



“We believe that meeting the challenges of these times requires that we take the kinds of risks that are the illustrious legacy of the Ford Foundation. It also requires that we advance programs and initiatives that have the potential to be transformative, even when the approaches are new. After all, risk and challenge are more than just the privilege of philanthropy—they are its responsibility. We are proud of Philanthropy’s Promise ...”

– FORD FOUNDATION
Luis Ubiñas, President

Why Sign On to Philanthropy’s Promise?

Philanthropy’s Promise is NCRP’s latest initiative that seeks to improve the effectiveness and impact of philanthropic dollars by encouraging grantmakers to prioritize meeting the unique needs of underserved communities and supporting significantly those efforts that address the root causes of complex social issues.

Since the initiative’s launch in June, more than 70 grantmakers have signed on to Philanthropy’s Promise. Below are excerpts from the public statements from 13 of these foundations. We hope that their words will serve to inspire more leaders from foundations and other public grantmaking charities to think about how the strategies offered by Philanthropy’s Promise might help their own organizations get better results from their grantmaking.

“Although General Mills does not categorize its work in NCRP’s terms, General Mills devotes substantially all of its grants to nourishing communities through hunger and nutrition wellness and educational support, particularly in underserved communities, and expects to continue to do so.

To create change that is deeply rooted and sustainable, General Mills’ work is based in the following values: integrity, leadership, innovation, diversity and impact.”

– THE GENERAL MILLS FOUNDATION
Ellen Goldberg Luger
Executive Director

“The solutions to chronic diseases, poverty, and disparities are complex. We cannot achieve our mission by simply funding good people to do good work. We must seek impact and results. Thus, KBR is also committed to funding systemic change. This work reaches beyond direct services to one individual at a time. This work seeks to change the factors that create barriers to wellness, education, and thriving communities. This work affects the way entire systems operate—the health care safety net, public education, mental health treatment, juvenile justice, to name a few—in order to improve the quality of health and the quality of life for our entire society.”

– KATE B. REYNOLDS CHARITABLE TRUST
Karen McNeil-Miller, President

“As a responsible steward of wealth for the public good whose grantmaking affects the public, we make our goals as transparent as possible and that is one reason we make this public statement. We also hope this statement will contribute to the discussion within philanthropy about how we, as a sector, can best promote the public good.”

– LEVI STRAUSS FOUNDATION, Daniel Lee, Executive Director

“Simply put, our mission is to improve the health and health care of all Americans. Thus, our fundamental responsibility is to help improve the conditions, policies and practices that protect and promote health. Our philanthropy represents a public trust, and we recognize that we are stewards of private resources that must be used in the public’s interest and particularly to help the most vulnerable in our society.”

– ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION, Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, President and CEO

“I believe most foundations could draw similar connections between the asset base of their philanthropy and the challenges of lower-income communities, communities of color and other marginalized groups. Wealth is not created in a vacuum. It arises within a complex social fabric in which the haves and the have-nots are interdependent. At its best, philanthropy acts on this truth in ways that honor our institutions’ origins and advance our diverse missions.”

– NORTHWEST AREA FOUNDATION, Kevin F. Walker, President and CEO



PHILANTHROPY'S PROMISE

Higher Impact, Stronger Communities

“As a result of our mission, values and grantmaking strategies, we fully believe that our unrestricted grantmaking will be consistent with NCRP’s goal of challenging foundations to provide at least 50 percent of their grants to underserved communities. In addition, we believe that 25 percent of these grants will meet NCRP’s criteria for social justice grantmaking. ... We encourage every grantmaking to actively consider how their individual mission statements and grantmaking priorities may enable them to participate in this challenge or, at the least, fully understand and reflect on the constraints that prevent them from doing so.”

– SILICON VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
Emmett Carson, President and CEO

“This statement publicly affirms our belief that philanthropy’s task is to defend and promote the health, dignity, aspirations and potential of all people.”

– MAINE INITIATIVES, Charlie Bernstein, Executive Director

“An essential characteristic of an open society is that all people count equally and that all should enjoy equal opportunities. The Open Society Foundations are committed to initiating and supporting efforts to improve the situation of underserved communities across a range of issues and by a variety of means. By shaping public policies that assure greater fairness in political, legal, and economic systems and safeguard fundamental rights, the Foundations help to support vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens.”

– OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS
Aryeh Neier, President

“Through our 32 years of experience making grants, we’ve found that supporting grassroots efforts led by those most affected by injustice and inequality is the most efficient and effective strategy for creating change. Focusing on those grassroots organizations that use advocacy and organizing strategies has resulted in the biggest positive impact on marginalized communities.”

– SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND NORTHWEST
Zeke Spier, Executive Director

To read statements from other grantmakers about why they’ve signed on to Philanthropy’s Promise, please visit philanthropypromise.org.

“With limited resources, McKnight’s programs seek to provide support where we believe we can have the greatest impact. In many cases, this requires that we attend to underserved communities. ... Additionally, McKnight’s board has long recognized the power of pursuing lasting, systemic change through advocacy, community organizing, and civic engagement.”

– THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION, Kate Wolford, President

“At United Way, we have come to understand that we must be focused on scale and lasting change since we work in a region that is larger than most states. While it is important to fund great programs on the ground, lasting change is accomplished through linking those investments to systemic changes and influencing public dollars and policies.”

– UNITED WAY GREATER LOS ANGELES
Elise Buik, President & CEO

“Although Wallace does not categorize its work in NCRP’s terms, Wallace devotes substantially all of its assets to improve learning and enrichment opportunities for children, particularly those living in distressed urban areas, and expects to continue to do so. This work grows out of our vision that all children should have access to good schools and a variety of enrichment programs in and outside of school that prepare them to be contributing members of their communities.”

– THE WALLACE FOUNDATION
M. Christine DeVita, President