

Foundation Support of Activism Is a Good Investment

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A new report that documents the dollar benefits that advocacy groups provide to society should put to rest much of the anxiety that foundations have had about supporting activist nonprofit activities.

At a time when the drop in endowment values has prodded foundations to look more carefully than ever at the way they spend money, the findings demonstrate that a greater investment in advocacy work will help foundations make every dollar go further. A tiny fraction of all foundation spending today goes to advocacy activities.

The study by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, conducted and written by Lisa Rangelhelli with help from other staff members of the organization, documents extraordinary accomplishments by 14 New Mexico groups from 2003 through 2007.

The report demonstrates that it is possible to measure the difference made by advocacy campaigns and other efforts to mobilize citizens to influence public policies.

The study's findings are striking: It says that for every one of the \$16.6-million the organization invested in advocacy work, New Mexico's citizens received \$157 in benefits. Now that is true bang for the buck.

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