



Top Ten Reasons Why Private Independent Foundations Belong to the Minnesota Council on Foundations.

Top ten reasons
to **join us.**

- one** > **Resources to enhance your effectiveness.** We focus on helping foundations increase the effectiveness of their grantmaking and simplify their work. Members have ready access to an array of useful tools, publications, best practices and other information — in print or online — to help maximize the impact of their grant dollars and the efficiency of their staff and/or volunteer board members.
- two** > **Networks to learn from others.** We serve as a vibrant hub for the community of foundations who share a commitment to effective grantmaking in this region. Members have a variety of ongoing opportunities to connect with, and learn from, other foundations facing similar issues, experiences and challenges, and to be in touch with other types of philanthropic organizations working to make a difference here at home.
- three** > **A strong voice to represent your interests.** We provide a unified voice to strengthen and protect philanthropy, representing members' interests with elected officials, the media, nonprofits and the general public. We communicate the important role of foundations by supporting key legislation, gaining positive media coverage, building the skills of grantseekers and much more. You can lend your voice to this platform and benefit from our advocacy on behalf of all foundations.
- four** > **Regional information to keep you up-to-date.** We are your access point for information and knowledge related to our region's unique needs — information you'll find nowhere else. We keep our members updated on emerging local giving trends, new community developments, pending legislative action, local giving news and more, to help you make effective decisions and plan for the future.
- five** > **Great programs to expand your knowledge.** We deliver a wide variety of ongoing programs where members learn useful ideas and effective practices from regional and national experts in the field. You can benefit from basic and advanced grantmaking seminars, briefings on community issues and much more.
- six** > **Opportunities to develop your leadership.** We provide numerous opportunities for your staff and board members to play an important leadership role in the field and the community. Members can get involved in Council committees and task forces, participate in programs with nonprofit and community leaders, and much more.
- seven** > **A local presence to serve you close to home.** We offer you programs, services and events that are close-at-hand, and bring top national experts and expertise to the region. You can use a car instead of an airplane to participate in high quality skill-building and networking activities throughout the year.
- eight** > **Responsive, personalized service to meet your needs.** We get to know you, your foundation, and its distinct characteristics and goals. You receive personalized attention from staff people who live and work in this region — and who are committed to helping your organization excel in achieving your goals.
- nine** > **Leadership to strengthen philanthropy.** Membership in the Council makes you part of a leadership organization dedicated to strengthening respectful, ethical philanthropy. The Council developed Principles for Minnesota Grantmakers, a code of ethics for foundations; corresponding practices for private independent foundations that offer practical ways to implement the Principles; and many other leadership initiatives to help uphold the public trust of foundations.
- ten** > **Professional help to support your work.** We have skilled staff who can connect you with expert technical assistance and consultant referrals in areas such as grantmaking, administration, accounting, technology, and governance, when you need them. You have ready access to the information and aid you need to support your operation.



Private Independent Foundation Member Benefits

At the Minnesota Council on Foundations, we understand that private independent foundations share a desire to be as effective as possible with their grant dollars to make a positive impact in our communities. They hope to do this while ensuring that they stay in touch with the community and its needs, leverage their grant dollars and connect with colleagues who share their interests and tackle similar issues.

For newer foundations, the central challenge is often about getting started: Defining a giving strategy that works, identifying roles and responsibilities, building a philanthropic network, creating grantmaking guidelines and finding outstanding nonprofit organizations and programs to support. For more established foundations, issues of greater concern typically include fine-tuning the grantmaking plan, benchmarking against best practices in the field, working in partnership with other grantmakers to be more effective, trying new approaches to address community needs and providing leadership in the field.

Whether your foundation is looking for information on community issues, effective practices in grantmaking, the latest ideas in foundation management and governance, grantmaking benchmarks, or the chance to connect with peers and potential partners, the Minnesota Council on Foundations can help.

We offer networking contacts, professional development opportunities, regional information and resources designed to make your important work easier and your grantmaking more effective.

PRIVATE INDEPENDENT FOUNDATION TESTIMONIAL >>>

“We measure the value of the Jerome Foundation’s membership in the Minnesota Council on Foundations not just in terms of the services we receive for our own board and staff, but also in the collective energy, integrity and openness the Council provides to the Minnesota nonprofit community.”

— *Cynthia Gehrig, Jerome Foundation*



“There are many valuable aspects of membership in Council... the information and tools, having a unified voice for philanthropy and the direct services they provide. It has all been important to our work at various times.”

John Kostishack
Executive Director, Otto Bremer Foundation



The Otto Bremer Foundation has long been a part of the philanthropic landscape in Minnesota. Established in 1944 as a charitable trust by Otto Bremer, an active banker and public servant, the Foundation focuses its grantmaking in four areas: affordable housing, access to health care, capacity building for nonprofits and civic engagement.

The Foundation, along with several other grantmakers, was instrumental in helping establish the Minnesota Council on Foundations. In doing so, these organizations were establishing a collective voice to inform state policy and a forum for networking and collaboration.

Today, both staff and trustees at the Otto Bremer Foundation are active with a variety of Council activities and they regularly utilize Council resources to advance the effectiveness of their grantmaking.

John Kostishack, the Foundation’s Executive Director, notes that Foundation staff takes regular advantage of special topic meetings. The Council helps facilitate and host these member forums. “We’re able to share information and approaches on a specific community issue. Through connections with other grantmakers, we’ve been able to amplify the impact of our grants. It’s a fabulous service.”

Kostishack also notes that the Council has been instrumental in helping potential grantees understand how to access grantmaking organizations. “The Council has helped nonprofits understand the differences between foundations (i.e., different grantmaking approaches and priorities) and helped make us more approachable. It has streamlined the grantseeking process and helped ensure we get proposals that align with our grantmaking focus.”

Senior Program Officer Elsa Vega-Perez finds the networking opportunities rewarding. “As a Council member and a person of color, I’m always looking for ways the field of philanthropy can create opportunities for systems change. The Council provides opportunities to convene members and discuss ways we can act as change agents around issues such as diversity.” Vega-Perez also notes she finds member briefings and training opportunities very beneficial to her work at the Foundation.

Charlotte Johnson, a Foundation trustee, also actively participates in Council activities, including serving as a past board chair of the Council. “The Council provides numerous opportunities to interact with others in the field — formally and informally. Although every foundation is different, we all deal with common issues. Members help each other be better philanthropists.”

Kostishack summed up the Council’s leadership by saying, “They’ve been a voice for all of us. The Council has really helped legislators and the media understand what we do and how it helps communities throughout our state.”

This is one example of how the Minnesota Council on Foundations helps private independent foundations. Please contact us to find out more about how your foundation can benefit from joining the Minnesota Council on Foundations.