



Giving Forum

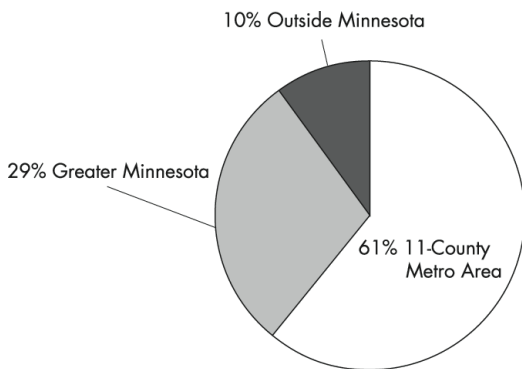
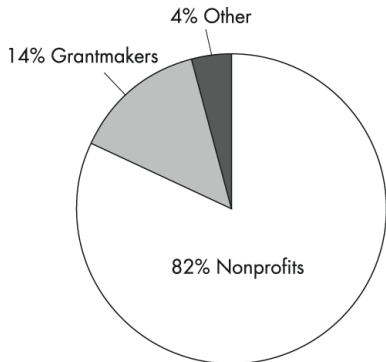
Giving Forum is a unique source of information on a topic essential to nonprofits: grantmaking. Published quarterly, *Giving Forum* features original in-depth articles that explore current giving issues, perspectives of Minnesota funders, and MCF research.

In addition to special themes, popular sections in each issue include: online resources, funding trends, staffing changes, professional development opportunities for nonprofits, recent grant awards, and grantmaking news.

Wide Readership

Giving Forum's 16,000 recipients include managers and staff of a wide range of nonprofits, including education, youth, health and human services, public policy, arts and culture, the environment, international affairs and religious organizations; all leaders and staff of Minnesota's top foundations and corporate giving programs; nonprofit sector consultants; government officials; and other community leaders.

Giving Forum Circulation



GIVING FORUM

Power of Partnering: Grantmakers Use Collective Action to Amplify Impact

BY CHRISTINE MURAKAMI NOONAN

"The grant that glues the tiles together is where the power is. It allows us to come up with bigger approaches and bigger solutions to social issues." —Cary Eise Bergsjoh, Hawai'i Community Foundation (The Nonprofit Quarterly, Winter 2008)

The belief that more can be done by utilizing the "power of the grant" is leading to substantial and innovative collaborations among Minnesota grantmakers, nonprofits and the public and private sectors. This work is not easy, though. Partners must address power dynamics, acknowledge the value that each organization contributes, establish clear expectations and processes, and develop strategies to leverage and maximize resources. The effort is well worth it, grantmakers say, because real collaborations can tackle tremendous social issues facing Minnesotans with greater impact than when separate "tiles" act alone.

How Can We Accomplish the Greatest Good?

"We start our work by asking this," says Jim Hoelhan, president/CEO, Blandin Foundation. Exploring this question has meant that partnership work is now embedded in Blandin's culture. "One of our very few stated operating principles emphasizes partnerships to leverage the most out of our resources in rural Minnesota," he explains. "Partnering is not an accident or add-on. We look for great partners and opportunities, so we can accomplish more for our communities."

Working together is valued and prevalent at HBM as well. "We can't do it alone," stresses Valerie Halverson Pace, HBM Corporation's West Region manager of corporate citizenship and corporate affairs. "The reality is, even in business, HBM doesn't do it alone. The world is bigger than any one of us, and there isn't an unlimited bucket of money in business either," she continues. "We need to find ways to work with each other successfully, or we can't get the work done."

Do Funders Tilt the Table?

"The huge tilt," as Kevlin Talata, Hawai'i Community Foundation, calls it in the Winter 2008 issue of *The Nonprofit Quarterly*, is the perceived power differential or power dynamic in the grantee-granter relationship. Is it possible to have true collaboration when one party holds the purse strings?

If funding is viewed as only one tile in the collaboration amongst several at the table, then the answer is yes.

"Each organization brings something to the table, whether it be relationships, connections, knowledge, influence or the ability to leverage other resources," notes Jill Shannon, director of community partnerships, St. Croix Valley Foundation. "We're all the same that way, yet we teach our communities differently. Whether a grantee or a grantor, we can work together to accomplish a common goal. The task at hand is to see what each organization can bring forward to reach that shared goal."

But it is a challenge, Shannon acknowledges, to keep the table from tilting. "I repeat a single message, 'We're here to help you achieve your goals. What can we do to support you?' It's not about being responsive to the funder. Rather, we con-



At the Minnesota State Fair, 4 Hers demonstrated fun science projects and games using www.triScience.org. Thanks to a partnership among BHM, 4 H, Centro and the University of Minnesota's Digital Divide Initiative. This partnership continues through 4 H's Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) national initiative and the creation of a TriScience club.

time to reframe the relationship to focus on what matters for the nonprofits with which we work."

Hoelhan also challenges the notion that the power dynamic is always about money. "In some cases, we may have more money, but another partner may have more experience, and another may have more knowledge. Every partner brings something unique, and we recognize that what each brings to the collaboration is just as valuable as money."

"We do not have all the answers, and money by itself accomplishes nothing."

—Jim Hoelhan, Blandin Foundation

Furthermore, he explains that the Blandin Foundation strives for a culture of humility, engagement and hospitality to address issues of power and balance: "Humbly, because we do not have all the answers, and money by itself accomplishes nothing. We truly are humbled by what our partners accomplish. Engagement, because we value cooperation and collaboration. Hospitality, because we try to create a culture in which everyone is welcome to share

ideas with us and feels comfortable telling us how we're doing. We frequently ask 'How are we doing?' and we mean it."

For effective collaborations, partners not only must acknowledge the value each brings to the table, grantmakers must commit to listening sincerely with the intention of learning, and nonprofits must not be afraid to speak honestly and directly.

Quickly Funding Critical Needs

When the Carl and Eloise Pohlman Family Foundation funded its \$20 million Economic Crisis Initiative last spring, the money needed to be distributed quickly. "We knew that continued job loss was leading to more deterioration," explains Marina Muñoz Lyon, vice president, Pohlman Family Foundation. "Pohlman family members wanted these funds put to work as quickly as possible. We didn't have the staff or systems set up to do that, so we partnered with intermediaries who had the expertise to create programs with us and share information with agencies that needed it."

The foundation turned to MAP for Nonprofits to administer part of the initiative. "MAP is a good pulse-on needs in the nonprofit sector," Lyon says. "Many nonprofits were reducing expenses because

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Giving Forum 2010 Editorial Calendar

Spring 2010: Catalyzing Philanthropy

Charitable giving is a \$5.5 billion annual endeavor in Minnesota. How can grantmakers and nonprofits make the most of that investment, as well as expand philanthropy to new, more effective levels? This issue of *Giving Forum* will explore innovations in giving technology, new roles for donor-advised funds, mission-related investing, foundation formation, and other initiatives to promote philanthropy and redefine how and what we give.

Summer 2010: Public Policy and Philanthropy

In these tough times, an optimistic "can-do" movement is taking hold as foundation, nonprofit and government representatives roll up their sleeves, join forces and share resources to tackle immense social issues. Locally and nationally, unprecedented efforts are underway to leverage grassroots advocacy and public policy action to influence change in the public sector. This issue of *Giving Forum* will dig into philanthropy's increasing participation in public policy initiatives for the betterment of the community.

Fall 2010: Focus on Family and Private Independent Foundations

Of the approximately 1,450 foundations in Minnesota, 85 percent are private family and independent foundations. These foundations award more than \$500 million annually, and of the various grantmaker types, they are the largest funders of the environment/animals, international affairs, health, and human services subject areas. Some of these foundations have endured for generations, while others are only months old. This issue of *Giving Forum* will delve into what inspired these individuals to create a foundation, the impact of their work, and the legacy they hope to create.

For more information:
Contact Wendy Wehr, 612.335.3597, wwehr@mcf.org.

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