

ASK

HERO

HELP EXPERTISE RESOURCES ONLINE

By Sarah Myers and Holly South

HERO (Help, Expertise, Resources, Online) is ACCE's online information repository and virtual reference desk. Open 24/7/365 with live help every business day, HERO is the place to start answering your next chamber-specific question like this one...



HERO HELPS – CHAMBER FOUNDATIONS

QUESTION:

Our board is talking about setting up a foundation. Where should we start?

ANSWER:

501(c)(3) foundations are important components of many chamber organizations. But make sure you have clear answers to these three questions before you dive headlong into establishing one:

1. What will be the foundation's **purpose**? What outcome will the foundation achieve that your current organizational structure doesn't allow? Don't begin the process of setting up a new legal entity without having a very clear rationale.
2. What is your **focus**? Will your foundation's mission be narrowly focused or broad and flexible? There are compelling reasons for each. Your purpose should drive this decision.
3. How will the foundation be **aligned** with the chamber? Will the foundation work hand and glove with the chamber or run its initiatives independently? Will their boards overlap? And how will you handle the foundation's branding? There are some legal restrictions relevant to the chamber-foundation governance relationship, but your approach will dictate some key decisions.

Once the answers to the above are clear to you, you should probably seek legal counsel and accounting assistance to navigate state nonprofit law and federal regulations dealing with foundations.

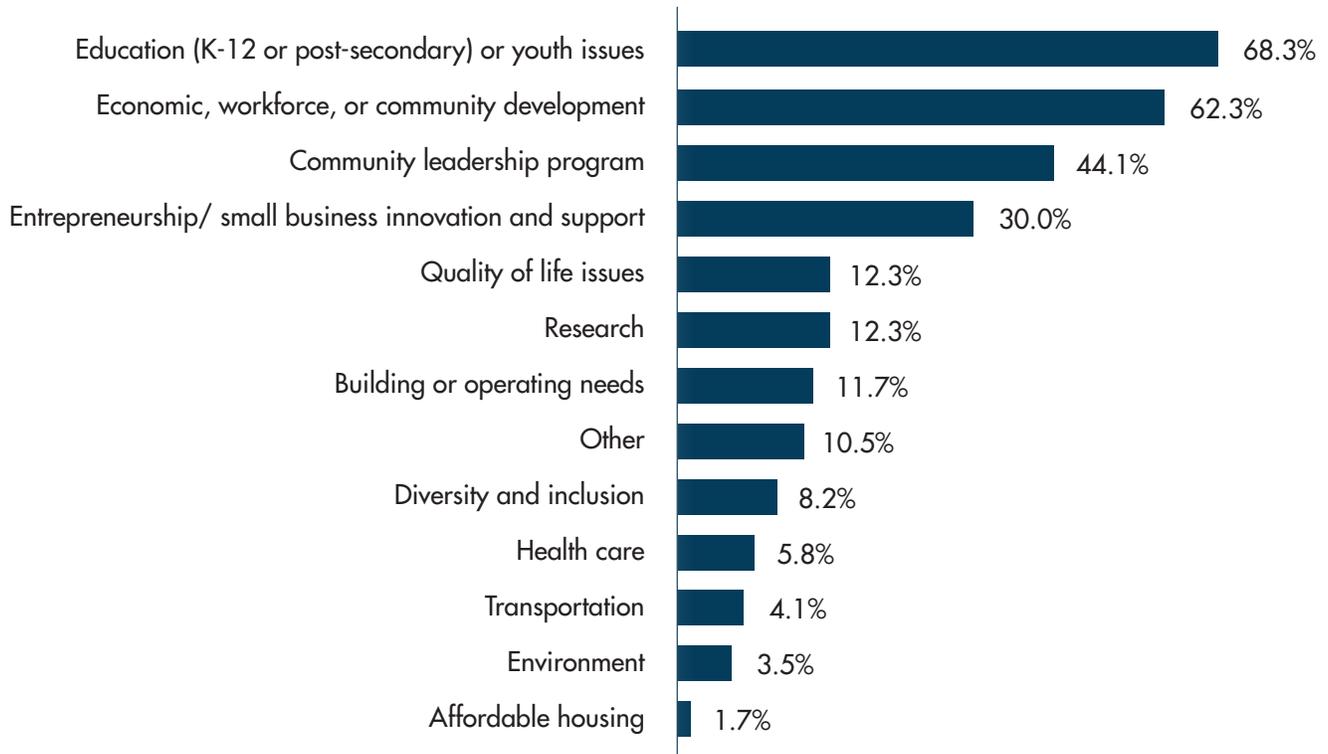
Dig deeper with additional resources. Start exploring at www.ACCE.org/HERO

- Chamberpedia page on chamber foundations, with sample bylaws, articles of incorporation, and legal resources.
- ACCE's quickpoll on foundations for insight on funding, staffing, goals and more
- Venable LLP article on chamber/foundation relationships, "Recent IRS Determination Highlights the Importance of Separation Among Affiliates."
(<http://tinyurl.com/zaenedp>)



NEARLY 70% OF CHAMBERS THAT RESPONDED TO ACCE'S QUICKPOLL ON CHAMBER FOUNDATIONS HAVE A FOUNDATION GEARED TOWARDS EDUCATION AND/OR YOUTH ISSUES.

WHAT IS THE PRIMARY MISSION OF YOUR CHAMBER'S FOUNDATION? (RESPONDENTS SELECTED MULTIPLE OPTIONS)



Looking for past issues of Chamber Executive magazine? They're housed under the Information tab at ACCE.org. Select "Magazine" and then view the "Issue Archive" or use the "Article Archive Search."

The HERO Samples Library is looking for examples of chamber-led Health and Wellness programs, community or employer focused. If your chamber has a program worth sharing, email HERO@acce.org.

Sarah Myers and Holly South are ACCE's directors of Information and research. They connect members with information resources to solve problems and explore opportunities. Ask your question at: www.ACCE.org/ask