

# Stronger Together: Foundry's Collaborative Fundraising Approach

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## Introduction

Foundry is a network of integrated youth service centres located in British Columbia, Canada. The network has expanded from its first centre opening in 2015 to 11 now open and 12 more in active development in diverse urban, rural, and remote communities spanning a wide geographical area. The Foundry central office leads the network, and each centre is established, opened, and operated by a designated lead agency, a non-profit organization or health authority already present in the community. The Foundry central office and each Foundry lead agency receive core funding from government and must also fundraise – in some cases with a partnering fundraising foundation – in order to complete capital funding requirements or run innovative programs or initiatives. A unique and exemplary collaborative fundraising model is emerging amongst agencies in the Foundry network.

## Objectives

To share the approaches Foundry central office has taken to establish a collaborative fundraising model in order to optimize funding opportunities across the network and reduce competition amongst Foundry central office and lead agencies.

## Approach/Methods

Foundry central office quickly realized in its first phase of development that coordination was required amongst the central office, its provincial partner foundation, and five initial lead agencies in order for each organization to meet its Foundry-related funding needs, with a focus on capital establishment, without confusing donors or hindering trust amongst partnering organizations. Some coordination occurred, but the need for a more collaborative approach became even more acute as expansion of the network occurred. The introduction of prospect management and donor recognition guidelines supported a coordinated approach, and an early foundation of relationship development and trust-building facilitated more intentional and intensive future coordination. This includes a Fundraising Community of Practice launched in 2020, as more centres and lead agencies were added to the network.

## Results

Foundry and its partners have raised over \$32M through philanthropy since its launch in 2015. Foundry central office coordinates the Fundraising Community of Practice to facilitate information-sharing, strategy development, and fundraising coordination amongst lead agencies and fundraising partners. Foundry central office and lead agencies now collaborate to develop shared proposals and grant applications and review funding opportunities to determine which organization is strategically positioned to lead the donor/funder conversation.

They also share ideas and examples of how youth, families/caregivers, and local community members can champion and/or participate in fundraising activities. This process identified that this level of collaborative fundraising is extremely rare in health and social services and perhaps unprecedented in the current system, which drives agencies to compete for limited funding opportunities.

## **Conclusion**

Foundry has had success in raising significant amounts of funding, while also maintaining strong and collaborative relationships amongst key partner agencies despite the difficulty often inherent in discussions related to fundraising. This approach has created an environment of trust and reciprocity amongst the Foundry network, which is challenging to achieve when organizations are driven to compete for limited funds.

