

CCF Editorial Principles

A document for folks who wish to contribute to Community Centric Fundraising's Content Hub, featuring thought leadership of BIPOC working in or adjacent to the nonprofit sector.

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Pitch submission form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd8YjrJYKP9u2UghEkGv2eyd5njmA4GGCu9lo9JOWSQrasUDg/viewform>

Introduction

"We shape the narrative, otherwise someone else will." – Noé Orgaz

We are so excited that you are interested in contributing to CCF's Content Hub! Our Content Hub is a place for folks with familiarity working in nonprofits to share knowledge, lift up beautiful practices, highlight difficult conversations and awful practices, network and make new contacts (and friends), and continue to examine and put a prominent voice to inequitable fundraising practices — and *we're going to change the entire sector together*.

This document contains answers to questions you may have about becoming a contributor as well as some loose guidelines for the content that tends to be popular, based on our experiences as content editors. These are not hard and fast criteria, though, so please feel open to reach out to Chris at editor@communitycentricfundraising.org if you have any questions.

Here are the kinds of original content* we are looking for (not an all-inclusive list, just a sampling):

- First-person essays about experiences in the sector
- Research articles featuring sector thought leadership
- Visual artwork with a written explanation or an artist statement
- Poetry with a written explanation or an artist statement
- Podcasts with good production value ("good" is subjective, so let's talk)
- Videos with good production value ("good" is subjective, so let's talk)

**By original content, we mean content that you create specifically for CCF. We typically don't reprint previously published pieces as we are prioritizing new voices. Always feel free to reach out if you have an idea that you think would work well in our hub.*

Themes

We're looking for work that speaks directly to those working in the nonprofit sector, particularly in fundraising. We want work that centers and prioritizes racial and economic justice. We also would like work that echoes CCF's [10 Principles](#).

Compensation

We're pursuing grants that enable us to pay our content creators for their work. **The rate is currently \$250/piece** — and will likely change (increase) as CCF evolves and grows.

Copyright

We will enter an agreement for first-rights publishing, where we get the honor of publishing your new work for the first time. We would love to also be able to showcase and promote your work through our various channels, including through social media, emails, reports, and maybe even printed materials. We'd also appreciate it if you would share your piece in your own networks with a link-back to CCF too!

You will retain ownership of your work and you are free to republish your work or share it as you see fit after first-publishing, hopefully with a note that says your article was first printed on the CCF website.

If you're interested in reprinting content from The Content Hub

All of the content on our hub belongs to their respective owners, and it's up to our individual content creators to give permission (or not) for reprints. CCF is happy to be a conduit between content creators and those looking to republish their work on other platforms. Please send an email to editor@communitycentricfundraising.org.

We ask that a stipend of at least \$100, if possible, be offered to our content creators for reprints of their work.

Content Guidelines

Own Voices

We require works that follow the principle of own voices (if applicable). This means that pieces that refer to marginalized groups and their experiences are created by people who share that identity. Pieces that follow this principle reflect the contributors' own lived experiences and perspectives.

We ask that contributors consider whether their proposed piece is their story to tell before submitting their pitches. Proximity to people with a lived experience is not a proxy for having that lived experience and will not be considered adhering to the own voices guideline.

This guideline is non-negotiable for us as our movement is full of people who have historically been spoken about but are rarely allowed a platform to speak for themselves.

AI Content

We do not accept pieces that use AI content creation, including ChatGPT. AI content is plagiarism, even though the systems have been formulated to modify the end result from the stolen materials just enough to be undetectable and circumvent copyright laws.

AI copies existing works by existing creatives without their knowledge or consent. It is an inappropriate and inequitable tool for content submitted to The Hub, especially as, at this time, the person using it and getting paid for their piece can't track down and fairly compensate the original creators for their work.

Written Content

Most of the content we work with will likely be in written form, so that's why we will discuss it the most. However, we are open to other forms of expression, and aspects of these general writing guidelines can be applied to other formats.

Here are the kinds of pieces we'd love to see at this point in our launch:

- First-person essays, reflections from those, especially BIPOC, who work or who have worked in the sector; we want to hear your stories loudly!
- Researched pieces: for those who have research or journalism backgrounds, or for those who feel more comfortable interviewing and quoting others — we'd love to get well-researched and balanced pieces bringing to light the inequities of the nonprofit sector
- A hybrid of both of the above
- Lighter pieces illuminating the idiosyncratic challenges of the work are also welcomed!

Word count

We respectfully request a minimum of 750 words. We find that fewer words than this doesn't allow for enough time to really dive into a topic.

Conversely, we generally request that pieces have a max of 3,000 words. We find that anything more covers a lot of ground in one sitting and could benefit from being split up into a series (which we are open to!) or edited.

Visual and poetry art pieces, artist statements

Sometimes visual art is not always intuitive because it doesn't follow a narrative in the way written content does. That's why we respectfully ask that visual art submissions have an artist statement accompanying it. An artist statement would explain your intentions with your piece — what it means, what it is saying, who it wants to speak to or for.

We request that artist statements run between 200-800 words.

Video, podcasts, and other digital forms of content

We know videos and podcasts are hard and labor-intensive, so we don't require the Hub to be the first place they appear for this type of content.

In general, we're looking for:

- Edited content (not live streams or recordings of events/meetings)
- Narrative content (content that tells stories versus 'reports')
- Visual or auditory variety; an aesthetic (which often translates to a certain level of production quality)

A note on bylines and writing anonymously

We prefer for our content creators to submit content with their bylines (with their real names). With every piece, we intend to print your photo along with your pronouns, a short bio, and links where you can be contacted (such as a public social media account or an email).

However, we totally understand that many people feel apprehensive about creating and publishing content under their real names. We've been asked a few times if we accept anonymous content or content written under a pseudonym.

Our policy is that it depends.

Here are some situations where we would likely accept anonymous content:

- If folks feel that writing under their real name will result in serious professional consequences for them (such as possible job termination)

- If folks are writing under their real names fear for their safety or the safety of their loved ones, if they are associated with what they are writing
- If the scope or topic of the piece in question is a really sensitive topic and writing anonymously feels necessary because of the sensitivity

We know that this is complex and often warrants discussion, so if you have questions or would like to bounce your thoughts off an editor, please email editor@communitycentricfundraising.org.

How we're gonna work together

At CCF, we're currently following a rather traditional editorial relationship with our content creators — this means you'll be working with an editor. Our intention is not to be gatekeepers of content, but rather to offer guidance and coaching in order to help our creators put out awesome stuff — in order to maximize the visibility of all of our works.

Here's how a typical editorial process would flow:

1. Tell your idea to a CCF editor

We don't want you to feel like you have to qualify or pitch your idea to us — we want to and are excited to work with you! But we also want to be efficient with your time because we know it's limited, and we are lucky to have some of it! [This is why we request that you tell us about your idea before pursuing it](#), spending a lot of time on it, and submitting it.

Also, as editors at CCF, we have some insight into the editorial calendar of content, so it's possible that two people have the same great idea. An editor would be able to see that and maybe offer some suggestions for tweaking so that two previously similar pieces end up feeling completely different and individualistic when done.

2. After an editor says, "Yes!" you go do your thing!

We will likely work on deadlines, only because many of us at CCF are also procrastinators, and we find that deadlines help us in terms of accountability.

Our content creators will likely set their own deadlines — it's up to you to tell us when you think you will finish your piece! CCF editors will just keep track of your deadline and look for your piece on the day it's due.

If you need to push the deadline for any reason, please let us know you need an extension and tell us when your new deadline is.

3. After you submit your piece, an editor will work with you on getting it publish-ready

For written pieces, this will include copy editing and feedback-giving.

We try to be careful with edits and feedback at CCF. Our focus in copy editing is always for equity, clarity, and accuracy to the intention of the writing — not stylistic edits. So we do our best to never alter your voice or change your writing style. We don't apply any edit that you haven't seen or approved of. You have the final say on your content.

(However, due to the nature of our movement, edits intended for the inclusion and dignity of marginalized communities are non-negotiable. If creators are unwilling to learn and change language to be more thoughtful, accessible, and liberatory, we may have to say “not now” to a piece. We will always leave the door open should the creator decide they want to come back to the table to collaborate.) We ask that creators stay open and curious rather than defensive or dismissive in this process. As [Radical Copyeditor](#) has said, language can evolve quickly, so a suggestion to change a word or phrase for equity is not a judgment, but a celebration of what that change means: “that people who have been marginalized for centuries are finding ways of reclaiming agency and legitimacy; that those of us who have been written out of existence are finding ways to rewrite reality to make room for our true selves.”

Other things we will edit for the safety of the community:

- Vague titles: We want the reader to know what they are reading so that they can have informed consent to proceed. If a title is overly vague and the piece contains sensitive subjects or content, we'll want to be clearer about what they're about to read.
- Sensational titles: We are always open to learning from our mistakes, and one we made was having an overly sensational title that caused an immediate heart-plummeting-reaction for some of our marginalized readers. We will consider this moving forward and will avoid overly sensational titles in the future.
- Sensitive content without a content warning: The title can't carry everything. In certain pieces, we'll want to add a content warning and possibly some resources for mental health supports.

Our intention with feedback is to give some notes, from one individual's point of view, on what might be good areas to explore or try to improve upon.

We like to apply the lessons we learn today to the next piece. We don't believe in pursuing perfection by editing and working on one piece over and over because we think that's discouraging for content creators. This is why we will try not to do more than three editing rounds. (Usually, two is average.)

4. You sign off on your piece, yay! It is published, yay! It is also promoted, yay!

After you give us your okay to publish your piece, we happily do it! We publish pieces along with your short bio, a headshot of you, and your preferred contact info.

Please note that we have an editorial schedule, and it may be some time before your piece is published after it completes the editing process. Feel free to check with us on when your piece will be published.

After publishing, it's likely we'll give a shout-out to it and you on social media or other platforms. You also will submit an invoice to get you paid at this point.

We also ask that you proudly share your own work with your networks!

5. We repeat this entire process again — maybe!

If you found the endeavor fulfilling and enjoyable and want to submit another piece and work with an editor again, we'd love that! We certainly don't expect it, though. It is completely up to you if you want to continue creating content with us, as well as the pace at which you release content!

A few tips for getting over nerves in creating

Hey, we know that creating content, especially from a personal point of view, can be really nerve-wracking! We've all experienced this at CCF, too! So here's an informal and not-comprehensive list of tips to hopefully overcome the nerves!

Number one: You are awesome, so don't forget that

Sometimes, we feel like the thing we have to say isn't novel or original enough. Sometimes, we feel underqualified to say what we want to say. This is, unfortunately, normal for BIPOC creators.

And it's wrong. We have so many things to say that are great and interesting and new. Nobody out there reads or consumes everything on a topic. There is no "final word." Your voice is more than a worthy contribution to the ongoing conversation. We want to and need to hear your voice.

Don't go for "perfect"

It can be pretty daunting trying to narrow down the "perfect" topic that encompasses your journey and who you are, and everything you stand for.

Don't put that pressure on yourself.

If you are torn and unsure of what you should write about, just come up with like, three topics that you are currently nerding out on and feel confident that you can talk about for five minutes (five minutes of talking is like 700 words of writing) and just intuit which topic you would like to tackle *today* (versus for all time — try not to think that way). If you have trouble narrowing it down to your fave topic of the day, maybe flip a coin, ask a friend, or reach out to the CCF editor. We're here for you.

Also, remember that you can have multiple shots at this, so maybe your first piece is the one where you practice writing clearer sentences or where you practice creative storytelling. Maybe the second piece is where you attempt something bigger?

Don't go too big with your topic

It's pretty tempting to want to write about something huge and lofty and sector-changing and paradigm-shifting in one fell swoop. Like, "I figured out how to fix everything!" But again, don't put that pressure on yourself.

Also — honestly — it's the smaller-scoped stories that are the most impactful. It's stories about lessons you learn quietly, but that really fundamentally change how you think and see — that really stick with people.

It is actually huge if you can tell a story about a moment you learned a really hard and personal lesson and how you are carrying it forward. It's huge to talk about the quiet personal and professional growth that happens on the daily.

Get specific, tell a "small" story with defined parameters

It's really easy to want to share comprehensively — you want to tell people all about all the things — but think of writing one story as like a first date. You don't want to freak out and scare your date by telling them every single detail about yourself or everything that has happened in your life to make you who you are. You tend to curate on a first date, right? You tend to tell pertinent/important little details to give them a good sense of what you're about, what you stand for, and who you are. Over time, more and more of the story gets uncovered.

Same with your writing and how you communicate. It's one scene, not the entire movie.

Resources to help

- ["The Power of Story: The Story of Self, Us, and Now"](#) from The Commons Social Change Library
- The Sum of Us ["A Progressive's Style Guide"](#)
- [Conscious Style Guide](#)

- [“7 tips to write content that is more accessible”](#) by Stacy Nguyen

A Note for White Folks

While we will always strive to center the perspectives and voices of BIPOC, we also are interested in content from white folks. [Reach out to us with your ideas!](#)

Centering BIPOC voices and perspectives (a note on the publishing schedule)

At CCF, we want the balance in our hub to be about 75% BIPOC voices and about 25% content from white folks. So it's possible that sometimes it may take a while for your pieces to get published. We'll do our best to communicate where we're at in the schedule — and you should also feel free to reach out to us with questions.

Opting out of getting paid

Also, a few white folks have reached out to us who wanted to contribute something to the hub but stated that they did not want to be paid. We appreciate this and will accept this gesture from any white folks.