



Trusts, Estates,
and Gift Planning

Strategic financial
planning for your
Cornell philanthropy

Cornell University Endowment

Ensuring academic
excellence to all



giftplanning.giving.cornell.edu

Academic freedom and expression

Endowment giving is a powerful force supporting all areas of the university by providing for research, faculty salaries and stipends, programs in every college and unit, grant aid and other student support, and facilities. Cornell's endowment funds are dedicated to promote inquiry and innovation across the university. By choosing to support or create an endowment, you are forging a critical connection between past, current, and future generations of students and scholars. Our role as an institution is to steward our endowed funds so that we may continue to provide for our students, programs, facilities, and faculty over many generations.

How it works

The most significant feature of an endowment is the preservation of the principal, or the gift made by the donor. Endowment gifts must be held in perpetuity. An endowment gift is invested in Cornell's long-term investment pool and this investment generates a payout that can be spent. The biggest misconception is that an endowment can be accessed like a large checking account in times of financial hardship. This is not the case. Cornell may spend only a portion of the earnings from the investment, as determined prudent by the Cornell University Board of Trustees.

When you choose to make a gift to an existing endowment, you are adding to the principal of the endowment. When you establish a new endowment, your gift gets invested and only a portion of the earnings from this investment can be spent.

A sacred trust

Today, the endowment celebrates a tradition of philanthropy that dates back to the 1890s. As we all work together to support the teaching and research mission of the university, we recognize our commitment to those that have entrusted those funds to us. Your endowed gift provides continuity. And endowments serve as a promise that the programs you love can be carried on indefinitely.

We are here to help

The Office of Trusts, Estates, and Gift Planning is here to help alumni and friends explore their support to the university at all levels. Often a donor finds that their gift to an endowment is the largest gift they have made to Cornell; requiring forethought, reflection, and careful execution. Our responsibility is to help make sure that your financial gift captures your true intentions and provides promising futures.

Cornell University and its employees do not provide tax, legal, or financial advice. This material has been prepared for informational purposes only, and is not intended to provide, and should not be relied on for tax, legal, or financial advice. You should consult your tax, legal, and financial advisors for personalized advice.

Learn more

Additional resources are available for you to review on our website giftplanning.giving.cornell.edu

Cornell's Office of Trusts, Estates, and Gift Planning

☎ 1.800.481.1865 ✉ gift_planning@cornell.edu