NISN FACILITIES PROGRAM

Funding File for 501(c)(3)s (fiscal agent or school foundation)

Most funding applications involve pulling general documents, adapting common case materials, and creating specific content for the opportunity. Being able to focus your time on the last item—information specific to a funding opportunity—gives you more time and focus for developing competitive proposals and helps reduce the stress and rush of meeting grant deadlines.

This is where a "Funding File" comes into play – this is a collection of documents and information that prepare you to easily gather standard attachments and commonly requested information. This should be in electronic/digital format (a hardcopy backup is fine), maintained over time, and well organized. The following checklists will help you create a solid Funding File. The checklist is specific to 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor or school foundation/charity. Please also complete the appropriate checklist for your charter school (there are versions for opened/operating and planned/pre-operational schools.

To get the most out of the checklist, answer the status question for each item, repeat it at least annually, and schedule internal tasks, deadlines, and responsible parties for items needing follow-up. The priority column rates items with one being the highest priority and three being the lowest. The ratings reflect the likelihood that funders may ask for the item as an attachment or that the information is likely to be requested or helpful in preparing proposals. These numbers can serve as a guide for developing the Funding File over time. For the status column, suggested entries are:

- On Hand: You have it yourself. *Action*: Check annually to ensure item is current.
- Available: Your school has it, but it is not in a centralized grant file. *Action*: These should be added to your grant file, assuming they do not have privileged information.
- No-GET: Your school doesn't have this, and it is something you would like to add in the next 12 months. *Action*: Schedule tasks and timelines to collect or develop.
- No-Skip: Your school doesn't have this, and the item is not a priority to get during the next 12 months. *Action*: None, revisit categorization annually.
- N/A: Not an applicable or relevant item for your school. *Action*: None.

Being able to find information when you need it is another aspect of having a strong Funding File. While you are checking and collecting grant file items, it is a good opportunity to organize and standardize electronic (and possibly print) files. An example file structure is below.

- Financial
- Operations
- Organization Establishment
- Policies
- Personnel
- Programs
- Academic Data

About this Document
This was produced as part of the NISN Facilities Training Program, an effort funded by the U.S. Department of Education Charter Schools Program (Award #U282T180018). Awarded to the NACA Inspired Schools Network (NISN), the program supports expansion of opportunities for Native American and other underserved students to attend high-performing, innovative, and culturally responsive charter schools. Work includes technical assistance to schools in three states and documentation and dissemination of information, resources, and tools for facilities needs assessment, planning, and funding.

Funding File Checklist for Fiscal Sponsor or School-Affiliated 501(c)(3)

Date Completed:
Name(s) of Checklist Completer(s):

Priority	Status	Document
Checklist for use with a Fiscal Sponsor		
1		Fiscal sponsor IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter
1		Fiscal sponsor contact information (mailing/street addresses, phone, website, main contact email, phone, name, title)
1		Fiscal sponsorship agreement letter
1		Fiscal sponsor board of directors/trustees list
2		Fiscal sponsor most recent IRS 990 tax returns
2		Fiscal sponsor most recent audited financials
2		Fiscal sponsor current organizational budget
Checklist for a School Affiliated Foundation (items are for the charity, not the school)		
1		IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter
1		List of current board of directors/trustees with contact information, board positions, and professional affiliations
1		Two most recent IRS 990 tax filings
1		Organization budget for current year
1		Last two years' financial statements (approved by board, preferably signed by board treasurer)
1		Two most recent years' audited financials if annual budget is over $500,000
2		Organization budget for next fiscal year
3		Bylaws
		Articles of Incorporation
3		List of top contributors for the past year (donors, grants, sponsors)