

Grassroots Fundraising Journal

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On Our Cover

San Diego-based activist and community organizer Kim Moore, photographed at the Movement for Black Lives Convening in Cleveland, July 2015. The gathering brought together nearly 1,000 Black people from across the United States to build shared consciousness and organizing strategies to counter anti-Black racism. William Cordery discusses the rapid resource mobilization to support the event in our feature article, "Resourcing the Movement for Black Lives." Photo by Shawn Escoffery: shawnescoffery.com and distantdreams.me.

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The Power of Relationships

I'M HUMBLLED BY THE HONOR of introducing myself to you as GIFT's newest staff member, and thrilled by the opportunity to dream and build with you in my role as program director. I was adopted into the GIFT family as a participant in our Fundraiser in Training internship, just over 10 years ago. During the years the internship program was active it helped birth over 100 social justice fundraisers—some of the fiercest resource mobilizers I know.

Through the years, I've served GIFT in several capacities, including as a program participant, a regular donor, a dedicated advocate, and an active volunteer. In kind, the GIFT family has very intentionally carved out and held space for me to learn, practice, grow, and mentor comrades on my journey to becoming the servant-leader I aspire to be. I live GIFT's values every day in my work to push resources to communities and grassroots groups toeing the line for equity and justice across issues, borders and cultures.

I believe the power to change our world is proportional to the depth of our relationships with one another and the systems and institutions we create out of those relationships. As the most harmful impacts of rapidly shifting global politics in an increasingly interconnected world resonate across our communities, it's imperative that we reexamine (and redefine where necessary) the relationships that sustain our organizing for racial, economic and social justice. The most powerful relationships we can strive for are those that shorten the distance between us, bringing us closer to our shared vision.

In that spirit, and for the first time in the 35-year history of the *Journal*, we're dedicating an entire issue to the evolving relationship between institutional philanthropy and grassroots fundraising for movement building. *Journal* Editorial Board member William Cordery opens the issue with an in-depth look at the role philanthropic institutions have played in supporting the Movement for Black Lives, and how they can be more effective and responsive partners to social movements. Next, Alex Parker-Guerrero of Hispanics in Philanthropy, shares the why and how of their crowdfunding platform HIPGive, including tips for success in your own online fundraising campaigns. And because we understand the particular challenges grassroots groups can face when it comes to securing grants, Dana Textoris and Matt Carter of Grants-Plus share helpful advice for raising more foundation funds while staying true to your mission.

I hope you find the articles in this issue as informative and thought provoking as I do. We look forward to seeing many of you in Denver this summer where we'll continue these and other critical conversations about sustaining our movements for the long haul.

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SHAWN ESCOFFERY

America Wake Up is scrawled on an I-beam in the burnt out rubble that once was Beauty Town. The store was burnt down during the protest on Nov. 24, 2014.

Resourcing the Movement for Black Lives

By William Cordery

THE POLICE BRUTALITY AND IMPUNITY that led to the deaths of Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, LaQuan McDonald, and countless others have once again highlighted the importance of community organizing for social and structural change. With growing national attention on the Movement for Black Lives, a conversation has surfaced across the field of philanthropy on its role in supporting this movement. Funders are asking themselves how best to meet immediate and urgent needs of communities under attack while also building long-term infrastructure for communities to respond in the future.

The Movement for Black Lives and Black Lives Matter have afforded philanthropy an opportunity to rethink how to be more helpful to communities in peril. Over the past few years, we've

seen notable shifts in how donors and institutional funders move money to crises and burgeoning movements.

In 2012, the Solidaire network was established to organize donors to effectively respond to the sustainability needs of local protests connected to the Occupy Movement, as well as to deepen their analysis on vast income disparities. This network of individual donors has since broadened its frame to respond to social movements in a timely way, including worker justice, climate change, immigration, and anti-Black racism.

The uprisings in Ferguson and Baltimore were game changers for Solidaire. Last year, Solidaire moved more than \$300,000 to rapid response support of the Movement for Black Lives, distributing funds directly to groups in Ferguson, Baltimore, Minneapolis, and Chicago. Since officially launching in 2013, Solidaire

has moved more than a half million dollars to movement-building organizing, much of which went to local and state campaigns that traditional funders would not touch. It became clear to Solidaire members that standard philanthropic mechanisms to move resources in a timely and expedient way was best done by connecting conscious individuals with wealth to local community campaigns.

Last year, Resource Generation (RG)—an organization devoted to organizing young people with wealth and class privilege to utilize their resources for transformative and equitable shifts in power—successfully challenged itself and its members to deploy more than \$1 million in just nine months to support Black-led organizing for Black liberation after the death of Michael Brown. RG members were guided by a collective understanding that racialized violence and wealth accumulation are inextricably linked, and that wealthy people have a responsibility to counter this with their resources and platform. Equally important, RG members who made contributions also committed to a long-term process of combating anti-Black racism, following the leadership of those in directly-impacted communities, and leveraging their family and personal networks to support change.

RG members provided direct contributions for general operating funds to groups like the BlackOut Collective, the New Jim Crow Movement, and We Can't Breathe Political Action Committee, while forging meaningful relationships with their leadership and work.

North Star Fund also launched an initiative that moved individual donor funds directly and immediately to community groups to respond to police abuse in Black and marginalized communities. The Let Us Breathe Fund focused on New York City and distributed more than \$280,000 between April and September 2015.

Women Donors Network, a network of women philanthropists committed to collectively moving monetary and human capital to support progressive change, also joined the pledge to raise more than \$1 million for racial justice in the wake of the deaths of Mike Brown and Eric Garner. Resource Generation Executive Director Jessie Spector shares, “Individual donors can and do move so much faster and can be more nimble than foundations...this has become a call to action [from RG] for continued organizing across philanthropy at large.”

Institutional philanthropic organizations have begun to heed the call. Several funder tables have emerged to support the Movement for Black Lives, aiming to minimize the red tape and organizational muck that sometimes prohibit foundations from responding quickly to timely crises or social movements. Most



SHAWN ESCOFFERY

A demonstrator holds up a makeshift “Black Lives Matter” sign as she chants with the crowd of thousands slowly moving through the streets of downtown Manhattan. Dec. 14, 2014

of these funds rely on trusted movement leadership to keep their collective ear to the ground and to deploy the right amount of resources at the right time. Some of these funds have very simple application processes that can move the funds within a matter of days, rather than the weeks or months it usually takes. These funds include the following:

- **Neighborhood Funders Group’s Funders for Justice.** This table is committed to organizing funders and affinity groups around issues of racial justice and police brutality, while helping foundations more effectively respond to crises and invest in long-term social movement infrastructure.
- **Hill Snowden Foundation’s Making Black Lives Matter Initiative.** This is a three-year grantmaking and co-funding initiative focused on deploying \$900,000 in grants to Black-led organizations building power in Black communi-



Protesters march down 14th Street in Manhattan, screaming at the top of their lungs “Hands Up Don’t Shoot!” and other Black Lives Matter slogans during the “Day of Anger” demonstration on Dec. 14, 2014.

ties through policy change, organizational infrastructure, public discourse, and leverage.

- **Third Wave Fund’s Mobilize Power Fund.** This organization has moved rapid response dollars to support campaigns like Black Youth Project 100’s #SayHerName Campaign, BreakOUT!’s Trans March of Resilience (a demonstration for justice and equality for trans people of color), and GetEQUAL’s #YearWithoutTamir Weekend of Action in Tamir Rice’s hometown of Cleveland.
- **Headwaters Foundation for Justice’s Emergency Fund for Black Lives.** Launched this past December, the foundation committed to moving \$100,000 to support the work of Black Lives Matter Minneapolis and Neighborhoods Organizing for Change (NOC), two local groups leading demonstrations after the police killing of Jamar Clark, as well as community healing work after protestors were attacked and shot by white supremacists.

Despite the bold efforts of donors and foundations to invest in the Movement for Black Lives, the majority of financial resources for community organizing still comes directly from the impacted communities themselves. Last December, the Los Angeles chapter of Black Lives Matter launched a social media campaign to raise money for legal support after members were detained during “Black Christmas” demonstrations. They have raised tens of thousands of dollars through online portals such as Crowdwise

and Color of Change. Black Lives Matter chapters in Chicago and Minneapolis have also run crowdfunding campaigns after violent retaliations (by both police and vigilantes) toward demonstrators.

According to Alicia Garza, co-founder of Black Lives Matter, one key distinction between social movements’ relationships to donors and institutional funders is trust. She explains, “When there’s trust, resources move more quickly and will likely be used more effectively, because people can be real about what they really need. [Then], giving is not directly tied to outcomes. It is tied to investment in the work.” With individual donors, organizations are in relationship in real time, which results in political trust being established far more quickly than with institutional philanthropy.

In July 2015, nearly 1,000 Black community organizers, movement leaders, and advocates traveled to Cleveland for a national Movement for Black Lives convening, designed to build shared consciousness, skills, and organizing strategy across all local communities that have been disparately working to counter anti-Black racism. The co-conveners for the meeting only had a handful of weeks to raise \$400,000 to cover the costs of the meeting—securing funding from donor networks, organized labor, and foundations. The majority of the funding came primarily from small donations from individuals, though foundations like Ford, Mertz Gilmore, Nathan Cummings, Kellogg, Surdna, and Andrus Family Fund provided small discretionary grants to cover convening

costs. Even with discretionary grants, these foundations showed that they understood the importance of Black community leadership having the space to strategize and build collective consciousness—and that this capacity building is directly connected to strengthening the work tied to our philanthropic institutions' current missions and strategies for social justice.

Imagine if institutional philanthropy strengthened its mutual trust with social movements by matching our grantmaking strategies with movement building principles. Foundations could resource community organizing with long-term, general operating support so groups can have the flexibility to concentrate their efforts for structural change. If we understand movement building to consist of broad-based efforts to build power at the community level—often led by those most directly impacted by issues—as well as challenging power holders, institutions, and societal norms to fundamentally shift toward a new vision, then philanthropy needs to understand its place and its power in that space. This includes taking its cues directly from the organizers themselves.

The impact we're trying to advance is far greater than our individual funding strategies, so our philanthropy should reflect

that. We in philanthropy need to commit to funding racial justice work beyond the appeal of a social media hashtag or a national headline. This requires institutions and individuals in positions of power to build our collective consciousness on racialized and economic violence and match our actions to that understanding. ■

William Cordery is a program officer for the Strong Local Economies program at Surdna Foundation, and serves on the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal* Editorial Board. Follow him on Twitter @WilliamCordery.

To support the Movement for Black Lives, please visit:

Movement for Black Lives Convenings:

<https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/movementforblacklives>

Black Lives Matter:

<https://donate.idex.org/checkout/donation?eid=66399>

Black Youth Project 100:

<http://byp100.org/donate/donate/>

Million Hoodies Movement for Justice:

<http://millionhoodies.net/donate/>



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Empowering the Latino Grassroots Through Crowdfunding

By Alex Parker-Guerrero

INFORMAL PHILANTHROPY IS ONE of the fastest growing industries in the United States today. Increasingly, nonprofit organizations are using online platforms to solicit small donations from individual donors in a process that is widely known as crowdfunding. In many cases, organizations crowdfund because they either do not have the capacity to secure traditional grants, or because they are responding to an immediate crisis and do not have the time to wait for funds to come through traditional grantmaking streams.

In 2013, Oakland, California-based Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) began developing its very own crowdfunding platform, HIPGive.org. Officially launched in the spring of 2014, HIPGive features nonprofit organizations that provide services for Latino communities in the United States and Latin America.

This article will explore HIPGive's inception and the results from its first year and a half of operation, including what it learned about inspiring deeper engagement from donors and acting as a responsive funder-partner to its grantees. By existing in the intersection between organizations that serve specific ethnic groups and those that utilize contemporary fundraising techniques, HIP-Give provides valuable insights for organizations who are considering using similar models.

Why HIPGive?

Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) was founded over 30 years ago with the goal of increasing resources for the Latino civil sector and strengthening Latino participation and leadership throughout the field of philanthropy. At its core, HIP is, and has always been, a network of Latino professionals. At the time of HIP's founding, migration from Latin America to the United States was steady,

and social movements related to Latino immigrants were gaining national attention.

Since beginning its work, HIP has had a positive and measurable impact on Latino civil society. In 30 years, HIP has raised and distributed over \$45 million in capacity-building grants to more than 600 Latino-led, Latino-serving organizations. HIP has also led over 300 training and leadership workshops, which have allowed the organization to convene key leaders and stakeholders from across sectors to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing Latino communities.

Why, after three decades of success in traditional grantmaking, would HIP choose to launch a crowdfunding platform? Three specific trends in HIPGive's target population—its recent growth, its affinity for technology and social media, and its culture of generosity—help to explain the timing of its inception.

First, Latinos represent a large and continuously growing presence in the U.S. population. Latinos accounted for more than half of U.S. population growth between 2001 and 2011, increasing by 43 percent. By 2050, the Latino population is expected to grow by nearly 170 percent, far more than any other ethnic group in the United States. However, despite this undeniable growth, funding for Latino communities has remained stagnant for many years at an average of 1.3 percent of funding dollars.

Moreover, this is a young, technologically savvy population. According to research by Statista and Pew Research, Latinos account for one in four youth in the United States and are embracing social technologies at faster rates than any other group. These users navigate these networks bilingually and transnationally, making them a perfect target population for a platform like HIPGive.

Finally, Latinos have growing economic power. According to a Nielsen State of the Consumer Report, Latinos had \$1.5 trillion in purchasing power in 2015 and represented the fastest-growing sector of small business owners. Data from a variety of sources also demonstrate that Latinos are generally very generous with their money: 63 percent of Latino households give to formal charity. In addition, 69 percent of Latinos rank helping people in need “very highly” amongst their priorities, and Latinos send \$50 billion in remittances annually.

Having reviewed similar data in 2013, Alexandra Aquino-Fike, then HIP’s senior manager of corporate relations, spearheaded the launch of HIPGive, currently one of HIP’s most successful new initiatives. Through HIPGive, Aquino-Fike and the rest of HIP’s staff seek to engage Latinos in lifting up and supporting their own communities.

Tapping into this community of young Latinos, HIPGive opens up the philanthropic process to smaller nonprofits, individual donors, and everyone in between. By granting almost total control over how the organizations run their campaigns, HIPGive provides organizations the opportunity to increase their capacity and develop a wide range of skills. By vetting each organization that applies to use the platform, HIPGive helps individuals direct their charitable dollars to the most innovative and progressive organizations across the Americas. Finally, by working to widely publicize the work it does, HIPGive helps to change the narrative of Latinos as “takers,” to one that celebrates Latinos as the “givers” that they are.

Crowdfunding 101

As part of its goal of featuring organizations that may not have the capacity to fundraise in formal ways, HIPGive is committed to providing an abundance of resources to teach its participants how to crowdfund.

Crowdfunding should be understood as a simple process that incorporates many of the skills today’s nonprofit organizations are already utilizing. Most nonprofits are required to conduct marketing, organizing and outreach once they are founded. Online crowdfunding platforms allow organizations to scale up these efforts through a wide-reaching, colorful, and relatively inexpensive process. Notwithstanding, it can be tricky to translate these skills to a web-based platform.

Before an organization can begin crowdfunding on HIPGive, they must submit an application for review. HIPGive has several basic criteria that all participants are required to meet. For example, HIPGive currently only features organizations that have 501(c)(3) status or the Latin American equivalent. Participants must also build the majority of their campaign when they apply.

Written text that describes the organization, the project, and the project’s beneficiaries is included in the application. This vetting process serves three purposes: First, it streamlines the application process, as it gives the HIPGive team an abundance of material to review. It also gives the participants a head start on their campaigns. Lastly, it helps the HIPGive team ensure that it is featuring organizations that have organizational values consistent with those of HIP and HIPGive.

HIPGive participants usually apply to participate in an issue- or theme-based contest (e.g., immigration or health). HIPGive traditionally has all participants run their campaigns for a set period of time (usually a four-week period). During this period, HIPGive will offer a series of pools of matching funds. Matching funds and other prizes are traditionally awarded to participants that raise the most funds in a particular week, or during a specific time period on a chosen day (“Power of Giving Hours”). These time periods are announced in advance, which encourages participants to conduct outreach to mobilize their donor base. In the past, HIPGive has also awarded funds or other gifts that encourage participants to develop and utilize certain skills and capacities. For example, HIPGive has awarded airline tickets to organizations that generate high volumes of social media activity.

A successful crowdfunding campaign can be broken down into five essential pillars—storytelling, social sharing, audience engagement, rewards and perks, and post-campaign communications.

1. Storytelling

First, clear and creative **storytelling** is required to get people invested in projects. Organizations and individuals must create compelling stories to make their audience empathetic, as opposed to merely sympathetic, to their cause. Generating empathy helps an audience transition from simply rooting for success to wanting to be a part of it. Organizations should strive to address several questions in their storytelling: what problem(s) they are faced with, what solution(s) they are offering, what they hope will happen, and what they fear will happen if they do not succeed. Providing a genuine narrative with a clear focus will draw audiences in and allow them to become connected.

2. Social Sharing

Promoting **social media sharing** of your project can be achieved by providing great shareable content. In this case, videos are an absolute must. On mainstream crowdfunding sites, videos double the likelihood of a campaign reaching its goal. Videos can function both to communicate the story of a campaign and to provide regular updates. Videos should be simple, direct and ideally, less than three minutes in length. Videos should have a very clear image and



sound, but should not be too flashy. Compelling photographs, like those that could be featured in a local newspaper, are also great to share. Try using photographs that are zoomed in to bring audiences closer to your story. Overall, media that strike a balance between creativity, quality and honesty can help your campaign a great deal.

3. Audience Engagement

Smart **audience engagement** will help an organization find donors likely to support its project. It is important to involve the whole organization in the outreach effort, from the communications team to the leadership. Organizations should mobilize their “seeds for success,” such as their best on and offline donors, board of directors, staff, family, and friends, to start their campaign with 30 percent of their goal already met.

Emails are the most effective tool for audience engagement. Emails should be straightforward, easy to scan quickly (bolded and underlined text is great), and should not be muddled with five or six links or objectives. Asking subscribers to donate and providing them with instructions on how to do so should be the focus. As with videos, emails should be kept short, and should employ a conversational, familiar tone.

Reaching out to online media outlets can also be effective. Organizations should research bloggers and journalists that cover topics relevant to their work and send them information about their campaign. Summaries, links, photographs, and pre-written introductions are all helpful. While this can be a long shot, it is definitely worth the work.

4. Rewards and Perks

Rewards and perks give people an incentive to donate to a campaign. Giving a range of gifts to correspond with the amount of the donation is quite common (personalized thank you note for a \$20 donation, T-shirt for a \$50 donation, etc.). Acknowledging donors on websites or enumerating how far a donation will go (e.g., \$10 donation will help purchase a first-aid kit) also incentivizes donations. Rewards and perks should be personalized when possible and should be related to the project or organization. Importantly, organizations should factor in production costs, shipping costs, and staff capacity when choosing their rewards.

5. Post-Campaign Communications Plan

Finally, having a **post-campaign communications plan** is essential in keeping donors engaged with your organization and its

work after the campaign has ended. Reaching out to donors will communicate gratitude and make your donors feel like they’re part of something larger than their donation. Send them updates on how their money is being used to achieve the campaign’s goals. Post-campaign communications will help your organization develop a larger network of donors for future campaigns.

All five of these pillars should be thought of as equally important. No matter how diligent an organization is about regularly sharing its project on social media, it will be less likely to succeed if, for example, it has not created a strong video.

HIPGive Success Stories

Hundreds of projects have been funded through HIPGive. What follows are some of HIPGive’s most successful campaigns and partnerships.

Protect the Children and Sanctuary for Our Children

Over the summer of 2014, HIP began work to respond to the unprecedented number of unaccompanied Central American children being detained at the U.S.-Mexico border. HIP President Diana Campoamor collaborated with several grantmakers to coordinate resource allocation for these children. At the same time, the HIPGive team contacted organizations that provided services to these children to participate in a crowdfunding campaign. HIP also published articles in two key media outlets, the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* and *Daily Kos*, to bring attention to HIP’s work and HIPGive’s upcoming campaign. A collaboration with 13 organizations, HIPGive’s “Protect the Children” campaign ran from Sept. 5 to Oct. 15, 2014. The participants raised approximately \$78,000, and with the matching dollars that HIP provided, approximately \$118,000 was channeled to help protect the unaccompanied children.

One of the Protect the Children campaign’s successful participants was Berkeley, California-based SHARE El Salvador, whose mission is, “[to strengthen] solidarity with and among the Salvadoran people in El Salvador and the United States in the struggle for economic sustainability, justice, and human and civil rights.” SHARE chose to expand the scope of its work to respond to the unaccompanied children crisis. Their project, entitled “Sanctuary for Our Children,” promised to provide basic humanitarian assistance and legal representation to these children, and to engage in local and national advocacy to help them gain legal status in the United States.

For their project, SHARE was able to run a successful campaign with a simple outline. Their page on HIPGive was quite basic, and their video was clearly of low production quality. The content, however, included enough details to make their campaign compelling. SHARE’s video featured their executive director looking directly into the camera and identifying himself as having once been a refugee from Central America, and their page outlined the value of each donation (\$50 would provide basic humanitar-

ian aid, \$250 would sponsor an advocacy event, and \$500 would sponsor legal representation).

With these basic components in place, SHARE was able to raise \$7,305, nearly three times their original goal of \$2,500. According to SHARE, the three most important components of their success were: communicating a sense of urgency, mobilizing their existing donor base, and reaching out to new donors. In a July 2015 interview with HIPGive, Katherine Wilson, SHARE's development coordinator, stated, "If it's something that seems like it can wait, a lot of people aren't really going to give. We had to make sure we effectively communicated the pressing nature of this campaign."

SHARE sent emails and made calls on a daily basis throughout the six-week campaign to ask for donations and to remind donors of HIPGive's matching funds—an effort that gained the small organization 21 new donors. Wilson adds that maintaining a personal tone with new and old donors alike helped them garner donations. According to Wilson, "[Crowdfunding] helps bring people close to the mission of your organization, and allows them to connect with something that's meaningful to them."

"Sanctuary for Our Children" and "Protect the Children" are success stories for both SHARE and HIPGive, respectively. SHARE presented a simple yet compelling campaign on the HIPGive platform. In a cohort of organizations that were all raising money for similar causes, SHARE was able to ensure its own success by diligently communicating with donors, old and new, while maintaining a personal tone to help donors feel connected to the cause. For its part, HIPGive successfully positioned itself as a leader in the response to the crisis. By being published in media outlets and collaborating with key funders, HIPGive brought more attention to the campaigns and helped secure matching funds for its most successful organizations.

A Little Technical Support Goes a Long Way

HIP also provides technical assistance to help organizations reach their goals. For example, Scholars Latino Initiative (SLI), a mentoring and college prep program based at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, failed to reach its goal its first time on HIPGive. In the spring of 2014, SLI raised \$1,436 towards its goal of \$5,000 as part of the "BeHIPGive" contest, HIPGive's very first cohort of participants. When it decided to come back to HIPGive for #HIPGive2EDU, HIPGive's education contest, SLI's leadership consulted HIPGive on ways to improve its campaign. Among other tips, HIPGive advised SLI to encourage its community members to carry the torch on social media. This strategy resonated far better with SLI's base. A swell of momentum and energy by SLI's circle of supporters helped it become one of the first four #HIPGive2EDU organizations to reach its goal, helping SLI secure \$10,000 in matching funds from HIPGive.

Giving Tuesday 2015

HIPGive's most recent campaign, Giving Tuesday 2015, demon-

strates how a funder-partner can be successful when it responds to changes in a campaign and when it approaches a campaign in a multi-pronged fashion. HIPGive billed Giving Tuesday as a single day on which \$20,000 in matching funds would be granted. In the weeks leading up to the campaign, the HIPGive team worked tirelessly to recruit and provide technical assistance to over 60 nonprofit organizations hoping to get their share of the funds. In addition to these outreach efforts, HIPGive Project and Marketing Coordinator Andrea Perez designed the #LatinosGive social media campaign. Latinosgive.org, a website that Perez created to accompany HIPGive's Giving Tuesday efforts, featured a live feed of social media posts that used the #LatinosGive hashtag. Like much of HIPGive's work, the site promoted images conveying Latino generosity. Perez coordinated press coverage of #LatinosGive with NBC Latino, who agreed to publish a list of their 10 favorite social media posts using the hashtag.

Their preparation paid off. HIPGive began releasing matching funds at 12 a.m. on Dec. 1, 2015 and, by around 12:20 a.m., the entire pool had been depleted. The HIPGive team was excited by these results and determined to see the momentum continue. By 10 a.m., HIPGive announced that they would release another \$20,000 in matching funds in four \$5,000 increments throughout the course of the day. In doing so, HIPGive sought to distribute the matching funds more evenly amongst the participants, and to maintain momentum for the campaign throughout the day. Eventually, the second pool of \$20,000 was also depleted. In total, the Giving Tuesday 2015 participants raised approximately \$190,000, and with the matching funds, over \$230,000 was channeled to a variety of nonprofits.

Looking Forward

In just under two years of operation, HIPGive has learned valuable lessons about using crowdfunding in the nonprofit fundraising sector. By using HIP's broad, well-established network as its base, HIPGive has created a modern platform to mobilize grassroots communities of Latinos across the Americas. With its connections to and knowledge of these communities, HIPGive addresses the issues that are most pressing to the contemporary Latino population, offsetting the wide discrepancy between the size of the Latino population and the amount of foundation dollars it receives.

Still, HIPGive has much room to grow and evolve. After the success of Giving Tuesday 2015, the HIPGive staff plans to give more focus to individual giving days, and less to longer contests. HIPGive also hopes to eventually loosen its current 501(c)(3) requirement in order to open the platform to entrepreneurs and other individuals. Above all, the organization is focused on empowering the most innovative nonprofit organizations to increase their impact on the fast-growing Latino population. ■

Alex Parker-Guerrero is the communications coordinator at Hispanics in Philanthropy.



Quinn Delaney of the Akonadi Foundation (center) with Dorsey Nunn and Marlene Sanchez from Legal Services for Prisoners with Children.

Gutsy Grant Seeking for Grassroots Organizations

By Dana Textoris & Matt Carter

SOCIAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATIONS can be in a tough spot when it comes to getting grant funding. Grants for advocacy work and general operating support can be difficult to find, making it tempting to chase grants for “fundable” projects support that veer away from core mission. Perhaps a much-needed grant is awarded—but only with uncomfortable strings attached. Or an organization without a grants track record might simply not know where or how to get started.

Social justice philanthropy is defined by the Foundation Center as grantmaking that “work(s) for structural change in order to

increase the opportunity of those who are the least well off politically, economically, and socially.” The Foundation Center found that in 2009, grantmakers gave \$3.1 billion to social justice causes, representing a share of 14.2 percent of all grant dollars that year¹.

Seventy percent of this 2009 funding was granted by the largest 25 social justice grantmakers—high profile funders like Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, none likely grantors

¹ foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/keyfacts_social_2011.pdf

A Framework for Social Justice Grantmaking

The Bay Area Justice Funders Network (BAJFN) has sought to provide funders with an alternative to metric-laden philanthropic practices by articulating a framework for social justice philanthropy. The framework proposes grounding grantmaking in the values of dignity and equity, integrity and authenticity, solidarity and collectivity, and courage and responsibility. In line with these values, BAJFN recommends practices for each step in the grantmaking cycle:

- Strategy Development
- Outreach and Application
- Due Diligence
- Making the Case
- Award and Implementation
- Evaluation and Learning

BAJFN envisions that by incorporating these values and practices, grantmakers will generate more responsive philanthropy to address structural inequity.

The full framework is available at justicefunders.org/Choir-Book

to local grassroots organizations. To put the availability of social justice funds into starker perspective, the majority of the nation's largest foundations reported that social justice-based grants were less than five percent of their grantmaking from 2008 to 2010.²

One of the conclusions to draw is that decisions about which causes and movements get funding—and which don't—are overwhelmingly made by the philanthropic elite. Where does this put grassroots and community-based organizations, who are often organizing in marginalized communities in direct opposition to those with power?

Grassroots organizations need not lose their social justice soul on the road to getting grants. With planning, strategy, and a dose of determination and courage, organizations can stay true to who they are and begin to raise more dollars from grant funders.

Speak Bravely

One grant seeking struggle for social justice organizations is fulfilling expectations around grant reporting and metrics. Foun-

dations are increasingly filling the funding gap left by shrinking government grant dollars—and many have intensified their requirements for quantifiable outcomes as a way to minimize risk and maximize return on their investments.

One example is the Robin Hood Foundation in New York City. The funder's website describes its metrics-based approach to grantmaking as “relentless monetization.” Foundation staff assign dollar values to the outcomes of each potential grant as well as the projected cost if the program goes unfunded, and use that calculation “to decide the relative impact of poverty-fighting options.”³ Using this approach, the foundation has managed to monetize the projected value of everything from the impact of dental care on earnings to the reduction in victims' costs as a result of crime prevention.

Not every funder subscribes to a metrics-based approach. “Too many funders have far too much of an emphasis on simple metrics,” observes Gary Bass, executive director of the Bauman Foundation, a national-level policy and social justice funder based in Washington, DC. “Metrics designed around grant cycles, like ‘number of web hits in a year’ or ‘number of times an organization is quoted in the media’ are an approximation of nothing. They can be a dangerous distraction from the real work of social change,” he says.

The heavy demands of reporting and outcomes tracking can be onerous and costly for smaller organizations. And even organizations with more robust systems and staff can be challenged to demonstrate progress according to the specific terms set by a funder or within the narrow time frames of a grant period. “A metrics-based approach to evaluation is very hard for organizations focused on structural change and advocacy,” acknowledges Quinn Delaney, president of Akonadi Foundation, a family foundation in Oakland, California, that supports and nurtures racial justice movement building to eliminate structural racism. “It takes time to lay a foundation, lift up the issue in the community, target decision makers, and see discernible movement—that's not going to happen in a one-year grant period.”

But rather than back away from grants out of fear of or aversion to outcomes measurement, organizations should lean into relationships with funders. Talk with a funder about why the metrics and measurements demanded by the grant proposal or report form are difficult for your organization to produce. Tell stories of the difference your work makes for your constituents, and describe how your staff and board members talk about impact.

“Nonprofits are often concerned about the power relationship between themselves and their funders because funders control the

² ncrp.org/files/publications/PhilanthropicLandscape-StateofSocialJusticePhilanthropy.pdf

³ robinhood.org/programs/get-funding

Philanthropic Alliances Dedicated to Advocating for Social Justice Work

International:

EDGE (Engage Donors for Global Equity) Funders Alliance (edgefunders.org)

International Human Rights Funders Group (ihrfg.org)

National:

National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (ncrp.org)

Neighborhood Funders Group (nfg.org)

Social Justice Infrastructure Funders (facebook.com/Social-Justice-Infrastructure-Funders-556803621017064/info/)

Regional:

New York State (still emerging)

Boston Area Social Justice Funders (still emerging)

Grantmakers for Southern Progress (nfg.org/gsp)

Bay Area Social Justice Funders Network (justicefunders.org)

purse strings,” Gary notes. “But this should not stop social justice organizations from developing working relationships with funders and teaching funders about the issues they face. Organizations can help funders see that their work changing social dynamics and policy is as important and valuable as direct service and other work that can be more easily measured.”

The brave conversations you have may help evolve funders’ responsiveness to the needs of the grassroots sector. An extraordinary example was last year when the Ford Foundation announced it was making changes to its funding priorities and practices as well as its own internal culture, after foundation president Darren Walker invited input from grantees and received 2,000 emails in return. He said, “In reading and reflecting on each and every response, I have become more aware of the ways in which we can improve our institution, and serve our mission.”⁴

Build Funding Partnerships Around Shared Values

Having a conversation about metrics with your existing funders is one thing—but it’s quite another to get this kind of opportunity with a prospective funder whose radar you are not even on. Acknowledging the difficulty of “breaking in,” Quinn suggests that

organizations focus on building relationships with funders who already understand and align themselves to a mission of funding social justice. She notes that while the largest foundations can get the most attention, “a lot of times it’s the smaller funders who are really pulling the weight in communities. We see that there ends up being a cluster of family and community foundations funding the organizations on the ground in each community.”

Funders in some philanthropic communities are forming alliances around shared social justice values and perspectives. The Akonadi Foundation was a founding member of the Bay Area Justice Funders Network, a philanthropic affinity group supporting social justice funders in the San Francisco Bay Area. Quinn explains that this network and others like it see a responsibility and role for funders to build authentic partnerships with community-based social movement organizations and are likely to be responsive to their needs and priorities. “Look for cohorts that reflect social justice values and learn about the funders within them,” she says. (See the box to the left of social justice funding alliances.)

Some funders are innovating bold approaches to social justice philanthropy in communities without these formal alliances. One example is Saint Luke’s Foundation in Cleveland. The foundation is one of 198 grantmakers that have signed on to Philanthropy’s Promise, a project of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. Funders who sign on pledge to devote at least half of their grantmaking to benefit at least one underserved community and at least one quarter to fund system change efforts involving advocacy, organizing, and civic engagement.⁵

Nelson Beckford is senior program officer for A Strong Neighborhood, a grantmaking initiative of Saint Luke’s Foundation to catalyze and sustain opportunities to improve social conditions and improve the physical environments in three specific Cleveland neighborhoods. An exemplary project that the foundation funded is Making Our Own Space, a collaboration of local youth, adults and organizations in Cleveland’s Buckeye neighborhood to plan, design and build playscapes that are usable to a broad cross-section of residents. The youth involved were treated as consultants and received stipends for their work. (See more about the project in this video: alturl.com/ux9kc.) Nelson explains that this grantmaking reflects a core belief that residents are the experts and should have a voice in planning and action in their own neighborhoods; that sometimes means thinking—and granting—outside the box.

“What we see bubbling up in these neighborhoods are really smart grassroots activities driven by residents who are leading

⁴ fordfoundation.org/equal-change/post/whats-next-for-the-ford-foundation

⁵ ncrp.org/philanthropys-promise

out of passion and necessity,” Nelson explains, “But, they aren’t 501(c)(3)s.” One way the foundation is making funds available to neighborhood leaders is by piloting and promoting ioby.org (stands for “in our backyards”), a crowd-resourcing platform that has distributed more than \$2 million in funds to over 600 neighbor-led projects around the country. Saint Luke’s Foundation and seven other foundations, including The Kresge Foundation and Ford Foundation, are currently funding the platform. “We want to provide the opportunity and resources for folks to make the places they live in better,” Nelson says.

Stay True to Who You Are

An organization’s grants strategy should match an organization’s strategic plan: Grants should fulfill the priorities that have been decided on by staff and board. Unfortunately, social justice organizations can find themselves operating from a position of scarcity. Anxious about not having enough funds to sustain the organization, organizations may turn to watering down their programs, or adding whole new programs, to maximize the chance of getting the funds that grantors want to give.

One organization in Cleveland advocated for and with the city’s most underserved and disempowered communities for decades. Then several years ago, leaders in the organization recognized its public policy and advocacy campaigns had morphed over time into program-based community education initiatives that could be more easily packaged for grant funding. Realizing that they would never reach their ultimate aims by allowing the grants strategy to dictate the organizational strategy—and not the other way around—the organization conducted a deep assessment of its grant seeking practices, funder relationships, and mission-driven priorities. One year after completing that assessment, the organization’s leadership has made a bold two-year commitment to fund its advocacy director using general operating dollars, which frees the ambitions of the advocacy program from the constrictions of funder expectations, and meanwhile concentrate grant seeking on other budgeted priorities.

The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights also took a fearless approach to a funding dilemma when a grantor’s funding priorities changed in the midst of a multi-year project. “The first year of funding was earmarked for the strategy that our coalition decided was most needed,” describes Director of Development Jocelyn Wong. “But when it came time for the second year of funding, the funder wanted to redirect how the funds should be used. That left us with a difficult decision: accept the funds and change our program plans and strategy, or reject the funds.”

This choice can be especially loaded for an organization when it impacts coalition partners and co-grantees as well. Jocelyn says,

“We were put in a difficult position, since we were responsible for dispersing funds to a handful of smaller organizations. We needed to have transparent conversations, both internally and within our coalition.”

Jocelyn explains that what allowed the organization to make the decision was having a strong internal compass and a willingness to have tough conversations. “We needed to carefully evaluate what was being offered by the funder, while not losing sight of our mission, vision, and how we want to show up as a partner,” she explains. “The decision came down to a question: ‘At a values level, are we comfortable doing this?’ By talking it through with key staff and partners, we were able to answer that question.”

Ultimately, the Ella Baker Center decided to accept the grant, but only after substantial discussion with the funder, and some negotiation of the terms. Jocelyn continues, “We took the opportunity to educate them from our experience doing the work. We clearly communicated the possibilities and limitations of a second year grant and were able to agree on a scope of work that worked for everyone involved.”

Organizations can often trip over themselves to demonstrate that they are a match to a funder’s priorities, but this should be a two-way street. Organizations should develop criteria and a process for vetting funders and funding opportunities to ensure they are a match to the organization’s mission and values, as well as its capacity to manage the grant. This evaluation should take place both at the point of deciding to apply and the point of accepting a grant that has been offered. The Ella Baker Center has developed its own “Evaluation Criteria for Pursuing Grant Opportunities” (see page 15), which can serve as a model for organizations that wish to develop a grant evaluation checklist.

Start With Who You Know—Then Grow

For organizations new to grant seeking, getting grants can feel like a game of chicken-and-egg: Most funders want to see a history of grant funding before they invest, but you need to secure some initial grants to establish a track record. How and where can an organization even begin?

As in any area of fund development, the place to start is with relationships you already have. Make a list of all grant funders in the organization’s history and assess what happened in each relationship. Create a plan of action to repair trust wherever expectations of a grant were not met and to restore any relationships that have gone cold. The most likely funders to make a grant are those who have funded you before.

Next, mine your inner circle for connections to potential funders. Have open conversations with donors and volunteers about their affiliations to family funds or local foundations. Ask

your board members to review lists of the boards of trustees of the funders you wish to pursue. Don't be afraid to ask your coalition partners for insights on specific funders—and make sure you're as open when contacted by fellow grant seekers for advice.

Finally, establish a regular practice of building your list of new prospective grantors. Set aside at least a few hours per month on your calendar for grants research or dedicate funds in your budget for outside expertise from a reputable grants researcher. If you don't have a paid subscription to a grants database, the Foundation Center makes free resources available at hundreds of locations in the U.S. Learn more at foundationcenter.org/find-us.

When you're new to getting grants, your first goal is gaining some traction. Consider the opportunity cost before you pursue any grant opportunity and invest your precious time and resources in more likely funders. If you don't have an established grants history, high-profile national funders are not likely strong prospects. They will expect to see that you have a track record of not just winning but also successfully managing grants and making good on those investments.

"Start small and get bigger," suggests Gary of the Bauman Foundation. Before stepping into a grantmaking role, Gary founded a nonprofit that was at first funded through small grants from smaller funders. However, he was eventually able to leverage those grants and the organization's resulting successes to secure grants from large funders, including Ford Foundation and Open Society Foundations. "Organizations need to take the long-view when it comes to foundation funding," he advises.

Some funders put up an impenetrable wall, while others are open to inquiries from grant seekers. Look for the latter. A conversation with a trustee or program officer can make a big difference, whether that means getting an advocate in your corner, information you can use to strengthen your application, or feedback that you ought not invest the effort to apply.

Don't assume that only small and community-based funders will be open to having a conversation. The Foundation Center ranked Bank of America Charitable Foundation number 16 out of the nation's 25 largest social justice funders, based on grants totaling more than \$30.5 million for social justice related causes in 2009. Despite being such a grantmaking heavy weight, funding decisions are often made on the local level. Jennifer Hurd is senior vice president, state of Ohio market manager for Bank of America. All grant applications to Bank of America Charitable Foundation from organizations in Ohio go first to Jen and then are reviewed and decided by an Ohio-based committee. She encourages any organization to contact her for a conversation before they apply, and she travels the state to meet with prospective grantees.

In Jen's experience, some organizations are more appreciative of this open line of communication than others. She tells the story of one organization that submitted a request for more than 100 times the largest grants that the foundation makes in Ohio. "This immediately showed that they hadn't sought out any guidance before applying," she says. Based on the inappropriate ask amount and what she said was a confusing budget, Jen decided to contact the grantee with questions. "He said that they'd follow-up with some clarifying information," she recounts, "but I never heard from him again."

Instead of embracing this opportunity, the grantee squandered it—as well as the relationship. Jen says that given the gaffe, she probably would not look favorably on a future request: "At least not until they contact me first and show that they understand. That's why I have these conversations: to make sure you understand us as a funder and that I understand your organization."

Build Relationships for the Long Haul

Effective, gutsy grant seeking comes down to relationships. "Establish good working relationships and open conversations with your current funders," encourages Quinn. "Ask them who else might be interested in funding you. They may point you to other funders who may be a fit. Who knows—they could even have another portfolio and be able to make an additional grant."

Keep in mind that grant seeking is a marathon, not a sprint—in many cases, the payoff will come only after a process of relationship building. To keep up your spirits and endurance, expand your definition of success. Set goals and celebrate milestones that mark your progress along the way: Count the number of proposals submitted, points of communication with funders, and new and strengthened relationships with community partners. In the first year or two that you begin submitting grant proposals, you must anticipate a fair portion of declines. But even a rejection is productive: You have introduced yourself to the funder and put your organization on their radar.

Always remember that relationship building doesn't end at the time the check arrives. In fact, that's when the important work begins of nurturing the funder's initial trust and delivering on your vision. With a plan in place to continuously steward funders and engage them in the work and mission of your organization, you'll be on your way to growing a grants program. ■

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Evaluation Criteria for Pursuing Grant Opportunities



The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights (EBC) evaluates grant opportunities based on the following considerations as to ensure that each foundation or corporate grant—from pre-award through final reporting—is consistent with our values and goals as an organization.

The executive director, the director of development, and any staff who are ultimately responsible for implementing the prospective grant will have early conversations about the grant opportunity to weigh these considerations. There will be subsequent opportunities to review and give feedback on the grant application, if pursued.

Values & Ethics

- Does the funder operate in accordance with our values as an organization?
- Is the funder a socially responsible investor? For example, is the funder invested in private prisons?
- Does the funder engage in ethical and socially just business practices? For example, is the funder a “ban the box” employer?

Program Alignment

- Does the grant offer an opportunity to advance EBC’s strategic goals?
- To what extent does the funder’s grantmaking strategies align with EBC’s current programs?
- Does applying for the grant present any risks to our work in both the short and long term?
- Are we stretching beyond our current goals and capacity in order to fit the funding criteria? Are we in danger of mission drift?
- If the funder’s grantmaking strategies changed, is EBC still a fit? If not, do we have partners that we should inform about the opportunity?

Partnerships

- How will applying for and/or accepting this grant impact our coalition partners and the broader movements of which we are a part? Will it help and/or hurt our partnerships and the movement? Will it cause tension or division that will disrupt other EBC efforts?
- Based on the scope of work, should we be including certain partners in the grant as co-applicants/subgrantees?
- If EBC is serving as the lead applicant for a collaborative grant, what additional responsibilities will we be taking on? Do we have existing capacity, or will the grant provide adequate resources to build up that capacity? What is the division of labor among partners? What is the process for accountability?
- Have we adequately and transparently communicated to partners about an emerging funding opportunity for a shared project, all relevant conversations with funders, etc.? Are we doing our best to cultivate trust with partners related to funding opportunities?

Finance & Administration

- Is the grant unrestricted (i.e., general operating) or restricted (i.e., earmarked for a specific program or purpose)?
- Did we budget the revenue and expenses for the grant? If not, how will incorporating the new grant impact the budget?
- Does the timing of the grant award or grant period matter? If budgeted, when did we schedule receipt for cash flow purposes?

- Are we able to include indirect costs in the grant budget?
- To what extent is there flexibility in the grant budget? For example, does the budget include specific line item allocations for the grant funding, or can the funding be used to offset the cost of the program/organization at large?
- If the grant provides funding for a new staff, will the position be temporary? Is there a plan to secure additional resources to sustain the position beyond the grant term? Do we have office space and equipment for the new staff? Who will supervise the new staff?
- Will this grant require special tracking because of its size or its specific expenditures?

Communications

- How will the grant impact our communications team? Are there significant requirements around media relations, branding/marketing, email, or so-

cial media? Do we have existing capacity on staff to meet these requirements?

- Will the grant award be highly publicized? What are the potential risks associated with the publicity, and can we do anything to mitigate them?

Feedback

- Is the funder receptive to feedback? Are we able to communicate directly with the funder when we have concerns?
- Is the funder willing to negotiate the scope of work, both during the application process and after the grant has been awarded?
- How “hands on” do we anticipate the funder to be? Are the number of updates and the level of involvement they expect to have prohibitive?

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