Letter of Inquiry Elements

Before considering a full proposal, many funders like to see a brief pre-proposal or letter of inquiry or intent (LOI). Often your first contact with a grantmaker is through this LOI, a succinct 2-3 page description of the work you want to accomplish with your project. An LOI is frequently the first step in approaching a funder and is a helpful tool for introducing your work to a prospective funder who may not have formal application guidelines. The letter includes similar information contained in a full proposal, condensed to the most essential information. An LOI typically consists of:

- **Introductory paragraph**—Including a single sentence description of what you want to accomplish and the amount you will request. Also demonstrate in this paragraph, or early on in your letter, why the grantmaker would have an interest in your program and how it fits the grantmaker's priorities.

- **Organizational information**—Brief summary of institutional, college, and department/program mission statements and qualifications.

- **Need or problem statement**—A glimpse at the available research and data supporting the need for your program. Tap into the reader's intellect and emotions.

- **Two-three paragraph program description**—How you will address the need, including an overview of your measurable goals and objectives, activities, and total program budget.

- **Closing**—Gracious statement positively expressing your appreciation for their consideration and your hopes to share further program details through further conversation or a full proposal. The GIFT Center can assist in determining who is most appropriate for signing the letter.