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Results

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Growth of Community-Based Giving Days in the United States: The Landscape and Effects

Catherine Humphries Brown, Ph.D., Nebraska Children and Families Foundation; and Abhishek Bhati, Ph.D., Bowling Green State University

Over the past decade, local and regional community foundations across the United States have adopted “giving days” as a means to build awareness, bolster community pride, and raise money for local nonprofit organizations. While aggregate amounts raised through giving days are increasing, the median amount raised has dropped substantially and the range in amounts is widening. Still, there was substantial growth from 2009 through 2016 in the number of giving days in the U.S., raising over \$1 billion across counties, cities, and states and thereby growing philanthropy within communities. Giving days may help increase a donor base but not all events are likely to raise large amounts of money.

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How Can Foundations Promote Impactful Collaboration?

Douglas Easterling, Ph.D., and Laura McDuffee, M.P.A., Wake Forest School of Medicine

Funders are increasingly looking to interagency and cross-sector collaboration as a strategy to solve complex, large-scale issues, but many collaborative groups fail to generate an impact with their work. The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts’ experience demonstrates that it is possible for groups to generate impactful strategies beyond what they would have done on their own, and that funders can add value to the collaborative process. Interviews with representatives from four successful projects indicate the key tasks involved in designing, implementing, refining, and sustaining impactful programs. Interviewees reported on the value of the model, but also emphasized that it requires high levels of commitment and analytic capacity.

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Tools

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Using a Decision-Making Placemat to Inform Strategy

Christine Baker Mitton, Ph.D., and Adrienne R. Mundorf, M.P.H., Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland; Kris Putnam-Walkerly, M.S.W., Putnam Consulting Group; and Susanna H. Krey, M.Ed., Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland

This article explores the development and use of a decision-making placemat tool to inform the strategic shift of the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland's place-based program area. Using the key elements of the foundation's learning approach, the tool guided board members as they worked toward consensus around potential scenarios. Use of the placemat tool strengthened the board's ability to articulate the rationale for the shift in strategic direction, and allowed board members to assume the role of learner. This tool may be applicable to other foundations considering a strategic shift and/or desiring deep engagement from the board in strategic decisions.

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Scaling Programs With Research Evidence and Effectiveness (SPREE)

Nan L. Maxwell, Ph.D., and Scott B. Richman, Ph.D., Mathematica

Foundations can serve more people by identifying and supporting effective interventions that are ready to be scaled. This article describes a process called SPREE — Scaling Programs with Research Evidence and Effectiveness — and provides insights into conditions under which foundations can apply it to help them and their grantees scale successfully. Implementing SPREE can assist foundations in two ways: (1) using evaluation research as a tool to determine which interventions are likely to produce desired outcomes, and (2) identifying those organizations ready to scale them.

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Sector

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Publicness and the Identity of Public Foundations

Alexandra K. Williamson, Ph.D., and Belinda G. Luke, Ph.D., Queensland University of Technology

At a time when philanthropy faces increasing public accountability expectations, the nature of foundations' publicness is a continuing concern. This article investigates the ways Australia's public ancillary funds understand their identity as public foundations, and examines how perceptions of publicness inform and influence the practice, conduct, and identity of grantmaking foundations. Interviews with managers and trustees from a diverse group of public foundations suggest that understandings and applications of two dimensions of publicness were significant: donations, or public money; and grantmaking, or public benefit. Further elements of publicness were expressed around foundations' visibility and the transparency of their operations.

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Leveraging Effective Consulting to Advance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Philanthropy

Stephanie Clohesy, B.A., Clohesy Consulting; Jara Dean-Coffey, M.P.H, Luminare Group; and Lisa McGill, Ph.D., LM Strategies Consulting

In 2018, the National Network of Consultants to Grantmakers launched an initiative to increase the capacity of consultants to engage with grantmakers on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work. Consultant members were interviewed about their most effective partnerships with grantmakers to identify lessons for advancing in philanthropy. Consultants need to be prepared to help grantmakers define or refine DEI and where equity fits into their values and mission. A good DEI consulting process helps to distinguish technical and complex dimensions of a DEI commitment, and how the scope of work should encompass both development of internal leadership skills and investment in grantee, community, and issue leaders.

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Reflective Practice

Strengthening Support for Grantees: Four Lessons for Foundations

Anna J. Bettis, MSUS, PMP, and Susan Pepin, MD, MPH, Arizona State University

The problems nonprofits are tasked with addressing require systems work. Funders must adapt not only to the challenges faced by the organizations they fund, but also to the dynamic social systems within which they aim to effect change. Based on qualitative insights from nonprofit leaders and funders and building upon the existing literature, four key lessons for strengthening funder support emerged. Funders that build partnerships, recognize and respond to grantee reimbursement models, ease reporting burdens, and leverage their power to convene will make significant contributions to improving the resiliency of those communities.

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