

A "Promise" to Make Charitable Dollars Work Harder

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Some of the charitable foundations that grant millions of dollars in Oregon are making a public pledge to do more to benefit those who need help the most.

While doing good by investing wisely is the goal of most such organizations, more than 60 - including four in Oregon - are taking an additional step: They have 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 to target one-quarter of their dollars on programs to end the root causes of social inequities.

Suk ("Sook") Rhee, vice president of planning and operations with the Northwest Health Foundation, says the Philanthropy's Promise pledge fits well with what her organization already does.

"For us, it just makes sense, because philanthropy has a different role to play in society, and that's one of the best roles we can play. If we never focused on the root causes we would, by default, only be addressing the symptoms - and what kind of declaration is that?"

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