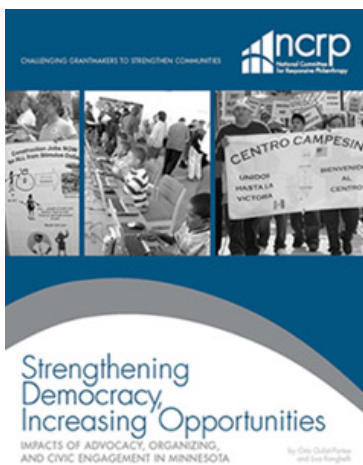


For Immediate Release

New Research Tracks Impact of Investment from Foundations in Advocacy and Organizing in Minnesota's communities \$138 return on every dollar invested in systemic change



Washington, D.C. (September 30, 2009) --When foundations and other donors in Minnesota provided funding to 15 nonprofits to bring about systemic, long-term change, Minnesota's citizens and communities benefited from a return on that investment of \$138 for every dollar spent.

'That is the finding of a new report from the [National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy](http://www.ncrp.org) (www.ncrp.org)

) released today that documents the impact of the advocacy and organizing efforts of 15 nonprofit organizations in Minnesota that received a total of \$16.5 million over a five-year period from 2004-2008. The local and state organizations and their allies sampled in the research leveraged millions in foundation resources to secure \$2.28 billion in benefits for Minnesotans.

"When nonprofit organizations and foundations partner to tackle urgent issues in the state, they can achieve tremendous success," said Aaron Dorfman, executive director of NCRP. "It is especially effective when they use public policy advocacy and engage directly the very people affected in the problem-solving process."

Documented impacts of funding

NCRP researchers documented concrete improvements in the lives of Minnesotans from partnerships between foundations and nonprofits. Examples are:

- Students of color and immigrants gained access to college.
- Formerly incarcerated people improved their job opportunities, increasing individual earning potential and economic benefits to their communities.
- People living with mental illnesses and their families received greater support and access to care thus enabling them to lead more productive and fulfilling lives.
- Workers secured increased wages and better working conditions.
- Lower-income residents accessed affordable housing and public transit.

Nonprofit groups brought thousands of residents into public policy conversations by forging coalitions among organizations to build solutions for shared problems. They organized and educated members of the public and elected officials on issues, testifying at public meetings and the state capitol, meeting with legislators, and working to pass new laws and to build compliance for laws on the books.

Foundations to gather

"The report brings the nonprofit perspective to the foundation community and demonstrates how Minnesota grantmakers can build on their success by partnering with communities, policymakers, and national funders to meet the challenges facing the state," said Lisa Rangelhelli, senior associate of NCRP and co-author of the report along with Gita Gulati-Partee, founder of OpenSource Leadership Strategies.

Jon Pratt, executive director the Minnesota Council of Nonprofit agrees. "Minnesota's quality of life has been shaped by many people, often through community organizations with the support of philanthropy," said Pratt. "Having the resources for people to work together on some of the toughest problems has made a huge difference to this state."

For this study, researchers asked the 15 nonprofits to identify foundations that supported their policy engagement efforts. The Otto Bremer Foundation, Headwaters Foundation for Justice, and The Minneapolis Foundation were among those most frequently mentioned by the groups.

Along with releasing the research, NCRP will host a gathering of foundations today to discuss the results and share ideas on how to better document, communicate, and achieve impact using policy advocacy, community organizing and civic engagement. The event is co-sponsored by The Minnesota Council on Foundations and MCN.

"A growing number of grantmakers recognize that public policy work is an effective strategy to address societal issues and advance their missions," said Bill King, president of MCF. "At this convening our members will learn about new ways to partner with nonprofits to achieve

common goals.

NCRP has previously completed the same research for the states of North Carolina and New Mexico. All reports, which are part of the " [Strengthening Democracy, Increasing Opportunities](#) " series (www.ncrp.org/campaigns-research-policy/communities/gcip), are available online for free download.

The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy 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. Visit www.ncrp.org .

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15 Minnesota nonprofit organizations included in the report:

- Advocating Change Together
- Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
- Centro Campesino
- Churches United in Ministry
- Council on Crime and Justice
- Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota
- Indigenous Peoples Task Force
- ISAIAH
- Minnesota AIDS Project
- Minnesota Minority Education Partnership
- Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Minnesota
- Range Women's Advocates
- Somali Action Alliance
- Three Rivers Community Action

