

thePRENUPS

What Filmmakers and Funders
Should Talk About
Before Tying the Knot

ACTIVE voice[®] LAB
AN ACTIVE VOICE LAB REPORT

The Prenups is supported by a grant from
TIDESFOUNDATION



thePRENUPS At a Glance

INTRODUCTION
pg.3

CHECK-List
pg.5

FUNDER AND
FILMMAKER
ARCHETYPES
pg.6

pg.8 THE PRENUP
GUIDELINES

Section 1:
pg.10

pg.16
Section 2:

Section 3:
pg.20

MATCHMAKER:
A GUIDE FOR
YOUR FIRST DATES
pg.24

Filmmakers and funders have more opportunities than ever to work together to tell great stories and have an impact. Active Voice launched an inquiry to explore why some funder-filmmaker partnerships flourish while others flounder; the result is the Prenups. Sidebars discuss what makes for effective films, and Active Voice "engagement campaigns." A "C.H.E.C.K.-List" captures the power of film.

Active Voice has identified "archetypes" of filmmakers and media funders to help readers of this guide place themselves in the spectrum of practice and to spark discussion about how to make the best match.

A strategy is needed in order for funders and filmmakers to have an impact. In order to build the best strategic partnerships, Active Voice recommends that filmmakers and film funders discuss the following questions before they "tie the knot."

Visions and Expectations

- **The Filmmaker's and The Funder's Experiences:** What experience and expectations do we have? Sidebars discuss power and filmmaker/funder perspectives.
- **Mission, Goals and Objectives:** What do we hope to achieve and how? Sidebars discuss multiple funders, going on a "movie date" and development funding.
- **The Final Product:** What will the end product(s) be? A sidebar gives the example of a filmmaker and funder who both had their needs met with different versions of a film.
- **Distribution:** Who do we want to reach, and how will the film be distributed? Sidebars discuss big-name distribution venues and a case study on distribution strategy.

Roles and Participation

- **Editorial Control and The Input Process:** Who controls what gets in the film? Sidebars include a glossary of editorial terms and the story of a project gone awry.
- **Real Life:** What happens when real life takes the film in an unexpected direction? A sidebar discusses how a funder and filmmaker dealt with some real-life contingencies.

Business and Legal

- **Budget:** How much will this cost, and what changes might we expect? A sidebar discusses using budget templates.
- **Timeline:** What is the expected schedule for production, what contingencies should we prepare for, and what are the deadlines? A sidebar discusses the phases of filmmaking.
- **Copyright and Licensing:** Who owns the copyright to the film, and what are the terms of "licensing"? A sidebar discusses copyright and the law.
- **Legal Liability:** What happens in the unlikely event of legal problems, and how do filmmaker and funder handle disputes?
- **Reporting and Evaluation:** What reports must the filmmaker submit, what do they cover, and how do we evaluate the project's impact?

A two-page sheet summarizing information from the Prenups provides a checklist of things for filmmakers and funders to do before they meet, as well as questions to discuss in the early stages.

Introduction

The Prenups: What Filmmakers and Funders Should Talk About Before Tying the Knot

Filmmakers and grantmakers need each other more than ever. Filmmakers spend years of their lives creating powerful stories about people we don't know but come to care about; they need support to tell those stories and to spark activism. Funders bring tremendous knowledge, networks, analytical skills, money and other resources to social change efforts; they need these films to put human faces on the issues they deal with, because doing so helps them build public awareness and influence public will.

Changes in media and philanthropy have expanded the range of ways that filmmakers and funders collaborate. Technological advances have made it easier and sometimes cheaper to make and distribute films. And an entrepreneurial, media-savvy spirit in philanthropy has made more funders inclined to work with media. As a result, it's no longer just arts/media grantmakers who are funding documentary film and video. More and more foundations, investors and nonprofits in every issue area—health, education, immigration, human rights and more—are using media to effect the change they want to see. Consider these examples:

- Several family foundations make grants for an entertaining documentary that sparks a **national conversation** about food systems and is released to coincide with the farm bill debate.
- A national nonprofit funds a documentary about a prisoner reentry program and uses the film as the centerpiece of a **mayors' meeting** on reentry that it convenes.
- Funders back a film about faith-based environmental groups, and segments are shown in houses of worship nationwide to spur the formation of local **grassroots efforts**.
- An education funder commissions a documentarian to track several school principals for a year to build support among targeted **policymakers** for school leadership programs.
- An equity investor supports a short film about a girls' sports league, which is sold to schools and recreation centers nationwide and **boosts support** for girls' athletics.
- A foundation commissions short web videos about its grantees, inspiring viewers to **learn** about the issues, **volunteer** their time or **donate** to the cause.

Different issues, different films, different platforms, different kinds of funders, different levels of funding and engagement. The time has come to look at the various hybrids that produce, fund and deploy powerful films.

CREDITS

Ellen Schneider
Executive Director

Paul VanDeCarr
Writer/Interviewer

Jon Funabiki
Funding Consultant

Gordon Quinn
Filmmaking Consultant

Daniel Moretti
Operations Manager

Zaldy Serrano
Design

This document is the product of an ongoing inquiry that Active Voice has made into the growing relationships between filmmakers and funders. Through surveys and in-depth interviews, more than 40 funders and filmmakers generously shared their experiences, questions and ideas about collaborating. Most of their comments have been synthesized or offered as anonymous anecdotes. Please keep three things in mind:

1. *The types of collaboration described in this document are not for everyone.* We hope and expect that many films will continue to be made completely independently, without any input from funders. But for those funders and filmmakers who do want to collaborate, both parties need language and guidelines in order for their partnerships to succeed.
2. *This document may seem daunting.* But the fact is, most filmmaker-funder collaborations work out just fine (partly because both parties discuss these types of questions in advance). What's more, not all of these questions are relevant for every collaboration. The reader can decide what's relevant in his or her own case.
3. *We don't prescribe a rigid set of do's and don'ts.* Instead, the guidelines prompt the funder and the filmmaker to understand each other's goals, professional standards and value systems—in other words, to see eye to eye.

We think of this eye-to-eye understanding as a *prenup* for filmmakers and funders. The Prenups can be used to guide funders and filmmakers as they discuss possible collaborations. The Prenups might also serve funders as a tool for strategy planning and grant review, and filmmakers as a guide to what funders are seeking. Consider the Prenups a work in progress. On our website and in conversations, we'll be asking you to contribute more stories and ideas in order to make this the most useful resource it can be. This inquiry and the guidelines have been supported by the Tides Foundation.

ACTIVE VOICE'S ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGNS: Active Voice organizes "engagement campaigns" to connect film and other media with target audiences and give them a way to act on what they see. For example, Active Voice organized screenings in cities nationwide of Daniel Alpert's film about a Chicago birth coach, *A Doula Story*, for policymakers, health administrators and other stakeholders who wanted to create their own birth coach programs. The result was heightened awareness that helped lead to federal funding of doula programs. Active Voice created a series of forums and a resource guide for Carlos Sandoval and Catherine Tambini's film *Farmingville*, about the clash between long-term residents and Mexican-American day laborers on suburban Long Island, which helped viewers take proactive steps to ease tensions in their own communities undergoing demographic changes. Using Marty Ostrow and Terry Kay Rockefeller's documentary *Renewal* as a catalyst, Active Voice built bridges among a wide range of faith-based organizations, secular environmental groups, seminaries and even municipalities that are committed to making a difference in this time of grave environmental threats. Active Voice also works with funders and filmmakers at other points along the line—negotiating relationships, convening experts for a "brain trust" during a film's development or forging partnerships that will deploy the film to meet their goals.

On the Power of Film

The film *An Inconvenient Truth* inspired millions of viewers to take action on the environment. A story on PBS's *FRONTLINE/World* about how Kiva.org enables people to make loans to micro-entrepreneurs in Africa prompted so many viewers to log on to the website that its servers crashed. Why is film such an important tool in change making? How is it different from straight-on advocacy communication? Our experience shows that a strong film offers five elements particularly suited to activating audiences. They are summarized in the Active Voice "C.H.E.C.K.-List":

Common (Visual) Text

Story-based films and videos give people with varied perspectives a shared experience. And with people more film-literate, and reading less than ever, it's the images and sound that may count the most.

Human Face

Films that tap into real people's stories can help viewers understand the consequences of policy decisions on individuals, families and communities. Robert Winn's short-film series *Childhood in Translation* captures the dilemma of children who must translate for their non-English-speaking parents and helped secure additional funds for translators in New York City schools.

Empathy

People have values that transcend right and left, red and blue, urban and rural. A character-driven story can help people identify with the struggles and triumphs of others and to walk in their shoes. *Made in L.A.*, Almudena Caracedo and Robert Bahar's portrait of three Latina garment workers, brought congressional leaders and community leaders together to discuss groundbreaking grassroots efforts around immigration reform.

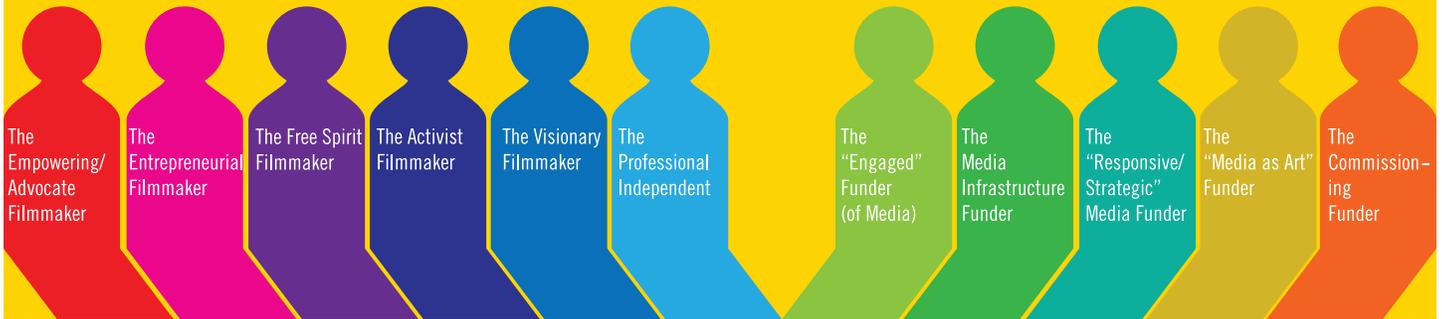
Change Over Time

Filmmakers often stay with a story long enough to capture personal and institutional transformation in the making. *Hoop Dreams*, the 1994 classic directed by Steve James, tracked the lives of two African-American high school students over five years as they attempted to achieve their dreams of becoming professional basketball stars.

Knowledge and Engagement

Vivid, character-driven stories can inspire others to tell their own stories, share ideas and take action. In 2005, producers Tia Lessin and Carl Deal saw amateur video taken by Scott and Kimberly Rivers Roberts as they struggled to survive the floodwaters of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. That video formed the core of *Trouble the Water*, which stimulated people across the nation to volunteer and donate to the recovery process in New Orleans.

Filmmakers and Funders



We felt it would be helpful to clarify the range of practices. After reviewing current trends, we have identified five general categories or “archetypes” of media funders and five archetypes of filmmakers. These categories lack hard boundaries—a person may straddle more than one category or move from one category to another depending on circumstances and need. These categories may change and new ones may emerge as media and philanthropy continue to evolve. And we aren’t suggesting that one approach is better than any other. We offer these archetypes to demonstrate that filmmakers and funders who work with film vary in their objectives, methods and styles. Understanding the nature of the relationship between the two is essential to a successful partnership.

FUNDER Archetypes



- The **Media Infrastructure Funder** is a systems engineer. She does not fund individual film projects, but rather the systems that support and control media, such as public television stations or media support organizations. **Example:** The Nathan Cummings Foundation’s support of Scribe Video Center, which provides quality media “experiences” and educational programs for people in the Philadelphia area.



- The **“Media as Art” Funder** is a patron of the arts. He believes in the artist’s vision, views his investment in film as a donation and takes a hands-off attitude toward the filmmaking process. The “media as art” funder may or may not have an agenda, such as whether he supports a controversial artist, or wishes to advance an issue, or is advocating for the arts in general. **Examples:** Creative Capital, the LEF Foundation and the Warhol Foundation all seek to have a cultural impact.



- The **“Responsive/Strategic” Media Funder** is a pragmatic strategist. Her foundation welcomes media proposals, and she is most interested in projects that will strategically inform the public about a specific issue. Editorial control typically remains in the filmmaker’s hands. **Example:** The Ford Foundation funds media in a variety of ways. Ford’s support of *Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?*—a documentary series on racial and socioeconomic disparities—falls under this category.



- The **“Engaged” Funder (of Media)** is a hands-on entrepreneur. He wouldn’t necessarily self-identify as a media funder (hence the parentheses) but nevertheless is willing to engage filmmaking just about anywhere in the process as a way to accomplish program goals. He recognizes the need to have stories that advance

change efforts, and he *initiates* media projects. **Example:** The Wallace Foundation supports education leadership and fully funded a film that follows several school principals; Wallace connected the filmmaker with schools, formulated a distribution plan and brought other resources to bear, all while leaving editorial control to the filmmaker.



- The **Commissioning Funder or “Sponsoring” Funder** is buying a service. She sees film as one tool in a communications toolbox, contracts the filmmaker’s services and controls the project. She typically seeks stories about grantees. **Example:** The Skoll Foundation commissions short videos on its “social entrepreneur” grantees, posts them on its website and YouTube, and shows them at its annual conference.

FILM-MAKER Archetypes



- The **Visionary Filmmaker** seeks personal artistic freedom or wants to tell a specific story. He is driven to be creative and express his ideas. He does not desire editorial input, seeks funding on his own grounds and often works on a number of ideas and projects. **Example:** Thomas Allen Harris’s films *That’s My Face* and *Twelve Disciples of Nelson Mandela* explore his own heritage and the life of his stepfather.



- The **Professional Independent** has independent filmmaking as her primary source of income. She is known by funders to be skilled in storytelling around social issues. She is open to input if it increases the reach and impact of the film. **Example:** In their many years as collaborating documentary filmmakers, Paco de Onís and Pam Yates have explored such issues as terrorism (*State of Fear*), human rights (*The Reckoning*) and homelessness (*Outriders*).



- The **Activist Filmmaker** wants to stimulate action. He sees film as a tool to promote a social or political agenda. There are more opportunities for sharing of control, and the filmmaker may work with activists or like-minded collaborators. **Examples:** Sandi DuBowski plumbed the experience of gay/lesbian Hasidic and Orthodox Jews in *Trembling Before G-d*, and Judith Helfand exposed the hazards of vinyl siding in *Blue Vinyl*.



- The **Empowering/Advocate Filmmaker** uses film to give voice to others. She offers the tools of filmmaking to the people and causes that she supports. Collaboration with the subjects is implicit, and there may be opportunities for sharing editorial control. **Example:** Spencer Nakasako taught video production to at-risk teens in San Francisco and coproduced films such as *School Colors* and *a.k.a. Don Bonus*, which used footage from cameras Nakasako had given to young people to film their own lives. (Funders did not have editorial control.)



- The **Entrepreneurial Filmmaker or “Filmmaker for Hire”** offers skills and talent for hire. The ideas and framing for the film come from the client, often a “commissioning” funder or investor. The filmmaker usually subsidizes his “real” filmmaking with these fee-for-service projects. **Example:** In addition to producing award-winning independent documentaries, the filmmakers at Video Action create films for high-profile professional conferences and gala dinners, and video briefings for policymakers.

Key Questions To Resolve To Reach An “Eye-to-eye” Understanding

A strategy is required to make the biggest impact. Experienced hands know that it requires a strategy for a film to make an impact, rather than just a splash. Consider the examples in the introduction. The prisoner reentry film was presented to mayors and other city officials who were in a position to create reentry programs, and at a conference that equipped them with the tools to do just that. The web videos about grantees are available on the foundation’s website, which has been positioned as a resource for change-makers and which makes it easy to donate or volunteer in just a few clicks of the mouse. In these and other cases, filmmakers and funders thought carefully about what they wanted to achieve, who they needed to reach in order to achieve it, what kind of film (or other media) would touch those audiences, what means would enable them to see it, and how they could help viewers translate what they saw into action.

Funders and filmmakers may get involved at any number of different points to maximize impact. In some cases, funders will commission and fully pay for a film and control what is in it and how it gets distributed. This is the “Commissioning Funder” working with the “Filmmaker for Hire,” as described in the archetypes above. In most other cases, however, a filmmaker gets support from multiple funders, and the filmmaker typically retains editorial control and the copyright but accepts funders’ valuable input on the project. There are other hybrid arrangements. The more strategic that funders and filmmakers are in their use of media, the more points at which they may become engaged with each other throughout the life of a film—and in more ways than just giving or receiving money. Funders may convene grantees to leverage the film, strategize about distribution, host special screenings or support “engagement campaigns” to extend the film’s reach. The level and type of funding may vary. Some funders may make a small research grant, or support a film for art’s sake, or come in at the end with distribution funds and take a hands-off approach. Some filmmakers may develop their own outreach strategies and look for simpatico funders who want to sign on. In some cases, there may be just enough overlap of goals to justify a limited or short-term engagement, rather than a lifelong marriage. Whatever the case, this can all add up to the high-impact projects that everyone wants.

The Prenups are meant to help filmmakers and funders form good relationships. We didn’t choose the term *Prenups* accidentally. Are you a good match? Do you trust each other? Have you discussed what you’re getting into? When the conditions are right, a successful partnership can blossom. But if the conditions are wrong, and funders and filmmakers don’t understand one another and haven’t communicated their expectations and needs in advance, the results can be unfortunate. For some people, the word *prenups* implies what will happen in the event of a divorce. However, we’re concerned mostly with how funders and filmmakers can talk up front about what they expect from a partnership so that it’s more likely to succeed in the long run.

What issues the Prenups cover. The closer the collaboration between funders and filmmakers, the more interaction there will be. And the greater chance for misunderstandings, as well. In a nutshell, this report suggests that whatever role you play in the relationship, you need to establish whether you and your partners are in alignment with one another. Active Voice has identified three key areas the funders and filmmakers should discuss to make partnerships the best they can be:

- **Visions and Expectations:** What is each party's background? How's the chemistry? What are each party's goals? What's the final product(s), and where will it be shown in order to have the desired impact?
- **Roles and Participation:** Who controls the story? What's the process for giving input during production, and who gives it?
- **Business and Legal:** Who owns the film? How will it be distributed? What's a reasonable budget? How long will it take to make? What about legal liability? Reporting?

The strategic link between a filmmaker's project and a funder's mission doesn't happen automatically; it has to be created. Forging this link can lead to powerful results. In each of the following sections, we present some of the major questions that filmmakers and funders we surveyed suggested discussing before "tying the knot."

Section 1

Visions and Expectations

THE FILMMAKER'S AND THE FUNDER'S EXPERIENCES

Seasoned funders and filmmakers say it's important to have an honest discussion about each other's experience in film and philanthropy. Before asking the questions below, funders and filmmakers should acquaint themselves with each other by reading résumés, artist statements, websites and strategy papers, and watching DVDs of the filmmaker's previous work and the funder's previously funded projects. They may also ask references about each other's experience, disposition and work process. Here are some specific issues and questions to touch upon.

- What is a documentary film one or both of us have seen, funded or made that has had a big impact personally or on the society at large? What power have we seen documentary films have?
- What exactly is our respective experience with funding/filmmaking? Has the funder worked in film production, and if so, in what phase and what capacity? Has the filmmaker been funded before, by whom, for what projects and what phase of production?
- What does each of us not know about philanthropy/film production but should know for purposes of this project?
- How does the chemistry feel between us? Says one funder, "I don't think you can underestimate the importance of chemistry. It's about choosing the right partner." Adds an equity investor, "If you don't trust a filmmaker to make a great film, you probably shouldn't be working with that person anyway."

What You Told Us About... **Power Dynamics**

"Let's face it," says one filmmaker, "one of the major issues is the power dynamic that surrounds the filmmaker and funder." Adds another, "The relationship between the two parties reflects supply and demand. [As far as many funders are concerned,] filmmakers are a dime a dozen." The point being, if a funder doesn't like one filmmaker, he can always find another. One grantmaker agrees: "The funder has a huge amount of power, and in this economy, even more. Given this imbalance of power, it's key for us to build and maintain transparent relationships from the beginning." Others told us that funders should be sensitive to how seemingly simple "requests" or "input" actually place a substantial burden on the filmmaker, costing her time and money—and that funders should be ready to give extra funds to offset that cost.



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

What Funders Told Us



Funders want filmmakers to know about their expertise, resources, goals and the demands on them. "Grant guidelines and various requirements can seem like unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, but our goal is to assess a project's viability, not to make life difficult for the applicant," notes one program officer. What's more, funders "are held more and more accountable by their foundations and their trustees for every dollar spent," says one grantmaker. "Funders must be prepared to show due diligence in entering into this relationship, [and therefore] filmmakers must be prepared for more scrutiny than ever before." Grantmaking is not just a matter of writing a check, but of developing sophisticated strategies to have the maximum impact. Most funders are deeply knowledgeable and passionate about the areas in which they work, and for that reason they have a lot more to offer filmmakers than just money; they can also provide issue knowledge, analysis, access to networks, technical assistance and other resources—all without intruding on the artistic process. Even relatively hands-off grantmakers want to see funded films succeed, and for that reason, says one, "we want filmmakers to keep us informed, so that to the extent possible we can be a source of knowledge." Ultimately, says one grantmaker, the investment of time and money can pay off: "This relationship can be a beautiful thing for both the funder and the filmmaker."

What Filmmakers Told Us



Filmmakers want funders to know that their work is harder than it looks. Part of the difficulty is financial, as most independent filmmakers lead what one calls "high-risk, low-financial-return" lives, a fact that funders might not appreciate if all they see is the glamour and passion involved. But the creative aspect is also difficult, says another filmmaker. "When funders see only the final product, they tend to think it's easy." It can be useful for funders to know about the process of filmmaking—to a point. "If a funder wants to learn how to edit and so on, they should become a filmmaker!" says one director. "But I think they should know the stages of making a movie and at what points they'll be consulting on the project." A film doesn't have to follow a strict "party line" to have an impact on the funder's program area, says another filmmaker. "There is value to letting a story unfold in a more nuanced, complex and subtle fashion." Filmmakers know how to "ride the wave of discovery" that characterizes the process of documentary and how to "tell a compelling story, even if we don't have the script nailed down from day one." All of that artistry and experience means that funders may have more to learn from filmmakers than they know, as one director says, because "the films are great adventures. And [since] we work on our films so hard after they are made [doing distribution and engagement activities], the adventure goes on and on."

MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

It's essential for funders and filmmakers to get clear on their own agendas and align their goals. Each party might start by asking themselves basic questions about what they hope to achieve by making or funding a particular film. The funder should not get seduced by the glamour of making a film, nor should the filmmaker be seduced by the prospect of funding. The important thing, say both parties, is whether both parties' goals will be met in the relationship. Everyone agrees that the time to start talking is before a significant investment of time and money is made. The more engaged the funding relationship, the deeper these conversations must go.

- How many other funders, if any, are supporting the project, and what implications does this have? Does each funder have limited input? How might funders work together to increase the impact of the film?
- What are our experiences with, perspectives on and interests in the issue the film treats? Why does each of us want to make/fund a film about it?
- Why specifically should we work together? What do we bring combined that will make the funded project even more successful?
- What are our respective goals for the project, in terms of artistry, entertainment and social impact? How do these goals overlap, differ or conflict?
- For funders, is a film the right vehicle for the foundation's goals on this issue? Are there other media you should be exploring instead of or in addition to a film?
- What would better serve our respective or shared goals—a commissioned film over which the funder has control or an independent documentary by a filmmaker who might explore new ground? Or a hybrid?
- What stage(s) of production does the funder want to support, and at what stage(s) does the filmmaker most need the support?
- Aside from money, what other resources can the funder bring to the project?
- How might the filmmaker be able to help the funder strategize about impact?
- What risks are we each taking on by entering into the grant agreement?

What You Told Us
About...

Polygamy (Multiple Funders)

Most documentary filmmakers are polygamous—they marry more than one funder. They have to in order to get the film made. Different funders may have separate goals, guidelines, reporting requirements, disbursement schedules, interests, or desired audiences or versions of the film. In some cases, the various funders' requirements may overlap conveniently. In many other cases, however, different funders may have conflicting (or just plain burdensome) requirements, placing real stress on the filmmaker. As one funder explains, "This puts tremendous time and resource pressure on the filmmaker, who is often trying to keep a stable of funders happy, some of whom have provided a very small amount of funding." She and other experienced people on both sides urge funders to recognize that the filmmaker is likely dealing with several different funders, as well as advocacy organizations, advisors and other people who are making demands on her film, time and resources. Filmmakers and funders alike told us that funders who contribute only a small portion of the total budget for a project should not expect to have much decision-making power over the production or distribution of a





Idea:
Go Out On a
**Movie
Date**

film—unless they make a grant specifically for another version of the film or distribution to a particular target audience. In any case, any given funder can offer important input and other resources to help a film have the impact everyone wants.



One filmmaker says, “When a funder thinks that I’d be good for a project, I’d like to know what existing film they’re imagining I’d make. Maybe it’s *Hoop Dreams*. I’d like to watch that film with her and find out what it is she likes about it. I’d like to talk to her about how much a film like that costs, how long it takes to make and what the big challenges are likely to be.”



Idea:
**Development
Funding**



As a critical component of its efforts to share what it was learning from its 10-year initiative devoted to education leadership, the Wallace Foundation commissioned a documentary film that would portray the challenges principals face in turning around struggling schools. (The Wallace Foundation does not accept unsolicited requests for film funding.) The foundation went through a rigorous two-phase process to select an independent filmmaker for the project. The process served two functions. First, it helped to identify candidates who were truly interested in both the topic and the engaged funding relationship. Second, by finding the best person for the job, the foundation helped manage the risk of funding a quality project and seeking broadcast on public television while ceding the necessary editorial control to the filmmaker. The foundation assembled a review panel comprising half foundation staffers and half outside education experts and experts in the world of documentary filmmaking. In the first “request for proposals” phase, a select group of filmmakers identified by Wallace were invited to submit a short proposal and examples of prior work. In the second phase, three finalists received \$10,000 each to develop their proposals into full treatments with outreach plans. The filmmaker who won the commission was chosen partly because he used the development money to produce a demonstration reel showing how he would approach the full film.

THE FINAL PRODUCT

Today, the word *film* is too broad: media-makers are exploring so many genres, lengths, platforms and approaches. Funders and filmmakers should discuss how a media project might fulfill their objectives. For example, feature films may help raise awareness, but they are expensive and distribution is iffy. “Many if not most films are now ‘multi-versioned’ to work for different audiences and applications,” says one longtime filmmaker. “This can be a way to preserve the ‘director’s cut’ and give the funder a greater role to influence, say, a ‘policy version’ or a shorter advocacy training tool.” That notion is echoed by a funder who is “trying to define a more nimble approach” by funding projects that have different versions, lengths and distribution platforms to meet everybody’s goals. Whatever the final product(s) may be, they should be discussed up front, along with the budget and goals for each.

- What audiences does each of us want to reach, and what different versions of the film might best serve each of the target audiences?
- What other documentary films with multiple versions might serve as a model for this project?
- Do the respective versions of the film conflict in terms of their use? For example, if the funder gets a 60-minute publicity piece about one of its programs and the filmmaker goes on to create a more partisan 10-minute film on the issue, will the shorter piece jeopardize the nonpartisan nature of the longer film?
- How much more time and how many other resources will it take for other versions to be produced? Different versions of the same film require extra expense and time in the editing room, and one funder recommends including all versions in the original budget: "It's often too difficult for a producer to have to come back to us for additional funding."
- What final product(s) do other funders want for this project, and how might various funders' interests be effectively managed?

Case In Point:
A Funder And A Filmmaker
Both
Meet Their Needs

One national nonprofit organization working with a variety of social issues occasionally commissions short films. "Mostly short stuff, 2 to 5 minutes online, or maybe a 20-minute film about one of our programs," says the program director. The organization wanted a piece on solitary confinement but didn't have a lot of money. The program director paid the filmmaker a fixed fee to go to a conference on prison issues, do interviews on solitary confinement and produce a short video on the topic that the organization could show online for educational purposes. The organization got a nice video, to which it retained the copyright. The filmmaker received a small fee, attended the conference, developed contacts for a longer documentary she wanted to produce on solitary confinement and retained ownership of the raw footage for her own project. "The idea was to give her something beyond just the modest pay—so we gave her the material," says the program director. "We got the piece we wanted, but with the creative energy of an independent filmmaker."



DISTRIBUTION

Filmmakers and engaged funders should express what platform best serves the needs of a particular project. This may include television broadcast, film festival screenings, theatrical release, presentations to policymakers, rental/sales of DVDs to educational institutions or home viewers, and, more recently, downloadable versions or streaming video online. Many filmmakers now think about distribution from the very beginning of their projects, and strategic grantmakers encourage this practice. Here are questions for both parties to consider before they get involved.

- What are our respective goals for broadcast, cablecast, film festivals, online distribution? How do these goals relate to those of other funders?

- How might online distribution and the use of social networking and other new technologies be used to support the funder's and the filmmaker's goals for the film?
- What other resources can we draw on to support a robust distribution of the film? What are our respective roles in distribution?
- Are there different distribution plans for different versions of the film? If so, have they been budgeted for, who is responsible, and what are the proposed schedules?
- Is there interest from PBS, cable, other television stations, film festivals or other distribution channels to show the film? How strong is that interest?
- What happens if elements of the distribution plan fall through? For example, what if PBS doesn't air the film or a theatrical release isn't viable?
- How might online streaming affect festival and theatrical distribution, educational/home video distribution, as well as the sale of tickets, DVDs or downloads?
- If the filmmaker owns the copyright and has control over pricing and sales, are there discounts for schools, community groups, etc.? Also, how many copies of the DVD does the funder get for free, and what is the cost to the funder for each DVD after that? What if the funder owns the copyright and has control over pricing and sales?
- How do we feel about the distribution plan? Excited, worried, secure?

Case In Point: Strategizing About Distribution

When Byron Hurt's *Beyond Beats & Rhymes* came to the attention of the Ford Foundation, grantmakers saw it as a powerful way to jump-start a public conversation about how hip-hop culture deals with masculinity, sexism and violence. But because of the film's profanity and provocative lyrics and images, they felt the need to strategize with Hurt about ways to ensure a successful broadcast—including negotiating with PBS about the content and building public momentum for the project. One of the lead grantmakers, himself an experienced filmmaker, thus helped the film get the exposure it deserved and have the impact everyone wanted—without compromising the filmmaker's vision.

What You Told
Us About...

Big-Name Distribution Venues

One filmmaker recalls a funder asking at the outset of production, "Tell me again, when is the Sundance Film Festival?" The funder assumed that, as long as the film was completed by the submission deadline, it would automatically be accepted. Another filmmaker says that, for many people on both sides, "the fantasy is still PBS." But sometimes there are no guarantees for broadcast or screenings. And besides, adds one producer, the big-name venues are not as important now that there are so many other distribution channels, whether it be other festivals, the internet, cable television or various lesser-known "strands" of programming on PBS.

EDITORIAL CONTROL AND THE INPUT PROCESS

Editorial control is one of the most important issues in relationships between filmmakers and funders. Who has what kinds of control over what gets in the film and how those decisions are made is the topic of this section. Both parties have understandably strong interests. Filmmakers work passionately on their films for a long time and often for little pay; they are responsible to the subjects of the film and to their own artistic ideals, and editorial control may be all they have in order to fulfill that responsibility. Funders, on the other hand, are accountable to their trustees or the public to invest every dollar to maximum effect; leaving editorial control to a filmmaker who may or may not share their goals feels like an awfully big risk.

There are two extremes when it comes to editorial control. At one end of the spectrum, a funder commissions a film over which, it is agreed, she will have final editorial control. At the other end of the spectrum, it is agreed that the filmmaker retains complete independence and editorial control. Funder-filmmaker partnerships that have already agreed they are at one extreme or the other can skip to the next section of the Prenups (and they should clearly spell out their arrangement in writing). However, in between these two extremes lies a whole range of possible collaborations between filmmaker and funder. ***This section of the Prenups is for people in that middle ground or who have not yet defined what their collaboration will look like.*** Following are some of the questions to ask before tying the knot.

- What do we each want in terms of editorial control and input? What arrangement would benefit the project, and how and why?
- Whose film is this? Says one filmmaker, “That may seem like a simplistic question, but I think it’s at the heart of the matter and it must be resolved before the process begins.”
- What other funders are there, and what sort of control or input do they expect to have?
- If editorial control is shared, who holds what kind of control? Do we both have sign-off on the final cut? (Make sure both parties have a shared understanding of these terms. See glossary below.)
- Do we want the film to be eligible for broadcast on public television? If so, the funder may make *suggestions* about content, but PBS prohibits underwriters from holding or sharing the copyright to—and hence editorial control of—the program. (See also the section on copyright, below.)
- At what points exactly should funders have a chance to review a film (e.g., at a rough cut, fine cut)? What is the expected turnaround time for the funder to give input?

- How can the funder help enrich the conversation about the film’s content? What kinds of input can the funder give, such as on style, perspective or content?
- Under what conditions, if any, should the filmmaker have to accept the funder’s input? And when is the filmmaker expected or required to incorporate that input into the film?
- What kinds of input can project advisors make, especially those who were recommended by the funder? Is their role strictly advisory, or do they have any editorial control?
- Do the subjects of the film—whether individuals or institutions—have any editorial control or input, and if so, how does this affect the filmmaker-funder relationship?
- Who gives the input—is it the funder himself, an intermediary representing the funder, or a committee? Filmmakers say it’s critical to have direct contact with the person who holds the purse strings at least once throughout the process, in case anything is lost in translation through an intermediary. One filmmaker recommends having a designated “point person” on each side, particularly if a committee is involved.

GLOSSARY: EDITORIAL TERMS

- To **cut** a film is to edit it.
- The **rough cut** is a rough draft. It may be longer or shorter than the finished film will be; it will probably lack narration, subtitles or credits; and its story or themes may be less coherent than they will be in the final version. Funders who are not familiar with film may be surprised at just how rough a rough cut can be; but if it weren’t rough, then there would be no way for funders to enter into the conversation about the work in progress.
- A **fine cut** of a film typically has more narrative or thematic structure but lacks the finishing touches such as titles or a musical score.
- The **final cut** is the finished film. *Final cut* may also refer to the power to decide what the finished film contains—the authority to approve or disapprove of an edited film. Funders who commission (and fully pay for) an industrial film normally have final cut. Filmmakers who get funds from multiple sources typically have final cut, especially if they want the film to be eligible for PBS broadcast.
- **Editorial control** is the power to decide what goes into a film and is generally synonymous with the power of final cut. Just because someone has editorial control does not mean they won’t accept input from the other party.
- **Input** is not a technical term of filmmaking, but is used here to mean the recommendations that funders may make about the content or style of a film.

What You Told Us About...

Who Gives Input

An equity investor in documentary film says, "This isn't Hollywood, where tens of millions of dollars are at stake. This is documentary film, usually on social issues that filmmakers care deeply about, and creative control is often all they have. What we [as investors] ask for is meaningful consultation, which means we get to see cuts of the film."



Case In Point:

Who Needs A Prenup?

A Funder-Filmmaker Conflict

A funder and filmmaker started out on what they thought would be a great relationship. The funder was head of a nonprofit agency with \$25,000 to put toward a documentary film on immigration; the filmmaker was interested in the issue and had a track record in documentaries. The filmmaker developed a proposal, and since she "always felt like an independent filmmaker," she expected she would have editorial control. The parties agreed that the funder would be the fiscal sponsor, or nonprofit umbrella organization, for the project. "All the discussions and agreements at this point were verbal," says the filmmaker. "It all seemed fine." But when the funder made the project proposal more public than the filmmaker wanted, an angry exchange followed. The filmmaker recalls the funder saying that since they had come up with the idea together, they would have equal say. This came as a shock to the filmmaker, who had assumed that the funder shared her understanding about the roles of producers, directors and funders. The funder knew the film would cost far more than \$25,000 and that other contributors would be coming on board. Much as the two parties tried to find common ground, the funder finally put his foot down, saying that he would continue only if he had equal editorial control with the producer/director and full copyright ownership. The filmmaker walked away from the project and is still negotiating the return of unused grant dollars, as well as ownership of the existing footage. "The funder was as shocked as we were," she recalls. "Early on, there was this flurry of excitement, and maybe that prevented us from talking about the practicalities of making this film."

REAL LIFE

Some of the frictions that arise between filmmakers and funders have to do with the nature of the story that unfolds within the film and who's in control of that story. If a funder commissions a film and has editorial control over it, then the story is cut-and-dry. But documentary filmmakers working in cinema verité are used to the idea that they follow, rather than control, a story; making a film is a process of discovery. A story may take a dramatic twist, a character might drop out, a stakeholder might reject a perspective that is featured in the film, or the filmmaker's life circumstances may change. Any of these prospects might not be so comfortable for a funder who wants a film to go in a particular direction or make a certain point. The unpredictability of this kind of filmmaking, concurs one funder, "is the big question." And it's these real-life questions that funders and filmmakers should discuss.

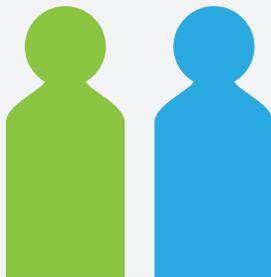
- Do we expect this film to advocate a certain position or to follow a story as it happens?
- Who are the subjects the filmmaker is following?
- What possible changes in the subjects' lives might the filmmaker anticipate? How might those changes affect the story, schedule and budget?

- Does the filmmaker have alternate subjects in case the primary subjects drop out?
- What if a subject turns out to be not very interesting or sympathetic?
- How comfortable do we feel about the changes we think might occur?
- Do we have a common understanding of how the project might evolve?
- How might the filmmaker's presence affect the lives of the film's subjects? Are there any ethical concerns that should be addressed? One filmmaker says that he wants funders to respect his relationship with subjects: "I work closely with subjects who trust that I am acting on their behalf and in good faith—and offering almost nothing in exchange for their time and honesty. We're using real people's lives to make compelling media that raises awareness or helps shift public policy—it cannot be at the subjects' expense."
- If the filmmaker's life circumstances change and production is delayed, what terms cover those delays?
- If the filmmaker is unable to complete the film, what reports must she make to the funder? Must she return some or all of the grant monies? Who keeps the footage?

Case In Point:

Strategizing About Story

A director received funding for her film that would follow a man as he started participating in a residential support program. The filmmaker's vision was to capture a positive personal transformation, but the story took a turn when the subject suffered a relapse. The filmmaker quickly informed the funder at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, who summoned her trusted outreach team. "One thing the story must have," observed the outreach specialists, "is hope." The filmmaker agreed. Screening footage together, the filmmaker and the outreach team identified a second client from the same program whose experience was far more positive. As a result, the film—now with two main characters—remained authentic and true to the program, the funder had an honest and ultimately more hopeful story to tell about her grantmaking, and the filmmaker's work is making a difference. Ultimately, the collaboration succeeded because the funder took a light-handed approach, the filmmaker retained editorial control, and they both communicated during the process to achieve shared goals.



BUDGET

Filmmakers and funders say that budgets need to be discussed up front, realistically and honestly. Some filmmakers might be tempted to give a low budget estimate in order to get funding, while others might overstate a budget they believe has room for compromise. For their part, some funders may not understand film budgeting and consider a perfectly reasonable budget too high, while others may go so far as to suggest additions to the budget to make it more realistic. (For information on film budgeting, please consult the Prenups resource list.) Some funders make grants of fixed amounts, while others are open to negotiation. Whatever the case, funders and filmmakers should discuss a budget that includes all phases of production, what the funder is covering, where there is flexibility, and what additional costs may arise.

- What is the overall budget, and what part of the budget is being covered by the funder at hand? Who are the other funders, and what are their expectations and requirements?
- What other resources might a funder bring to the project, and do these defray the costs of any line items in the budget?
- Is distribution/outreach covered in the budget? Or is this a separate budget?
- Is the funding restricted in any way? For example, only for a certain phase of production, only for salaries, not for purchase of equipment?
- Is the filmmaker allowed to shift around some or all of the funding if necessary? For example, if the film adds production days and needs to rent equipment for those days, can equipment rental funds be taken out of the budget for salaries?
- What changes in the budget must the filmmaker notify the funder of? For example, going above a certain amount or shifting funds from one part of the budget to another?
- What is the disbursement schedule of the grant, and how does this align with the filmmaker's needs? What products or reports (e.g., rough cut, interim reports) must the filmmaker deliver in order for additional disbursements of the funding to be released?
- If additional funds need to be raised to complete the film, what happens if the new funder's requirements (such as for credit) conflict with those of existing funders?
- If the film comes in under budget, is the filmmaker required to return any of the funding?
- If the film makes money over and above production costs, must any of the grant funds be repaid to the funder?
- How do we each feel about the project budget, and do we understand and trust each other's intentions with regard to budgeting?



Idea: **Use A Budget Template**

Creating a project budget is an important but difficult process. Oftentimes, different funders will require that a film's budget be presented in different formats. One veteran filmmaker says that reformatting his budget for each funder is unnecessarily bureaucratic and time-consuming. He asks that all funders on a given project accept a single format for a budget and normally uses the template provided by the public television funder the Independent Television Service (ITVS). Other filmmakers may use the ITVS template or ask a group of various funders to talk up front among themselves; these funders can then rely on whomever has the most experience with film budgeting. This saves the filmmaker valuable time and educates other funders about the most effective budgeting practices.

TIMELINE

Especially for the more engaged funder, timelines are an important topic of discussion with grantee filmmakers. Timelines should cover all phases of the film being considered for funding, include contingencies, have phases that are tied to the budget and be put in writing. Here are some questions to ask.

- What is the projected timeline for each phase of production of the film?
- What contingencies can we anticipate, and what is each party's alternate timeline?
- What possible changes in the timeline can be projected far in advance (e.g., broadcast dates), and which can be projected only in the near term (e.g., a subject falls ill)?
- Do additional funds need to be raised, and how does this affect the production schedule?
- What deadlines are there for the funder and filmmaker, respectively? For example, reporting deadlines, rough cut, etc.? Which deadlines are hard, and which are soft?
- When, if ever, are interim reports required and what agreements need to be made about correcting the timeline to adjust for changes?
- How does each of us feel about the timeline? Is it realistic, comfortable, ambitious?

GLOSSARY: THE PHASES OF FILMMAKING:

- **Production** is the phase when the film is being shot.
- **Preproduction** is everything that comes before production, such as developing the idea, conducting preliminary research interviews, writing a "treatment" that describes the filmmaker's approach and the story outline, fundraising and producing a short demo reel (usually at the filmmaker's own expense) to promote the project to prospective funders.
- **Postproduction** (often referred to simply as *post*) includes everything that comes after production, such as editing, titling, color correction and recording and laying down a soundtrack.
- **Distribution** of a film—even though it technically comes after production—is not considered part of postproduction, but rather constitutes its own category.

COPYRIGHT AND LICENSING

Who owns the copyright? What kind of “license” or permission does the copyright owner give to other parties to use or distribute the film? Typically, if a funder commissions and fully pays for a film, she owns the copyright. Otherwise, the filmmaker normally owns the copyright to the film and may license it to a funder for specific uses. Whatever the case, these agreements must be clearly negotiated and put in writing. “The question is not just who owns the copyright,” says a veteran filmmaker, “but what terms you agree upon in the contract about licensing the film. There’s no one way to do this.” The legal issues may seem daunting, but another director urges looking on the bright side: “This just means there are many ways to make the most of the film—to get it out to the biggest audiences, to have the greatest impact, to meet everybody’s needs.” Here are some issues to consider in creating an agreement.

- What are other funders’ expectations about copyright and licensing, and how do they relate to those of the present funder?
- Why does each of us want what we want with regard to copyright and licensing? Both funders and filmmakers say it’s important to get at the underlying interests.
- Who owns the copyright to which versions of the film, if there is more than one version?
- Who owns the raw or unused footage, and does the other party have a license to use or distribute the unused footage?
- Who has license to create what versions or “derivative works” of the film?
- Who has license to distribute or sell copies of the film, on what platform, and for how long?
- If copyright is co-owned (an option that many filmmakers and funders recommend against for being too complicated), what are the terms that govern use of the film?
- Do copyright or any licenses change hands at an agreed-upon point or interval? One filmmaker says, “Funders usually have a finite interest in a film; they want to get it out to their grantees, or have an immediate impact on an urgent issue, or fulfill a specific purpose. But filmmakers want their films to have a long life.” By having copyright and licenses change hands at certain predetermined points, the funder and filmmaker may be able to fulfill their respective goals.

COPYRIGHT AND THE LAW: Generally, the person (or persons or entity) who creates a film or other work is presumed to hold the copyright. The copyright owner enjoys the exclusive rights to (a) reproduce the work; (b) prepare derivative works based on the original; (c) distribute copies to the public; (d) show the work publicly; (e) copy, publicly distribute and prepare derivative works; and (f) control who copies the work, how much will be charged for copies and whether or not to allow the public to use or make derivative works of the original. When the copyright owner allows another person or entity to exercise one of these rights in some way, that is called a “license.” To be legally enforceable, a transfer or assignment of copyright or the license of any right associated with the copyright must be in writing. The copyright owner is generally presumed to have the power to “license” the film for distribution, sales, derivative works and so on. As an experienced filmmaker explains, “None of this is set in stone. It’s all about the terms you agree upon in a contract.”

(Disclaimer: The above is intended only as general information about copyright law and is not intended as legal advice. Active Voice does not do legal consulting. Before creating any sort of legal agreement, or for specific questions about copyright law, please consult legal counsel.)

LEGAL LIABILITY

In rare instances, lawsuits may arise from a liability that occurred during production; a subject of the film who complained; the use of unlicensed images, audio or footage; or perhaps an entanglement between the filmmaker and the funder. As rare as lawsuits are, it's important to discuss the possibility in advance.

- Does the filmmaker have errors and omissions insurance, or production insurance? Who pays for insurance, and who pays for the errors and omissions deductible? One filmmaker urges, "Every filmmaker must make sure they have these insurances budgeted!"
- If a lawsuit is brought in connection with the film, who is liable?
- Is the funder/filmmaker held harmless (i.e., not liable) or indemnified in any lawsuit, and will this be put in writing? If so, who chooses legal representation?
- If a conflict arises between the funder and the filmmaker, is there a mechanism for mediation or arbitration? In the event of irreconcilable differences, what are the terms for termination of the funding agreement?
- What, if any, has been your experience in dealing with legal issues on media projects?

REPORTING AND EVALUATION

Funders often request interim reports, a prospect that filmmakers typically do not relish—especially if they have numerous funders to answer to. But interim reports can help both parties stay on task and identify other resources that the filmmaker finds she may need to successfully complete the film. Some funders also require interim reports because they are responsible to their boards of trustees or governing bodies. As one funder says, "The point of these reports is not to pull the plug, it's to get the job done." Also, final reports help the funder and filmmaker evaluate the impact a film has had—which helps the filmmaker to build her reputation and the funder to justify funding films at all. Questions to consider with reporting are as follows.

- What is the purpose of reporting and evaluation on this project?
- What must the filmmaker report to the funder about and when? For example, progress in production, new project advisors, changes in the budget or updates on subjects?
- What happens if the filmmaker is delinquent in providing interim reports? Are there sanctions? Can the funder withhold funds?
- After the film is completed, what is the time frame for evaluation of impact? What is covered by short-, medium- and long-term evaluations, if any?
- How will impact be measured and what specific data is the filmmaker to collect for evaluation?

Matchmaker: A Guide For Your First Dates

Filmmakers and funders might need a little help getting to know each other. Below are some things to do or think about before you first discuss a possible relationship. Following that is a list of questions to consider on your first couple dates as you explore whether you're a good match. Print out these two pages and take them with you to your first meetings or have them handy when you talk on the phone.

FOR FUNDERS BEFORE YOU GO ON A DATE

- Get inspired! **Watch a great documentary film** on your subject area or another subject area. Visit ActiveVoice.net for some ideas about films you might appreciate.
- **Read the "Funder Archetypes"** here in the Prenups and place yourself as best as you can. This will help you figure out who might be the best partner to have the impact you want.
- **Consider how film/media might or might not support your program strategy.** Consult with Active Voice, Grantmakers in Film and Electronic Media or other funders.
- **Read the guide on "Communicating for Impact,"** available at GrantCraft.org. The guide will help you think about how media might be part of your program strategy.
- Not sure what this might cost? **Review the film-budgeting resources** listed on the Prenups website, or speak with an experienced media funder or filmmaker you know.
- Need a green light? **Think about the resources you have available** for a film project, what support you'll need to drum up at the foundation, and who might help make the case.
- Get ready for the big date! **Review the filmmaker's website and previous films.** If you think you might get serious, check in with his/her old flames (previous funders).

FOR FILMMAKERS BEFORE YOU GO ON A DATE

- **First, know yourself.** Think about your vision and goals for the film, what audiences you hope to reach, and what versions or distribution platforms might help you have an impact.
- **Read the "Filmmaker Archetypes"** here in the Prenups and place yourself as best as you can. This will help you figure out who might be the best partner to have the impact you want.
- **Scope out your date!** Review the prospective funder's website for funding guidelines, and to see what other work they've supported in the relevant program area.
- **Watch films or other media projects they've funded.** Try to discern whether and how your proposed project fits into the funder's guidelines and interests.
- Don't know much about funding strategies? **Get in funders' shoes** by visiting GFEM.org, as well as reading the guide on "Communicating for Impact" at GrantCraft.org.
- **Line up strong organizational partners** for your "engagement campaign," or at least have an arrangement with specialists who can create a campaign for you. The funder will want to know your plan for maximizing impact.
- Think you might get serious? If you can, **talk with the funder's old flames** (previous grantees, especially other filmmakers) to ask about his/her goals, style and expectations.

Beyond Small Talk: Things to Consider in the Early Stages

Review this list before your first meeting or phone conversation, and keep it handy as your relationship progresses. Especially when you're getting to know each other, we recommend being positive but realistic—the idea is to discuss possibilities for social change. Some of the nitty-gritty can wait until later.

VISIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

- What are our respective experiences with funding/making media?
- What is a documentary film one or both of us have seen, funded or made that has had a big impact personally or on the society at large?
- What are our experiences with and perspectives on the issue the film deals with?
- Is this film going to be commissioned and fully funded by the funder? Or is the filmmaker seeking funds as part of a larger budget?
- What role would the present funder play in relation to other funders of the project?
- Why should we work together? What can we each bring to this project and to our collaboration?
- What are our respective goals for the project, in terms of artistry and social impact?
- What stage(s) of production need to be funded, and what might the funder support?
- Who do we want to have see this film and why?
- What final product(s) or versions of the film would best serve target audiences?
- What are the best distribution channels to reach target audiences?

ROLES AND PARTICIPATION

- Do we expect this film to advocate a certain position or to follow a story as it happens?
- What do we each want in the way of editorial control or input—and why?
- At what points during the production process will the funder have control or give input?
- Will we be communicating directly or through an intermediary?
- Who are the film's subjects, and how might their lives change in a way that would affect production?
- Will any of the film's advisors or subjects have any editorial control or input?
- How might the filmmaker's presence affect the lives of the film's subjects?
- How comfortable do we feel about the changes we think might occur?

BUSINESS AND LEGAL

- Is distribution/outreach covered in this budget? Or is this a separate budget?
- Is the funding restricted in any way? For example, is it only for a certain phase of production?
- Is the filmmaker allowed to shift around some or all of the funding within the budget?
- What changes in the budget must the filmmaker notify the funder of?
- What is the disbursement schedule, and what deliverables must the filmmaker produce?
- What is the projected timeline for each phase of production of the film?
- What contingencies can we anticipate in the production schedule?
- How do we each feel about the project budget and timeline and each other's intentions?
- What do we each want with regard to copyright and licensing, and why?
- What are our respective needs with regard to interim reporting and project evaluation?
- What are some ways we might measure impact in the short-, medium- and long-term?