

Diversity in Philanthropy Project

May 2008

## COUNCIL ON FOUNDATIONS SUMMIT BRIEFING

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## Building on a Year of Success

**T**he Diversity in Philanthropy Project (DPP) celebrates a year of success in uniting leading philanthropic sector executives, CEOs, trustees, and research experts behind a shared commitment to leverage more fully diverse talents and perspectives in our profession and society.

DPP builds on a long tradition of efforts by forward-looking inclusiveness advocates to improve our sector's relevance and impact. Our current efforts are intended to encourage more field-wide gains on these issues.

DPP exists because we believe diversity can add value to independent sector organizational staffing, programming, grantmaking, contracting, operations, and planning.

Last year the project began with an historic series of standing-room only sessions at the 2007 Council

on Foundations Meeting in Seattle. Panelists and participants explored the full spectrum of diversity issues - from organizational effectiveness to asset management strategies.

Hundreds of attendees shared real-world experiences and offered candid dialogue on the myriad of challenges and opportunities that diversity poses for our organizations and society.

These initial sessions demonstrated a clear, shared desire to continue the conversation and work collaboratively to facilitate change.

Building on this promising start, our mandate has been to join with our peers in exploring new frameworks for research and action as well as sharing best practices on diversity and effectiveness.

In this Council on Foundations Summit briefing, you'll learn more about our

efforts to articulate principles and practices that can guide our future work, forge effective partnerships, and encourage new thinking and promising practices to realize our full potential in a rapidly changing world. ■

"Diversity is best achieved when it is understood, prioritized, and integrated into the operations of a foundation as a tool for effectiveness in, and responsiveness to, the communities being served."

– Dr. Robert K. Ross,  
President and CEO,  
The California Endowment

**Robert K. Ross, MD (Chair)**

President and CEO, The California Endowment

**Susan Batten**

Senior Associate, Annie E. Casey Foundation

**Ronna D. Brown**

President, New York Regional Association of Grantmakers

**Jessica Chao**

Vice President, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

**Victor De Luca**

President and CEO, The Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation

**Louis Delgado**

Trustee, Needmor Fund

**Linetta Gilbert**

Senior Program Officer, The Ford Foundation

**Steve Gunderson**

President, Council on Foundations

**Sandra R. Hernández, MD**

President and CEO, The San Francisco Foundation

**Stephen B. Heintz**

President & CEO, Rockefeller Brothers Fund

**Gara LaMarche**

President & CEO, The Atlantic Philanthropies

**Thomas C. Layton**

President and CEO, Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation

**Carol Lewis**

President and CEO, Philanthropy Northwest

**Valerie S. Lies**

President and CEO, Donors Forum of Chicago

**Jane Isaacs Lowe**

Senior Program Officer, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

**Terry Mazany**

President and CEO, Chicago Community Trust

**Lawrence McGill**

Vice President for Research, Foundation Center

**Hugo Morales**

Trustee, Rosenberg Foundation

**John Morning**

Trustee, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

**Mary Mountcastle**

Trustee, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

**Gary D. Nelson, Ph.D.**

President and CEO, Healthcare Georgia Foundation

**Peter H. Pennekamp**

Executive Director, Humboldt Area Foundation

**Joy Persall**

Executive Director, Native Americans in Philanthropy

**Lata N. Reddy**

Vice President and Secretary, Prudential Foundation

**Linda E. Reed**

Executive Director, Montana Community Foundation

**Miguel Satut**

Program Director, W.K. Kellogg Foundation

**Michael S. Seltzer**

Board Member, Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers

**Ruth Shack**

President and CEO, Dade Community Foundation

**Unmi Song**

President and CEO, Lloyd A. Fry Foundation

**Arturo Vargas**

Trustee, Council on Foundations

**Luz Vega-Marquis**

President and CEO, Marguerite Casey Foundation

**Elsa Vega-Perez**

Trustee, The Saint Paul Foundation

**Cole Wilbur**

Trustee, David and Lucile Packard Foundation

**Richard Woo**

CEO, Russell Family Foundation

**Gary L. Yates**

President and CEO, The California Wellness Foundation

The Diversity in Philanthropy Project is dedicated to shaping the future of philanthropy by strengthening the diversity of perspectives and voices within our field.

Our strategy combines an exploration of common commitments, advocacy for pioneering research, and shared learning to enhance our work and impact.

### Voluntary Initiatives

A core element for long-term impact is the development of guiding principles and practices that philanthropic leaders can employ to advance diversity and effectiveness in their organizations.

Based on broad field consultation, DPP has drafted statements of voluntary operating principles and practices to concretely help funders achieve more meaningful and measurable gains in diversity, while respecting their individual missions and interests.

We look forward to further refining these documents with our advisors and partners, encouraging organizational adoption, launching a campaign to inspire commitment to meaningful inclusivity initiatives, and creating spaces for funders to undertake mutual support efforts.

### Research

DPP has convened a working group of leading independent sector researchers to develop a long-term research agenda and improvements in field data that inform more inclusive strategies and increase impact.

Led by researchers from the Foundation Center, the Council on Foundations, ARNOVA, Independent Sector, and an impressive group of university-based scholars and field advocates, the Data and Research Working Group is convening leading practitioners to promote sector-wide collaboration and better tracking and reporting of foundation diversity performance.

### Partnerships and Learning Circles

DPP has also helped to create important new partnerships and encouraged learning circles with other diversity and effectiveness stakeholder groups.

In partnership with the Council on Foundations and Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, DPP recently assembled nearly a dozen leading philanthropy anchor organizations to explore collaborative opportunities to leverage diversity. Participating groups included the Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers, Change Action Partners (formerly Joint Affinity Group), the Race & Equity in Philanthropy Group, and the Center for Effective Philanthropy, among others. Allied efforts have sparked alliances with other important stakeholder groups including Philanthropy Northwest, Common Vision, and the Diversity-Focused Funders Project.

Finally, the Council of Michigan Foundations and DPP have formed a special partnership to strengthen the link between diversity and effectiveness in our field. Together we will develop new knowledge, tools, and supports for increasing diversity and inclusive practices among funders. We think this substantive regional program will have influence in encouraging comparable efforts in other key regions of the national grantmaking field.

### Tools and Resources

In September 2007, DPP launched an online resource to support field leadership education and exchange on diversity issues. At [www.diversityinphilanthropy.org](http://www.diversityinphilanthropy.org) field leaders can access the latest news, events, and a comprehensive list of resources aimed at advancing dialogue and action. ■

The following principles and practices originated from the philanthropic sector executives, CEOs, and trustees of the Diversity in Philanthropy Project. They express the unity of our intention while respecting that our approaches may vary.

The principles and practices outlined here in draft form are not meant to be prescriptive; rather they represent a collective, voluntary effort to lift our field to a higher standard of operating practice. They can be employed in whole or in part to help philanthropic institutions more effectively achieve their missions.

We share these ideas as a work-in-progress to stimulate discussion across our field. Our leadership group came together originally to focus on diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, disability, educational background, age, geographic location, and religious belief. However, we welcome all partners working on these and/or other dimensions of diversity.

## Our Principles

We seek to encourage all foundation leaders to embrace the following principles intended to promote diversity as a matter of fairness and effectiveness in our profession.

### Mutual Respect

Within the parameters of our core values and charter requirements, we are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and we fundamentally value and respect experiences that are different from our own.

### Freedom and Flexibility

We promote a broad approach to diversity while respecting each individual foundation's commitment to address those aspects most germane to its mission.

### Knowledge and Creativity

By increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion, we believe we will access more expansive and varied ideas, information, and perspectives, making us more creative, informed investors.

### Strategic Approach

To achieve our aims, we believe it is necessary to be strategic and intentional in formalizing and pursuing meaningful diversity goals as central aspects of our governance and programming.

### Transparency

We believe we have a responsibility to society and our sector to achieve our goals with honesty and transparency, regularly reporting progress and lessons learned along the way.

## Promising Practices

We seek to advance diversity by encouraging voluntary practices that include:

### Internal Diversity Assessments

Conducting periodic assessments of board and staff appointments, grantmaking, and contracting to help institutional leaders identify priorities, recognize strategic opportunities, and enhance their diversity performance.

### Diversity Plans

Developing and implementing diversity plans to help leaders design specific and concrete steps to expand representation and engagement from diverse communities in their mission and work.

### Field Development and Coordination

Supporting more integrated and coordinated planning, investment, and action to expand the field's overall capacity for change.

### Peer Support

Building peer networks, both formal and informal, to help individuals, their institutions, and the larger field achieve greater diversity.

### Periodic Progress Reporting

Tracking progress, communicating accomplishments, and sharing lessons learned to establish field-wide performance benchmarks and enhanced transparency and public accountability.

### Public Leadership

Exercising visible leadership by encouraging others to join, publicly promoting the benefits of diversity, and identifying new strategies that lead to greater effectiveness. ■

**Alan J. Abramson**  
The Aspen Institute

**Elizabeth T. Boris**  
Urban Institute

**René B. Branch**  
Council on Foundations

**Mary Ellen Capek**  
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**Michael Cortés**  
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“Diversity, as we embrace it, is not about promoting quotas or varying standards of excellence. Rather, it is about optimally tapping, growing, and aligning the still-to-be-utilized assets we have available to us within our institutions and society to improve the human condition in the United States and elsewhere across the planet.”

– Cole Wilbur, Trustee,  
David and Lucile Packard  
Foundation

## Take Action

The Diversity in Philanthropy Project envisions a future in which the diversity of our field and the larger society is an essential consideration in funders' day-to-day strategic decisions and actions. We believe our sector is ready to take important next steps to embrace diverse cultures and advance our quest to be more effective grantmakers.

Our combined efforts will lead to:

- **Organizational Effectiveness.** Research shows that diverse teams create more effective solutions to complex problems. Evidence from philanthropy and other sectors suggests that diversity can improve employee relations, productivity, and customer satisfaction.
- **External Impact.** Globalization is redefining the landscape that shapes our work. When foundations harness diversity, we draw more deeply on the plurality of human experiences and backgrounds, and better equip ourselves to tackle both our nation's and the world's increasingly challenging issues.
- **Public Responsibility.** Societal and political expectations are rising. Maintaining the nation's confidence in our sector requires leadership, accountability, and transparency. We have a public responsibility to demonstrate broader sector-wide commitment to these issues.

## Join Us

We invite you to join our community of practice and work with us to achieve the full depth and breadth of the many possibilities before us.

### Inform

- Find out more about the independent sector's past and current diversity initiatives, and its thought leadership on inclusivity and effectiveness
- Learn more about diversity initiatives in other sectors
- Sign-up for our e-newsletters to stay informed

### Involve

- Attend conferences, workshops, and diversity discussions
- Join a learning circle
- Participate in sector-wide diversity surveys

### Inspire

- Share what you learn with your networks
- Post your comments and case studies on our website
- Find out how your foundation can partner with DPP

To learn more about the Diversity in Philanthropy Project and what you can do to get involved, visit [www.diversityinphilanthropy.org](http://www.diversityinphilanthropy.org).

"Diversity makes us better. From a business perspective, it's the absolute right thing to do – we cannot be effective if we don't have the tools and knowledge around the table to do our job well."

– Victor De Luca  
President, Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation

"By recognizing the inherent relationship between diversity and institutional effectiveness, foundations of all kinds can honor and advance private philanthropy's most exciting inclinations and potential."

– Joy A. Persall  
Executive Director,  
Native Americans in Philanthropy

Diversity  
Philanthropy

[www.diversityinphilanthropy.org](http://www.diversityinphilanthropy.org)