

A "Promise" to Make Charitable Dollars Work Harder

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Some charitable foundations which receive and grant millions of dollars of donations in Washington are making a public pledge to do more to benefit those who need help the most. They've agreed to allocate at least half of their grant money to causes that benefit the poor, the elderly, and other groups that are struggling - and one-quarter of their dollars to end the root causes of social inequities.

For the Social Justice Fund Northwest, signing the pledge fits well with what it already does, according to executive director Zeke Spier. Helping with immediate needs such as homelessness is important, he says, but only part of the bigger picture.

"The challenge is that, if we don't actually invest in organizations working to change those underlying issues, then we just get caught in a perpetual cycle of continually trying to keep one finger in the dike without actually fixing it."

The new pledge, called "Philanthropy's Promise," is from the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. More than 60 charitable foundations have signed it so far this month.

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