

Funders' Role in Promoting Collaboration to Improve Equity for Children, Families, and Communities

Location: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
College Road East and Route 1, Garden Room (1st floor), Princeton, New Jersey
July 18, 2007

Objectives:

- Share perspectives, ideas, and experiences on opportunities for collaboration among organizations with diverse areas of focus (i.e., education, poverty/community economic development, and health).
- Understand successes and limitations of funders' current approaches, addressing different issues without frequent cross-topic or cross-sector collaboration.
- Identify concrete opportunities for organizations to “cross borders” across topics and sectors to reach common goals – and what would help support this.

Agenda:

Continental Breakfast	9:30 – 10:00
Setting the Context 1. Welcome & overview (<i>Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, President and CEO, RWJF</i>) 2. Participant introductions and perspectives	10:00 – 10:35
Where is our common ground? 1. Relationships between our areas of focus A. What do you see as the essential factors that impact the outcomes of interest to you/your organization? How do our various essential factors relate to one another? B. What are the commonalities between our areas of focus? 2. Strengths and limitations of our current approach A. Share examples of our organizations' current approaches to multi-sector collaboration o Through grant-making strategies o Through collaboration between funders B. If your foundation works in two or three issue areas, how do you integrate work across these areas? (Or how have your observed others doing so?) C. What can we learn from these models? D. What prevents you from pursuing multi-sector collaboration? o Role of funder process for setting strategies and priorities	10:35 – 12:00

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Role of grant structure and/or grantee structure, goals, and norms ○ Role of funding period for grants 	
<p>Transition to working lunch</p> <p>Please take a short break and pick up your lunch; reconvene by 12:20pm.</p>	<p>12:00 – 12:20</p>
<p>How can we best support collaboration?</p> <p>1. Identifying a practical vision (<i>small-group exercise while eating lunch</i>)</p> <p>A. What are some examples of how you see cross-sector collaboration playing out in philanthropy and in organizations we fund? What could it look like? Thinking about what you’re doing now or planning in the near future, where do you see opportunities for collaboration? What would enable more of these opportunities?</p> <p>B. Do parts of this vision already exist? Do some organizations (including grantees) “cross borders” well already? What are the characteristics of efforts that have been successful?</p> <p>2. The role of funders (<i>large-group discussion</i>)</p> <p>A. As funders, what are ways we can help other organizations to “cross borders” – being both integrative and collaborative – across topics and sectors to reach the common goal of social equity? How can we cross these borders ourselves?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishing strategies, priorities, and end-goals ○ Acting as thought-leaders and conveners ○ Establishing mechanisms for collaboration (e.g., pooled funds) ○ Influencing interventions / selecting projects and grantees 	<p>12:20 – 1:30</p>
<p>Implications and next steps</p> <p>1. For funders</p> <p>A. What are the best ways to continue this conversation within the funder community? Who needs to be involved to help shape the agenda and direction for this issue? What environment is needed to enable this to happen, in the current context of few rewards or incentives for collaboration?</p> <p>B. What practical steps or policies would help funders engage in greater multi-sector collaboration?</p> <p>C. In general, what events or conditions might open windows for such collaboration? What events are on the horizon in the next 2-3 years?</p> <p>2. For others</p> <p>A. What other kinds of organizations need to come together around this issue?</p> <p>B. What policies/actions would support their involvement?</p>	<p>1:30 – 2:45</p>
<p>Closing</p>	<p>2:45 – 3:00</p>