

# Criterion I: Values

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A grantmaker practicing Philanthropy at Its Best serves the public good by contributing to a strong, participatory democracy that engages all communities.

- a) Provides at least 50 percent of its grant dollars to benefit lower-income communities, communities of color and other marginalized groups, broadly defined
  
  - b) Provides at least 25 percent of its grant dollars for advocacy, organizing and civic engagement to promote equity, opportunity and justice in our society
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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

NCRP encourages staff and trustees of foundations and other grantmakers to engage in serious discussions about each criterion and the chapter that elaborates on the criterion. Sample discussion questions are provided here to help get you started.

- > Which parts of the chapter did you like the most? Why?
- > Which parts did you like the least? Why?
- > Do you agree that it's important to contribute to a strong, participatory democracy and to support marginalized communities? Why or why not?
- > How do we define marginalized communities in the context of our mission? Have we ever thought about how increasing our giving to marginalized communities might align with our mission?
- > What percentage of our foundation's grant dollars do we estimate are intended to benefit marginalized communities, broadly defined? Are we satisfied with that percentage? Why or why not? How did we establish our current position?
- > How is advocacy, community organizing and civic engagement relevant to our current grantmaking or programmatic work? Have we ever considered how these strategies might align with our mission?
- > What percentage of our foundation's grant dollars do we estimate are for advocacy, community organizing and civic engagement? Are we satisfied with that percentage? Why or why not? How did we establish our current position?
- > What else from this chapter should inform our current grantmaking priorities?
- > If we want to make any changes based on this discussion, what will need to happen in order to make those changes? What are the next steps?

## Criterion II: Effectiveness

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A grantmaker practicing Philanthropy at Its Best serves the public good by investing in the health, growth and effectiveness of its nonprofit partners.

- a) Provides at least 50 percent of its grant dollars for general operating support
  - b) Provides at least 50 percent of its grant dollars as multi-year grants
  - c) Ensures that the time to apply for and report on the grant is commensurate with grant size
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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

NCRP encourages staff and trustees of foundations and other grantmakers to engage in serious discussions about each criterion and the chapter that elaborates on the criterion. Sample discussion questions are provided here to help get you started.

- > Which parts of the chapter did you like the most? Why?
- > Which parts did you like the least? Why?
- > Is it important to invest in the health, growth and effectiveness of our grantees? Why or why not? Have we ever held explicit discussions related to this?
- > In what ways do you think our foundation currently invests in the health, growth, and effectiveness of our grantees? Are there other examples from our past?
- > What percentage of our foundation's grant dollars do we estimate are given as general operating support? As multi-year grants? How did we establish those percentages? Do they satisfy us? Why or why not?
- > Considering the mission of our foundation, are there ways we might increase our general operating support and our multi-year grants and still be effective in achieving our goals?
- > Do we think our application and reporting requirements are burdensome to nonprofits? How do we know how long it takes grantees to apply for and report on a grant from us?
- > Do we think our requirements are reasonable considering the size grants we offer? Do we want to consider altering anything about grant size or requirements? Why or why not?
- > Considering the mission of our foundation, are we doing everything we can to promote effectiveness of our grantees?
- > What else from this chapter should inform our current grantmaking priorities?
- > If we want to make any changes based on this discussion, what will need to happen in order to make those changes? What are the next steps?

## Criterion III: Ethics

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A grantmaker practicing Philanthropy at Its Best serves the public good by demonstrating accountability and transparency to the public, its grantees and constituents.

- a) Maintains an engaged board of at least five people who include among them a diversity of perspectives—including of the communities it serves—and who serve without compensation
  - b) Maintains policies and practices that support ethical behavior
  - c) Discloses information freely
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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

NCRP encourages staff and trustees of foundations and other grantmakers to engage in serious discussions about each criterion and the chapter that elaborates on the criterion. Sample discussion questions are provided here to help get you started.

- > Which parts of the chapter did you like the most? Why?
- > Which parts did you like the least? Why?
- > Is it important to demonstrate accountability and transparency? Why or why not? How and when did we reach this decision? How often do we review our policies regarding these issues?
- > Do we feel that the size and diversity of our board could improve? If so, in what ways? If not, what are the barriers to us doing so? Have we considered including the grantee perspective on our board? How do we define diversity?
- > How did we establish the compensation policy we have in place for trustees? Why? If we don't compensate trustees, are we ensuring that there's no self-dealing or providing other non-monetary forms of compensation? If yes, how did we determine this is appropriate?
- > What policies and practices do we have in place to support ethical behavior? How did we establish our conflict of interest policy? Our whistleblower policy? Who is ensuring compliance with these? How do we set executive compensation? Should we consider adopting new policies, following our current policies more closely or revising our policies to align more with funders with comparable assets and missions?
- > What information do we disclose freely to the public? Is that enough? How did we determine that this level of disclosure is appropriate? Do we share demographic information about our board, staff and grantees? Do we have ways to ensure we get authentic feedback? Why or why not?
- > What else from this chapter should inform our current grantmaking priorities?
- > If we want to make any changes based on this discussion, what will need to happen in order to make those changes? What are the next steps?

## Criterion IV: Commitment

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A grantmaker practicing Philanthropy at Its Best serves the public good by engaging a substantial portion of its financial assets in pursuit of its mission.

- a) Pays out at least 6 percent of its assets annually in grants
  - b) Invests at least 25 percent of its assets in ways that support its mission
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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

NCRP encourages staff and trustees of foundations and other grantmakers to engage in serious discussions about each criterion and the chapter that elaborates on the criterion. Sample discussion questions are provided here to help get you started.

- > Which parts of the chapter did you like the most? Why?
- > Which parts did you like the least? Why?
- > Do you agree that it's important to engage a substantial portion of our financial assets in pursuit of our mission? Why or why not?
- > What percentage of our foundation's assets do we pay out in grants each year? How did we establish that percentage? Are we satisfied with that percentage? Why or why not?
- > Have we ever considered had an intentional discussion about mission investing? What percentage of our foundation's assets do we invest in accordance with our mission? (Include screening, proxy voting or shareholder activism, and proactive mission investments.)
- > How did we establish that percentage? Are we satisfied with that percentage? Why or why not?
- > Are there ways we can use other investment assets at our disposal to achieve our mission?
- > What else from this chapter should inform our current grantmaking priorities?
- > If we want to make any changes based on this discussion, what will need to happen in order to make those changes? What are the next steps?