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Amber W. Brown of Coastal Community Foundation discusses the kick-off questions for Sharing Power from the Power Moves toolkit. Photo by Adam Chandler.



Equity isn't a declaration, it's a purpose that drives action

By Amber W. Brown

Coastal Community Foundation is located along and serves the coast of South Carolina. With more than \$300 million dollars in assets, CCF is among the top 100 community foundations in the nation. With a mission to create vibrant communities by uniting people and investing resources, CCF awards nearly \$20 million in grants each year.

"Power is the ability to achieve a purpose. Whether or not it is good or bad depends upon the purpose."

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Coastal Community Foundation's (CCF) devotion to equity came the hard way. After acknowledging the sordid history of slavery in Charleston, South Carolina, we were acutely reminded of its lasting effects with the Mother Emanuel Massacre in 2015.

At the time, the foundation's main office stood 2 miles away from Mother Emanuel AME, a church co-founded by slavery uprising leader Denmark Vesey. In response to news of the massacre, the foundation and board immediately

committed to making strides in our communities (and within our own walls) to address racial and other forms of injustice.

In 2018, when we were invited by NCRP to consider piloting a new toolkit that focused on equity with a peer-learning group of funders, we jumped at the opportunity to measure our progress on the equity goals to which we had devoted ourselves.

It was not until we partnered with NCRP that *(continued on page 9)*



challenging grantmakers
to strengthen communities

A message from the Vice President and Chief Engagement Officer



Dear Reader,

“If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground ... This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle.”

—Frederick Douglass

Many of us are familiar with the quote “Power concedes nothing without demand...,” but just before this famous line, Douglass uttered the aforementioned words in his speech entitled “If There Is No Struggle, There Is No Progress.”

Douglass calls those of us who “favor freedom” to directly engage systems of power; yet, we in philanthropy are still tentative. Concepts of equity and inclusion are more prevalent in our sector’s rhetoric, but we seldom take a hard look at the power we have and make courageous choices about how to build, share and wield power to achieve a more equitable world.

In this issue of *Responsive Philanthropy*, we hear from 3 funders who have taken on that challenge by incorporating the *Power Moves* guide in their work.

Amber W. Brown, program officer at Coastal Community Foundation in South Carolina, shares insights about how the evaluation resources in *Power Moves* helped to clarify the “power exertion it takes to accomplish [their] work.” Success hinged not only on their external engagement with stakeholders, but also with creating clarity among staff and board.

The advocacy and policy partner at The Colorado Trust, Noelle Doward, shared with NCRP’s Lisa Ranghelli, *Power Moves* author and senior director of evaluation and learning, the shifts they have made to strengthen community partnerships and support the community organizing infrastructure in their state.

Finally, Hanh Le, executive director at Weissberg Foundation explores how the outcome of their strategic planning process was a recognition that they needed “to be bolder in developing, naming and implementing our strategy to advance equity.” *Power Moves* has been a tool to help them operationalize a bold strategy in both governance and grantmaking.

Power is not an optional consideration for funders who want to advance equity. Economic, political and social systems navigate power regularly. These are the very systems in our society that perpetuate so many of the conditions we seek to repair with philanthropy. The authors in this issue inspire our sector to be bold enough to examine our own power and advance a more sophisticated and honest strategy for making a difference.

Are you ready to follow their lead?

Your colleague in power-building,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Jeanné L. Lewis". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jeanné L. Lewis
Vice President and Chief Engagement Officer

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Moving power to advance racial equity

By Hanh Le

The Weissberg Foundation is a small, family foundation based in Arlington, Virginia. It was started in 1988 by real estate developer and engaged citizen Marvin Weissberg.

We have always operated with a broad vision for social justice. In the past several years, we have worked to better articulate our mission, to advance organizations and efforts building power of those most negatively impacted by racism through funding, amplification, capacity building and collaboration. In 2018 the foundation made grants totaling \$1.4 million.

In January 2016 our trustee Nina Weissberg began participating in a 6-month learning series organized by the Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers (WRAG) called “Putting Racism on the Table¹.”

This experience provided her and, through her, the foundation (including me when I came on board in May of that year) stronger foundational knowledge about structural racism, implicit bias and white privilege, and an urgency for philanthropy – including the Weissberg Foundation – to play a role in advancing racial equity.

In August 2016, we kicked off a strategic planning process. The first thing the board and staff did as part of this process was to articulate our core values, which included equity.

Over the next year, and with that lens, we did a lot of talking to each other; getting feedback from our grantee partners, declined grant applicants and peers; and looking at our grantmaking history.

Soon after we started our strategic planning process, Donald Trump won

the presidential election; this was a real kick in the tail for us.

We convened a board and staff call in the week following the election to process the “what, so what and now what” of that, and our biggest “now what” was that we needed to be bolder in developing, naming and implementing our strategy to advance equity.

Throughout the remainder of our strategic planning process, it became clear that so much of what our work was addressing was caused by inequity, in particular racial inequity.

In August 2017, we released our new strategic framework and our new Reframing <Washington> program area, both centered on advancing racial equity by supporting building power in communities of color.

Since that time, we have continued to build our knowledge, sharpen our analysis and examine our own complicity in structural racism. In late 2019, we revised the language in our strategic framework to be even bolder and more explicitly anti-racist.

POWER MOVES AS A RESOURCE

In 2018 we started using *Power Moves* as a tool to help us more effectively operationalize racial equity internally and externally.

I participated in an NCRP learning cohort of other foundations exploring how to implement *Power Moves*, and our foundation dedicated significant time through 3



Weissberg Foundation's Disrupt, Move, Voice Power program is one example of the foundation's "reparative" grantmaking prioritizing the funding of people of color-led organizations.

consecutive board meetings from November 2018 through June 2019 to examine how we build, share and wield power.

Throughout this process, we found that *Power Moves* provided:

- An **accessible framework** – building power, sharing power, wielding power – for engaging in tough conversations on race.
- A **tool for our board and staff to assess** progress, perspectives and knowledge about operationalizing racial equity, and chart a plan for making further progress.
- **Tangible benchmarks** for advancing equity.
- **Relatable, practical and inspiring stories** of how other foundations build, share and wield power toward racial equity.

We devoted each board meeting to a different dimension of power (building, sharing, wielding). In advance of each meeting, using a survey tool co-created with NCRP as part of the *Power Moves* Peer Learning Group, we anonymously surveyed board and staff on how well they thought we were doing on that aspect of power.

At the actual board meetings, we then shared and discussed results of the assessment. To bring the concepts to life, we explored how other foundations and our grantee partners move power by reading case studies about their work, or inviting them to the board meeting to share firsthand.

Outcomes of this self-assessment and learning process included a greater shared understanding among the foundation board and staff of where we were, where we wanted to be and how we could move toward engaging power more effectively for equity.

MOVING POWER IN GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL PRACTICE

Before we started using *Power Moves*, but certainly more so since, we have been making some changes to advance racial equity internally:

- In terms of **board composition**, we are moving from an all-white, almost all-family board to adopting a goal of becoming 50% family member, 50% community member, and significantly more diverse (in race, gender, sexuality, life experience, etc.) in the next few years.

- We adopted an **Investment Policy Statement** to get us to 100% mission-aligned in 5 years, so we are considering racial equity in how we wield our investment decisions.
- We build meaningful engagement in **board meetings** with our increasingly diverse board and staff as active participants.
- In terms of **hiring staff**, we are transparent about salaries, eliminate unnecessary qualifications like certain educational degrees and prioritize as essential other qualifications such as relevant lived experience.
- In **managing staff**, we make the time to offer and request 2-way feedback, and we support facilitative leadership by all.
- We support ongoing group and individual **learning about race and racism** by board and staff.
- We wield our consumer power by ensuring that any **consultants and vendors** we hire, from accountants to IT service providers, practice values that align with ours.

MOVING POWER IN GRANTMAKING PRACTICE AND PROGRAMS

In terms of ensuring our programmatic activities, including our grantmaking practices, are more racially equitable, we engage in the following:

- **"Reparative" grantmaking:** Prioritizing funding people of color-led organizations, which have been and continue to be egregiously underfunded by philanthropy, that are explicitly striving to advance racial equity through advocacy, organizing, civic engagement and/or other power-building strategies. Our Equitable Justice program and Disrupt, Move, Voice Power program are the strongest examples of this.
- **"Partly-participatory" grantmaking:** Sharing grantmaking decision-making power by engaging community reviewers throughout our

proposal review process, including co-creation of our application assessment rubric; compensating them fairly; and building a pipeline to our board. (At this point, staff and board work side-by-side with community reviewers as co-creators, but if/when we move to community members leading the process, then we will feel more comfortable calling it true participatory grantmaking.)

- **Going beyond the “no” with declined grant applicants:** Inviting 2-way feedback conversations with declined grant applicants and providing acknowledgment grants to those that get to a certain stage in the grant review process to signal our appreciation for their efforts.
- **Tending to our ABCs:** Going beyond funding by ramping up our strategies around Amplification, Building capacity and Collaboration in ways that help grantee partners meet their larger vision for racial equity.

LESSONS LEARNED IN MOVING POWER

Everything we do is an opportunity to learn and to inform our next steps, so we seek out lessons that will develop us individually and institutionally at the foundation, and that will help make the philanthropic sector more equitable. Some stand out as particularly important:

Ensuring that the necessary conditions for effectively examining how we are moving power:

- Consciousness and honesty about the truth that philanthropy is historically rooted in inequitable systems, structures and dynamics, and a true belief that philanthropy can operate in a different, more equitable way.
- Commitment to advancing equity both internally and externally and for the long-haul – it needs to be an authentic and sustained effort.
- Shared agreements, strategies and language for dealing with unhealthy

power dynamics, macroaggressions and other inequitable behavior.

This work is messy, and though we ultimately seek to change systems and structures, this work is deeply personal. We have to build a container for that; not necessarily a safe container but a brave one.

- Empathy for the extra burden that people of color carry in leading or being a part of this equity journey, and care and resources to support them.
- Because of the reality of foundation power dynamics, board members who can help champion the work so that it is not all staff-driven.

Carving out the time needed to move equity efforts forward:

- More time for bringing along the full board early in the process so that staff and board champions do not get too far ahead of others, which can be alienating on both sides.
- More time to accommodate for meandering conversations that might go down unexpected paths (e.g., cutting off a discussion about racial bias because we need to review our financials is a downer).

Knowing who to turn to for help:

- Engaging with peers who have been on similar journeys for shared learning, support, idea generation and collaboration.
- Bringing in external experts to lead some of the tougher conversations and processes, but being sure to vet them carefully. There are lots of consultants now that say they do racial equity consulting, but not all of them are good or right for you, and they can actually derail your process and inflict harm on those involved.

Keeping it real:

- The need to bring kindness, compassion, empathy and, sometimes, indignant rage to the process.

- Remembering, especially when you are faced with obstacles and challenges of doing racial equity work, that THAT IS THE WORK!

Moving power when we feel powerless:

- Always pushing ourselves to examine how we as individuals – in whatever roles we play – can build, share and wield our own power to move forward change.
- Reminding ourselves of Eric Liu’s 3 laws of power: 1. Power pools and concentrates; 2. Power self-justifies; and, most importantly, 3. Power is infinite ... it can be created!

WHAT’S NEXT FOR THE FOUNDATION?

When we did the *Power Moves* assessments, we found that we are moving in the right direction across all 3 dimensions of power. That said, it was clear we have the furthest to go in terms of **wielding our power**.

So, building the muscle – of both our board and staff – to push philanthropy, academia, government and business to operate and engage more equitably is a particular priority for us in the coming year.

Because racial equity is both a process and an outcome, our work needs constant, vigilant tending and nurturing – it is ongoing.

And because people’s lives, our communities, our country and our humanity are on the line, we will keep at it. ■

Hanh Le is executive director of the Weissberg Foundation. She participated in NCRP’s Power Moves Peer Learning and Advisory Group.

Notes

1. To learn more, visit <https://www.puttinggracisonthetable.org/>

Centering community power and feedback: The Colorado Trust on its new advocacy grantmaking program

The Colorado Trust recently launched a new advocacy grantmaking program¹. In January, NCRP's Lisa Ranghelli interviewed the program's architect, Noelle Dorward, to find out more about the shift in strategy.

The Colorado Trust's mission is to advance the health and well-being of the people of Colorado. In 2018, the foundation ended the year with \$470 million in assets and liabilities and made charitable expenditures totaling \$18.4 million.

NCRP: Please give our readers some background on The Colorado Trust's advocacy grantmaking goals and strategies before this new 2020 approach.

Noelle Dorward: The Colorado Trust considers policy and advocacy work as essential to achieving health equity, and recognizes that many of the inequities that people experience, whether unintended or intended, are a result of and perpetuated by policy decisions.

Since 2014, we've been funding a field-building strategy², where we've supported a cohort of community organizing, direct service and policy advocacy organizations across the state and developed a new field of health equity advocates.

That strategy, called Health Equity Advocacy, has a grantee-driven approach. To build this field, the cohort members determined for themselves:

- The strategies to implement to build the field.
- How to allocate capacity-building resources to support that implementation.
- Which collective policy advocacy activities and issues to work on.

- How to center racial equity in all of their health equity work.
- Shared communications and messaging across all of their different missions, visions and geographies.
- A plan to have statewide convenings, 3 times a year for 3 days, along with place-based activities.

NCRP: Did the grant partners give feedback at different points that fed into what you learned about the strategy and possible future directions?

Noelle: The cohort used real-time learning to make decisions to evolve their field-building work, and we used it to ask questions about how the strategy was going and think about what happens in the future.

The advocacy field-building strategy and the resident-centered community approach were designed and launched at different times.

Over the years, the cohort members and I did note that there seemed to be a silo between the Community Partnerships work and the advocacy grantmaking, and they were right.

We couldn't quite figure out how to bring that together ourselves. For our next advocacy grantmaking strategy, we're seeking more alignment.

I went and visited every single cohort member in January 2019 for 3 reasons. One, to say we're changing direction, and talk with them about what that means and why.

Second, we asked what they want us to take forward from the cohort work in a next advocacy investment.

Third, what should we leave behind? Their experience and insight made their way into the new advocacy funding strategy.

I also talked to other funders in the state to ask: How do you fund advocacy? What do you think is missing? Do you think that the cohort, field building and focus on advocacy and health equity has had impact? The summary of those conversations helped inform the thinking of what to do next.

We co-developed the cohort's 2020 work plan with grantees, and our board supported an additional year of funding.

It's less funds, but they've done incredible work, have momentum, and we want to see that continue and provide a runway to support their ideas about where they think this work can go.

I think every single funder I talked to said no transition has ever gone exactly how they hoped. And it's never enough funding, and it's never enough time. Knowing all this, trying to accomplish something within this context, to be as supportive as possible, was really important.

NCRP: Were there other resources or information in addition to peers and cohort members that informed your process of rethinking the approach?

Noelle: My background is in supporting resident and agency coalitions, community development and community engagement. I've worked alongside organizers, but I'm not an organizer.

That was a big world to explore, as well as the concept of power, which wasn't a central focus of the Health Equity Advocacy field building.

In the Community Partnerships work, their North Star, if you will, is supporting residents in building power. And that is really the major alignment for advocacy grantmaking.

With that clear focus on power, I learned from Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy (EPIP), where I'm on the Colorado steering committee, and from groups like the Chinook Fund, Alliance for Justice, Allied Media Project, Othering and Belonging Institute, and Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity.

The work of these groups supported my thinking through the practice of philanthropy, and equity in philanthropy.

And then for power itself, I'll highlight 2 resources: a Grassroots Policy Project (GPP) paper, *The Three Faces of Power*³, and NCRP's *Power Moves* guide. Both were critical in thinking about the practice of philanthropy and power.

Power Moves provides very clear questions for self-assessment. It can be a transformative experience if people take those thoughtful questions and then implement changes, but it's also personally transformational to critically reflect on how I have experienced our work and the opportunity we have in our next advocacy funding opportunity.

The 3 domains that the guide – I'll explain more on these shortly – lays out so clearly helped me think about it as a journey or an arc of a story.

It was also helpful in not getting bogged down in thoughts like, "I'm not doing enough," or "I'm not doing it the right way," because institutional philanthropy is a long-term change game.

Seeing the amazing thought processes that went behind creating the

guide, and all the different ways that it was informed by different people, helped me have a template that I could trust in helping guide my thinking.

The EPIP Colorado steering committee facilitated a coffee chat about the guide with other people in philanthropy, about where we were in this process and what we thought about it.

Having a guide that I could talk with peers about that was structured, and had clear definitions of power and where they came from, was really instrumental in that thinking.

And that actually happened before we started this transition, so it had already been in the back of my mind as we moved forward.

The GPP paper describes 3 faces of power: organizing people and resources, building policy infrastructure and shifting popular narrative.

When we started talking with The Trust's Community Partnerships staff about what they were experiencing in the state with community members, and the myriad ways they had talked about power over the last few years, staff began to see a need for a stron-

ger connection to policy change work, because they were working with new groups of residents who had been shut out of decision-making processes.

Resident teams participating in the Community Partnerships work were getting to this point of saying, "This isn't a programmatic issue. We need to advocate for change." GPP's high-level framework felt in alignment with how we were already thinking.

It's been a process of discovery, thinking through these concepts, and the 3 domains of power from *Power Moves* and *The Three Faces of Power* all are resonating.

That has been really helpful, and it's aligned with how we were already thinking. Certainly, the difference was we hadn't centered power, and we're looking for better ways of understanding power.

NCRP: From all that, you developed a very comprehensive 18-page set of goals, strategies and grant guidelines. What does this new approach look like?

Noelle: In some ways, it's similar. We were on a good path with a lot of things



The Health Equity Advocacy Cohort planned a "social justice superhero party" to celebrate the past 5 years of incredible work. Pictured left to right, back row: Lea Steed, Silas Musick, Carol Hedges, Caitlin Schneider; front row: Wren [official MC of the evening!], Esther Turcios. Photo used with permission.

LESSONS FROM THE COLORADO TRUST'S TRANSITION PROCESS

1. It's important to think about this work as a long arc of a story, rather than a 5-year chunk, in which we are learning and evolving as we move along.
2. Relationship building is critical – how we show up is what determines whether people will believe us and want to work with us, regardless of anything we write or say elsewhere about what we intend for a grant strategy.
3. I can't stress enough the importance of transparency in funder-grantee relationships. That's a key value we want to live into, and I want to be really clear about that.
4. Having multiple opportunities for feedback has been really essential. Maybe people will still feel more comfortable saying things to our external evaluators that they won't say to me – and that's okay, that's fine. That is the ever-present power dynamic.
5. Lean into power dynamics a lot and just explicitly confront them. It's about being comfortable standing in that tension. As the ones with the power, we need to say it out loud, course-correct when needed and receive critique, then think about what to do with that and be accountable.

we were doing. The differences are around: 1. an explicit focus on organizing, and 2. supporting organizations building a community organizing and policy infrastructure that is responsive to community needs, without us dictating what that infrastructure needs to look like across the state.

What we've heard through different conversations, as well as a recent community organizing scan we completed, is that there's simply not enough support in Colorado for grassroots work.

So there's a big focus on both building and bridging power in this funding opportunity. By bridging, we mean bringing people together to learn from and leverage each other's capacities, networks and power in service to community-defined issues.

In addition, we think that a community-driven policy infrastructure is the best way to achieve the most equitable outcomes that will help folks live their best lives and have the healthiest communities.

It's long-term work: a 4.5-year general operating grant; capacity-building resources directed by the funded organizations; a relationship-based grant-making approach; a "rapid response" fund for immediate, urgent advocacy needs; and a comprehensive evaluation and learning plan that supports what those organizations need, not evaluating each individual organization on programmatic goals and objectives.

Rather, we're evaluating at the strategy to see to what extent an organizing and policy infrastructure is strengthened or exists as a result of this work.

And as a convener and thought partner in this work, we want to continue to support grantee network and relationship building.

That is why the field-building work has been successful – people were willing to build relationships with each other across their differences and geographies.

The reason for the 18-page grant information document is because we

have been legitimately critiqued that we have not been clear about our expectations, and we wanted to provide as much information as possible up front so people could ask questions before applying.

We firmly believe that general operating support is necessary in funding advocacy, and yet we also still hope to see some specific outcomes as a result of this work.

We wanted to be as transparent as possible from the outset about what the questions are going to be, both in the letter of intent and the application, what the process and timeline will be, as well as outline the relationship we hope to have with grantees.

There already is a deep history of organizing and movement building in Colorado, and I hope that we're adding value by being a good thought partner and strengthening what exists or people want to exist.

There are so many people in philanthropy working really hard at transforming their institutions to be more equitable and community-driven.

I see it through the networks I'm part of and the eagerness of folks wanting to learn, grow and change their institutions. I hope that we all continue down that path and work hard to transform ourselves in service to the folks who really make our missions possible. ■

Notes

1. To learn more, visit <https://www.coloradotrust.org/strategy/building-and-bridging-power>
2. To learn more, visit <https://www.coloradotrust.org/strategy/health-equity-advocacy>
3. Richard Healey and Sandra Hinson, *The Three Faces of Power*, Grassroots Policy Project, May 2018, https://grassrootspolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/GPP_34FacesOfPower.pdf

we genuinely thought about how effectively the foundation exerts power to accomplish our objectives. Like many other community foundations, CCF aims to solve tough, long-standing problems including affordable places and inclusive spaces, education and economic opportunities in our region.

Today's political and social climate makes it more important than ever to ensure our work helps, not hinders, efforts to make significant progress to mitigate inequity. As such, we've committed to championing transparency and accessibility. In a sense, equity has become our purpose.

Over the last decade, philanthropy has shifted towards practicing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). For some, identifying equity's importance as the cornerstone of our endeavors has been more than a passing phase.

Our field also recognizes the limitations we have in being able to effectively measure our progress towards such invaluable efforts. NCRP's *Power Moves* guide has served as a mechanism to fill that very void, particularly as it's designed for foundations who desire to exercise the power they possess to create change.

It is intended for any grantmaker who cares about under-resourced communities and wants to more effectively advance justice and equity. It benefits funders who value community engagement and want deeper partnerships to achieve community-centered solutions.

I've found *Power Moves* to be unique in 2 ways: First, it identifies the link between power, privilege and equitable outcomes and, second, it is grounded in honest feedback from a foundations' grantees, peers and other stakeholders.

WHY WE DECIDED TO FOCUS ON SHARING POWER

How do you address power with your stakeholders when your stakeholders

are the entire community? Not without mistakes.

The piloting work began with the foundation's Grantmaking and Community Leadership (GCL) department in July 2018. We initiated a facilitated discussion process to identify the foundation's involvement in *Power Moves*.

We took on the kick-off questions in each section to help familiarize ourselves, while also evaluating our own practices.

Each week we took an hour to talk about power and how we exhibit, or want to exhibit, the characteristics found in the toolkit for building, sharing and wielding power.

While we found value in each power dimension, we knew we could only focus

on 1 at a time. Using an anonymous ballot process, the GCL team unanimously voted to pursue the Sharing Power section of the *Power Moves* toolkit.

Our decision was based on the need to challenge ourselves while realizing the limitations we had at the time.

We found that we'd done a lot of the work suggested in Building Power with a recently completed series of community-based conversations, and, although Wielding Power is where we wanted to be, we weren't quite ready for that body of work without having to strengthen the relationships we have with our stakeholders.

Sharing Power was a happy medium where there were things left to be accomplished, but we weren't starting from scratch either. We'd thought we'd done the hardest part.

WANT TO IMPLEMENT POWER MOVES SUCCESSFULLY? START WITH YOUR BOARD.

Making a declaration that something is so does not in fact make it so. We learned this lesson as soon as our *Power Moves* work was expanded outside of our small department. Our goal was to embed *Power Moves* into the foundation's overall culture as a tool we use to measure the success of our DEI work.

This couldn't be just a "grantmaking thing" if we wanted our endeavor to be successful. We quickly brought in the remaining foundation departments. We held a staff kickoff where we explained the toolkit and conducted a group discussion based on the Sharing Power discussion questions.

And from there, we asked for volunteers for a team to create and administer internal and external stakeholder surveys and analyze the data. We had an ambitious goal to get the internal data collection kicked off the next week.

However, we didn't have nearly as much interest from other departments

Our goal was to
embed *Power Moves*
into the foundation's
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of our DEI work.

EXAMPLES OF CCF PRACTICE CHANGES RELATED TO BUILDING, SHARING AND WIELDING POWER

- After analyzing its last 3 years of grants, and learning that CCF was not providing as much support as intended to rural organizations, toward groups led by people of color and for general operations, the foundation set targets in these areas, changed the questions asked in its applications, changed the way it does site visits, and changed the way it trains grants committees. At the next 3-year mark, CCF will measure progress again.
- With 60% of assets being donor-advised, CCF's development team has used *Power Moves* to inform how it engages donors where they are, to help them move them along a continuum of thinking about the impact of their grantmaking. Through individual 1 on 1 conversations between stewardship officers and donors, as well as larger donor gatherings, CCF is being more intentional about bringing diverse perspectives into donor learning on particular topics. And donors have started thinking about their philanthropy in a different way.
- CCF has examined its vendor policy with an equity lens and committed to specific benchmarks and milestones for hiring and procurement. CCF has challenged its auditors and investment managers about their diversity policies and practices.
- The foundation board has adopted a policy agenda in partnership with stakeholders. Based on community input, CCF is prioritizing education, access to opportunity and community engagement in its policy stances.

to get involved as we'd wanted. It had become a "grantmaking thing." Some staff felt they didn't really have anything to contribute to this process although it sounded interesting.

Some of our leadership felt that the commitment was too great for the bandwidth the foundation had available at the time, resulting in several staff being denied the opportunity to participate. *Power Moves* was described as another boiling pot being placed on a full stove. This perception was extremely problematic given that we didn't want this to be something additional; rather, *Power Moves* was something that needed to be embedded across the foundation. Our communication strategy had failed to deliver that message despite the GCL team's best efforts. It was at that moment that we realized our biggest mistake: We hadn't started with the board.

In September, we introduced *Power Moves* to our department's board committee and began a 4-month long discussion series. We delved into their engagement with the foundation and

how *Power Moves* could strategically advance our equity efforts.

From there, the board committee introduced *Power Moves* to the full board, and we began to set it as a priority for the foundation. Now the committee chairman, who is our incoming board chair, carries the *Power Moves* glossary and infographic with him as a touchstone.

In retrospect, had we introduced the concept to the board first, it would have been much easier to emphasize its importance to staff and leadership as a strategic growth opportunity.

INTEGRATING POWER MOVES INTO OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Despite our staff capacity obstacles, we persisted with data collection into the fall of 2018. We asked all staff to complete an anonymous survey about the power dynamics internal to the foundation, and we sent out an external survey to grantees, prospective grantees and applicants who'd previously been denied grant funding.

Shortly after receiving and review-



Coastal Community Foundation staff discuss the kick-off questions for *Sharing Power* from the *Power Moves* toolkit. Photo by Adam Chandler.

ing the internal data, we began to focus on the power structures at play within the foundation's walls. The results revealed that we had a communication problem, and the staff experience varied greatly from person to person. We'd been living inequitably, while pushing for equity externally. It was clear that we needed to get every department involved and focused on rectifying our own power imbalances.

In my opinion, our greatest struggle came with deciding how to integrate *Power Moves* into other departments. As written, the toolkit seems to focus primarily on the power of grantmaking and doesn't directly tackle the power other departments hold.

To help remedy the disconnect, we hosted a series of discussions and road mapping activities with each department. *Power Moves* provides a roadmap for each dimension of power that leads toward equitable habits.

With the original in mind, we developed roadmaps based on a series of internally created discussion questions designed to identify ways that each department can engage in sharing power.

These hour-long discussions left each team with the ability to identify their power as individuals, as well as a team, and provided us with a holistic view of the gaps in our equity pursuit. I evaluated each of the discussion notes for patterns, missed opportunities and ways for staff to feel the importance of their engagement.

At the completion of the analysis, the operations, finance and development departments, as well as the foundation's management team, left with a roadmap to guide their *Power Moves* involvement for the coming year.

It wasn't until then that our journey with power truly began. Equipped with a guiding document, each department was tasked with coming up with tactical plans for acknowledging power and

instilling equity into their work.

As an effort to solidify the importance and reward the dedication it takes to accomplish the objectives, we've embedded our progress into the foundation's strategic goals for the year.

A mere 18 months later, we are halfway through our first year of implementing *Power Moves* across departments. Our areas of focus include:

- Undertaking a culture evaluation.
- Increasing effective communications amongst staff.
- Developing a transparent budgeting process.
- Expanding the geographical diversity of our place-based impact investment recipients.
- Opening a consistent feedback loop for our grant partners.

We are, by no means, near the end of this journey and are sure to make more mistakes. Nonetheless, *Power Moves* has influenced the way we approach our everyday work. It has informed our DEI policies, communication strategies, our strategic framework and the way we engage with donors and community partners.

But even in our journey for equity we've yet to address everything that we can. Our focus has been primarily internal, initially, and we still have work to do with external stakeholders as we continue to move forward.

Grant partners want to hear more from the foundation and to engage in more training opportunities. Our work is ongoing and *Power Moves* will serve as a focus area for years to come. After all, equity cannot be declared as done; it can only be a purpose driver. ■

Amber W. Brown is program officer at the Coastal Community Foundation and has led much of the foundation's equity-oriented work with Power Moves.

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Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice
Barr Foundation
Capital & Main
Carnegie Corporation of New York
Chorus Foundation
CommonWealth Kitchen
The Conservation Fund: Resourceful Communities
David Rockefeller Fund
Daphne Foundation
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
Faith in Action
Field Foundation of Illinois
Foundation for Child Development
Foundation for a Just Society
General Service Foundation
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Hull Family Foundation
ImmSchools
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Latino Union of Chicago
Lawrence Foundation
The Libra Foundation
Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation
Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation
Melville Charitable Trust
Mendelsohn Family Fund
Metro IAF
Meyer Memorial Trust
Mizrahi Family Foundation
The Nathan Cummings Foundation
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
New York Foundation
NEO Philanthropy
Norman Foundation
Ohio Voice
Rockefeller Brothers Fund
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Sandler Foundation
Southwest Organizing Project
Tarbell Family Foundation
Tennessee Justice Center
Wallace Global Fund
Weingart Foundation
Women's Foundation of Rhode Island

Select Publications

Movements Matter: The Savvy Donor's Guide to Investing in Social Movements January 2020

This 1-page brief intended for individual donors comes in 4 different versions and details how social justice movements are the mechanism by which people come together to make their voices heard and change their communities for the better. The brief highlights 4 important movements: the LGBTQ Equality Movement, the Feminist Movement, the Black Civil Rights Movement and the Environmental Movement.

The Case for Funding in the South August 2019

This 1-page brief intended for individual donors details how they can begin to fill the gap left by under-investment in the South by institutional philanthropy, as individual donors aren't beholden to the institutional barriers that prevent foundations from making timely pivots in funding.

State of Foundation Funding for the Pro-Immigrant Movement

by Timi Gerson, Ryan Schlegel and
Stephanie Peng April 2019

In this first brief from its new Movement Investment Project, NCRP uses the latest available grantmaking data and feedback from frontline immigrant justice movement organizations to identify how funders can invest more and in better ways in the rich diversity that fuels the success of our country.

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