

PLEASE ROUTE:

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BUILDING COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

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PHILANTHROPIC VENTURES FOUNDATION

GRANTMAKING CONSULTING PROGRAM
BILL SOMERVILLE, PRESIDENT

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DAVID AND LUCILE PACKARD FOUNDATION

EVALUATION

Evaluation work with foundations is a bifurcated process. It involves a judgment of who should get money, “the before process,” and an assessment of how they spent the funds, the “after process.”

The “before process” - who should get grants involves:

- The application should give a full, rich, description of what is going to be done and why funding is needed.
- A site visit to the applicant to ask questions missed by the proposal.
- Calls to reference persons to inquire about the applicant and the proposed project.
- Possible calls to colleagues who have funded the applicant.
- A literature review as necessary to shed light on the application and give perspective.

All of these processes are then condensed into a report by the foundation staff which is sent to distribution committee members at least two weeks in advance of a grants committee meeting.

The request and report are discussed by the grants committee utilizing the insight, experience, and intuition of the members, and a decision is made.

It is interesting to note that in the final analysis the funding decision is a subjective one - Do you like the proposal? Do you think it is a good idea? Do you think it is going to work?

All of the above work is an effort to add objectivity to the process.

After the grant is made a new evaluation process begins - the “after process.”

SAMPLE POLICY ON EVALUATION

Evaluation is a critical component of grantmaking effectiveness.

It is the policy of the Foundation that evaluation is an integral part of the operation and that evaluation is the primary means to measure operational effectiveness and grantmaking impact.

The Foundation conducts continuing evaluation processes, which include:

- Visits to grantees, often on an unannounced basis.
- Requirement that grantees send a narrative regarding their progress.
- Requirement grantees send reports on how the grant money was used, at times requiring receipts. (On a regular basis review grantee files and if a report has not been received contact the grantee.)
- Provide disposable cameras to grantees to take photographs of their work and send to the Foundation.
- Hire professional evaluators to assess particular giving programs and take random samplings of grantees for interviews and visits.
- Utilize interns to look at a particular program and summarize, catalog, and assess the types of grants made and their impact.

Note: evaluation of a grant is not necessarily determined by the size of the grant. It is the policy of the Foundation to evaluate all grants when feasible.

From the information gathered through these evaluation processes, the Foundation can begin to assess grant impact in the community. Such things as demand for grants in a particular subject area, narrative response from grantees, and findings by evaluators all speak to impact.

Impact can be gauged by positive feedback received, timeliness of grant, point of intervention, ease of application, and ability to improve one's program. Impact relates to the grantee being able to innovate, try new approaches, be venturesome. Impact includes reaching out to new population groups so that grantees have a diversity of clients. Impact moves grantee clients towards becoming self-sufficient.

EVALUATION REGARDING DONOR ADVISE GRANTS

Most donor advise grants are not evaluated by the Foundation. The policy is if the donor recommended a grant, the Foundation will verify that the grant is charitable but no further follow up will be conducted after the grant is made – regardless of the amount of the grant.

If the Foundation initiates an idea and a donor recommends funding from a donor advise fund, the Foundation will conduct an evaluation, and keep the donor informed.

TEACHING AT LOCAL COLLEGES

Foundation personnel, executive directors and program officers, should consider conducting courses on philanthropy at the college level. These people have a world of knowledge to share with young people and there is a great need to bring more young people into philanthropy.

Stanford University offers a course on Community Development and Philanthropy through its Department of Urban Studies. The course is taught by the Director of the Haas Center for Public Service and a foundation executive (the Editor of this bulletin). The students are allocated \$20,000 to grant to local programs.

Similar courses are now being taught at USC, Brown, and University of California - Berkeley. A family foundation has offered to give each of these Universities \$20,000 to use in their course. Each of these courses involves a community foundation and the University.

Persons to contact for further information and course materials:

Nadinne Cruz, Director, Haas Center for Public Service, Stanford University
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PHILANTHROPIC VENTURES FOUNDATION'S GRANTMAKING CONSULTING PROGRAM

PVF has provided on-site consulting to over 245 community foundations throughout the USA, working with staff, board members and the community to improve grantmaking and operations. The Consulting Program is in its 9th year of operation and has been funded by The David and Lucile Packard Foundation since its inception. The PVF consulting fee is paid for by The Packard Foundation. Participating community foundations pay for travel, meals, lodging and a program officer training fee. If your Foundation is interested in receiving consulting services, contact Bill Somerville for more information at 510-645-1890. The services offered include:

- **Program Audit and Evaluation** - Intensive 3-day on-site sessions focusing on analysis of foundation operations, grant making programs, public relations and internal procedures. Includes meetings with foundation board, grants committee, board chair, foundation staff, and executive director. Also included are meetings with funders, interviews with local media, and meetings with local non-profit organizations. The days are full and intense with the result being new enthusiasm, new expectations and new ideas.
- **Program Officer Training** - 2 full days of training for foundation personnel, involving problem solving, interaction of participants and exchange of ideas, accompanied by 500-page reference manual created by PVF. Participants analyze actual grant requests, evaluate and make grant making decisions and engage in role-playing.
- **Board Retreats** - Facilitator for Board Retreats (1/2 to 2 days). Work through issues facing foundations including growth, planning & community outreach. Facilitator draws out strengths and weaknesses, serving as guide through strategic planning process.