

## For Immediate Release

March 4, 2009

### Large Foundations Fall Short in Supporting Vulnerable Groups

#### California lawmaker backs new guidelines for U.S. grantmakers

Washington, D.C. - The nation's largest foundations only gave \$1 out of \$3 to benefit the economically and socially disadvantaged, according to the *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best: Benchmarks to Assess and Enhance Grantmaker Impact*, released yesterday by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

The *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best* is the first ever set of measurable guidelines that foundations and other institutional grantmakers can use to maximize their contributions to society and to make a positive difference in the world today. One of the benchmarks emphasizes support for underserved communities.

"Especially now, when every foundation dollar is at a premium due to the recession, where the money goes becomes an even more critical issue," said Aaron Dorfman, executive director of NCRP. "So we are asking our nation's foundations to renew their commitment to help our nation's underserved men, women and children. We all benefit when foundations invest in helping vulnerable populations."

Interwoven throughout the *Criteria* is the concept that foundation assets are partially public dollars due to their tax-exempt nature.

"Taxpayers have rewarded [foundations] for being there for America," said Representative Xavier Becerra (D-Calif.) at yesterday's unveiling. "At the same time, those of us at Congress have an obligation as the representatives of the people to make sure that their money-taxpayer

money-are being well invested."

Rep. Becerra is a senior member of the House Ways and Means Committee.

NCRP analyzed the giving trends of more than 800 of the country's largest foundations from 2004 - 2006 based on a dataset developed with the Foundation Center.

Results show that less than \$5 billion out of nearly \$15 billion in foundation grants from 2004 - 2006 were given to nonprofits in support of marginalized population groups. NCRP recognized in its report the exemplary work of the leading foundation supporters of these groups:

### **Marginalized Population**

#### **Top Foundation Supporters (by % of grant dollars for the benefit of the specific marginalized g**

#### **State**

Economically disadvantaged

Corella & Bertram F. Bonner Foundation

NJ

The Melville Charitable Trust

MA

Racial & ethnic minorities

Kimberly-Clark Foundation, Inc.

TX

Marguerite Casey Foundation

WA

Women & girls

Avon Foundation

NY

Fischer Family Foundation

KY

People with AIDS

John M. Lloyd Foundation

CA

The Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, Inc.

NY

People with disabilities

The James H. and Alice Teubert Charitable Trust

WV

Lavelle Fund for the Blind, Inc.

NY

Elderly & senior citizens

The Retirement Research Foundation

IL

The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Inc.

NY

Immigrant & refugee communities

Foundation for Child Development

NY

New York Foundation

NY

Crime & abuse victims

The Goldsbury Foundation

TX

The Sunshine Lady Foundation, Inc.

NC

Offenders & ex-offenders

JEHT Foundation

NY

Lord Rudolph Spanier Foundation, Inc.

VT

Single parents

Woods Charitable Fund, Inc.

NE

Mathile Family Foundation

OH

LGBTQ communities

The Gill Foundation

CO

Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund

CA

Many foundation leaders believe that their dollars are "private" funds and object to being told how to spend "their" money. There are, however, those who see the important role the sector plays in strengthening the country's democracy.



"Philanthropy certainly has the resources and potential to help tackle the deeper, structural causes of inequality and injustice," said Luz Vega-Marquis, president and CEO of the Marguerite Casey Foundation. "NCRP's criteria are exactly what foundations need to transform our institutions and grantmaking in ways that serve lower-income families and contribute to a just and equitable society."

The *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best* focuses on values, effectiveness, ethics and commitment. It tackles hotly contested issues like payout, general support vs. program grants, board composition, compensation and disclosure. It also looks at multi-year funding, partnerships, administrative requirements and mission investing.

*The Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best is available for free download at NCRP's website, where you can also view the list of endorsers and order your copies. An online self-assessment test for foundations also will be available in the coming weeks.*

*The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP) in Washington, D.C. is a national watchdog, research and advocacy organization that 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. For more information, visit [www.ncrp.org](http://www.ncrp.org).*

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