



THE GRANTMAKING FOR COMMUNITY IMPACT PROJECT

Increasing Philanthropic Resources for Advocacy, Organizing and Civic Engagement

The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP) aims to ensure that philanthropic institutions practice Philanthropy at Its Best® – philanthropy that serves the public good, supports nonprofit effectiveness and responds to those in our society with the least wealth, opportunity and power. NCRP believes that one of the most effective ways to address the needs of the disenfranchised is by providing support for advocacy, community organizing and civic engagement.

NCRP's *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best*, published in March 2009, challenges grantmakers to promote the American values of opportunity and inclusion by contributing to a strong, participatory democracy that engages all communities. One way they can accomplish that is by providing at least 25 percent of their grant dollars for advocacy, organizing and civic engagement. This aspirational goal is one of ten benchmarks in *Criteria*.

Although many grantmakers invest in these strategies as a way to advance their missions and strengthen communities, a sizable number of foundations have not considered seriously investing in this work, in part because they have difficulty measuring its impact. The Grantmaking for Community Impact Project (GCIP) addresses these concerns by highlighting the positive impact that communities have seen through funder-supported nonpartisan advocacy and organizing. By documenting impact and results, and by creating dialogue, the project provides useful tools and grantmaking options for funders, and will help to increase philanthropic support for this work nationwide.

DOCUMENTING IMPACT AND RESULTS

NCRP is conducting research that documents how and to what extent advocacy and community organizing lead to substantial, measurable impacts on key issues. NCRP is releasing a series of reports that uses quantitative and qualitative methods to measure impact, drawing on the latest advances in advocacy evaluation, organizing outcome measurement and the positive returns to social capital from civic engagement. A key component of NCRP's approach is calculating an aggregate return on investment for quantifiable organizing and advocacy impacts among a set of organizations.

ENGAGING COMMUNITY AND CREATING DIALOGUE

NCRP will engage grantmakers, community groups and the media in a broad discussion about how organizing by and advocacy on behalf of disadvantaged communities help funders and grantees achieve their missions and maximize their impact, and how these strategies result in community-wide benefits. Focusing on one city, region or state at a time, NCRP collaborates with funders and community organizations in each site to gather information and disseminate research results through local forums. NCRP seeks to engage current and prospective funders of advocacy and organizing and link them to resources that can help them use these strategies to achieve their mission.

ABOUT NCRP

The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy promotes philanthropy that serves the public good, is responsive to people and communities with the least wealth and opportunity, and is held accountable to the highest standards of integrity and openness. The organization was founded in 1976 and has a long track record of respected research and advocacy on philanthropic issues.

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH APPROACH

The Grantmaking for Community Impact Project seeks to increase philanthropic resources for advocacy, organizing and civic engagement that benefits low-income communities, communities of color and other disadvantaged groups, by documenting impact and engaging stakeholders in dialogue.

SITE SELECTION

NCRP will choose project sites that have some or all of the following characteristics:

- A vibrant mix of active organizing, advocacy and civic engagement groups;
- A grantmaker association and nonprofit association interested in the project;
- Foundations that currently support advocacy and organizing;
- Foundations that desire to begin or increase support for this work; and,
- Communities that reflect overall diversity (population density, regions of the country, demographics).

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

NCRP will identify potential community organizations to be researched by gathering information from nonprofit associations, foundations and other community leaders. After a complete list has been generated, NCRP will consider organizations that can demonstrate meeting the following criteria:

- Been in existence for at least five years;
- Have a commitment to and capacity for organizing or advocacy;
- Have at least one full-time staff person devoted to this work throughout the five year timeframe;
- Focus on a core constituency of low-income people, people of color or other marginalized groups;
- Work on a local, regional (within-state) or statewide level; and,
- Have the capacity to provide data for the research.

DATA COLLECTION

NCRP will collect data for a five-year period for the following measures:

- Quantitative impacts (e.g. the dollar value of policy changes and the number of constituents benefiting from the changes);
- Civic engagement indicators (e.g. the number of leaders trained, voters registered and volunteers recruited);
- Interim progress and capacity-building indicators (e.g. changes in leaders' skills and access to the policy process); and,
- Amounts and types of funding groups have received during the five years.

FINAL REPORT AND DIALOGUE

NCRP will produce a report on the research findings for each site. This report will be the focus of a release event and other outreach activities that will highlight key lessons and recommendations for foundations on how to more effectively support advocacy, organizing and civic engagement efforts. NCRP will work with both nonprofits and foundations to create meaningful conversations and link foundations to resources on how to get involved.

For further information, please contact:

Melissa Johnson, Field Director at mjohnson@ncrp.org or (202) 387-9177, ext 26
Lisa Ranghelli, Senior Research Associate at lranghelli@ncrp.org or (413) 634-5092.