

## GIVING TO COMMUNITIES OF COLOR IN OREGON

*Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information? (T.S. Eliot)*

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION** The purpose of the project is to gather and analyze information about funders' investment in communities today, to inform a broader conversation about Oregon's future—a future that reflects our collective vision for inclusive communities. The project will conduct research on giving to communities of color in Oregon by independent, tribal, corporate and public charity funders, establishing a baseline for measuring future investment in these communities over time. The methodology—developed by Foundation Center, the nationally recognized leader in this field—builds upon the work of similar studies commissioned by funders throughout the country. In addition to providing timely information, the project is primarily a *collective learning activity* for the entire philanthropic sector—an invitation for assessment and dialogue, and an opportunity for action stemming from information and insight.

**INTENDED OUTCOMES** Funders regularly use data to inform our work. The project will fill the void in reliable information about giving to communities of color in Oregon. The goal is to document current grantmaking patterns and provide tools for funders that want to increase their engagement in communities of color, not to advocate that all funders meet set targets. The final report will present the research data (and methodology) in an accessible manner for broad audiences, and share practical recommendations for action from the perspective of funders and community partners. The final report will be available at no charge online, and offered as a tool for building common ground for dialogue among all groups serving Oregon communities.

**THE NEED FOR THIS CONVERSATION** In education, there are achievement gaps. In health, there are disparities in outcomes. In human services, there are enduring social problems that mirror the inequality we see in society. There are communities that are predictably overrepresented in the criminal justice system and predictably underrepresented in elected office. In almost every area of interest for funders and communities, race/ethnicity is implicitly expressed in how we define the issues to be addressed.

Philanthropy and giving to communities of color has been a priority discussion in the last decade as funders have sought to reflect the changing demographics of their communities in their grantmaking practices. The topic has been a headline issue in regional and national conversations in the past few years, and a broad range of opinion pieces, industry journals, and conferences have addressed diversity in philanthropy. Although ultimately withdrawn, the recent call for legislation in California—requiring foundations with assets more than \$250 million to disclose diversity practices in both their grantmaking and staffing—highlighted the need for good data and common frameworks, everywhere.

In Oregon, we've been having the conversation since at least 1981. That year, the Portland Committee for Responsive Philanthropy released a report entitled "Oregon Foundations: Private Sector Response to Public Needs," which included an analysis of giving to racial minorities and other underrepresented communities. The report examined the giving programs of Oregon foundations, and the role they might play in the coming decade. The introduction describes an era of shrinking resources "as government support of social programs recede" and subsequently, "the role of foundations takes on an even greater significance." The report stated that "the future direction chosen by foundations will greatly impact the extent to which private resources are brought to bear upon our nation's most serious social problems."

The Giving to Communities of Color in Oregon Project continues this discussion, under circumstances that echo the economic uncertainty of 1981. Nearly 30 years later, we have the data that tells the story of a more ethnically diverse Oregon. But we do not have any more insight into the giving patterns to these growing communities, or if the collective giving of funders can help shape, as well as merely respond to community changes, especially in lean years. Led by a collaboration of organizations interested in proactively addressing the lack of such data in Oregon, this project also intends to use this information to engage *all* communities in a conversation about Oregon's future, once again.

**PROJECT TEAM AND RESEARCH PARTNER** The project team provides overall direction for the effort and ensures the viability of the project. Members are:

- Black United Fund—Adrienne Livingston, Executive Director
- GRANTMAKERS of Oregon and SW Washington—Megan Wentworth, Director of Membership Programs, and Joyce White, Executive Director
- McKenzie River Gathering Foundation—Marjory Hamann, Executive Director
- Meyer Memorial Trust—Karissa Lowe, Grants Management Associate and Phoebe O’Leary, Director, Grants Administration
- Northwest Health Foundation—Chris DeMars, Program Officer and Suk Rhee, Director of Operations
- Oregon Community Foundation—Randy Choi, Program Officer for Education and Special Funds
- Potlatch Fund—Ken Gordon, Executive Director
- Spirit Mountain Community Foundation—Louis King, Program Officer and Shelley Hansen, Director
- Technical Assistance for Community Services—Dahnesh Medora, Director of Strategic Initiatives
- The Cornyn Foundation—Ginny Cornyn, Founder

The research partner is the Foundation Center, the leading national expert in this field. The Foundation Center maintains the most comprehensive database available on U.S. grantmakers and their grants, which has served as the basis for definitive analysis of philanthropic sector trends for more than 30 years. They have participated in milestone diversity research projects in just the past two years, including:

- Serving as the primary research consultant for the national Diversity in Philanthropy Project, and serving as a member of its Research Advisory, National Advisory and Executive Committees.
- Conducting research studies on diversity-related grantmaking for the Northern California Grantmakers (in partnership with Southern California and San Diego Grantmakers), Philanthropy New York, Council of Michigan Foundations, Colorado Association of Funders, and others. Their research model is becoming the national standard for data collection and analysis of investments to diverse communities.
- Collaborating with four infrastructure networks (Council on Foundations, a coalition of regional associations, a coalition of affinity groups and a coalition of identity-based funders) to discuss the adoption of a standard set of metrics for collecting and sharing data on diversity issues.

Larry McGill, Ph.D., senior vice president at Foundation Center, served as the principal researcher on the efforts listed above. Dr. McGill is the principal researcher on the Oregon project.

**SCOPE OF WORK AND BUDGET** The scope of work for the Foundation Center includes:

- Compilation of datasets to ensure the credible analysis of giving patterns of Oregon funders. The current research design will allow for analysis of giving patterns by type of funder, (e.g., independent, tribal/public charity or corporate), as well as the aggregated behavior of “all Oregon funders.”
- Indexing/coding and analysis of the data (a full description of research methods is available upon request.)
- Writing and publishing a final report on the findings and preparation of materials for presentations.
- Participation by Dr. McGill and the research team in mutually agreed upon dissemination activities.

All components of the final deliverables, including the published report and database of collected information, are to be owned by the funders commissioning the report. The report will be accompanied by recommendations from Oregon funders and community partners, solicited and compiled by the project team.

The budget is \$55,000 for salaries, data collection, grant indexing/coding, aggregate and subgroup analyses, report writing and design, travel and indirect costs. As of October 26, 2009, \$16,500 has been committed by Spirit Mountain Community Fund (\$5,000), Northwest Health Foundation (\$10,000) and McKenzie River Gathering Foundation (\$1,500). Significant in-kind contributions for data collection, report dissemination and outreach activities have been committed by additional members of the project team. Lead gifts from project team members will secure the project’s ability to move forward; the remaining funds will be raised through gifts of various sizes from other funders to indicate broad support for the project. With funding secured by the end of December 2009, the project will begin January/February 2010. The report will be released nine months later, approximately September/October 2010.