

Q&A With Aaron Dorfman, National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy

By Matt Sinclair

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The [National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy](#) was created thirty-five years ago to encourage foundations to do more to address public needs that were then -- and often still are -- underfunded. The organization works to promote 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.

Aaron Dorfman has served as executive director of NCRP since 2007. Prior to joining the organization, he worked for fifteen years as a community organizer, spearheading grassroots campaigns to improve public education, expand public transportation for low-income residents, and improve access to affordable housing.

Recently, PND spoke with Dorfman about the public education crisis in America, how foundation support of nonprofit advocacy has changed in recent years, and the likelihood of new legislation affecting nonprofits and the nonprofit sector.

Philanthropy News Digest: [Confronting Systematic Inequity in Education](#), a recent NCRP report written by

[evin Welner](#)

, a professor of education at the

[University of Colorado at Boulder](#)

, and

[Amy Farley](#)

, a doctoral candidate at CU's

[School of Education](#)

, argues that the American public education system is in crisis and that foundations working in the education space are likely to have the greatest impact if they focus on marginalized populations. That's difficult, expensive work. How much of an education funder's grantmaking budget should be devoted to educational equity and access efforts?

Aaron Dorfman: I agree it's difficult and expensive work. And I think most education funders are in it for the long haul and want to see long-term, sustainable results. But there's no right way to determine how much of a particular funder's portfolio should be devoted to these kinds of efforts. At the end of the day, it has a lot to do with the comfort level of trustees when it comes to funding advocacy and focusing on long-term change versus achieving short-term results. One of the points we were trying to raise in the report is that, on the whole, there is far too little funding for efforts that confront systemic inequity in education. So I would encourage each foundation to think about its own long-term goals and how the high-impact strategies offered in the report might help them achieve those goals.

[Read the full interview](#) .