

Annie E. Casey Foundation
California Community Foundation
The California Endowment
The San Francisco Foundation
Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Woods Fund of Chicago



Race and Equity in Philanthropy Group: *Transforming Practices and Policies*

Reports Available at www.repgfoundations.org

Spring/Summer 2013



Update on REPG

Since 2006, REPG member foundations have been influencing and strengthening efforts to measure demographics of grantees, approaches to working with Boards, evaluations of impact on target populations, communications strategies to discuss race, and many other policies and practices. The REPG views philanthropy holistically – for the total range of operations and systems that ultimately shape foundations’ impact. While the core of REPG’s method has emphasized the capacity of member foundations, increasingly, the REPG is focused on engaging the wider philanthropic field. Lessons learned from REPG member foundations have been instructive to numerous other foundations.

One emerging effort harnesses the aggregate learning across member foundations’ efforts to gather demographic data on grantees and the populations they serve. Member foundations, based on their experiences, have identified various categories that are critical to measuring impact. Ultimately, REPG foundations will agree to jointly collect data in these categories similarly. This is the beginning of what will become a Data Collection Initiative in which many other foundations will be able to participate. This is an important opportunity for the REPG and numerous other foundations to collaborate. The REPG will produce a report at the end of the year updating our progress, which will be widely available. The REPG is a valuable asset to foundations seeking to comprehensively improve their policies and practices around racial equity, inclusion, and diversity. Contact Cynthia Jones (cjones@margainc.com) to learn more about membership in the REPG.

Race, Equity, and Health

In March, the REPG sponsored an exciting panel, “Creating and Measuring Success in Diversifying Approaches to Health”, at the Grantmakers in Health Annual Meeting in San Francisco. This discussion addressed the various considerations for foundations in addressing race, equity, and inclusion in health. Panelists included Gail Christopher of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Mona Jhawar and Sandra Witt of the California Endowment, Yanique Redwood of the Consumer Health Foundation, and Naima Wong of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Well over one hundred participants packed a room at the Marriott Marquis in San Francisco to learn from panelists and share their experiences. The high correlation between health outcomes and the neighborhood demographics was an important recurring theme on the panel. It was clear that foundations’ ability to develop programming adequately addressing the health needs of communities of color and reducing health disparities are shaped by internal policies.



The W.K. Kellogg Foundation Example

The REPG’s comprehensive view of foundations suggests every dimension of an institution should be reviewed in relation to racial equity, inclusion, and diversity. A long time REPG member, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation has been taking a systemic approach to race and equity, revising its policies, practices, and operations from how vendors secure contracts to how the foundation hires to how the foundation manages its investments, alongside its well-known programming through America Healing. The REPG held a webinar featuring WKKF’s comprehensive strategy in October. Gail Christopher, Vice President of Program Strategy, Luz Benitez Delgado, Program Officer, Kathy Reincke, Communications Officer, and Joel Wittenberg, Vice President and Chief Investment Officer each described the various systems Kellogg has recently developed, and fielded questions. Contact us for a recording of this event.

Local Learning Exchanges

The REPG rotates the location of its in person meetings across the country. In the prior evening, we hold a local learning exchange dinner in which members engage in dialogue with local foundation representatives. Most recently, the REPG held a local learning exchange dinner in Los Angeles, hosted by The California Endowment and the California Community Foundation. In July, an exchange was hosted by the Woods Fund of Chicago. The next local exchange will take place this coming July in Baltimore.



Community Foundations and Demographics

In September, the REPG sponsored a panel discussion at the Council on Foundations’ Fall Conference for Community Foundations in New Orleans on the role of community foundations in the context of changing demographics. Ivey Allen of the Foundation for the Mid South, Clotilde Dedeker of the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, James Head of the San Francisco Foundation, and Marie Young of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation shared their experiences developing practices, policies, and programs designed to reduce inequities in their regions and promote racial equity and inclusion. The session was entitled “Engaging Donors in Light of Changing Demographics”.

Panelists participated in a moderated exchange on the various challenges and opportunities in community foundations’ efforts to connect with the diverse populations in their areas. As demographics continually change, community foundations will have to be relevant to communities of color and able to address the complex challenges faced by neighborhoods, municipalities, and regions. A significant portion of the audience discussion addressed how community foundations can engage donors of color. In order to effectively build relationships with diverse donors, community foundations require the cultural competency to forge authentic relationships with various types of populations. The staffing, policies, priorities, leadership, and systems of community foundations all impact their capacity to successfully engage diverse populations.

The Role of Family Philanthropy

In January, the REPG sponsored a panel entitled, “Race, Diversity, and Inclusion in Family Foundations’ Grantmaking Strategy” at the Council on Foundations’ Family Philanthropy Conference in San Jose, California. Gerald Solomon of the Samueli Foundation, Quinn Delaney of the Akonadi Foundation, and John Morning a board member of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation addressed the various considerations facing family foundations regarding racial equity, inclusion, and changing demographics.

Connecting with REPG

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The importance of strategic governance surfaced during this panel and dialogue. Family foundations can establish priorities that directly consider contemporary demographic dynamics and persistent inequities among racial and ethnic groups. The Samueli Foundation is intentionally improving educational opportunities for communities of color in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). The Akonadi Foundation explicitly emphasizes racial justice in its programming. John Morning reminded attendees of the persistent lack of board diversity in many foundations.

