


# STARTUP CAPITAL FOR THE IMPACT ENTREPRENEUR

For startup founders in the impact space, the path to capital is not always clear. Whether you're just getting off the ground, trying to get your first funder meeting or finding your true champions, fundraising takes a lot of trial and error. This infographic captures highlights from our four part series on startup capital.

Look for the  links throughout the piece to read more.

## SIX CREATIVE APPROACHES TO RAISING CAPITAL

- ### 1 FOUNDERS, FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Make the most of the resources in your network — consider personal debt, loans, favors and IOUs.
- ### 2 SIDE HUSTLE

A side gig can help pay the bills, and an aligned employer could be a good partner to build out and test an idea.
- ### 3 NETWORK

Get creative about meeting and engaging new people — remember that asking for advice can be a great way to get people excited.
- ### 4 CROWDFUNDING

Use online campaigns to get support beyond your immediate circle and deepen the engagement of supporters who love your work.
- ### 5 COMPETITIONS, CHALLENGES, AND MICRO-FUNDING

Seek out funding opportunities designed to nurture innovation, and provide exposure to influential players.
- ### 6 ACCELERATORS/ INCUBATORS

Apply to structured programs that offer access to resources, networks and expertise.

 [LEARN MORE ABOUT CAPITAL PATHWAYS](#)

### ANGEL INVESTORS AND MAJOR DONORS

Get ready to build personal relationships — they often invest because they believe in the team.

### FOUNDATIONS

Institutional funders are focused on solving specific problems — think about how your startup can help them achieve their goals.

### HYBRID MODELS

New models are blurring the lines between for-profits and nonprofits — foundations are exploring impact investing and for-profit accelerators are accepting nonprofits. Look for funders that support your vision, regardless of fiscal structure.




## WHO ARE THE FUNDERS?

### EARLY STAGE VC FIRMS

Look for creative ways to research and meet VCs. Sites like LinkedIn and Quora can help you do your homework, and pitch events often have VCs participating as judges.

### ACCELERATORS

Every accelerator has a different focus and value to offer — consider domain expertise and network before applying.

 [LEARN MORE ABOUT FUNDERS](#)

## WHAT ARE FUNDERS LOOKING FOR?



### EXECUTION

"Ideas aren't hard to come by. Success is almost entirely about execution"

- JULIE MENTER  
Principal, New Media Ventures



### VISION

"A big part of fundraising is inspiring other people to want to be a part of this and to want to help you either for financial return or the emotional return of seeing you and your company win."

- MORGAN DEBAUN  
Founder and CEO, Blavity



### ABILITY TO LEARN

"We look for founders who have experienced the problem they set out to solve. These founders tend to be agile, open to feedback, and resilient. And personal experience keeps them focused on the problem."

- SHANNON FARLEY  
Co-Founder and Executive Director, Fast Forward



### RESOURCEFULNESS

"Being a tech nonprofit is hard. A successful one needs people who are resource magnets. We are looking for leaders that will attract resources — money, talent and visibility."


- MORGAN SIMON  
Managing Director, Candide Group



### TRANSPARENCY

"I want a founder to be able to say 'Here are the five things we think we are doing right. Here are the three places that might fail, and this is what we are doing to address them.' Knowing someone can be honest is important."

- JOSH STEARNS  
Associate Director of the Public Square Program, The Democracy Fund

 [LEARN MORE ABOUT CRITERIA](#)

## SIX RULES FOR REACHING OUT TO FUNDERS

The relationships you have with your first funders have a lasting impact on your startup. These best practices can help you find and cultivate the right investors.

### DO YOUR RESEARCH

Be informed, customize your introduction email or pitch, and show respect for investors' time. For foundations, Foundation Center and Guidestar are great resources. For VCs, check out Quora and AngelList.

### LISTEN TO LEARN

"If you're willing to listen and do the homework, you can get stronger from interactions with the people who don't give you money."

- JENNIFER BRANDEL  
CEO and Founder, Hearken

### FIND A NETWORKING STRATEGY THAT WORKS FOR YOU

For some founders, funding is a scale game: the more exposure they get, the better. For others, meeting with only those vetted by their network is the best use of time and resources. Either way, remember that getting the meeting is often the hardest part.

### GET PERSONAL

Get to know your funders, and help them know you (and your work). Send them useful information and timely updates, and look for ways to demonstrate perseverance. They want to know you'll do whatever it takes.

### MAKE A CLEAR ASK

Don't be afraid to be direct, and remember connections come from surprising places. Ask everyone you meet for two additional intros.

### FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW THROUGH

Even your best meetings can be ruined by lack of follow-up. Keep your materials organized and easily accessible to make it easy to follow up quickly.

 [LEARN MORE ABOUT OUTREACH](#)