

# Spotting opportunity: Moving from a commercial fund to the Community Foundation



Although a donor-advised fund, which is becoming a more and more popular charitable planning tool, can be established through a national financial institution, the Community Foundation offers its donor-advised fund holders much broader services, more personal attention, and deeper connections to the nonprofits whose work is essential to effecting positive community change. Unfortunately, many attorneys, accountants, and financial advisors are simply not aware that a donor-advised fund established at the Community Foundation is in most cases a far better fit for their clients than a donor-advised fund set up at a “commercial gift fund.”

As you meet with your clients about year-end planning, be sure to ask whether they’ve established a donor-advised fund and if so, where it’s housed. If a client’s donor-advised fund is not at a Community Foundation, but instead was established through a national provider, please give us a call. We would be happy to talk with you and your client about the ease and benefits of moving the donor-advised fund to the Community Foundation.

The Community Foundation offers donor-advised fund holders the same tax and administrative benefits as a commercial gift fund, including:

- Online access to the donor-advised fund to view balances, contributions, and grants

- Simple process for requesting grants to favorite charities
- Streamlined tax reporting, often represented by just one letter to provide to an accountant at tax time, even when the donor-advised fund is used to support dozens of individual charities throughout the year
- All back-office administration, tax receipts, recordkeeping, and other requirements for the donor-advised fund's 501(c)(3) status
- Favorable tax-deductibility of contributions to the fund

Unlike standard commercial gift funds, though, the Community Foundation offers high-level, customized services to its donor-advised fund holders, including:

- Concierge-level service by knowledgeable staff to structure estate gifts to charities and accept gifts of appreciated stock or complex assets such as real estate or closely-held stock
- In-house experts who have a finger on the pulse of community needs, the strengths of specific nonprofits, and how to structure grant making for the highest possible community benefit
- Opportunities to collaborate with other donors who care about similar issues and forums to tap into local and national subject matter experts
- Opportunities to go deep into specific issue areas, both through education and hands-on involvement
- Assistance with structuring and measuring the impact of grants
- Family philanthropy and corporate giving services to foster a well-rounded, holistic approach to philanthropy
- Administrative fees that are reinvested into the Community Foundation, itself a nonprofit, to help support operations, grow its mission, and help even more donors support the causes they care about
- Hands-on assistance from local experts who understand both local and distant needs, and welcome the opportunity to research and identify causes aligned with donors' goals and priorities
- Staff members who live in the community they serve and often personally know the leaders and staff of grantee organizations and regularly hear about their needs first-hand

Keep an eye out for clients' donor-advised funds at commercial gift funds. You'll be doing a tremendous service for your client, and you'll be helping the local community. You will also be fulfilling your own professional responsibilities by exploring the opportunity for a client to move a donor-advised fund to the Community Foundation. At the Community Foundation, hard-earned assets receive the attention they deserve as your clients strive to make a difference in the causes they care about the most.