



Fact Sheet: Giving More Than Grants

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Financial help is certainly critical to a nonprofit's success. However, when a foundation opts to give more than money, both the foundation and grantee benefit. Grantees can gain immeasurable assistance from a foundation's local knowledge, governance best practices, and funding network. At the same time, foundations leverage their funds, augmenting their impact.

Sharing local knowledge

Many community foundations produce Vital Signs, a publication that leverages local knowledge to measure the vitality of their community and support actions towards improving our collective quality of life. Vital Signs uses local knowledge to measure the vitality of a community and supports action towards improving collective quality of life. Local data gathered through the program is used to support evidence-based, locally relevant solutions to improve the quality of life at the community level. Vital Signs aims to inspire civic engagement, to provide focus for public debate, and to help a range of actors' act and direct resources where they will have the greatest impact.

Foundations are using the data in the report to host Vital Conversations, community dialogues about issues identified in the report. The Windsor-Essex Community Foundation aligned Vital Signs data collection with their granting allowing them to better target community needs by modifying their granting applications to match community identified needs and priorities. The results from the second Vital Signs report in 2013 produced by the Community Foundation of South Okanagan Similkameen led directly to the creation of the Youth Engagement Strategy (YES) Project. This became a community development initiative of the foundation. The YES Project generated more than \$2 million in donations to the foundation over the next 6 years and culminated in the foundation's purchase of a 21,000 square foot building that is leased out to 5 youth-serving agencies. Penticton now has a self-sustaining youth services hub.



Demonstrating governance best practices

Several community foundations are accredited through Imagine Canada's Standards Program. This program offers a Canada-wide set of standards for charities and non-profits designed to strengthen their capacity in five fundamental areas: board governance, financial accountability and transparency, fundraising, staff management and volunteer involvement. Any organization may use these standards to improve and monitor its practices. A role that many foundations play is to increase the capacity of local non-profits in their community, including their capacity to be well-governed. Accredited foundations are encouraging local organization to use the standards and to share with their community how the standards are a governance best practice. The Muskoka Community Foundation annually hosts a Governance Workshop for local board members and agency managers. Attendees receive an overview of good governance, accountability, transparency, and fiduciary responsibility. They also review the role of the Board and management, outline the duties of a Director and how to fulfill the role of a Board member, as well as discuss the legal duties and liabilities of Directors and Boards. These topics will provide a background on the purpose of Boards and identify key roles for Directors

Participating in a funding network

Many community foundations are part of their local funding network. These networks, comprised of public and private funders, provide grant seekers the opportunity to learn about funding opportunities in their community, introduce themselves to local funders and also connect with like-minded organizations. In 2016, The Oakville Foundation convened a group, now called The Halton Granters' Roundtable, which is a network of organizations that provide financial support for charitable causes within the Halton region. This Roundtable was created to identify ways to collaborate, address priority needs in the community and create a more substantive impact to benefit local charities and the people they serve.

Some funding networks also provide resources for local organizations. The Greater Victoria Community Funders' Network provides a regular opportunity for local grant makers to share best practices and collaborate on different initiatives. In 2018 the Network updated their Grant Writing Handbook which is intended to provide information that organizations may find useful as they prepare grant applications.

Leveraging their funds

There are times when a grantee is looking for funding for a project that does not fit within the foundation's grants program criteria. Or if it does, the amount of the foundation's grant is only a



portion of the total revenue needed for the project to move forward. In these instances, foundations have been known to connect with their donor directed fundholders or other granting organization who have interests similar to the grantee. For a number of years, the Toronto Foundation published a list of projects which they supported but which needed additional funds. They then shared this list with their fund holders.

Community foundations are more than just grant makers when it comes to supporting and building their community. Foundations are here for good, forever and the more that they can share their knowledge and resources the more that they will continue to be an integral part of their community, long into the future.