

2013

Evaluation of The Office of Foundation Liaison, 2013

Johnson Center at Grand Valley State University

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EVALUATION OF

THE OFFICE OF FOUNDATION LIAISON



Johnson Center
at Grand Valley State University

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INTRODUCTION

Michigan's nonpartisan Office of Foundation Liaison (OFL) was created in 2003 at the suggestion of Michigan philanthropic leaders. The overarching goal of OFL is to foster partnerships between foundations and state government agencies. The OFL staff works to create shared agendas among foundations and agencies and then to identify the investments that each can make in support of that agenda.

Begun under the administration of Democrat Jennifer Granholm, it currently operates with the support of Republican Gov. Rick Snyder and is located in the governor's administrative offices. This senior-level position – unique in the nation – helps to identify and broker strategic partnerships between the state and foundations likely to result in policy reforms that would improve the lives of children and families in Michigan.

Since its inception, OFL has been funded by 17 foundations, with an office provided by the state government. It is governed by an advisory committee of contributing funders; the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF), its fiscal agent; and a member of the governor's executive staff. This report documents findings about the activities and results of OFL from April 2012 to April 2013.

BACKGROUND

The OFL is one of a growing number of offices designed to facilitate cross-sector collaboration. The Michigan office is unique in operating at the state level.¹ In 2012, the Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy at the University of Southern California held a series of roundtable discussions about liaison offices to chart their growth around the country and to understand the opportunities and challenges they face. A report on their status, "Philanthropy and Government Working Together,"² identified the following differences between foundations and government that need to be bridged in order to have successful partnerships.

¹ One explanation for why Michigan has been successful in creating this office may be that it has one of the oldest and largest grantmaker associations in the country, the Council of Michigan Foundations; it was instrumental in launching OFL and serves as the fiscal home.

² Ferris, J M & Williams, N. (2012). *Philanthropy and Government Working Together: The Role of Offices of Strategic Partnerships in Public Problem Solving*. Los Angeles, CA: The Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy, Sol Price School of Public Policy at USC.

TABLE 1: The different worlds of philanthropy and government

Philanthropy	Government
We have a certain amount of flexibility about timing	We have to adhere to annual budget cycles
We see this work as a long term commitment	An election can change everything
This initiative is a top priority	This initiative is one of hundreds of responsibilities
We can be selective about what we focus on	We do not have a lot of flexibility in setting priorities
We don't pick up the tab for defunded services	An important program got cut; let's get philanthropy to fund it
Government is mysterious	Foundations are mysterious

This table is adapted from Working with Government (GrantCraft, 2010)

The OFL now has 10 years of experience bridging these differences.

As the governorship transitioned administrations, considerable effort went into a smooth transition of the office. Both OFL and CMF staff and members worked to ensure that all candidates were aware of the office and its role. Once Gov. Snyder was elected, he was briefed on the office.

On Aug. 31, 2011, eight members of the Office of Foundation Liaison advisory committee participated in a focus group regarding the achievement, challenges, and future directions for the office. Of particular concern was maintaining support from Snyder. Subsequently, additional conversations were held to reach members who had not been in attendance. These conversations included a three-person conference call and two individual interviews.

Several themes emerged regarding how the OFL had worked across the transition from the Granholm administration to the Snyder administration:

- The OFL staff was very successful in maintaining momentum on two key initiatives: the Michigan Benefit Access Initiative and work on early childhood education.
- It was still early in the Snyder administration; there was also a learning curve under the previous administration.
- At the same time, the Snyder team was moving quickly on a series of policy priorities, perhaps faster than a group of independent foundations could move.
- The OFL should be helping to change the conversation about the role of philanthropy broadly, not focusing just on funding specific projects.

The work the OFL was able to do throughout the transition [was very important] to keep momentum on initiatives that the foundations were interested in, and, for lack of a better term, 'selling' those ideas to the new administration as they came in, to overcome some of the political barriers that are typically experienced as you transition from one party to the next.
- OFL stakeholder



Between August 2011 and January 2012, OFL staff and advisory committee members reviewed and revised the theory of change, mission, priorities, and goals for the office. Individual interviews, a half-day retreat, and two meetings culminated in affirmation of the following:

MISSION

To develop strategic partnerships between philanthropy and government in order to create better outcomes for Michigan citizens within a commonly defined set of agendas.

PRIORITY ISSUE AREAS

We focus our efforts on three key issue areas that are aligned with both foundation and state government priorities:

- Early Childhood Development (0 to 5)
- Education (K to 16)
- Economic/Workforce Development

GOALS

We believe we can accomplish our mission through the following goals:

1. Promoting mutual understanding and collaboration between state government and foundations, and to identify strategic opportunities for partnering.
2. Serving as a trusted source of data, information, and dialogue about programs, policy impacts, and policy and implementation options.
3. Facilitating strategic joint investments that will improve outcomes for Michigan and its residents.

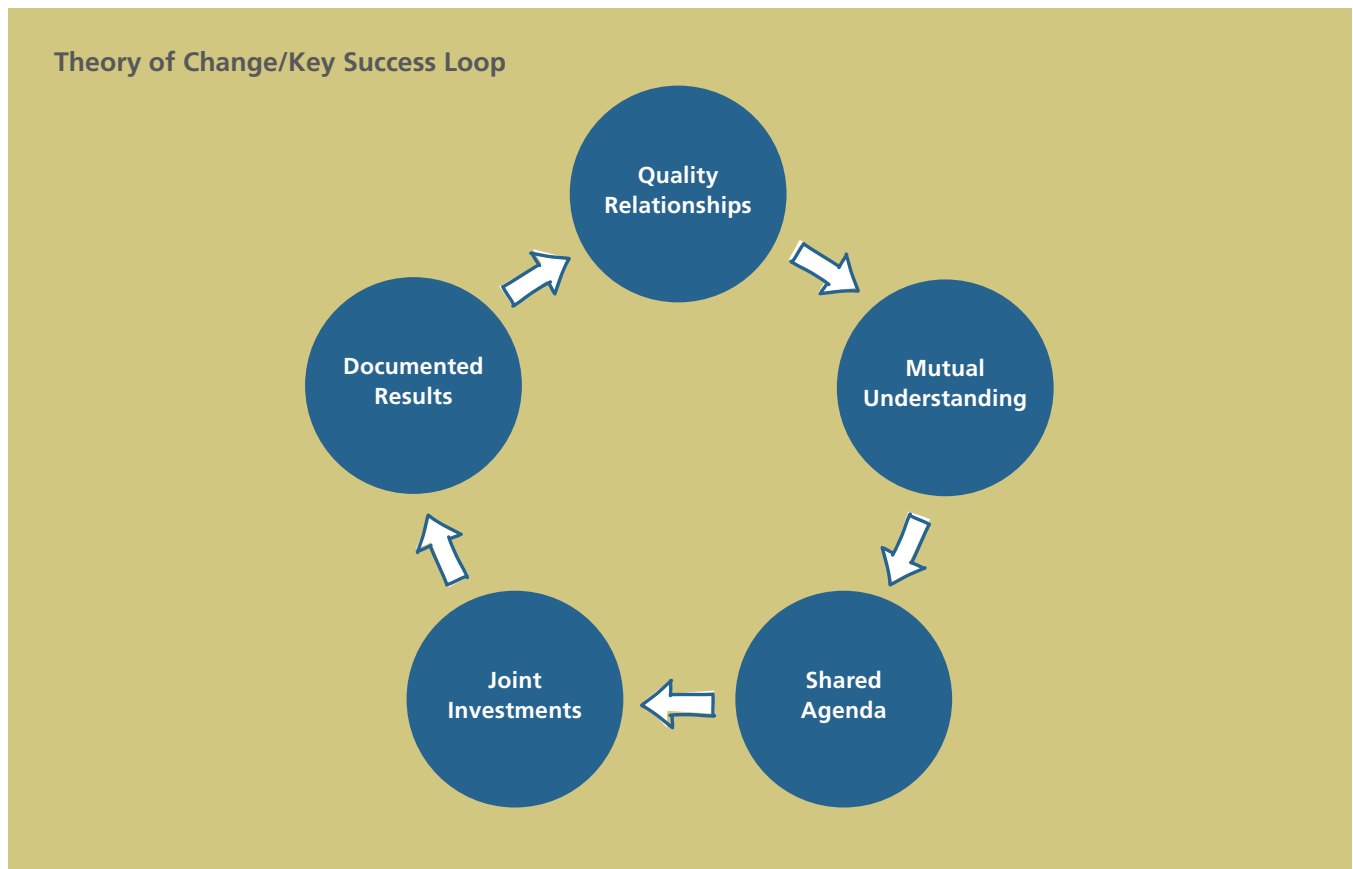
THEORY OF CHANGE / KEY SUCCESS LOOP

The theory of change was summarized in a Key Success Loop that describes the dynamics of how OFL works with foundations and state government.

In order to encourage this dynamic, three overarching levers of change were identified:

- Convening state agencies, foundations, and other key resources to share knowledge.
- Sharing information on foundation strategies and priorities through issue papers and briefs.
- Connecting people and organizations to work together on issues and emerging opportunities.

Additionally, the advisory committee recommended that OFL staff place even greater emphasis on capturing what foundations have learned through their grantmaking and research to share with state government.



This evaluation was guided by the following questions:

1. Has OFL contributed to greater coordination and shared learning among foundations in Michigan and between foundations and state government?
2. What are the strategies for engagement with both foundations and state government that have been most effective in enabling shared learning and joint investments?
3. What have been the outcomes of shared investments?

Data were collected in three ways. An **online survey** was sent to foundation staff members who had some interaction with OFL over the previous year. The list of names was provided by OFL. Survey links were sent to 85 individuals from 46 different foundations; 52 individuals responded, for a 61% response rate. There was a slight overrepresentation of individuals from private foundations in the final sample. This is not surprising, given that private foundations have provided funds for OFL and tend to work more closely with the office.

TABLE 2: Is the foundation you represent a...

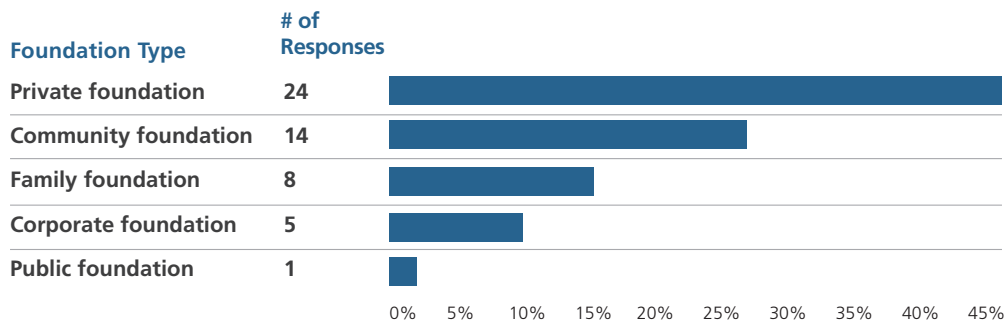
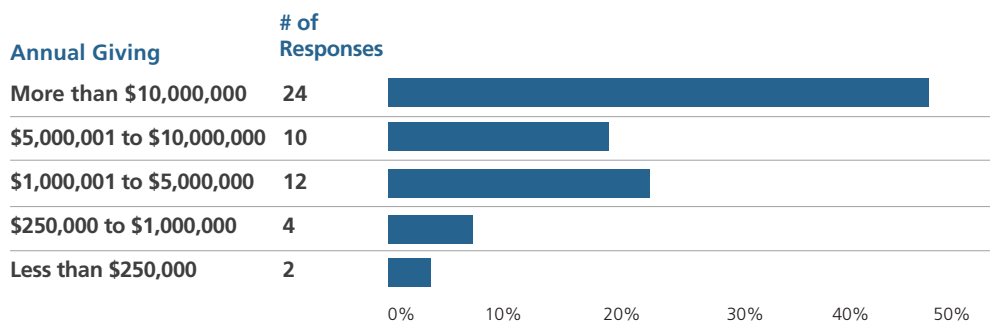


TABLE 3: What is the total annual giving of your foundation?



The second primary data source was **monthly interviews** of the OFL’s staff, Karen Aldridge-Eason and Maura Dewan. During these interviews, the work from the previous month was reviewed.

The remainder of this report organizes the findings by evaluation question. Complete survey results are attached as an appendix, with discussion of items relevant to each question included in the body of the report.

Finally, representatives of government and foundations with whom OFL had worked participated in **phone interviews**. The names were provided by OFL staff.

[Working with the OFL] is a necessary connection. It creates that synergy that we need to understand how we can do business differently and how we can work closely with our foundations. It helps to tie lots of initiatives together.

– State government agency staff person



EVALUATION QUESTION 1:

Has OFL contributed to greater coordination and shared learning among foundations in Michigan and between foundations and state government?

Data to address this question come from both the surveys and the interviews.

The survey first sought to gather some baseline data on the existing levels of collaboration among Michigan foundations. Respondents to the survey reported frequent interaction with other Michigan foundations. Almost 90 percent of the foundation members reported that they met or spoke with members of other foundations “very often” or “frequently.”

As shown in the following tables, the vast majority also reports joint investments both with other foundations and with government agencies. More than 90 percent have had joint investments with other foundations, and more than 80 percent with government agencies. Of those who have funded jointly, the vast majority participates in multiple joint efforts.

TABLE 4:
How often does someone from your foundation meet with or speak with staff or executives from other Michigan-based foundations *outside* of conferences such as CMF?

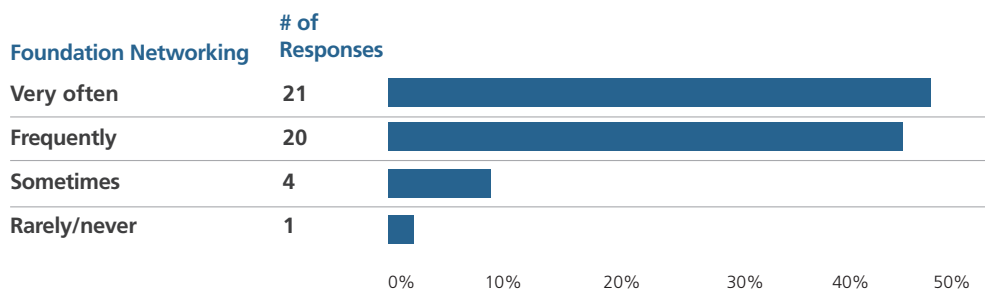


TABLE 5:
Have you jointly invested with other foundations in projects or programs?

Joint Funding with Foundations	Number of Foundations	% of Total Foundations
Yes	32	91.43%
No	3	8.57%
Grand Total	35	100%

TABLE 7:
Have you jointly invested with government funders in projects or programs?

Joint Funding with Government	Number of Foundations	% of Total Foundations
Yes	28	84.85%
No	5	15.15%
Grand Total	33	100%

TABLE 6:
Approximately how many joint funding efforts [with other foundations] does your foundation currently have underway?

Joint Funding Efforts with Foundations	Number of Foundations	% of Total Foundations
Several	16	50.00%
A few	14	43.75%
One	2	6.25%
Grand Total	32	100%

TABLE 8:
Approximately how many joint funding efforts [with government funders] does your foundation currently have underway?

Joint Funding Efforts with Government	Number of Foundations	% of Total Foundations
Several	7	25.00%
A few	17	60.71%
One	4	14.29%
Grand Total	28	100%

Collaborations between foundations

The respondents were asked about the areas where they saw the greatest opportunities for collaboration among foundations. Economic/workforce development was mentioned most often as a potential area for collaboration. “Impact investing” or “joint funding efforts” was also a common response. As one participant observed, “In order to catalyze change, it is critical for foundations and funders to partner and pool their resources for greater impact with evidence.” Funders also saw education and, particularly, early childhood development as having great potential for collaboration. This is not surprising, given the flurry of activity around early childhood development in Michigan.

A little more than half of the respondents indicated that they have had opportunities to collaborate with other foundations that they have not pursued. The following are the three primary obstacles to collaboration between foundations given by the respondents (in order of most popular response):

- **Lack of alignment.** The lack of alignment between the foundations in terms of goals, priorities, or agendas was cited as a key obstacle to collaboration. One respondent commented that they had “different institutional priorities, perspectives, procedures, and the ‘not invented here’ syndrome.” Another observed, “[we] can’t agree on the ‘how.’ ... We can get to a vague vision, but when it comes to pulling the trigger, especially on statewide policy work, other foundations back away.”
- **Limited capacity.** Foundations have limited time, staff, and resources, sometimes putting collaborations on the back burner. One respondent observed that the “biggest obstacle is the fact that we have limited staff and we don’t have the time to devote to these topics/issues. We’d like to do more if we could.”
- **Need for leadership and facilitation for collaboration.** A respondent remarked on the “lack of some party serving as the convener/leader.”

And yet, as mentioned earlier, more than 90 percent of the respondents indicate that they have joint investments with other foundations.

Collaborations between foundations and government

Foundations were asked about the areas where they saw the most potential for collaborations with government agencies. The most common responses were “environmental issues” and “community planning and revitalization”; one respondent cited “green infrastructure and water-related opportunities.” Another commented, “Our city is presently in the midst of a master planning process and we can play a helpful role with some community engagement processes.”

The other potential areas for collaboration were the same as those with foundations: economic/workforce development and education – in particular, early childhood development.

Approximately 45 percent of respondents indicated that they at some point had an opportunity to cooperate with a government agency that they did not pursue. Similar to collaborations between foundations, the lack of alignment of missions or agendas was the most common obstacle.

The role of the OFL in fostering collaborations

To understand the role of OFL in fostering these collaborations, we asked foundation respondents how often they had been contacted by OFL for purposes of collaborating, whether OFL had facilitated those collaborations, and how important the OFL role was.

As seen in the following tables, the majority of foundations reported that they were contacted multiple times and, of those who responded, more than 70 percent said that OFL had facilitated the collaboration. The role of OFL was described as being “extremely important” or “very important” by more than half of those who indicated it had played a role, and “somewhat important” by another 40 percent.

TABLE 9:
How often has your foundation been contacted by OFL for the purpose of collaboration with other foundations or government agencies?

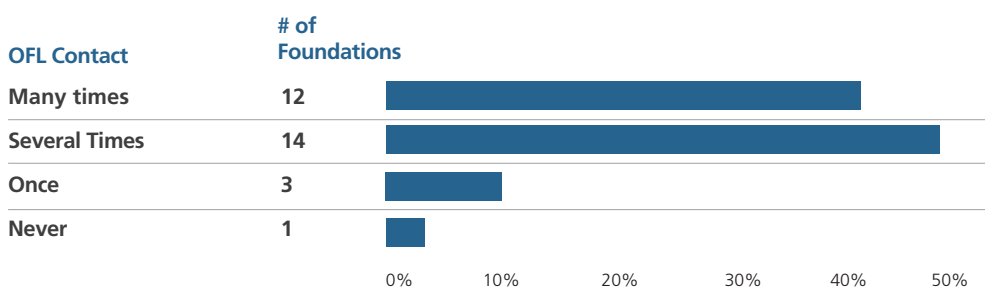


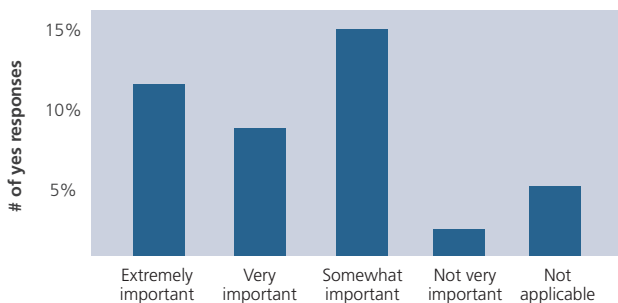
TABLE 10:
Thinking of your collaborations with other foundations, have any of these collaborations been facilitated by OFL?

OFL Facilitated Collaboration	Number of Foundations	% of Total Foundations
Yes	19	70.4%
No	6	22.2%
Don't Know	2	7.4%
Grand Total	27	100%

TABLE 11:
Thinking of your collaborations with government agencies, have any of these collaborations been facilitated by the OFL?

OFL Facilitated Gov't Collaboration	Number of Foundations	% of Total Foundations
Yes	17	70.83%
No	7	29.17%
Grand Total	24	100%

TABLE 12:
Thinking of any collaborations facilitated by OFL, how would you describe the importance of its role?



This pattern of responses suggests that the OFL staff were proactive in reaching out to foundations and that this outreach resulted in significant numbers of foundations collaborating and jointly funding work. A funder commented,

Individually, foundations can get meetings [with state government entities], but what's really important about what OFL does is they try to coordinate so we can all hear it together. It's efficient for both the foundation and the officials.

The question of joint learning was addressed in interviews, both with OFL staff and with foundation and government partners. The OFL facilitated shared learning around big-picture strategy for the state and foundations in several areas including education and health. One funder observed that one way in which OFL staff are

extremely helpful is they bring funders together around educational topics. Recently we attended a session they did with the director of community mental health services in Michigan. There was a very open candid discussion between funders statewide and the director of community mental health on the challenges on funding streams. They facilitate deeper understanding on both sides.

In the area of education, the OFL has played an important role by convening briefings for funders and facilitating access to key government education staff.

The OFL has also helped to inform tactical decisions by bringing in targeted experts or organizing site visits for foundation and government partners to observe how specific programs are implemented. In one example, a site visit to Ohio in December 2009 allowed funders and Department of Human Services (DHS) staff to make an informed decision on how to move forward with the Michigan Benefit Access Initiative. A 2006 site visit to the Harlem Children's Zone helped DHS and foundations see for themselves the benefits of putting human services resources into schools; that visit sparked collaborative work that continues to this day.

OFL's strength lies in their knowledge of the majority of foundations that work with the office and ... their ability to keep key legislators informed. They have been very effective in this unique partnership. This was something I thought was going to be a real challenge and wondered whether it would be successful. But, because of their ability to relate to both sides, it has allowed them to be successful.
- OFL funder



EVALUATION QUESTION 2:

What are the strategies for engagement with both foundations and state government that have been most effective in enabling shared learning and joint investments?

A key strategy was to align the priorities of OFL with the priorities identified by Gov. Snyder. The governor identified “groups” of work that would be the priority for his administration. The OFL purposefully aligned its priorities with these during the planning process described previously. The foundation members of the OFL advisory board identified the broad areas that aligned with their own funding priorities:

- Early Childhood Development (0 to 5) aligns with the governor’s “People Group.”
- Education (K to 16) aligns with the governor’s “People Group.”
- Economic/Workforce Development aligns with the governor’s “Economic Strength Group.”

The survey respondents also indicated alignment with these priorities. Economic/workforce development was mentioned most often as a priority for collaborative funding, followed by early childhood development and education.

As a way of understanding what the OFL staff does, monthly interview notes were analyzed to identify the projects and partners engaged for each priority. The notes

were also analyzed using a tool that visually displays the frequency with which words are used. They were analyzed separately for each of the three priority areas, as well as for a fourth area (projects responding to specific requests from the governor’s office).

A major task in this priority area was coaching, as a new state office – the Office of Great Start – was being created; OFL staff coached the person heading the office.

KEY INTERVENTIONS



For Priority One (Early Childhood Development), OFL staff worked on the following projects:

Projects	Partners
Clarifying roles of Early Childhood Investment Corp. (ECIC) and Office of Great Start (OGS)	ECIC, W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), OGS, Executive Office (EO)
Launch of OGS	Susan Broman (OGS), Public Sector Consultants (PSC), EO, Center for Michigan, Citizens Research Council
Technical assistance	ECIC, EO
Early matters meeting	ECIC, OGS, Grand Rapids Community Foundation, DeVos, Kresge, GM, Skillman, Fisher, CFSEM, WKKF, Fremont Area Community Foundation

For Priority Two (Education), key projects and partners were:

Projects	Partners
Obtaining matching funds for Michigan College Access Network (MCAN)	MCAN, CMF, Michigan Department of Education (MDOE), Kresge Foundation, more than 40 community foundations (CFs)
Convening and agenda-setting with education funders	WKKF, Kresge, Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (CFSEM), Grand Rapids and Fremont CFs; Rotary Charities, DeVos Family, C. S. Mott, Dow, Fischer, General Motors, Skillman, Ford foundations
Review of school finance	CMF, State Board of Education, EO
LEAD Scholars	CMF/University of Michigan (U of M)
Pathways to Potential	DHS, Office of Urban Affairs, MDE, Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), Kent School Services Network/Kent County, EO, C. S. Mott, Skillman, DPS, Chance for Life, GRCF
Council on Educator Effectiveness	EO, U of M, Dow, CMF
Education Achievement Authority (technical assistance and convenings)	Consumers Energy, WKKF, C. S. Mott

KEY INTERVENTIONS:



For Priority Three (Economic/Workforce Development), key projects and partners were:

Projects	Partners
Governor’s “Talent Message”	Michigan Economic Development Corp., EO, Skillman, C. S. Mott, U of M
Flint crime reduction	EO, C. S. Mott
Crime reduction	Prophetic Voice, EO, Office of Urban and Metropolitan Initiatives (OUMI), Michigan State Police
Trails	State Department of National Resources (DNR)/Rotary Charities
Detroit riverfront redevelopment	EO, DNR/Kresge/Ford/Skillman, Hudson Webber and McGregor foundations, CFSEM
Blight reduction and Pathways to Potential	DHS deputy director/Michigan Land Bank, Office of Urban and Metropolitan Initiatives (OUMI), Skillman, WKKF, CFSEM, Kresge, McGregor, Community Foundation of Greater Flint, Saginaw Community Foundation, J. P. Morgan Chase, Charter One Bank, MASCO
DHS certification / Community action grants	EO
MBAI match	C. S. Mott, WKKF, Michigan Workforce Development, New Economy Initiative
Michigan Benefit Access Initiative	C.S. Mott, Consumers Energy, DHS, Michigan Association of United Ways, Food Bank Council of Michigan, Community Action Agencies, Michigan Primary Care Association, United Way of Southeastern Michigan, Open Society Foundation, WKKF, Kresge, Fisher, Ford, McGregor
Veterans issues	EO, Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Masco and Wege foundations, CFSEM, Canton CF, McGregor, Altarum Inc., Sebastian Veterans, Capital Region CF, CMF

KEY INTERVENTIONS:



In the workforce area, [OFL] is bringing national experts into Michigan. This is key. They are actively engaged in the learning process for state government.
- State official



A significant proportion of the work done by the office was in response to emerging needs and specific requests for assistance from the executive office. Depending on the na-

ture of the request, the OFL's role varied from a few phone calls to provide advice or answer questions to a series of meetings to scope a project and identify partners.

For Priority Four (Ongoing Projects and Responsive Collaborations), key projects and partners were:

Projects	Partners
Detroit Society of Engineers engagement	EO, DSE
Medication Quality Improvement Program (MQIP)	Flinn Foundation, Michigan Department of Community Health
Food and fitness	Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, CMF
Cultural competency	EO/WKKF
	EO, DNR/Kresge/Ford/Skillman, Hudson Webber and McGregor foundations, CFSEM
Wetland protection	PSC/DNR
No Kids Hungry	DHS, CFSEM
Prisoner re-entry	EO, U of M Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), JEHT Foundation, Council on Crime and Delinquency
Obesity / agenda setting	DCH, Kresge, WKKF
Grant-writing training	EO (D.C. Office), Johnson Center for Philanthropy
Land-use message / strategy	Sustainable Communities Funding; C. S. Mott; Ruth Mott; CFSEM; Manistee Community Foundation; Rotary Charities; Americana, Erb, and Frey foundations
Fair Foods / Double Up Food Bucks	Detroit Area Grantmakers (DAG)
Social Impact Bonding	Michigan Department of Treasury, DHS, EO
Age Friendly Michigan	AARP/Altarum/EO
Mentoring former foster children	DHS/AARP

Analysis of engagement strategies in the three priority areas

The most frequent activities did vary by priority area, most likely reflecting the state of existing relationships within each domain. Substantial progress was made in early childhood development during the Granholm administration. With the new administration, OFL re-engaged around this work and contributed to the development of the Office of Great Start (OGS). The OFL's role was focused on developing relationships with the new administration's staff and creating mutual understanding through coaching, reviewing, and clarifying.

In contrast, there was a longer history of work in education/workforce development, so more work was on developing shared agendas (identifying, meeting, convening).

EVALUATION QUESTION 3:

What have been the outcomes of shared investments?

This question is addressed in depth for the Michigan Benefit Access Initiative (MBAI) in a separate case study. The outcomes of that investment are described in this section. Other key initiatives the MBAI facilitated during this time include the launch of OGS and support for Pathways to Potential, prisoner re-entry activities, and Double Up Food Bucks. Of these initiatives, outcome data are only available for Double Up Food Bucks.

The following are highlights of the evaluations of Double Up Food Bucks and MBAI:

Double Up Food Bucks: OFL staff helped to connect staff of the Fair Food Network, the organization that developed Double Up Food Bucks, to foundations and government agencies. As a result, Fair Food Network was able to get the financial support it needed to launch the program statewide. Outcomes include:

- In 2012, low-income customers in Michigan spent more than \$750,000 in Double Up Food Bucks on fresh and locally grown fruits and vegetables.
- Since its beginning in 2009, Double Up Food Bucks has expanded from a pilot project in five Detroit markets to more than 90 markets and three grocery stores throughout Michigan.

Michigan Benefits Access Initiative: The OFL played a role in almost all aspects of the development of MBAI. The office facilitated relationships across the government, foundation, and nonprofit sectors, helping the various stakeholders come to a shared vision of the work. Through the implementation of MBAI, the OFL staff mediated disagreements and translated expectations across the sectors. The following are among recent MBAI outcomes:

- Online applications for benefits grew from fewer than 7 percent of all applications to approximately 30 percent by the end of 2012.
- Community sites in southeastern Michigan assisted more than 2,000 families in applying for benefits online through March 2013.
- Statewide, approximately 600 local organizations were solicited to become recertified community partners to provide access to MI Bridges food assistance in their local communities. As of May 2013, 110 organizations applied for recertification.

The theory of change suggests that in addition to the outcomes of the individual projects, a result of joint investments should be an improved quality of relationships. Despite the challenges of bringing some of the collaborations to fruition, stronger relationships do appear to be emerging.

The OFL plays a key role in translating language across the sectors to build stronger relationships. As one foundation staff person commented,

They help us to speak the same language with the folks at the state. They are translators. Working in government is very different from working in a foundation. Sometimes we need help translating our work to each other." Staff from state government have a similar perspective; said one, "They [OFL] understand both sides and the different perspectives that partners have.

The OFL has also played a role in managing expectations of the different stakeholders. As a government partner observed,

[OFL staff] are good advocates, so that when the foundations get excited about something, they can take it to the governor's staff. And, when the staff needs help from the foundation community, they are a good advocate to get the foundations to think about it. I think OFL does a great job of brokering each others' expectations.

When asked what would be different without an Office of Foundation Liaison, interviewee comments included:

- You would have foundations who would never consult with the state on program development. And you would probably have state offices coming to foundations for reasons that did not necessarily fit the strategy of the foundation. They facilitate deeper understanding of both sides.
- We wouldn't have nearly the number of successful public-private partnerships that we have now. I think it would be much more tenuous, and my sense is that people would just 'pass.'
- Government doesn't traditionally work this closely with foundations, so it's actually a great experience.
- Every government entity – at all levels – should have one of these offices.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

The key findings are

- The OFL has been an important factor in fostering collaboration between and among foundations and government agencies.
- These collaborations have resulted in significant joint investments.
- The OFL staff is uniformly respected for their knowledge of both sectors and their facilitation skills.
- Different stages of the collaboration process (as described in the theory of change) require different strategies.
- The OFL is a highly effective structure for brokering partnerships.

Some suggestions for the future are:

- Begin to consider succession planning. The success of the office is attributed by stakeholders largely to the skills of the current staff. Identifying and cultivating staff members who have the needed skill set would help to assure the long-term viability of the office. A fellowship, for example, might be a way to begin developing talent.
- There are opportunities to expand the number and type of foundations who are partnering. However, the “big” initiatives are necessarily supported by the larger private foundations. More local collaborations involving community foundations and other foundations may require an office closer to the “on the ground” work, such as partnering with local government to create local liaison offices. This is a major undertaking that would require significant investment.
- The different timelines on which state agencies and foundations work continues to be identified as a significant barrier. Government interviewees in particular raised this as a concern. Educating both sectors on this issue will likely be an ongoing task.

What they have been able to do is find the right partners. Depending on what the need is, they were able to find the right partners with the same mission and vision.

– State government agency staff person

They have their ear to the wire, they know funders, what funders are working on, and how to connect what the funders are working on to what the state is working on. ”

– Foundation staff person



APPENDIX A

SURVEY ANALYSIS

APPENDIX A

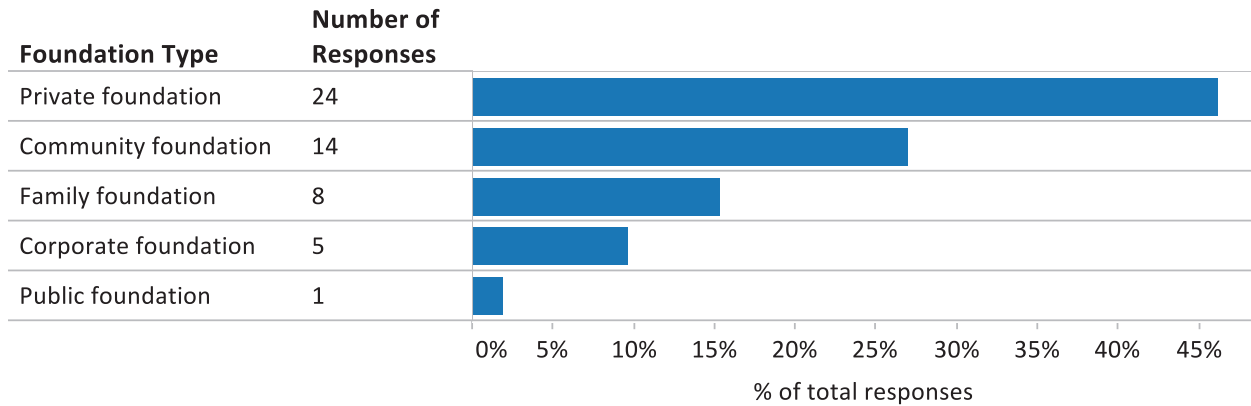
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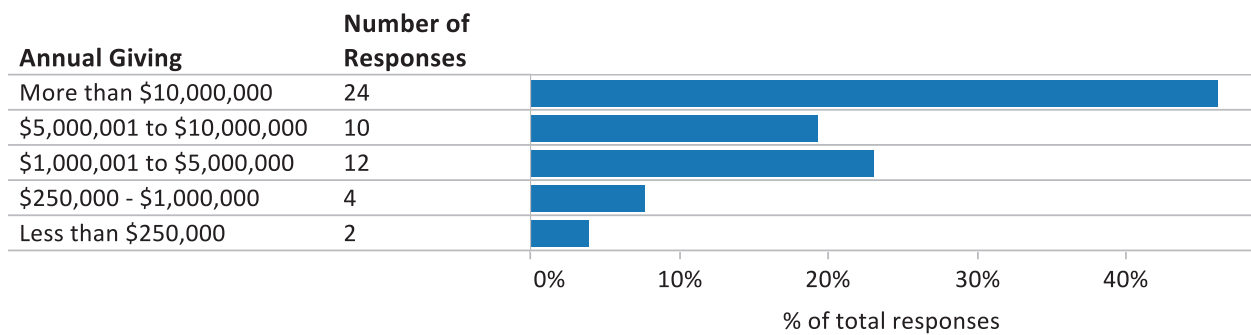
The following data come from an online survey sent to 85 staff members from 46 foundations. The survey was conducted in February-March 2013. The response rate was 62 percent (52 respondents) from 35 foundations.

1. Is the foundation you represent...



The largest percentage of respondents is from private foundations (46%), followed by community foundations at 27%.

2. What is the total annual giving of your foundation?



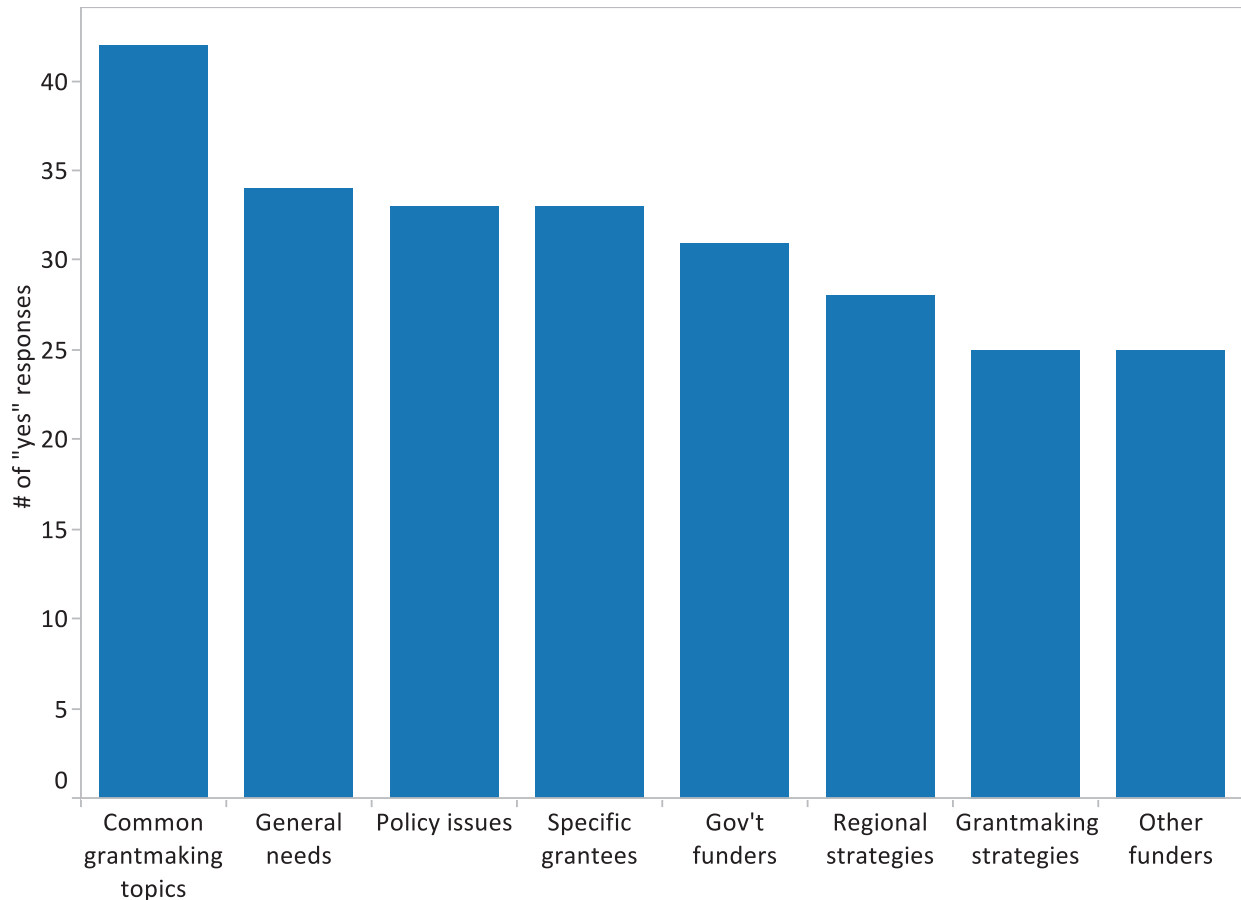
More than half of the respondents are from large foundations with annual giving amounts of more than \$10,000,000.

3. How often does someone from your foundation meet with or speak with staff or executives from other Michigan-based foundations *outside* of conferences such as CMF?

Foundation Networking	Number of Responses	Foundation Networking % of Total
Very often	21	45.65%
Frequently	20	43.48%
Sometimes	4	8.70%
Rarely / never	1	2.17%
Grand Total	46	100.00%

Almost 90 percent of respondents indicated that they meet with or speak with staff from other Michigan foundations “very often” or “frequently.”

4. What are the topics you discuss together?



When asked about the topics that respondents discuss with other foundations, common grantmaking was the most often checked (about 42 percent). General needs, policy issues, and specific grantees were checked by about a third of respondents.

5. Have you jointly invested with other foundations in projects or programs?

Joint Investment	Number of Responses	Joint Funding % of Total
Yes	32	91.43%
No	3	8.57%
Grand Total	35	100.00%

More than 90 percent of foundation respondents (filtered by one response per foundation) indicated that their foundation has joint investments with other funders.

6. Approximately how many joint funding efforts does your foundation currently have underway?

Joint Funding Efforts	Number of Responses	Joint Funding % of Total
Several	16	50.00%
A few	14	43.75%
One	2	6.25%
Grand Total	32	100.00%

Foundation Type	Joint Funding Efforts			Grand Total
	Several	A few	One	
Community foundation	22%	78%		100.00%
Corporate foundation	33%	67%		100.00%
Family foundation	40%	40%	20%	100.00%
Private foundation	79%	21%		100.00%
Public foundation			100%	100.00%
Grand Total	50.00%	43.75%	6.25%	100.00%

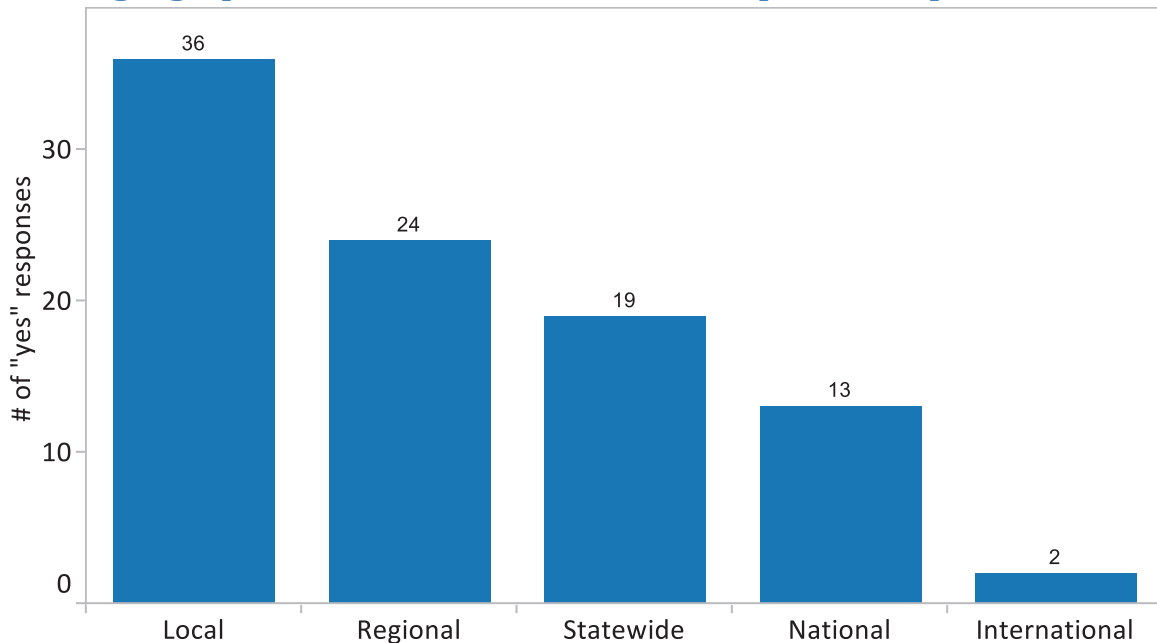
Of the 32 foundation respondents with joint investments, more than 90 percent had more than one joint funding effort. By foundation type, most private foundations had “several” joint efforts, while most of the other types had “a few” funding efforts.

7. What is the approximate total dollar amount your foundation has invested in these joint funding efforts?

Joint Investment Funding	Number of Responses	Joint Funding % of Total
More than \$1 million	16	50%
\$250,000 - \$1 million	7	22%
\$50,001 - \$250,000	6	19%
Less than \$50,000	3	9%
Grand Total	32	100%

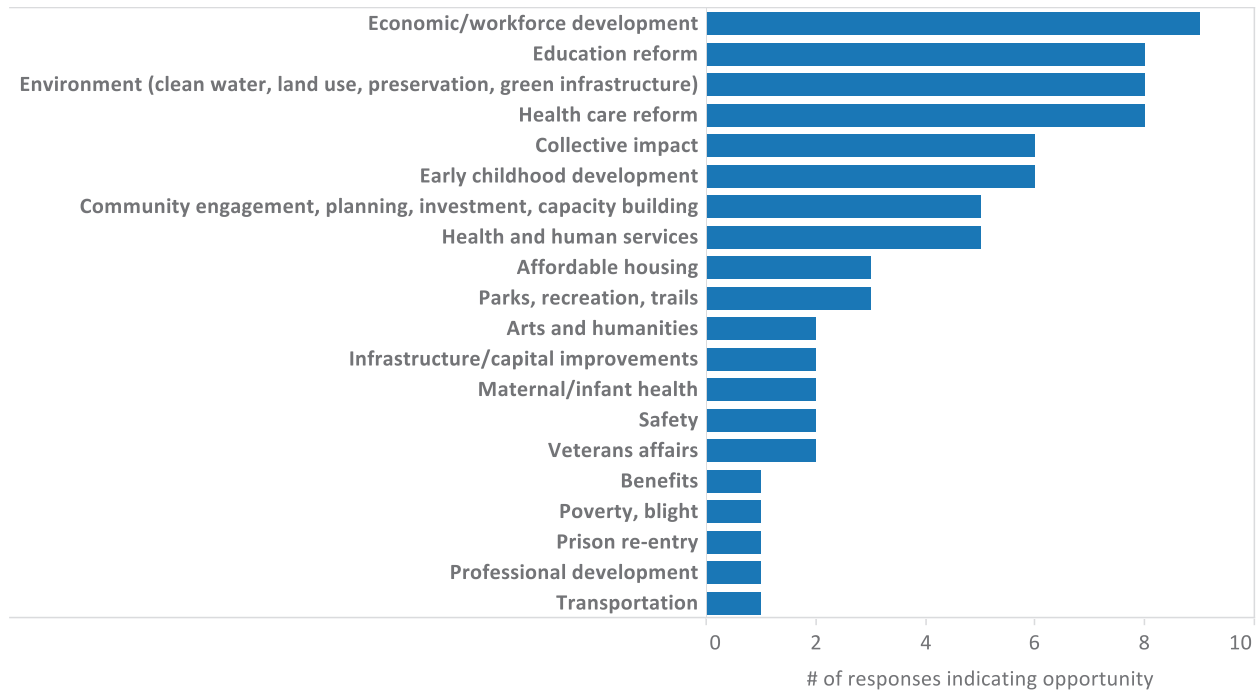
Of the 32 respondents who indicate their foundation have joint investments, 50 percent have more than \$1 million in joint funding.

8. At what geographic level have these foundations partnerships been?



Approximately one third of the foundation partnerships were local, another quarter were regional, and the rest were statewide and national. Two foundations had international partnerships.

9. What areas do you see as good opportunities for more collaboration among foundations in the next two years?



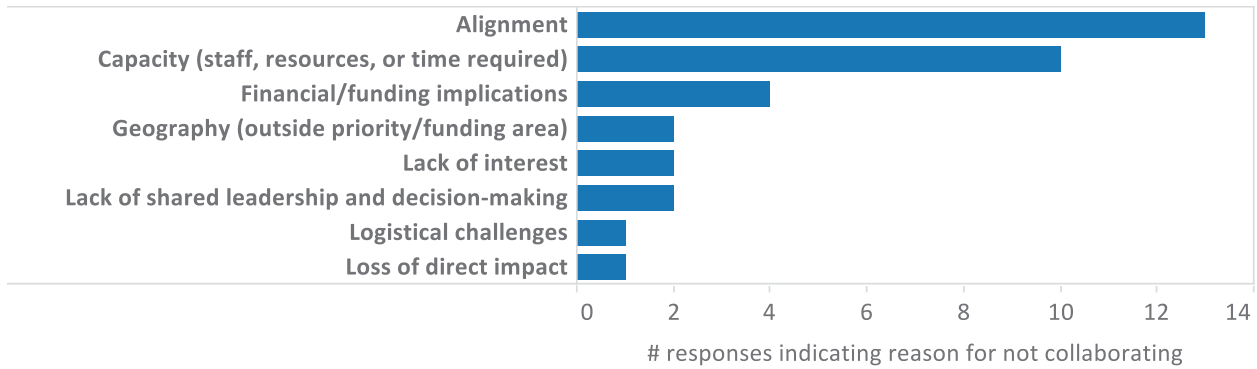
The top three areas that respondents believe have the most potential for collaboration with other funders are economic/workforce development, education reform, and environment.

10. Have there been any opportunities to cooperate with other foundations that your foundation has *not* followed up on?

Follow-up Opportunities Missed?	Number of Responses	Follow-up Missed % of Total
Yes	20	57.14%
No	15	42.86%
Grand Total	35	100.00%

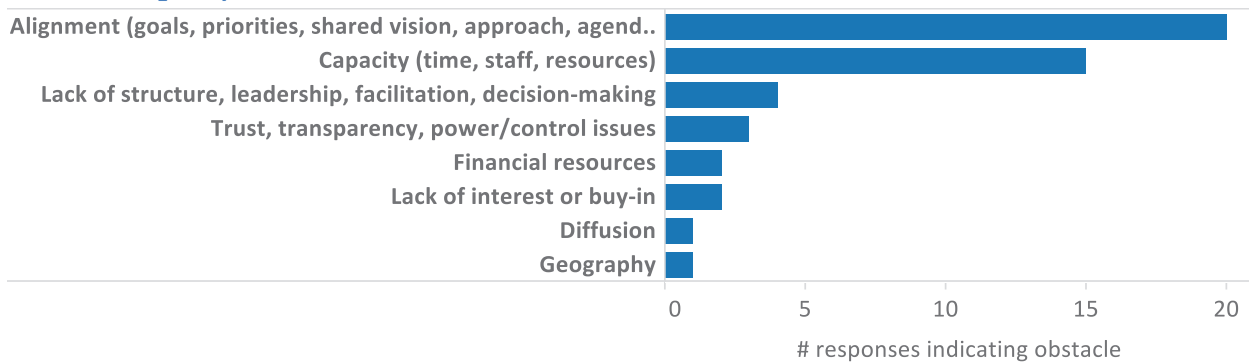
Of the 35 foundations respondents (duplicate responses from one foundation eliminated; “yes” response used if different), the majority indicated that there have been opportunities to cooperate with other foundations that they have not followed up on.

11. What were the factors that influenced the decision not to pursue the collaboration?



Two factors stood out as important in discouraging collaboration with other foundations: lack of alignment and capacity issues.

12. What are the primary obstacles to collaboration with other foundations on shared topics/issues?



These same factors of alignment and capacity are seen as general obstacles to collaboration.

13. Have you jointly invested with government funders in projects or programs?

Joint Investment With Government?	Number of Foundations	% of Total Foundations
Yes	28	84.85%
No	5	15.15%
Grand Total	33	100.00%

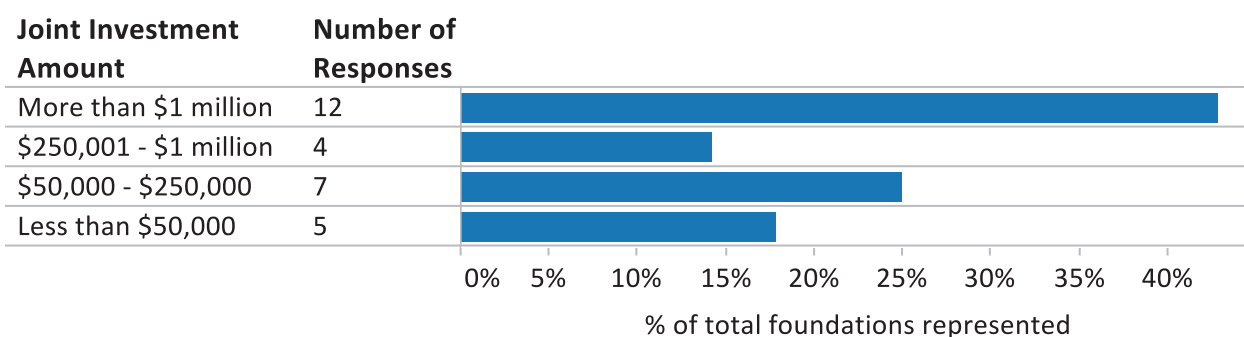
Approximately 85 percent of foundation respondents (filtered by one response per foundation) indicated that their foundation has joint investments with government funders.

14. Approximately how many joint funding efforts does your foundation currently have underway?

Joint Investment Efforts	Number of Responses	Joint Investment Efforts % of Total
Several	8	15.4%
A few	22	42.3%
One	7	13.5%
Missing	15	28.8%
Grand Total	52	100.0%

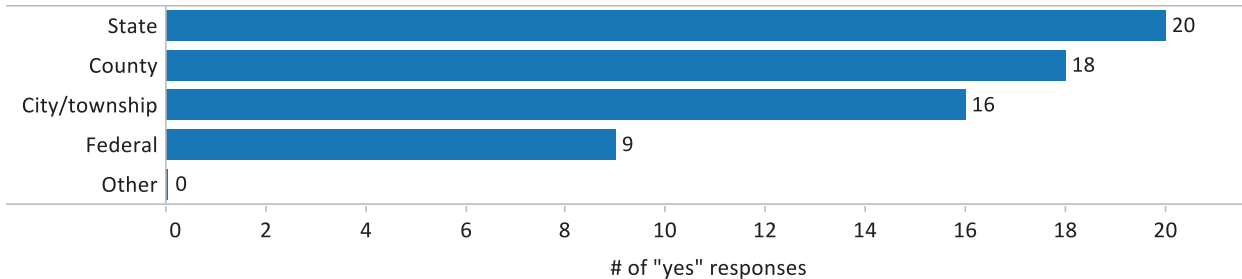
More than 50 percent of the respondents have more than one joint funding effort with government.

15. What is the approximate dollar amount your foundation has invested in these joint funding efforts?



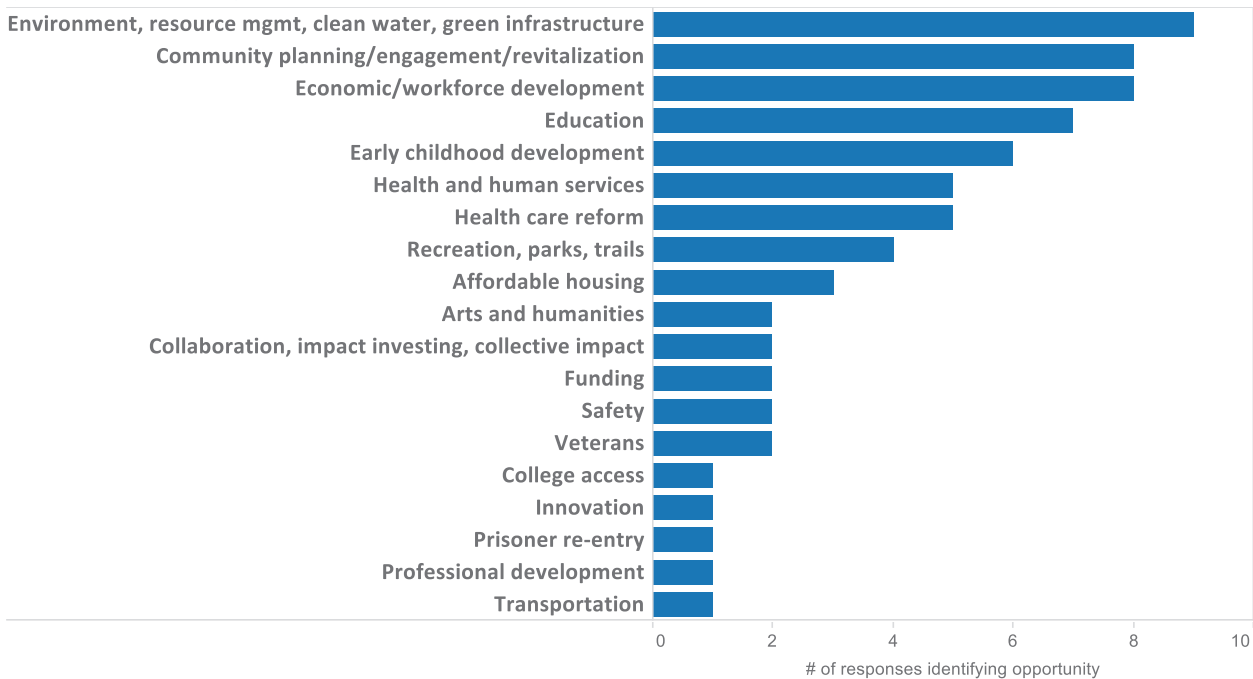
Of the 28 respondents (the largest response used if multiple respondents from one foundation), more than 50 percent have joint funding investments with government of more than \$250,000.

16. With what level of government have you co-funded projects?



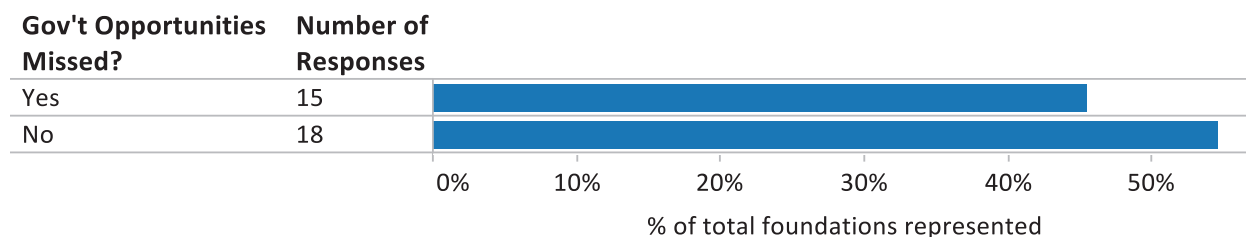
Of the respondents, the majority of co-funded projects with government agencies were at the state and county levels.

17. What areas do you see as good opportunities for more collaboration with government agencies in the next two years?



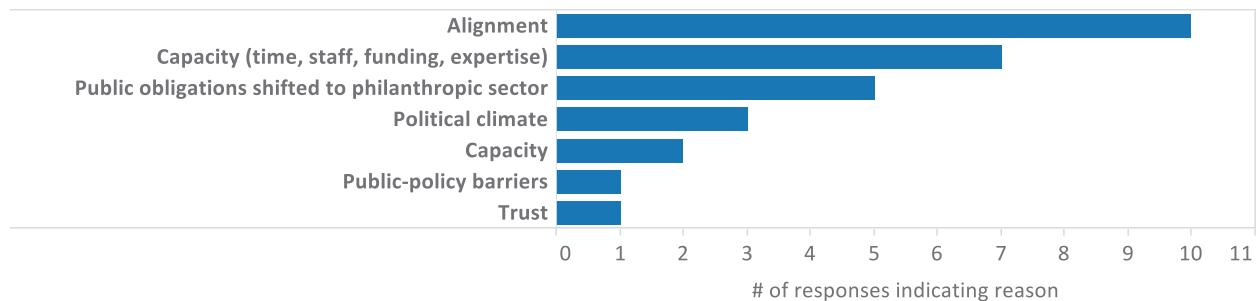
The areas that respondents believe have the most potential for collaboration with government agencies are environment, community planning and revitalization, economic/workforce development, education and early childhood development. These align well with the priority areas for OLF, with the exception of the environment.

18. Have there been any opportunities to cooperate with government agencies that your foundation has not pursued?



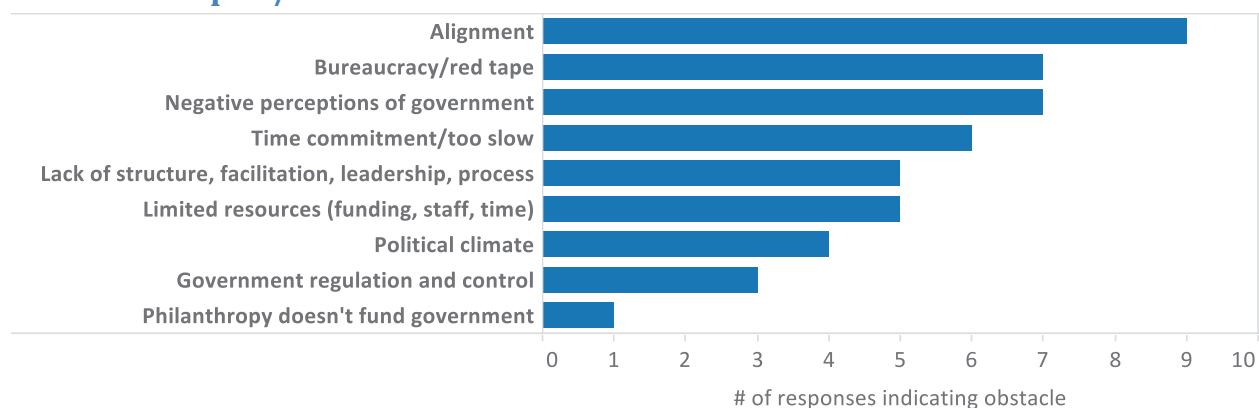
Of the 33 foundations respondents (filtered for one per foundation), approximately 55 percent indicated that there have not been opportunities to cooperate with government agencies that they have not pursued.

19. What were the factors that influenced the decision not to pursue the collaboration?



The top two factors that discouraged collaboration with government – alignment and resource capacity – were the same as those that discouraged collaboration with other foundations. However, the third most frequently mentioned factor was related to the perceived roles of each sectors, with foundations cautious about assuming public-sector obligations.

20. What are the primary obstacles to collaborating with government agencies on shared topics/issues?



As with obstacles to collaboration with other foundations, respondents indicated that lack of alignment was the primary obstacle to collaborating with government. The next most mentioned barriers, however, were related to general perceptions of how the government sector operates: bureaucracy and red tape, inefficiency, a slow pace.

21. Are you familiar with Office of Foundation Liaison?

Foundation Type	Familiar With OFL?		Grand Total
	Yes	N/A	
Community foundation	9 81.8%	2 18.2%	11 100.0%
Corporate foundation	4 100.0%		4 100.0%
Family foundation	6 75.0%	2 25.0%	8 100.0%
Private foundation	12 70.6%	5 29.4%	17 100.0%
Public foundation	1 100.0%		1 100.0%
Grand Total	32 78.0%	9 22.0%	41 100.0%

Regardless of foundation type, more than 70 percent of respondents from each foundation type were familiar with OFL. Given that the list was provided by OFL, this is not surprising.

22. How often has your foundation been contacted by OFL for the purpose of collaboration with other foundations or government agencies?

Foundation Type	OFL Contact				Grand Total
	Many times	Several times	Once	Never	
Community foundation	22.2%	66.7%	11.1%		100.0%
Corporate foundation	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%		100.0%
Family foundation		50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Private foundation	75.0%	25.0%			100.0%
Public foundation		100.0%			100.0%
Grand Total	40.0%	46.7%	10.0%	3.3%	100.0%

Approximately 85 percent of all foundation respondents (using the response that indicated the highest frequency if multiple respondents per foundation) had been contacted by OFL “several” or “many” times for purpose of collaboration. By type of foundation, private foundations had been contacted most often. None of the family or public foundations reported “many” contacts.

23. Thinking of your collaborations with other foundations, have any of these collaborations been facilitated by OFL?

OFL Facilitated Collaboration	Number of Foundations	% of Total Foundations
Yes	19	70.4%
No	6	22.2%
Don't know	2	7.4%
Grand Total	27	100.0%

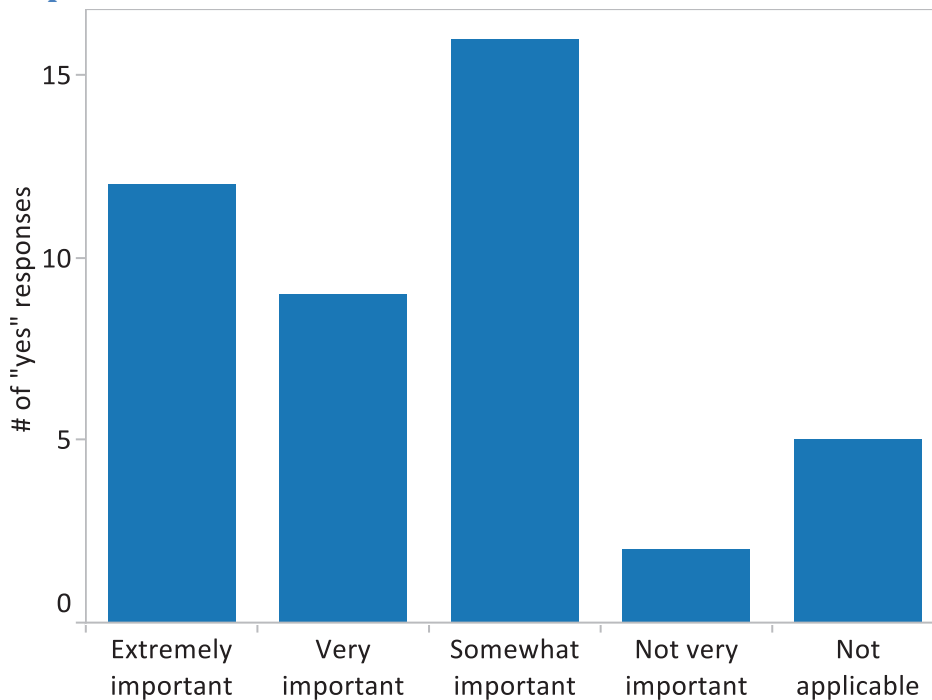
Of the 27 foundations (using one respondent per foundation), approximately 70 percent indicated that their foundation collaborations were facilitated by OFL.

24. Thinking of your collaborations with government agencies, have any of these collaborations been facilitated by the OFL?

OFL Facilitated Gov't Collaboration	Number of Foundations	% of Total Foundations
Yes	17	70.83%
No	7	29.17%
Grand Total	24	100.00%

Of the 24 foundations responding, approximately 70 percent indicated that their government collaborations were facilitated by OFL.

25. Thinking of any collaborations facilitated by OFL, how would you describe the importance of its role?



Approximately 85 percent of respondents indicated that the OFL played an “extremely,” “very,” or “somewhat” important role in collaborations facilitated by OFL.

Summary and Discussion

Respondents to this survey tend to over-represent private foundations in Michigan, although all foundation types were represented. The foundations which are represented in this survey tend to network regularly with other foundations in the state, engaging frequently in discussions about general grantmaking topics, policy issues, and specific grantees. They have jointly funded work both with other foundations and with state government, most often state or county government entities.

These respondents see lack of alignment as a general barrier to collaboration with both government and other foundations. The time and resources needed to collaborate have been barriers to specific opportunities to collaborate with both government and foundations. However, perceptions about the bureaucracy and timeliness of government action and caution over stepping out of appropriate roles are also mentioned as general obstacles to collaboration with government that are not present with collaboration with other foundations.

A large majority of respondents to this survey attributed at least some of their collaborations to the work of OFL. Again, given that OFL provided the respondent list, this is not surprising. About half of respondents, however, indicated that the OFL's role was "extremely" or "very" important, underscoring the significance of its role.

Several areas seem ripe for further collaboration. In particular, respondents identified environmental issues as the primary opportunity for increased collaboration.

For more information about the Office of Foundation Liaison,
visit www.michiganfoundations.org.

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