

(This press release has been updated with notations to correct a typographical error on March 15, 2010. The correction is marked in red.)

For Immediate Release

Nonprofits Bring Tremendous Benefits to Communities Through Citizen Involvement in Politics

Increase in wages, lower health care cost, affordable housing among real impact of strategic foundation funding



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Washington, D.C. (March 2, 2009) - Americans received extraordinary benefits from the policy

advocacy and community organizing efforts by nonprofit organizations in their area, funded by foundations and other donors, according to a series of reports by the [National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy](http://www.ncrp.org)

(
<http://www.ncrp.org>
).

Research on nearly (70)**60** nonprofits from New Mexico, North Carolina, Minnesota and Los Angeles County over a five year period showed that these groups combined generated nearly \$14 billion worth of benefits for their diverse communities, and many other non-monetary gains. The return for every dollar invested in these groups ranged from \$89 to a staggering \$157.

The latest study on 15 Los Angeles County nonprofit organizations found that from 2004-08, area groups generated nearly \$7 billion in benefits for local citizens, including \$2.6 billion in higher wages, \$2.2 billion in health care savings and more than \$2 billion from increased use of public transit, construction of new schools and expanded affordable housing. These benefits were the direct result of community involvement in public policy.

"While high profile commentators decry 'community organizing,' this report clearly demonstrates that such activity delivers enormous benefits to communities. On every issue of concern to residents of Los Angeles County, from clean air to immigration, from equality to education, foundation support for community-based activist organizations yields positive results," said Aaron Dorfman, executive director of NCRP. "Foundation support turns indifference into democracy and the benefits of a thriving democracy are indeed substantial."

Strengthening Democracy, Increasing Opportunities: Impacts of Advocacy, Organizing and Civic Engagement in Los Angeles County, issued by NCRP, charts a dramatic, substantial return on investments in policy engagement. For every dollar foundations and other donors provided to community organizations engaged in advocacy and organizing, the funded groups realized \$91 in benefits to the communities they serve.

In addition, the report tracks such non-monetized benefits as protection of voting rights, improved working conditions and expanded, more responsive service delivery to such marginalized groups as lesbians and gays and residents with limited English proficiency.

"The report demonstrates that foundations best serve their own objectives and generate the greatest impact on communities when we support advocacy and organizing at the grassroots level. There is no doubt that the impact could expand even more if we work in concert and focus resources through strategic grantmaking," said Kafi Blumenfield, CEO and executive director of the Liberty Hill Foundation, a Los Angeles-based foundation that provided seed money and supported a majority of the organizations featured in the report.

The report, written by NCRP Senior Research Associate Lisa Rangelhelli and Research Associate Julia Craig, recommends that foundations increase grant funding for advocacy and organizing, help educate donors about the benefits of advocacy funding, support effective collaboration among community organizations, collaborate with other grant makers to leverage resources and invest in the infrastructure and organizational capacity of grassroots organizations over sustained periods of time.

"Los Angeles is richer, stronger, healthier and infinitely more democratic because foundations have learned that advocacy, organizing and civic engagement really do make a difference in the lives of everyone," says Stewart Kwoh, executive director of L.A.'s Asian Pacific American Legal Center, one of the 15 organizations surveyed in the study. "When foundations support strategic grassroots initiatives, every resident of Los Angeles benefits."

The reports on [New Mexico](#) , [North Carolina](#) and [Minnesota](#) , and a [summary of findings](#) from all four study sites are available online for free download. Research is currently underway for areas in the Pacific Northwest and Pennsylvania.

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 <http://www.ncrp.org>

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- [Summary of Findings from New Mexico, North Carolina, Minnesota and Los Angeles County](#)

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- [Lisa Ranghelli](#) , Co-author and Senior Research Associate, National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy
- [Julia Craig](#) , Co-author and Research Associate, National Committee for Responsive

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