



# The Oklahoma Eagle

## FUNDING STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

### Donor Transparency & Editorial Independence

Tulsa Flyer & The Oklahoma Eagle are committed to transparency in every aspect of funding our organization.

We may consider donations to support the coverage of particular topics, but maintain editorial control of the coverage. We will cede no right of review or influence of editorial content, nor of unauthorized distribution of editorial content. Accepting financial support does not mean we endorse donors or their products, services or opinions.

You may read our complete Donor Transparency Policy and Editorial Independence Policy at [tulsa flyer.org](http://tulsa flyer.org) and [theokeagle.org](http://theokeagle.org).

### Specific guidelines for funder categories:

**Individuals.** All individuals who provide funding, including through crowdfunding campaigns, must be identified to Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle by their legal name (not a pseudonym or online username). This requirement should be clear at the outset of any crowdfunding campaign to ensure that funding is not raised from anonymous donors.

**Corporate Divisions and Subsidiaries.** If funding comes from a corporation's bona fide operating division or subsidiary with independent budgeting and decision-making authority, that division or subsidiary may be identified as the funder without identifying the parent corporation.

**Brand Names.** Established brands that are not corporate entities (for example, "Jell-O" is a brand owned by Kraft, "Crest" is a brand owned by Procter & Gamble) may be identified as funders if the corporate owner is also fully and clearly disclosed. However, individual products or product lines may not be identified as funders (such as "Crest 3D White Toothpaste").

**Endowments, Trusts, and "Friends of" Initiatives.** Third-party endowments, program-specific trusts, or other "friends of" initiatives that provide funding may be identified as funders.

**Foundations.** Many foundations feature specific grant programs (e.g., Ford Foundation's JustFilms grant). When content receives funding from such a grant, the grant may be identified as a funder provided that the foundation is also fully and clearly disclosed.

## EVALUATING FUNDER ACCEPTABILITY

While financing from funders is critical to support the creation of trusted, high-quality content, Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle will not accept funding that could compromise the editorial credibility or integrity of the content. To preserve the public's trust, Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle applies two tests when evaluating the acceptability of every proposed funder: the Editorial Influence Test and the Perception Test.

### Editorial Influence Test

Content distributed by Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle should be produced with the highest ethical, journalistic and professional standards in accordance with the Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle policies. Content must be responsive solely to the needs of the public—not to the interests of funders. No funder may influence content. This includes partner content. In determining compliance with this prohibition, Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle evaluates whether the funder is able to:

- Participate in the production process after the conceptual stage is complete
- Specify in any detail what the content is about
- Direct the conclusions or opinions of the content
- Provide input on stories, outlines, final drafts
- Appoint or approve experts to be interviewed or advisors to provide guidance about content development
- Influence or contribute to decision about the publication of content
- Control distribution of content

While these particular factors are indicative of impermissible editorial influence, other contextual factors may also be relevant. Each situation is unique and requires specific analysis.

In general, a funder may communicate an interest in broad concepts or proposals that it might wish to fund. For example, a potential funder could indicate its interest in funding content on the performing arts or scientific innovation but not a specific business.

### Perception Test

To preserve the public's trust, Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle also guards against the potential perception that a funder has exercised editorial influence, even if no such influence has occurred. For this reason, Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle will not produce or distribute content if we determine the reader might reasonably conclude that Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle has compromised its independence to a funder. The perception of editorial influence can include a funding arrangement that appears so self-serving that the audience might assume that the primary purpose of the content is to promote the funder's products, services or other interests.

In determining whether the audience might reasonably believe that a funder has exercised editorial influence, Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle evaluates whether there is a connection between the products, services or interests of the funder and the subject matter of the content. If there is any such connection, we will evaluate whether:

- The connection is incidental to the subject matter of the content
- The funder seeks to fund an entire initiative or only select stories within that initiative
- The content was produced before or after the funding relationship was established
- The proposed funder is one of many or joined with neutral funders, making it a minority rather than majority funder
- Disclosure language is added to make clear that the funder had no editorial involvement in the content

The presence of one or more of these factors may mitigate the potential perception that a funder exercised editorial influence. No one factor is necessarily determinative and other factors may be relevant depending on circumstances. The potential perception that a funder may have exercised editorial influence is of heightened importance when the content involves news, public affairs or controversial subject matter.

## Category Restrictions

Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle reserve the right to decline any proposed funder or funding acknowledgment that does not align with our public service mission. The following general restrictions apply:

**Politics.** Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle does not accept ads or sponsor messaging that supports or opposes any candidate for political office.

**Public Importance or Interest.** Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle does not accept ads or sponsor messaging that expresses views with respect to any matter of public importance or interest.

**Violence or Sexual Themes.** Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle may reject and/or require edits to any ad or sponsor message if it contains violent or otherwise graphic, explicit, sexual or offensive content that is determined to be incompatible with our public service mission.

If a funder is approved, Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle reviews the message that will identify the funder. This section sets forth the rules that apply to the contents of any funding identification, ad or message.

## EVALUATING FUNDER ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### Contents of Funder Acknowledgments

Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle applies reasonable good faith judgment when evaluating proposed funding acknowledgments for all distribution platforms—including online videos, social/mobile applications, websites and print publications. In doing so, Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle takes into account evolving digital platforms and audience expectations for each platform.

#### Funder's Name or Logo

All funders must be clearly identified. A logo may be used to identify a funder, however the funder's name must be included in text if a logo by itself does not adequately disclose the funder's identity.

#### Acceptable Information

Aside from clearly identifying the name of the funder, a funding acknowledgment may contain additional information, provided such information meets Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle standards & guidelines.

The following identifying information is acceptable:

- Value-neutral descriptions that identify the funder and its products or services
- Brand and trade names, as well as brief product or service listings
- Visual depictions of products
- Duration of time in business
- Informational imperatives that direct the reader to additional information like, "Learn more at..."
- Location information
- Identifying logos, organizational slogans or taglines and mission language

### Unacceptable Language

- Calls to action such as “pick up the phone now,” “come in today,” and “order now.” Implicit calls to action such as “Are you ready to buy a house? Want to know if you qualify?”
- Subjective language such as: beautiful, dependable, easy, excellent, reliable
- Comparative language such as: best, better, easier, exclusive, hottest, largest, latest, most
- Depictions of customers’ apparent satisfaction with the funder’s products or services
- Inflammatory, coercive or aggressive language

### Contextual Factors

Context is essential in evaluating funder acknowledgments. No set of specific rules can anticipate every use or possible combination of creative elements. As such, Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle must exercise its discretion when considering precedent and evaluating the acceptability of proposed funding acknowledgments.

### Children

On content intended for children ages 12 and under, Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle applies a higher standard of review that encourages non-promotional language.

## Procedures for Website, Newsletter & Social Funding Acknowledgments

Website, Newsletter and Social Banner funding acknowledgments will be evaluated according to all of the standards above, along with the following additional requirements:

### Placement and Design

Funding acknowledgements may appear as static logos or text at the perimeter of Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle webpages (i.e., the top, bottom, or side columns).

Funding acknowledgments that appear as banners on Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle webpages, newsletters, mobile applications and other digital platforms will appear in designated display units.

Funding acknowledgments should not be designed to appear as editorial or news content. Long-form informational messages are allowed but must be clearly identified as sponsored content.

### Unacceptable Placement and Design

- No content shall attempt to mislead the user in any way.
- No strobing or flashing effects, pop-up, pop-under or other distracting animation.
- No audio or video that begins without the user’s initiation or does not stop at the user’s request.

### Explanatory Language

Explanatory text will appear near funding credits, such as “Support provided by,” and a link to “Learn About Sponsorships” should be easily accessible. That link directs users to a Tulsa Flyer/The Oklahoma Eagle webpage which explains editorial and transparency policies.