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Advocacy for Social Change In Metropolitan Washington

By Rick Cohen
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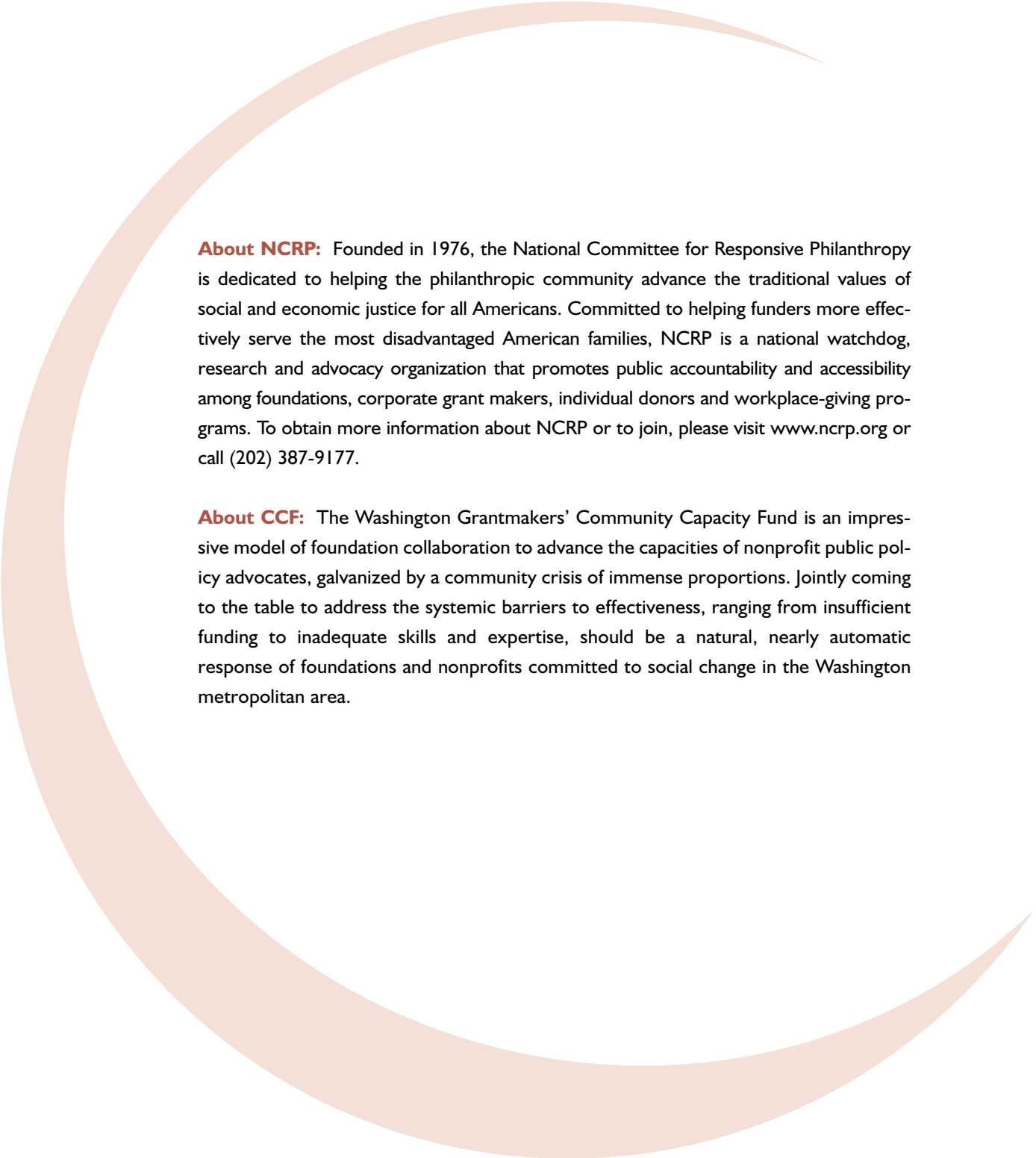
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Advocacy for Social Change In Metropolitan Washington

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About NCRP: Founded in 1976, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy is dedicated to helping the philanthropic community advance the traditional values of social and economic justice for all Americans. Committed to helping funders more effectively serve the most disadvantaged American families, NCRP is a national watchdog, research and advocacy organization that promotes public accountability and accessibility among foundations, corporate grant makers, individual donors and workplace-giving programs. To obtain more information about NCRP or to join, please visit www.ncrp.org or call (202) 387-9177.

About CCF: The Washington Grantmakers' Community Capacity Fund is an impressive model of foundation collaboration to advance the capacities of nonprofit public policy advocates, galvanized by a community crisis of immense proportions. Jointly coming to the table to address the systemic barriers to effectiveness, ranging from insufficient funding to inadequate skills and expertise, should be a natural, nearly automatic response of foundations and nonprofits committed to social change in the Washington metropolitan area.

Preface: The Importance of Advocacy

By Sloan C. Wiesen

Advocacy for social change is critically important for foundations and nonprofits alike as they work to advance their missions. While this report focuses primarily on how local and regional advocacy funding plays out in metropolitan Washington, it is hoped that readers will not overlook the underlying vital premise that advocacy is of integral importance in improving social services and securing social change.

Grant money used to inform policy makers and opinion leaders about why more public funding is needed for affordable housing or education can leverage exponentially more resources and results in these areas than would the same size grant to a direct service program that excludes advocacy from its approach to these issues. Now more than ever as foundations and grantees are being asked to do “more with less,” when it comes to funding advocacy, an ounce of resources may yield a pound of results.

One need not walk too far down the endless promenade of posh K Street lobbying firms in Washington to appreciate that corporate America fully understands the value of advocacy. Business leaders know that advocacy is often a matter as elementary and vital to their interests as making sure their voices are heard by the people who can swing policy—and lucrative contracts—in their direction. Automobile manufacturers don't just make cars—they make their case to people who make policies that can dramatically boost car sales.

It is merely a matter of quite literally putting one's money where one's mouth is, as effective advocacy serves as a mouthpiece for the interests it represents. And business leaders pour vast sums of money into advocacy, both in-house and through hired firms (and, of course, this influence is above and beyond what they purchase through political campaign contributions). They may call it “government relations” or “public affairs,” but it is advocacy, it effectively advances their interests—and it is well funded, unlike its counterparts in the nonprofit sector.

Only 1.6 percent of charities report lobbying expenses to the IRS, and such expenses constitute a mere 0.08 percent of total charity expenses, according to the National Center for Charitable Statistics. And according to Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest, 42 percent of charities report that foundation funding is a barrier to advocacy.

The point is that even as the nonprofit sector is being asked to shoulder a disproportionate, unfair and unworkable share of the burden left by politicians slashing the public social safety net, the sector's advocacy voice is uniquely underfunded. Americans, and especially those in greatest need, are not well served by this imbalance. The corporate and government sectors have the advocacy resources to speak through a megaphone—while nonprofits have the advocacy resources to allow for but the barest whisper.

Yes, this report is intended to advance understanding of *how* advocacy is funded in metropolitan Washington and to offer suggestions for strengthening the advocacy work of local and regional nonprofits. But this report is issued with the hope that as readers

approach these findings, they are already bringing to the table their own clear understanding of *why* advocacy is so crucial to the success of area foundations and their grantees alike.

The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy is grateful to the Washington Grantmakers' Community Capacity Fund for its generous support of this project, and to the funders and nonprofits that participated in this effort to illuminate the advocacy landscape in metropolitan Washington.

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Executive Summary

Neither metropolitan Washington nor the nation as a whole is the same as it was prior to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. One reflection of the impact is an altered sense of the pivotal functions played by a whole host of nonprofits.

The impact of the nonprofit sector was not simply the demonstrated abilities of charities to respond to the economic and social dislocation and the capacities of funders to channel grant moneys where they might be needed to deliver “safety net” services. In metropolitan Washington as in New York City, funders and nonprofits together witnessed the gaping holes in the public sector safety net—and the important role of the nonprofit sector to advocate for changes in public policies to reknit or sometimes simply create the net where none exists. A vigorous nonprofit sector contains not only a network of service providers, but an energetic array of nonprofits advocating for policy changes to create the programs and generate the resources to address the needs of the disadvantaged and disenfranchised populations of a locality, region or state.

Locally, Washington Grantmakers, the area’s regional association of grantmakers, initiated a multi-foundation collaboration, the Community Capacity Fund (CCF), for grantmaking to build the capacity of area nonprofits after Sept. 11, especially a stronger public policy advocacy capacity among area nonprofits. CCF’s grantmaking not only addressed needs that emerged in the wake of Sept. 11, but revealed the need for nonprofit and foundation leaders to elevate attention to the need for a strengthened nonprofit advocacy capacity in this region.

Metropolitan Washington poses special challenges to nonprofit public policy advocates and their philanthropic supporters. The region is a composite of multiple political jurisdictions—municipalities, counties, two states and the District of Columbia. Nearly every public policy issue requires nonprofits to demonstrate the agility to navigate different political arenas simultaneously. At the core, the District of Columbia remains a uniquely disenfranchised political territory, unable to elect voting members to Congress and suffering from ultimate decision-making authority over many local budgetary and policy issues by legislators from the states of New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Florida rather than the neighborhoods of Anacostia, Petworth and Shaw.

This report, *Advocacy for Social Change in Metropolitan Washington*, is an analysis of the state-of-the-art of the region’s multiple layers of nonprofit public policy advocacy. It is based largely on two surveys.

- An extensive, data-oriented mail survey of 118 nonprofits identified by local funders and by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy as organizations engaged in or emphasizing policy advocacy focused on local metropolitan, county, regional, and state issues affecting the metropolitan Washington area.¹
- A survey of selected grantmakers, including both local foundations and foundations from other cities and regions from around the U.S., identified for their knowledge of and experience in supporting nonprofit public policy advocacy, examining how foundations can enhance the capacities and effectiveness of public policy advocates.²

Supplemental information came from public records on foundations and nonprofits, including data drawn from the nonprofits’ own form 990s.

Conclusions and recommendations on building nonprofit advocacy capacities in this region or any other are subject to contention and debate. Both funders and nonprofits approach the issue with preconceptions about what works and what doesn’t. A fundamental truth for one is seen as the nonprofit equivalent of an “urban myth” for another. One funder’s idea of a core grantmaking activity may be deemed by another as a temporary fad, even though both want to bol-

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ster nonprofit public policy advocacy capacity in the region. Even the concept of effectiveness in public policy advocacy garners little consensus.

As a result, this research relies on the insights of the survey respondents—funders and nonprofits—for their strongly held perspectives, based on empirical experience, regarding strategies for advancing nonprofit public policy advocacy in the metropolitan area. Some recommendations may be areas for Washington regional funders to collaborate on in supporting and elevating nonprofit public policy advocacy. Others may simply be notions of best practices that foundations and nonprofits might promote within their own organizations and associations to make their public policy advocacy more effective and productive.

TYPES OF NONPROFIT PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY IN THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON REGION

The array of local and regional nonprofits engaged in public policy advocacy is larger than some observers might expect. Their profile is limited because Washington is the arena for the resolution of national public policy issues, joined by national public interest organizations. In few other regions of the country do local and regional nonprofit advocacy organizations have to compete with national players for visibility and attention.

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Uncovering and elevating the functions and interests of metropolitan Washington advocacy organizations requires initially an understanding or framework for examining who they are, what they emphasize in their advocacy, and how

they function. Most advocacy organizations are truly multifunctional, engaging in an array of activities crossing types of public policy advocacy and stretching from advocacy to direct service provision.

There are many ways of classifying nonprofit advocacy organizations. The typology that would seem to be of most utility to entities interested in promoting and expanding nonprofit public policy advocacy would be a four-part model that could lead to specific actions by funders and advocates together:

1. What kinds of advocacy activities do nonprofit public policy advocates carry out in the metropolitan Washington D.C. area? The action implications include: Is sufficient attention being devoted to specific types of public policy advocacy?

What kinds of interventions might address perceived shortcomings in the region's advocacy array? What sorts of advocacy actions best suit the challenges of advocacy in a multiple jurisdiction environment like metropolitan Washington?

2. What kinds of issues do nonprofit public policy advocates in this region work on? The action implications for both funders and advocates include determining where there are issues and topics needing more advocacy attention.
3. In which geographic areas do the region's public policy advocacy organizations focus their activities? As partners in promoting a social change agenda, funders and advocates can assess whether there is a need to build more regional attention complementing the regional scope of the issues and problems facing the area, whether there is sufficient local attention to public policy advocacy and organizing in subareas of the region, particularly suburban communities, and how to take advantage of the Washington presence of national advocacy groups in the area in order to link their resources and skills to groups addressing these issues locally and regionally.
4. Where and how do local and regional public policy advocacy organizations work together for maximum effectiveness? Can funders and advocacy organizations themselves build mechanisms for peer support, for collaborative action and for linking up with national networks that would enhance the effectiveness of public policy advocates in this region?

Means of distinguishing and categorizing the types of local and regional advocates and assessing their capacities and challenges are presented in the following typology:

Types of advocacy: As relatively small nonprofits, most D.C. area public policy advocates are multifunctional organizations, combining several types of advocacy activities under one roof. However, most emphasize what might be best described as informal advocacy, meeting with government officials in the course of program or contract activities or participating or cooperating in advisory boards or panels involving multiple organizations with diverse agendas. Less than one-fifth of the organizations responding to the NCRP survey are frequently engaged in generating and disseminating public policy research reports. More than a quarter of respondents carry out direct lobbying "often" or "very often."

Geographic emphases: Not surprisingly, the preponderance of groups surveyed (45.9 percent) focus their work on the District of Columbia. Providing support to build the capacity of public policy advocates that work in the Virginia and Maryland suburbs, which share in the inner ring urban problems of the District, emerges as an important agenda item, not to the detriment of support to groups in the District, but to expand the

regional attention to public policy problems that do not stop at the municipal, county or state boundaries. The presence of national advocacy nonprofits willing to pay attention to the problems of the metropolitan region and even devote research, advocacy, technical assistance (TA) and organizing time is a resource that can be leveraged in the future. Recently, some of the national groups have begun developing local programming or incubating spin-off public policy advocates focused on the Washington metropolitan area.

Sectoral emphases: Local and regional advocacy organizations' issue concerns vary, as the organizations adapt their missions to mechanisms for attracting support, building coalitions and developing effective advocacy programs. To connect with potential allies and funders, most of the surveyed organizations (64.9 percent) link their activities with the politically and fiscally more popular subject matter of addressing issues of children, youth and families.

Working in coalitions: It takes energy and skill for organizations to work in coalitions. It is an accepted truism that collaborative action has positive impacts, though usually when it is directed at concrete, tangible issues, as opposed to emphasizing process-oriented collaboration for its own sake. Nine out of ten nonprofit respondents work in coalitions with other organizations, and one-fourth self-identify as coalitions (that is, organizational members determine their advocacy agendas).

Despite the diversity of organizations mentioned as coalition partners or organizational collaborators of some degree, relatively few of these organizations received more than one mention as a regular, influential partner for metropolitan D.C. area nonprofits. These "nodes" of collaborative focus include:

- Among local/regional coalitions and collaborations, the Washington Council of Agencies (WCA) and the D.C. Primary Care Association.
- Among national efforts, the National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support, housed at the Center for Community Change and the National Council of La Raza.
- Among organizations turned to for assistance, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute (housed at CBPP), the Center for Law and Social Policy, D.C. Action for Children and So Others Might Eat.

There seems to be just about no opposition to working in coalitions, but little coalescence around coalitions that draw in a wide array of public policy advocacy nonprofits in the region. The list of the coalitional interests of local and regional nonprofits is as long and as diverse as the missions and functions of the surveyed organizations. The region does not appear to have as of yet an arena comparable to the Progressive Network of Los Angeles that convenes, connects and coalesces nonprofit public policy

advocacy organizations in an effective manner across issues.

The report details the financial and staff characteristics of public policy advocacy organizations in the region, including salary levels, benefits packages, board governance and budget sizes. Key to an analysis of what might be done by and for nonprofit advocates to bolster their critical social change role is an assessment of their staff capacities. For the most part, these are small organizations with limited staffing. Although the average staff size in full-time equivalents is 8.2 staff people, the median staff size is only 6.5, the skew explained by the presence of a few large organiza-

tions with substantial service delivery and administrative staff complements. Almost one-third of the organizations employ two staff persons or less.

The importance of advocacy organizations giving voice and profile to small, niche constituencies whose perspectives might be lost in larger organizations cannot be overstated. These organizations reflect the sector's inherent democratic diversity. But these organizations are fragile, vulnerable to staff and leadership turnover, and challenged by quickly moving policy dynamics. The ability of those organizations to link up with other advocacy groups in collaborative efforts allows smaller groups to expand their capacities, making funder investments in organizations capable of serving as coalition "nodes" potentially helps small public policy advocates.

The organizations are also challenged by limited staff capacities in key functional areas in public policy advocacy. Only one-fourth of the organizations have any staff people assigned to communications functions, and less than one-fifth have staff assigned to research activities. The organizations with the largest staff complements assigned to "core program" and administrative functions tend to be either large service providers (with most staff assigned to service delivery rather than policy research, lobbying or advocacy communications) or local organizations functioning housed within national groups and therefore able to "count" more staff. The more indigenous, community-based advocates in this region are more apt to be so small that the one or two people on staff carry out multiple functions, doing "everything." Consequently, the limitations in staff skills

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among advocacy nonprofits may actually be limitations in available staffing, cured not by technical assistance or training, but by increased funding allowing these organizations to recruit and hire the professional staff that they need.

CHALLENGES FOR THE NONPROFIT ADVOCACY SECTOR OF METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON

Few metropolitan Washington public policy advocates are sanguine about the challenges they face in promoting social change for populations in need. Survey respondents articulated several critical issues they see as hurdles to be overcome in advancing public policy advocacy:

- **Obtaining support from grantmakers for controversial issues or unpopular constituencies (as opposed to the easier support for advocacy around children, youth and family issues):** Advocates called for educating funders about

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the real issues affecting neighborhoods and residents and for making connections between children and youth issues and other advocacy concerns.

- **Putting nonprofit advocacy—and the accomplishments of nonprofit advocates—onto the radar screens of funders:** To generate enhanced attention for their concerns, advocates called for convenings among

public policy advocacy organizations to promote their work and improved communications skills in order to increase media attention to local and regional advocates.

- **Overcoming racial and ethnic disparities in the staffing of nonprofit advocacy organizations:** Survey respondents recommended redoubling their organizational commitments to diversity in recruitment, especially at the executive director level, looking to leadership development efforts among board members and community leaders in order to recruit staff better reflecting the communities they serve, and convening peer networks among advocacy group staff, particularly people of color, to promote diversity and to attract and retain people in careers of nonprofit public policy advocacy.

- **Addressing difficult fundraising futures:** Advocates suggested working with foundations to generate information that helps them understand the importance and potential impact of public policy advocacy and to devise language to help funders channel funds in this direction even though they may not explicitly say that they support advocacy per se.

- **Overcoming reliance on a small number of local and regional foundations:** Diversifying sources of funding, particularly through reaching individual donors in communities and in the workplace—and reaching major individual donors—received attention, but the importance of foundation funding for nonprofit advocacy was underscored, with a call for the core advocacy funders to educate and recruit their foundation peers and expand the metropolitan Washington universe of foundations providing support to nonprofit public policy advocacy.

- **Continuing to educate nonprofits and funders about the legality of funding nonprofit advocacy and engaging in advocacy and lobbying:** Despite suggesting that legal barriers did not appear to be an important constraint to nonprofit advocacy, survey respondents suggested that funders expand their work with organizations such as Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest (CLPI) and the Alliance for Justice to train funders around improved techniques and support for nonprofit public policy advocacy.

- **Expanding access to needed core operating support funding:** Citing the critical importance of core operating support grantmaking for nonprofit public policy advocacy, groups suggested the need to better document for funders the impact of insufficient core operating support, to help funders devise improved administrative cost formulas for supporting overhead costs in program- or project-specific grants, and to encourage funders to increase the proportion of their grants devoted to core support, providing advocates the flexibility they need to respond to changes in public policy dynamics.

- **Getting support for “systems reform” as opposed to “advocacy projects:”** Complaining that funders preferred shorter-term advocacy projects rather than longer-term systems reform advocacy, advocates suggested convening cross-issue dialogues on systemic issues that warrant increased or renewed long term attention from local funders. In addition, they suggested improving their own articulation of “strategies for change” in addressing long term systems challenges, so that funders could better understand what their systems reform investments actually bring. And they called for advocates themselves to be more open to collaborations between policy-research groups and com-

munity organizers, between advocates and service providers, to demonstrate capabilities for addressing systems reform issues.

- **Overcoming mismatches between the kinds of nonprofit capacity-building generally available and the specific capacity-building needs of nonprofit public policy advocates:**

Foundation grantmaking is a small part of the revenues of all nonprofits, but a critical component of nonprofit advocacy, particularly in the metropolitan Washington area.

Advocates suggested the need to articulate a capacity-building agenda focused on the skills that advocates themselves think are important, such as strategic communications, collaborations and strategy development, and to identify capacity-building programs

and providers that the advocates know and bring them to the attention of their peers and local funders.

- **Generating new measures of public policy advocacy success:** Responding to the frequent call for measures of the impact of funding nonprofit advocacy, survey respondents suggested that they share the evaluation methodologies they themselves use to guide their work, that they develop for funders—and for themselves—“bottom-up” measures of advocacy success, and that they work with funders and evaluators to produce documented case studies of the impact of foundation investments in public policy advocacy.

PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY

The experience of the Community Capacity Fund has elevated the funding community’s awareness of advocacy funding and the importance of responding to crisis through the linkage of service delivery and public policy advocacy. Foundation grantmaking is a small part of the revenues of all nonprofits, but a critical component of nonprofit advocacy, particularly in the metropolitan Washington area:

- **Three-fourths of nonprofit public policy respondents reported receiving support from foundations:** Foundation support accounted for 55.9 percent of their budgets. Two-thirds reported receiving support from individual donors, but that support constituted only 13.4 percent of the budgets of these organizations.
- **Foundation grants were respondents’ single most signifi-**

cant funding source: Foundation grants accounted for 41.9 percent on average of the total reported budgets of all nonprofit survey respondents. The second largest funding source was government grants and contracts, which cannot be used for lobbying or most advocacy activities.

- **The array of foundations frequently identified as funders of public policy advocacy organizations is a minuscule proportion of the more than 1,000 foundations in the metropolitan area:** Nine of the top ten foundation sources of funding for local public policy advocacy organizations are local foundations, in rank order, the Eugene and Agnes Meyer Foundation, the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, the Fannie Mae Foundation, the Freddie Mac Foundation, the Moriah Fund, the Public Welfare Foundation, the Trellis Fund, the Consumer Health Foundation and the Naomi and Nehemiah Cohen Foundation.³ The non-foundation identified in the top ten is the United Way (or the United Way plus other sources of workplace fundraising donations).⁴
- **While nonprofit respondents indicated a general concern about future funding prospects due to plunging foundation endowments, for the most part they expressed confidence about the commitment of their primary foundation boosters:** Among local foundations, there appears to be a strong commitment to try to maintain funding to local and regional advocates. Nonetheless, historically in U.S. grantmaking during stock market downturns, foundations have cut back on granting in the area of “public/society benefit” which includes much of progressive social change advocacy. Nearly half of the nonprofit respondents to this survey characterized their financial futures as only “somewhat stable” or even “shaky.” Even nonprofits predicting “stable” or “strong” finances expressed concern about the ability of foundations to maintain their grant support in this arena.
- **In general, nonprofit respondents conveyed little concern about foundations attempting to influence, shape or dominate nonprofits’ advocacy agendas:** To the contrary, advocates described local foundations as friends, allies, boosters and partners, offering not only grant support, but contacts, ideas and even offering “substantive and process” input.

Committed to capitalizing on the advocacy successes of the Community Capacity Fund and strengthening the infrastructure of nonprofit advocacy in this region, local foundations are aware of the challenges that nonprofit advocates themselves face and are willing to examine best practices and test new models for social change advocacy.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GRANTMAKERS BY GRANTMAKERS

While there is much that advocacy groups can and should do in the way of self-improvement, there is a crucial leadership role to be played by foundations in this region.

Fundamentally, the challenge for advocacy funders is to advocate and organize within their own community. There is a wide diversity of charitable causes worthy of philanthropic support. Many funders will not and, perhaps due to donor constraints, cannot engage in public policy advocacy. But there is potential for more funder engagement around public policy advocacy, even if they do not call it advocacy. The most promising strategies and approaches suggested by funders within and outside of the metropolitan Washington region are briefly outlined below and described in detail, with models for exploration and emulation, in the full report:

- **Maintaining and expanding foundation grant resources for public policy advocacy:** Active outreach to and organizing among other funders; convening forums for funders on critical public policy issues; participating in collaborative funding efforts; convening peer networks among foundation staff; targeting new foundations, small foundations and individual donors to bring them into advocacy funding; engaging in countercyclical grantmaking (higher advocacy support when endowments and the economy are down); making grants in “political time” (emergency grants, cash flow loans, etc.); and granting to public or community foundations for advocacy regranting.
- **Strengthening the communications effectiveness of nonprofit public policy advocacy groups:** Bringing in a strategic communications firm to provide training and technical assistance; supporting local cross-training and mutual support among advocates; and using the foundations’ own communications staff to provide communications training and assistance.
- **Benchmarking the impacts and outcomes of public policy advocacy:** Collecting in-depth information on measures and indicators used by local advocacy groups; collecting information on how organizations articulate their “strategies for change;” and educating other funders about outcomes indicators.
- **Supporting improved capacity building for nonprofit public policy advocacy organizations:** Recruiting and bringing to the metropolitan Washington area experienced technical assistance providers around specific skills and issues (for example, the Midwest Academy or the Rockwood Leadership Program on organizing and leadership development skills, Grassroots Institute for Fundraising and Training

for diversifying fundraising, Technology Works for Good or Project Alchemy on technology, etc.); reaching out to issue-focused networks for technical assistance to local organizations (for example, the Center for Community Change on jobs and welfare reform, the American Civil Liberties Union on civil rights advocacy, etc.); and supporting and facilitating peer support networks among local advocacy organizations.

- **Encouraging funding for advocacy on “unpopular” issues or constituencies:** Analyzing issues that might be “ripe for action” and promoting support for them among funders; peer organizing among foundations and their staff to garner support; demonstrating moral courage by visibly promoting advocacy for unpopular causes and constituencies.
- **Linking public policy research and organizing and political mobilization:** Consider institutionalizing the Community Capacity Fund as a mechanism for linking public policy researchers with local community-based organizing efforts; and consider replicating the model of the Racial Justice Collaborative’s local funds (in California and North Carolina, currently) in the metropolitan Washington area.
- **Promoting collaboration among nonprofit public policy advocates:** Providing “space” for potential collaborations by inviting groups to meet, think and plan together; engaging in grantmaking that rewards existing and emerging collaborations; funding the provision of technical assistance for building collaborations; and bringing “model collaborations” to the attention of metropolitan D.C. funders and advocacy organizations.
- **Promoting public policy advocacy among human service nonprofits:** Advocating for advocacy within the service professions; rewarding collaborations between advocates and service providers; funding trade associations and interest groups; and promoting and funding advocacy without necessarily having to call it “advocacy.”

There is potential for more funder engagement around public policy advocacy, even if they do not call it advocacy.

NEXT STEPS: ADVANCING THE CAUSE OF NONPROFIT PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY

The combined energies and ideas of metropolitan D.C. funders and public policy advocates comprise an exciting menu of possibilities for advancing the capacities and effectiveness of local nonprofit public policy advocacy organizations. Like the

evolution of the Community Capacity Fund, there is no “quick fix” in the offing, no panacea that will transform public policy advocacy in this region from an array of mostly small groups to multiple powerhouses jumpstarting progress on intractable local and regional issues.

What might happen next? The collaborative sentiments of local public policy advocates and Washington area foundations should be tested in convenings with both nonprofits and foundations at the table. While there are multiple issues that might be explored, funders and advocates might consider a series of convenings with these topics and agendas:

- 1. Introductory convening:** Discussing the state of nonprofit advocacy in the metropolitan region, to develop a shared sense of partnership between nonprofit advocates and their funders and to identify “stuck” public policy issues warranting increased attention.
- 2. Convening on collaborations and coalitions:** Exploring models of collaboration among advocates and funder roles incentivizing advocacy collaborations, to break down the topical “silos” among public policy advocacy groups.
- 3. Convening on promoting advocacy among metropolitan Washington funders:** Finding ways of attracting new foundations into supporting nonprofit public policy advocacy, toward developing a strategy for presenting and “selling” advocacy grantmaking to new foundations and family foundations and devising a language for talking about advocacy among funders coming from a variety of issue and ideological perspectives.
- 4. Convening on capacity building for nonprofit public policy advocacy:** Identifying and describing the gaps between the skills of indigenous advocacy organizations and the services available for capacity building, with an outcome of identifying and initiating relationships with the national capacity-building groups to work with local host organizations such as the Nonprofit Roundtable or the Washington Council of Agencies to bring their TA and training skills to local/regional advocates.
- 5. Convening on success measures in nonprofit public policy advocacy:** Developing robust indicators of public policy advocacy impact and success measures, toward educating foundation staff and trustees about how to evaluate public policy advocacy and educating advocacy organizations themselves to the need for monitoring and evaluating progress.

Jointly coming to the table to address the systemic barriers to effectiveness, ranging from insufficient funding to inadequate skills and expertise, should be a natural, nearly automatic response of foundations and nonprofits committed to social change in the Washington metropolitan area. The Community Capacity Fund has been an impressive model of foundation col-

laboration to advance the capacities of nonprofit public policy advocates, galvanized by a community crisis of immense proportions. The next steps clearly require collaboration not only among foundations, but between foundations and their nonprofit public policy advocacy allies to alter the climate for public policy advocacy funding, capacity and impact in the metropolitan Washington region.

1. Introduction

Nonprofit advocacy in the metropolitan Washington area did not originate with the horrors of Sept. 11, nor has advocacy been limited to direct and indirect responses to disaster relief, particularly the recovery from the massive loss of jobs in the region. Nonprofit advocates in the metropolitan area might suffer from undercapitalization, inadequate staff resources, limited capacity-building support and the overwhelming challenge of getting attention in the nation's capital. But they are not short of issues and challenges.

A Lexis-Nexis search of any random day of advocacy stories in the metropolitan newspapers reveals an energetic local advocacy community struggling to grab the attention of public policy makers and the general public. Take Oct. 3, 2002, as an example of the importance of the local advocacy sector. In that day's *Washington Post*, the region's newspaper of record, nonprofit advocates boldly challenged the smugness of major institutions.

Walter Smith, the executive director of D.C. Appleseed, challenged an editorial of the *Washington Post* on the sale of the nonprofit health insurer, CareFirst.⁵ "The District's decision-makers need to decide if the sale is right before they decide if the price is right," he challenged, questioning the absence of attention to the public interest in the proposed sale and conversion of the insurer. D.C. Appleseed was a leading player in conducting the research and analysis of the proposed sale of CareFirst, which as the largest insurer in the region affects 3.1 million subscribers in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia and Delaware.

On the same day, an article quoted representatives and supporters of the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless, one dressed as the Grim Reaper, at a hearing of the District of Columbia Council on adequate safeguards for the homeless during the winter.⁶ "It makes me want to weep when I still have to have conversations about 'Are the blankets ready? Is the housing ready?' To me, it's such a strong sign of the lack of priority that [Williams's] administration, at the highest levels, gives to the issues that deeply affect those most vulnerable," said the Clinic's executive director, Patricia Mullahy Fugere. The urgency of the issue is apparent to the advocates if not to administrators, who know that 370,000 very low income households in the metropolitan area faced problems of severe rent burdens, physical deficiencies or overcrowding, and a conservatively estimated 13,000 people remain homeless.⁷

Elsewhere in that day's press coverage, the leadership of Parents United spoke out against the cuts in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) at a public forum of the Board

of Education.⁸ Challenging the notion that the board had negotiated a relatively harmless way out of the scrum over the mayor's budget, Parents United co-chair Iris Toyer made it clear that "at the local school level, we're going to suffer."

As micro-entities, none of these organizations have "solved" the macro-problems they are addressing. Conversions of nonprofit health care insurers such as CareFirst continue in this metropolitan area as they do around the nation. Homelessness in the metropolitan area is hardly going to be reduced in the wake of national and state budget shortfalls and cutbacks. Financing public education is no less a challenge in the District than it is in other metropolitan areas. But the voices of D.C. Appleseed, the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless, Parents United and actually numerous other nonprofit advocacy organizations are doing a yeoman's job to keep the attention of policy makers, major institutions, the press and the public fixed on the critical issues affecting the welfare of disadvantaged and disenfranchised people in the metropolitan area comprising the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia and suburban Maryland.

This report documents the condition of the nonprofit advocacy sector—focused on local and regional advocacy issues—in the metropolitan Washington area. The work of these advocacy organizations in a difficult environment, handicapped by the challenge of fighting for attention to local issues against a national and international policy backdrop focused on the White House, Congress, the U.S. Supreme Court and increasingly on global institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, is laudatory and frequently spirited—and surprisingly unseen by too many funders. This analysis of nonprofit public policy advocacy organizations in this region reveals the barriers, driving forces, and emerging opportunities for impacting local and regional public policy.

Despite funders' fears that there were only a handful of nonprofit advocates serving this region, the research uncovered a much larger number, many of which combined advocacy with various forms of service delivery. Contrary to the

admonitions of some national advocacy experts, many service providers are themselves excellent advocates for disadvantaged and disenfranchised populations, based on proximity and interaction, but they are hamstrung with insufficient resources. Nonetheless, the metropolitan advocacy organizations studied by NCRP—through a survey delivered to 118 organizations identified by NCRP and confirmed by representatives of the Washington Grantmakers' Community Capacity Fund (CCF) as definite or likely metropolitan Washington advocacy organizations—were larger than expected, more professionally developed, and noticeably energetic and vigorous at promoting public policy advocacy across a large range of issues. Support for advocacy is growing, as funders locally and around the nation recognize that the track record of this nation's non-

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profit sector is fundamentally connected to its advocacy for social change, not simply its delivery of services supplementing what should be core governmental functions.

The lack of general operating support bedevils nonprofit advocacy in the nation and in this region.⁹ This stands as a distinct contrast to the grantmaking strategies of the nation's well known

conservative foundations which aggressively provide their ideological supporters with core operating investments to build organizational strength.¹⁰ Even minor proportional increases in foundation support for core operating expenses could have vast impact on the capacity of metropolitan Washington area advocacy groups to participate in and impact the democratic process.

Unlike narrower nonprofit service delivery projects, advocacy does not lend itself easily to hard, quantifiable measures, particularly when the end goal is systems reform or social change. Providing multiyear support enabling groups to go after long term issues, particularly those that do not lend themselves to more discrete advocacy projects, is high on the wishlist of local groups for philanthropic reform.

Metropolitan D.C. advocacy organizations have much to "teach" their local funders, with the potential result of a strengthened funding picture for nonprofit advocacy in the region. They possess an acute sense of perceived shortcomings in foundation support for advocacy and the areas where foun-

dations could well improve the advocacy environment, including support for systems reform, increased funding levels for nonprofit advocates, bringing service providers into public policy advocacy and developing robust impact measures for advocacy, just to name a few. Advocacy groups most fundamentally look to foundations for leadership to promote the legitimacy and importance of advocacy among their grantmaking peers.

Increased foundation support for nonprofit advocacy is clearly needed throughout the nonprofit sector. By most calculations, a pittance of foundation grantmaking goes toward advocacy for social change.¹¹ In metropolitan Washington, the advocacy challenges are in combination unique and daunting:

- The region is comprised of parts of two states plus the District of Columbia,¹² the latter lacking the full powers of a state such as having voting members of Congress.¹³
- While most inner cities are declining, Washington's is a combination of neighborhood distress and real estate market speculation, gentrification and displacement.
- In the suburbs, rampant development has made the metropolitan area a focal point for the debate around the meaning and importance of "smart growth," highlighted by the greater Washington region being second only to Los Angeles in terms of the most congested traffic in the nation.¹⁴
- A core problem is the health of the core: The District of Columbia faces deficit budgets hampered by federal restrictions on its ability to tax income earned in the District and the huge amount of relatively untaxable and tax-exempt federal land and property.¹⁵
- Despite a "hot" housing market, the District has lost housing and people during the past decade. The housing shortage in the region is huge, with plummeting vacancy rates in the suburbs despite a soft national and regional economy.¹⁶
- LGBT populations in the region continue to face discrimination. Neither Maryland, Virginia nor the District license civil marriage or civil unions. Maryland and Virginia deny partner benefits for state employees and do not protect gay and lesbian students. Virginia does not include sexual orientation in its non-discrimination laws.¹⁷ The difficulty of advocacy in the District, which is more progressive on these issues than its suburban neighbors, is exemplified by the fact that Congress blocked the District's ability to provide domestic partner benefits for a decade until 2002.¹⁸
- The metropolitan area is one of the top destinations for legal immigrants into the U.S., a diverse population scattered across the region and frequently unseen by most observers.

In Maryland's Montgomery County, for example, public school pupils with limited English proficiency are counted as speaking 120 languages. From 1990 to 1998, a quarter million immigrants settled in metropolitan Washington, only 12.8 percent within the District itself.¹⁹

- Few would suggest that the aptly titled study, *Children in Crisis*,²⁰ critiquing the District of Columbia Public School system in 1996, does not still apply today. Education battles in suburban districts mirror the District's problems, particularly as their school demographics approach the District's and school funding problems worsen.
- In addition to the CareFirst conversion, health care advocacy challenges in the District are exemplified by the closing of D.C. General Hospital, the only public hospital in the city, and the suburban bankruptcy of the private firm hired to manage its scaled down replacement. The combination of a litany of shockingly extreme health problems in the District (including statistically high death rates, infant mortality rates, HIV/AIDS death rates and sexually transmitted diseases) plus the fact that almost half of the District's population is either on Medicaid or uninsured, highlights the healthcare challenge.
- The entire region was devastated by the terrorism and tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001. While most of the nation has focused on the impact of 9/11 on New York City, the impacts in the greater Washington area were significant, particularly in job losses due to the prolonged closure of National Airport and in the slumping tourism market.

The front line in addressing these multiple issues is the array of advocacy nonprofits with the gumption to call for policy changes on behalf of disadvantaged and disenfranchised populations in this region. The fuel for their activity has to be deep, strategic and increased grantmaking by local, regional and even national foundations paying attention to the needs of local advocates addressing the sometimes murky and constantly difficult public policy issues of this region. The payoff, or the outcome, is leveraged resources and improved policies for those most in need—and enhanced grassroots voice and capacity for responding to critical community problems.

Advocacy for Social Change in Metropolitan Washington examines the current opportunities foundations have to support the social change efforts of nonprofit organizations in the greater Washington metropolitan area. The region in question includes the District of Columbia, the suburban Maryland jurisdictions of Montgomery County and Prince George's County, and Virginia's City of Alexandria, City of Fairfax, City of Falls Church, and Fairfax and Arlington counties.

Methodologically, this report draws on several prior reports of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. In

response to NCRP's 1997 analysis of conservative foundations' public policy grantmaking in *Moving a Public Policy Agenda: The Strategic Philanthropy of Conservative Foundations*, foundations looked for opportunities for supporting a comparable nonprofit agenda in favor of social change for constituencies that were faring poorly in the economy and our society. NCRP initiated a number of studies exploring the segment of nonprofit social change advocacy organizations working at state and local levels, frequently off the radar screen of large mainstream funders. Our purpose was to explore the structure of local advocacy and the opportunities presented for foundations.

The ultimate effectiveness of foundations is their delivery system, the capacities and programs of the nonprofits they fund. That means deploying their resources to build the organizational strength and support the programs of nonprofits that engage in public policy advocacy and mobilize their constituencies for social change.

In 2000, NCRP conducted a review of nonprofit advocates engaged in state-level public policy advocacy in California—*A Democratic Landscape: Funding Social Change in California*—followed by two studies of local and regional advocates in New York City, *Building Power, Supporting Change? Foundation Support of Community Organizing in New York City* (2000) conducted by the National Center for Schools and Communities, and *Review of New York Foundation Grantmaking for Organizing and Advocacy: Impacts and Implications* (2002), prepared for the New York Foundation. The evolution of these studies occurred against a backdrop of an enhanced philanthropic awareness of the importance and appropriateness of foundation support for public policy advocacy.

Recognition of the legitimacy and importance of foundation support for public policy advocacy is now much more widespread than in years past. In 1999, the Council on Foundations, the trade association for organized philanthropy, issued a report on public policy which explicitly advocated the involvement of foundations in “the development and improvement of public policies” through “any legally permissible philanthropic activity, including funding and convening.”²¹ Foundation affinity groups such as Grantmakers in Health (GIH)²² and the Neighborhood Funders Group (NFG)²³ have underscored within their topically focused constituencies the importance and legitimacy of foundation engagement in public policy issues.

Foundations best affect the generation, modification and improvement of public policies by providing support to the nonprofit organizations engaged in public policy advocacy. Clearly there are many other points of attack for foundations. Foundations themselves can directly engage policy makers on issues of concern to them, as the participating foundations in the National Community Development Initiative (NCDI)²⁴ have done on occasion. On their own, they can generate information of use to the debate on public policies, the Fannie Mae Foundation's "Knowledgeplex" obviously serving as a useful example, and the new anti-poverty strategy of the Northwest Areas Foundation as another.

Nonetheless, the ultimate effectiveness of foundations is their delivery system, the capacities and programs of the nonprofits they fund. That means deploying their resources to build the organizational strength and support the programs of nonprofits that engage in public policy advocacy and mobilize their constituencies for social change. Nonprofits constitute a vital "third sector nexus" between public policy makers and affected constituencies. Foundation support makes that nexus function in the public policy arena.

The obstacles are not legal, as the excellent work of organizations such as the Alliance for Justice (AFJ)²⁵ and Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest (CLPI)²⁶ have amply demonstrated. Once foundations overcome fears of politically motivated audits by the Internal Revenue Service, fears that have been raised by both ends of the political spectrum in philanthropy with little evidence that the IRS has inappropriately scrutinized either liberal or conservative grantmakers, the obstacle impeding foundation support of nonprofit advocacy turns out to be within foundations themselves: Fears of controversy.²⁷ Fears of bad press. Fears of alienating public and private sector community leaders. Discomfort with varieties of direct action. Discomfort with the constituencies mobilized by advocacy nonprofits. Discomfort with politicians and politics. Concerns about due diligence. Concerns about measuring the outcomes of advocacy grants. Concerns about the complexities of the public policy process.

And sometimes the impediments are the nonprofit advocates themselves and their own fears about the consequences of engaging in the public policy scrum.²⁸ In fact, there may be challenges in how nonprofit advocacy organizations think about and present their advocacy agendas, how they communicate, how they report on their work and their findings, how they cooperate and collaborate or fail to do so that might deter some foundations from maximizing their support of advocacy. Nonprofits might well respond that their shortcomings in some of these areas are induced by foundation grantmaking policies themselves.²⁹

NCRP's analysis of the challenges of foundation support for nonprofit advocacy has evolved as the philanthropic sector has evolved. The challenge is no longer to demonstrate to founda-

tions the legality and importance of funding nonprofit public policy advocacy. Even if they do not necessarily do it, they get it. Foundations know they can support advocacy and even direct lobbying. But many approach the shoals of nonprofit advocacy with great trepidation. They need to better understand what advocates require in terms of support from and relationships with funders. They need to see the capacity needs of nonprofit advocates (or the needs of advocacy functions within service or other organizations) as distinct from a "vanilla" concept of nonprofit structure and function. They need to understand the issues and context of local and regional nonprofit advocates, what might work in some settings and not in others.

This report examines the advocacy and organizing infrastructure of the greater Washington region. It is intended to generate perspectives on what foundations and advocates can do to bolster foundation support for local public policy advocacy. It is intended for use by foundations and advocates in convenings to promote public policy advocacy in this region.

2. Foundations and Nonprofits In Metropolitan Washington

Why metropolitan Washington? Instrumentally, the answer is straightforward. In the wake of the terrorism of Sept. 11 that destroyed lives, hopes, dreams and futures as a hijacked jet slammed into the Pentagon, Washington Grantmakers, the local regional association of grantmakers (RAG), established a program to improve the public policy advocacy work of local nonprofits in the metropolitan area, addressing disaster relief, particularly around issues of job losses and immigration. The Washington Grantmakers' Community Capacity Fund (CCF) focused on "strengthen[ing the] advocacy capacity of organizations striving to expand the public sector safety net for dislocated workers from industries affected by the terrorist attacks." CCF's unique collaborative grantmaking exhibited several characteristics important to the profile of funders addressing problems in this region:

- CCF's focus was truly regional, aiming to distribute funding to the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia in roughly the proportions of workers dislocated from jobs due to the Sept. 11 attacks.
- Although regional in focus, CCF grants would be tailored to the "needs and opportunities within each jurisdiction" of the region.
- CCF grants would focus on safety-net issues, using "immediate-term campaigns" to address "longer-term systemic policy goals."
- The funders intended their grantmaking support to be catalytic, promoting more advocacy and leveraging dollars from other Washington Grantmakers members.
- CCF grants would encourage collaborative capacity, serving as "the 'glue' that could enable several organizations to move toward a common end."

The small CCF effort constitutes a virtual outline for testing approaches to building regional nonprofit public policy advocacy capacity, making the Washington metropolitan area the most appropriate geography to test the region's philanthropic response to advocacy capacity-building.

The District of Columbia and the two adjacent states are home to a rich array of public policy-oriented nonprofits, albeit many with national rather than state or local scopes. There is no way of telling from Internal Revenue Service data how many nonprofits are engaged in public policy advocacy per

se, but there is no question that the two states and the District are growing venues for nonprofits.³⁰

	1992	1999	Percent Change
Washington			
Total active 501(c)(3)s	6,512	7,739	18.8
Public charities	6,114	7,731	26.4
Private foundations	398	408	2.5
Maryland			
Total active 501(c)(3)s	10,552	16,633	57.2
Public charities	9,711	15,515	59.8
Private foundations	841	1,118	32.9
Virginia			
Total active 501(c)(3)s	12,448	18,964	52.3
Public charities	11,519	17,792	54.5
Private foundations	929	1,172	26.2

The District's nonprofit association, the Washington Council of Agencies (WCA), counts 20,525 nonprofits in the metropolitan area, including 8,200 in the District of Columbia, 6,032 in Maryland's Montgomery and Prince George's County and 6,293 in suburban Virginia.³¹

As a city whose population has declined during the past decade compared to the explosive growth of the Maryland and Virginia suburbs, the slower growth rate of nonprofits and private foundations in the District is not surprising. But the District's growth rates in key types of nonprofits that are likely to be engaged in public policy advocacy surpasses the total sector's growth rates:³²

Active/Reporting Nonprofits: Washington			
	1992	1999	Percent Change
Environmental Quality	86	125	45.3
Housing/Shelter	61	115	88.5
Multipurpose Human Service	210	301	43.3
Community Improvement	118	157	33.1
Civil Rights/Social Action/Advocacy	86	120	35.4

The growth in the numbers of reporting nonprofits in Virginia and Maryland is equally if not more impressive:

Active/Reporting Nonprofits: Maryland			
	1992	1999	Percent Change
Environmental Quality	53	102	92.5
Housing/Shelter	146	270	84.9
Multipurpose Human Service	462	702	51.9
Community Improvement	99	193	94.9
Civil Rights/Social Action/Advocacy	27	47	74.1

Active/Reporting Nonprofits: Virginia			
	1992	1999	Percent Change
Environmental Quality	62	123	98.4
Housing/Shelter	160	291	81.9
Multipurpose Human Service	521	750	44.0
Community Improvement	140	247	76.2
Civil Rights/Social Action/Advocacy	29	56	93.1

Probably many more nonprofits than the ones counted here are likely involved in advocacy to some degree or another.

Philanthropy in the metropolitan area is somewhat limited, particularly within the District itself. Philanthropy has clearly grown in the region, but the bulk of foundation grantmaking by source has been in foundations located in the suburbs rather than within the District of Columbia:³³

Grants (In Millions)	1998	1999	2000
Total Foundation Grants in MSA	\$446.6	\$520.2	\$579.2
Foundation Grants in Washington	\$199.2	\$243.0	\$276.5
Foundation Grants in Suburbs	\$247.4	\$277.2	\$302.7

Washington Grantmakers cites an even larger grantmaking total for the region for 2001, a total of \$555 million from private foundations, \$59 million from operating foundations, and \$241 million from public charities.³⁴ However, the grants from the region's foundations were not necessarily all focused in the region: 26 percent went to organizations in the District of Columbia, 11 percent to groups in Maryland, and 8 percent to Virginia-based nonprofits.

While some 500 new foundations have been established in the region during the past five years, there has been substantial foundation growth in the Maryland and Virginia suburbs:³⁵

	1998	1999	2000
Foundations in MSA	898	957	1,148
Foundations in D.C.	310	325	632
Foundations in Suburbs	588	632	790

On the list of top 100 foundations by assets or by total grantmaking, there are no foundations based in the District of Columbia, and the handful of foundations in Virginia and Maryland in the top 100 lists are not seen as metropolitan D.C. funders.³⁶ If the philanthropic community is going to be able to support local and regional advocacy, it is hamstrung by the presence of few large foundations, though the District's own community foundation and the Fannie Mae Foundation are among the largest in their respective philanthropic categories.³⁷ Local nonprofits speak eloquently of the narrow range of funders that identify with and provide funding for nonprofits that serve the District, the suburbs or the metropolitan area as opposed to focusing in state or federal arenas. While a number of prominent nonprofit advocacy organizations in the District are among the top recipients of foundation support, such as the National Council of La Raza, the Advocacy Institute, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities,³⁸ the Heritage Foundation and the Children's Defense Fund, none are exclusively or predominantly locally or regionally focused; the largest nonprofit recipient of foundation grants in the District of Columbia is the World Bank.

National nonprofit advocates based in metropolitan Washington overshadow local organizations and camouflage their organizational and funding needs. Based on Internal Revenue Service data on nonprofits reporting lobbying expenditures, it would appear that the District of Columbia is well endowed with nonprofit advocates, ranking second only to

California in the number of advocates that lobby and second to New York in the proportion of all nonprofit lobbying expenditures in the U.S.³⁹ Add in the Virginia and Maryland totals, and the District/Maryland/Virginia conglomeration accounted for 14.3 percent of all nonprofit organizations that lobbied and 19.1 percent of all nonprofit lobbying expenditures. Nevertheless, most observers agree with Jeff Krehely that “[the] many national charitable groups ... located within the Washington beltway ... [push] up the concentration in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia.”⁴⁰ While there are numerous problems with relying on IRS data for calculations of the numbers of nonprofits engaged in lobbying or the broader area of public policy advocacy,⁴¹ because in part that many nonprofits do not accurately or honestly report lobbying expenditures (and other categories of expenditures for that matter) on their 990s for numerous reasons, there is little question that the Beltway nonprofits account for the bulk of lobbying attributed to nonprofits in the three state-like jurisdictions. The existence of local advocacy organizations in this region is simply camouflaged by national statistics and hidden from analysts and funders. Bringing local and regional nonprofit advocacy organizations into full relief, out from the behind the highly visible national nonprofits in this region, may be the critical public service of this research report.

The Washington metropolitan area faces a range of public policy challenges, not unlike other metropolitan areas around the nation, plus some that pose daunting problems to government decision-makers, advocates and foundations.

The region is comprised of parts of two states plus the District of Columbia,⁴² the latter lacking the full powers of a state such as having voting members of Congress.⁴³ It is a region of inner-city decline and depopulation combined with overheated real estate markets causing gentrification and displacement. A huge housing shortage in the region has caused plummeting suburban housing vacancy rates in the suburbs despite a soft national and regional economy.⁴⁴ Plus, Maryland and Virginia suburbs have become the poster children of the need for “smart growth,” highlighted by the greater Washington region’s ranking as possessing the most congested traffic in the nation—second to Los Angeles.⁴⁵ The metropolitan area is one of the top destinations for legal immigrants into the U.S., a diverse population scattered across the region and frequently unseen by most observers. In Maryland’s Montgomery County, for example, public school pupils with limited English proficiency are counted as speaking 120 languages. From 1990 to 1998, a quarter million immigrants settled in metropolitan Washington, only 12.8 percent within the District itself.⁴⁶ A core problem is the fiscal health of the core: The District of Columbia faces deficit budgets hampered by federal restrictions on its ability to tax income earned in the District and the huge amount of relatively untaxable and tax-exempt federal land and property.⁴⁷ The budget deficits of the District are only one of a myriad of reasons why the

District’s public schools still warrant the descriptions from the 1996 study, *Children in Crisis*.⁴⁸

Civil rights remain a persistent issue in the region, not only from the expected dimensions of race and ethnicity, but fairness for other populations as well, notably gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons. Neither Maryland, Virginia nor the District license same-sex marriage or civil unions (and Virginia even bans recognition of same-sex marriages), Maryland and Virginia deny partner benefits for state employees, Virginia and Maryland do not protect gay and lesbian students and Virginia does not include sexual orientation in its non-discrimination laws.⁴⁹ The difficulty of advocacy in the District, which is more progressive on these issues than its suburban neighbors, is exemplified by the fact that Congress blocked the District’s ability to provide domestic partner benefits for a decade until 2002, because of the District’s status requiring congressional approval of its budget and facing amendments and restrictions like these.⁵⁰

One of the populations most consistently and quietly deprived of basic human rights are the people in the region who might be termed medically vulnerable. The combination of a litany of shockingly extreme health problems in the District (including statistically high death rates, infant mortality rates, HIV/AIDS death rates and sexually transmitted diseases, for example) plus the fact that almost half of the District’s population is either on Medicaid or uninsured, highlights the healthcare challenge. Representative of the public sector response, the District of Columbia closed the public hospital in the community and hired a private sector firm to manage its scaled-down replacement; that firm has now gone bankrupt.

This is an inventory of issues that characterizes the problems of a complex metropolitan area, exacerbated by having to negotiate policies with two state governments, five counties, a number of municipalities and the government of the District of Columbia that some residents describe as akin to a colony. How nonprofit advocates function in this environment and how foundations conceive of their roles in maintaining and advancing the cause of nonprofit public policy advocacy in the region can shape the contours of foundation behavior throughout the nation. The accomplishments of the Community Capacity Fund, created from whole cloth in response to the devastation of Sept. 11, is one noteworthy example of the pathbreaking potential of Washington-area grantmakers.

The existence of local advocacy organizations in this region is simply camouflaged by national statistics and hidden from analysts and funders.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The findings in this report on the needs, challenges and prospects of local and regional nonprofit public policy advocates are based on the results of two surveys.

The first was a survey of local advocates conducted in the summer and fall of 2002. NCRP compiled a list of 118 local and regional advocacy organizations in the following way. The Community Capacity Fund of the Washington Grantmakers provided a small initial list of nonprofits that had received grants from the CCF for their post-9/11 advocacy activities, primarily around issues of jobs and immigration. NCRP then conducted its own searches for nonprofit organizations that might be identifiable as local or regional nonprofit public policy advocacy organizations.

NCRP's criteria for selecting potential survey participants were the following:

- status as an active 501(c)(3) nonprofit or a fiscal relationship with a 501(c)(3);
- active involvement in work to influence public policy at the local or regional level in the metropolitan Washington region;
- a primary focus on local or regional public policy advocacy as opposed to national policy advocacy;⁵¹ and
- self-identification as an organization working to improve the political, social and economic environment of disadvantaged or disenfranchised populations.

On its own, NCRP conducted Internet searches for organizations engaged in local or regional public policy advocacy, identified organizations mentioned for their advocacy in press coverage, and reviewed lists of nonprofits whose mission descriptions as identified by the Urban Institute's National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) suggested that they might be engaged in public policy advocacy.

NCRP submitted this list of potential advocacy organizations to the funders involved in the Community Capacity Fund and reached a final list of nonprofits engaged in some form of local or regional policy containing 118 organizations.

In conjunction with the CCF members, NCRP developed a detailed questionnaire designed to obtain data in the following areas: general information about the organizations; their public policy activities; the funding they received from foundations and their relationships with foundations; and possible directions for strengthening social change policy efforts in the region and for bolstering foundation support of policy advocacy. NCRP drew on questions from its previous studies in California and New York as well as issues raised in other surveys of advocacy-oriented nonprofits.

The survey was mailed to all 118 organizations with a cover letter describing NCRP's role and the Community Capacity Fund's sponsorship. NCRP staff and CCF staff called each of the organizations between two and three times to encourage responses. By the middle of December 2002, NCRP received 37 responses for a response rate of 31.4 percent. These nonprofit survey responses were supplemented by personal interviews with a subset of six additional nonprofit public policy advocates in the region.

Supplementing the information from the first nonprofit survey were informal interviews in 2002 of selected public policy-oriented funders from around the nation for their perspectives on funding nonprofit public policy advocacy, followed by a more structured second survey in 2003 of 30 representatives of selected foundations engaged in supporting public policy advocacy, including eight funders active in the metropolitan Washington region.⁵² The insights of these funders as well as perspectives from the increasingly robust literature on nonprofit public policy advocacy are integrated into this analysis. However, the core findings in *Advocacy for Social Change in Metropolitan Washington* come from the rich information provided by the surveyed public policy advocacy nonprofits in this region.

Also noteworthy are the constraints of this type of survey research. As with many surveys, there may be differences between the organizations that were able or willing to respond and those that were not. This report does not profess to account for the potential distinctions between respondents and non-respondents. It is offered not as a definitive end point for research on local and regional advocacy in metropolitan Washington, but rather as a substantive starting point for further discussion among foundations and nonprofit grantees as they increasingly recognize the integral role public policy advocacy plays in advancing their missions.

3. Nonprofit Advocacy Typology

At the local or regional level, nonprofit public policy advocates typically engage in multiple advocacy functions. A working typology of local/regional advocacy revolves around the following structural and functional components:

- **What kinds of advocacy activities do nonprofit public policy advocates carry out in the metropolitan Washington area?** The action implications include: Is sufficient attention being devoted to specific types of public policy advocacy? What kinds of interventions might address perceived shortcomings in the region's advocacy array? What sorts of advocacy actions best suit the challenges of advocacy in a multiple jurisdiction environment like metropolitan Washington?
- **What kinds of issues do nonprofit public policy advocates in this region work on?** The action implications for both funders and advocates include determining where there are issues and topics needing more advocacy attention.
- **In which geographic areas do the region's public policy advocacy organizations focus their activities?** As partners in promoting a social change agenda, funders and advocates can assess whether there is a need to build more regional attention complementing the regional scope of the issues and problems facing the area, whether there is sufficient local attention to public policy advocacy and organizing in subareas of the region, particularly suburban communities, and how to take advantage of the Washington presence of national advocacy groups in the area in order to link their resources and skills to groups addressing these issues locally and regionally.
- **Where and how do local and regional public policy advocacy organizations work together for maximum effectiveness?** Can funders and advocacy organizations themselves build mechanisms for peer support, for collaborative action and for linking up with national networks that would enhance the effectiveness of public policy advocates in this region?

In the metropolitan Washington area, as the following findings from the survey responses demonstrate, public policy advocates in this region break out in the following way:

Advocacy Activities	D.C. area advocates engage primarily in informal advocacy (meetings with government officials, providing information). Few organizations engage in the generation and release of public policy research.
Advocacy Issues	The majority of local public policy advocates emphasize children, youth and family issues advocacy as the easiest arena to garner funding support and make advocacy progress.
Geographic Focuses	Nearly half work in the District, nearly one-third work regionally and one-third also work on national issues as well as local/regional issues, reflecting the availability of national nonprofits in the D.C. area as a resource to local/regional advocacy. Advocacy focusing on the Maryland and Virginia suburbs is much less in evidence.
Coalitions and Collaborations	Ninety percent of advocacy respondents work with coalitions and collaborations, but coalitions are widely dispersed by topics or issues, with little cross-issue functionality. Possible nodes for cross-issue coalitions or collaborations include locally based national organizations such as the Center for Community Change, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and the Center for Law and Social Policy.

Despite some excellent work on difficult issues in a multi-jurisdictioned political environment, the region's nonprofit advocacy structure is not highly developed. For the most part, the organizations are small and understaffed. Gravitating to where the public and funders agree, and perhaps reflecting a social service orientation of some respondents, the overwhelming

issue focus is children, youth and family issues. There is an appetite and willingness among metropolitan Washington organizations for working in collaboratives and coalitions, but few venues for breaking through advocacy “silos” appear to successfully attract and retain diverse organizations.

Were there a hugely robust local and regional nonprofit public policy advocacy sector, a more fine-grained disaggregation of advocacy organizations would be possible. Overshadowed by national advocates located in the same region, the local public policy advocacy arena is hardly robust. Its future lies in serious attention by the advocates themselves in addressing their weaknesses and by advocates and funders together as partners in developing the infrastructure for social change activism in the area.

What do metropolitan Washington public policy advocates do?

The organizations that constitute this study all, in one form or another, work to improve the environment, health, civil rights, economic conditions, community capacity or democratic participation of the people of this region. Without restricting the population of nonprofit advocates to any kind of political or ideological cause or stripe, the majority clearly address the needs of people facing social, economic or political deprivation or discrimination.

Organizations' Primary Constituents	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Low income	25	67.6
Children	18	48.6
Women	14	37.8
African-American	12	32.4
Latino	12	32.4
Other	12	32.4
Immigrants	11	29.7
Disabled	6	16.2
LGBT communities	5	13.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	10.8
Refugees	3	8.1
Native American / Indian	1	2.7

Not surprisingly, more than two-thirds of responding organizations identify children and family issues as a key advocacy focus.⁵³ As one noted, there is a common currency to children and families advocacy; many foundations are quite open to working on children's and families issues as a somewhat benign, less controversial arena for advocacy than alternatives.⁵⁴ Despite the focus on children and families, less than half as many groups mention education as an area of advocacy, clearly targeted to the needs of children and families, than the more generic advocacy alternative, perhaps in recognition that advocacy to move and change public school systems is around the nation one of the more daunting and

frustrating areas of public policy—for nonprofits and for government decision-makers. Nonetheless, nearly every surveyed organization reported that they were engaged in multiple issue areas.

Issues of Most Concern To Surveyed Organization	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Children / Youth / Family	24	64.9
Health	16	43.2
Poverty and Inequality	16	43.2
Social Welfare	16	43.2
Housing	15	40.5
Community Development	14	37.8
Education	12	32.4
Nonprofit Organizations	11	29.7
Other	11	29.7
Fiscal Policy	10	27.0
Homelessness	10	27.0
Government Operations	9	24.3
Immigration and/or Refugees	8	21.6
Race and Ethnicity	8	21.6
Criminal Justice	4	10.8
LGBT Rights	4	10.8
Philanthropy	4	10.8
Technology	4	10.8
Environment	3	8.1
Ethics, Morality and/or Religion	2	5.4
Gender	2	5.4
Arts and Culture	1	2.7

Similarly, respondents indicated that to some degree, they were engaged in responding to or attempting to inform policy in arenas beyond their primary geographic areas:

Geographic Area of Focus	Percent of Respondents
Local D.C.	45.9
Local MD	10.8
Local VA	21.6
Region (Metropolitan Area)	27.0
National	32.4

Some organizations clearly perceive that effective local advocacy requires regional and even national advocacy presences. This is a clear demonstration of the impact of devolution: local, regional and national advocacy intersect and overlap. Some of this occurs through membership in or partnership with larger national organizations, either “parent” organizations, organizing networks or trade associations, cited by 16 percent of the respondents.

While being overshadowed by national advocates is seen as a problem for local organizations—and it is difficult to capture

attention when the press turns to national organizations for commentary on local issues instead of asking locals for perspective—the presence of national organizations offers a unique resource lacking in other regions. In a few cases, there are local advocacy organizations that have been created by or housed in national organizations, particularly the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Center for Law and Social Policy and the Center for Community Change. In Washington, local advocacy organizations can turn to these uniquely effective, progressive, professional national advocacy organizations to capture their attention and link them to issues and impacts on the ground in the communities in which they are located. In the case of public policy advocacy, proximity can and should breed respect—and collaboration—particularly if it is encouraged by the advocates' funding partners.

Critically important is an understanding of what metropolitan Washington advocacy nonprofits emphasize as the substance of their public policy advocacy. Based on a weighting of responses to questions regarding the frequency that advocacy groups engaged in particular kinds of advocacy, the respondents to the NCRP survey appear to engage in a diverse array of advocacy activities:⁵⁵

Advocacy Activity <i>(in rank order)</i>	Weighted Frequency/Importance <i>(1-5 scale)</i>	Percent of Advocacy Organizations Engaged in Specific Advocacy Activity <i>(often or very often)</i>
Meeting with government officials	3.03	51.4
Working in planning/advisory groups	3.00	43.2
Testifying in public hearings	2.95	37.9
Public education campaigns	2.46	27.0
Direct lobbying	2.24	27.0
Indirect/grassroots lobbying	2.19	18.9
Letters to the editor/media	2.05	13.5
Other ⁵⁶	2.00	37.8
Releasing research/policy reports	1.97	16.2

In many ways, this is a surprisingly strong advocacy orientation on the part of local nonprofits, particularly with the frequency that local nonprofits report that they testify at public hearings in the region.⁵⁷ However, there are two dimensions that stand out as issues worthy of attention by the advocates and their funder partners:

1. As organizations focused on local public policy advocacy, they rank lower than nationally surveyed groups in their propensity to release research reports to the media or public policy makers. While some might debate the importance of dealing with the media, characterizing it as a current funder “fad,” most observers suggest that communications strategies are de rigeur for effective advocacy groups. Even letters to the editor are exceptionally well read and influential. Because the *Washington Post* is a national newspaper of record, local advocacy groups might feel dismayed at the prospects of extensive print coverage, much less accessing Washington radio and TV with their high levels of attentiveness to issues of national scope. As any number of experts can attest to, and as discussed in the feedback from funders, there are resources to turn to in order to elevate media attention and use the media to the benefit of social change advocates.
2. The organizations issuing policy research reports are a very small proportion of the total. The organizations identified as frequent or regular entities releasing policy research were the Fair Budget Coalition, the D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute, the Washington Legal Council for the Homeless, the Center for Law and Social Policy, the Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute and the Council for Court Excellence. Other organizations do release policy-oriented research, but the concentration of this activity in a small number of survey respondents indicates a truism, that research is expensive and few organizations have the staff and resources to devote to action research. As an action item, the promotion of policy research as a stronger component of public policy advocacy in this metropolitan area, either through linking direct advocacy groups with research-oriented groups or building linkages between advocates and alternative sources of research (researchers, graduate students, at local colleges and universities), merits consideration.

Nonetheless, the categories of public policy advocacy demonstrate the diversity of advocacy approaches in play among metropolitan Washington nonprofits and the diversity of needs they face. Effective public policy advocates might have to have in-house or consultative capacities to testify at a District of Columbia Council or a state legislative committee meeting in Annapolis or Richmond, an ability to call and lobby policy makers in several jurisdictions, a strategy for mobilizing constituents to show up en masse in public meetings or call and write their elected officials, and even conduct research and issue reports analyzing the prospective impacts of desired or detrimental public policies. However, it is worth underscoring that in-house communications and research capabilities are not huge nor well dispersed among metropolitan area advocacy groups.

Who are metropolitan Washington public policy advocates?

In terms of annual budget size, the surveyed organizations exhibited a wide range:

Budget Size	FY00	FY01	Difference
Not available	5.4	5.4	0.0
Below \$100K	24.3	18.9	-5.4
\$100K - \$250K	18.9	13.5	-5.4
\$250K - \$500K	18.9	21.6	2.7
\$500K - \$1 million	16.2	21.6	5.4
\$1 - 2 million	10.8	16.2	5.4
Above \$2 million	5.4	2.7	-2.7

Overall, budgets appear to have increased between fiscal 2000 and 2001, except for the number of groups with budgets over \$2,000,000. However, for the most part, these are hardly large organizations, and most of the groups with reported budgets greater than \$500,000 are either organizations with sizable service provision functions or organizations within larger national entities.

A review of respondents' latest 990 filings from fiscal years 2000 or 2001 downloaded from Guidestar further substantiates the sense of financially thin advocacy organizations. NCRP searched the Guidestar database on a sample of roughly half of the 118 organizations that were originally mailed NCRP's non-profit survey. Only 52.8 percent had 990s posted, which means that the 55.6 percent without published 990s either had not been incorporated before 2000-2001 or that their formal revenues and expenditures were below the \$25,000 annual thresholds for filing 990s.⁵⁸

Total budgets mean little when the issue is one of devoting resources to advocacy. As the table below demonstrates, a significant portion of the organizations in the survey report no specific budget allocations supporting their advocacy work.

Percent of Budget Devoted to Advocacy	FY00	FY01
None	32.4	21.6
Up to 10%	24.3	32.4
10 - 25 %	8.1	10.8
25 - 50%	16.2	13.5
50 - 75%	2.7	5.4
100%	16.2	16.2

Either they do not make specific formal or informal budgetary allocations or they view their mix of services and advocacy as too intertwined to be disaggregated in that way. Nonetheless, even with differences in the way the participating organizations calculate their budgetary commitments to public policy advocacy, approximately one-fifth devote more than half of their annual expenditures to advocacy writ large, and only around one-third

devote more than a quarter of their budgets toward this end.

Despite reportedly being engaged in direct and indirect lobbying, the reported lobbying expenditures on organizations' 990s were minimal. For the sample of 990s examined by NCRP, only 5.6 percent reported any lobbying expenditures. Of the aggregate lobbying expenditures report, one organization's lobbying accounted for 90 percent of the total. It is highly likely that many organizations routinely underreport or misclassify their public policy lobbying activities. While more organizations may be engaged in lobbying than reporting expenditures in that direction, lobbying expenditures of 0.1 percent for metropolitan Washington public policy advocates suggests that the intensity of their legislative lobbying might be less intense and structured than their survey responses imply.

Although small organizations by and large, the surveyed advocates are largely not one-person operations, with an average staff size of 8.2 full-time equivalents (FTEs).

Number of Staff Members	Percent of Respondents
0	5.4
1 to 5	10.8
6 to 10	10.8
11 to 15	35.1
16 to 20	18.9
> 20	18.9

Nonetheless, these are not large, staffed operations. For the most part, these are small organizations with limited staffing. Although the average staff size in full-time equivalents is 8.2 staff people, the median staff size is only 6.5, the skew explained by the presence of a few large organizations with substantial service delivery and administrative staff complements. Almost one-third of the organizations employ two staff persons or fewer.

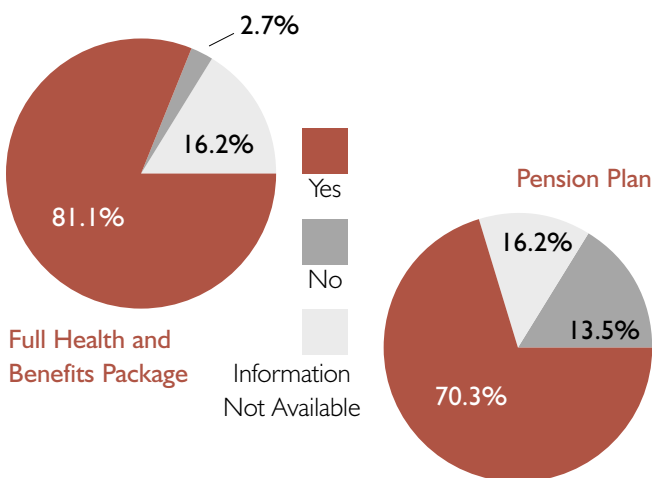
For many organizations engaged in local advocacy, the distinction between support staff and professional staff is spurious. Staff have multiple functions and multitask constantly. A median staffing of 6.5 is hardly a demonstration of great staff capacity, compared to surveys of advocacy groups around the nation which report that half have total paid staff of 11 or more.⁵⁹ The frequency of public policy advocacy engagement by nonprofits is just about always positively correlated with the availability of capable staff. Social service providers, who themselves do more advocacy than many observers and funders may recognize or admit, report that the availability of staff is a major impediment. For service providers to engage in advocacy, it means pulling staff from the delivery of critically needed human services and other program deliverables. Bolstering the capacity of local and regional nonprofit public policy advocates means first and foremost providing support to give nonprofit advocates the bodies they need to be able to deploy to get the advocacy job done.⁶⁰

Most organizations were staffed by a majority of women, although there is no information from which we can determine whether the women staff were employed in professional or support positions. On average, for those organizations providing a gender breakdown, the average staffing by women was 55 percent and by men 45 percent.

A rich and important statistic regarding staffing is the racial and ethnic diversity of the organizations' staff. Again, there is no means of disaggregating in a brief survey racial/ethnic staffing by professional or support staff. Nonetheless, regarding overall staffing, more than half of the staff working for these organizations appear to be non-white: on average, 25.8 percent of staff were identified as African-American/Black, 13.7 percent Hispanic/Latino, 7.2 percent Asian-American/Pacific Islander, and 4.8 percent other. This demographic staff profile is somewhat representative of the region, but not nearly as representative of the populations in this region most severely affected and potentially disadvantaged by the kinds of public policies adversely affecting schools, health care, jobs and inner-city community development.

Respondents provided sufficient data on salary levels for executive directors to suggest some unexpected robustness. Among those reporting salaries for the top professional in the groups, the average ED salary was \$70,200 and the median ED salary was \$68,500. That actually compares favorably with the average nonprofit chief executive officer salary in the Washington metropolitan area of \$70,000.⁶¹ Nonetheless, the respondents that failed to include information on ED salaries might have skewed the average advocacy nonprofit ED's salary lower than \$70,200. Moreover, the survey revealed that most of the organizations have few if any of the other major job categories in metropolitan Washington nonprofits. Only a handful cited salaries for development (fundraising) directors, even less for communications directors, and hardly at salaries competitive with other nonprofits throughout the region.

From concerns raised in other studies,⁶² we were surprised to see that as high a proportion of organizations engaged in public policy advocacy in the region provided full health and pension benefits:⁶³



Because all but two of the organizations in the NCRP survey were professionally staffed, it is possible that nonrespondents provided much less in the way of employee benefits. It is equally possible, however, that the metropolitan Washington geography of these organizations exposes them to a higher level of nonprofit professional support than comparable organizations elsewhere in the nation. Washington is the home to a clear majority of the associations that represent and advocate for nonprofit organizational effectiveness, ranging from the Council on Foundations and other philanthropic institutions to nonprofit players such as Independent Sector, the National Council of Nonprofit Associations, the Association for Nonprofit Management and others. Whether they are connected to and supportive of aggressive social change advocacy or not, they speak out clearly for strengthening the nonprofit sector, including bolstering the protections and resources necessary for nonprofit employee retention and advancement. The availability of benefit programs associated with nonprofit associations such as the Washington Council of Agencies (WCA) cannot be discounted as a factor in the high rate of pension coverage for nonprofit advocacy staff in the region. Similarly, in the advocacy arena itself, the metropolitan area boasts national groups such as the National Organizers Alliance that offer 401(a) and 401(k) retirement plans for nonprofit employers. And national experts in the field, such as the Advocacy Institute, have elevated the attention to this issue, making employer contributions to pension funds the first recommendation emerging from its Ford Foundation-funded strategic analysis of the social justice nonprofit sector.⁶⁴

Governance of these organizations is by boards of directors that appear to be reasonably sized, only a handful above twenty board members or below five. More important than size is the composition of the organizations' boards of directors, because of the significant role the boards play in determining the organizations' advocacy agendas:

Who Contributes to Defining The Advocacy Agenda	Percent of Respondents
Coalition members	24.3
Members	32.4
Constituents	40.5
Staff	54.1
Executive director	73.0
Board	81.1

Relatively few seemed to have boards that were fundamentally dependent on community residents, most identifying and categorizing their board members as professionals:

Board Members' Background	Percent of Respondents
Academia	5.4
Government	16.2
Other	16.2
Organizers	32.4
Advocacy	45.9
Social Services Providers	59.5
Businesspersons	73.0
Professionals	91.9

Within the “other” category appeared to be the more grass-roots board members, identified as “homeless,” “low-wage workers” or “DCPS parents.”

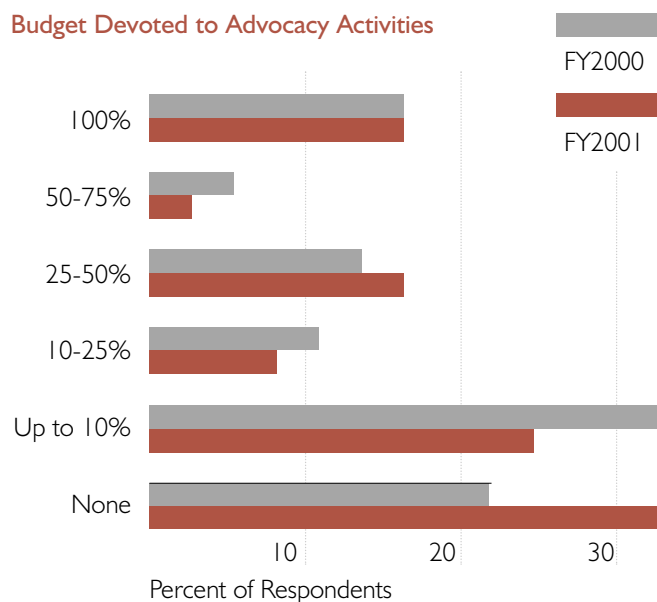
For funders to understand the advocacy agendas of the organizations they might support, they have to understand the demographics of the organizations’ board composition.

More than 40 percent of the responding organizations have formal memberships, nearly all individuals with a scattering of memberships offered to other nonprofits, corporations and occasionally foundations. On average, they counted 287 members, with a high in one case of 1,300 members. Nearly all of the respondents, more than nine out of ten, participate as members of coalitions.

4. Funding Public Policy Advocacy In Metropolitan Washington

Even with growing budgets, the challenge for public policy advocacy organizations is how much of their budgets can they actually put toward advocacy. The reality is that advocates are generally multipurpose, including some that engage in significant service delivery. Constraints from funders and from competing program areas limit the availability of resources devoted to advocacy, as the following chart indicates:

Budget Devoted to Advocacy Activities



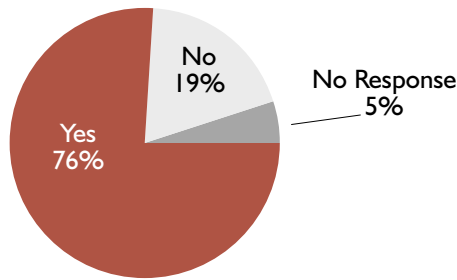
Funding Source	Percent of Respondents	Percent of Budgets for Those Receiving this Source	Percent of Budgets for all Survey Respondents
Foundation grants	75.0	55.9	41.9
Corporate	44.4	5.4	2.4
Individual contributions	66.7	13.4	8.9
Workplace contributions	27.8	2.9	0.8
Government	41.7	51.0	21.2
Membership	36.1	29.3	10.9
Earned income/fees	41.7	8.3	3.5
Special events	33.3	19.1	6.4
Other ⁶⁵	19.4	10.7	2.1

There is the obvious anomaly of one-third of the respondents reporting no funding specifically allocated to public policy advocacy. From the surveys, that appears to be a reflection of an unwillingness or uneasiness with disaggregating expenditures in that manner. Nonetheless, only a handful of groups indicate that they devote more than half of their budgets to advocacy.

How do advocates get their funding to engage in advocacy? Among survey respondents in toto, 54 percent of their revenues were reported as general support and only 46 percent as project- or program-specific. This is a more favorable operating support picture than previous NCRP studies of advocacy organizations in California, for example, but the data might be skewed by the availability of funding sources other than foundations for some of the responding organizations. The following table shows the funding sources cited by survey respondents, the proportion of respondents receiving funding from each source, the proportion of their budgets from those sources, and the proportion of all of the survey respondents' budgets attributable to specific sources:

Workplace contributions, membership dues, earned income, special events, and individual contributions are probably likely sources of general operating support, counterbalancing the tendency of many foundation funders to emphasize annual project- or program-grants. As NCRP has revealed through research in the past, foundation support for core operating has been declining, especially among large foundations, as a percentage of total grant dollars, from 16.1 percent in 1994 to 7.1 percent in 2000.⁶⁶ The result is nonprofits' "pretzeling" their program grants to cover core operations. For advocacy groups, particularly those engaged in lobbying, the need for operating support is even more significant, as funders concerned about direct support for lobbying and advocacy can still support these functions through core operating grants to the organizations. Not surprisingly, survey respondents cite the challenge of obtaining core operating support as one of their most significant challenges.

It may be simply fundraising bravado or the anomalies of survey research, but most of the survey respondents suggest that their funding sources are relatively stable:



That means largely that the respondents by and large feel that their current funders are not likely to abandon them. Several respondents expressed confidence on that score. Nonetheless, they also remarked that their “reliable” funders require “constant cultivation” and annual, frequently highly competitive annual grant renewals.

Who are the current funders? Among institutional philanthropies, the list of major players is predictable:

Top Non-Public Funders of Regional Advocates

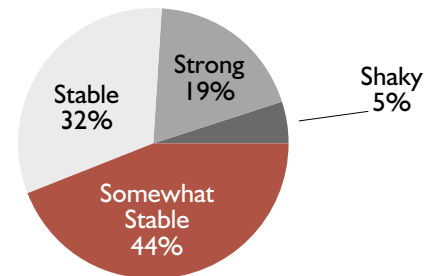
(by number of mentions)

- Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation (17)
- The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation (9)
- Fannie Mae Foundation (9)
- Freddie Mac Foundation (8)
- Moriah Fund (8)
- Public Welfare Foundation (7)
- United Way/workplace fundraising (8)
- Trellis Fund (5)
- Consumer Health Foundation (4)
- Naomi and Nehemiah Cohen Foundation (3)
- Ford Foundation (3)
- Prince Charitable Trusts (3)
- District of Columbia Bar Association (3)
- C.S. Mott Foundation (3)
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2)
- Community Foundation for the National Capital Region (2)
- Kaiser Permanente (2)
- Unitarian Universalist Veatch Foundation (2)
- Union Community Fund (2)⁶⁷
- Rockefeller Foundation (2)
- The Summit Fund (2)

If public sector sources are added, a number of groups noted receiving support from Arlington County, Fairfax, Montgomery, Prince William and Prince George’s counties and the City of Alexandria, although surprisingly not the District of Columbia. Government funding hardly competes with these private sector sources.

The generosity of these foundations in support of the fragile infrastructure of metropolitan Washington public policy advocacy is obvious.⁶⁸ However, the list of frequent funders of non-profit advocacy in the region makes it all too clear that despite north of 1,200 foundations in the region, only a tiny number are supporting public policy advocacy.

As a consequence, with reports of foundations cutting grant-making in the wake of plummeting endowments,⁶⁹ fewer groups are confident about their financial futures than about the reliability of their key funders:



Even this finding must be seen in light of a bias in the survey. Respondents clearly understood that the public policy advocacy analysis was being conducted under the auspices of an organization affiliated with Washington Grantmakers. While organizations bemoan the prospects of fundraising in troubled economic times, it hardly behooves nonprofits to “cry the blues,” particularly as the watchword of many funders is for nonprofits to tighten their belts, work harder to raise money, and “look for other creative ways to extend their abilities to do more with less.”⁷⁰ That 44 percent describe their financial futures as “somewhat stable” as opposed to “stable” or “strong” is clear indication of concern.

Even respondents citing “stable” or “strong” financial futures expressed qualms. A “stable” commentator noted its dependence on foundations, indicating “when foundations lose, we do too.” A small, relatively young organization expressed concern that both its short history of foundation funding and the fact that it emphasizes public policy advocacy would make it the first to be cut when foundations retrenched. To achieve stability, several noted the need for new funders and more diversified funding streams. The truly confident organizations predicated their positive future forecasts on their recent history of successful fundraising plus strong investments, including one that noted it had a year’s funding in reserve. Overall, however, the respondents’ self-categorization as relatively confident about their future funding prospects seemed to be undermined by commentary about the vulnerability of their foundation funding support due to declining endowments in a plummeting stock market.

It is worth noting that respondents did not in any significant way link their fundraising challenges or prospects to the impact of Sept. 11. While respondents noted some decreases in individual, corporate and foundation giving, they were linked to the downturn in the economy and the vicissitudes in the stock market, not

to a shift of resources into disaster relief and recovery.

Despite the impressive work of Washington Grantmakers' Community Capacity Fund with its emphasis on public policy advocacy, philanthropic support for nonprofit advocacy in the metropolitan region is tepid. Even if the individual foundations identified in the survey are reliable, trustworthy and considered by the groups to be allies, institutional philanthropy overall is not there with the nonprofit advocates. The Washington metropolitan region is not unique in that way. Philanthropy tends to be gun-shy toward public policy advocacy, especially advocacy around unpopular issues or advocacy with an aggressive approach or touch of political mobilization. There is undoubtedly much that nonprofit advocates can do to strengthen their operations and improve their appeal to potential funders. But with a narrow band of potential funders even willing to be in the advocacy game, the result is advocacy groups competing for slices of a very small pie. Advocacy-supportive foundations have to make the case with their peers about the importance of funding nonprofit advocacy.

NONPROFIT PERSPECTIVES ON ISSUES AND PROSPECTS

Foundations seen as supportive partners: There was little sense from the respondents of antagonism or antipathy toward the funders, notwithstanding their lack of reticence with recommendations for bolstering the region's advocacy sector and the roles that foundations should play. Unlike other regions of the nation, metropolitan Washington survey respondents indicated that their foundation funders exercised relatively limited influence over the organizations and their advocacy agenda—except for the fact foundations provide their financial lifeblood. Institutional philanthropy, that is, the small array of foundations that currently fund the surveyed groups, is largely seen as friends, close partners and supporters. Foundations were not seen as controlling the organizations' advocacy agendas, but rather providing contacts to advance their advocacy work, “substantive and process advice,”⁷¹ and other input. Beyond money, foundation partners were characterized as having “little influence” over the substance of the organizations' work, except that their grantmaking priorities by virtue of simply making more funding available for some issues than others do affect which issues the organizations might take on, leading to the previously noted emphasis on advocacy in the relatively uncontroversial arena of children and families.

Continuing need for core operating support grantmaking: Because foundations typically provide project rather than core operating support,⁷² the respondents noted that their policy agendas must be squeezed into foundations' project emphases. The lack of multiyear funding and the small size of most advocacy grants forces the respondents to design advocacy “projects”—time limited, short term—rather than focusing on longer-term and broader-aim policy reform. “They make it

happen with their resources,” one respondent noted, but they “only fund certain activities” and the “loss of foundation support wipe(s) out much of our work.” Nonprofit advocacy in the Washington region is hugely vulnerable to variations in foundation funding. While the advocates would be well advised to diversify funding, particularly as many experts suggest, soliciting increased support from members and constituents, the foundation community possesses the “working capital” of nonprofit public policy advocacy, without which few of the surveyed organizations will be able to achieve much to promote social change and social justice in this metropolitan region.

Advocacy for children's issues and support for advocacy projects (or specific deliverables, such as a report or publication) are the kinds of activities that the respondents deem “relatively easy” (or “easier”) to obtain philanthropic underwriting. What are the difficult advocacy fundraising challenges? The respondents' answers converged around several themes:

- Support for organizational infrastructure (operations, increased staff, reserves) leading to prospects for stability and sustainability.
- Legal advocacy, undertaking litigation to pursue remedies on behalf of affected constituencies, challenging unfair or unconstitutional statutes and regulations.⁷³
- Advocacy for “unpopular” constituencies—ex-offenders, for example.
- Systems reform, the long-term efforts to change deep-seated structures and policies that are not responsive to advocacy “actions,” particularly seemingly intransigent areas of policy reform, such as efforts to reform the District of Columbia Public Schools.⁷⁴

One additional category of “difficult to fund” appears to be the advocacy capacities of service providers. There is a feeling from groups that work with the individuals and families directly impacted by inequitable public policies and private investments that they have a great deal to offer—authentically—in public policy advocacy. However, they complain that there is an academic kind of bias in funding advocacy that tends to diminish opportunities for building the advocacy programs of human service providers.⁷⁵

With a narrow band of potential funders even willing to be in the advocacy game, the result is advocacy groups competing for slices of a very small pie.

For many organizations, the difficult resource to find is core operating support. While some half of the organizations would not alter their programs or strategies with the availability of increased levels of core operating support, for many increased core operating funding would open new vistas:

- “We would do more work on general good government initiatives and system reform.”
- “We could probably spend less time focused on raising unrestricted income and ... more time on building service coalitions.”
- “There would be greater ease in providing and expanding services without fear of administrative costs.”
- “We could finance larger-scale efforts in educating citizens and further the study of more complex issues ... where special outside expertise may be required.”
- “We could be more flexible in responding to changing needs, emerging issues, and unexpected opportunities.”
- “It would enhance our ability to do more innovative things.”

Again, the increased availability of core operating support was linked to creating more robust organizations. Core operating support would be used for planning, staffing, board development, technology and management capacity-building, all toward developing “an organization that is built on a more solid foundation.” In NCRP’s analyses of nonprofit advocacy organizations in New York City, the call for funding to bolster the organizational health and sustainability of advocacy groups as a primary grantmaking objective was particularly important for smaller, community-based organizations without substantial access to multiple funders, particularly large mainstream funders.

Technical assistance and training challenges and opportunities: Foundation support for “capacity building” and “organizational effectiveness” has been on the upswing across the nation. There are significant concerns among nonprofit advocacy groups around the nation that most nonprofit capacity-building technical assistance fits poorly with the capacity-building needs of nonprofit public policy advocacy organizations.

Advocates elsewhere in the nation lament the lack of symmetry between the demographics of the advocacy groups and their constituencies and the character of the management TA providers, that is, the largely white character of the TA providers and the minority populations involved in the advocacy groups themselves. The “cultural competence” of the TA providers is sometimes uncertain. Advocacy groups complain that few TA providers “get” their work and their issues and do not understand the specific capacity-building needs of advocates, particu-

larly the needs to understand and analyze community context and policy systems, to address issues of racial/ethnic, gender, and sexual differences within the organization and the community, to train organizations to work in multi-organizational, cross-issue coalitions and to address political mobilization as more than simply building consumer/constituent support.

Criticisms about the limitations of technical assistance focusing on the vanilla basics of management capacity building⁷⁶ do not reveal what kinds of technical assistance might be more needed by public policy advocates. As a barrier to effective advocacy, skills training ranks far below the basic need for cash grants, but the potential availability of technical assistance would generate specific technical assistance needs.

Most Significant Barriers To Effective Advocacy	Percent of Respondents
Direct lobbying	8.1
Coalition building	13.5
Skills development/training	13.5
Grassroots lobbying	16.2
Communications	29.7
Fundraising/funding	62.2

Effective lobbying and advocacy needs: Relatively few respondents expressed a need for technical assistance and training in the basics of effective lobbying techniques or overall lobbying strategies. Only one respondent indicated a need for TA or training in the law or legality of advocacy⁷⁷ and specifically described the need as resources to be able to deliver training to the organization’s own grant subrecipients on what they can and cannot do in lobbying and advocacy.⁷⁸

Strategic communications assistance needs: The second most consistently voiced technical assistance and training needs of the nonprofit survey respondents was assistance with communications, message development and media outreach. In this era, effective public policy advocacy requires access to the media, given the instrumental role of television, radio, newspapers and magazines in shaping public opinion. Survey respondents underscored the need for increasing the visibility of their constituencies, enhancing the palatability and acceptance of their messages, and reducing the stigma attached to marginalized populations and unpopular issues as key elements of effective communications strategies, and accessing and using the media in advocacy campaigns.⁷⁹ As noted, few of the surveyed organizations have staff assigned to communications functions, and in the smaller groups, communications functions are part and parcel of every staff person’s daily activities. The suggestions of funders for communications assistance later in this report spell out what might be the components of this technical assistance need.

Fundraising assistance: As noted, public policy advocates have to diversify their funding sources, and they know it. Many are fragile, several too dependent on only a few sources of

income for their advocacy work. While advocacy funders can organize among their peers for more foundation grantmaking, the advocates themselves have to explore opportunities for fundraising beyond foundations. When economic conditions sour, the most stable source of charitable giving is not foundation grantmaking, corporate contributions or governmental appropriations, but individual charitable donations. Tapping individual contributions and small business donations through direct solicitations, memberships and other means is widely considered worthwhile among professionals engaged in social-change fundraising. Additional assistance on better techniques for tapping into foundations and larger corporations would also be welcome, but the focusing on individual fundraising has the secondary benefit of identifying and mobilizing new activists in the organizations' programs.

Executive director and board needs: Advocates or not, new executive directors need to know the basics of management capacity-building, particularly personnel management/human resources, nonprofit financial management and of course strategic communications. In addition, they and their boards need to address how to function as the managers of advocacy organizations. The request of surveyed nonprofits for training and TA, particularly in-depth on-site one-on-one intervention and support

confirms the sense of experienced observers that the roles of boardmembers and senior staff might require special attention from funders and capacity-building intervenors. New EDs might find their boards, comprised of community

The increased availability of core operating support was linked to creating more robust organizations.

activists themselves, highly involved in the day-to-day operations of the organizations. In smaller advocacy organizations, board members might find themselves called on to fulfill quasi-staff functions and exercise public leadership that might not be expected from a traditional nonprofit board. The special dynamics of executive directors and boards in public policy advocacy organizations may warrant assistance and intervention not typically addressed in traditional nonprofit management capacity-building organizational development.

Assistance with organizing and political mobilization: Nonprofit respondents addressed the challenge of developing organizing strategies that would connect with their constituencies, particularly parents of schoolchildren to spur parents to address endemic problems in the public schools. The sense of the discussions with advocacy groups is a need for strategic assistance with organizing that is different than generic techniques. It may

be an avenue for linking local advocates with national networks for organizing assistance, distinct from the multi-issue community organizing intermediaries such as ACORN and the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). In community development, national intermediaries such as the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and the Enterprise Foundation actually function in the District, though less so in the suburbs, to provide direct assistance to CDCs. Linking other intermediaries to their natural constituencies with a focus on building their advocacy functions might be a positive capacity-building strategy.

Capacity builders in metropolitan Washington: Who provides capacity-building training the Washington metropolitan advocacy groups as it is? Several responding organizations are members of the Washington Council of Agencies, which has long provided workshops on a variety of nonprofit issues and support for nonprofit advocacy functions, and two cited WCA's Maryland-based sister organization, the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations (MANO). Another half dozen suggested that they get TA and training from local consultants, but only two—Mosaica and the Management Assistance Group—were named. Unlike other regions where there are major nonprofit TA providers (not simply TA providers to nonprofits, but nonprofits established to deliver management capacity-building), including TA/training centers in California and New York City,⁸⁰ metropolitan Washington seems to either lack a comparably reliable TA/training resource, especially one that works well with the specific needs of nonprofit public policy advocates, or sufficient work has not been done to bolster the existing training and TA resources of the region to fit advocates' needs.

Rather than turning to a management or capacity-building entity, nonprofit respondents indicated that they turn to each other or to other advocacy organizations for peer-to-peer support and collegiality. Among the organizations frequently identified as influential to the surveyed groups, as organizations with which the respondents turn to for information and support, are the following:

- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- Fiscal Policy Institute
- Center for Law and Social Policy
- D.C. Action for Children
- D.C. Appleseed
- National Congress for Community Economic Development
- National Council of La Raza
- Georgetown University's federal legislation clinic

In the absence of many formal technical assistance providers with a sense of how to build nonprofit advocacy capacity, strengthening mutual aid among advocacy organizations might be an effective foundation-supported capacity-building and organizational strengthening strategy.

Advocates' recommendations for change: What do the region's advocates recommend to funders as strategies that funders could and should adopt to build a more effective public policy advocacy apparatus in metropolitan Washington—besides or in addition to generating more grantmaking for advocacy?

- Help organizations develop collaboratives and coalitions that break out of the policy silos that predominate, silos that are sometimes abetted by the competitive, project-oriented grantmaking process of most funders. Grantmakers could even incentivize collaborations, though being careful not to force-fit top-down “faux” collaborations, established only because the funders want them.
- Promote advocacy as a value among nonprofits and among funders, getting more organizations and grantmakers to embrace nonprofit advocacy as a fundamental dimension of a healthy democracy.
- Convene funders and nonprofits to engage in advocacy strategizing, sharing strategies and techniques, and communicating across subject issues.
- Build the advocacy capacity of human service providers, who currently face pulling staff from delivering needed services when they want to take on advocacy roles, and educate foundations and nonprofits about the compatibility of advocacy and service.
- Support the linkage of advocacy and organizing, particularly advocacy that is more authentically connected and accountable to grassroots constituencies.

Many of the recommendations for grantmakers are “heal thyself” issues for nonprofit advocacy organizations themselves:

- Advocates themselves should be making more assiduous efforts to work collaboratively, building alliances with organized labor, community organizers and institutions with power bases (notably the African-American churches in the region).
- Advocates have to strengthen the linkage between technical policy research and analysis and grassroots community organizing, avoiding or overcoming the professional bias in public policy that distances the analysis from the populations in whose name advocates take action.
- Advocates have to remember their constituent roots and make themselves much more accountable to the populations whose interests they claim to represent, particularly accountability to low-income populations and people of color.

Grantmakers find themselves leaning against advocacy partly because of concerns around measures, or the lack of them, of effectiveness and success in advocacy. When nonprofit advocates ask that funders stop funding groups whose day has long passed and whose advocacy effectiveness is virtually nil, they too are asking for measures of effectiveness. The problem for holding all parties accountable is that the measures fitting nonprofit public policy advocacy are flimsy and subject to much debate. To enhance advocacy funding, grantmakers and nonprofits have to come together to generate acceptable performance benchmarks, measures of achievement and success that make sense and fit advocacy and do not sidle advocacy into inappropriate evaluative frameworks.

Advocacy organizations themselves have considered these issues in depth and suggest work on benchmarks that include issues such as:

- Public funding leveraged as a result of public policy advocacy.
- Enhanced public and media visibility of the issues and the advocacy organizations.
- Evidence of the adoption of the advocates' analytical framework of the issues in public debates.
- Changes in the “political environment.”
- Identification and development of new leaders.
- Evidence of increased power for marginalized constituencies.
- Indications of community participation in advocacy around priority issues, reflecting constituency development.

Advocacy groups note that the answers are not simply in the measures, substituting a bottom-up set of benchmarks for foundations' (and other funders') top-down evaluation measures, many of which focus on quantitative headcounts on one side and political “wins and losses” on the other, both relatively limited in what they reveal about public policy advocacy success. The measurement issue must be addressed by benchmarks and by methodology. Respondents clearly and consistently call for self-evaluation, feedback from peers, participant evaluation by constituents and impacted populations, and other methods where the act of measuring progress against agreed-upon performance benchmarks becomes another tool in the nonprofits' arsenal of policy and political education and activation. This does not mean that everything in advocacy is measurable or that changes such as these bulleted above are fully attributable to the work of specific organizations or the results of specific grants. But thinking about impacts and engaging grantmakers around the realistic latitudes and constraints involved in measurement can elevate the quality of the dialogue and the levels of understanding.

GRANTMAKER PERSPECTIVES ON SUPPORTING PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY

Philanthropy is—or ought to be—considered a partnership, a process of coming together of grantmakers and grant recipients to advance the cause of social change and progress in a locality, in a region or nationally. While there is much that nonprofits from their front-line perspectives can teach funders, grantmakers frequently possess information on and insights into best practices and model programs in particular fields, partly from their own experience of funding numerous organizations, partly through their networks with grantmaking peers around the nation such as formalized foundation affinity groups that educate funders about comparable experiences.

Nonprofits ignore the expertise of partner funders at their peril, especially as the best philanthropic practice evidenced around the nation combines effective grantmaking and knowledge accumulation for targeting social problems and policy changes.⁸¹

In the course of this research, NCRP interviewed 38 grantmakers through telephone conversations and electronic media for their perspectives on the key issues raised as challenges and obstacles by public policy nonprofits in the Washington metropolitan area. Among the confidential interviews were eight with grantmakers in the Washington area. The questions were keyed to the issues raised by nonprofit respondents to the NCRP advocacy survey, emphasizing the knowledge of approaches and solutions that grantmakers might suggest as avenues for funders in the Washington metropolitan area to pursue in advancing interest and commitment to public policy advocacy grantmaking.

What do funders recommend regarding maintaining grantmaking to nonprofit public policy advocacy organizations?

By and large, the results of NCRP's survey of selected national and metropolitan Washington funders reveals both concern about declining funding availability and a strong commitment on their own part to maintain their advocacy funding as much as possible. For some, it has begun to "kick start connections in people's minds ... a real sudden understanding in times of crisis that helping the babies one at a time is not adequate."

Others are a bit more dubious, indicating that they "have not seen a rush by new funders to support advocacy; those who funded it before will continue and they understand how important it is, [but t]hose who have not are not going to do so, particularly with the cutback in dollars." Some suggested that the different funding "fields" would react differently, for example, "[i]n the reproductive rights area ... actually an increased interest in and willingness to fund groups for advocacy." Similar statements were suggested for funders addressing peace and security efforts, undoubtedly motivated by the war in Iraq, the issues around the Patriot Act and the proposed Treasury Department guidelines on international giving. Nonetheless, among non-

D.C. advocacy funders, there were clear indications of having to cut back somewhat on the size of grants while trying as much as possible to hold groups harmless. Among Washington area funders responding to NCRP inquiries, grantmaking for advocacy has appeared to hold steady, despite declining endowments, though mostly for current grant recipients rather than being open to new groups.

The various techniques and strategies funders are employing to generate more funding to advocacy organizations:

- Regular outreach by foundation staff in funders' panels and programs advocating among their peers for increased advocacy and organizing funding (attempting to reach funders that are not providing much advocacy funding as opposed to refining funding strategies among those few funders that are making advocacy grants, in one respondent's terms, "We must not fall into the trap of preaching just to the converted, but think strategically about how to reach others.")
- Convening forums on critical public policy issues in the foundations' geographic areas (particularly on racial/economic justice issues and on post 9/11 civil liberties) to induce funders to get involved in these issues with advocacy grantmaking.
- Participating in collaborative program efforts on critically important public policy issues (for example, multiracial immigrant/refugee justice work is frequently a topic raised).
- Convening peer networks among foundation staff, for example, the newly formed People of Color in Philanthropy in the Northwest, to bring attention to issues and organize within foundations from the staff level for more resources directed toward advocacy.
- Aggressively targeting small foundations, new foundations, and individual donors to build interest and involvement in advocacy, before as new funders they get "tracked" into more mainstream philanthropic grantmaking avenues and audiences—including educating family foundation trustees, speaking to their interests and connecting their interests in issues with the need for advocacy to realize those interests.
- Making the typical informal, informational fundraising advice of funders a more formal occupation, aggressively providing assistance to help targeted advocacy groups identify and raise new sources of money, particularly to replace sources that have precipitously declined or disappeared (for example, Packard or Summit).
- Reemphasizing core operating support grantmaking for nonprofit public policy advocates as the most important kind of grantmaking for advocacy (one respondent linked the

prospect of adding core operating support to making multi-year grants to advocacy groups as complementary pieces of a strategy for helping groups survive the current climate).

- Engaging in countercyclical grantmaking, increasing grant levels despite depressed endowments due to the increasing need for advocacy in troubled times and troubled economies.
- Making funding available in “political time,” making emergency grants and cash-flow loans or recoverable grants to advocacy groups that address their needs for money when it is timely and important.
- Granting money (by private foundations) to public foundations (community foundations, women’s funds, social justice funds such as Tides, issue-specific public foundations such as the Ms. Foundation, etc.) with more focused programs for supporting public policy advocacy and more grassroots connection, interaction and identity with specific constituencies.⁸²
- Educating funders about what they can do in terms of supporting advocacy—or engaging in advocacy themselves.

Funding issues seem to revolve on what the funders can do, and there is clearly a lot. But some of the answer has to come from the nonprofits themselves, “do[ing] a great job selling the effectiveness of their work,” as one Chicago-based funder put it. “Part of the issue is that the advocacy groups have to get their acts together, they should be on the same page,” according to a New York foundation executive, meaning not that every advocacy group is doing the same advocacy, but they are working together to educate and mobilize foundations to put their money behind social change.

Despite the constraints in funding and the ever-expanding advocacy needs in the current economic and political climate, some observers suggested that the time is one of opportunity, as one Boston funder eloquently addressed:

“For me, the long-term solution lies in constant education and dialogue between and among funders and with organizing and public policy organizations. For those of us supporting community organizing and advocacy as a key grantmaking strategy, we must make the case that such a strategy offers a unique opportunity to address the root causes of economic and social inequality, whether in housing, education, health care, the environment, etc. There are abundant opportunities to have this conversation on the local, regional and national levels, at RAG meetings, affinity group meetings, Council on Foundation conference[s], etc., as well as in any number of publications. But this must be recognized as an organizing project that requires a long-term strategy to reach as many funders as possible with a coherent message,

compelling stories, best practices, etc.—all of which can influence and affect the grantmaking priorities of funders.”

A midwestern funder adopted an increase in advocacy grantmaking, not because there was more money in the endowment (there wasn’t) or that the funder had a point to make about foundation payout rates (it didn’t), but “to shine a light on the importance of advocacy, to influence our colleagues.” Notwithstanding the interest in funder education, few could point to examples of the coherent traveling “road show” of sorts.

How else does a funder elevate the importance of public policy advocacy? One respondent proposed a powerful, single-minded approach: “My goal is to fund only those groups that engage in public policy advocacy.” This would make public policy advocacy a core part of foundation grantmaking, not to the exclusion of other kinds of grants, but recognizing that long-term social progress addressing root causes cannot happen without nonprofit advocacy and organizing.

While discussion of “civil society” makes audiences’ eyes glaze over, the role of nonprofit advocacy in a vibrant democratic process is crucial—and the role of foundation grantmaking for public policy advocacy contributing toward that is equally

important. There may be a “messaging” component to generating more funding (or more funders) for public policy advocacy. Part of it might require nonprofits’ not always hitting potentially interested funders with politically charged language that drives them away from advocacy. Even the use of the word “advocacy” itself may be a barrier for some funders who would otherwise put money behind public policy initiatives that advocacy funders would term “advocacy.”⁸³ As one local respondent noted, “My sense is that the smaller family foundations tend to not feel comfortable funding advocacy. Community foundations ... tend to be careful to not offend donors [and] ... corporate foundations are wary for their own reasons.” This observer and others cited the collegial activity of post-9/11 grantmaking through Washington Grantmakers, with the notion that the shared activity and shared risk helped over-

Some said communications might be at the core of advocacy effectiveness: “We need to redefine communications from being an add-on to being an integral part of programming ... [and we] must get away from the notion that dollars invested in communications are dollars that cannot be invested in programs.”

come some apprehensions and actually contributed to a rewarding experience.

How can funders bolster the communications effectiveness of nonprofit public policy advocacy organizations?

Is the call for attention to communications and messaging simply the latest foundation and nonprofit fad, or do advocates really need to build a capacity in communications if they expect to make something happen with their public policy advocacy?

The response of non-D.C. and local funders to this issue is a split call, but the predominant feeling was that communications for advocacy groups is important and requires some skills that most nonprofits do not possess and many communications experts may not get. Advocacy communications may have components of marketing and public relations, but it is more—and different. Some said communications might be at the core of advocacy effectiveness: “We need to redefine communications from being an add-on to being an integral part of programming ... [and we] must get away from the notion that dollars invested in communications are dollars that cannot be invested in programs.” If advocacy groups publish reports that are not circulated, don’t get read, and don’t reach broader audiences than their own choirs, the results will be inauspicious at best.

The problem for those funders who see communications as integral to advocacy is what to do and who can do it. The following suggestions emerged:

- The SPIN (Strategic Press Information Network) Project⁸⁴ in San Francisco gets widespread acclaim for its work on increasing media access for progressive organizations. SPIN provides training workshops and also does “training the trainers.” Because it is San Francisco-based, SPIN is clearly more accessible to West Coast nonprofits than those in the metropolitan Washington area. Observers suggested that local funders might bring in and connect SPIN to local/regional groups or to technical assistance providers.
- The Washington-based Fenton Communications offers high quality communications assistance to a variety of clients including foundations and social justice nonprofits, including a willingness to tackle controversial issues and work with explicitly advocacy-oriented, nonprofit social justice groups.⁸⁵ Spitfire Strategies, also based in Washington, offers strategic communications assistance to social change organizations (the founders of Spitfire came from Fenton). Additionally, among health funders in this region, Burness Communications has been recruited to do communications assessments and follow-up one-on-one technical assistance that have been well received by nonprofit advocacy organizations.

- Some respondents identified another West Coast organization, We Interrupt This Message, as a capable TA provider that also conducts its own media activism work (on post-9/11 civil liberties issues, youth voices in the media, racism and social justice, etc.).⁸⁶
- The Independent Press Association among others is cited as a resource for public policy advocates with journals and publications looking for a broader audience and more impact, providing membership services, special programs and technical assistance manuals.
- There seem to be growing examples of cross-training efforts to link advocacy groups as peers to strengthen communications strategies. The Progressive Communicators Network of Spirit in Action apparently engages in linking advocates with each other for trainings and even one-on-one technical assistance, although it appears that frequently the trainings also involve personnel from SPIN or We Interrupt This Message.
- Several had strong sentiments about funders coming together to promote communications work for advocates within a regional setting. Several funders, even those beyond Chicago, pointed to the Chicago Media Workshop, formed by a journalist and a community activist to connect the local media to “stories of the other Chicago, the oft-neglected neighborhoods and back streets ... where the problems are felt most deeply and where solutions are most likely to be born.”
- Increasingly, the communications expertise is within the foundations themselves, among the communications staff of local foundations who can not only promote what the foundations are doing, but make themselves available for one-on-one and group training and technical assistance to advocacy grantees regarding communications strategies. The alternative approach is the foundations’ hiring their own communications strategist to work with a number of groups to hone their strategies.

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The subtext of the responses from non-D.C. funders is that support for the communications and messaging work of public

policy advocates is crucial, but needs to be considered a core part of advocacy strategies and funding, not an add-on. Moreover, there is a trend toward funders supporting either the bulk purchasing of communications TA and training for their grant recipients through hiring SPIN or Spitfire or through forming local collaborations such as the effort in Chicago. Sometimes the resources might be available externally, for example, the highly regarded media training that has been made available from the National Immigration Forum for local and regional immigration rights groups or the training provided by Planned Parenthood for its affiliates.

Some funders suggest that they are not being asked for communications assistance or funding, therefore, why respond to a problem or need that is not on the table? Others indicate that the failure to ask for assistance reflects an inadequate understanding of the importance of communications, a factor which no amount of technical assistance will solve or cure. This may be a topic where the foundation sector's own experience in beginning to come to grips with the need for sophisticated communications strategies on its own behalf can be used as a positive contribution to the capacities needed by nonprofit public policy advocates.

Admittedly, in the field of strategic communications, there are a number of "self-serving charlatans" promoting themselves as the solutions to the media problem. There is no sure-fire way of getting the *Washington Post* to cover a story, much less promote the social justice concerns of many of the local advocates. But in affecting public policy, it is difficult to imagine much success with a state legislature or city council that does not come with the involvement and scrutiny of the print and radio/television media.

For policy advocates, the issue is understanding how to package their issues as news. As one consultant (Jason Salzman of Denver's Cause Communications) notes, "The problem is that advocacy groups think their ideas are so compelling that those ideas should be the news ... [b]ut that doesn't work with those who aren't already dedicated believers."⁸⁷ Unfortunately, public policy activists frequently view communications as a trade-off for their advocacy programming, but they are actually part and parcel of the same. The elements that seem to arise as the critical issues in advocacy communications are the following:

- A sharper focus on messaging, the process of condensing information into clear messages directed toward specific audiences, making positions accessible and understandable.
- Developing relationships with the media to get more consistent coverage of issues and more access and openness to the voices of constituencies and neighborhoods frequently underreflected in the attention of mainstream media.
- Educating the reporters and the media to reframe issues for better public discussion (for example, the kind of work that

the Center for Community Change has done in its work on welfare reform and jobs and income issues).

- Developing media plans that define audiences, frame the debate, script messages and create news opportunities.
- Getting op-eds written and placed and using letters to the editor as campaign opportunities.⁸⁸
- Developing common messages with allies for mutual support and effectiveness.

Among the philanthropic respondents to NCRP's inquiries were some with professional backgrounds in communications, one of whom put the issue more clearly than many of the nonprofit respondents to NCRP's survey who addressed pieces of the question: "[T]here is little understanding about media advocacy or strategic communications, which is different [from simply 'communicating our work.' ... Media advocacy/strategic communications] is developing a clear and strategic message and then making sure that the media talks about THAT, rather than shaping the story to their needs. It's tough work and it requires strategic leadership and savvy about how the media works, which most nonprofits simply don't have right now." As another funder respondent noted, "A strong communications strategy is a key sign of an effective [advocacy] organization."

While some might legitimately debate the credentials of some of the promoters of strategic communications in nonprofit advocacy and the faddish interest of some foundations in media issues, the overwhelming sentiment of advocacy nonprofits and experienced funders is that this is an issue for attention by foundations that support nonprofit public policy advocacy. With a variety of relatively small nonprofits engaged in local advocacy in D.C., the ability to hire for-profit or even nonprofit communications strategists of the quality of Fenton or Spitfire is simply not all that possible. With funders making a "bulk-purchase" of a communications strategist for group training, education and one-on-one technical advice, the results might be significant.

How can and should foundations "benchmark" the impacts and outcomes of nonprofit public policy advocacy?

Not every grant recipient will demonstrate its impact by winning the equivalent of the Nobel Prize for Peace as done by the U.S.-based International Campaign to Ban Landmines. The fixation of some funders on outcomes does result in an accountant's bean-counting approach to social change that sometimes achieves little more than deterring advocates from taking on the complex, indeed messy issues of social policy that are so crucial to long-term systems reform and social justice. In one foundation CEO's terms, "Artificial concreteness is more destructive than no measures; hard measurements often preclude tackling the most diffi-

cult problems.” But it is equally important to recognize that advocacy for the sake of advocacy is of little merit unless there is something to show for it at the end of the day.

The challenge in advocacy was well articulated by one nationally recognized funder’s response to NCRP: “It is inherently difficult to measure [the] outcomes or impact of policy work because so much of it is educational and involve(s) the prevention of bad outcomes as opposed to the creation of good ones.” Whether the interest in outcomes is faddish or fundamental, it is a real concern that motivates the funding community, and, as one very supportive observer noted, “groups need to get very serious about evaluation and outcomes and they need to start very early in identifying what the outcomes are that they expect and how they are going to measure them.” For some funders who have not spent much time on the advocacy side of the table, this involves some educational process on the part of the advocacy nonprofits themselves: “Part of their job is to educate funders on what is realistic to expect in a one year short-term grant.”

Observers pointed out some examples of policy campaigns that have been implemented with strong components of outcomes indicators and measures, notably efforts on community organizing around school reform that might be worth exploring in some depth. Fundamentally, the thinking around outcomes—and educating both funders and nonprofits about outcomes and measures in public policy advocacy—is evolving. While force-fitting nonprofits into artificial and inappropriate outcomes measures is clearly wrong, the answer is not to dismiss the notion of evaluating success, but to come up with better approaches that fit public policy advocacy. Given the diversity of approaches employed by funders and by the advocates themselves, as demonstrated in their responses to the NCRP survey, the following steps might be appropriate for metropolitan Washington funders to take:

- Collecting in-depth information on the measures and indicators used by local advocacy organizations (D.C. Action for Children was mentioned by local funders) and by public policy advocacy efforts in other communities.
- Collecting information on how organizations articulate their strategies for change, how their advocacy work is meant to instrumentally make things different, including simply stopping “bad things from happening,” recognizing that strategies for change can and should be in some circumstances very long term, with proximate accomplishments and outcomes being as important as desired multi-year systems impacts.
- Using this information to educate reluctant funders of advocacy—perhaps the trustees in addition to or even as opposed to foundation staff—about the impacts and outcomes of advocacy, particularly the leverage of resources

and protection or expansion of rights for disadvantaged constituencies that public policy advocacy is meant to achieve.

Comparable efforts are happening among funders elsewhere in the nation, including an effort of one West Coast funder to develop a methodology of quantitative and qualitative measures for describing and evaluating their advocacy and organizing. It is certainly not as easy as one funder claims to have heard from her peers, that it is simply a matter of “either you influenced a piece of legislation or you didn’t, if that’s your goal.” But the overwhelming majority of foundation staff responding to NCRP’s question on benchmarks suggest that it is not only appropriate to look for groups to articulate and keep track of outcomes, but to push them to do so by articulating what they are trying to achieve and how they plan to get there. That is not answered simply by asking groups for measurable goals and reasonable timelines; it needs the articulation of a model or models of policy change and instrumental measures for marking substantive rather than artificial progress.⁸⁹

One foundation respondent who ran a neighborhood-based organizing and advocacy organization prior to joining the foundation remarked, “I have seen time and again the voracious appetite organizers and planners have for convening people without any specific end in mind,” and she went on to describe in detail examples to prove the point. She concluded by saying, “I think it’s the responsibility of the funding community (and anyone else who cares) to push [public policy advocacy] nonprofits to articulate their anticipated outcomes; [i]t sharpens all of our thinking and makes us better.” A concerted effort by Washington area funders to promote and support this kind of dialogue, particularly since the problems of the region seem to be so persistent and so vulnerable to backsliding, seems warranted.

What can and should be delivered as capacity-building organizational assistance for nonprofit public policy advocates?

A West Coast funder nearly entirely devoted to supporting neighborhood and metropolitan-wide advocacy suggested that “the world of nonprofit consultants doesn’t match our grants,

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[so] we have had to develop our own technical assistance program [addressing] campaign-style [work], cultural competency,” etc. Both local and national funders had relatively little positive to suggest about existing nonprofit technical assistance resources, addressing the challenges of capacity building for advocacy organizations that have been well documented in the efforts of researchers such as Frances Kunreuther’s Building Democracy program based at the Hauser Center for Nonprofits at Harvard University.

None of this should be taken to mean that funders should be dictating and deploying compulsory, foundation-selected techni-

cal assistance provision to build capacities. Some would say that the “capacity-building fad” is simply another foundation-control phenomenon, far less effective in building long-term capacity than simply providing groups with core operating support grants and letting them figure out what they need and how to obtain it. But the

Few foundations are established to fund “advocacy” as opposed to funding a specific issue area or range of issues—but in advancing their specific issues they discover the importance of funding nonprofit public policy advocacy.

problem is, once a group knows it has needs, where does it turn, who does it turn to for the kinds of training and technical assistance that fit the needs of nonprofits trying to promote social change through public policy advocacy?

There seem to be three categories of responses for the kinds of organizations funders can and do turn to for capacity-building resources for local and regional advocacy nonprofits, particularly those with the grassroots identities and focuses that characterize metropolitan Washington advocacy organizations:

Bring in the high-power TA providers: Much like the issue on communications, with funders paying for the availability of high-quality, high-power firms such as Fenton Communications to bolster communications strategies, there is a minority view among respondents that a similar kind of approach is needed for advocacy groups. Rather than paying for “commodified” technical assistance delivered by a bevy of small TA providers, some observers favor recruiting the likes of a McKinsey or Bridgespan to hugely ratchet up the organizational strength and strategies of nonprofit advocacy groups. In their view, anything less is merely shortchanging the organizations and ultimately shortchanging advocacy impacts. An alternative would be to recruit the services of other respected TA providers with strong track records of building advocacy capacities in their communities, such as New York’s Community Resource Exchange.

Subject-specific technical assistance: Some observers suggest that funders need to reach out to providers offering advocacy-geared TA on key issues and topics. In addition, again, to the communications/messaging TA that crops up in the discussion of overall capacity-building, these additional issues are frequently mentioned:

- *Organizing/constituency building/leadership development:* The nationally known Midwest Academy in Chicago, the Rockwood Leadership Program in the Bay Area of California, and the training offered by national networks of organizers, particularly the Pacific Institute for Community Organizations (PICO), the National Training and Information Center (NTIC) and the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) get frequent mention as important resources that the foundation community might bring into metropolitan Washington to deliver training and TA directly or through local organizations such as the Washington Council of Agencies or the Nonprofit Roundtable.
- *Fundraising for advocacy groups:* This is especially an issue for grassroots organizations interested in broadening the diversity of their funding sources or linking fundraising to organizing and constituency building, particularly as it relates to fundraising by people of color. Many people have turned to the efforts of Kim Klein and her colleagues at GrassrootsFundraising.org and increasingly the training and one-on-one technical assistance delivered by the Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training, headed by Mike Roque, based in Colorado.
- *Technology:* Technology Works for Good in this region and Project Alchemy outside of this area received mentions as TA providers capable of understanding the technology capacity-building needs and uses of policy advocacy groups.

There are also providers focused on specific issues or constituencies, for example, STONESOUP in the state of Washington providing training for the executive directors of women’s organizations or technical assistance from the Gill Foundation in Colorado for LGBT organizations, though largely Gill grant recipients.

Network technical assistance: Recommendations of training and TA through national community organizing intermediaries such as the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) and PICO reflect a strategy of recruiting national issue-specific networks to provide technical assistance to local advocacy organizations addressing related issues. To some extent, the limitation of a referral to IAF, for example, is that these networks work largely with their own member or affiliated groups—or provide training with an eye to induce groups to join or affiliate. Nonetheless, issue-identified networks (or simply major organizations identified with specific

issues) may have capacity-building training or technical assistance that fits the kinds of issues, cultures and contexts faced by related advocacy organizations. Receiving particularly high marks were the following:

- Devoted to organizing and advocacy, the Center for Community Change has long had organizational development as a significant program component. Respondents, however, repeatedly recommended the Center as a source of training and technical assistance for groups focusing on welfare reform and jobs/incomes strategies, based on the Center's serving as home to the national organizing work around jobs and welfare reform.⁹⁰
- For death penalty opponents, observers suggested the Justice Project, the ACLU Capital Punishment Project, the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty and the Quixote Center among others as good technical assistance providers to advocates.
- Among immigration-focused funders, high marks go to the Center to Support Immigrant Organizing (in Boston), the National Immigration Forum and constituency-specific organizations.⁹¹
- On issues of banking and insurance, the National Community Reinvestment Coalition and the Center for Community Change are lauded.
- Eco Action, the Environmental Support Center and the Institute for Conservation Leadership, among others, do work not only in environmental advocacy, but environmental justice advocacy.

In each advocacy arena, there are national entities that have developed capacity-building programs with providers who understand the nuances of the issues as well as more generic nonprofit organizational development issues. The local funding network can facilitate some of these connections through workshops and one-on-one programs, potentially through local intermediaries such as the Nonprofit Roundtable, WCA, MANO and others.

Peer support: One funder articulated a sentiment that appeared to be shared by many, that "cookie-cutter" TA and "generalized toolkits" do not work particularly well for advocacy organizations—and perhaps might not work well for very many other nonprofits as well. But there was significant interest expressed—from non-D.C. area funders—for funders providing opportunities for groups to mentor each other locally, to engage in strategy development working with each, to provide peer support. In Minnesota, the Sheltering Arms Foundation has been convening funders and advocates together to explore how

to learn from each others' work. The word from Los Angeles is that advocates wanted "on-going peer-based learning," to which a foundation created separately structured, facilitated groups (facilitated by staff from the foundation) for executive directors, development directors, and organizers. This is certainly the direction that appears to be emerging from the Building Democracy convenings at the Hauser Center and is even explicitly part of the models cited earlier in communications technical assistance sponsored by the Chicago Community Media Workshop and the Progressive Communicators Network.

With the small number of foundations providing significant support to Washington area advocacy groups, there is substantial co-funding or at least overlapping funding. The opportunity exists for funders to collaborate in convenings of advocacy groups for skills exchanges, peer learnings, and cross-group strategic thinking. Facing an eviscerated federal safety net, a prognosis of continuing federal budget cuts and budget deficits in Maryland and Virginia, not to mention the continuing retrenchment in services and programs in the District of Columbia, the times are perhaps more challenging than ever for local advocacy organizations. Capacity building may be best addressed by funders' providing opportunities for cross-organization and cross-issue dialogues on strategy and tactics in a turbulent public policy arena.

How can funders be encouraged to support advocacy on subjects or for constituencies that may be seen by many funders—and the public—as difficult or unpopular?

The charge from nonprofits is that it is significantly easier to obtain support for advocacy when the issues are "children and youth" and significantly more difficult in other advocacy arenas. That does not mean that children and youth advocates are flowing in foundation resources, particularly in times of charitable giving cut-backs, but "children and youth" has been a growing area of foundation funding in general, compared to declining proportions of foundation support for housing, community development and civil rights.⁹² As a Midwest foundation observer noted, "I know the kids' groups get funds without much work, i.e. Annie E. Casey money," citing the nation's largest funder devoted to children and family issues. The proximity of the Casey Foundation to the metropolitan Washington area adds to the view that children/youth funding is an easy spigot to tap, a perspective abetted with the high profile work of Venture Philanthropy Partners in partnership with several local funders emphasizing support for children's organizations such as Heads Up.

While a few groups may have access to special resources that many other nonprofit advocates might not have, the view from funders engaged in that arena suggests that the picture is less rosy from the inside, that support may be beginning to wane as "the debate around children is totally stalled." A few

actually think that the picture is not necessarily bad for other issues, that “there is good interest (it is never great) in a wide range of public policy concerns, including health, homelessness and affordable housing; [w]hile there is never ‘enough’ money, I think it is out there.” The problem is how to leverage foundation support into crucial advocacy priorities that might stretch beyond the comfort zones of many funders. Philanthropic observers suggested several explanations and possible solutions:

Mission constraints: Foundations are set up with particular purposes or focuses, and wholesale shifts in purpose may be difficult or impossible to accomplish given the donors’ interests and the foundations’ formal missions. Few foundations are established to fund “advocacy” as opposed to funding a specific issue area or range of issues—but in advancing their specific issues they discover the importance of funding nonprofit public policy advocacy. Most of the responses to NCRP inquiries from foundations taking on a variety of advocacy concerns or demonstrating an ability to shift advocacy funding priorities in a major way were local public foundations. However, among private foundations, despite a stronger sense of mission/interest boundaries, observers suggested, “when there is a perceived ‘crisis,’ I think funders will come to fund it.”

Risk aversion: At root according to some is a more fundamental problem that relates to funder reluctance to support public policy advocacy per se, a concern about controversy: “We in our field sometimes ‘shy away’ from the more contentious, controversial issues for a number of reasons, including, perhaps, the composition and [perceived and/or real] outlooks of our boards, the fear of press/media attention, potential loss of anonymity, fear of ‘taking a side,’ etc.” A nationally recognized philanthropic leader suggested that the solution to getting more funders involved in risky issues and populations requires “moral courage more than special techniques.”

Peer pressure: Several factors converge in what makes funders gravitate to particular issues and what might open them up to others. Favoring a focus on children and youth grantmaking is in part simply the willingness of those funders to actively promote and organize among their peers for support, often with high-powered spokespersons. Moreover, the children and youth advocates do an excellent job in what one observer called “intersectionality” or more colloquially, “connecting the dots,” nominating the work of the Early Education for All Campaign in Massachusetts as a great example of how youth advocates link constituencies together to promote their efforts. Similarly, however, efforts to promote support for less popular or more divisive issues show the same kind of peer organizing among funders, for example, the work of the People of Color in Philanthropy effort in the Pacific Northwest focusing on racial justice, the anti-war organizing of funders among members of the Environmental Grantmakers Association, the work of the Freedom to Marry Collaborative, the organizing of Grantmakers Concerned about Immigrants and Refugees, and others. A

number of people cited the smart growth movement, which has connected smart growth issues to causes such as the concerns of inner-city firefighters (i.e., the majority of firefighters who die in the line of duty die in vacant building fires, thus the smart growth emphasis on reinvestment in inner cities connects to the concerns of firefighters, etc.).

Ripe for action: A New York funder complained about the emphasis of public policy advocacy on responding to constituencies because they are victims rather than having a stronger sense of the issues, the indicators and where advocacy interventions might have some impact. A Washington funder suggested that the reason why the children and youth advocates might be doing as well as they are with funders is because children and youth support systems around the nation are getting a great deal of attention (due to, for example, the crisis in services for children from troubled families, well documented in the Washington area by the tragic deaths of children overlooked by social workers and judges, visible nationally most recently in the hundreds of children “lost” in the Florida child welfare system) and therefore might be “ripe” for reform. Thinking in these terms would imply a need for funders to better analyze where attention is being given to systems reforms, where changes are occurring and where funder support for advocacy might be well timed. Because they emerged from a system in crisis and reflect only a partially successful response at best, the advocacy support of some of the health conversion foundations seems to reflect this kind of “systems intervention” thinking.

How can public policy research advocates be better linked with the organizing and mobilizing efforts of organizations working directly with the affected constituencies?

This issue breaks down in several ways among funders, with several minority perspectives:

1. Some groups do research-focused advocacy, they are good at it, and there is no particular point to trying to connect policy advocacy and political mobilization in the same organization.
2. Funders actually prefer funding research-focused advocacy, because the advocacy is generally being “done by people like them,” and not funding the more turbulent, political organizing, and therefore the link is not likely to happen.
3. The problem is among the organizers, who fail to do enough research and analysis, which is why funders find themselves doing “more and more policy-oriented research.” As one West Coast funder noted, “every time we do a van tour, we have to do the research.”

The bulk of respondents, however, called for a need to provide more attention to the political dimensions of public policy

advocacy and the importance of linking public policy research and on-the-ground organizing. The real need, they suggested, is for political organizing, political empowerment, that change really occurs when advocates make the situation “painful and embarrassing” for people in power, and that does not occur through issuing “scientific” solutions. A national player noted, “funders need to understand the importance of politics in decision-making.” Another confirmed this, suggesting “[l]egislators would like us to believe that they make decisions because of the research and information when we really know that they make decision[s] because it will get them reelected. The only way we can threaten their reelection is with an organized constituency.” A local funder implied that “some of the most effective advocacy, as in advocacy that yields a real change in the community, comes from groups that provide direct service and from that vantage point, see trends, have real client or community relationships, and ... organize and advocate.”

Perspectives on this issue from funders with strong personal backgrounds in advocacy were intense: According to one, “What I’ve seen is that the academic research agenda—no matter what the issue or field—often takes place with little or no input from the folks in the field ... consequently the research that results is of little use to them and what’s happening in the field doesn’t get fed back to the researchers.” Another observer concluded, “[i]n these tight fiscal times, I really think that funders who favor paying for reports rather than paying for advocates’ salaries need to rethink their strategy.”

Where are the models for this linkage occurring? Examples suggested by proponents of the enhanced linkage of policy research and political organizing included the following:

- The Racial Justice Collaborative, which is partnering community-based organizations with researchers and attorneys who provide a range of support—policy analysis, data gathering, litigation, etc.—for systemic changes (in addition to the National Fund that has been established for this program, two statewide funds have been created, in California and North Carolina, which might be models for metropolitan Washington).
- The Environmental Health Coalition in San Diego is seen as a model for linking policy work and organizing.
- Observers noted the work of the Funders Network for Population and Reproductive Health in promoting the linkage of organizing in addition to policy research and advocacy.
- Like the Racial Justice Collaborative, again the National Jobs and Income campaign of the Center for Community Change garners high marks as a model of organizing and research advocacy.

- One person noted that one of the most successful public policy campaigns supported by her foundation was the Housing First! campaign in New York City, leading to that municipality’s consistently high-level commitment to community-based affordable housing development, a campaign that emerged with just about no published research reports.

Several talked about their own foundations’ new funding guidelines for public policy advocacy, asking for explanations not of how research will be disseminated and published, but how action will emerge, what the implementation strategy will be, how, according to one foundation respondent’s guidelines, the research will have “direct and demonstrable application to practitioners.” There is no reason to make policy researchers into community organizers nor to transform organizers into academics. But if foundations in the metropolitan Washington area really want to see social change emerge, they would well be advised, as a Midwest funder noted, to “do a better job in putting the word out ...

making the link themselves [as organizers] between the research and the information fueling the organizing and advocacy work ... to show how the linkage comes alive.” Likening the challenge to a “campaign,” one observer concluded “there are different pieces of the work that are required to be strong and operating in sync, e.g. organizing, education, research, direct advocacy, etc., in order for the necessary reform to occur, [and f]unders can identify and recognize the value of each of these pieces often performed by a number of groups and fund them all as necessary parts of the whole.”

Most observers cited positive benefits and examples of advocacy collaboration, noting how well right-wing organizations collaborate to promote a conservative political agenda.

Can and should metropolitan D.C. advocacy funders promote nonprofit advocacy collaboration?

A New York funder of community-based advocacy and organizing groups acknowledged the problem: In this economy, some large proportion of these small organizations were simply not going to survive, but identifying which ones will make the cut is virtually impossible, frequently in hindsight counterintuitive. In general, collaborations among organizations garner positive feedback from philanthropic observers, but across the board, there is just about no support for funders’ forcing groups into “faux” collaborations. Some even expressed skepticism about collaborations, noting “it takes a certain level of

organizational capacity to engage in collaborative efforts in a meaningful way,” a sentiment expressed by a local funder to the effect that “there are opportunity costs [to working in partnership with others] (it takes effort and strong leadership, for example, to make a coalition adhere).” At least two expressed more than skepticism, one referring to collaboration with an expletive, and both suggesting that the funder emphasis on collaboration is too focused on too much “soft,” “process-oriented,” “fuzzy stuff,” as opposed to keeping organizations focused on tangible products.

Nonetheless, most observers cited positive benefits and examples of advocacy collaboration, noting how well right-wing organizations collaborate to promote a conservative political agenda. Funders can encourage advocacy collaboration without reifying it as a panacea for current and future advocacy shortcomings:

- **Collaboration space:** As articulated by one foundation leader, “Funders can provide a space for groups to come together, give them opportunities to work together, and then see what comes out of it.” Why not model collaborative behavior by participating in collaborations with organizations? The health funders, being the products of advocacy in the health arena, set the standard, for example, participating in this region’s Regional Primary Care Conversations, a “low-tech” example of collaboration involving information sharing across geographic and some topical boundaries. This “loose” collaboration is an example of what happens through simply providing space and room for discussions, the participants coming to see the logic of collective action and taking steps to formalize the process in concrete steps and tangible projects, in this case, two community health centers.
- **Rewarding collaboration:** While nearly everyone called for “organic” collaborative efforts, the problem is what to do when they are presented for funding. Most suggested rewarding existing collaborations to build their infrastructure or funding new ones that reflect the energies of local groups to work together. One funder among those talked to by NCRP gives larger grants to organizations working in collaborations.
- **Funding collaborative effectiveness:** As noted above, there are skills sets for working in collaboration that many organizations might not have. There are questions of leadership capacity. There are simply the issues of different organizational cultures blending sufficiently to work together effectively. While this again might be another area of capacity-building charlatans, capacity-building TA from movement-building groups that have experienced the importance of collaborations might work.
- **Exemplary collaborations:** Observers pointed to several “organic” collaborations elsewhere in the nation that have become functional efforts. The Arkansas Public Policy Panel was cited as a Southeast model. The San Francisco Human Services Network emerged in the Bay Area to “speak with a stronger voice about city policies and funding affecting ... [the Network members’] programs,” developing a joint analysis of the economic impacts of proposed municipal budget cuts on the human services sector. The efforts of smart growth advocates are themselves examples of cross-issue collaboration.

What can and should funders do to promote the possibility of service providers becoming public policy advocates?

Notwithstanding the concern that some view service provider advocacy as focused basically on government appropriations and contracts for themselves, service providers’ potential advocacy is, as one observer put it, “a live question.” Dismissing service providers as “alms givers” is counterproductive if the interests of funders is long-lasting social change. Local observers identify organizations such as the Legal Clinic for the Homeless, So Others Might Eat, the D.C. Employment Justice Center and even Head’s Up as organizations recognizing that effective service delivery is more than winning more contracts, but a matter of combining service with advocacy.

Nationally, several funders were reminded that the combination of services and advocacy was the underpinning of the community development corporation sector, a model that actually came from community action agencies. In community development, youth development and other arenas, the fear is that receipt of government contracts compels groups to forego advocacy. In other cases, it was simply the corporate dominance over funding sources, citing the disinterest of banks in funding CDCs with strong advocacy agendas around community reinvestment, or in the federated giving context, the examples of United Way agencies in North Carolina, Texas and most recently Minnesota to respond to corporate and governmental critics by redefining funding eligibility to significantly restrict the participation of organizations with too high a proportion of program activities devoted to advocacy, particularly advocacy directed at specific corporate interests.⁹³

Despite obstacles, service providers are increasingly interested and engaged in advocacy, particularly as the tattered safety net devolves into gaps and crises at the municipal and state levels. The nation’s significant shortfall of health services for the poor has made many service providers into effective advocates, notably the leaders of regional D.C. health clinics such as Mary’s Center for Maternal and Child Health and La Clinica del Pueblo. Constrained for time, facing choices of whether to “testify in front of the City Council and other legislative bodies ... [or focus on] organization building,” some executive directors of

service providers face a no-win situation, though many engage in “informal advocacy” through regular interactions outside of the policy-making arena with other organizations and with decision-makers.

While there were few models to offer, observers just about across the board seemed to support increased advocacy involvement by service providers, with the following ideas for funders:

- **Advocating within the service professions:** A couple of observers suggested that part of the problem was simply the perspective of social service professionals themselves, not particularly aware of the potential power of their advocacy as the people “on the front lines.” They fail to see sometimes that “working on the front lines, they have the most compelling stories and the hottest fire in their bellies.” Some observers recommended funder outreach to and advocacy with professional associations and networks and to local colleges and universities that train service providers.
- **Rewarding collaborations:** Linking service providers with advocacy organizations has merit. As indicated above, collaborations that are top-down originating with funders have little merit. But if the funder involvement is to reward collaborations, special attention to rewarding collaborations with service providers appears meritorious.
- **Funding trade/interest associations or affinity groups:** The complaint about service provider advocacy, besides contractual self-interest, is the notion that service providers function with silos, not simply by issue, but even in isolation within their organizations. Some of the advances such as the San Francisco Human Services Network are not simply due to the idea of groups engaged in collaborative efforts, but being supported as a “sector” to think in sectoral terms. That does not mean sector as in all nonprofits, but sector as the subsector of human service providers or others. Presumably, broader associations such as the Nonprofit Roundtable or the Washington Council on Agencies might be seen as places to “house” subsector discussions for strengthening ties and boosting service provider advocacy, particularly among agency directors who find themselves chronically short of the time, resources and staff back-up to free them for advocacy work.
- **Advocacy by any other name:** Sometimes advocates undermine themselves by forcing an ideological or conceptual purity on the process, making organizations announce that what they are doing is advocacy, regardless of how that goes down with their funders or their own constituencies. If announcing an advocacy agenda is risky, but engaging in advocacy is important and effective, why not as some fun-

ders suggest provide funding that addresses, applauds and supports the work of service providers in expanding their effectiveness in creating “social alliances,” addressing “root causes” and educating their constituencies?⁹⁴ That might also include advocacy training for service providers, but again, not necessarily emblazoned as “advocacy training,” geared toward undergirding the advocacy skills sets that many service agency staff and directors may not be exposed to in their professional training.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

While there is much that advocacy groups can and should do in the way of self-improvement, there is a crucial leadership role to be played by foundations in this region. Fundamentally, the challenge for advocacy funders is to advocate and organize within their own community. There is a wide diversity of charitable causes worthy of philanthropic support. Many funders will not and perhaps due to donor constraints cannot engage in public policy advocacy. But there is potential for more funder engagement around public policy advocacy, even if they do not call it advocacy. The most promising strategies, approaches and models suggested by funders within and outside of the metropolitan Washington region are outlined below:

ISSUE: Maintaining and expanding grant resources for public policy advocacy

What can grantmakers do?

- Active outreach to and organizing among other funders
- Convening forums on critical public policy issues
- Participating in collaborative program/funding efforts
- Convening peer networks among foundation staff
- Targeting new foundations, small foundations, individual donors to bring them into advocacy funding
- Making fundraising for advocates a key function of foundation staff
- Reemphasizing core operating support for advocacy
- Engaging in countercyclical grantmaking (higher advocacy support when endowments/economy are down)
- Making grants in “political time” (emergency grants, cash flow loans, etc.)
- Granting to public foundations for advocacy regranteeing
- Continuing efforts to educate funders about their legal latitudes in supporting advocacy—and doing advocacy themselves

Models to explore: California Wellness Foundation and California Endowment on organizing, advocacy and core operating support grantmaking; public charities such as the Tides Foundation, the Ms. Foundation and the Minneapolis Foundation on supporting direct lobbying; Carnegie Corporation funding campaign finance reform.

Model networks for promoting advocacy grantmaking: Working Group on Labor and Community (Neighborhood Funders Group); the National Network of Grantmakers;

Grantmakers Income Security Task Force; Funders Committee for Civic Participation; Funders Network for Population, Reproductive Health, and Rights

ISSUE: Strengthening communications effectiveness of nonprofit advocates

What can grantmakers do?

- Bringing in a strategic communications firm to provide training and TA to deliver assistance
- Supporting local cross-training and mutual support among advocates
- Using the foundations’ own communications staff to provide communications assistance

Resources: SPIN Project; Fenton Communications; Spitfire Strategies; Burness Communications; mutual support/peer networks: Progressive Communicators Network; Chicago Community Media Workshop; models for building skills: National Immigration Forum; Planned Parenthood

ISSUE: Benchmarking the impacts/outcomes of policy advocacy

What can grantmakers do?

- Collecting in-depth information on measures/indicators used by local advocacy groups
- Collecting information on how organizations articulate their “strategies for change”
- Educating other funders about outcomes indicators

Models worth exploring: D.C. Action for Children; French American Charitable Trust (FACT)

ISSUE: Capacity building for advocacy organizations

What can grantmakers do?

- Recruiting experienced TA providers around specific skills and issues (organizing, fundraising, technology, etc.)
- Reaching out to issue-focused networks for TA to local organizations
- Supporting and facilitating peer support networks among advocacy organizations

Models for training/TA: Midwest Academy and the Rockwood Leadership Program (on organizing/mobilization/leadership development); GIFT (on fundraising); Technology Works for Good and Project Alchemy (on technology)

Models for capacity building within networks: Center for Community Change (on jobs, welfare reform, etc.); ACLU (on civil rights advocacy); National Immigration Forum and the Center for Support Immigrant Organizing (on immigration and refugees); the National Community Reinvestment Coalition and again the Center for Community Change (on neighborhood reinvestment); Eco Action and the Environmental Support Center (on environmental advocacy); Industrial Areas Foundation, PICO and others (community organizing)

Facilitating peer support: Sheltering Arms Foundation in Minnesota; Liberty Hill Foundation in Los Angeles; Building Democracy program at the Hauser Center

ISSUE: Encouraging advocacy on “unpopular” issues or constituencies

What can grantmakers do?

- Analyzing issues that are “ripe for action” and promoting support among funders
- Peer organizing among foundations and their staff to garner support
- Identifying crisis issues to garner support from funders not typically funding these issues
- Demonstrating moral courage by foundation leaders promoting advocacy on unpopular issues

Models: Environmental Grantmakers Association; Grantmakers Concerned about Immigrants and Refugees; Early Education for All Campaign in Massachusetts

ISSUE: Linking public policy research and organizing/political mobilization

What can grantmakers do?

- Consider replicating the racial justice funding collaborative model in metropolitan Washington, fundamentally continuing and institutionalizing CCF as a mechanism for linking public policy advocacy researchers with local community-based organizing efforts
- Link grassroots advocates to research-oriented providers

Models: Racial Justice Collaborative (local funds in California and North Carolina tied to the National Fund); the Environmental Health Coalition in San Diego; Funders Network for Population and Reproductive Health; National Jobs and Income Campaign of the Center for Community Change

ISSUE: Promoting collaboration among advocates

What can grantmakers do?

- Providing “space” for potential collaborations
- Engaging in grantmaking that rewards existing and emerging collaborations
- Funding the provision of TA for building collaborations
- Bringing “model collaborations” to the attention of metropolitan D.C. funders and advocacy organizations

Models: San Francisco Human Services Network; the Arkansas Public Policy Panel

ISSUE: Promoting advocacy among human service nonprofits

What can grantmakers do?

- Advocating for advocacy within the service professions
- Rewarding collaborations between advocates and service providers
- Funding trade associations and interest groups
- Promoting/funding advocacy without calling it “advocacy”

Models of service providers with advocacy agendas: Legal Clinic for the Homeless; So Others Might Eat; D.C. Employment Justice Center; D.C. area health clinics (Mary’s Center, La Clinica del Pueblo)

6. Next Steps to Promote Increased Support for Nonprofit Public Policy Advocacy

The combined energies and ideas of metropolitan D.C. funders and public policy advocates comprise an exciting menu of possibilities for advancing the capacities and effectiveness of local nonprofit public policy advocacy organizations. Like the evolution of the Community Capacity Fund, there is no “quick fix” in the offing, no panacea that will transform public policy advocacy in this region from an array of mostly small groups to multiple powerhouses jumpstarting progress on intractable local and regional issues.

What might happen next? The collaborative sentiments of local public policy advocates and Washington area foundations should be tested in convenings with both nonprofits and foundations at the table. While there are multiple issues that might be explored, funders and advocates might consider a series of convenings with these topics and agendas:

INTRODUCTORY CONVENING

Face-to-face discussions on the state of nonprofit advocacy in the metropolitan region

Possible Outcomes: Strengthened sense of partnership, shared mission of advocacy nonprofits and advocacy funders; identification of “stuck” public policy issues warranting increased attention from funders and nonprofits

Resources: Selected nonprofits presenting on challenges of advocacy in this region, emphasizing groups working on issues beyond children, youth and families; facilitated discussion to identify and confirm skill/resource/issue gaps in the region; identification of systems reform challenges and strategies

SECOND CONVENING on collaborations and coalitions

Exploration of models of collaboration among advocates and funder roles encouraging advocacy collaborations

Possible Outcomes: Exploration of cross-issue coalition to promote public policy advocacy in the metropolitan area; break down topical “silos” among policy advocacy groups

Resources: Presentations from selected local coalitions and from local nonprofits that other groups turn to for advocacy assistance and partnership; invite resource presentations from coalitions and collaborations in other metropolitan areas (Los Angeles, Boston, etc.); circulate case studies of advocacy coalitions in other cities for use as discussion “practicum”

THIRD CONVENING

on promoting advocacy among metropolitan Washington funders

Finding ways of attracting new foundations into supporting nonprofit public policy advocacy

Possible Outcomes: A strategy for presenting and “selling” advocacy grantmaking to new foundations and to family foundations; a language for talking about advocacy with funders coming from a variety of issue and ideological perspectives

Resources: Case studies of advocacy success from around the nation on issues with resonance in metropolitan Washington (civil rights, affordable housing, health care, smart growth, etc.); Presentations from small/medium-sized foundations elsewhere in the U.S. on strategies they have pursued in public policy advocacy (Sheltering Arms in the Twin Cities, Gerbode in San Francisco, Wieboldt in Chicago, Hyams in Boston, the New York Foundation, etc.)

FOURTH CONVENING on building the capacities of nonprofit public policy advocates

Identifying and describing the gaps between the communications and strategic skills of indigenous advocacy organizations and the services available

Possible Outcomes: Beginning of negotiations with external and national organizations willing and capable of providing capacity-building assistance; explorations with local organizations (Nonprofit Roundtable, others) that might sponsor capacity-building technical assistance and training

Resources: Bring in resource people from the Western States Center, the Rockwood Leadership Program, SPIN Strategies and others describing their models of building advocacy/organizing capacities; bring in national organizations based in D.C.

(the Advocacy Institute, the National Council of LaRaza, the Grassroots Policy Project, etc.) which emphasize advocacy to talk about what they might be able to deliver to metropolitan Washington groups; examine models that include building the advocacy capacities of human service providers

FIFTH CONVENING

on success measures in public policy advocacy

Developing robust indicators of public policy advocacy impacts and success measures

Possible Outcomes: The beginning of an effort of an educational handbook for advocates, foundations and foundation trustees on success measures in public policy advocacy; strengthening the attentiveness of advocacy organizations themselves to the need for monitoring and evaluating progress

Resources: Invite local policy advocates to articulate the success measures they use for evaluating progress and accomplishments; bring in people of the caliber of David Arons (former staff member at CLPI), Frances Kunreuther (Hauser Center) and David Cohen (the Advocacy Institute) to discuss public policy benchmarking and “theories of change”

Notes

1. Thirty-seven organizations, amounting to a response rate of 31.4 percent, responded to the NCRP survey. These survey responses were supplemented by individual interviews with six additional nonprofit advocacy organizations in the metropolitan Washington region. The individual responses of nonprofits responding to the mail survey and participating in individual interviews were guaranteed confidentiality in order to spur candid feedback from respondents.
2. Thirty funders, including eight from foundations specifically active in the metropolitan Washington area, responded to an e-mail survey (or in three cases, requested interviews instead of responding to the written survey), addressing questions and challenges largely drawn from the obstacles and challenges identified by nonprofit respondents regarding building advocacy. In addition, eight additional non-local funders were contacted and surveyed on a limited range of questions pertinent to this study. These interviews supplemented interviews conducted by NCRP with funders from around the nation at the outset of this research in 2002.
3. Other local foundations identified by local/regional nonprofits as significant funders of their advocacy activities included the Summit Fund, the Prince Charitable Trust and the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region. External funders in the top twenty mentioned as sources of grant support for survey respondents were the Ford Foundation, the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Fund at Shelter Rock.
4. Two respondents cited funding from the Union Community Fund, which in the Washington metropolitan area participated in the National Capital United Way campaign.
5. *Washington Post* (October 3, 2002), p. A18.
6. *Washington Post* (October 3, 2002), p. T5.
7. Margery Austin Turner et al., *Housing in the Nation's Capital 2002* (Washington: Fannie Mae Foundation, 2002), p. 5.
8. *Washington Post* (October 3, 2002), p. B2.
9. Rick Cohen, "Cutting to the Core: Nonprofits Threatened as Key Operating Support Wanes," in *Responsive Philanthropy* (Fall 2002); also Rick Cohen, "Something Is Wrong with This Picture," in *The Nonprofit Quarterly* e-newsletter (May 2002).
10. *Moving a Public Policy Agenda: The Strategic Philanthropy of Conservative Foundations* (Washington: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, July 1997).
11. Even if not fully on point, two statistics substantiate this observation: Only 1.6 percent of nonprofits counted by the Internal Revenue Service in 1999 cite any lobbying expenditures and they amount to only 0.08 percent of their budgets. The most recent information from the Foundation Center on funding trends identifies only 1.1 percent of foundation grantmaking dollars going to civil rights and social action.
12. The "inner ring" of the metropolitan area includes not only the District of Columbia, but the City of Alexandria, Arlington County, Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax and the City of Falls Church in Virginia, and Montgomery County and Prince George's County in Maryland. An expansion of the metropolitan area to another geographic ring would add at a minimum another six counties in Virginia and Maryland.
13. In 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal of a lower court decision rejecting full voting representation in Congress for the District. In Congress, the District of Columbia's sole Congressional delegate may speak on the floor and actually vote in committees, but not vote on legislation on the floor. The mayor and 13-member District Council are required to send the District's budget to Congress for approval, where frequently unrelated and undemocratic amendments or restrictions are added.
14. "2001 Potomac Index: Measuring Progress in the Greater Washington Region" (Brookings Greater Washington Research Program, 2001), p. 28.
15. See the McKinsey & Company report to the City Council, "Assessing the District of Columbia's Financial Position" (March 14, 2002).
16. Cf. "Households Increase Faster than Housing Units," *Washington Area Trends* (Washington: Brookings Greater Washington Research Program, Issue No. 20, December 2001).
17. The source for this information is the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (www.nglftf.org) as of 2002.
18. "District Registers Domestic Partners; Congress Blocked Law for 10 Years", *Washington Post* (July 9, 2002), p. B1.
19. Singer, Audrey and Friedman, Samantha, "The World in a Zip Code: Greater Washington D.C. as a New Region of Immigration" (Washington: The Brookings Institution, April 2001), p. 8.
20. District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority, *Children in Crisis* (November 12, 1996).
21. Report of the Public Policy Task Force for the Council on Foundations (Washington D.C.: Council on Foundations, December, 1999), p. 9.
22. *Strategies for Shaping Public Policy: A Guide for Health Funders* (New York: Grantmakers in Health, January 2000).
23. Ami Nagle, *A Seat at the Table: Keeping the "Public" in Public Policy* (Washington: Neighborhood Funders Group, 2001).
24. <http://www.ncdi.org/successes.html>; NCDI is now known as "Living Cities."
25. Cf. *Myth v. Fact: Foundation Support of Advocacy* (1995), *Worry-Free Lobbying for Nonprofits: How to Use the 501h Election to Maximize Effectiveness* (1999), and *Support Grantees That Lobby, and You Know What Will Happen? Better Public Policy* (2002).
26. Cf. Bob Smucker, *The Nonprofit Lobbying Guide* (1999).
27. The Gerbode Foundation's Thomas Layton says, "The issue is not that foundations are policy-shy. They are controversy shy and policy/advocacy is associated with controversy." Quoted in Nan Aron,

- "Funding Nonprofit Advocacy: The Increasing Role of Foundations," in *The State of Philanthropy 2002* (Washington: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2002), p. 81.
28. In *Testing the Limits: Changing Charity Project Synthesis Handbook* (Washington: The Union Institute, July 2001), p.8, the authors balanced the usual critique of government and foundation inhibitors of nonprofit advocacy with this conclusion: "Many limitations placed on nonprofit advocacy are self-imposed. Boards may shy away from involvement in advocacy because they are misinformed about what is legally allowable. Executive directors may be wary of advocacy because it is hard to fund and requires them to take stands on controversial issues. And an increasingly professionalized nonprofit workforce may be less inclined to value advocacy and active citizenship."
29. Bothwell argues that foundation funding priorities have "aided and abetted development of policy silos and policy incrementalism at both the national and grassroots levels," in Robert O. Bothwell, "Philanthropic Funding and the Diminution of Progressive Policy Making," in *State of Philanthropy 2002* (Washington: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2002), p. 39.
30. Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics (<http://nccs.urban.org/states.htm>); this analysis excludes religious congregations and certain other kinds of nonprofits.
31. Washington Council of Agencies, *The Washington Region's Nonprofit Community* (September 2001); note, however, that the definition of suburban Virginia includes jurisdictions not included in the NCRP survey, including Loudon, Fauquier, Manassas, Manassas Park and other places.
32. Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics (<http://nccs.urban.org/states.htm>), counting only "reporting" 501(c)(3)s, excluding not only religious congregations, but nonprofits with expenditures below \$25,000 and certain other kinds of nonprofits.
33. Source: The Foundation Center (http://fdncenter.org/fc_stats/listing01.html).
34. Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers, *A Region of Givers: The Report on Philanthropy in the Greater Washington D.C. Region* (2002).
35. Washington Grantmakers counts approximately 1,200 private foundations plus 50 operating foundations and 241 public charities in the region.
36. In terms of asset size, among the top 100 are the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation and the Sherman Fairchild Foundation located in Maryland and the Freedom Forum based in Virginia. Measured by total grantmaking, the Sherman Fairchild Foundation drops off the list, and the Whittaker in Virginia joins it.
37. The foundations of the two mammoth "governmentally supported enterprises," Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are among the top 50 corporate grantmakers by total giving (the Fannie Mae Foundation at \$34.8m ranking 14th in the nation and the Virginia-based Freddie Mac Foundation giving away \$15.7m to rank 42nd). The Community Foundation of the National Capital Region is in the top 50 community foundations measured by total grantmaking.
38. CBPP has created and serves as the "home" for one significant local advocate, the Fiscal Policy Institute.
39. Based on 1998 IRS data, in Jeff Krehely, "Assessing the Current Data on 501(c)(3) Advocacy: What IRS Form 990 Can Tell Us," in Elizabeth J. Reid and Maria D. Montilla, eds., *Exploring Organizations and Advocacy: Strategies and Finances* (Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute, August 2001), p. 41.
40. Ibid.
41. By type of organization, the largest proportion of nonprofits engaged in lobbying are in the health fields, including disease-related nonprofits, hospitals and medical research institutions, accounting for almost one-fourth of all nonprofits reporting lobbying expenditures in 1998 (and nearly 40 percent of all nonprofit lobbying expenditures). Nonprofits in education, many likely colleges and universities, accounted for more than 16 percent of the organizations citing lobbying expenditures, followed by multipurpose human service nonprofits, constituting 11.5 percent of nonprofit organizations engaged in lobbying. Reflecting the issues that many funders typically think of as arenas for local/regional social action advocacy, environmental nonprofits accounted for 7.5 percent of nonprofits engaged in lobbying, community improvement 3.9 percent, civil rights 3.3 percent, and housing/shelter 1.7 percent.
42. The "inner ring" of the metropolitan area includes not only the District of Columbia, but the City of Alexandria, Arlington County, Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax and the City of Falls Church in Virginia, and Montgomery County and Prince George's County in Maryland. An expansion of the metropolitan area to another geographic ring would add at a minimum another six counties in Virginia and Maryland.
43. In 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal of a lower court decision rejecting full voting representation in Congress for the District. In Congress, the District of Columbia's sole Congressional delegate may speak on the floor and actually vote in committees, but not vote on legislation on the floor. The mayor and 13-member District Council are required to send the District's budget to Congress for approval, where frequently unrelated and undemocratic amendments or restrictions are added.
44. Cf. "Households Increase Faster than Housing Units," *Washington Area Trends* (Washington: Brookings Greater Washington Research Program, Issue No. 20, December 2001).
45. "2001 Potomac Index: Measuring Progress in the Greater Washington Region" (Brookings Greater Washington Research Program, 2001), p. 28.
46. Singer, Audrey and Friedman, Samantha, "The World in a Zip Code: Greater Washington D.C. as a New Region of Immigration" (Washington: The Brookings Institution, April 2001), p. 8.
47. See the McKinsey & Company report to the City Council, "Assessing the District of Columbia's Financial Position" (March 14, 2002).
48. District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority, *Children in Crisis* (November 12, 1996).
49. The source for this information is the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (www.nglftf.org) as of 2002.
50. "District Registers Domestic Partners; Congress Blocked Law for 10 Years," *Washington Post* (July 9, 2002), p. B1.
51. This criterion allowed for inclusion of organizations focused on local or regional public policy advocacy that might be "housed" in larger national organizations.
52. An additional eight funders from outside of the Washington area were interviewed on a limited range of questions, emphasizing

- measures of success in public policy advocacy and organizing.
53. Surveyed organizations identified one or more areas of topical concern.
 54. Funding for children and youth as a targeted constituency has been expanding for years, increasing from 19.1 percent to 21.0 percent of grants (by number of grants) between 1998 and 2000 and increasing from 16.1 to 16.6 percent of grants by dollars. Source: Foundation Center.
 55. Survey respondents identified the frequency and importance of the various options for public policy advocacy. We assigned scores to the selections, with "Always" given a score of 5, "Very Often" 4, "Often" 3, "Occasionally" 2 and "Rarely" 1. The total score for each category of advocacy activity was then divided by the number of survey respondents to establish a weighted average. The categories of advocacy activities are roughly approximate to the categories used in the national research project conducted by Tufts University, OMB Watch, and Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest, reported in May 2002 (SNAP: Strengthening Nonprofit Advocacy Project). NCRP's researchers modified the Tufts categorization by eliminating two categories that Tufts included as types of public policy activity—"discussing grants/contracts with government officials" and "interacting socially with government officials." The former seemed to NCRP to be a self-interested kind of advocacy, oriented to benefiting the specific nonprofit with getting or increasing a government service contract; the latter's emphasis on social interaction appeared to be less than an organizational public policy advocacy strategy that a funder would support under the guise of promoting advocacy. NCRP also eliminated the Tufts category, "responding to requests from those in government," as a natural activity of disclosure and responsiveness characteristic to most nonprofits whether advocacy oriented or not.
 56. Described as litigation, community organizing, community building and simply coalition-building or coordination with other organizations.
 57. Testifying at public hearings ranked just above interacting socially with government officials as the lowest ranked public policy advocacy activity in the national Tufts survey.
 58. It is also possible that some might actually be incorporated as 501(c)(4) organizations, whose IRS reports are not posted by Guidestar.
 59. SNAP: Strengthening Nonprofit Advocacy Project: *Overview of Findings* (May 2002), p. 5.
 60. The NCRP survey did not examine the participation or use of volunteers because of consistent problems in the research regarding the reliability of definitions and responses, distinguishing between counts of constituents who show up at meetings, others who actually do some work for the organization and still others whose voluntary involvement is associated with their status as organizational members. Any conception that volunteers of limited time-availability and skills can be substituted for staff shortcomings is simply analytically unreliable.
 61. *Compensation in Nonprofit Organizations in the Mid-Atlantic Region* (Washington: Washington Council of Agencies and Abbott, Langer & Associates, 2002).
 62. An Abbott Langer study from September 2001 suggested that 13 percent of all nonprofits, based on a national survey of nonprofits, provided no retirement benefits (<http://www.abbott-langer.com/snofsumm.html>). In theory, social action, advocacy and organizing-oriented nonprofits might be expected to be less able to offer pension plan benefits to their employees.
 63. Cf. the justifications behind the creation of the Met-Life pension program through the National Organizers Alliance (NOA). The Alliance created a portable, multi-employer pension program because it contended that "most organizers—even those who have worked 20 years or more—have no retirement benefits beyond social security" (<http://www.noacentral.org/about.html>).
 64. *Justice Begins at Home: Strengthening Social Justice Advocacy in the U.S.* (Washington: The Advocacy Institute, 2000), p. 15.
 65. Identified variously as funding from law firms, religious congregations, in-kind services and grants from the Council of Governments.
 66. Rick Cohen, "Cutting to the Core: Nonprofits Threatened as Key Operating Support Wanes," *Responsive Philanthropy* (Fall 2002).
 67. The Union Community Fund is a workplace fundraising effort of the AFL-CIO to raise money through payroll deductions supporting charities that provide support to working families and other labor-related constituencies and issues. UCF's major fundraising operations to date have been through workplace campaigns associated with the Washington Central Labor Committee.
 68. Grantmaking by local foundations for the 118 organizations in the NCRP survey for 2001 and 2002 include \$495,000 from Summit, \$839,500 from the Moriah Fund, \$690,830 from Trellis, \$1,552,000 from the Public Welfare Foundation, \$700,500 from the Meyer Foundation and \$1,690,000 from the Cafritz Foundation. While these amounts were not all exclusively devoted to nonprofit advocacy functions, they represent a significant philanthropic investment in the local nonprofits that carry out public policy advocacy in the region.
 69. Of the primary local or regional foundations in the list of frequent funders of the nonprofit respondents in the NCRP survey, the Summit Fund has publicly announced the suspension of its grantmaking due to the decline in the value of the Fund's assets.
 70. Minor M. Shaw, "Tough Agencies for Tough Times," *Issues: Doing More with Less* (Winter 2003)
 71. The foundations' process advice was frequently organizational (recommendations regarding project advisory and governance structures), process (for example, on reporting), and fundraising (providing contacts in other foundations who might support the groups).
 72. Research continues to demonstrate that foundations in general give short shrift to nonprofit administrative overhead costs in project- or program-specific grants, typically limiting grantees to overhead allowances of 10 percent, 5 percent or even no overhead at all. Cf. Kennard T. Wing, "Don't Spread It Thin," *Foundation News & Commentary* (November/December 2002).
 73. Cf. Bristow Hardin, "Uphill Climb Toward Justice," in *Responsive Philanthropy* (Summer 2002) for the reluctance of many foundations to support legal advocacy, and Rick Cohen, "Championing Legal Services and the First Amendment," also in *Responsive Philanthropy* (Summer 2002) for the restrictions on public and private funding for class action litigation conducted by local Legal Service Corporation affiliates, now being challenged in *Dobbins v. Legal Services Corporation*, making foundation support of litigation strategies of nonprofit advocates critically important.
 74. Consistently, respondents voiced perceptions along these lines: "donors generally seem to prefer specific projects" or "donors want

tangible results, and working to change systems does not lead to many tangible results.”

75. A call for building the advocacy capacities of service providers is consistent with the findings of the Union Institute's Changing Charity Project, which concluded that increasing the advocacy roles of service providers was “an inevitable and necessary next step in their organizational development.” Cf. Anne Pasmanick, “Advocacy Matters: A National Roundtable” (Washington: The Union Institute, 2001).
76. Only one respondent reported a TA need of personnel management and financial management, though one added board development and another staff development as TA/training needs.
77. Throughout this study, there was scant evidence that either the nonprofits or the funders felt constrained by legal limitations on advocacy or lobbying. Even the presence of government funding does not appear to deter these organizations from participating in public policy advocacy. The hurdle in securing philanthropic support for public policy advocacy appears to be funder attitudes and predispositions, not necessarily the limited or erroneous advice of in-house counsel.
78. Although only the request of one survey respondent, one did suggest that a very useful manual would be a publication describing how governments in the metropolitan Washington area operate, their budget and finance processes, and sources of information on public policies.
79. Respondents specifically asked for advocacy-oriented communications assistance that they described as different than “public relations” capacity building.
80. In New York City, advocacy organizations regularly turn to the Community Resource Exchange for a variety of capacity-building needs, in the Bay Area of California, CompassPoint, and in Los Angeles, the Center for Nonprofit Management; all provide a variety of training and capacity-building services for a range of nonprofits, but public policy advocacy organizations find them capable of understanding the needs of advocacy groups themselves.
81. The Northwest Area Foundation, for example, has devoted itself to focusing its grantmaking to address poverty reduction in its eight-state region through a combination of targeted grantmaking and the Foundation's functioning as a knowledge intermediary. Cf. Karl Stauber, “Changing Means, Clarifying Paths: Philanthropy in an Era of Limited Government,” in *Responsive Philanthropy* (Spring 2002)
82. Community foundations seem to get special attention as regrantees, offering private foundations an avenue for reaching certain recipients that the foundations themselves cannot or will not, for example, giving a grant to a community foundation (a c(3)) for the community foundation to regrant to a c(4) organization.
83. Even among NCRP's calls to funders outside of the D.C. metropolitan area, funders that regularly fund advocacy groups engaged in public policy work denied that they fund advocacy, including one self-described social justice foundation.
84. According to its own communications, SPIN “provides media technical assistance to nonprofit public-interest organizations across the nation who want to influence debate, shape public opinion and garner positive media attention. SPIN offers public relations consulting, including comprehensive media training and intensive media strategizing and resources to community organizations.” SPIN's media guidebook, *SPIN Works! A Media Guidebook for the Rest of Us* is a well-respected communications tool kit with a focus on advocacy issues. The annual SPIN Academy is run in Petaluma, California, at a very reasonable cost (\$250 per participant), and SPIN also offers workshops and training through the Western States Center's conference. Although the staff of SPIN have worked in dozens of states, to make them available to the variety of small advocacy organizations operating in the Washington metropolitan area, a concerted effort of local funders might be necessary.
85. Like SPIN, Fenton also has an excellent manual for public interest advocacy groups, *Now Hear This, Now Hear This: The Nine Laws of Successful Advocacy Communications*.
86. Two respondents noted that they believed that We Interrupt This Message had become “defunct,” although the organization's website appears to have some relatively current materials posted.
87. Sarah Leshner, “Activist Groups Turn Toward Cost-Effective PR,” *The Hill* (May 7, 2003).
88. Apparently, op-eds are well read by decision-makers, and letters to the editor are among the most read parts of newspapers by the general readership.
89. Observers called for a better understanding of the policy process in order to generate robust and revealing measures. For example, one of the measures suggested by respondents was the extent and quality of media coverage of the issue, since policy advocates are frequently legitimately focused on trying to affix their issues in the public consciousness. In the policy process, it is often not a question of whether legislation was passed, but whether the issue of concern to advocates made its way into legislation or got discussed in legislative committees, because once an issue reaches the point of being introduced and discussed in committee or in a legislative body, the chances are good that it can and will come up again; the first hurdle is fundamentally getting the issue placed in the public policy arena.
90. Connecting to organized labor may be a capacity-building resource as well, particularly since some of the more energetic arenas for advocacy and organizing around the nation happen to involve labor unions, some of which have been active in jobs issues in the metropolitan Washington area after 9/11, including the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees union (HERE) and others.
91. With the special attention focused recently on Muslims and on Arabs whether Muslim or not, particularly with the potentially adverse consequences of some provisions of the Patriot Act, one funder noted the development of ACCESS in Detroit, which developed a capacity-building program for seven Arab-American community-based organizations around the nation.
92. Foundation Center reports demonstrate the foundation funding trends working in favor of grantmaking for children and youth. In terms of grants for specific populations served, the proportion of foundation grant dollars for children and youth skyrocketed from 15.5 percent in 1999 and 16.9 percent in 2000 to 17.9 percent in 2001. Going in the opposite directions were grants for the poor and indigent (12.0 percent in 1999, 16.4 percent in 2000, 12.1 percent in 2001), and minorities (7.9 percent in 1999, 7.7 percent in 2000, and 7.0 percent in 2001). In terms of grants by subject area, grantmaking for civil rights and social action plunged from 1.5 percent of foundation grants in 2000 to 1.1 percent, for community improvement and development from 3.9 percent in 1999 and

3.5 percent in 2000 to 3.2 percent in 2001, and for housing and shelter from 1.7 percent in 1999, 1.3 percent in 2000, and down to 1.1 percent in 2001.

93. In North Carolina, a United Way campaign manager changed its funding guidelines in response to lobbying from a utility company in order to expel an environmental justice organization, NC WARN, from participating in the United Way campaign even for donor designation eligibility. As one observer put it, "If NC WARN had just been advocating for potassium iodide pills instead of changes in the way nuclear utilities operate, [the] United Way probably wouldn't have gone after them."
94. Only one respondent in NCRP's conversations suggested the possibility of mandating that service providers receiving foundation money pledge that 5 percent of their expenditures go to advocacy.

Appendices

APPENDIX A Survey Respondents

Organization	Web Address
Action in Montgomery	www.aim-iaf.org
AGLCA	www.aglca.org
Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless	www.aachhomeless.org
Center for Law and Social Policy	www.clasp.org
Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development	www.cnhed.org
Council for Court Excellence	www.courtexcellence.org
D.C. Action for Children	www.dckids.org
D.C. Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy	www.teenpregnancydc.org
D.C. Community Prevention	www.dcpartnerwhip.org
D.C. Employment Justice Center	www.dcejc.org
D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute	www.dcfpi.org
D.C. Primary Care Association	www.dcpca.org
D.C. Vote	www.dcvote.org
Fair Budget Coalition	www.legalclinic.org/fairbud.htm
Gay and Lesbian Activist Alliance	www.glaa.org
Hispanic Committee of Virginia	www.hispaniccommitteeofvirginia.org
Independence Now	
Jobs with Justice	www.jwj.org
League of Korean Americans, USA	
League of Womens Voters of the District of Columbia	www.dccwatch.com/lwvdc
Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute	www.marylandpolicy.org
Montgomery County Alliance of Private Nonprofit Organizations	
Northern Virginia AIDS Ministry	www.novam.org
Northern Virginia Family Service	www.nvfs.org
Parents United for the D.C. Public Schools	
Safe Shores - The D.C. Childrens Advocacy Center	
Strategic Community Services, Inc.	www.strategicinc.org
Tahirih Justice Center	www.tahirih.org
Teaching for Change (Tellin' Stories Project)	www.teachingforchange.org
Tenants and Workers Support Committee/ Comité de Apoyo de Inquilinos y Trabajadores	www.twsc.org
The Childrens Law Center	www.childrenslawcenter.org
The Empower Program	www.empowered.org
Urban Alternative	
Washington Regional Network for Livable Communities	www.washingtonregion.org
Washington AIDS Partnership	www.washingtonaidspartnership.org
Washington Legal Council for the Homeless	
Women Like Us	

APPENDIX B Survey Non-Respondents

ACLU Fund of the National Capital Area
ACORN - Washington D.C.
Advocates for Justice and Education
Alliance for Fairness in Reforms to Medicaid (AFFIRM)
American Center for Law and Justice
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Arlington Gay and Lesbian Alliance
Asian American Lead
Ayuda, Inc.
Boat People SOS
Capital Area ADAPT
Capital Area Immigrants' Right Coalition
CASA of Maryland
Center for Environmental Citizenship
Center for Multicultural Human Services
Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)
Coalition for Local Sovereignty
Coalition for the Homeless
Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place
Community Family Life Services, Inc.
Consortium for Child Welfare
Council of Latino Agencies
Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington
D.C. Agenda
D.C. Appleseed Center
D.C. ARC, INC.
D.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence
D.C. Food Stamps Resource Center
D.C. Kids Count
D.C. Peace and Economic Justice Program—AFSC
D.C. Prisoners Legal Services Project
D.C. Rape Crisis Center
D.C. Voice
Fair Employment Council of Greater Washington
Families USA
Free State Justice Campaign, MD
Greater Washington Research Program - Brookings Institution
Greater Washington Urban League
Health Action Forum / Health Action Campaign
Heath Care Now
Immigrant Empowerment Council (IEC)
Indochinese Community Center
Interfaith Action Communities
Jews United for Justice
Juvenile Justice Coalition
Korean American Coalition (KAC)

APPENDIX B Survey Non-Respondents (continued)

Korean Community Service Center

La Clinica del Pueblo

Latin American Youth Center

Listen Inc.

Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Institute

MANNA CDC

Maryland Citizens Health Initiative

Maryland NARAL

Metropolitan Washington Council of the AFL-CIO

Mid Atlantic Equity Consortium

Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless

My Sister's Place

National Best Practices Collaborative for Anacostia (ask WCA)

National Capital Area Carefirst Watch

New Community After School and Advocacy Project

Nonprofit Advisory Team on Contracting and Procurement C/O Washington Council of Agencies

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays of the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Area (PFLAG-DC)

PL Active, Inc.

Planned Parenthood - D.C.

Progressive Maryland

Sikh American Association (SAA)

So Others Might Eat (SOME)

Stephanie Roper Foundation

Summit Fund

The Empower Program

The Homeless Children's Tutorial Project, Inc.

The Young Women's Project

Turning the Page

United Community Ministries

Washington Council of Community Services Agencies

Washington Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights

Washington Parks & People

Whitman-Walker Clinic

Women's Law & Public Policy

Yachad, Inc.

APPENDIX C Interview Subjects (by telephone, e-mail, and in person)

Henry Allen, Hyams Foundation
Harriet Barlow, HKH Foundation
Carrie Irwin Brown, First Alaskans Institute
Barbara Bryan, New York Regional Association of Grantmakers
Millie Buchanan, Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
Maudine R. Cooper, Greater Washington Urban League
Kathleen Enright, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations
Diane Feeney, French American Charitable Trust
Deborah Felder, Maine Initiatives
Cheryl King Fischer, New England Grassroots Environmental Fund
Bookda Gheisar, A Territory Resource
Cynthia Gibson, Carnegie Corporation
Hope Gleicher, Trellis Foundation
Sara Gould, Ms Foundation
Laura Hamasaka, American Legacy Foundation
Angela Jones, D.C. Action for Children
Karen Kelley-Ariwoola, Minneapolis Foundation
Larry Kressley, Public Welfare Foundation
Kathy Wah Lee, Consultant
Gara LaMarche, Open Society Institute
Spence Limbocker, Neighborhood Funders Group
Lance Lindblom, Nathan Cummings Foundation
Laura Loescher, Changemakers
Audrey Lyons, Yachad
William Mattle, Stonewall Community Foundation
Carmella Mazzotta, D.C. Voice
Regina McGraw, Wieboldt Foundation
Allison McWilliams, Naomi and Nehemiah Cohen Foundation
Mario Morino, Venture Philanthropy Partners
Sarah Nelson, Dallas Women's Foundation
Margaret O'Bryon, Consumer Health Foundation
Joel Orosz, Grand Valley State University
Torie Osborn, Liberty Hill Foundation
Robert Pohlman, Coalition for Non-profit Housing and Economic Development
Vincent Robinson, Social Venture Partners Fund
Albert Ruesga, Meyer Foundation
Carey Shea, Surdna Foundation
Walter Smith, D.C. Appleseed
Martha Toll, Butler Family Fund
Bruce Trachtenberg, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
Deborah Warren, Southern Resources Development Institute
Sylvia Yee, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Foundation

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THIS SURVEY WILL BE KEPT COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL

I.1 Contact Information

Name of the Organization: _____

Name of person completing this survey: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

City/State _____ Zip Code _____

Tel: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Web-site address: _____

I.2 Year Founded:

I.3 Mission:

2. PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY WORK (18 QUESTIONS)

2.1 What policy issues are of most concern to your organization? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Culture | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children / Youth / Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration and/or Refugees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Development | <input type="checkbox"/> LGBT Rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> National Security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Death Penalty | <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit Organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Philanthropy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty and Inequality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics, Morality and/or Religion | <input type="checkbox"/> Race and Ethnicity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Welfare |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gender | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government Operations | <input type="checkbox"/> Others (Please specify): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | |

2.2 What is your organization's primary geographic scope or focus? (Check all that apply)

- Local DC
- Local MD
- Local VA
- Regional (metropolitan area)
- State
- National

2.3 Is your program part of a national organization, but working exclusively/specifically on local DC metro area issues?

- Yes
- No

If YES, please provide the name of your national parent organization _____

2.4 On a scale of 1 to 5 please tell us what are the advocacy functions or activities that your organization conducts on a regular basis? (1 = very often, 5 = rarely)

- Direct lobbying (direct contact/interaction with legislators)
- Indirect/grassroots lobbying (urge public/constituents/others to contact legislators)
- Letter to editors / media campaigns
- Public education campaigns
- Meeting with government officials to promote regulatory/procedural change
- Testifying in public hearings
- Releasing research/policy reports
- Working in planning or advisory groups with government officials
- Other (please explain): _____

2.5 Percentage of your organization's time devoted to the following advocacy activities:

- % Direct lobbying (direct contact/interaction with legislators)
- % Indirect/grassroots lobbying (urge public/constituents/others to contact legislators)
- % Letter to editors / media campaigns
- % Public education campaigns
- % Meeting with government officials to promote regulatory/procedural change
- % Testifying in public hearings
- % Releasing research/policy reports
- % Working in planning or advisory groups with government officials
- % Other (please explain): _____

2.6 Is your organization a 501(h) elector? (Provisions in federal law that specifically allow organizations to engage in lobbying)

- Yes
- No

2.7 Why does your organization engage in advocacy activities (what motivates your involvement)? (Check all that apply)

- Supporting/promoting organizational mission
- Raising issue awareness
- Protecting key government programs and services
- Obtaining government money for contracts and services
- Responding to crises
- General concern for public good
- Other (please explain) _____

2.8 Who decides/defines your organization's policy/advocacy agenda? (Check all that apply)

- Board
- Executive Director
- Staff
- Constituents
- Membership
- Coalitions
- Consultants
- Media

2.9 Is your organization membership-based?

- Yes No

2.10 If yes, how many members do you have? _____

- ___ % Individual members
- ___ % Nonprofit organizational members
- ___ % Corporate members
- ___ % Governmental agency members
- ___ % Foundation (Grantmaker) members

2.11 Which of the following groups does your organization primarily seek to support? (Check all that apply)

- Low income
- African-American
- Latino
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Native American/Indian
- Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgendered (LGBT) communities
- Women
- Children
- Disabled
- Immigrants
- Refugees
- Other (please specify): _____

2.12 Please mention the 5 most influential local, state or national groups with whom your organization maintains on-going formal or informal contact related to your advocacy agenda? (Organizations that your group turn to for information and support of its advocacy work)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

2.13 Please list the organizations that typically call on your organization for support for their activities and programs?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

2.14 Does your organization maintain on-going formal or informal contact with other local, state or national advocacy groups working on issues not necessarily related to your specific organization's agenda? (Please list)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2.15 Does your organization participate in coalitions?

- Yes
- No

2.16 If yes, around what issues or concerns?

2.17 What are the most significant barriers that your organization faces to be more effective in your advocacy work? (Check all that apply)

- Coalition building
- Public engagement
- Direct Lobbying (contacting legislators)
- Grassroots lobbying (mobilizing constituents / support base to contact legislators)
- Fundraising/Funder constraints
- Skills development / training
- Other (please explain) _____

2.18 How does your organization evaluate or measure success?

3. OPERATIONS/DEVELOPMENT (22 QUESTIONS)

3.1 What was your organization's operating budget for:

FY2000 \$
FY2001 \$

3.2 What proportion of your organization's current budget comes from:

___% Foundation (non-corporate) grants
___% Corporate grants
___% Individual donors
___% Workplace contributions (United Way, Combined Federal Campaign, etc.)
___% Government contracts
___% Membership dues
___% Earned income (fees, publications sales, etc.)
___% Special events
___% Other (please specify) _____

3.3 Percentage of your budget devoted to public policy advocacy work:

FY2000 ___%
FY2001 ___%

3.4 Please provide a breakdown of the percentage of your organization's budget (approximate), allocated on a yearly basis, to the following:

___% Research and policy analysis
___% Lobbying (direct and/or indirect)
___% Community organizing
___% Training and technical assistance
___% Media/communications
___% Public education
___% Litigation
___% Administrative/overhead expenses
___% Other (please specify): _____

3.5 What percentage of your organization's FY2001 budget comes from:

___% Federal Government
___% State Government
___% Local Government
___% Individual donors
___% Membership dues
___% Special events
___% Publication sales
___% Service fees
___% Other (please specify) _____

3.6 Please tell us how many staff members (full time equivalents) your organization has in each of the following areas:

- Administrative
- Communications
- Development
- Finance
- Core Program
- Research
- Clerical
- Other (please explain): _____

3.7 What is the occupational background of staff? (check all that apply)

- Business
- Professional
- Social Services
- Advocacy
- Organizer
- Other (please explain): _____

3.8 What is the composition of your organization's staff?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> % Male | <input type="checkbox"/> % African-American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> % Female | <input type="checkbox"/> % Asian-American/Pacific Islander |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> % Latino |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> % Non-Hispanic white |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> % Other |

3.9 How many people serve on your organization's board? _____

3.10 How long are the terms of your organization's board members?

3.11 What is the occupational background of the board members? (Check all that apply)

- Business
- Professional
- Social services
- Advocacy
- Organizer
- Other (please explain): _____

3.12 How would you describe the board's role in your organization's advocacy program/activities?

3.13 What is the salary range for your professional staff? (Please provide low and high end when applicable)

_____	Executive Director
_____ - _____	Development Area
_____ - _____	Communications Area
_____ - _____	Research Area
_____ - _____	Advocacy Area
_____ - _____	Organizing Area
_____ - _____	Administrative Support

3.14 Does your organization provide a full health and benefits package?

Yes _ No _

3.15 Does your organization provide a pension plan for your employees?

Yes _ No _

3.16 Please identify your 10 largest sources of income (specific foundations, individual donors, government agencies, etc.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

3.17 Is this a relatively stable group of funders?

Yes _ No _

Why?

3.18 How does your funding base differ from last year after September 11?

3.19 How would you characterize your group's financial future?

- Strong
- Stable
- Somewhat stable
- Shaky

Why?

3.20 What percentage of foundation/corporate foundation grants awarded to your organization comes in the form of:

- ___% General Operations Support
___% Project-Specific Support

3.21 From whom does your organization obtain technical support (who do you turn to) on organizational and personnel development matters? (Management, finance, administrative, leadership skills, etc.)

3.22 What kind of support do you usually obtain? (Check all that apply)

- Financial support
- Technical assistance / Consultations
- Convenings
- Training
- Other (please explain) _____

4. OPEN ENDED (11 QUESTIONS)

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO USE ADDITIONAL PIECES OF PAPER
IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

- 4.1 How do foundations influence the work of your organization, if at all?
- 4.2 In your experience, which issues/programs have been easier (or relatively easy) to obtain funding for?
- 4.3 Which have been more difficult? Why?
- 4.4 How would your organization's programs, services, and strategies change (if at all) if the grants you received were entirely for unrestricted or general/core operating support?
- 4.5 What kinds of technical support and training (if any) do you think your organization might need in order to become a better, stronger, more capable advocate?
- 4.6 What kinds of assistance do you receive from funders and technical assistance providers that you believe does NOT help your organization become a better advocate?
- 4.7 Overall, what do you think funders could be doing to strengthen advocacy organizations in this region to enhance their capacities to impact policy?

- 4.8 What do you think policy-oriented advocacy organizations like yours should be doing differently to increase their impact or influence on policy issues at the local and/or state level?
- 4.9 What weaknesses do you see in advocacy in this region that should be addressed by advocates—and hopefully by their funding partners?
- 4.10 Have you seen any changes, events, or new developments in the past year or so that appear to have boosted the organizational strength and effectiveness of local/regional advocacy groups? Which ones? How have they impacted the advocates?
- 4.11 Identify what you consider the 5 most effective policy-oriented nonprofit organizations in the DC metropolitan area, and what do you think makes these groups particularly effective?

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ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBER (voting)

- \$25
- \$50
- \$100
- \$250
- \$500
- \$300
- Other _____

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER (nonvoting)

- \$25
- \$50
- \$100
- \$250
- \$500
- Other _____

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Name _____
Title _____ Organization _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
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Advocacy for Social Change in Metropolitan Washington

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