

Having the Right Paid Foundation Staff at the Right Time

Foundations have special tax status because funds are used for the public good. Trustees are legally responsible for assuring that all the foundation's assets are used responsibly for public good, including funds used to pay for staff and/or consultants.

1. Fiscal accountability

How will adding paid staff/consultants make the foundation more responsive and responsible to the public? Is this the best use of these dollars?

2. Power shifts

How would adding staff/consultants who are family members shift power and influence?

How would adding staff/consultants not connected to the family shift power and influence?

How do the trustees want to deal with the power shifts?

3. The job description(s) -- Write it down

What will staff/consultants do that a volunteer is not available, able or willing to do?

(Below are some possibilities.)

respond to requests for information

send receipts for funding requests

maintain files

write minutes

prepare info for tax filing

write letters of transmittal and decline

prepare materials for meetings

review requests for completeness

work with requesting organizations

conduct site visits

write grant summaries for trustees

develop guidelines or a strategy

do research

draft a budget

represent the foundation at meetings

4. Skills and abilities needed

Exactly what hard and soft skills are needed? *(Here are some possibilities)*

computer skills

experience with nonprofit organizations

understanding of foundations

knowledge of an issue

ability to evaluate program design

ability to work collaboratively

good written communication

good verbal communication

good judgment

professional physical appearance

5. Staffing models

Will the defined work best be done by one person, or will two or three be more effective?

Is the work full-time, part-time, contract?

What benefits will be offered, if any?

Contract or consulting staff is clearly best for:

--projects with beginning and end dates

--testing a person's abilities to do the work

--positions without benefits or if office space and equipment will not be provided

6. The fair market value of the position(s)

What is the fair market value of the position(s) given the responsibilities and skills?

What is comparable for similar jobs in the same community?

7. Staff oversight and training

To whom will staff report?

How will staff be trained? (All staff needs some type of training/orientation.)

Who will do performance appraisal and when?

Best: Identify one primary contact even if staff will work with all trustees.