





Endowment Building Q&A

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 Thursday, January 29, 2026
 1:00 PM ET

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Agenda

- (:05) Quick Introduction
- (:05) Some definitions
- (:10) The Five Keystones of Endowment Building
- (:40) Questions and Answers

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What Exactly Is an Endowment?

- Collection of individual funds, some restricted, some not
- Pooled for investment purposes
- Invested for future use
- Generally, nonprofit spends from some of the investment return and preserves the principal
- Excess return is reinvested to grow the endowment

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What Does an Endowment Make Possible?


- Endowment growth allows distributions to keep up with inflation
- Provides continuous support as needs change
- Facilitates long-range planning and capital projects (especially maintenance)
- Provides stable funding source through market fluctuations and annual giving ups and downs

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Five keystones of Endowment Building


1. Fundraising / Gift Acceptance Policy
2. Investment Policy
3. Spending Policy
4. Commingled Investments with Sub-Accounting
5. Stewardship

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1. Fundraising / Gift Acceptance Policy

- Rules of the road for gifts
- Can't put the organization at risk
- Gifts must be compatible with mission
- Defines who reviews non-standard gifts and all donor restrictions
- Has formal written donor agreements

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2. Investment Policy

- Balances risk and reward
- Anticipates generating positive total return over time without jeopardizing principal
- Clarifies investment strategies and oversight

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3. Spending Policy

- Ensures consistent distribution available to the organization
- Must be considered “prudent.”
- Usually applied over trailing average, not a point in time
- $(\text{Expected investment return}) - (\text{Expected inflation}) = (\text{Amount to spend})$
- Range of 2.5% - 5% is typical

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4. Commingled Investments / Sub-Accounting

- Funds pooled for optimal investing and efficient administration
- Need to account for new gifts and distribution amounts of individual funds
- Everything else is allocated *pro rata*
- Track individual donor restrictions

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5. Stewardship


- Critical to maintain relationships with donors (and families)
- Demonstrate how organization is fulfilling its mission
- Includes clear financial reporting to show how donors' contributions are invested and used
- Happy donors become repeat donors!

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Q&A




To ask a question, click the Q&A button at the bottom of your screen.

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Thank You!

Contact Gary: gary@pgcalc.com 888-497-4970

Read the White Paper:
The Five keystones of Endowment Building
giving.pgcalc.com/endowment-keystones

Learn about PG Calc's Endowment Sub-Accounting Services:
giving.pgcalc.com/sub-accounting-conversation

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