The Colorado Health Foundation™

2015 Grantee Perception Report

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In 2015 the Foundation surveyed grantees to better gauge our overall impact as a philanthropic organization. The survey was conducted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) and was intended to help answer:

- How much impact do grantees believe the Foundation is having in the fields and communities in which we work? How can we have more?
- How do grantees experience their relationship with the Foundation and what suggestions do they have for improvement?
- What do grantees find most helpful and most frustrating about the Foundation's application and reporting process?
- Are we communicating Foundation goals and strategies effectively?

CEP produced a 2015 Grantee Perception Report that compares our results to a large dataset of more than 250 funders to help us judge our performance relative to other foundations and our overall performance as a philanthropic organization.

Overview of Findings

There are some positive results to share, including:

- The Foundation rated higher than 70 percent of funders in CEP's dataset for its impact on grantees' fields.
- The Foundation rated in the top 20 percent of funders for its impact on grantees' organizations.
- When asked to describe the Foundation in one word, grantees most commonly describe us as "supportive."
- Overall, Foundation grantees receive a higher than typical monetary return on the hours they invest in the Foundation's processes over the lifetime of their grant.
- Grantees provided ratings that are higher than typical for the extent to which the Foundation has affected public policy in their fields.
- Grantees voiced deep appreciation for their program officers and for Foundation processes in the comments section.

The results also point to many things that we can do better as a Foundation, including:

- We need to increase our understanding of the fields in which we work. Grantees rated the Foundation's understanding of their fields lower than typical.
- We rank low (bottom 25 percent) compared to other funders regarding our openness to grantees' ideas about our strategy.
- The Foundation is rated lower than typical for its understanding of grantees' local communities. Grantees who work in rural areas rate the Foundation significantly lower than those who characterize their work as statewide.
- The Foundation receives ratings in the bottom 10 percent of funders for its understanding of the social, cultural and socioeconomic factors that affect grantees' work.

Moving Forward

We use a variety of tools to achieve impact, such as program-related investments, policy and advocacy and communications The Grantee Perception Report provides important insight into how we are doing as a foundation. In some ways, we consider it a grade on a larger report card of our progress toward our mission of improving the health and health care of all Coloradans. Along with the report, we gather information about our overall impact via ad hoc surveys and third-party evaluation efforts. Together, all of these tools help us understand our impact, as well as what we can do better. We are committed to improving the current results and sharing the "how" with you.

Following are recommendations that CEP provided us, along with specific actions we intend to take:

- **Seek opportunities for grantee engagement** that drive and demonstrate a deeper understanding of their fields and incorporate grantees' ideas and concerns into future grantmaking strategies and approaches.
- **Learn from and with our grantees to build our understanding of the fields in which they work**.
    - We are committed to finding the most useful practices for seeking input and sharing our learnings and reflections.
- **Consider where the Foundation can build a stronger understanding of grantees' local communities and contexts**, particularly for those working in rural areas.
    - We've identified community engagement as a key priority.
- **Ensure staff have opportunities to engage with grantees** to create a stronger shared understanding of grantees' goals, strategies and the challenges their organizations face.
- **Facilitate regular staff conversations about barriers that hinder and how to facilitate stronger relationships with grantees**, and how these challenges might be addressed. Program staff have already begun having these

conversations and we plan to continue them.

- **Review and refine our process for increased continuity and robust knowledge transfer during moments of staff transition.**
    - Based on feedback from a 2010 Grantee Perception Report, we developed a process for transitioning grants between program staff and will revisit that process to ensure we are effectively transitioning relationships.
- **Strive to communicate clearly with understandable and timely messages to grantees about organizational changes.**
    - We know we can always improve on how and what we communicate, and are currently revamping some of our communications tools in order to provide the most transparency possible.
- **Discuss reports/evaluations with grantees.**
    - We are committed to timely review of reports and communicating with grantees about the reports they submit.
- **Consider how to mitigate pressure to modify programs or projects in order to receive funding through current opportunities.**
    - We launched a Special Projects Program designed to support the diverse needs and opportunities across Colorado's communities that drive health. It was also a way for the Foundation to identify new partners and help us understand how to support solutions over time.

If you have questions, please contact Show email, vice president of philanthropy at Show phone