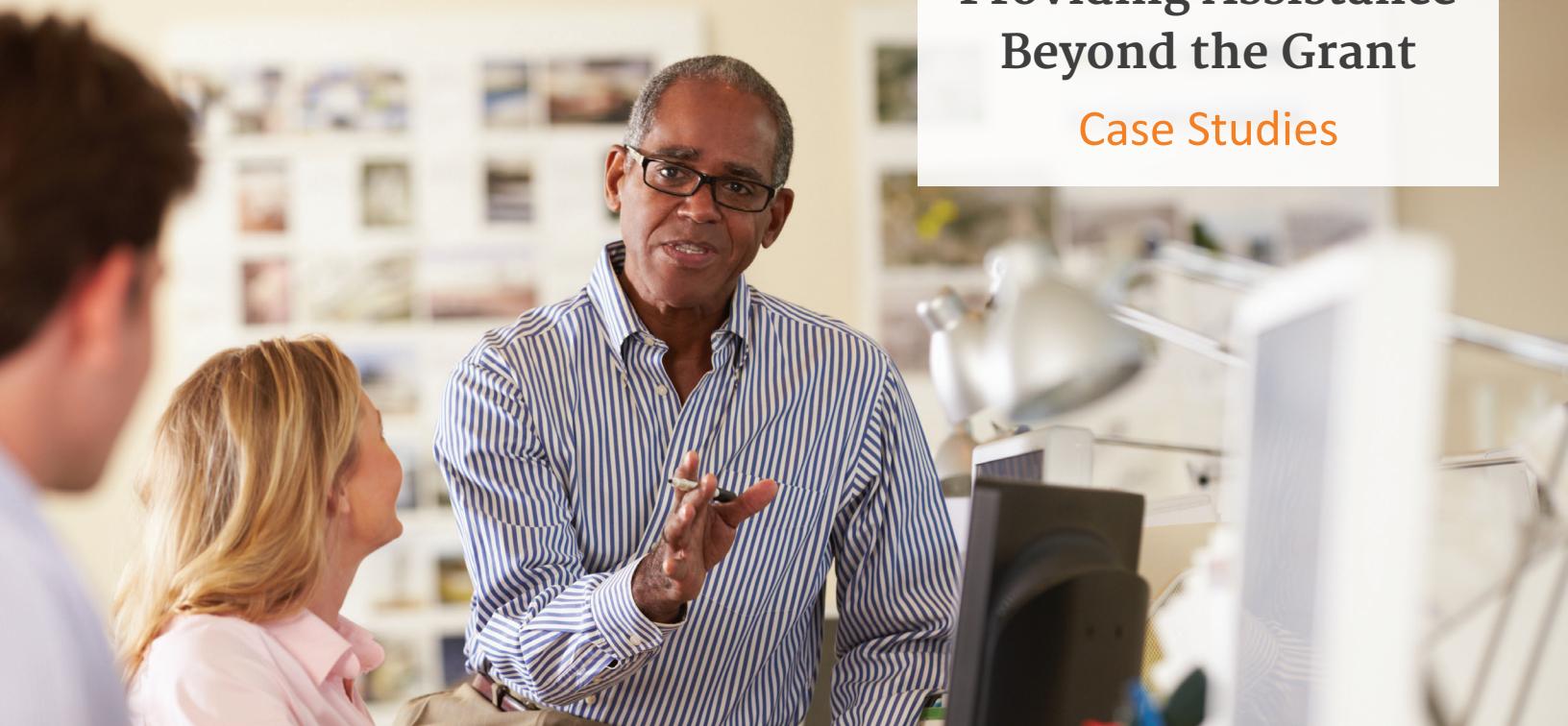




THE CENTER
FOR EFFECTIVE
PHILANTHROPY

Providing Assistance Beyond the Grant

Case Studies



Many funders provide at least some of their grantees with assistance beyond the grant check, whether it's through one-on-one conversations with program officers on staff, or through more formalized trainings or learning groups. As part of CEP's grantee survey, funders ask their grantees whether they have received any of 14 types of non-monetary assistance:



Management Assistance

- ▶ General management advice
- ▶ Strategic planning advice
- ▶ Financial planning/accounting
- ▶ Development of performance measures



Field-Related Assistance

- ▶ Encouraged/facilitated collaboration
- ▶ Insight and advice on your field
- ▶ Introductions to leaders in field
- ▶ Provided research or best practices
- ▶ Provided seminars/forums/convenings



Other Assistance

- ▶ Board development/governance assistance
- ▶ Information technology assistance
- ▶ Communications/marketing/publicity assistance
- ▶ Use of Foundation facilities
- ▶ Staff/management training

Intensive Assistance Patterns

COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE

Grantees receiving at least 7 forms of assistance

FIELD-FOCUSED ASSISTANCE

Grantees receiving at least 3 forms of field-related assistance but less than 7 forms of assistance overall

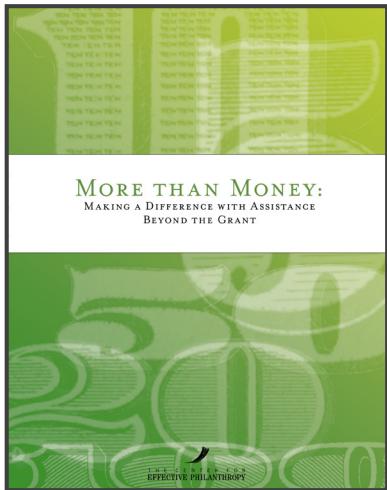
Other Patterns

LITTLE ASSISTANCE

Grantees receiving at least one form of assistance but not falling into the above categories

NO ASSISTANCE

Grantees not receiving non-monetary support



CEP's analysis in [*More than Money: Making a Difference with Assistance Beyond the Grant*](#) shows that particular patterns of more intensive non-monetary assistance can have a substantial positive impact on grantees' experiences with philanthropic funders: when grantees receive either field-focused or comprehensive patterns of non-monetary assistance, they have a substantially more positive experience compared to grantees receiving no assistance. Across the field, grantees that receive only sporadic assistance do not report significantly different experience than grantees that receive no assistance beyond the grant.

We at CEP are often asked by funders for examples of how other funders provide high levels of intensive assistance. With support from Wilburforce Foundation, CEP compiled profiles of eight foundations that provide some of the largest proportions of their grantees with the most intensive and helpful field-focused and comprehensive patterns of non-monetary assistance. These profiles represent a range of foundations in terms of size and scope, and the ways in which these funders provide grantees with assistance beyond the grant varies widely. Nonetheless, several key themes arose across funders profiled:

- ▶ All of these eight funders are intentional about providing high levels of non-monetary assistance
- ▶ All broach the topic of assistance beyond the grant proactively with grantees, but they have varying levels of pre-definition about what assistance they offer grantees
- ▶ All believe providing assistance beyond the grant is fundamental to achievement of their mission, through support of better learning, relationships, or grantee effectiveness
- ▶ There is no single method of provision across profiled funders, but most use some third-party assistance or consultants to provide assistance
- ▶ Most of these funders strive to create shareable publications, resources, or other learning products from their and grantees' experiences
- ▶ Direct assessment of utility of non-monetary assistance is somewhat limited at most of these funders

We hope you'll find these profiles helpful as you consider which practices might work best at your foundation. Please contact Kevin Bolduc, Vice President – Assessment Tools, with any questions at kevinb@effectivephilanthropy.org or 617-492-0800 x202.

Note: The definitions of Assistance Patterns above are those CEP uses in The Grantee Perception Report. They are those based on, but slightly different than, those used in More than Money.



Providing Assistance Beyond the Grant

Nellie Mae Education Foundation

INTERVIEWEE:

Stephanie Cheney, Senior Grants Manager

Located in Quincy, MA, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation has assets of \$453MM and works to stimulate transformative change of public education systems across New England by growing a greater variety of higher quality educational opportunities that enable all learners – especially and essentially underserved learners – to obtain the skills and knowledge necessary to become civically engaged and economically self-sufficient.

Results from the Foundation's 2007 Grantee Perception Report* placed the Foundation among the top 10 percent of funders in CEP's dataset for provision of the most helpful patterns of non-monetary assistance:



	Assistance Pattern	Proportion of Grantees Receiving Assistance Pattern
MOST HELPFUL Patterns of Assistance	Comprehensive Assistance	26%
	Field-Focused Assistance	23%
LESS HELPFUL Patterns of Assistance	Little Assistance	23%
	No Assistance	29%

*CEP surveyed 107 grantees in 2007; the median grantee budget was \$2MM and 11 Nellie Mae staff members actively manage grantee relationships

Why provide assistance beyond the grant check?

Nellie Mae provides assistance beyond the grant in order to **foster learning across its grantees** and to improve their effectiveness. As Cheney explains, "Technical assistance brings the funded districts together to learn from each other. Each district has its strengths and its weaknesses, or pieces of work they're just starting that another district has been working on for quite some time. They really enjoy coming together and learning from each other." Cheney explains that needs are assessed taking into account "what is it that grantees need to move the work forward, without assuming that you [as the funder] know."

Who receives non-monetary assistance?

Nellie Mae has four main strategic initiatives that are variously augmented **by different types and levels of non-monetary assistance**. "We don't provide the same technical assistance to all of our grantees," says Cheney. "As we developed our initiatives we prioritized the extra assistance to grantees taking on very new and complex work." In some Funds, Nellie Mae requires that grantees build a certain amount for technical assistance into their budgets. Cheney notes, "depending on the size, the initiative, and what we think the technical assistance is going to be, we'll set an amount."

What assistance is provided?

Nellie Mae works mainly with **third-party contractors to provide technical assistance to grantees, through Cross-District Learning communities, and through workshops and trainings**. The Foundation also has a research department that has **commissioned and published research** on student-centered learning and the Foundation has developed strategies to bring that knowledge to grantees.

Cross-District Learning

Nellie Mae's newest Fund, New Approaches in Urban Districts, requires that all grantees budget \$50K to participate in "cross-district professional learning communities," which are being developed by a third-party consultant paid directly by the Foundation. The money allocated will cover grantees' room and board and travel to any convenings that will take place as part of the professional learning communities. Over these 20-month grants, grantees will meet "three times in person, and virtually through webinars and over an extranet, which is a place for them to share documents and ideas."

Technical Assistance

Nellie Mae provides grantees, depending on initiative, with regular opportunities for technical assistance. As Cheney explains, "For program grants, there is a calendar that is set up for workshops and trainings so, it's not just a one-time deal. Our largest initiative, which is called 'Building New Models for Systems Change,' includes a fairly expensive technical assistance package. We have an intermediary that provides cross district support and technical assistance." In this initiative, grantees are also able to "use their individual grants to purchase their own individual technical assistance from contractors."

Research

Working with an intermediary the Foundation's research department has commissioned and published research on student-centered learning that is available to grantees and the field more broadly on a dedicated website: www.studentsatthecenter.org. The Foundation is also working to develop a hub that will serve as a "central repository for information and resources that can be accessed by anyone that's interested in student centered learning. It will be one place where people can go to either get information or find out where they can get information."

How does the foundation evaluate the impact of non-monetary assistance?

Outside of the Grantee Perception Report, Nellie Mae does not formally evaluate the impact of its non-monetary assistance. In the GPR, Nellie Mae asks grantees to evaluate the helpfulness of the individual technical assistance providers. Nellie Mae evaluates the analytics on how its web based resources are being reviewed and downloaded. The Foundation also engages the third party technical assistance providers to investigate what technical assistance would be most useful and whether or not grantees experience the technical assistance to be helpful.

What's the biggest challenge in providing assistance beyond the grant?

Cheney says the biggest challenge in providing technical assistance is **striking a balance between useful information and information overload for grantees**. She explains, "We're working with school districts and need to remember that while they are trying to do something new, they're also working to educate kids. They already have a full time job, so we can't overwhelm them with too much technical assistance or too much research."



Providing Assistance Beyond the Grant

College Access Foundation of California

INTERVIEWEE:

Julia Lopez, President and CEO

Located in San Francisco, The College Access Foundation of California is a private foundation with assets of \$427MM committed to increasing the number of low-income students who attend and complete college across the state.

Results from the foundation's 2011 Grantee Perception Report* placed the foundation among the top 10 percent of funders in CEP's dataset for provision of the most helpful patterns of non-monetary assistance:



**COLLEGE ACCESS
FOUNDATION
*of California***

Opportunities for Students

	Assistance Pattern	Proportion of Grantees Receiving Assistance Pattern
MOST HELPFUL Patterns of Assistance	Comprehensive Assistance	7%
	Field-Focused Assistance	32%
LESS HELPFUL Patterns of Assistance	Little Assistance	37%
	No Assistance	25%

*CEP surveyed 114 grantees in 2011; the median grantee budget was \$800K and 5 College Access staff members actively manage grantee relationships.

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Why provide assistance beyond the grant check?

College Access Foundation awards grants to local programs to finance college scholarships for low-income and historically underrepresented students in California. Providing additional assistance beyond the grant arose in recognition that **it takes more than just a scholarship to improve student college matriculation outcomes**. Lopez emphasizes that “[scholarships need to be provided] in the context of financial aid.” As she explains, “providing assistance beyond the scholarship grant is part and parcel of what we do as a foundation. If we provide assistance that helps these groups understand how to secure public financial aid grants that combined can pay for as much as half the cost of attending a state university, then our kids will benefit.” As a result, non-monetary assistance has become an embedded value of the foundation.

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Who receives non-monetary assistance?

As Lopez explains, “almost **every grantee** receives some assistance beyond the grant, since many grantees had limited experience in helping students apply for and receive financial aid. College Access Foundation program officers initiate conversations with grantees around “what it would take so that every student who’s in that program gets financial aid.” As Lopez explains, “We see [our grantees] as the key to our success, and we try to do everything we can to increase the odds of their doing right by those students, [beyond] giving them a scholarship. We spend a lot of time working with grantees to bring them up to speed [on] how to help students receive [financial aid such as] Pell Grants and Cal Grants.”

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What assistance is provided?

Individualized Assistance

Much of the assistance that grantees receive is **individualized and based on consultation with College Access program officers**.

As Lopez explains, “the program officers are our principal provider of information. We don’t have a go-to technical assistance provider.” As the foundation’s strategy shifts, Lopez mentions that partnering with third party technical assistance providers may be something the foundation explores in the future. As Lopez explains, “I think form follows function. Once we understand what’s needed, then we’ll figure out who is in the best position to do [provide assistance].”

Convenings

College Access Foundation hosts optional convenings of grantees. Regional convenings are held in the spring and a statewide convening (www.collegeaccessfoundation.org/grants/Grantee_Convening_2012.aspx) is held each fall. The goal of these convenings is to foster greater networking and collaboration and share best practices among

grantees to promote more effective scholarship provision and financial aid assistance. Lopez describes how “there are common issues across grantees,” and by bringing grantees together face-to-face in a convening helps facilitate sharing. All grantees, current and former, are invited to participate in these statewide convenings, but attendance is optional. All are encouraged to continue sharing information through a LinkedIn group that the Foundation established after the statewide convening in 2011.

Publicly Available Resources

The foundation also works to make resources and online tools publicly available to help grantees and students better understand financial aid in California. One such tool that the foundation developed in partnership with CaliforniaColleges.edu and with input from grantees is the Financial Aid Comparison Tool, which gives students a summary of their remaining unmet need and helps them compare the amount of “free aid” (including Cal Grants and institutional awards) relative to “loan aid” between different financial aid offers. A more complete list of resources for parents and students is published on the foundation’s website (www.collegeaccessfoundation.org).

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How does the foundation evaluate the impact of non-monetary assistance?

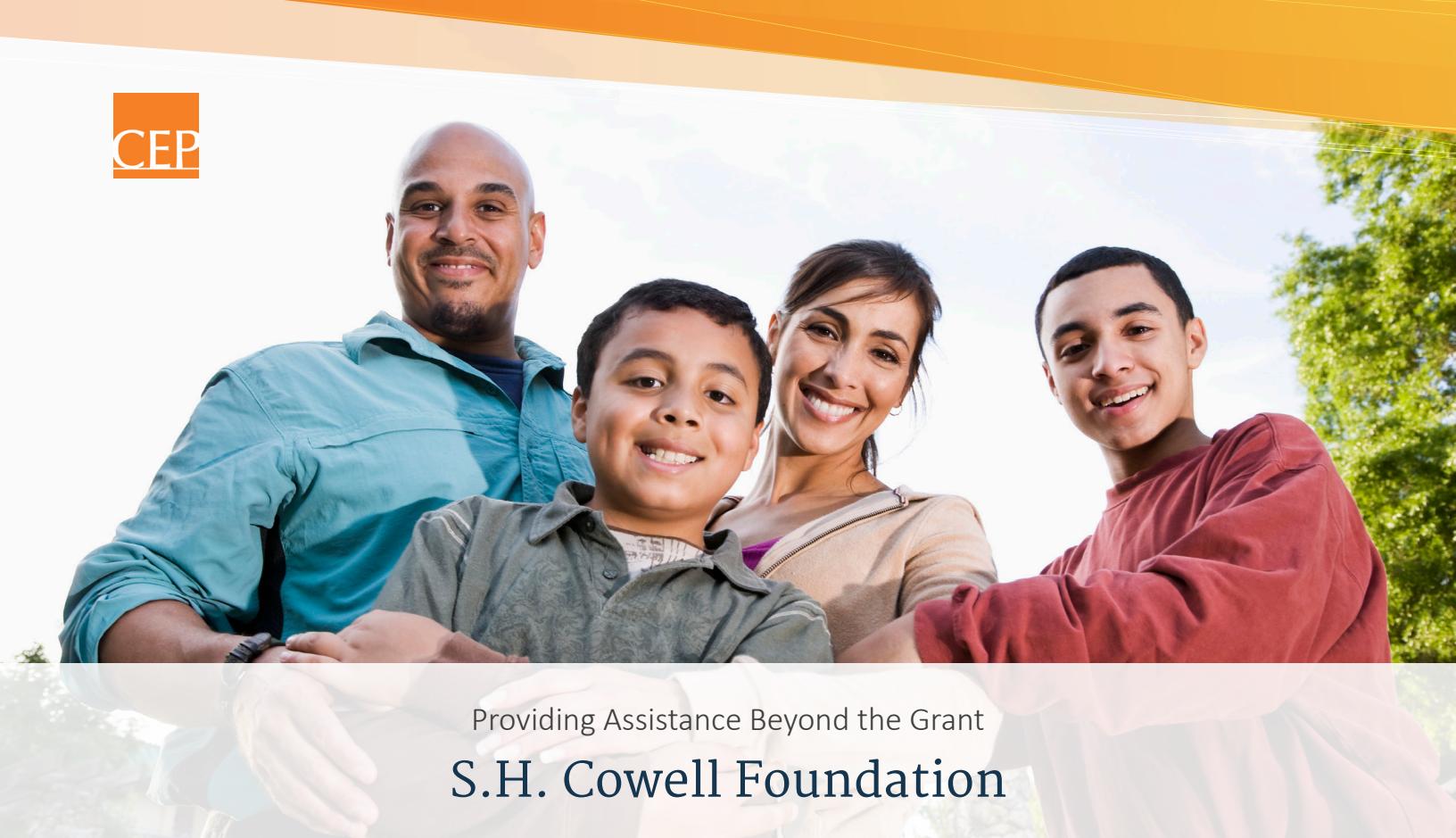
The foundation has **two staff members devoted to research and evaluation** of the foundation’s programs, including the impact of the foundation’s assistance beyond the grant. As Lopez explains, the foundation measures “student-level data including what financial aid [their] students received and where students went to college.” In addition, the team measures whether students are reenrolling through data provided by the National Student Clearinghouse. As Lopez describes, “We do have evidence that our assistance is leading to kids getting more financial aid.”

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What’s the biggest challenge in providing assistance beyond the grant?

Lopez encounters challenges around working with technology and “who controls the data,” as the foundation works in large part with the public sector. As she explains, “by doing some things just a little bit differently, public institutions could really bring real added value to the field” but “getting all of the systems to work together can be challenging.” Another challenge that Lopez mentions is around the “time and capacity required of program officers” to provide assistance beyond the grant has been challenging.

As the foundation’s strategy shifts, Lopez hypothesizes that the biggest challenge the foundation will face will be “finding good technical assistance providers.”



Providing Assistance Beyond the Grant
S.H. Cowell Foundation

INTERVIEWEE:

Lise Maisano, Vice President Grant Programs

Located in San Francisco, CA, the S.H. Cowell Foundation works to improve the lives of children living in poverty in Northern and Central California by providing support to strengthen families and communities. The Foundation's primary grantmaking is rooted in a strategy that is both place-based and complementary.

Results from the Foundation's 2011 Grantee Perception Report* placed the Foundation among the top 10 percent of funders in CEP's dataset for provision of the most helpful patterns of non-monetary assistance:

S.H. COWELL FOUNDATION

	Assistance Pattern	Proportion of Grantees Receiving Assistance Pattern
MOST HELPFUL Patterns of Assistance	Comprehensive Assistance	11%
	Field-Focused Assistance	25%
LESS HELPFUL Patterns of Assistance	Little Assistance	35%
	No Assistance	30%

*CEP surveyed 91 grantees in 2011; the median grantee budget was \$1.4MM and 3 Cowell staff members actively manage grantee relationships.

① Why provide assistance beyond the grant check?

At Cowell, assistance beyond the grant check is seen as **fundamental to supporting strong funder-grantee relationships** and grantees' ability to achieve their missions. As Lise Maisano, Vice President Grant Programs, explains, "We deeply believe in developing long-term respectful relationships with our grantees and that it is important to offer a variety of opportunities that support our grantees' success." For staff at Cowell, this means that the provision of assistance beyond the grant check is "as important as the grant" and is "hardwired into [their] culture." As Maisano says, "We know that in order for people to do their best work; they need support on many different levels. We know how important funding is to our grantees. But we have also learned how important it is for our grantees to build their leadership skills and to share their strategies and what works with peers, funders and other stakeholders."

② Who receives non-monetary assistance?

Most grantees, especially those that are engaged in Cowell's place-based, complementary grantmaking, are offered some type of non-monetary assistance. Grantees who take advantage of this assistance tend to be the **most motivated in pursuing the assistance** and are **grantees that the foundation has worked with previously**. Cowell believes that providing assistance in this way allows grantees to be their own agents in their leadership and organizational development. As Maisano explains, "They tell us who they want to work with and show us the work plan and budget. When the grant is awarded the grantees are the owners of what they want to learn. They're responsible for getting their needs met."

③ What assistance is provided?

Cowell provides a **wide variety of assistance** beyond the grant at **various points throughout the grant's life cycle** and employs both **internal and external channels** to provide this assistance. Forms of non-monetary assistance range from assistance with proposal writing to convenings and site visits to knowledge sharing to leadership development.

Internally-provided assistance

Cowell's three **program staff are the primary providers** of the foundation's non-monetary assistance. At the beginning of grantees' engagement, Cowell staff members provide most grantees with intensive assistance in developing their proposals. As Maisano explains, "Rarely if, ever, is a proposal submitted and taken directly to the Board. Grantees have a lot of opportunities to refine and focus their requests. This iterative process helps grantees get really clear about what they're going to do, and why. This process also strengthens their proposal-writing skills, which in turn helps them with other funders as well. We spend a tremendous amount of time in person, on the phone, via email – it's built into our process."

Grantee convenings and site visits

Cowell also **hosts convenings and site visits** where grantees can share knowledge and best practices. Cowell hosts Leadership Convenings every two years, where 100 grantees focused on place-based work are invited to learn and network with other Cowell grantees doing similar work. As Maisano explains, these two-and-a-half day events

provide grantees an opportunity to "reflect, rejuvenate, network and learn new skills." At the last Leadership Convening, grantees compiled a Wisdom Book that describes lessons learned at the convening, which the foundation shares on its website. In addition to Leadership Convenings, Cowell also brings grantees together for subject-focused convenings on a variety of topics, such as family economic success, evaluation and youth development in affordable housing complexes.

Externally-provided assistance: Leadership Development

Cowell sees leadership development as essential to the success of its grantees and considers leadership grants as a type of assistance beyond the grant. These grants, awarded through a streamlined process, typically complement and/or supplement existing larger grants in Cowell's program areas and enable a grantee to participate in a variety of skill building and organizational development activities, such as building programmatic expertise and skills of individual leaders, inspiring and organizing others, building personnel procedures, enhancing financial and evaluation systems, improving board governance, strategic planning, and succession planning. For specific skill building training, the foundation knows of third party partners that they sometimes recommend to grantees, but grantees may also suggest other providers with which they'd like to work. From connections formed at Cowell staff-driven convenings, grantees can also request funding for a peer-to-peer exchange so they can visit each other and learn about each other's strategies.

Grantees can look to Cowell's website for more information regarding the types of non-monetary assistance and resources that the foundation provides. Cowell publishes a list of leadership development resources on its website (www.shcowell.org), along with insights and relevant resources that pertain to the nonprofit sector, family resource centers, K-12 education, youth development, and affordable housing.

④ How does the foundation evaluate the impact of non-monetary assistance?

Outside of the Grantee Perception Report, Cowell evaluates the assistance it provides through conversations with grantees and through online surveys about their convenings. Other than these methods, Cowell conducts limited direct assessment of its provision of assistance beyond the grant.

⑤ What's the biggest challenge in providing assistance beyond the grant?

Because Cowell's three program staff are the primary providers of the foundation's non-monetary assistance, budgeting time to develop staff expertise and to devote to providing this assistance can be a challenge. However Maisano explains that the time the Foundation takes with grantees is more than worth the investment: "How we work with our grantees is as important as the funding. It is not just what we do; it is how we do it that matters. We take our values very seriously – to be grounded in rigor, direct, inclusive, built on connections, supportive of grantee leadership, and founded on knowledge. We understand that the Foundation can only achieve its mission through the work of our grantees and they need support beyond the grant check to achieve their goals."



Providing Assistance Beyond the Grant

The Health Foundation

INTERVIEWEE:

Pat O'Connor, PhD, Vice President & COO

Located in Cincinnati, OH, the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati works to improve the health of the people of the region. The foundation has assets of \$201MM and awards grants to non-profit and governmental organizations for programs and activities that improve health in Cincinnati and 20 surrounding counties in Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio.

Results from the Foundation's 2010 Grantee Perception Report* placed the foundation among the top 10 percent of funders in CEP's dataset for provision of the most helpful patterns of non-monetary assistance:



	Assistance Pattern	Proportion of Grantees Receiving Assistance Pattern
MOST HELPFUL Patterns of Assistance	Comprehensive Assistance	29%
	Field-Focused Assistance	13%
LESS HELPFUL Patterns of Assistance	Little Assistance	38%
	No Assistance	21%

*CEP surveyed 123 grantees in 2010; the median grantee budget was \$6.1MM and 8 foundation staff members actively manage grantee relationships

① Why provide assistance beyond the grant check?

The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati provides assistance beyond the grant in order to develop a real partnership with their grantees and provide opportunities for foundation staff and grantees to learn from each other. As O'Connor explains, "We want to recognize the contributions that grantees make to getting work done. They're the experts. When you're a partner, you can be very helpful from the very beginning. We conceive our program officers to be coaches, facilitators, and consultants to grantees."

② Who receives non-monetary assistance?

All grantees have the opportunity to receive non-monetary assistance. The nature of the assistance that the foundation provides varies depending on where a grantee organization is in its development. As O'Connor explains, "When grantees first come to the foundation, they may need a lot of assistance, but as they mature, they need more specific assistance."

In many cases, the foundation **suggests and provides assistance beyond the grant to grantees, but grantees also have opportunities to direct their own pursuit of non-monetary assistance.** As O'Connor explains, "Sometimes assistance is driven by us because we want a certain kind of thing done, we see problems, or we have certain things we're asking them to do. We'll offer programs or add technical assistance for getting those kinds of things done. On the other side, grantees also tell us what they need. If they're still coming to the programs, that means there's a need. If appropriate, we authorize grant variances, which may include more resources or external technical assistance."

③ What assistance is provided?

The foundation provides group trainings and individualized assistance through one-on-one coaching with program officers, and sometimes consultants. The foundation provides multiple resources (www.healthfoundation.org/non-profit-resources) for grantees to learn about the scope of assistance it provides. As O'Connor describes, "We have a biweekly newsletter where we advertise our programs and other opportunities in the community for grantees and for anybody who subscribes to the newsletter. We also have a section in there about other funders." In addition to the newsletter, the foundation also publishes information on its website. O'Connor notes that the foundation has "a capacity building brochure and a guide to working with the foundation on its website (www.healthfoundation.org) that describes how to take advantage of non-monetary resources."

Group trainings

The bulk of the foundation's non-monetary assistance is provided through **technical trainings to groups of grantees.** O'Connor says, "Grantees have common themes in what they need to do their jobs well.

Rather than providing the same assistance to individual grantees over and over again through interactions with program officers, we realized we needed to do this at the theme level." Examples of material covered in these trainings range from development to fundraising, business planning, communications, evaluations, and policy and advocacy. Program officers organize these trainings but the foundation tends to bring in **instructors with deep content expertise to lead the trainings.**

Individualized assistance

When a grantee has worked with the foundation over the course of multiple grants and has learned the material covered in the generalized trainings, **individualized coaching is provided through program officers.** As O'Connor explains, "After a grantee has worked with us for a while over multiple grants, they've learned these things... and what they need is a little different."

In addition to coaching, the foundation also offers a **variety of other resources** to grantees on an individual basis. "Grantees can host meetings here," says O'Connor. "We'll print posters for them. We will volunteer our communications people to help grantees with editing. We will offer assistance with evaluation, data collection, and data management. A suite of resources is available and grantees can use those resources as they need to," O'Connor explains.

④ How does the foundation evaluate the impact of non-monetary assistance?

While the foundation **does not conduct a formalized evaluation of the impact of its non-monetary assistance,** the foundation surveys grantees that attend its trainings to understand how helpful grantees found the trainings. In addition, the foundation has **ongoing conversations with its grantees through its site visits** about "what they need and any problems they're having." The foundation also uses the CEP Grantee Perception Report to gauge how its grantees globally experience the help the foundation offers.

⑤ What's the biggest challenge in providing assistance beyond the grant?

For the foundation, the biggest challenge is **justifying the expense** when asked why this money isn't channeled directly to grantmaking instead. O'Connor describes how the money benefits the community directly from the foundation, rather than through many grantees trying to accomplish the same work from scratch. She sees the foundation's role as a hub for providing non-monetary assistance as "smoothing that process" and explains that the benefits of providing this intensive assistance are "evident in what grantees are able to accomplish and in project sustainability." O'Connor explains that "grantees don't always have the time or infrastructure it takes to find trainings themselves or to hire and work with consultants."



Providing Assistance Beyond the Grant

St. Louis Country Children's Service Fund

INTERVIEWEE:

Julie Russell, LCSW, Deputy Director

Located in St. Louis, Missouri, the Children's Service Fund works to improve the lives of children, youth, and families in St. Louis County by strategically investing in the creation and maintenance of an integrated system of care that delivers effective and quality mental health and substance abuse services to youth 19 and younger. Funding is derived from a ½ cent sales tax, approved by voters in 2008, dedicated to mental health and substance abuse services for St. Louis County youth. The tax generates approximately \$40 million a year.



Results from the fund's 2012 Grantee Perception Report* placed the fund among the top 10 percent of funders in CEP's dataset for provision of the most helpful patterns of non-monetary assistance:

	Assistance Pattern	Proportion of Grantees Receiving Assistance Pattern
	Comprehensive Assistance	27%
Patterns of Assistance	Field-Focused Assistance	18%
	Little Assistance	45%
Patterns of Assistance	No Assistance	9%

*CEP surveyed 49 grantees in 2012; the median grantee budget was \$2.5MM and 3 Children's Service Fund staff members actively manage grantee relationships

① Why provide assistance beyond the grant check?

The Fund provides assistance beyond the grant to help **improve grantees' effectiveness in achieving the outcomes the fund seeks**. As Russell explains, “[assistance beyond the grant] is **part of our theory of change**. Part of what we provide are grant dollars and the other part is non-financial capacity building and technical support. We can't just provide the program dollars, we have to help strengthen the non-profits that we fund, because that's what's going to help produce the outcomes that we're seeking.” She adds that “as the funder, we're counting on the boots on the ground to get us the result and the outcomes. We need to make sure that those main agencies have the tools and the information that they need to be successful.”

② Who receives non-monetary assistance?

All grantees receive non-monetary assistance as a requirement of being funded. Grantees are **required to participate in learning work groups** to coordinate the provision of services and foster collaboration. As Russell explains, grantees are “required to attend at least 75% of the events that are relevant for them.”

In addition, since the fund’s grantmaking dollars come from taxpayer money, it’s necessary for the fund to “track utilization and quality of services [grantees provide]. Twice a year, portfolio managers will perform clinical reviews and audits on grantees.” These non-punitive audits are intended to identify areas where grantees could improve or could use more help. The fund uses **results from these audits to guide its provision of individualized assistance**.

③ What assistance is provided?

Learning work groups

The Fund has 10 service areas that it funds and “convenes funded agencies by service area at least once or twice a month.” Russell says those who attend these learning work groups are “the program manager or the intake staff at funded agencies, so the learning work group provides the space and time with the other providers within the network, so they can start to collaborate and coordinate these services for the families they serve.” Russell explains that the Fund requires grantees’ participation in learning work groups to reduce siloing among funded agencies. As Russell notes, “We need agencies to work together and collaborate, to coordinate services for families

served, and to realize that they can’t do everything on their own as providers.” Russell believes that fostering collaboration through learning work groups has “decreased competition” and “mission creep” among grantees, since “agencies are really able to focus on what they do best, and refer families on for things that they’re not the best at so everyone can really focus on their core competencies.”

Professional development training

The Fund surveys grantees regarding what type of professional development would be most helpful for their staff and, based on those survey results, **provides professional development trainings** that would benefit the most grantees. For example, many grantees requested training in helping children post-trauma, so the fund contracted with third party expert agency to lead the training, which consisted of “full day trainings and workshops and individual coaching calls.”

Individualized assistance

The fund provides **individualized assistance** based on the results from its audits. Russell says that based on the results of an organization’s audits, program officers provide “feedback to help take grantees to the next level and make suggestions where they could tighten or improve processes.”

④ How does the foundation evaluate the impact of non-monetary assistance?

The fund surveys grantees both on its own and through third parties to determine the impact of its non-monetary assistance. Russell explains that “grantees are surveyed after participating in a learning work group.” In addition, the fund has surveyed grantees through the third party consultant that provided professional development training. As Russell explains, survey results are used to determine “knowledge gained, skill sets gained, and the outcomes of the kids that were served.”

⑤ What’s the biggest challenge in providing assistance beyond the grant?

Russell says that the biggest challenge in providing assistance beyond the grant is **ensuring that the fund’s staff has the capabilities and capacities to deliver it**. She also mentions that **“turnover at funded agencies”** after the fund has invested the time and money to train individuals on staff is challenging.



Providing Assistance Beyond the Grant

The Broad Foundation

INTERVIEWEE:

Rebecca Wolf DiBiase, Managing Director of Programs

Located in Los Angeles, CA, The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation has assets of \$1.6B and the mission of dramatically transforming urban K-12 public education through better governance, management, labor relations, and competition.

Results from the foundation's 2008 Grantee Perception Report* placed the foundation among the top 10 percent of funders in CEP's dataset for provision of the most helpful patterns of non-monetary assistance:



	Assistance Pattern	Proportion of Grantees Receiving Assistance Pattern
MOST HELPFUL Patterns of Assistance	Comprehensive Assistance	19%
	Field-Focused Assistance	17%
LESS HELPFUL Patterns of Assistance	Little Assistance	42%
	No Assistance	23%

*CEP surveyed 78 grantees in 2008; the median grantee budget was \$20MM; and, 21 Broad staff members actively managed grantee relationships

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Why provide assistance beyond the grant check?

Assistance beyond the grant is **part of Broad's core philosophy**. As DiBiase explains, "Our founder emphasizes that we don't just write checks. We also provide intellectual capital to grantees and to the field. Providing value beyond a check is core to how we operate."

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Who receives non-monetary assistance?

Assistance beyond the grant is provided as needed, based on **where an organization is in its development**. As DiBiase explains, "A \$250K startup grant may need our help. If we're funding something really new or we're trying to help scale an organization or a field, then we would be available to be heavily involved in non-monetary assistance as is helpful to the grantee." However, DiBiase also adds that the process of deciding what non-monetary assistance to provide "is iterative" and program officers assess grantees' and potential grantees' needs as they engage with them.

When the foundation identifies a need on the part of a grantee or potential grantee, the organization is usually eager to receive non-monetary assistance. But as DiBiase explains, "**technical assistance is a part of working with the foundation** – we ask grantees to collect evaluation metrics even if they haven't previously. We're measuring return on investment in terms of increases in student achievement, reductions in achievement gaps and other measures, to inform the grantee and our grant-making going forward."

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What assistance is provided?

The foundation provides a **wide variety of assistance that is guided by grantee needs** and engages **both program officers and external partners** in providing assistance. As DiBiase explains, there's a continuous conversation between grantees and their program officers regarding "what type of assistance grantees need and when they need it." As DiBiase explains, "If we are providing general operating funds in an organization, we'll provide assistance over the long term. But if we're funding a particular paper and the launch of that paper, assistance will be targeted on things like ensuring the broadest audience possible has access to the paper."

As DiBiase explains, "On an ongoing basis, program officers provide technical assistance, but the foundation may also pay for consultants or grantwriters to work with grantees when helpful."

To ensure that its program officers are able to provide excellent technical assistance, Broad sometimes hires staff for their content expertise, but as DiBiase explains, "more frequently, program officers become content experts during their time here. We often hire people who have a consulting background and who can come up to speed quickly on things, with an ability to think through things, even if they don't know the field initially." When the foundation selects external consultants to work with grantees, it often suggests consultants with whom the foundation has worked with in the past. However, as DiBiase notes, if the grantee has a preferred partner,

the foundation "prefers to work with the consultant that the grantee is most comfortable with."

Usually **grantees' needs are acknowledged and addressed openly through conversations with program officers, but on occasion when, for example, the grant is not producing results, the foundation has itself been the driver of the provision of assistance**. DiBiase explains that "there are times when the grant is not yielding outcomes that the grantee expected, and as a result, we'll decide to engage with the grantee on possible ways to iterate upon the model to produce better results. We only do this when the will of the organization to go further exists, but we don't hesitate to share our views if we think it may ultimately help the organization contribute toward higher student achievement gains."

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How does the foundation evaluate the impact of non-monetary assistance?

The foundation tracks grantee perception surveys, encourages grantees to provide feedback on non-monetary assistance the foundation has provided, and uses lessons learned to drive improvements in its non-monetary assistance. But, the foundation doesn't have a specific internal process for measuring the impact of its assistance beyond the grant. As DiBiase explains, Broad's measurement is instead more focused on "whether grantees accomplished what they set out to do" with the understanding that non-monetary assistance was provided to grantees over the course of the engagement to increase their capacity to achieve their intended outcomes.

When evaluating the work of a hired consultant, DiBiase explains that the foundation uses "metrics that help the grantee organization and the foundation determine whether the consultant did what needed to be done." For example, these metrics address whether the project is on-time and in-budget, the quality of grantees' deliverables, and whether the grantee is happy with it.

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What's the biggest challenge in providing assistance beyond the grant?

Ensuring that the foundation's non-monetary assistance is a value-add for grantees can be a challenge, given the inherent power dynamic between grantors and grantees. As DiBiase explains, "we aim to make sure that our help is actually useful and that it's humbly given, and that we're not using a 'you have to listen to me' attitude, because that has diminishing returns. We both have the same goals, and we are clear about what we will fund and what we won't fund. We provide assistance, but it is ultimately up to grantees to decide what to do."

DiBiase also acknowledges that the **time investment required** in providing assistance beyond the grant can be a challenge, but notes that having content expertise in grantees' fields of work is not a challenge. As DiBiase explains, "when we don't have the subject expertise on something, we work with consultants who do."



Providing Assistance Beyond the Grant

The Wallace Foundation

INTERVIEWEES:

Ed Pauly, Director of Research and Evaluation

Jody Spiro, Director, Education Leadership

Located in New York City, the Wallace Foundation has assets of \$1.3B and its mission is to improve learning and enrichment opportunities for children in the United States. Wallace does this by supporting and sharing effective ideas and practices. More specifically, Wallace strives to create effective programs and reliable, useful knowledge through its work with grantees and to leverage and share that knowledge more broadly in ways that will help even those it does not fund.

Results from the foundation's 2012 Grantee Perception Report* placed the foundation highest among funders in CEP's dataset for provision of the most helpful patterns of non-monetary assistance:



The Wallace Foundation

	Assistance Pattern	Proportion of Grantees Receiving Assistance Pattern
MOST HELPFUL Patterns of Assistance	Comprehensive Assistance	21%
	Field-Focused Assistance	33%
LESS HELPFUL Patterns of Assistance	Little Assistance	34%
	No Assistance	12%

*CEP surveyed 120 grantees in 2012; the median grantee budget was \$7.5MM and 10 Wallace staff members actively managed grantee relationships in 2012

Why provide assistance beyond the grant check?

Wallace provides assistance beyond the grant in order to **help grantees carry out their often-challenging grant-funded work effectively.** Wallace grantees' work is challenging because it often asks grantees to test out new practices. As Pauly explains, "We think of [non-monetary assistance] as cutting across a whole initiative, and that's because the initiatives that Wallace supports are on major unsolved social problems where innovation is needed, and nobody, ourselves included, has all the answers. We are trying to bring together resources and people that can really accelerate and support the grantees. [We are trying to do] the heavy lifting of providing support that makes innovation work well on the front lines."

Who receives non-monetary assistance?

The Wallace Foundation typically **offers its grantees opportunities to participate in meetings with other grantees to exchange ideas and experiences, and to receive technical assistance as needed. Wallace funds these activities so they do not reduce the funding received by grantees.** As Spiro explains, "We make the offer of technical assistance, and the presumption of its acceptance, clear before grantees receive the grant. It's built in as a requirement of the grant." Because the foundation's goal is to provide nonmonetary assistance for the "unsolved problems" facing its grantees, the foundation focuses on providing non-monetary assistance to grantees in groups working toward similar goals. "We don't think about non-monetary assistance on a grantee to grantee basis," says Pauly.

What assistance is provided?

The Wallace Foundation staff and third-party providers work with grantees in three ways to provide assistance beyond the grant – through technical assistance provided to grantees within a particular initiative, through professional learning communities, and through Wallace staff.

Initiative-wide technical assistance

Wallace provides **technical assistance across all program grantees in a particular initiative** based on a gap analysis to see what needs have not been met among grantees. The foundation then "hires a technical assistance provider on grantees' behalf to provide assistance to all grantees."

One example of this type of assistance is in the foundation's Principal Pipeline work, where all grantees seek high quality training provider partners for leader preparation programs. To help them identify high-quality programs, Spiro says "the foundation provides a grant to the Education Development Center to provide a tool and consulting to all the Wallace grantee school districts focused on assessing the quality of programs according to research-based criteria." Another example is Wallace's work with 54 arts organizations on audience-building. There, a gap analysis revealed that organizations needed help in gathering and analyzing data about attitudes and attendance among patrons; the technical assistance therefore focused on helping organizations meet that strategic challenge.

In addition to the built-in technical assistance that is provided to all grantees from the beginning of their relationship with the foundation, Wallace staff responds to needs that emerge while grants are in progress. As Spiro explains, "Staff are continually in touch with grantees and know what their needs are, so we bring them together as a group where their needs are addressed at large." Pauly describes

this as a "faster, more efficient, and more effective way of providing assistance to a large number of grantees." He also mentions that "this method of providing assistance is adaptable, but isn't designed to be 'one size fits all.'"

Professional learning communities

Wallace developed **professional learning communities** when the foundation recognized that its grantees were struggling with similar issues and were more likely to accelerate their work if they shared ideas and approached problem-solving together. For grantees to be as effective as possible, Spiro says grantees "need to be sharing solutions and getting ideas of things they are struggling with or things they're doing well in real time, and on an ongoing basis." As Spiro explains, Wallace's learning communities "bring together people from school districts, communications experts, national thought leaders, key partners in technical assistance, and other experts with an agenda jointly constructed between Wallace and the districts, based on what they're struggling with." These working groups happen, as Spiro notes, "a couple of times a year in person, and nearly every month via webinar" with the goal of developing "very concrete programs and products."

Assistance provided through Wallace staff

Wallace program officers are experts in the foundation's research and are knowledgeable about field-wide best practices. Providing **non-monetary assistance to grantees through consultation is a critical part of Wallace program officers' roles.** As Spiro explains, "We consider Wallace's staff as major deliverers of technical assistance. Staff who manage grants consider themselves to be 'critical friends' for grantees to push their thinking. We have conversations with grantees such as, 'Have you thought of this? Here's some research, here are other people that have been dealing with the similar issue.'"

How does the foundation evaluate the impact of non-monetary assistance?

Wallace **grantees are required to submit a self-reported progress report**, where as Spiro explains, they are asked "to evaluate their progress against their plan and assess the value of all different kind of non-monetary assistance that they've received. We ask if they've used any assistance, and to indicate on a scale of 1-5 how valuable it was. We also ask them for examples of how they've used non-monetary assistance." Wallace has an internal team composed of staff from communications, research and evaluation, and education leadership that discusses the results of these reports.

In addition, the NYU Wagner School conducted a publicly available, third-party evaluation of Wallace's professional learning communities for Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (www.geofunders.org). The aim of this evaluation was to ensure that professional learning communities were meeting their goal of directly furthering grantees' objectives.

What's the biggest challenge in providing assistance beyond the grant?

Providing intensive non-monetary assistance to grantees requires a **substantial time investment from staff.** As Pauly explains, "It's challenging, but we think it delivers a great deal of value given our focus on supporting and testing innovative practices, and grantees want to keep doing it."



Providing Assistance Beyond the Grant

William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund

INTERVIEWEES:

Carmen Siberon, *Community Program Officer*

Angela Frusciante, PhD, *Knowledge Development Officer*

WRITTEN INPUT FROM NANCY LEONARD, PUBLIC POLICY OFFICER

Based in Hamden, CT, the William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund has assets of \$201MM and its mission is to improve the effectiveness of education in fostering both personal development and leadership. Its chief initiative is Discovery, aimed at ensuring that *Connecticut children of all races and economic backgrounds are ready for school by age five and successful learners by age nine.*

Results from the Foundation's 2010 Grantee Perception Report* placed the foundation among the top 10 percent of funders in CEP's dataset for provision of the most helpful patterns of non-monetary assistance:

WILLIAM CASPAR GRAUSTEIN
MEMORIAL FUND

	Assistance Pattern	Proportion of Grantees Receiving Assistance Pattern
MOST HELPFUL Patterns of Assistance	Comprehensive Assistance	29%
	Field-Focused Assistance	16%
LESS HELPFUL Patterns of Assistance	Little Assistance	41%
	No Assistance	14%

*CEP surveyed 67 grantees in 2010; the median grantee budget was \$100K and 5 Memorial Fund staff members actively manage grantee relationships

Why provide assistance beyond the grant check?

The Memorial Fund sees non-monetary assistance as a **way to extend the impact of their financial support**. As Siberon explains, "The focus of our community grants is to support the infrastructure required for local decision-making to address the needs of young children. Our community capacity building program is a direct mirror of that focus. Our community grants are modest in size, and, as our executive director likes to say, 'The grant is what brings community stakeholders to the table initially, but it's the capacity building offered that keeps them at the table.'" "The statewide advocacy organizations work collaboratively," said Leonard, "and capacity building has focused largely on their collective impact. This kind of support has enabled them to become a much more effective coalition, each drawing on its unique strengths."

Who receives non-monetary assistance?

Grantees that are most closely aligned with Discovery's desired result and that receive core support grants are the ones that tend to receive the most intensive and helpful forms of non-monetary support. Siberon explains that within the Community Program, the Memorial Fund awards three types of grants: \$50,000 implementation grants that are awarded to "communities with a birth to age 8 community plan to improve early childhood education that they are ready to implement;" \$25,000 planning grants that are awarded to communities "to develop a plan for children in the community;" and \$10,000 project grants that are awarded to communities that are "interested in getting support for parent engagement or school readiness projects but are not yet establishing a local decisionmaking structure or committed to developing a community plan." The 40 communities that are awarded implementation and planning grants work most closely with the Memorial Fund to develop a comprehensive birth to age 8 community plan and to build local decisionmaking infrastructure. These communities tend to utilize the most intensive and helpful forms of non-monetary assistance. As Siberon explains, "our capacity building and technical assistance program is tailored toward communities working on implementation and planning." "The five statewide advocacy organizations that also work toward Discovery's goal receive a variety of supports beyond the individual grants," said Leonard. "Like the communities, they use a self-assessment tool that helps to guide their growth and learning, in some cases as individual organizations but most often as a coalition of advocacy efforts."

What assistance is provided?

The Memorial Fund offers an **extensive set of nonmonetary assistance** to its grantees that is **mainly channeled through external providers**. Staff provides assistance directly to grantees, most often at the start-up of projects or at critical junctures in the work. In most cases, the Memorial Fund works extensively with consultants, outside experts and other partners to extend their ability to provide assistance beyond the grant.

Siberon describes the Memorial Fund's approach to assistance beyond the grant as "holistic and centered on what the community needs to make things happen on the ground." The Memorial Fund hires **community liaisons**, who are external consultants with the role of "holding up a mirror, helping the communities apply what the community is learning, and helping the Memorial Fund understand how its capacity building assistance is being taken up by communities." These liaisons work regularly with the collaborative groups of community grantees to offer advice, give feedback, provide some facilitation support, and encourage use of other capacity-building supports. They also serve as a direct connection between the Memorial Fund and the funded communities. As Siberon explains, this results in "constant communication about what's working and what's not and this information goes directly back into co-design and ongoing adjustments of programs."

Another form of the Memorial Fund's assistance is **providing opportunities for peer sharing among communities, statewide advocates and other partners**, through bimonthly convenings, the annual Stone Soup conference, occasional regional and cohort meetings, and many capacity building events.

The Memorial Fund also utilizes an interactive website along with a listserv to facilitate communication and knowledge sharing among communities and the statewide advocacy grantees.

The Memorial Fund provides grantees with **training and tools** such as access to experts, online resources through the Discovery website (<http://discovery.wcgmf.org/about/timeline>) and weekly newsletter, workshops and training sessions, multi-day institutes, and on-site technical assistance. Some of these supports are provided to communities by statewide grantees and most by other trusted third party providers from within Connecticut or elsewhere.

Through all of the assistance it provides, the Memorial Fund works to ensure that grantees share the learning they achieve. For this reason, the Memorial Fund "meets with the statewide grantees twice a year for a structured reflection on emerging lessons, changes in the environment, and opportunities for strengthening their efforts," said Leonard. "Through these opportunities, the core advocacy partners have emerged as a collaborative team and learning network."

The Discovery communities are often encouraged to form community teams to attend trainings and institutes. As Siberon explains, "if only one person comes to a training, it's difficult for them to go back and put their learning into action. Asking communities to come in teams helps ensure that the capacity building is shared and benefits more people."

How does the foundation evaluate the impact of non-monetary assistance?

The Memorial Fund assesses grantees' experience with the non-monetary support it provides through **surveys distributed immediately after the assistance is provided** and use the feedback provided to inform future assistance. As Siberon explains, "We have an evaluation sheet that communities fill out that's specific to each offering. In addition, we have plus/minus conversations with communities after every engagement to identify the positive aspects of the offering and also what needs to change. We use that information to determine whether to keep doing something, how to step it up, or how to tweak the offering."

The Memorial Fund has also commissioned a **third-party evaluation** of the funded communities' use of the Memorial Fund's capacity-building assistance. The goal of this evaluation, available on the Memorial Fund's website (<http://discovery.wcgmf.org>) was to assess how the Memorial Fund's capacity-building approach in the Discovery initiative has influenced community and state practice and policy related to early care and education.

What's the biggest challenge in providing assistance beyond the grant?

The Memorial Fund is "engaged in the Discovery work" it funds. **Sharing the benefits and challenges associated with this kind of grantmaking and capacity building with the philanthropic field** has been challenging. Sharing is important especially as more funders consider moving toward similar engaged grantmaking. As Frusciante explains, "We find ourselves in a position where we're trying to operate as a grantmaking organization and we're doing it in a very engaged way. We're trying to figure out how we share with the field what those challenges are."

Another challenge is the **demand on staff** that providing capacity building poses. As Siberon explains, "This level of capacity building is very hands-on for foundation staff. Program officers are often driven by priorities of the foundation work, such as trying to stay on top of what's going on in the field, meeting with existing and potential grantees/partners, etc. [In the Memorial Fund's model of engaged grantmaking and capacity building], a program officer's role shifts in a way that makes it a lot more about executing a project or being responsive to things that come up, and being flexible to mid-project adjustments."