

# Safeguarding Language in Grant Applications

## Recommendations



### TO COMMUNICATE THE PRIORITY OF SAFEGUARDING AND ABUSE PREVENTION TO GRANTEES AND PARTNERS, FUNDERS CAN:

- 1 Include a brief statement of the foundation's safeguarding values on its website or grant application materials, as an initial introduction to the topic (SEE REVERSE);
- 2 Gather information from partners via basic questions/intake on grant applications or requests.
  - Questions can be formulated to understand what, if any, protocols, policies, and safeguards exist within an applicant's organizational structure.
  - If desired, questions can accommodate a simple YES/NO or free response.
  - "No" can be softened with a "Not at this time" or a comparable sentiment.

### ANTICIPATE CONCERNS & WELCOME DIALOGUE

**Safeguarding is a sensitive topic.** Grantee and prospective partners may be intimidated by questions related to "abuse prevention," or reluctant to disclose information to a funder **unless they understand how a funder will use the data.** At minimum, a partner must understand that the funder is committed to providing the grantee with resources for learning. The term "safeguarding" can also be unfamiliar to some organizations, and **it is essential for a funder to provide a clear definition.**

We recommend that funders communicate new safeguarding expectations *verbally*, in addition to any written statements. A verbal introduction creates a valuable opportunity for dialogue and questions from the partner. **It is critical for the grantee partner to understand both 1) the nature of a funder's interest, and 2) expectations associated with the "ask," including whether it is formalized and binding, or encouraged and invitational.** As trust-based philanthropy grows, funders must recognize the burden and work that organizational safeguarding demands and be clear and consistent in their rationale for prioritizing this work. A conversation within or following the first round of contact helps manage grantee expectations and clear up misunderstandings and concerns.

### IMPORTANTLY, FUNDERS & PARTNERS MUST SHARE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING



Framing safeguarding as a "**collaborative effort**" between funder and partner is useful. Funders and grantee partners are often aligned on key principles of service, justice, or faith; safeguarding all people (from volunteers and team members to program participants and beneficiaries of service) is a natural extension of these principles.

- It is helpful for a funder to understand the **challenges that a grantee partner may face** in implementing best practices, including drafting and approving a written safeguarding policy.
- It is helpful for the grantee partner to see that a foundation is **sincere in its safeguarding commitment (and its own development and education in this area)**, despite being some degrees removed from direct service.



### TIP: DEFINE YOUR TERMINOLOGY TO CREATE A "COMMON LANGUAGE"

**Safeguarding** refers to measures and interventions that protect people from abuse, harm, exploitation, or violence. Safeguarding reflects a commitment to best practices that prevent abuse, reduce risk, and keep all persons—especially children and vulnerable adults—safe. Safeguarding also promotes action that assures justice and supports healing for victims and survivors of abuse.

Discover additional resources at  
<https://safeguarding.fadica.org>

## SAMPLE VALUES STATEMENT:

[Foundation Name] is committed to promoting a culture of safe environments and prioritizing the well-being of all individuals, especially children and vulnerable adults, in its grantmaking. As part of this effort, [the foundation] has pledged to support grantee partners in developing capacity for abuse prevention and organizational safeguards. The following questions will help [the foundation] [determine next steps/provide resources to partners].

**All answers are confidential and will be used for [specific purpose], e.g.,** *Our goals are to resource grantee partners by linking you to cost-free materials or providing free access to—or additional funding for—trainings, modules, templates, expert consultation, etc.*

### Other considerations:

- Assess how the foundation will provide access to resources and consultation.
- Acknowledge that answers will not disqualify a grantee partner/prospect from funding; rather, explain how this initial data will be used.
- Discuss a timeline for how the foundation will use collected data. Will safeguarding training resource use be invitational and optional? Does the foundation wish to impose a requirement in the long-term?
- As safeguarding best practices are adopted/integrated, to what extent will the foundation consider additional partner infrastructure needs?
- Be prepared to answer the same questions you ask grantee partners.
- Are partners struggling with the term “safeguarding”? Frame it more simply: What do you do (or need to do) to keep people safe at your organization?



### TIP: BE SPECIFIC!

Sample language for the values statement is intentionally broad so funders may set unique expectations for grantee partners. Consider how safeguarding intersects with your grantmaking values, and articulate how you will use raw data to resource the partner. Know the “why,” as well as the “who” and the “what.”



### TIP: GO BEYOND “CHILD PROTECTION”

**Vulnerable adult** can be diversely defined; however, it frequently refers to an individual who is eighteen years of age or older and who is unable to protect themselves from abuse, harm, or exploitation, which may be by reason of illness, age, chronic health condition, disability, or other types of physical or mental impairment. In the support and care for vulnerable adults, a power differential is inherent, according to the relationship or situation of trust, influence, or dependency.

Which partners serve vulnerable adult populations, and how you can best support them?

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR GRANT SEEKERS:

1. Does your organization provide direct services to children or vulnerable adults?

Yes

No

If the answer to #1 is yes, please confirm:

- Does your organization have a written policy that defines appropriate boundaries and interactions between staff and vulnerable clients/beneficiaries of service, and offers a clear system of reporting for violations or concerns? (Y/N)
- Does your organization require staff to participate in abuse prevention trainings/programs before interacting with children or vulnerable adults? (Y/N)

2. Are you interested in receiving free resources and/or expert consultation to build capacity for abuse prevention and safe environments?

Yes

No