

## Tips for Working with Consultants

To work effectively with a consultant, nonprofits should **prepare thoroughly**, **choose thoughtfully**, and **commit to full partnership**. According to articles from [The Chronicle of Philanthropy](#), this means clearly defining your needs and budget, checking references, asking insightful interview questions, and building a relationship grounded in communication, shared responsibility, and trust. This comprehensive approach leads to a stronger engagement—one that supports your organization well beyond a single project.

### ***Before Hiring***

- 1. Define Your Needs and Goals:** Clearly articulate the specific problems you need to solve or the goals you want to achieve.
- 2. Align Your Budget:** Understand the costs associated with hiring a consultant, including their fees.
- 3. Do Your Homework:** Research potential consultants thoroughly, comparing their skills and experience against your organization's specific needs.
- 4. Prepare Your Internal Team:** Ensure your staff is informed, equipped, and ready to engage fully with the consultant.

### ***During the Hiring Process***

- 1. Ask the Right Questions:** During interviews, go beyond standard questions and inquire about how a consultant handles changing needs, builds buy-in, and communicates when things go off track.
- 2. Request Proposals:** After narrowing down options, provide consultants with specific information and ask for detailed proposals outlining their approach and fees.
- 3. Check References:** Contact references to get honest feedback and ensure the consultant's skills are the right match for the work you need done.



### ***While Working with the Consultant***

- 1. Establish Communication Expectations:** From the outset, set clear expectations for how and when you will communicate throughout the project.
- 2. Ensure Collaboration:** Treat the consultant as a partner, fostering trust and shared responsibility for the project's success.
- 3. Manage Power Dynamics:** Be open with the consultant about any power dynamics within your organization or with donors that might affect the work.
- 4. Provide Ongoing Feedback:** Actively participate in the process, offering feedback to ensure the project stays on track and delivers the desired results.