



FAQ about Field of Interest Funds

What is the purpose of a field of interest fund?

Field of interest funds are flexible funds for grantmaking in a specific interest area.

How does a field of interest fund work?

A donor makes a gift to establish a field of interest fund in an area about which they feel passionately. ACF works with the donor to establish guidelines to inform grantmaking over time. A field of interest fund can be broadly or narrowly focused, depending on the donor's interest. A broad field of interest fund could be a fund for children. More specific would be a fund for child abuse prevention. Based on the amount in the fund, grants are made one or two times per year, in the name of the donor's fund.

Who is the ideal donor for a field of interest fund?

Field of interest funds are great fits for many types of donors, including those who want their fund to be flexible enough to meet changing needs in the field, and do not feel the need to be actively involved in grantmaking. Additionally, individuals and families who want to leave a legacy gift supporting charitable causes they care about and for memorializing those who had a particular cause they were passionate about.

Who is responsible for the grantmaking?

ACF's Board of Directors is responsible for all foundation grantmaking, usually through a grants committee. Depending on the field of interest, the board may ask outside experts to sit on a grantmaking committee.

Does the grantmaking have to be competitive?

No. Grants from a field of interest fund are often awarded in a competitive process. However, the grants committee may decide to make pro-active grants in the field of interest, or to solicit proposals from specific agencies whose work in the field is interesting to them.

What happens if there is not longer a need for grants in that area?

That would be a wonderful thing. However, if a field of interest fund was established to combat a certain issue that, over time, ceases to be a concern, the ACF Board of Directors would try to find another similar charitable cause to direct the grantmaking as close as possible to the donor's original intent. For example, old funds set up to benefit children with polio have been converted into funds for the benefit of disabled children.

Do field of interest funds have to be endowed?

Yes. This ensures a permanent resource to address an ongoing need.

Please contact a program officer for additional information.