

**NAN'S RULES FOR RAISING MONEY: EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW  
ABOUT ASKING FOR MONEY BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK**

1. **Don't be afraid to ask.** There is no secret to getting money—all you have to do is ASK. It is the only way to get it. You will never know what you can get until you ask, and the worst thing that can happen is someone will say “no.” Ah, but what a thrill when they say “yes”...  
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2. **Do your homework.** Take the time to research your target foundations and individuals, so you will know what they are really interested in supporting and who their board members are.  
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3. **Make your intentions clear.** In person and in writing, make sure your “ask” is clear and specific. Don't ask for ‘whatever you can give...’ Be concrete in your request and name your amount.  
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4. **“NO” doesn't always mean no.** It might mean “I can't do it now,” or “I have to think about it,” or “come back later.” Don't be afraid to ask again.  
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5. **Take the time to get to know donors and foundation staff.** Many people ENJOY giving money, and welcome the opportunity. They will respond if there is a personal connection. But often, individuals and foundations need cultivating and attention before they are ready to give. Sometimes, they have other commitments and can't give you support yet even if they want to. Often, just knowing who you are and what your project does will help differentiate you from the rest of the pack.  
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6. **Follow instructions when writing grants and fill out forms properly.** If foundations and funders give you instructions for writing a proposal, DO WHAT THEY TELL YOU. There is nothing that will turn them off faster than handing in a proposal that does not follow their instructions.  
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7. **If you are confused or have questions, ASK.** The job of a foundation is to give away money, and the role of the staff is to help you. Foundation staff will answer questions and give you guidance, and often a phone call will leave an impression with them that will help you later on. Sometimes it is worth making up a question just so you can chat or meet with a program officer. And do call them to ask when you get a rejection, too.  
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8. **The name of the game in foundations is for them to know who you are.** Foundations get dozens of proposals for each one they fund, so even if you fit their guidelines perfectly, don't expect a grant just because you have sent in a proposal. Most foundations want to develop personal relations with their grantees, and need confidence in them before the first dollar is spent. There is no substitute for having them know who you are.  
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9. **When writing a proposal or case statement, tell a story.** You have to capture them in the first few sentences, so don't use jargon -- be concrete to explain the basics – what, why, how, when, who.  
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10. **Don't assume that the person reading your proposal knows anything about your issue.** You have no idea who will wind up reading your proposal, so write it for someone who knows nothing. Include as much background, context and history as necessary to make sure the reader can understand what you are proposing to do and why.  
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11. **Money follows money.** Sometimes getting that first commitment is the hardest, because donors and foundations are generally cautious and don't like to be first. But once you have primed the pump, you will find others happy to follow.  
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