

NIUF CORPORATE & FOUNDATION RELATIONS

Letter of Inquiry Template



Date

Addressee

Organization Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear _____:

Paragraph 1 – Short executive summary with:

- Compelling opener with name of the organization (Northern Illinois University Foundation)
- “Hook” statement – program title + impact
- How the project fits the funder’s mission/purpose/funding interests
- Request for “consideration of grant funding”

Paragraph 2 – Brief Organizational Description (focus more on NIU with brief mention of NIUF):

- Founded in 1895; mission statement
- Leader in both transformational research and social mobility (Brookings Institute)
- 100+ undergraduate and 96 graduate programs
- Over 16,000 students; NIU graduated over 4,000 from our 7 colleges/schools last year; 50% of undergraduates are first-generation college students.
- NIU Foundation mission/role.

Paragraph 3 – Statement of Need:

- Need met by your project:
 - Think outside of NIU – The need is NOT funding for supplies or research. Think about what necessitates the research/need in the first place.
 - Examples might include: *prevalence of a disease; widespread poverty/food shortages; cultural gap in local arts community, etc.*
- Target population/demographics? Geographic area impacted?
- Statistical facts; citations; examples

Paragraph 4 – Methodology:

- State the request: *On behalf of the NIU College of _____ (and/or Department of _____), the NIU Foundation respectfully requests \$XXX,XXX to fund [program name/research initiative].*
- What are the goals (overarching) and objectives (specific, measurable) of your proposed project? For example:
 - *Goal: Develop new solutions and treatments to aid in the fight against [disease].*
 - *Objective 1: By May 2030, we will identify ## medicines that target and treat _____.*
- General overview of major activities (1-2 sentences)
- Names and titles of key, highly-credentialed project staff
- Other funding sources (especially NIU’s skin-in-the-game)

NIU FOUNDATION CORPORATE & FOUNDATION RELATIONS

135 Altgeld Hall | DeKalb, IL 60115 | 815-753-1626

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Paragraph 5 – Closing:

- Restate intent of project and alignment with foundation’s mission/purpose/funding interests.
- Corporate & Foundation Relations Contact Information: *For additional information, please contact Erin Smith, Senior Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, at Erin.Smith@niu.edu or 815-753-1859.*
- 1-2 “sign-off sentences” – *“Thank you for considering [project name/research initiative]. Funding from the XYZ Foundation will go a long way in transforming _____.”*

Sincerely,

Name, Title
Organization

TIPS:

- 1-2 pages in length
- Use language from the funder’s website
- Print on NIU Foundation letterhead