an obligation to follow through. Too often this accounting trail is murky, as endowment earnings are distributed to one account for distribution or are simply allocated to the annual budget.

### **a. Reporting to Stakeholders**

Endowment reporting offers a great opportunity for stewardship. Donors who create funds during life often want information on how the fund is growing, and the lives or programs touched by the distributions. This is most easily accomplished with a fund statement that shows the donor's gift balance accompanied by a letter detailing the distributions made from the fund and the uses to which those funds were put. If the donor is no longer alive, this information can be sent to the donor's descendants, with a personal note about the donor's goals and objectives in creating the fund. Whether the report goes to the donor or the donor's family, it will remind them of the importance of the gift and may encourage them to make additional contributions. One annual report combines stewardship and fundraising.

### **b. Getting the Work Done**

Tracking individual funds, allocating increases and decreases to reflect capital gains and losses, apportioning income and fees, and posting additions and distributions is not an easy task. The options for the charity are to staff the work in house or to hire an outside management firm.

### **c. Internal Management**

Many charities handle accounting internally through Excel spreadsheets or other software. This accounting is easily handled in house when the endowment has a limited number of designated funds. It becomes more problematic when the number of accounts increases. The difficulties are ensuring accuracy and providing donor reporting.

In addition to the rigors of fund allocation, the annual accounting to donors is more difficult. Most internally produced balance sheets are not suitable for mailing. Therefore figures must be produced and integrated with the letter reporting results to the donor.

### **d. Third Party Management Firm**

A number of third party vendors are equipped to do the accounting for endowment sub-accounts. Most banks and trust companies have divisions geared to nonprofit management, and there are specialty administrative firms with this capability. When hiring a firm to do this specialized accounting, know your goals (accounting, donor statement reporting, etc.) and know the number of levels of accounting you will require. Some firms cannot manage more than one or two sub-account levels, while others are more flexible.

## V. Step Three: Build the Team

### A. An Overview

A successful endowment campaign and planned gift program involves a team effort. While staff may have the lead role, staff cannot be effective without support. It's important to be as specific as possible about board, staff, and even professional advisor roles.

Expanding a development program to accept planned gifts takes more staff and volunteer support than conducting an annual fund campaign for several reasons.

- *Planned gifts involve non-cash assets, some of which carry liability for the Charity.* For example, a gift of undeveloped real estate may have environmental damage; if the charity does not engage in due diligence in reviewing the gift prior to acceptance, it may find itself liable for cleanup, even though it had nothing to do with creating the damage. Or, a gift of closely-held stock may be accepted to fund a needed scholarship program – only to discover there is no market for sale of the stock. This does not mean that non-cash assets are inappropriate. It simply means the charity has to have policies and procedures in place, a chief financial officer familiar with these issues, and a staff and board that understands it is sometimes appropriate to say “no.”
- *Planned gifts are generally allocated to endowment, requiring additional time and expertise for management.* Endowments require time and attention. The assets invested for endowed purposes require a more long-term asset allocation, policies for withdrawals, a spending policy, special accounting (for funds set aside for specific purposes), and the ability to report to donors. Often, the charity's financial officer is not aware of the need to communicate with staff and donors about results; therefore, the financial officer should be brought in early and become part of the planning team. In addition, the CEO must support the effort.
- *Planned gifts require patience.* While an annual campaign is planned, executed, and completed within a year, or a capital campaign is planned, executed and completed within five to ten years, a planned giving campaign has no end. The most effective programs continue year to year as a constant background effort. Donors who commit to a planned gift today may not complete that gift for 5, 10 or even 25 years. Eighty percent of all planned gifts are deferred until death – and donors making commitments are sometimes as young as 40. This requires staff and board to understand that their work today is ensuring the future of the Charity.
- *Planned gifts are most likely from the charity's best donors.* Often, these donors have the closest relationship with the annual gift staff, the charity's staff or program officers, the board, or even executive staff. Each of these individuals is a planned giving ambassador and should know how to connect that committed donor with the planned giving officer to move the gift forward. Without that support, the planned giving officer will have little way to make contact.

The most effective planned giving programs have the support of the charity's staff leadership, its volunteer leadership, and the other members of the development team. It is easiest to understand the role that each can play by examining specific responsibilities.

## B. The Role of the Board

Board members can make a big difference in the success of a planned giving program. Board members are the representatives of the charity in the community and can communicate case, purpose, and endowment impact. Volunteers can open doors to potential prospects and communicate peer-to-peer with the board and potential donors about the impact of planned gifts. Specific duties, focused primarily on the board, are enumerated below:

- 1) *Engage in a regular strategic planning process.* The role of endowment in the charity's future should be a part of that discussion. The board has a fiduciary duty to ensure the charity has the ability to meet short-term dips in operating income, and to fund the growth and expansion of the charity.
- 2) *Participate in the design of endowment.* Set a goal for the size needed to sustain the charity (specifically by area of need). Make sure endowed funds are protected through policies on use and withdrawal of funds. Set a minimum size for separately accounted funds. (Note: often this work is conducted in the development and/or finance committee.)
- 3) *Ask questions!* The Board's role is to ensure the safety of the long-term assets committed to its care. Board members and volunteers should know how the funds are invested and the fund's return (compared to indices).
- 4) *Ensure accountability.* Make sure the charity has the resources to perform its duties related to endowment and planned gifts.
- 5) *Include a regular report on planned giving and the endowment with each board meeting (through a committee report).* Boards tend to prioritize those activities that are regularly reported. To give the report extra emphasis, ask the volunteer chairing the responsible committee to deliver the report.
- 6) *Ensure planned giving and endowment management are included in the charity's budget, and that the program is managed within that budget.* This may include staffing, marketing, event funds, or other dollars. It is not necessary to have a devoted staff member or a large budget to be successful.
- 7) *Provide marketing and outreach support for staff.* This includes identifying donors, calling on donors, sponsoring events, or any appropriate way to lend support for the process.
- 8) *Adopt policies.* These include:
  - Gift acceptance policies
  - Investment management policies
  - Endowment policies
  - Stewardship policies
- 9) *Adopt ethical guidelines affecting donors, staff and volunteers.* The Board sets the ethical tone for the charity.
- 10) *Consider a personal gift to the charity.* A board member or volunteer has high contact with an organization, understands its mission and effectiveness, and should at a minimum consider a gift. Planned gifts can be made at every asset and income level. If the board member has not considered how he or she might

make a gift, it is difficult to call on other donors to ask them to give, or to truly understand the value of planning in making a gift.

## **C. The Role of Staff**

### **1. The Duties of the CEO**

The CEO must actively support the endowment process if it is to be a success. The CEO sets the agenda for the charity, prioritizes staff responsibilities, prioritizes budget dollars, determines the content and pace of the board meetings (with the Board chair), and works with the development officer to set goals and objectives for the year. If the CEO is ambivalent about planned giving, or believes it is not as important as other development activities, the program will suffer. Specific duties are enumerated below.

- a) *Drive strategic planning process that establishes long-term goals of the charity, the role of planned gifts, and endowment needs (including ultimate goal for endowment).*
- b) *Draft or oversee drafting of case statement for endowment (work with development staff).*
- c) *Ensure board understands and endorses long-term strategic objectives and the role of planned giving and the resulting endowment.*
- d) *Make regular reports to board on planned giving results; schedule as regular report to the board.*
- e) *Assign oversight of endowment to finance committee.*
- f) *Make regular reports to board (through investment committee) on endowment size, performance, and contribution to operating needs of affiliate.*
- g) *Define endowment form (separate account; separate entity such as foundation) and fund structure (minimum size, purposes of funds).*
- h) *Draft resolution to commit planned gifts to endowment; present to board for approval.*
- i) *Assure CFO can manage administration and reporting required for sub-accounts in endowment; use third party administrators if services not possible internally. (Third party services are usually the most professional and best long-term solution.)*
- j) *Establish mechanism to request funds (quasi-endowment or non-donor restricted) from endowment.*
- k) *Support development staff in making calls on potential donors and/or recruiting volunteer leadership.*

### **2. The Duties of the CFO**

The CFO is the individual charged with oversight of the planned gifts once received. This individual must understand the role of planned gifts, the distinction between planned and annual gifts, and the importance of communicating with the staff and donor about fund management. Specific CFO duties are set out below.

- a) *Work with development/national staff to develop endowment agreement used to govern designated endowment gifts.*

- b) *Review administrative requirements for planned giving and endowment management, and determine resources necessary to support the process.*
- c) *Make checklist for development staff for all items needed to take in gifts of cash, securities, and other assets.*
- d) *Make annual checklist for planned giving and endowment support (see related annual checklist in this section) to guide annual activities.*
- e) *Work with investment committee to invest assets.* Recommend spending policy for endowed assets.
- f) *Prepare quarterly and annual report on endowment results, use of funds, etc. for investment committee, board, and annual report.*
- g) *Follow through on receipt of all gifts to set up account on books, sell or otherwise dispose of asset, acknowledge gift to donor (substantiation and Form 8283 for non-marketable gifts in excess of \$5,000 sold or disposed of within three years of receipt).*

### **3. The Duties of the Development Officer**

Few charities have staff devoted solely to planned giving (roughly 20% do). This means the development officer may be responsible for all aspects of fundraising, or major/planned gifts, or some combination of duties. Checklists keep things in perspective and are useful in making an annual implementation plan. Specific duties are listed below.

- a) *Prepare a planned giving audit of the charity's readiness for planned giving. (You may need outside help for this, but it is a critical first step, and helpful to conduct periodically to measure your progress.)*
- b) *Work with staff and volunteer committee to develop the case for planned giving and endowment.*
- c) *Identify budget needs (marketing, staffing, travel, donor meetings, etc.) required to solicit endowed gifts.*
- d) *Prepare marketing materials that explain endowment and planned giving to donors. This may include a brochure for the endowment initiative, a basic planning workbook, and a comprehensive brochure for the charity. These should be revised periodically to make them current.*
- e) *Determine volunteer support required to solicit gifts for endowment; recruit volunteers with support of CEO. This is time well spent, since every volunteer is a potential donor (even those that have already made gifts to the charity).*
- f) *Make calls on donors to solicit planned gifts; prepare gift proposals; follow through with advisors and donors to complete gift.*
- g) *Follow through with CFO after receipt of gift to make sure your charity has all information required to manage the gift after receipt; make sure follow through on sale or disposition of assets. For example, if you have just created a charitable gift annuity, have you asked the donor how they want to receive the payment? Do they prefer automatic funds transfer to a checking account, or would they like to receive a check in the mail?*

- h) *Contact donor after fund established to let donor know what to expect in terms of substantiation, communication, and reporting.*
- i) *Send annual update and thank you note to donors whose funds comprise the endowment, helping them understand the impact their gift has had on the operations of the charity.*

#### **D. The Role of Volunteers**

The volunteers who staff the endowment task force, and make the calls on prospects, are the keys to its success. Peer to peer solicitations are far more effective than staff calls on prospects. These volunteers should:

- Embrace the learning curve! Learn as much as possible about endowment, and the impact it will have on the organization's future.
- Learn to articulate the case.
- Consider a personal gift to the endowment. Your gift will lead by example and inspire and encourage others to consider a personal gift.
- Gift thought to the impact of your gift – on your community, on your family, on you personally. By thinking through the process it will open your eyes to the process others must engage in to complete a gift.
- Make the calls! Your calls will change the face of your organization!
- Get help when you need it – you are surrounded by resources to make the job easier.

#### **VI. Step Four: Market the Endowment**

Once the endowment is organized, well managed and effectively invested, consider it a powerful marketing tool. For years charities have shied away from mentioning or advertising endowment for fear of sending the message to donors that it had plenty of assets and does not need additional contributions. Marketed in the right way, however, it becomes a showcase for solid management techniques, and a beacon for donors who are considering planned gifts. The case statement for endowment should always accompany the message, so that donors understand the purpose of the fund, its role in the ongoing viability of the nonprofit, and the outstanding endowment needs.

##### **A. What is the Opportunity for Your Donors?**

Once again, we're back to the case for support. The first step in marketing is understanding the joy donors experience in giving – it is a privilege to envision and imagine the impact of their gifts on the organization, the community, and those served by the organization.

The conversation you will have with donors will create opportunity for that donor – not a burden. Here are the elements of that opportunity:

- The donor can select the charity to which the endowment gift is made, and the purpose for which that gift is used.
- The donor can create a gift that involves family, or honors a family member.



- The donor can create the gift within the context of his or her estate planning. This opportunity alone may result in a more thorough and thoughtful review of that estate plan.
- The donor can give back to the community that has provided such support to the donor and the donor's family.
- It's an opportunity to change the world, and change the lives of those served by your organization.

### **B. What Are the Challenges to Donors?**

Just as board members have preconceived notions about the appropriateness of endowments, donors may have preconceived notions of the appropriateness of the endowment and their role in making an endowment gift. Consider the most common issues and be prepared to help donors move beyond these reactions.

- It is uncomfortable to talk about bequests and death, or, there is no need to talk about that now – I'll take care of that later.
- How do I take care of my personal needs, my family, and the charities I support? I don't know where to start.
- Why don't you just raise the amount of money you need every year? It doesn't make sense to have a big pile of unused funds sitting in endowment.
- I'm not wealthy enough to give you a large gift – what I could afford to give you really wouldn't make a difference.
- This whole process sounds too complicated. Why don't I just write you a check for \$500? That will save us both time and trouble.
- Why do you need so much money?
- My family doesn't live in this community. I don't think I really need to create a gift like this in Cincinnati.

### **C. The Many Facets of Donor Motivation**

Each donor has his or her own motivation to create an endowment gift and you should not assume you know that motivation. It is generally revealed in the course of gift planning. In that, one of the real values in the gift planning and the endowment development process is that it provides so many timing and structure options, and allows donors to combine personal and philanthropic goals. The most common motivations to establish an endowment include:

- 1) A commitment to the vital role your organization serves in the community, the country, or the world
- 2) A commitment to "give back" in appreciation for the many gifts the donor has received from others
- 3) An appreciation of the organization because of a service provided
- 4) An understanding of the nonprofit's contribution to quality of life
- 5) The nonprofit's role in research or development
- 6) Personal gratitude for economic success
- 7) An interest in facilitating change in the community through the nonprofit organization
- 8) An interest in establishing a memorial for the family or an individual
- 9) An interest in recognition
- 10) A desire to influence or control the nonprofit's activities
- 11) Guilt
- 12) Tax incentives

## **D. Setting Expectations**

Keep the endowment - and its impact - visible year round. It's all about expectations and communication. Position the endowment as an essential element of your organization's success. Ask donors to support endowment, to include gifts to endowment under their wills, and to extend the impact they have on annual operations through a gift to endowment. Make it clear that donors at all levels can participate, and that you will not be successful long-term without that support.

## **E. Communication**

Communication should not only focus on the donor and the donor's family, it should focus on endowment prospects and the general public as well.

- ▶ *Board reports.* Keep the board informed throughout the year. Provide a report on the endowment, the number of current funds, the number of new funds, the investment performance, the first managing the funds, and the impact of endowment on the organization's mission.
- ▶ *Annual report.* Report on the endowment, the number of funds, those with permanent funds, investment performance, the impact of the fund, and the annual impact. Be sure to include information on how donors can create a personal impact.
- ▶ *Website.* Include information on endowment on the website. This should include the information in the annual report as well as instructions on how to name the endowment under a will, trust, or as beneficiary of a life insurance or retirement/IRA plan, how to get a sample fund document, and who to contact to have a deeper conversation.
- ▶ *Development materials.* Create an annual endowment report that can be used to talk with donors about endowment. Include information in basic giving brochures and planned giving brochures. Position the endowment and its purpose and encourage donors to give at all levels.
- ▶ *Newsletters, magazines, and other platforms.* Everyone who receives a newsletter, magazine or other communication from your nonprofit is a prospect. Include stories of donors who have created funds (living and deceased) at all gift levels and the impact of their gift. Refer readers to the website for more information.

## **F. Stay In Touch with Donors and Their Families**

Most problems between nonprofits and donors (or donors' family members) could have been alleviated, mediated, or reduced in scale through discussions and an effort to resolve the issue at the front end. Once a donor or donor's family has been stonewalled, ignored, or cut off, it is no longer possible for a possible settlement. Be clear at the creation of the fund to establish open communication. Document the files to clearly communicate to the next staff member any conversations or expectations of the donor the nonprofit agreed to. (These should all be reduced to writing in the document at the beginning, but sometimes resolution of small issues occurs along the way.) Provide transparent, annual communications. Engage the donor's family after the death of the donor.

## VII. Step Five: Make a Plan and Set Goals for Endowment

### A. Setting Expectations on Goals

Planned giving programs do not operate like annual fundraising or capital campaigns. Donors are asked to consider a gift to endowment through their estate plan. These prospects consider a variety of gift options that will meet their personal financial and charitable goals, as well as the charity's needs. Decisions are made slowly and often deferred until the donor is ready to tackle decisions in his entire estate plan.

Nonprofit boards make two common mistakes when setting goals for endowment and planned giving programs.

- *First, they expect an endowment – funded by planned gifts – to address short-term fundraising goals.* This will not happen. Planned giving takes time. There are no “average” benchmarks for planned giving program success. This is largely due to the fact that each charity has a different market position, board, history, and budget. One rule of thumb, however, is that the substantive results of a planned giving program will not be evident for 7 to 10 years.

Why the delay? Most planned gifts are deferred to the date of the donor's death. And while many donors who make planned gift commitments are over the age of 65, the mortality tables provide increasingly generous expectancies for donors of that age.

The long-term nature of the commitment is the strength of a planned giving program. One of the most successful sources of planned gifts is a donor with previous planned gift experience, whether that experience is with your organization or another nonprofit. A donor who has made a long-term commitment to your nonprofit will often increase the level of annual gifts in addition to making other planned gifts. That is because donors who make a bequest or other deferred commitment are invested in your organization's present and future.

- *Second, boards expect a planned giving program to generate instant returns. This also will not happen.* This expectation is a corollary to the first. Nonprofits are accustomed to immediate returns on their investments in fundraising, and naturally measure planned gifts in the same way. Annual campaigns, special events, and even capital campaigns have specific dollar goals and a date for campaign completion. Donors are solicited to write checks or make donations immediately. For these activities, current dollars are the measure of success.

Planned giving programs are different. Donors are not asked to make immediate contributions, but to consider the charity in their estate planning. (In fact, asking donors to fund the endowment with current dollars may affect that individual's ability to continue to make annual or capital gifts.) Decisions are made more slowly, and in the context of their broader estate plans.

As noted above, this does not mean that solicitation of endowed and planned gifts will not positively impact current gifts – it should. Conversations with donors about endowment build stronger donor relationships, focus donors on the organization's long-term goals, and remind them of the importance of their current investment in the organization's mission.

## **B. Begin by Setting Conceptual Goals**

Begin the goal setting process by working with the board to set conceptual goals for the endowment and planned giving programs. This offers an excellent opportunity to begin the board's education on this process and to set expectations about outcomes. Conceptual goals may include:

- Building the financial base of the nonprofit by creating an endowment;
- Identifying new donors to the organization, and cultivating those who are currently connected;
- Creating a marketing program to bring greater community visibility of the charity and its mission;
- Creating greater visibility for endowment and planned giving within the charity (staff and board);
- Improving the charity's organizational infrastructure and the effectiveness of its development program; and
- Creating a structure to involve a greater number of board members and volunteers in fundraising.

Discuss the goals, rank them by priority, and reduce them to writing.

## **C. Next, Set Specific, Incremental Goals**

Next set smaller, more specific goals that allow your organization to achieve the broader goals you have established making sure the goals you set are attainable, and are realistic. For example:

### *YEAR ONE GOALS*

- Strengthen data management to expand information retained on donors, and to hold planned gift/endowment data.
- Develop a prospecting and donor identification process.
- Adopt gift acceptance and endowment management policies.
- Create a marketing plan that will educate donors about endowment, planned gift options, and the case for long-term funding. Integrate these messages in current publications.
- Update annual fund and annual report formats to include queries on planned gifts and offer donors information about endowment.
- Develop method of tracking personal calls and responses to endowment marketing.
- Create a planned giving recognition society.
- Make calls on the 50 top prospects.
- Obtain endowment gifts from 50% of the board members.
- Obtain endowment gifts from 20% of the former board members.
- Train board and staff on endowment/planned giving.

### *YEAR TWO GOALS*

- Raise board endowment participation to 75%.
- Obtain 10 additional endowment commitments from former board members.
- Make calls on 75 top prospects to solicit endowment gifts.
- Celebrate your success at the one-year mark, inviting all who have committed to date and top prospects.
- Send letters to top 500 endowment prospects to invite them to an event, or to request information; follow up by telephone with as many as possible.
- Create a professional advisor council to support activities and raise awareness in the professional community.
- Add a full or part-time staff member to support endowment/planned giving work.

## *YEAR FIVE GOALS*

- 150 total members of the planned gift recognition society
- \$2,000,000 in endowment assets and \$10 million in endowment commitments
- 150 ongoing solicitations per year
- Active endowment committee/task force
- Active professional advisory council with two regular meetings each year

The goals set for the endowment/planned giving program should emphasize the priorities of the program. The goals must be measurable and should be divided into indirect revenue producing activities (activities with the goal of identifying and cultivating prospects) and direct revenue producing activities (activities related to closing gifts).

### *INDIRECT REVENUE PRODUCING ACTIVITIES*

In the early years of a planned giving program you should expect to spend most of your time in building infrastructure, qualifying prospects, making calls, and having conversations with potential donors. Planned giving success has a high correlation to the level of personal contact and interaction that the charity has with the donor. The higher the level of contact, the more likely it is the organization will be successful in developing endowed and planned gifts.

- Identifying qualified planned giving candidates.
- Reviewing donor records to qualify candidates as prospects.
- Training volunteers to make calls.
- Making telephone contacts to request appointments to discuss an endowment gift.
- Making personal visits with donors to solicit planned gifts.
- Making telephone calls and/or visits to follow up on solicitations.
- Making contacts with or soliciting the nonprofit's volunteers.
- Conducting seminars
- Mailing brochures to qualified prospects
- Making follow up calls in response to brochure response cards

### *DIRECT REVENUE PRODUCING ACTIVITIES*

Completed gifts – both irrevocable and revocable – should begin to materialize in the first few years of the planned giving program. However cash flow may not materialize for five, seven, or even ten years.

- Booking irrevocable gifts
- Booking revocable gift commitments
- Booking revenue from realized gifts

## **D. Create a Written Plan**

### **1. Start with Your Goals**

Use the goals to set your action steps. Break the goals into individual steps required to achieve each one. Please these action steps on a worksheet in a format shown in Table 8.

**TABLE 8  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN WORKSHEET**

<i>Action Steps</i>	<i>Person Responsible</i>	<i>Staff/Volunteer Resources Required</i>	<i>\$\$ Resources Required</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

**1. Incorporate the Results of the Assessment of Infrastructure and Readiness**

Using the list you created when you made an assessment of the elements required for success, such as a committed board, gift acceptance policies, endowment policies, staff, basic marketing materials, professional resources, and data management capability. Identify those tasks that must be a part of your implementation plan and include them on the list. Many of the infrastructure items must be included in the first year.

**2. Don't Forget Other Key Details on Your Implementation Plan**

An implementation plan is transformed from a "to do" list to a true implementation plan when key details are added. These include:

- The person or persons responsible for driving the action item.
- The staff and volunteer resources required to complete the step. Addressing this in the planning process adds a dose of reality to how quickly the step can be accomplished, and also establishes the critical roles of staff and volunteers in the success of the plan.
- The planning stage is also the time to address budget by including the financial resources required. The pace of implementation will be tempered not only by the staff/volunteers required, but the dollars required as well.
- Finally, assign a timeline. Be aware that some activities must be completed before the next stage begins. Make sure your timelines are realistic. Also note you may undertake more than one activity at a time.

**E. Commit to Ongoing Reporting**

**1. Update Progress on the Plan on a Quarterly Basis**

Update progress on a quarterly basis, using one color to denote completed items and another to indicate a step is in progress. Share this with the volunteer team and the board. If a single action item is holding up progress in moving forward, problem solve to eliminate the barrier.

**2. Track Progress Internally with a One Page Report**

While the endowment team will use the color coded implementation plan to track work progress, you will also need to track outcomes. Use a simple, single, one page report to track progress and report to the board. (See sample at Appendix B.) This report focuses you on the number of calls made, gift commitments received, and dollars received. It further measures the number of members of the planned gift recognition society, recognizes new members, and educates the board with a single tip on gift planning.

### **3. Report Progress Externally by Thanking Donors and Reporting Impact**

As recommended earlier, account to endowment donors, or donors' families, on an annual basis. Send them a letter and reporting reflecting the impact of their endowed gift. Emphasize your appreciation for the gift and the effective management the organization has provided. Encourage additional contributions to the fund, or creation of a new fund for an area of personal interest.

Always address investment results in the report. Donors become especially curious about investment results in down years. Even in down years there can be good news if the nonprofit results have met or exceeded market results. Even if the investment results are not reported in the public documents, donors who have contributed funds to the endowment should be told and staff should be prepared to answer donors' questions with an emphasis on the strong points of the portfolio's performance. If the performance has been disastrous, then staff should be prepared to tell donors what the charity plans to do to position itself more positively moving forward.

Endowment performance reporting provides the most tangible way to provide stewardship to endowment donors. Consider these donors similar to other types of donors with the potential to make additions to gifts or to create new funds. Annual reporting also provides a way to involve family members, either before or after the donor's death. Keeping in touch with family members through annual reporting allows the planned giving officer to develop a relationship with family members and to cultivate them as potential new donors.

Also thank those donors that have made gift commitments. Describe the impact of endowment on current mission and talk them as "partners" in your current and future success.

**APPENDIX A-1  
SAMPLE BOARD RESOLUTION COMMITTING FUNDS TO ENDOWMENT**

**THE XYZ CHARITY  
CORPORATE RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, The XYZ Charity is a nonprofit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_; and

WHEREAS, The XYZ Charity has made a commitment to the development of funds from public sources for the support of the programs and operation of The XYZ Charity in furtherance of its charitable mission; and

WHEREAS, The XYZ Charity conducts annual fundraising to generate funds required for operation; and

WHEREAS, The XYZ Charity desires to build an endowment to meet the future needs of the organization, and to provide resources for unexpected expenses, programs, or facility improvement;

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED*** that:

The XYZ Charity will:

1. Commit all proceeds of bequests, distributions from charitable remainder trusts, proceeds from retirement plan beneficiary designations, proceeds from life insurance beneficiary designations, proceeds from gift annuities (current and deferred), and other deferred gifts to the organization to the XYZ Endowment Pool [here substitute the name of the organization's foundation, the community foundation endowment fund for its benefit, or the segregated fund holding the organization's endowed funds], provided, however, that if such funds are transferred to XYZ with a use designated by the donor, such designation shall be honored.
2. Establish an annual spending policy for those funds, which may consist of income and some portion of the gains generated by the principal, to be used by XYZ in its operation or for the purposes designated by the donor.
3. Establish a procedure to distribute the principal of such funds, provided, however, that such distributions of principal shall be restricted to narrow situations of unexpected need and shall not generally be used for the operating budget of the foundation.



**CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION**

We the undersigned do each hereby certify that the above and foregoing resolution was duly adopted on \_\_\_\_\_ by The XYZ Charity at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors held on due notice and in compliance with its By-laws and Articles of Incorporation at which time a quorum was present and has not been modified or revoked.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President, The XYZ Charity

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary, The XYZ Charity

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX A-2  
SAMPLE RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING ENDOWMENT  
CORPORATE RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, The XYZ Charity is a nonprofit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_; and

WHEREAS, The XYZ Charity has made a commitment to the development of funds from public sources for the support of the programs and operation of The XYZ Charity and other nonprofits in the community; and

WHEREAS, The XYZ Charity desires to expand the capacity of XYZ to meet future needs, unexpected fluctuations in income, and to fully discharge its mission; and

WHEREAS, The XYZ Charity recognizes the need to encourage donors to contribute funds to the future use and purposes of XYZ, and that to do so, XYZ must provide a method of managing and investing such funds; and

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED*** that:

1. The XYZ Charity will establish a permanent endowment to be called "The XYZ Permanent Endowment".
2. The XYZ Permanent Endowment will be held [here, indicate whether the fund will be a segregated account initially held at a bank, trust company, or brokerage, an endowment account at the community foundation, or a supporting foundation].
3. The board of XYZ, upon the recommendation of its development and investment committees, will establish policies for administration and investment management of the funds held in endowment.
4. The board of XYZ, upon the recommendation of its development and investment committees, will adopt an accounting process that allows segregation of funds for the purpose of reporting to donors and monitoring spending for designated purposes, but will permit assets to be consolidated for the purposes of investment management.
5. XYZ will ensure compliance with the disclosure requirements of The Philanthropy Protection Act of 1995.

**CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION**

We the undersigned do each hereby certify that the above and foregoing resolution was duly adopted on \_\_\_\_\_ by The XYZ Charity at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors held on due notice and in compliance with its By-laws and Articles of Incorporation at which time a quorum was present and has not been modified or revoked.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President, The XYZ Charity

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary, The XYZ Charity

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date