



Philanthropic Legacy Letter for Successor Advisors

Once you know who the successor advisor(s) of your fund will be, write a letter to him/her as if you were going on a trip and do not expect to return. Some prefer to write one letter and address it to all their successor advisors at once. Others may wish to write one letter and address sections of the letter to specific people. How you design your letter is up to you.

The purpose of the letter is to let your successor advisor(s) know what is most important in your philanthropy. This is an opportunity to communicate your core values and not just instructions about how to handle the fund and what charities to give to. Your thoughts, opinions and philosophy will be treasured and given much more attention and credibility after you are gone.

Your letter should include your description of what drives you and what you stand for when it comes to philanthropy. Restate values, ethics and morals that require emphasis. Speak about the gifts to charity that gave you the most satisfaction and explain what made them meaningful for you. Speak about the lessons you learned about grantmaking that you would like to pass on to your successor advisor(s). Share cherished memories, events and people that made an impact in your charitable giving. These can be very powerful. Most importantly, reinforce the trust you have in your successor advisor(s) and your hope for the benefits they'll gain by advising your fund.

Your legacy can be more than your fund. It can be a window into who you are and what you believe in – a personal, insightful missive that they will value and remember long after you are gone.