

# The Foundation Review

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## Front Matter

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# THE FoundationReview®



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The Peer-Reviewed Journal of Philanthropy



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# THE FoundationReview®

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*The Foundation Review* is the first peer-reviewed journal of philanthropy, written by and for foundation staff and boards and those who work with them implementing programs. Each quarterly issue of *The Foundation Review* provides peer-reviewed reports about the field of philanthropy, including reports by foundations on their own work.

**Our mission:** To share evaluation results, tools, and knowledge about the philanthropic sector in order to improve the practice of grantmaking, yielding greater impact and innovation.

*The Foundation Review* is a proud product of the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University.



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# editorial

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Dear Readers,

*How foundations do their work is getting increasing attention in the field of philanthropy. Articles in this issue contribute significantly to the growing knowledge base how foundation structures and practices contribute to – or impede – effective grantmaking.*

In a two-article special section, **Easterling and Metz** and **Metz and Easterling** describe the contributions of implementation science to effectively enacting foundation strategy. They highlight the use of two tools – practice profiles and implementation drivers assessment – to deepen understanding of how foundation staff roles and structures need to be adapted to fit the demands of a particular strategy. Paired with Patton, Foote, and Radner's (2015) work on Theory of Philanthropy, these articles provide a deep and comprehensive framework for foundations seeking to align their work internally and externally.



**Berman and Webb and Bell** focus on particular internal foundation structures. Berman shares her research on the role of senior leadership teams in shaping the direction and culture of foundations and their capacity to collaborate both internally and externally. Webb and Bell describe why and how to build high-functioning program teams within a foundation. At both executive and programmatic levels, structures that help foundations better integrate across their internal silos may contribute to greater effectiveness.

**Sherer** shares a framework for thinking about how the extent and type of evaluation required should match the foundation's mission, strategy and reasons for conducting evaluation. This article may be particularly helpful for foundations that are in the early stages of designing their evaluation approach.

Two articles in this issue report on the results of major foundation initiatives. **Yu, Henderson-Frakes, and Peña** share the results of a five-year evaluation of a large-scale field-building initiative: Blue Shield of California Foundation's Strong Field Project. Their data suggest that in addition to leadership and network building, funders need to invest in challenging traditional assumptions and entrenched patterns as part of field-building.

**Djang, Andersen, Masters, Vanslyke, and Beadnell** report on a major initiative to improve school nutrition and food literacy in Santa Barbara, Calif. The initiative involved 84 schools and more than 50,000 students over its nine years of programming. In order to tailor programming to specific needs, the foundation emphasized stakeholder involvement throughout the process.

Two other articles describe strategies for foundations' work in communities. **Jessup, Parsons, and Moore** offer a typology of partnerships that includes three types: project-focused, formal-systems-focused, and community-grounded. Among other suggestions for how to stimulate partnerships committed to deep systemic change, they urge funders to actively participate in community partnerships.

**Fehler-Cabral, James, Long, and Preskill** share insights and implications generated at a convening titled *Is This a Better Place? The Art and Science of Place-based Evaluation* and reflections by the authors, who also facilitated convening sessions. The convening produced a number of considerations, presented in this article, for how funders, and their investments in evaluation, can support the design, implementation, and overall success of place-based efforts. Increasing understanding and use of systems thinking tools is one key suggestion.

As with any relationship, integrity and consistency are important to building trust between funders and grantees. These articles suggest ways to better align how foundations do their work internally and externally to contribute to more effective relationships and better outcomes.



Theresa R. Behrens, Ph.D.  
Editor in Chief

## Reference

PATTON, MICHAEL QUINN; FOOTE, NATHANIEL; AND RADNER, JAMES (2015) A Foundation's Theory of Philanthropy: What It Is, What It Provides, How to Do It. *The Foundation Review*. 7(4) 7-20. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.9707/1944-5660.1263>





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