

NATIONAL  
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## Interior Industry Growth Fund

### *Executive Summary*

### The History

The interior landscape community has historically implemented programs to penetrate the market and grow the industry. In 1998, in conjunction with then the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA), industry practitioners launched the Interior Industry Growth Initiative.

This collective goal was to expand the size and profitability of the interior landscape services market. In less than ten months, \$825,000 was pledged that led to the formation of Plants at Work, a 501 c3 non-profit entity raising the profile of the interior landscape industry to decision-makers. In 2008 Plants at Work was rebranded to Green Plants for Green Buildings (GPGB). Its mission is to communicate the aesthetic, wellbeing, and economic benefits of nature in the built environment.

### The Problem

The benefits and return-on-investment of live plants in commercial spaces needs to reach decision-makers to accelerate growth and profitability in the interior landscape industry. Businesses can do so individually, but most do not have the funds to do it with the necessary quality, depth, and consistency that a cooperative international effort would provide.

GPGB continues to provide curated research, educational courses, and continuing education credits to professionals in organizations such as the American Institute of Architects, the US Green Building Council, the American Society of Interior Designers, the Building Owners and Managers Association, and many others.

The Interior Landscape Industry would greatly benefit from new research on live plants' support of wellness, their impact in the workplace, and how their presence influences workers' choice of employers.

Similarly, new research proving how live plants and other biophilic design elements improve business will positively impact other market sectors. Business owners' selection of office space, investors' increased returns from green building initiatives, and the benefits of plants to healthcare, retail, and hospitality would give credible evidence to the ROI of interior landscape services.

Funding these growth initiatives is a challenge. University research budgets are tight, educational programming is costly, and professional marketing is expensive to execute on an international platform. Industry donor support is not enough to support these efforts sustainably.

## The Solution

The National Horticulture Foundation (NHF) was created in 1987 to provide research and education to projects relevant to the nursery and landscape industry and support students pursuing careers in horticulture-related fields. NHF currently has over **\$4,000,000** in its endowment. The capital is untouched, and earnings have averaged over 8% annually over the past 30-years supporting these efforts.

The NHF endowment provides general funding to the horticulture industry, including research on consumers habits, marketing, grower-related issues, and nursery production practices. As successful as NHF is, it has not had an investment fund specific to the interior landscape industry.

An Interior Industry-specific endowment is the best approach to provide a permanent source of funding to grow the size and profitability of the Interior Landscape Industry and future-proof it for new generations.

In December 2021, GPGB and NHF announced the Interior Industry Growth Fund (IIGF). The Fund was established through a financial gift from GPGB and merging NHF's Fund for Interior Horticulture Research and Education (FIHRE Fund) which was founded in 2001 but maintained a relatively small balance.

In the first 30-days of the Interior Industry Growth Fund's creation, 40 generous and future-minded entrepreneurs investing towards the sustainability and growth of our industry committed **\$335,000**.

NHF and its financial advisors will manage this all-new endowment. The capital will never be spent and will grow through future contributions. Organizers have an initial target to grow the IIGF to **\$1,000,000**. Annual earnings will be spent exclusively on interior landscape industry research, education, and marketing projects.

The IIGF will have three individuals representing the interior landscape industry designated by GPGB to serve as an advisory committee to NHF. Their role is to provide oversight and recommendations on how the earned interest will fulfill the Fund's purpose.

## The Importance of the Work

Guided by a vibrant network of business professionals, GPGB and NHF are dedicated to positioning the Interior Landscape industry to thrive well into the future.

The Interior Industry Growth Fund will provide research initiatives, professional education, and targeted marketing to influencers and decision-makers. A well-endowed Fund will assure interior landscape services are deemed essential by informed leaders of top-performing companies. Thoughtful investment in the IIGF will help to future-proof the interior landscape industry.

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