



HOW TO FINANCE YOUR FELLOW

Lead For America's mission is to support our nation's brightest young people to return to their hometowns in service of their communities — particularly to places that struggle the most to recruit and retain their young people. As such, we focus on placing Fellows in rural, tribal, and economically distressed urban communities, and understand that for many of these host institutions, financial resources are often significantly limited. While we believe that it is important for all host governments to have “skin in the game” in the form of financial contribution, we are also committed to accessibility and work to do everything we can to support financially strapped host institutions in creatively financing their fellowship. This brochure describes the numerous financing methods we have worked with host institutions to pursue over the past year.

If you have any questions about the Fellowship or how to creatively finance your Fellow, please do not hesitate to email Director of Community Partnerships, Erica Ng, at Erica.Ng@lead4america.org.

FUNDRAISING PROCESS

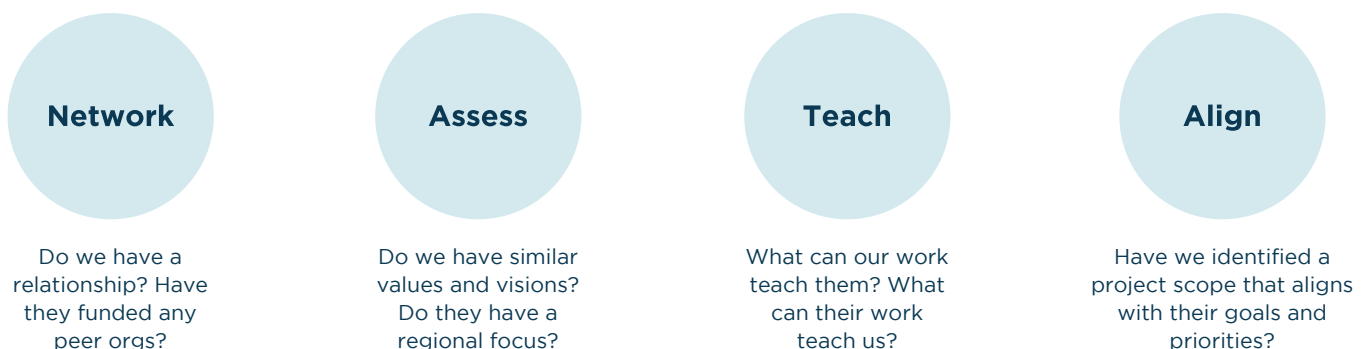
Lead For America helps Host Communities connect with local philanthropic resources to support your Fellow's scholarship. There are various types of foundations that can provide support, and we will work with you to develop both new and existing relationships to best support your Fellow.

Step 1: Determine Funding Needs

Before we begin fundraising, it is necessary to understand the funding gap needed to be filled by local philanthropy. Please complete [this quick survey](#).

Step 2: Identify Philanthropic Partners

After determining the funding gap, we can identify local funders to join you in supporting your Fellow. If you have existing relationships, it is key to assess which of those partners would be most willing and able to give support. If you do not have existing relationships with local funders, we encourage you to identify prospective partners. Community foundations and locally-focused private family foundations are great places to start pursuing relationships for community-driven work. Here are some tactics that will help determine if there is an opportunity for a partnership:



After identifying local funders, send us a list of foundation name, point of contact, and email address so we can begin to engage.

Step 3: LFA Engages Local Philanthropy

We will provide support throughout each step. We will begin by sending an introduction email to the local funders you identified and refer to your host organization in the subject line. We will facilitate any follow up call with a local funder to share more about the Fellow and our program. LFA will also provide any necessary materials such as executive summaries, financial overviews, examples of Fellow projects, and other related resources that may be helpful in engaging philanthropic partners. Throughout the engagement process, LFA will ensure that you have all the tools and insight necessary to successfully engage a philanthropic partner.

OTHER WAYS TO FUNDRAISE

The previous page details the process of partnering with local philanthropy to fundraise for your Fellow. But, there are various other ways to garner financial support. See the following pages for other suggested ways of fundraising.



COST-SHARE WITH OTHER HOSTING DEPARTMENTS

Several host institutions have split the Fellow's project scope and responsibilities across multiple departments. The Fellow reports to multiple supervisors and shares their time as the departments see fit. This allows for multiple budgets to allocate a portion of the financial contribution, and is often used in cases where the community is embarking on key initiatives where responsibilities fall across multiple departments. Often, Fellows play the coordinating role across these departments and are able to move strategies forward on projects that risk stalling because of the lack of a dedicated person acting as coordinator.



USE A FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT

Some institutions used a portion of their grant money from a federal, state, (or in one case, settlement funds from a public lawsuit) grant to fund their Fellow. As a result, the Fellow's project scope is focused on moving forward the outcomes tied to that specific grant. This is often the tool used in institutions that are understaffed, but receive significant funding to launch a new initiative for the community. In other cases, this is funding from things like Opportunity Zones and CDBG grants that include administrative line items written into the grant receipt.



HOST YOUR FELLOWS AS AN AMERICORPS VISTA

For host institutions that already host their own AmeriCorps VISTA members, some chose to repurpose their VISTA slots to the Fellow - covering the core base stipend of the fellowship through federal money and leaving housing and health insurance (if needed) to be funded by either a community-based foundation or LFA scholarship. In these cases, LFA does not handle any of the AmeriCorps process. The host institution will serve as the primary sponsor of the AmeriCorps member and is responsible for all reporting and compliance with the AmeriCorps project scope and selection timeline.



PROVIDE IN-KIND HOUSING TO YOUR FELLOW

To decrease the total cost of the financial contribution, hosts can provide in-kind housing to the Fellow and the Fellow must agree to accept this in-kind support. Some host institutions have identified individual community members eager to host a young returning community member in an extra room in their house. Others have identified accommodation within churches or fire houses.



RE-ALLOCATE INTERNSHIP FUNDING

Some host institutions have funding pre-allocated within their budgets, or through local associations, that they repurposed to fund the fellowship financial contribution. For hosts that have college enrollment be a requirement for internship funding eligibility, we have had examples where the decision-makers overrode these requirements to accommodate hosting a Fellow using internship funds.



HOST A COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER

In certain communities, we have partnered with local community leaders - including the host institution representative - to identify a set of potential donors to invite to a dinner, appetizers and drinks event, etc. with the hopes of raising funds to support the individual Fellow's return.

In one case, a community raised \$10,000 in just two hours at a happy hour event. LFA is happy to help support in this planning, share best practices, provide materials, etc. as is helpful.



HIRE THE FELLOW AS A FULL TIME EMPLOYEE

In some extraordinary cases, some host institutions preferred to hire the Fellow on as a full-time employee so that the Fellow can receive full access to the benefits of regular employees. In this case, we saw project scopes change to fulfill more day-to-day needs of the institution, in addition to the community projects and training that the Fellow undergoes through Lead for America. Host institutions are still expected to pay a program fee to Lead for America, but LFA can work with the host institution to identify a community-based foundation that would help cover the program fee to cover training and education costs.



APPLY FOR A NEEDS-BASED SCHOLARSHIP

In certain exceptional cases, LFA will fundraise nationally to support those host institutions that have tried all of these financing methods. Hosts are invited to apply for a needs-based scholarship after meeting with Erica to discuss their situation and possible support options.



BE CREATIVE

Don't see an option here that works for you but still want to host? We'd love to hear from you still! We are happy to add and learn from additional ways that hosts might be able to leverage partnerships.

THANK YOU

If these steps do not yield positive results, we will work with you to identify other champions in your community and conduct a similar outreach process. Ultimately, we believe that you are the best representation of your community assets and needs to potential funders, and we are committed to facilitating those relationships in any way that is a best-fit for everyone involved. We want to be a strong partner to your community and organization.

For questions about the fellowship or hosting process contact Erica Ng, Director of Community Partnerships at Erica.Ng@lead4america.org.

For questions specifically about fundraising, contact Raymundo Garcia Jr., Director of Development at Raymundo.Garcia@lead4america.org.