

NEW YORK
COMMUNITY TRUST

HOW CAN THIS EQUITY
FUNDER RALLY DONORS
AND DEEPEN GRASSROOTS
ENGAGEMENT
TO FURTHER ITS IMPACT?

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philamplify
honest feedback to improve philanthropy



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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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OVERVIEW OF PHILAMPLIFY METHODOLOGY

NCRP has developed an assessment tool for foundations that addresses the strategic practices outlined in *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best* and *Real Results: Why Strategic Philanthropy Is Social Justice Philanthropy*. The former provides a set of evidence-based benchmarks that foundations can use for effective operational, grantmaking and leadership practices. The latter argues that foundations must be both strategic and just to maximize impact. Strategic and just philanthropy goes beyond having clearly aligned goals and strategies and methods to measure impact. It also means considering the explicit beneficiaries of the foundation's grantmaking, a systematic process to gather input from affected communities to inform the foundation's priorities and work, and a steadfast commitment to ending inequity by investing in systems change.

NCRP began applying this assessment tool to diverse foundations in 2014 with its Philamplify initiative, which provides candid feedback to many of the largest funders in the United States through comprehensive foundation assessments and spurs dialogue in the sector about how to maximize impact on systems and equity. In early 2015, informed by research and interviews with 20 sector leaders and experts in community philanthropy, NCRP adapted the Philamplify methodology to assess community foundations. Our benchmarks for community foundations examine, in particular, the foundation's role as a community leader, its engagement with diverse donors to advance community goals and its relationships not just with grantees, but residents and other community constituents.

A comprehensive, nuanced review of foundation goals, strategies and practices using NCRP's Philamplify lens shows how strategy and justice can be aligned to boost a foundation's impact in communities that are most affected by inequitable structures and are in need of philanthropic investment. Defining "strategic social justice impact" is complex largely because there is no singular or universal definition of "social justice." This means we must be both intentional and adaptable in our understanding and how we apply it to the foundations we assess.

KEY QUESTIONS

The assessment addresses these key questions:

Overall Goals and Strategy

- Are the foundation's goals and strategies likely to benefit or empower underserved communities? Is the foundation applying an equity lens or analysis to its asset development, grantmaking and public leadership? Is it addressing disparities in outcomes for the issues or constituencies it prioritizes?
- Which stakeholders and what sources of data and best practices have informed these goals and strategies?
- Does the foundation pursue and invest in systemic change strategies? Does it support grantees' efforts to use the full range of advocacy tools legally at their disposal? Is the foundation leveraging its limited dollars in ways that advance social justice?
- Is the foundation looking at the ecosystem of actors within the sphere it seeks to influence and collaborating strategically with others?

Outcomes and Impact

- What social justice outcomes have been achieved in part because of the foundation's efforts?
- Do the foundation's efforts result in meaningful and lasting social change that can be felt in people's lives, particularly those most affected by structural barriers and burdens?
- Has the foundation worked across sectors and silos to achieve impact?
- Has the foundation effectively supported community-driven collaboration and coalitions among grantees and other nonprofits?
- Can the foundation and its stakeholders point to specific signs of progress?

Partnership with Community

- Does the foundation employ responsive grantmaking practices, such as providing coesupport and multi-year funding? How do the foundation's grantmaking practices advance or hinder achievement of its goals?
- How does the foundation go beyond the grant to leverage its relationships, convening power, expertise and other assets to help community partners, donors and grantees achieve mutual goals?
- Does the foundation solicit feedback from the community, including peers, partners, donors, grantees and applicants, and act on that feedback?

Partnership with Donors

- How does the foundation proactively engage donors to address community issues and needs, garner resources and advocate for systemic solutions?
- Does the foundation encourage community philanthropy equitably by reaching out to potential donors from all resident populations, including underserved communities?

Other Effective Practices

- How do the foundation's investment and fund policies and practices support its own mission and the goals of its donors and grantees?
- Does the foundation operate in a transparent and ethical manner, with policies in place to prevent fraud and abuse?
- Is the board of directors large and diverse enough to allow for effective and ethical decision-making?

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

To answer these questions, NCRP employed the following research methods:

1. **Review of publicly available materials and internal documents.** NCRP reviewed publicly available foundation materials, e.g. 990s from previous three years, annual reports, marketing materials, grantmaking strategy documents and requests for proposals. The Trust generously shared internal documents such as the 2012 Center for Effective Philanthropy Grantee Perception Report (GPR), board and staff demographics, grants history, spending policy, investment policy, code of conduct and ethics, whistleblower policy, conflict of interest policy and equal employment policy. Data on the Trust's grantmaking refers to grants given to agencies located in and serving New York City, unless otherwise specified. Analysis of competitive giving excluded grants serving the Connecticut Metro Area, Long Island, Nassau County, the New Jersey Metro Area and Westchester County. The Trust does not track donor-advised, designated and scholarship grants by location served, therefore, NCRP relied on geography. Analysis of advised giving excluded grants to organizations located in 15 other states and the aforementioned regional locations.

2. Survey of recent and current grantees. NCRP sent a link to our comprehensive survey on the Trust's grantmaking to a total of 643 competitive grantees located in New York City that were funded in the last three years (2014, 2013, 2012). Competitive grantees of the Long Island Community Foundation and Westchester Community Foundation (divisions of the Trust), and those that received grants of \$5,000 or less, were excluded. We received 255 completed responses, for a response rate of 40 percent, our target ratio. In addition, NCRP sent a link to a shorter version of the survey on grantmaking by the Trust and its donor advisors to a sample of 81 grantees of donor-advised and designated funds from the past three years. The sample was narrowed to those grant recipients who received funding earmarked for "general operating support," "general support" or "general funding." To avoid duplication, grantees that were also competitive grant recipients were excluded. Grantees that received grants of \$5,000 or less were also excluded. While we received 31 completed responses, the survey sample was too small for the data to have utility in the report. All respondents were guaranteed anonymity. We did not reveal the survey respondents to the foundation and any quotes included in this report are anonymous as well.

NCRP requested contact information for a sample of donor advisors and solicited feedback on a survey tool for donors. The foundation declined this request, and NCRP was unable to obtain enough contact information on its own to conduct a survey of donors.

3. Confidential interviews with stakeholders. NCRP interviewed a diverse group of individuals familiar with the foundation's work who could comment on its philanthropic efforts and results as they relate to our criteria.

Stakeholders were identified by the Trust and NCRP, with referrals also made by stakeholders themselves. NCRP directly reached out to stakeholders who were suggested by their peers. In addition to Trust staff members, NCRP contacted 64 stakeholders; 37 were interviewed. NCRP requested interviews with Trust donor advisors and board members, including bank trustees. The foundation declined this request. NCRP attempted to reach out to a sample of donors for whom contact information was publicly available, but none responded to our interview request. The breakdown of interviewees is as follows:

- 13 Trust staff members
- 11 local foundation leaders
- 18 grantees
- Eight other stakeholders (including consultants, government representatives and other nonprofit leaders)

All Trust staff members are identified by name in the report. All other interviewees have been guaranteed anonymity and will not be identified by name in the report or in any other communications. Although the foundation helped to identify some interview prospects, NCRP did not share the names of those actually interviewed with the foundation. Further, some interviewees were suggested through the research process and not revealed to the foundation, even as prospects. NCRP intentionally sought diverse perspectives on the Trust's work. Unless otherwise noted, the quotes in the report are from the surveys and interviews conducted as part of the assessment.

NCRP also incorporated the perspectives of experts on the community foundation sector to provide important context for understanding the work of individual grantmakers.

4. Analysis and interpretation of data. Using qualitative evaluation tools, NCRP researchers used an iterative process to do a content analysis of open-ended survey responses and interview transcripts. They analyzed data to code for assessment-related topics as well as other emergent subjects. The research team read through all qualitative data, identified key themes, compared notes and further refined the codes. NCRP's holistic analysis of closed- and open-ended survey responses, interview transcripts, third-party research and foundation materials produced the findings and recommendations included in this report. Quotes are provided to exemplify ideas that emerged from the evidence, typically in cases where multiple respondents raised similar points. In qualitative research, themes may be elevated in analysis even when a minority of stakeholders raise them, depending on factors such as the source of the feedback and the prevalence of a topic among a subset of responses. Thus opinions from smaller subsets of people can still offer meaningful perspectives, especially given the complex structure of the Trust, and its many roles and constituencies as a community foundation.

5. Relevant reports and news articles referenced throughout this document.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FOUNDATION

NCRP invited the New York Community Trust's leadership to participate in shaping and implementing this assessment in the summer of 2015. In the preparation of this report, the Trust provided NCRP with several foundation documents, including its most recent Grantee Perception Report, and facilitated NCRP's survey of grantees and interviews of foundation staff. Interviews were conducted with Trust staff by phone during the fall of 2015. A draft copy of this report was provided to the Trust for review and feedback prior to its publication. The Trust provided detailed comments both via phone and in writing. NCRP made revisions to the report to clarify findings and data analyses and incorporated additional information provided by the Trust in the final report where appropriate.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New York Community Trust is a venerable institution that has enjoyed remarkable stability and leadership continuity in its nearly 100-year history. Its adaptive and collaborative approach has enabled the foundation to respond to changing community needs, including the terrible scourge of HIV/AIDS, as well as to unforeseen emergencies such as 9/11 and Superstorm Sandy. The staff demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring that Trust-held dollars benefit communities of color, those living with poverty or disabilities, LGBTQ residents and other marginalized New Yorkers. While funding service delivery improvement is the primary vehicle it uses to achieve this, other important tools are funding advocacy to improve systems, particularly through the foundation's numerous funder collaboratives, and non-profit capacity building.

The Trust can build on these strengths to achieve even greater progress for New York City in a number of ways. In particular, the Trust can be a true public leader, not just within philanthropy and the nonprofit sphere, but among all sectors of the city, by providing deeper support for community organizing, especially among communities of color, by more creatively engaging donors and by being a more visible advocate for an inclusive, equitable New York.

FINDINGS

- 1. The Trust is committed to investing in underserved communities and equity. It funds service delivery improvement and advocacy as the primary tools for changing systems and also sees a limited role for community organizing in its grantmaking.**
- 2. The Trust's strategies are well informed and broad enough to respond to emerging needs. However, it has not effectively communicated how these strategies add up to an overarching vision for the city, which results in confusion among many stakeholders about what it stands for.**
- 3. The Trust has initiated many effective funder collaboratives on key issues in the city and often convenes grantees to foster shared learning and collaboration. The foundation works effectively with local government, but rarely uses its bully pulpit to take positions on behalf of marginalized communities.**
- 4. The Trust creatively directs funds from bequests and conducts annual appeals and learning opportunities for donor advisors to respond to changing community needs. Yet the foundation's donor engagement is not particularly robust nor does it foster connections with Trust grantees.**
- 5. Nonprofits praise Trust staff for their expertise, thought partnership, open and honest communication, accessibility and responsiveness. Grantees want more opportunities to connect with other funding sources and like-minded nonprofits.**
- 6. The Trust provides single-year project funding through its competitive grants and also offers capacity building. More than 1 in 3 grantees seek multi-year core support to bolster their long-term capacity and effectiveness.**

PHILAMPLIFY URGES THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Continue the Trust's strong commitment to underserved communities; effective partnership with grantees; and leadership role as a convener of funders, grantees and other community stakeholders.** The Trust is an exemplar for other community foundations in its unwavering support for underserved communities and equity, whether in its health, education or arts portfolios. Continuing to manifest this commitment through convening, collaboration and respectful relationships with nonprofits will ensure the Trust makes an ongoing difference for marginalized New Yorkers.
- 2. Increase funding and capacity building to smaller, more grassroots, community organizing groups and organizations led by people of color.** The Trust staff prides itself on funding an ecosystem of types of organizations from year to year to achieve its broad goals in each program area. An examination of grants shows limited investment in neighborhood-based groups and those that are led by or directly organize residents of color, who comprise the majority in New York City. Devoting greater resources and capacity building to these types of organizations, either directly or through partnerships with other local funders that heavily support such groups, will enable the Trust to spur civic engagement and harness community activism for change. A few grantmakers expressed the wish that the Trust could collaborate with other, much smaller public foundations to leverage its larger assets to support more small and grassroots social change organizations that do not otherwise

receive Trust support.

- 3. Strategically provide general support grants to equity-oriented nonprofits and make further progress to increase multi-year funding. Doing so would free up program staff time to engage and convene more grantees and nonprofits.** The Trust aims to maximize the impact of its limited discretionary dollars through single-year, project-specific funding. This is laudable, and helps ensure that large nonprofits serving broad populations will target Trust resources to marginalized residents. But it limits the ability of smaller nonprofits to be flexible in responding to community needs and new opportunities. We urge the Trust to identify appropriate types of organizations that would most benefit from general support while still being able to ensure alignment of purpose and mission with equity, benefit for underserved communities and the foundation's other goals. The Trust has already set an intention to make more of its competitive grants multi-year, and can continue to make progress in this area. These two recommendations, along with streamlining application processes, would free up both grantees' and foundation staff members' time to focus more on achieving mission.
- 4. Take a stand more often and use the Trust's bully pulpit when it is clearly in the best interests of underserved communities in New York.** The Trust exercises leadership in many ways, including as a convener of other funders and of its grantees. Its program staff also strategically engages local government leaders around issues relevant to its nonprofit partners. Yet peers and grantees see a missed opportunity in the Trust's quiet leadership style at the top. The Trust can further advance its equity goals by raising the voices of its leaders, board and donors as advocates for the

most marginalized across all sectors of the city.

- 5. Explicitly articulate a unifying vision and values statement for an equitable city. Improve communications tools, including the website, to more effectively convey how the Trust's goals and strategies align with its vision and values.** The Trust's grant-making is guided by strategic reviews in each of its funding areas and the foundation's communications tools describe grantee results well. However, stakeholders still do not understand the foundation's larger vision for NYC. More transparency about how the foundation sets strategic priorities within the constraints of its complex funding structure would help stakeholders better understand how the Trust makes decisions. The foundation needs to express a compelling vision that can unify its strategic priorities and more effectively rally donors, other grantmakers, nonprofits and communities around common goals for the city.

- 6. Explore and test out more creative donor engagement strategies and foster more connections and cooperation among donors, other public grant-making charities and nonprofits.** The Trust is very adept at cultivating donors who will leave a community legacy through the foundation, and flexible in using such bequests to meet changing needs. However, its ongoing donor engagement activities could more effectively connect donors to the communities the foundation seeks to benefit and to the nonprofits serving those communities. Other grantmaking charities in the city could be allies rather than competitors in exploring creative ways to grow diverse community philanthropy that will direct resources to empowering disenfranchised residents.

BACKGROUND ABOUT THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST

The value, and challenge, of community philanthropy is in bringing together community needs and community assets. Community foundations like the New York Community Trust, the third-largest community foundation in the U.S., are tasked with being responsive to dynamically changing environments for residents, nonprofits and donors alike. With a total of \$2.4 billion in assets and \$144 million in annual giving, the Trust houses more than 2,000 charitable funds. The Trust, in fact, is credited with pioneering the donor-advised fund vehicle (DAF) in 1931.

Based in New York City (NYC), with two regional subdivisions in Westchester and on Long Island (founded in 1975 and 1978 respectively), the Trust employs 48 administrative, finance, donor services and grantmaking staff. In its 95-year history, there have been three long-time presidents of the Trust: Ralph Hayes (1924-1967), Herbert West (1967-1990) and Lorie Slutsky (1990-present). Slutsky believes the Trust's effectiveness stems from its role as the "ultimate niche grantmaker." She said:

"The role of a community foundation is to understand the problems and be a place that will stick with those things that need to be stuck with, build the capacity of critical neighborhood anchor institutions over time and leave the door open so new problems identified by new populations and challenges still have a place to go and be heard."

The foundation "supports an array of effective nonprofits

that help make the city a vital and secure place to live, learn, work and play, while building permanent resources for the future."¹ The Trust is lauded for frequent grant cycles, expert staff and attention to issues of equity, and its grantmaking is known for its breadth and responsiveness to changing needs. Given the foundation's reputation for high standards, receipt of a competitive grant from the Trust is perceived as a "stamp of approval." While discretionary grants are project-specific, donor-advised grants are awarded as general operating support.

The Trust's public leadership style is purposefully understated, though it takes an active role in collaborative funding and partnership with NYC government agencies. In Slutsky's words, "We lead when appropriate, we follow when needed and we put the community front and center."

In 1977, the Trust helped found the New York Regional Association of Grantmakers, now known as Philanthropy New York. Amid the many issues in its purview, during the past 30 years, the Trust has helped to strengthen immigrant-led organizations, protect NYC's drinking water, improve the workforce development system and increase equity in state education funding.²

The Trust has a governance structure similar to some of the earliest community foundations founded in the 1920s and 1930s. Though it acts as a single philanthropic entity serving metropolitan New York, it legally consists of two organizations: The New York Community Trust and Com-

munity Funds, Inc. While the two file a combined tax form and share a board and staff, the first is an unincorporated association of charitable trusts and the second is a not-for-profit corporation. In a primer on community foundations, Professor Christopher R. Hoyt explained that, in addition to configuring itself as two organizations, the Trust also uses several banks as its trustees, with each bank holding different aspects of its funds. Hoyt said:

“The separation of the investment function from the disbursement function permits the trustee banks to do what they do best (make investments) and the community foundation to do what it does best (make grants).”³

This arrangement allows multiple trusts and corporations to function as a singular charity.

Frank J. Parsons, vice president of the United States Mortgage and Trust Company, was the driving force in the creation of the New York Community Foundation. Parsons was strategic in engaging powerful city institutions in the community foundation movement through conferences and luncheons. Of the 20 banks Parsons invited to serve on the founding committee, 11 agreed, adopting the resolution and declaration (R&D) that established the Trust in 1924. The number of banks serving as trustee has fluctuated over time, in part due to mergers, and stands at eleven today, according to the Trust.⁴

Created to “promote the well-being of mankind and primarily of the inhabitants of the community comprising the City of New York and its vicinity, regardless of race, color or creed,” the Trust’s founders envisioned the public charity as a vehicle for public good, with specific benefit for disenfranchised and vulnerable communities. (See Appendix A for more on the Trust’s founding purpose.) The Trust

seeks to achieve this mandate by maximizing the use of its flexible funds to complement, rather than duplicate, its donor-advised funds. Toward that end, the Trust extensively analyzes where DAF grants are allocated.

Today, donors recommend nearly three quarters of the Trust’s total grant funds.⁵ Grants originate from among four types of funds:

1. **Designated:** The donor names specific nonprofits to receive grants, and the Trust makes them over time. The Trust’s board can put the money to use for other important charitable activities if circumstances change that make carrying out the fund’s purpose impossible, impractical, unnecessary or undesirable.
2. **Field-of-Interest:** The Trust makes grants to nonprofits that tackle issues in the donor’s chosen field.
3. **Unrestricted:** The Trust uses the donor’s gift to support effective work of nonprofits throughout the five boroughs in perpetuity.
4. **Donor-Advised (DAF):** The donor recommends the organizations to receive grants, and the Trust does the due diligence and paperwork.

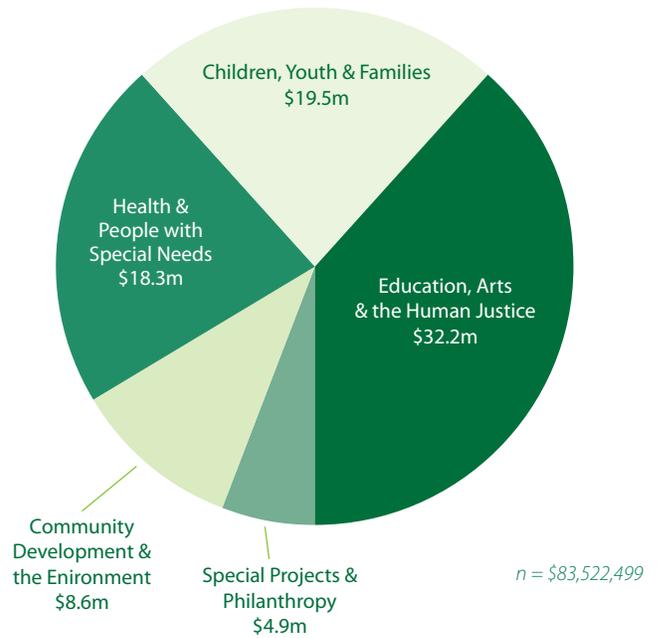
The first three types of funds can be established as permanent, endowed funds. Since DAFs function by the recommendations of living donors for a limited period of time, they are generally considered non-endowed funds. The Trust encourages donors to use DAFs as a way to build an endowed fund over time that can continue their charitable legacy upon their death.

The Trust currently has four main areas of competitive funding, including 22 different program areas, which draw from approximately 350, unrestricted, field-of-interest and other defined funds at the community foundation.

From 2012 to 2014, the \$83.5 million in competitive grants went to 705 organizations in NYC. Just fewer than 350 NYC nonprofits received grants from both donor-advised and competitive funds held by the Trust.

As Graph 1 shows, the highest proportion of discretionary grants and grant dollars support the program area that includes education, arts and human justice projects. A more detailed breakdown of funding within each program area reveals that close to half of that program area is allocated to the arts and another third to education. (See Appendix B.)

Graph 1. Competitive Grants by Funding Area, 2012-2014



FINDINGS

1. The Trust is committed to investing in underserved communities and equity. It funds service delivery improvement and advocacy as the primary tools for changing systems and also sees a limited role for community organizing in its competitive grantmaking.

a. Underserved Communities

Our research affirms the Trust’s stated commitment to NYC’s marginalized communities in its grantmaking – particularly for people who live in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and for New Yorkers of color. In reference to the institution’s discretionary dollars, Vice President for Grants Patricia Jenny shared:

“We’re really able to make those funds work in a very effective way that meets the needs of New Yorkers as they change over time. ... We’re obviously interested in all New Yorkers, but it’s low-income, disenfranchised New Yorkers that need the most help and are the constituency of most of the nonprofits we support.”

Geographically, the Trust focuses its competitive grantmaking on New York’s economically disadvantaged communities by identifying and targeting those with concentrated poverty and lowest median household incomes.⁶ While most of the Trust’s grantmaking goes to agencies serving the entire city or multiple boroughs, an analysis of the foundation’s grants demonstrates its allocation of smaller amounts in the three boroughs with the poorest neighborhoods: the Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan (See Table 1). Jenny noted that even citywide grants largely focus on low-income and disenfranchised populations. That said, at least a few NYC peer funders urged the Trust to invest greater amounts directly in underserved boroughs and neighborhoods. The South Bronx Healthy and Livable Neighborhoods initiative is an example of the Trust’s experimentation with a deep, neighborhood-based approach that collaborates across program areas.

Approximately 65 percent of New York City’s residents are people of color (see Graph 2),⁷ and the majority of the

Table 1. Competitive Grants by Location Served, 2012-2014



Location	Percent Total Grant Dollars	Grant Dollars (US)
Citywide (all five boroughs)	53.7%	\$44,867,061
Mixed boroughs (less than 5)	17.8	14,831,350
The Bronx	8.1	6,740,924
Brooklyn	6.5	5,455,264
Manhattan	5.3	4,456,492
Queens	4.7	3,903,768
Metro Area	2.5	2,074,640
Staten Island	1.4	1,193,000

n = \$83,522,499

Trust's competitive grants benefit residents and communities of color (see Graph 3).⁸

Grantee survey data reinforces these grant analyses. When asked to identify the intended beneficiaries of their grant funds from the Trust, 68 percent of survey respondents reported serving economically disadvantaged populations, 59.5 percent racial/ethnic communities, 13.4 percent people with disabilities and 9 percent LGBTQ citizens. For the latter group, the Trust was recognized as one of the top ten community foundations funding LGBTQ issues in 2013 and 2014.⁹ Surveyed grantees share a positive perception of the Trust's support for underserved populations. Regarding the foundation's current goals and strategies, 89 percent strongly or somewhat agree that they are likely to benefit marginalized communities.

b. Equity and Systems Change

A review of grantmaking guidelines, strategy documents, funder collaborative goals and other sources show that the

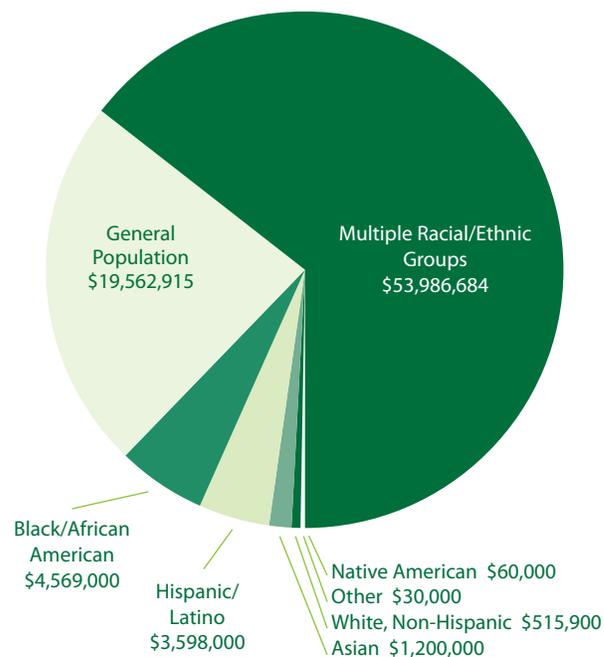
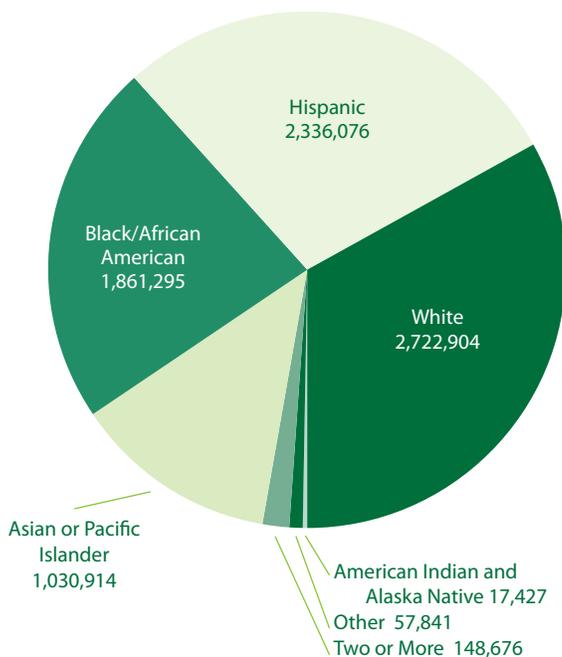
Trust analyzes racial disparities and sets goals for systemic change. Examples of grantmaking goals outlined in strategy documents include:

- Preserve affordable housing.
- Build the financial and managerial capacity of ethnic, minority and community groups.
- Contribute to research, policy and advocacy for workforce development.
- Build and mobilize public will for greater equity and quality in the school system.
- Promote a more effective and fair civil and criminal justice system.
- Advocate for the expansion of affordable public and private health insurance.

The Trust advances equity through funder collaboratives, such as the Cultural Agenda Fund and AIDS Funder Collaborative.

Graph 2. New York City Total Population by Mutually Exclusive Race and Hispanic Origin, 2010 Census

Graph 3: New York Community Trust Competitive Grants by Race/Ethnicity Served, 2012-2014



n = 8,175,133

n = \$83,522,499

Interviews with foundation staff also showed a strong intention to advance equity and change systems. The Trust's senior program officer for Education and Human Justice, Shawn Morehead, shared:

"The way we have addressed [equity] is to really focus on populations that clearly are not getting the same positive outcomes we would want. We have done a lot of grantmaking around students with disabilities and in particular have done individual advocacy, grants to provide individual advocacy for students with disabilities to make sure they are getting access to the kinds of programming they need to succeed."

Natasha Lifton, senior program officer for Children Youth and Families said:

"I'm really interested in looking at areas of need, both in terms of an organization or program meeting a need in a community, but also how that ties back to and addresses broader systemic change issues. It's me thinking about what the potential political or public policy context is that is really important."

Arturo Garcia-Costas, senior program officer for the foundation's NYC and National Environment program noted:

"When someone comes out of [the] environmental justice policy area, there are two very strong elements or pillars: one is meaningful participation in [the process] by the communities, and the other is balancing burdens with benefits. I apply both lenses when I review proposals that have an equity dimension to them."

Survey and interview data indicate that grantees and other stakeholders share this perception. Among surveyed grantees:

- 84 percent strongly or somewhat agree that Trust goals and strategies are likely to result in more equitable systems for marginalized communities.
- 81 percent strongly or somewhat agree that they are likely to support and empower marginalized communities to define solutions and lead change.

"The Trust is one of the few foundations committed to big ideas, root causes of the problems and how to address issues in a structural systemic way," said one grantee. "They had a strategic plan around education funding that they put on their website for potential grantees to look at. It was impressive, it wasn't the same kind of trendy things that other foundations were funding; it was clear that they had some kind of a retreat and thought about how they were going to make an impact in NYC."

An observer of the Cultural Agenda Fund, which explicitly seeks to address equity in the arts said:

"I give them a lot of credit because thanks to [Trust staff's] vision around the Cultural Agenda Fund, they made sure that it's explicitly framed in terms of equity issues as opposed to being just about getting more money to the arts ... They also funded a cohort of cultural organizations, not just to increase their advocacy capacity, but also funded them to be trained around issues of equity and things like sensitivity around issues of race and ethnicity. Really visionary on their part."

The Trust not only has equity-oriented and systemic goals; it delivers results in these areas. Spanning issues such as universal free school lunch, participatory budgeting, affordable housing, equitable wages and increasing the age of criminal responsibility, the Trust's grantmaking and initiatives have achieved systemic impact that benefits

marginalized communities in NYC. Our analysis of survey and interview data found numerous recent examples, including the following:

- Many of the recommendations developed and advocated for by the A+ NYC Coalition, a grantee of the Donors' Education Collaborative (DEC), were adopted by the de Blasio administration, including the creation of more community schools, expanded afterschool programs and reform of school discipline and policing.¹⁰
- The Trust has been a long-time supporter of juvenile justice reform and the Raise the Age NY campaign to change the age of criminal responsibility in New York state from 16 to 18 years of age. Though a bill failed in the legislature last summer, Trust grantee partners won Governor Andrew Cuomo's commitment to removing minors from the state's adult prisons. Observed one grantee:

"In the field of juvenile justice, the Trust has had a sustained impact in New York policy and practice by funding efforts to transform policy – like the Raise the Age effort this year – and by supporting direct service programming that pilots innovative solutions to social problems."

- Though nationwide marriage equality was not won until 2015, New York state legalized same-sex marriage in 2011. As an active funder of LGBTQ rights, the Trust has supported nonprofits such as the Empire State Pride Agenda and the New York Civil Liberties Foundation to achieve equality and help same-sex couples understand their changing legal rights.

As one staffer noted, impact goes beyond the outcomes of any one grant and is manifest by building up from the micro

to macro level – growing capacity and infrastructure among a set of organizations or communities, bringing pilot projects to scale and enabling collective advocacy that leads to systems change. Patricia Swann, senior program officer for Community Development and the Environment, said:

"I often think of impact in layers. The layers vary based on type of grant, but they include: influence in the field among other practitioners, influence among decision makers (policymakers and government), direct impact on participants in the program (or maybe on a specific neighborhood) and influence on public opinion. The intensity of each of those different layers would vary depending on whether it's an advocacy grant, public education grant, direct service grant or boutique program that is changing the lives of 15 girls at a time."

d. Types of Organizations and Projects Funded

Balancing project-specific competitive grants from discretionary funds and general operating grants made by donor advisors, the Trust funds and benefits from relationships with a variety of nonprofits. The Trust's senior program officer for Arts and Historic Preservation, Kerry McCarthy, explained how this balance helps the foundation to achieve its mission:

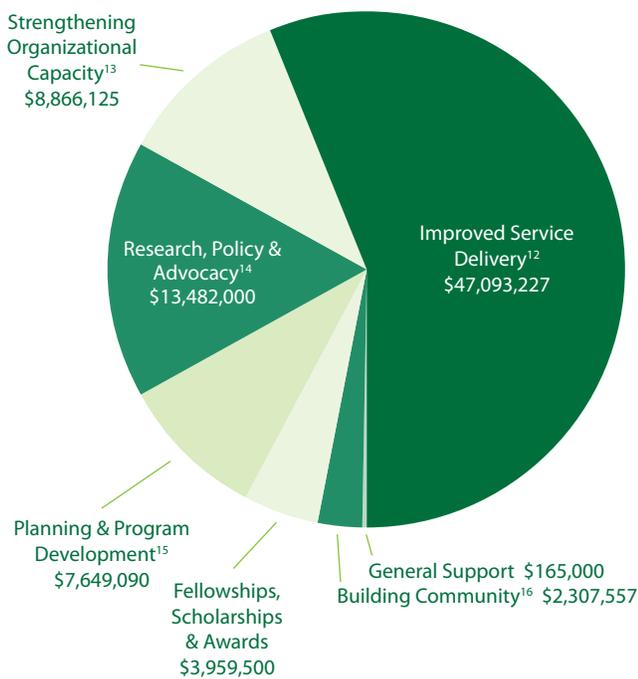
"NYC is not a museum of culture. It's a living, breathing, dynamic thing. The largest institutions tend to draw the most attention from the press and from philanthropy, so while we support them, and our donor advisors tend to make grants to those large institutions, with our competitive grant program we try to help support the grassroots aspect of the sector to ensure that the whole sector is robust."

In its efforts to improve conditions and systems for mar-

ginalized populations, the Trust supports an ecosystem of nonprofits that vary in size, issue focus and type. The Trust’s coding of grant purpose (summarized in Graph 4) reveals that 16 percent of its NYC grantees use systemic approaches of “research, policy and advocacy.” Slutsky asserted that most of the Trust’s service delivery grants are also directed to systemic change by improving service for underserved clients. The Trust sees improving services in a larger context of demonstrating the efficacy or efficiency of structural changes. Slutsky provided the example of CancerCare, a Trust grantee that it funded specifically to provide underserved New Yorkers with financial support and education to remove barriers to receiving quality care.¹¹

For comparison, NCRP’s survey data in Table 2 show the proportion of grantees reporting their use of various strategies.

Graph 4: New York Community Trust Competitive Grants by Purpose, 2012-2014



n = \$83,522,499

Sixteen grantees and two other stakeholders urged the Trust to make more grants to support community organizing, especially to people of color-led organizations and smaller grassroots groups. These quotes are illustrative:

“I would try to find ways to support more community organizing efforts at the grassroots level. That is the most effective way to secure change in NYC institutions, and the Trust could play a bigger role in bringing together activists and supporting groups by enhancing their capacity to work on long-term social change.”

Table 2: Types of Grant-Funded Activities as Reported by Survey Respondents*

Activity	Percent of Grantees	No. of Grantees
Program development/implementation	72.1%	183
Internal capacity building/strategic planning	36.2	92
Training/technical assistance	30.7	78
Policy change/advocacy¹⁷	27.6	70
Leadership development among targeted populations	24.8	63
Evaluation	22.4	57
Marketing/communications	20.1	51
Social services	19.3	49
Community organizing¹⁸	18.9	48
Civic engagement¹⁹	15.0	38
Research	13.4	34
Other	11.8	30
Scholarships/fellowships	9.8	25
One-time capital campaign/facility	1.6	4

*Respondents were asked to select “all that apply.”

n = 254

“I would consider having a cross-cutting focus on community organizing as a strategy for social change. We have been able to get support for some community organizing work, but I have always felt that the Trust could be a bigger leader in this area in the city.”

“[They are willing] to support more ‘grass-tops’ think tanks, elite kinds of groups that do policy thinking, and not so much in on-the-ground organizing. That needs to change or at least have a balance, creating a support structure for communities of color and directors from those backgrounds, to ensure they have access and can act on resources the foundation can give.”

While this recommendation came from a small proportion of all stakeholders, it came primarily from organizations with constituencies deeply rooted in low-income neighborhoods and/or representing communities of color – voices to which any community foundation should pay close attention.

The Trust’s leaders strongly believe that the foundation is using the most effective combination of strategies to achieve impact. Slutsky affirmed:

“If you’re going to make change in a place as big and complicated as New York City to improve the lot of the disenfranchised and the poor, you have to fund a whole lot of approaches to get that needle moved.”

Jenny added:

“This institution has been focused on systems change for a long time in a lot of arenas – education, workforce development, arts and culture, health policy – and we really have changed systems but it happens over 5-10

years and it happens with a multitude of strategies.

Community organizing is one important strategy, but it is not the only strategy; you also need to negotiate platforms among various interest groups, prepare published reports, conduct social media campaigns, advocate with public agencies, or lobby elected officials.”

Based on extensive evidence-based research, NCRP recommends that foundations invest at least 25 percent of grant dollars in constituent-led advocacy, organizing and civic engagement.²⁰ The sheer size of the Trust’s assets and giving translates into potential to leverage dollars for impact that’s unrivaled by smaller local funders that provide higher proportions of their funding for these strategies.

Grassroots Grantmakers defines grassroots grantmaking as a place-based approach that “focuses on strengthening and connecting resident-led organizations and their leaders in urban neighborhoods and rural communities.”²¹ It is a priority strategy for connecting with marginalized segments of the community. Both Grassroots Grantmakers and CFLeads have compiled considerable resources on how funding for resident-led groups increases active citizenship and community leadership.

Given the Trust’s commitment to marginalized communities in NYC, targeting more resources to grassroots community organizing would be a natural evolution of its grantmaking strategies, as exemplified in its education portfolio (see sidebar on page 19). The Trust could leverage partnerships with local funders that possess expertise in this area to strengthen nonprofits’ capacity to do community organizing. Shared one peer:

“The Trust is not known as a risk taker. They will fund an organization after a certain level of capacity and

MASA: HITTING THE “SWEET SPOT” WITH RESIDENT-LED ADVOCACY AND ORGANIZING TO IMPROVE NYC EDUCATION

For over two decades, community organizing has been a central tool in the New York Community Trust’s strategy to improve the accessibility and quality of public education in New York City. From 2012 to 2014, the Trust allocated \$10.7 million in grants to make public schools effective for all students and to build a broad constituency in support of public education by funding efforts that strengthen the involvement of citizen groups, particularly parents. In doing so, the foundation found the sweet spot in implementing a program that combines a commitment to equity with resident-led systems change.

The Mexican American Student Association (Masa), a small grassroots organization that works closely with its South Bronx and Mott Haven communities on education and immigrant issues, is a NYCT grantee. As Aracelis Lucero, executive director of the organization, explained:

“Our work has been empowering and engaging families. We can’t really work alone. There is a huge fight and a lot will be required to move the needle forward for community issues through direct services, getting them involved in education and helping them be better equipped in tackling the issues from a local perspective. ... What we’ve done is provide education support from as early on as possible to college and beyond. We engage parents; we focus on children and youth but our entry point and the way we engage is in a very holistic family support and community support.”

One of the ways in which Masa engages families is through parent committees that provide space for parents to voice concerns, share knowledge and best practices to support each other, and to engage in larger

community issues. For example, a group of parents felt they were not being welcomed to a charter school’s PTA. They also faced a language barrier to participating. Masa assisted the parents by recommending strategies to address the problem and by helping them voice their concerns to the charter school’s board. As a result, parent involvement improved in the school.

One parent in particular who took language classes at Masa was able to speak at a press conference at City Hall to talk about the difficulties of participating in the PTA. Lucero noted:

“We have people who couldn’t even dream of being part of the committee and she is now part of it. ... There has been a huge transformation in how she expresses herself. Before, she wouldn’t talk in parent meetings and now she is much more open and is really driving the conversation and creating the agenda to talk about. That’s a huge transformation.”

Similarly, through its youth committee, Masa is empowering the younger generation to become leaders and advocates in the community. “Youth have been really

key to building trust with the community and to driving what has been happening,” said Lucero. “The organization grew from a four-person staff to 18. Of the 18 staff, 14 of them are young adults who are pretty much children of immigrants or immigrants themselves who are running Masa right now. Everyone is from the community or has grown up in the community.”

On working with the Trust, Lucero praises its staff for providing honest feedback and for supporting grassroots organizations:

“I appreciate the work they’re doing to include grassroots organizations. ... We needed people who would take a chance on us. ... NYCT was one of the earlier partners, along with New York Foundation, to believe in Masa’s work, see what we were doing at the grassroots level and recognize the potential. ... One of the things that I appreciate beyond the support and taking a chance to believe in us is that [the Trust] also provided very honest feedback at each point of our development. I appreciate that; when you are growing you want to be told what you could be doing better and make meaningful changes to help you grow.” ■



Photo courtesy of Masa.

demonstrated impact. I don't see anything wrong with that. ... I see [an] additional opportunity to partner with smaller local foundations that are more risk takers and develop organizations that they can pick up for funding [those] even closer to the ground than the Trust. ... The Trust is more staid than we are. We are happy with that but sometimes there's an opportunity to do things together on an investment level."

While other systemic approaches can and should complement these activities, including the voices of affected communities raises the likelihood that proposed policy solutions will actually benefit them and will be implemented effectively.

e. Demographics of Grantees

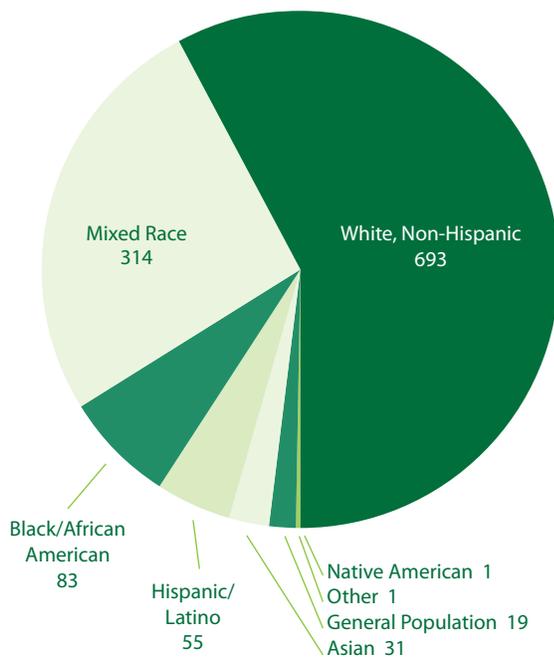
The Trust manifests its implicit commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion by extensively tracking the board and staff composition of its competitive grantees. These data show that the Trust's grantees mirror the NYC nonprofit

sector writ large: they are primarily led by whites, even though more than 65 percent of NYC's residents are people of color.²² Graphs 5 and 6 depict the foundation's grantee organizations by majority race and ethnicity of staff and board as reported by the Trust.

In the past three years, 60 percent of the Trust's grants (720 of 1,197) went to organizations that do not qualify as being led by people of color. While definitions and criteria vary in the sector, the Trust requires that organizations meet two of three criteria to qualify as "minority-led": 51 percent or more of population served is minority; 51 percent or more of board is minority; and/or 51 percent or more of staff is minority.²³ In 2009, a study by the Foundation Center found that 49 percent of surveyed NYC organizations did not self-identify as being minority-led,²⁴ while 38 percent did and 14 percent were unsure.

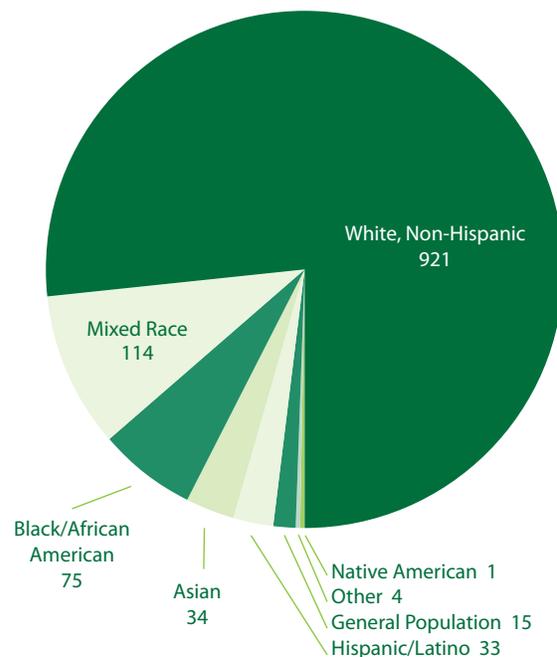
Given the Trust's strong commitment to vulnerable New Yorkers, the majority of whom are Black and Latino, the

Graph 5. Majority Racial/Ethnic Make-Up of Competitive Grantee Organizations' Staff, 2012-2014



n = 1,197 grantees

Graph 6. Majority Racial/Ethnic Make-Up of Competitive Grantee Organizations' Board, 2012-2014



n = 1,197 grantees

Trust's role in fostering more nonprofit leadership development among marginalized populations is critical. The Trust is a member of the Fund for New Citizens, a foundation collaborative that makes grants to immigrant organizations for capacity-building projects. This fund supports grantees such as South Asian Youth Action to do leadership development. A division of the Trust, the Long Island Community Foundation supports Adelphi University's Long Island Center for Nonprofit Leadership to train community leaders of color. And, in 2015, the Trust launched a Leadership Fellows program in partnership with Baruch College to enhance the leadership and management competencies of mid-career professionals from grantee organizations.²⁵ The Trust's leaders explained that, based on input from internal staff of color, this particular pro-

gram decided not to have an explicit focus on people of color or organizations they lead.

There is clearly a demand for leadership development that contributes to reducing disparities and creating more equitable opportunities for communities that remain historically and structurally marginalized in the nonprofit sector. A leader of color encouraged the Trust:

"I would invest in leadership of the nonprofit sector and it could be either at board level or Executive Director/CEO level ... I would utilize an equity lens to look at grants and have a concrete conversation about how many of these organizations we support that are led by people who are a majority of our city."

THE TRUST'S STAFF AND BOARD DEMOGRAPHICS

The Trust tracks the demographics of its staff and board, demonstrating its commitment to achieve and monitor internal diversity and inclusion. According to the Trust, the composition of its 48 staff and 11 board members²⁶ as of August 2015 was:

Staff (including sub-divisions in Westchester and Long Island):

- 40 (83 percent) are female.
- 24 (50 percent) are white.
- 24 (50 percent) are people of color: 12 are African American, 9 are Hispanic, 2 are Asian/South Asian and 1 is other.
- 3 (6 percent) identify as LGBTQ.

Board

- 6 (55 percent) are female.
- 7 (64 percent) are white.
- 4 (36 percent) are people of color: 2 are African American, 1 is Hispanic and 1 is other.
- 2 (18 percent) identify as LGBTQ.

One stakeholder of color commended the progress the Trust has made in diver-

sifying its staff and said:

"It is notable that both of the program officers I interacted with at the Trust were people of color ... To see that kind of diversity reflected in people who are helping to make decisions is not something I take for granted. It's not the case in a lot of places ... [The Trust is] meeting the needs that exist in the city in general and not pretending to be colorblind."

Because of its governance structure, the Trust has limited control over the diversity and racial makeup of its board, also known as its "distribution committee." The resolution and declaration that established the Trust in 1924 mandates that the board include six officials nominated by public authorities,²⁷ with the other five elected by the board members. Using the only available comparative data, from a 2009 Foundation Center report,²⁸ the Trust has an equivalent number of female employees and a higher percentage of people of color on staff relative to other NYC funders.

Its board also has more racial diversity than that of peer funders.

Lorie Slutsky described the board as "pretty diverse but not as much as New York City. But with 11 people it will never be as diverse as New York City." Patricia Jenny further explained:

"Achieving a staff and board that reflect the demographics of NYC is an ongoing challenge; it has been a goal here for more than 25 years. For board members, we seek out individuals from various ethnicities as well as from diverse professional backgrounds (law, finance, arts, etc.). For staff, we also widely publicize openings and look for prospective candidates from multiple backgrounds. Sometimes it means holding open positions longer than we like, but the end justifies the means."

It's clear the Trust gives as much thought to its internal diversity as it does to the diversity of its grantees. ■

Last year NCRP published *Cultivating Nonprofit Leadership: A (Missed?) Philanthropic Opportunity*, which noted the urgency to address the needs of leaders of color, at all levels of organizational size. The Trust can share with its audiences more about what it sees as the opportunities, challenges and strategies for achieving this goal.

In sum, this section of our assessment highlights many different facets of the Trust’s commitment to equity and systems change. The foundation uses a variety of strategies to achieve the goals of each program area, and it places great stock in improving services as a means to create more equitable systems. The Trust can invest greater resources in constituent-led organizing and grassroots advocacy to ensure that service delivery improvements, policy reforms and other structural changes will be informed by and benefit low-income residents and communities of color.

2. The Trust’s strategies are well informed and broad enough to respond to emerging needs. However, it has

not effectively communicated how these strategies add up to an overarching vision for the city, which results in confusion among many stakeholders about what it stands for.

In order to address changing community needs, the Trust intentionally has broad goals and strategies for each program area, described in guiding documents, some of which are posted on its website. Several strategies were updated in the last few years, while others were last revised five to 10 years ago (see Table 3). Each strategic framework is informed by a scan of the field, usually conducted by a consultant. The most recently completed scans spell out the sources of information they incorporated, which typically include conversations with a few dozen grantees, peer funders and other experts.

Each document serves as a briefing memo of sorts, with an overview of public and private sector roles and funding streams; an analysis of issues and trends; review of past Trust grantmaking in that program area; and recommendations for future strategic directions, including in some cases cross-cutting opportunities among multiple program areas. The documents summarize the accomplishments of the Trust’s previous grant investments. They do not generally share lessons or examples of strategies that were less successful, although the Trust reported changing strategies based on past results. For example, arts staff indicated they plan to make changes to their Van Lier fellowship program based on the recommendations of a recent program evaluation.

The guiding papers vary in the extent to which they talk about how the changes they propose will occur. On one hand, the Education strategy is explicit that advocacy and organizing are central components to achieving the program’s goal of improving the highest-need middle

Table 3: Recent Chronology of the Trust’s Guiding Strategies

Program Area	When the Current Strategy Document Was Prepared
Human Justice	June 2015
Jobs & Workforce Development	June 2014
Environment (both NYC and international)	April 2014
Community Development	July 2012
Education	December 2009
Arts & Culture	December 2005
Civic Affairs	July 2005
Health	October 2004*

**Will be revised in 2016*

and high schools. The Jobs and Workforce Development strategy mentions a range of tactics – sectoral linkages, employer partnerships, workforce intermediaries and advocacy efforts – to achieve its goals. On the other hand, the NYC Environmental strategy and Community Development strategy each describe goals in three broad areas, but don't say how they will be achieved. A reader might infer that research, advocacy, public-private partnerships, constituency building and other tactics will be required, but the means are not spelled out.

This lack of explicitness may be in part because the Trust program strategies are intended to be broad and flexible enough to last for up to a decade or more, so they can respond to changing community needs over time. This has enabled the Trust to adapt its grantmaking when unanticipated community issues arise. Historically, the Trust was able to direct specific health funds to respond to the emerging HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s, and was one of the first foundations to do so. The Trust also has been able to respond to emergencies by quickly creating crisis response funds, such as immediately after 9/11 and Superstorm Sandy.

Shawn Morehead observed that the strategy documents “help structure conversations with current and potential grantees in thinking about how we can achieve some systemic impacts and reform in ways that are consistent with and contribute to the broader strategy that we've set.” She added, “But things do change, and in some areas pretty rapidly, so you want a strategy to be one that you can adapt as the policy environment changes.” Morehead noted that the Education strategy from 2009 is still “very much on target.” For example, it seeks to lift up community voices to improve public education. In the context of Bill de Blasio's new mayoral administration, which supports the creation of “community schools,” this means funding

parent-organizing groups so they can pressure the City to involve parents in defining and planning these schools.

Indeed, many surveyed grantees credit the Trust for nimbleness in the face of emerging issues and openness to innovative responses by nonprofits. They depend on the Trust to continue to operate this way:

“[If I were] president of the Trust, I would continue to maintain an openness to innovative and strategic proposals, as well as maintain a focus on helping grantees keep on top of anticipated changes in delivery systems within their fields. This sort of forward-thinking grantmaking is invaluable, particularly to nonprofits that are often mired in day-to-day difficulties and hard-pressed to practice more strategic or long-term planning.”

“As one of the largest community foundations in the country, the Trust has a responsibility to continue to proactively address timely issues that face the City's nonprofits and the communities and people they serve. While challenges may arise that fall outside of the Trust's main program areas, and as the needs of New Yorkers evolve, it is important that the Trust remains knowledgeable and continues to lead on key issues.”

What the foundation has gained in nimbleness, however, may come at the expense of grantee and nonprofit engagement. For instance, when asked, “Has the Trust asked for feedback from you about its strategies or practices in the last three years?” only 1 in 5 survey respondents said yes, more than half (54 percent) said no and a quarter (26 percent) said they didn't know. Among the 20 percent who said yes, 59 percent were asked for feedback through one-on-one conversations, 51 percent through grant reports and 34 percent through either site visits or anonymous surveys. But more

than three-quarters of these respondents (77 percent) have no idea whether the foundation has made changes based on their feedback. In open-ended responses, 7 percent of grantees reported feeling excluded from the Trust's strategy development. They urged the Trust to recognize grantees as the eyes and ears on the ground and tap into their expertise when shaping grantmaking priorities and launching strategic conversations. In particular, stakeholders recommend that the Trust:

"Seek additional feedback from grantees about what is going on in the community. The Metro NY area is changing rapidly, so are service needs. Nonprofits are first-line eyes and ears on the ground, able to share mission-critical insights that can help advance grantmaking practice."

"Create more frequent and strong processes for program officers to be in dialogue with the community of organizations that it supports/wants to support to hear from them what problems it's aiming to solve, share what problems the program officers are seeing and want to address, and come to a point of convergence between the two. Often, it feels like there are priorities that emerge, but little clarity as to where those priorities are coming from or the theory of change behind them."

Although the Trust's formal strategic reviews include a select number of grantee interviews, such reviews occur infrequently. From the Trust's perspective, Patricia Jenny pointed to ongoing input mechanisms such as convening small groups and conversations with program officers as examples of how the Trust values and invites grantee perspectives.

In addition to an expressed desire for more opportunities to help shape strategies and priorities, a third of inter-

viewed stakeholders (including grantees, peer funders and others) articulated concerns that they did not have a clear sense of the Trust's overarching goals and strategies and how they add up to a comprehensive vision for NYC. The following grantee responses illustrated this point:

"I think it's important to note that while I have received funding from the Trust multiple times, I have no idea who the president is or what their mandate is overall for the Trust. They are not visible, nor is their mandate legible to me as a grantee. In contrast, I have met the presidents of all of my other funders, and have a clear sense of their mission and message."

"I don't have a really concrete sense of what they're holistically trying to accomplish with their grantmaking. They have different categories but if they have donors giving to them and competing with DAFs, how are they influencing what donors are giving to? And then how do they harness that to be able to grant to a lot of different organizations? I know they have different categories, but I don't have a sense of what they're really trying to accomplish. I can't say the Trust does 'X.'"

The Trust prefers that the grants and their results speak for themselves, and indeed the Trust's newsletters feature many examples of how grantees drive benefit and change for underserved communities. According to communications and marketing director, David Marcus:

"Much of the Trust grantmaking that we publicize directly addresses justice and equity issues, from environmental justice to supporting greater equity in arts and culture resources across the city, from pushing NYC's public education system to serve all 1.1 million students equally to gaining access to health care for all New

Yorkers, including undocumented immigrants. Social and economic equity, embedded in our grant programs, underlies our communications.”

Although it shares these stories of success, the Trust’s grant-making, website and other communication tools do not express a clear, overarching vision for justice and equity in NYC. The Grant Seekers section of the website, the only page where a mission statement can be found, simply states, “The Trust’s mandate is to make the City a vital place in which to live and work for all New Yorkers.” One grantee described her frustration with the foundation’s online communication:

“I was just on their website and I think the health section is really emblematic to me. It’s a good thing and it’s a bad thing; they don’t have much of a strategy. I think they fund what they think are good grant proposals. ... If people have a good idea they can go to them. There is an openness there. But if you go to the website, you don’t have a sense of what they are funding or why. When I go to the Navigating Medicare and Medicaid section, they have something posted from August 2010. That’s five years out of date, quoting a person that doesn’t even work there anymore. I’m just not sure. It feels like their strategy is pretty reactive.”

Several peer funders expressed a lack of knowledge about what the Trust is trying to accomplish, even though they work collaboratively with staff at the foundation, and a few said the style of communication is a bit “stodgy.” One said, “Most of their materials that we get, that I’m aware of, tend to be more stories of grantees and the work that they do. I’m less aware of the Trust having a broad theoretical underpinning.” Another observed:

“I’m not sure how strategic they are. I’m not sure what

constraints they may be under in terms of being very highly focused and strategic. I don’t know the basics, how much of their money is donor advised (and therefore they don’t have discretion), versus how much is straight-up discretionary money to spend as they see fit. ... I don’t really know that much about them, don’t really know what they are doing and what they are capable or not capable of doing. If I had to change one thing, I’d start by improving their external communications, so that we really understand how they see their role and [share] what is their strategy.”

Other leading community foundations have a mission, vision and values statement and/or a diversity, equity and inclusion statement that conveys to their audiences explicitly what they stand for and what kind of community they seek to foster.²⁹

As the above-quoted funder acknowledged, a community foundation has a different set of parameters and constraints than a private foundation. For example, it may appear that some program strategies emerge without stakeholder input, but Slutsky noted that priorities are often dictated by purposes stipulated in bequests. Based on stakeholder calls for more transparency about foundation vision, goals and strategies, it may be important for the Trust to convey more explicitly not just what it seeks to accomplish but also how the Trust works within those constraints.

Finally, the Trust undertakes internal assessment and learning in a variety of ways, such as a recent evaluation of the Van Lier fellowship. Generally the Trust does not share the results of these reviews. Grantees and other stakeholders report that they rarely see assessments or reports published by the Trust:

- “Rarely see analysis or reports that pulls together those

outcomes and honestly assesses project and whether it achieved what it was supposed to.”

- “Never really hear about evaluation benchmarks for success.”
- “From the perspective of an outside person, I have only started to see in literature, emails I get which I didn’t use to, and print newsletter they send.”
- “No sense about the impact of their funding or the impact on the grantees.”

In sum, the foundation gathers a great deal of information from knowledgeable sources, including some grantees, to inform its priorities and strategies across 22 program areas, seeking to maximize flexibility within the constraints of donor bequests. Missing is the big picture vision that signals to donors and other New Yorkers what kind of city the Trust envisions, in a metropolis with stark wealth inequality where half the population is living in or near poverty.³⁰ Some would argue that community foundations by definition must take a broad approach to articulating their mission, but the lack of more explicit vision is a missed opportunity.

3. The Trust has initiated many effective funder collaborations on key issues in the city and often convenes grantees to foster shared learning and collaboration. The foundation works effectively with local government, but rarely uses its bully pulpit to take positions on behalf of marginalized communities.

Philamplify examines the “public leadership” of a foundation, which incorporates measures related to its willingness to leverage its reputation and expertise, take risks and innovate, convene and mobilize stakeholders, work across issues and funding silos, and collaborate with other funders. Overall, the Trust scored fairly highly on most of

these measures. It is perceived as an effective institution with a positive reputation that seeds new projects, fosters collaboration within philanthropy, and convenes people around key issues affecting the city. At the same time, the president’s understated leadership style and reluctance to engage the Trust in direct advocacy and mobilization frustrates some of its constituents.

The most positively rated public leadership traits were the Trust’s reputation and its expertise on local issues and communities. As noted earlier, a Trust grant serves as a “seal of approval” that enhances a nonprofit’s status with other funders. When grantee survey respondents were asked what difference the foundation is making, at least 10 pointed to its reputation as a sign of impact.

“The Trust is a well-respected and recognized name among the nonprofit and foundation communities. [Foundation staffers] strongly adhere to their programmatic goals and rigorously work with grantees and others to achieve them. Program staff is incredibly knowledgeable about the many faceted issues they tackle – including the populations that are affected, the political landscape and what tactics might be most effective to achieve goals.”

The Trust is credited frequently for its willingness to take risks on new and unproven projects and ideas. A notable historical example is its early funding for organizations responding to the HIV/AIDS crisis during the 1980s. In survey responses, many grantees cited more recent examples of this comfort with risk:

“In our case, the Trust did one of the rarest, hardest things in philanthropy – make an early investment when the risk was great, and the outcomes uncertain. But this

seed money has allowed us to do the patient work to develop the partnerships, shared vision, etc., that will ultimately focus millions in funding to a targeted, solvable community development challenge.”

Several peers regard the Trust as a vital actor in NYC’s philanthropic ecosystem and admire its grantmaking abilities, expert staff and successful fundraising. Beyond New York City, others in community philanthropy value the role the Trust plays, as shaped over decades by its president, Lorie Slutsky. Said one:

“Most of what I know [about the Trust] is through Lorie and the fact that she’s been so groundbreaking in the field of community foundations. She’s one of the people in the U.S. who has shaped what community foundations are and can be. I have a lot of respect for her. My impression is that the Trust plays some of the infrastructure, the connectivity of the social sector in NYC and the region. Certainly like any other community foundation they have lots of kinds of resources and roles but they do have a long history of having discretionary resources and field-of-interest funds to allow some flexibility to play more controversial and systems changing roles.”

The Trust is a strong local convener and collaborator, participating in and leading a plethora of funder collaboratives, spanning areas such as workforce development, digital media, education, arts and culture (Cultural Agenda Fund), immigration and until recently, HIV/AIDS.

Other philanthropic leaders credit the Trust for knowing when to lead and when to step back and let others do so. Said one leader:

“It depends on the program officer. I think there are some arenas that we’ve been in where the program officer is playing a strong leadership role in that group and sometimes they’re a great partner but not necessarily the leader. If everyone is a leader it won’t work. Sometimes they are at the table and helpful but not jumping up to be the chair or leader of it.”

The Trust also maintains a successful relationship with local government, partnering with municipal administrations on issues such as health, aging and arts and culture. Trust program officers often broker conversations between non-profits and government. Recently, with help from the Trust, the Cultural Agenda Fund has brought together city and state government arts agencies with “an aligned set of [arts] advocates” as well as with a cohort of local arts funders to exchange information and develop new relationships. Another stakeholder reported a similar experience related to aging:

“The Trust convened the City Department for the Aging, community-based organizations that are interfacing with health systems and funders [that work] in aging in NYC. We had a really honest, good conversation about what it is going to take to ensure that the sector [providers] that serve seniors ... can position themselves to make sure they are compensated for those services they

Table 4: Competitive Grants by Top 5 Collaborative Funds, 2012-2014

Fund	Percent of Total Grant Dollars	Grant Dollars (US)
Hive Digital Media Learning Fund	5.9%	\$4,935,679
Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund for New Citizens	3.9	3,230,000
NYC AIDS Fund	2.8	2,294,463
Donors’ Education Collaborative	2.6	2,146,000
	3.5	2,904,463

are offering, as opposed to case managers referring people and assuming that someone else will provide funding. [If you are] pushing people out of the health system and having somebody on the other side to catch them, then [make sure the other side has] the resources necessary. I thought it was brilliant that they hosted that meeting. A lot of people that were there were grantees of the Trust and they were able to present to funders and to the City and articulate their concerns. It was a smart way to start to figure out a solution.”

When asked how effectively the Trust exercises public leadership to solve community problems, 61 percent of grantee respondents said very or somewhat effectively, 8 percent said not very or completely ineffectively, and 30 percent said they didn’t know. Generally, observers see these connections happening through individual program staff, while the internal and external perception of the Trust is an institution that shies away from using its influence or bully pulpit to directly mobilize constituents to affect public policy. More than 1 in 10 grantees say the Trust does not convene enough around policy issues, and some other stakeholders see them as cautious in that regard:

“The Trust should bring grantees interested in similar issues and areas together to encourage shared learning and the identification of best practices. It should also use its prestige and influence to bring key government players to the table to discuss problems and programs that it is focused on.”

“I think I would consider convening grantees, staff and even board members and other funders around specific issues to encourage working together or other joint actions that could move common issues.”

Many survey respondents would like to see the Trust use its bully pulpit more – and bring together grantees with policymakers, other funders and other advocates to move forward specific policy agendas and advocacy campaigns.

When asked how effectively the Trust collaborates with others in the community to achieve its goals, it’s notable that 88 percent of respondents believe it very or somewhat effectively collaborates with nonprofits. On the other extreme, 74 percent responded “I Don’t Know” for its collaboration with residents and 73 percent responded “I Don’t Know” for its collaboration with businesses. Roughly half thought the foundation either very or somewhat effectively collaborates with government and other foundations, but the other half didn’t know at all.

The foundation believes that it makes its advocacy agenda known through its grantmaking. As a grantmaking public charity, the Trust can legally fund grantees to undertake advocacy and lobbying, and can also lobby itself. Over a three-year period (2012-2014), the community foundation reported expenditures of \$737,600 on lobbying.

CFLeads articulates specific practices for consistent and effective community leadership in its *Framework for Community Leadership by a Community Foundation*.³¹ One such practice is that a community foundation’s board and staff “take new or courageous stands, when necessary, to move an issue forward.” The building blocks of community leadership in the framework also include: “The community foundation’s donors use their influence and connections to advance community leadership efforts.” Indeed, such activity can strongly contribute to donor satisfaction. The Center for Effective Philanthropy conducted a survey of community foundation donors that found community impact and community leadership to be crucial contributors to donor satisfaction.³²

As noted previously, the Trust's public leadership style – or rather the preferred approach of its executive leadership – is purposefully understated. The foundation rarely (if ever) adopts a public stance on policy. Akin to many community foundations, the Trust seems eager to maintain a sense of neutrality, to allow for a diversity of viewpoints and perhaps to avoid alienation within its donor base. In the words of Patricia Jenny:

“We actually don't use the bully pulpit that much. Really because of the style of our president and the importance of maintaining some neutrality so that discussions can be had welcoming all perspectives. We think of ourselves as a venue for bringing together city and state government, private philanthropy and nonprofits. Maintaining neutrality has always been important. The Trust is not a community foundation whose president is out there as public player. This is a different city than any other community foundation operates in, but that's not really our style.”

This leadership style leaves some peers and other stakeholders uncertain about the Trust's core values. One commented:

“I'm not sure I know what the Trust stands for. I say that really with a question mark at the end. They may stand for a lot of things. You could pick five foundations in Manhattan and I could probably tell you what they stand for, but I don't know what the Trust would stand for. ... I think there are individual staff members that do stand for things and a particular point of view in meetings.”

This style is also seen in the Trust's sub-divisions. Although the Long Island Community Foundation (LICF) has been a vocal advocate around housing issues, David Okorn at LICF expressed a similar sentiment, saying:

“For advocacy, we have funded many organizations taking up that charge and cause. As I see us in many instances, we're that ... I don't want to call it a 'neutral party,' but that party that can bring people together from all sides to start discussions and break down silos. Our voice typically isn't the advocating one, but [instead we're] funding advocates and having them at the table with us.”

Under new leadership, Westchester Community Foundation (WCF) is considering taking advocacy positions but has not yet decided. Laura Rossi, executive director, commented:

“My predecessor did not weigh in on specific topics, and I have not done so, but I haven't been presented with that opportunity so far. So that's a place we need to sort out – when is it appropriate for me as executive director of the foundation to take a public stand and when is it not? ... It's something that requires a lot of careful thought.”

Examples of other community foundations that have used their bully pulpit include the Cleveland Foundation, which has made a stand on LGBTQ issues, and the Montana Community Foundation, which led a successful ballot campaign to curb predatory payday lending practices. A number of stakeholders see untapped potential for the Trust to similarly exercise public leadership.

4. The Trust creatively directs funds from bequests and conducts annual appeals and learning opportunities for donor advisors to respond to changing community needs. Yet the foundation's donor engagement is not particularly robust nor does it foster connections with Trust grantees.

Two donor relations staff are responsible for serving 1,300 living donor advisors at the Trust, with an emphasis on raising funds and educating donor advisors. Staff members say

their role is to satisfy requirements as a public charity and help individuals carry out philanthropy. In 2014, the Trust reported housing 1,379 DAFs with \$1 billion in assets and 123 other funds and accounts with \$66.4 million in assets. In comparison, 10 years ago the Trust had 1,004 funds and \$750.6 million in assets.³³ In addition to servicing donors in the city, the Trust oversees back office operations for the Westchester and Long Island divisions, which each have a designated staff person for donor relations.

Advised grants comprise almost twice as much funding as the Trust's own discretionary funding to New York City. Over a three-year period (2012 to 2014), donors recommended \$205.4 million in grants to nonprofits in 16 states, of which 71 percent remained in NYC. In total, 13,015 grants worth \$145.9 million were given to 1,978 NYC agencies. (See Appendix C for the Trust's advised grantmaking data organized by program area and theme.) NCRP's analysis found that proportionally, donors' giving closely mirrors the Trust's own grant allocations by program area, though donors give many fewer grants to Special Projects & Philanthropy.

The Trust is considered one of the higher-payout community foundations among the nation's largest foundations³⁴ but does not offer public data on the average or median payout rates of its funds; nor does it publish specific policies related to distribution. In 2011, the Treasury Department found that "aggregate payout rates may mask low payout rates (or even no payout) from a subset of individual DAFs."³⁵

NCRP encourages foundations and field observers to report on not just mean but also median payout rates to better understand distribution across thousands of funds.³⁶ In *Do More Than Grow: Realizing the Potential of Community Foundation Donor-Advised Funds*, CF Insights analyzed trends among some 6,100 individual funds over a 12-year

period (2000-2011). The study found an overall distribution rate of 15 percent (total grants divided by total assets).³⁷

The Trust's distribution is reflective of average annual payout in the larger sector. According to the Trust, the average payout for all grants from the foundation is approximately 7 percent. Slutsky reported that the payout rate from donor-advised funds at the Trust is higher at 14-16 percent because donors want to "draw on capital quickly and get it out to the community quickly."

The Trust is known for its close relationships with attorneys and advisors who help individuals manage their wealth and financial goals. Yet the Trust struggles to convey the many facets of its work to its donors and other core audiences. "Our sweet spot is when people understand the totality of what we do," said Bob Edgar, vice president of Donor Relations, "but it's very hard to help donors understand that it's not just the donor-advised program that makes the New York Community Trust."

For example, the Trust's website layout signals the priority given to fundraising. The homepage immediately greets donors, proclaiming, "Generous donors like you help us support the nonprofits that make life better for all New Yorkers," "What do you love?" and "Don't just give. Solve. Today and forever." Three of five main website headers are related to giving. Visitors must go to the "Grant Seekers" section to find the foundation's mission statement, and a landing page about the foundation's grantmaking is buried in a subsection.³⁸ The Trust indicated that it has been working to better its communications tools over the last few years, and this is an ongoing process.

According to CFLeads, a key building block of community leadership by community foundations is to "engage donors

and other co-investors in community leadership work.”³⁹ To engage its donors, the Trust holds an annual luncheon and hosts around six briefings per year to facilitate learning about specific issue areas such as the arts, climate change and immigration. Edgar noted that arts-and-culture-themed briefings tend to attract more donors, but otherwise attendance from any number of its 1,300 donors is low. “My goal would be 40 [attendees],” added Gay Young, vice president of donor services, “but I’d be satisfied with 15-20. It’s New York City. We’re competing with a lot of activities on any given night.”

WCF has hosted a series of Community Matters forums that are designed to inform its suburban constituents about issues they may not realize are happening in their own backyard. Laura Rossi explained:

“We have shown documentary films on hunger, poverty, mental health, veterans, lots of different things. Then in panel discussions, we said, ‘We are showing this because [these problems exist here too].’ We typically have had grantees talking about how [the issues depicted] play out in our community. ... We are raising awareness and we get a little press around it, but it’s also a forum for folks to talk about it. That’s been really effective ... Primarily, the donor engagement, in terms of in-person engagement has been through the Community Matters series, and that’s been very well attended by donors.”

LICF’s Okorn explained that impact means making sure that “donors are informed, that they understand pressing issues in the community, in hopes that they will in turn make grants to those issues.”

As one community foundation expert noted, it takes leadership to turn “hopes” into a robust donor engagement

strategy. While the Trust offers informational publications and educational opportunities to donors, it avoids what it perceives as “value judgments” on donors’ money. This is closely tied to the preferred public leadership style of Slutsky, who believes, “One of our important roles is to maintain enough neutrality that we can be a place to talk to all sides of an issue.” She further asserted:

“A third of donors know what they want to do and there’s nothing I can do to really influence them. But if I put out a desperate appeal, that something is really tragic, they’ll help and write a check or suggest we take funds out. They care but they are very committed to charities they or their parents or their children are involved with, whatever their connections are. I’m not going to do a lot to change where they want to have an impact with their philanthropy.”

Conspicuously absent from this assessment are the perspectives of donors themselves. Citing confidentiality, the Trust did not afford NCRP access to a sample of donors for a survey or interviews. The foundation also has not commissioned a Donor Perception Report from CEP. Based on a review of 12 donor profiles on the Trust’s website, nearly half lauded the Trust for introducing them to nonprofits and philanthropic trends. One donor, William Donnell, shared:

“The staff at The Trust has helped me refine my personal response to the city’s needs. I can’t give to every good cause, but I can be part of the solution in specific areas. When I established my donor-advised fund, they took a look at the areas where I’d been most involved and helped me evaluate specific nonprofits. The red flags and green lights they’ve offered in response to my suggestions have empowered me to make the most of what I can do.”⁴⁰

There is too little evidence to know to what extent other donors have been similarly connected to community needs. Other stakeholders are relatively unaware of the Trust's engagement with donors. When asked to identify strengths and weaknesses of the Trust's donor engagement strategies, few stakeholders could say. Two grantee responses were typical, "I haven't been exposed to donor engagement" and "No idea. I'm not aware of any gatherings of donors and LGBTQ groups." Similarly, two peer funders reactions were "I don't know," and "Zero perception."

The Trust offers a few opportunities for donors to strategically align their giving with that of the foundation. The Trust makes special appeals, as it did after 9/11 and Superstorm Sandy. In 2013, the Trust made \$1.5 million in emergency grants for Sandy recovery, bolstered by contributions from donors.⁴¹ Another opportunity is its new annual fund, which is marketed to donor advisors as well as other generous New Yorkers. The Trust made its first annual fund grants totaling \$300,000 to seven organizations in 2014.⁴² The Trust's annual fund also receives money from

Table 5: Top 10 New York City Grantees by Total Amount of Donor-Advised or Designated Grants, 2012-2014

Organization	Grant Dollars (US)
1 City University of New York	\$8,489,141
2 New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations	6,701,952
3 Hunter College Foundation, Inc.	5,122,250
4 Trustees of Columbia University	3,960,532
5 New York Botanical Garden	2,935,282
6 St. Mary's Foundation for Children	2,405,000
7 New York-Presbyterian Hospital	2,340,020
8 Sesame Workshop	1,984,500
9 Rockefeller University	1,714,105
10 Metropolitan Museum of Art	1,713,687
TOTAL	37,366,469

inactive donor-advised or field-of-interest funds. The foundation's inactive fund policy, while not made public, states that if a fund has been inactive for two years, its income (or spending plan) for the first year will be swept into the annual fund for distribution during the third year.⁴³ Its funder collaboratives provide a third vehicle for aligned giving, and the Trust reported that "a fair number of donors" have contributed to them.

The Trust participated in a community foundation study that found strategic value in expanding donor engagement. In *Do More Than Grow*, CF Insights reported that "personally engaged donors"⁴⁴ are more likely to align their grantmaking with the goals and priorities of the foundation, and contribute to unrestricted assets.

The Trust works to ensure that its discretionary giving balances its advised grants to support a diverse range of nonprofits. Yet it doesn't appear that the Trust encourages its donor advisors to recommend more of their grant dollars for grassroots social change organizations. The Well-Met Group, a women's giving circle housed at the Trust, provides \$5,000-\$20,000 grants to grassroots community organizations, but it has functioned independently since its formation in 1999.

The organizations that received the largest number of grants and amount of grant dollars from the Trust's donor advisors include educational and medical institutions, public media and service agencies. Little support comes from DAFs for constituent-led grassroots groups in contrast to the millions given to large, traditional institutions. From NCRP's analysis of the Trust's advised grants from 2012-2014, it appears that less than \$100,000 went to community organizing groups, while the top 10 grants in Table 5 total over \$37.4 million.

On the other hand, the Trust is particularly creative in applying funds from decades old bequests to current community needs, incorporating its knowledge of inequity and underserved communities in NYC. Irfan Hasan, program officer for Health and People with Special Needs, explained:

“The Trust does endowment-based competitive giving, so we have interactions with donors, but not as much, unlike other community foundations where the donor-advised fund side is often the primary area of staff involvement. ... Community foundations rely on what [now deceased] donors set up. People set up funds for particular populations and those are programs we develop [but we can also use endowment funds to target other populations]. For example, substance use ... is an issue that we feel needs money. If nothing is left in the wills and estates, then we will create it. Our substance abuse grant program is created from flexible money that has been left to the Trust and endowments to improve NYC. The Trust created this category maybe 20-25 years ago, right around the time that the crack [cocaine] epidemic was at a high and we thought it was important that we get involved in that.”

Press releases on the Trust’s grants very often include information on the donors whose bequests provided for the grantmaking. This not only keeps the lives and legacies of New Yorkers who have passed fresh in people’s minds, but also serves as a strategic marketing tool to inspire others to give.

The Trust employs a strong communications strategy for attracting a new generation of donors – including advertisements in independent newspapers and local public radio stations that reach a wealthy audience – focusing heavily on planned giving and wills. Yet the Trust’s donor services staff report that referrals are the most effective means for bringing in new donors, rather than campaigns.

The donor services staff seeks to remain accessible and be a “community foundation for the entire community.” The minimum to set up a donor-advised fund with the Trust is \$5,000 and the minimum grant recommendation is \$250. Peer community foundations often require much higher minimums to establish a donor-advised fund. The Chicago Community Trust requires a minimum gift of \$10,000⁴⁷ while the California Community Foundation requires at least \$25,000.⁴⁸

THE TRUST BEQUESTS HELP NEW GENERATIONS

A recent newsletter from the Trust featured the fund of Mildred Anna Williams, whose will allotted a large part of her estate to “help the poor and disadvantaged girls and young women improve their lives.” In April 2014, 75 years after Mildred’s death, the Trust directed a grant from her fund to open the first Planned Parenthood clinic in Queens and “provide birth control, reproductive counseling, and other help so girls

and young women can stay healthy and become educated.”⁴⁵

In 1988, the Trust received the estate of Sally Van Lier to “provide educational assistance and training to gifted young persons who aspire to a career in the arts.” The Trust spent three years developing a strategy for the Van Lier funds and studying existing scholarship programs. Staff discovered that many poor or minority

students were not competitive applicants for such financial awards. As a result, since 1991 the Van Lier fellowships have explicitly benefited low-income and artists of color during their pre- and post-college years.⁴⁶ A number of grantees lifted up the work of the Trust’s grantmaking in the arts, such as the Van Lier fellowships, as an example of grantmaking for equity. ■

Philamplify defines equitable community philanthropy as reaching out to potential donors from all resident populations, including underserved communities, and fostering a variety of giving vehicles to meet the needs and interests of all community donors. The leadership framework by CFLeads also recommends as a best practice that donors be “broadly reflective of the community and its shifting demographics.” Lower minimums may indeed invite diversity of class, but are not a comprehensive approach to equity in donor cultivation and engagement. Racial and ethnic wealth gaps hinder generational philanthropy for groups such as Blacks and Latinos, who face higher rates of unemployment, job discrimination and unequal pay that curtail an ability to accumulate wealth.⁴⁹

The Trust does not track donor demographics, and all of the donors profiled in the foundation’s annual reports from the past three years are white.⁵⁰ Edgar acknowledged the challenges in diversifying the Trust’s donor base:

“We’re well known in the LGBT community because of our work with HIV/AIDS. Work with [racial/ethnic] minorities is much harder because they have their own systems of philanthropy. We have several African-American and Asian funds, but I don’t think they’re a fair representation of the community in terms of proportion. Our money is principally endowment money. ... Someone commits money when they die. That’s a tough one for a lot of minorities who haven’t been well served and who [tend to help their own community] rather than give to an institution.”

“For historic reasons our donors have tended to be wealthy white people,” added Young. “Increasingly our donor base is more diverse, but that takes time and it’s only been in the last few years that it’s started to diversify.” Slutsky reiterated

that diversity has improved, but stated:

“Look at my community. If I don’t have a diverse donor base then I’m not meeting whole community needs. ... We have more diverse donors, but the kind of diversity that reflects my city? Not even close. If we work another 100 years, it would be way better but I don’t think we’ll ever be as diverse as the city we’re trying to serve.”

To grow more diverse, equitable community philanthropy, the Trust could have more intentional conversations with the other public grantmaking charities serving NYC about collectively growing the number of diverse donors in a way that fosters cooperation rather than competition. A few local funders see an opportunity for the Trust to harness its reputation to engage other philanthropic entities in collective strategies for grantmaking and donor engagement – particularly with those that have expertise in marginalized communities.

Additionally, there is no evidence that the Trust brings together nonprofits and donors for networking and leadership opportunities. Indeed, the fifth most common characteristic of partnership with the Trust that surveyed grantees thought could be more effective was networking and convening among grantees and donors. Grantees expressed similar opinions, with one recommending the Trust “[play] a greater role as a convener of grantees, peer organizations, donors and other stakeholders to explore avenues for collaboration/coordination, marshal awareness and funding resources to shared priority issue areas.” Another said, “I would also want to give the Trust’s own donors a sense of the issues the Trust’s grantee organizations are struggling with.”

While the Trust’s program staff receive occasional donor inquiries that require expertise and collaborate with donor services staff in selecting the themes of donor briefings, the

sum of its efforts do not amount to robust engagement of donors to encourage their proactive community leadership.

5. Nonprofits praise Trust staff for their expertise, thought partnership, open and honest communication, accessibility and responsiveness. Grantees want more opportunities to connect with other funding sources and like-minded nonprofits.

Grantees regard the Trust’s program staff as effective partners, and described them as responsive, open and honest. Survey respondents praised program officers for guiding them through the application process with an open-door approach. “I try to respond to emails within hours, not weeks, and do phone calls within the same day,” shared one program officer. “Grantees know, respect and appreciate that ... I try to behave the way I hoped [funders] would when I was on the other side.”

In the Philamplify grantee survey, 67 percent of respondents rated their partnership with the Trust as highly effective and 27 percent as somewhat effective. The most effective characteristic of the partnership identified by grantees was relationship with foundation staff at 70 percent. (See Table 6.)

The Trust’s relationships with nonprofits are transparent and honest. The grantmaking staff members are known to provide guidance and constructive criticism throughout the proposal process. Grantee feedback from the Philamplify survey repeatedly referred to the benefits of open discussion, direct communication and “one-on-one frank negotiation” with program staff. Sample comments on what the Trust should maintain in this approach included:

“The program staff is very accessible and open to conversations about our work, regardless of whether it will

align ultimately with the Trust’s funding priorities. Program staff has also introduced us to fellow staff members who might have an interest in a specific program that does not fall under their purview.”

“Maintaining an open dialogue with grantees and prospective grantees – including a review of the submitted application and dialogue on key deliverables – is an incredibly effective way to clarify both a nonprofit’s intent behind a particular program, as well as the program officer’s understanding of the given issue. It also establishes a sense of partnership, which is of utmost benefit to any funding relationship.”

Stakeholders consistently lift up the Trust’s staff for possession of deep content knowledge and community roots. In response to what survey respondents would maintain as president of the Trust, the partnership with staff emerged as a key theme:

“Our program officers were VERY good: thoughtful partners, easy to honestly discuss successes and challenges, willing to allow us to do what we do well, strategic in their own thinking and in designing the program with us.”

Table 6: Top Five Most Effective Characteristics of Grantee Partnership as Reported by Survey Respondents

Answer Choice	Percent of Responses
Relationship with foundation staff	70%
Alignment of goals and mission between the foundation and grantee	63
Grant size	41
Foundation receptivity to innovation and risk	40
Funder knowledge, expertise and role as thought partner	39

n = 254

“The Trust has a respectful relationship with grantees, and adds value by having a knowledgeable program officer who can be a thought partner.”

“The degree of partnership we have had from the Trust has been outstanding, with staff deeply engaged in learning about our work, serving as thought partners, being available for discussions, and connecting with other stakeholders to move our initiative forward.”

The staff members pride themselves on being able to see the big picture and help make connections among nonprofits with similar goals. They encourage but do not force collaboration among grantees. In describing this role, Arturo Garcia-Costas explained:

“The primary thing [we bring] to this mix is the money, but another thing that program officers do is connect people. We get so many proposals in, we hear so many things that different people are doing, you automatically see synergies and make potential connections between the initiatives and projects.”

Patricia Swann insisted:

“I want applicants to think of me as a resource, not just a potential grant. ... As an institution, I think we’ve really stepped up to be more of a resource for our grantees and nonprofits in general, beyond the monetary contribution that we could make.”

Peer grantmakers in the city likewise enjoy camaraderie with the Trust’s staff. They are often at the same table in the numerous funder collaboratives that the Trust either hosts or is a member of in NYC. A local funder noted:

“One program officer in particular has been my closest partner at the Trust in the last number of years. I find her to be superb. Really sharp, gets the issues and policy stuff. We have collaborated with her on two to three projects. Her skill set and vision have been excellent.”

Another stakeholder remarked:

“Their people are very seasoned in the realities of what’s going on in the community. If I’m comparing them to another foundation, they are one of the few foundations that are staffed by people who are in touch with reality and not just hearing what people want to tell them.”

Program officers also participate in national affinity groups such as Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrant Refugees, Grantmakers in the Arts, Environmental Grantmakers Association and the Health and Environmental Funders Network.

The Trust coordinates work among grantees, implements grants that foster collaboration and offers training opportunities. For example, a nonprofit leader described attendance at regular meetings with other grantees of Donors’ Education Collaborative (DEC), whose members pool funds for systemic reform of NYC’s public schools, to share strategies and ideas. Among survey respondents, 58 percent reported that the Trust has given them financial or other support to work with other organizations. Within that, 75 percent said their organization, rather than the Trust, initiated the collaboration and 87 percent said the Trust’s support was very important to enable it.

Last year, two cohorts of service providers participated in a series of interactive workshops, or “Learning Labs,” entitled “Leveraging Opportunities in Healthcare Reform.” Local organizations whose constituents would be affected by Medicaid

reform in New York – specifically settlement houses, supportive housing providers and behavioral health agencies – applied for one of 20 spots. One stakeholder familiar with the initiative saw it as a nimble response to a changing environment, outside of the traditional grantmaking process. She shared:

“I don’t know any other foundation that’s done something like that in NYC ... the Learning Lab [brought] in consultants who did individual time with each provider to look at their context and give feedback about how they’re adapting, what they may need to do and what issues they’re grappling with.”

The Trust also convened HIV/AIDS service providers to help them identify ways they could better coordinate service provision, resulting in some agencies expanding referrals of their clients to each other’s programs.

While excellent in terms of expertise and partnership, the Trust acknowledges that its number of program staff limits capacity. A Grantee Perception Report (GPR) from 2012 rated the Trust below 72 percent of funders and below 67 percent of community funders on overall funder-grantee relationships. The report found that grantees desired more partnership and communication with program officers.

Patricia Jenny reflected:

“I’m sure one of the big takeaways from the [2012] CEP report was that we’re not as accessible to grantee organizations, in part because we make more grants per person. ... It did seem that we weren’t as free to go to the countless evening events they’re doing or hosting during the day as other program officers.”

Lean staffing to serve thousands of nonprofits may account for uneven grantee perceptions about opportunities

to attend convenings and network with other nonprofits.⁵¹ In the Philamplify survey, 40 percent reported the foundation brought them together with other interested parties to work on a common issue and found it very or somewhat useful. Similarly, 36 percent said the Trust provided opportunities to learn from and network with peers and found it very or somewhat useful. However, in both instances more than half of grantees reported receiving no such support.

Trust leaders noted that they work closely with and support Philanthropy New York, which serves a convening and knowledge-sharing function for foundations and grantees. However, more than two dozen survey respondents expressed interest in more convening focused on learning, partnership, relationship-building and shared impact. Envisioning what they would change if they were president of the Trust, grantees suggest further opportunities for networking and connections with other sectors. Illustrative comments included:

“The Trust would create more opportunities for grantees to share successful practices with each other and with donors, increasing the impact of innovative programming across the city.”

“I would utilize the Trust’s convening and support power more broadly: Regularly and pro-actively convene informational briefings about key issues and developments, to further discussion and shape a policy response. Bring together key leaders from foundations, grantees and policymakers to discuss larger issues of philanthropy and its role, and help build strong networks as well.”

Many grantees request the Trust do more to connect them to other donors and foundations. When asked which characteristics could be most improved to make their

partnership with the Trust more effective, the top choice was exposure and connections to other funding sources at 49 percent. This sentiment was overwhelmingly echoed in response to what kinds of assistance grantees would like the Trust to offer in the future, with 84 percent wanting the Trust to facilitate exposure and access to other funding sources. One grantee suggested:

“I believe that the Trust could make a stronger case of how their funding could leverage additional support from other organizations, government institutions or foundations. [Our organization], for example, has been able to garner additional funding in large part thanks to the recommendations of our program officer, but it is not clear to me whether this is the case for all the grantees of the Trust. Perhaps a section of ‘Best Practices’ or ‘matching projects’ on their website could help smaller organizations stay informed on which projects and which funders are best suited for one another, so those organizations can become more easily independent from the Trust.”

The Trust takes pride in reviewing every proposal received. According to Slutsky, program officers hold weekly meetings to discuss strategy, ongoing business and new proposals. For each grant, one program officer is assigned as the lead, though multiple grantmaking programs may be engaged in specific issue components. Program officers often work on collaborative initiatives with one another, and refer prospective grantees to each other’s programs. Shawn Morehead mused:

“One of the things I really like about being at a community foundation is that the proposal process is really open and we entertain any proposal. Sometimes we make a modest grant for smaller organizations. It makes

the grantmaking process feel very vital to the city. Small groups that are figuring out what they are doing can come without having to know me first. They can go to our website and figure out how to apply and we will read every application with care.”

To improve the application and reapplication process, the Trust incorporated feedback from the 2012 GPR. Slutsky explained:

“We did hear from [grantees] about the hassles and extra work and burden of the way we were making payments and the reapplication process for renewals. . . . We changed the way they can come in for reapplication so they don’t lose two or three months, which for them is money. We remind them of moving up their final report so that they can get in the hopper and don’t lose money on a grant renewal.”

The foundation’s leadership acknowledges that their average portfolio, or number of grants made per program officer, is significantly higher at almost double the average for private foundations and peer community foundations. One community foundation expert called this “the tyranny of the grants docket.” As a result, the foundation established a fellowship team of graduate students to lessen the load for individual program staff, growing from one fellow in 1999 to four today. To maximize funds for grantmaking, the Trust describes itself as judicious with administrative expenses such as staffing. Slutsky remarked, “I could double program staff but that would probably be \$2.5 million less in grant money every year. The program staff would be happy but the board wouldn’t be.”

Overall, the Trust scores high marks from its grantees, which is impressive given the limited time staff have to

respond to applications, grow relationships with grantees and other stakeholders and convene around key issues.

6. The Trust provides single-year project funding through its competitive grants and also offers capacity building. More than 1 in 3 grantees seek multi-year core support to bolster their long-term capacity and effectiveness.

The Trust dispenses an average of two-thirds of its grant funds at the recommendation of its donor advisors, and all of these grants are disbursed as general support grants. The Trust's rationale for making the remaining one-third of grant funds as project-specific competitive grants is so that it can maximize the targeted benefit of its limited discretionary dollars. This includes "field of interest" funds that may have some donor restrictions attached to them. According to its own grants analysis, the Trust rejects 4-6 percent of applications each year because they are general support applications.

Patricia Jenny acknowledged that the issue of nonprofit overhead support is a growing concern for philanthropy and government, and clarified the Trust's position:

"I think there's a little bit of conflation that goes on between general operating support and administrative support. In the project specific grants that we make through the competitive grants program, we always support administration. This is generally done because we pay for salaries, direct costs of project and whatever administrative overhead rate an agency has. Not the whole pie but it's certainly an important piece of it. It's an issue that foundations have to come together and struggle with right now. As a field or group, there are fewer [foundations] that make general support grants than don't. In some ways, when the Trust supports

through the competitive grants a program or small agency, or one that has one or two programs, it'll look like a program specific grant but really for an organization like that it's general support. It's a little more complicated than it seems, the distinction between project support and general operating support."

Patricia Swann noted that the Trust recently began making general support grants to several nonprofit capacity building organizations:

"I came to believe that ... it was really important for us to provide general operating support to these handful of capacity-building organizations, I think six of them, as opposed to trying every year or every other year to try to tease out a project. I see these organizations as a resource to the sector overall. It didn't do them justice to keep trying to tweak what they do to create a project, when just being there and doing what they do was valuable and worthy of consideration for general support."

In fact, capacity building is an important value-added for many grantees, with at least 1 in 5 survey respondents indicating they received some form of technical assistance. Also, 36 percent of respondents indicated that they themselves provide such activities as part of their grant-funded activities. As noted earlier in this report, several Trust programs and funder collaboratives it participates in support leadership development. The community foundation's Nonprofit Excellence Awards are another indirect form of capacity building. A grantee leader shared how her organization is keen to apply for the competitive award, and how impactful she considers the initiative.

"It's something that [the Trust does] a workshop around, and people are honored to share best practices. It's

something people strive for. ... I think that stamp of approval has been something useful and to come from such a venerable organization as the Trust is wonderful.”

In addition, the Trust has been able to respond to emergency capacity needs outside of the grantmaking process. The foundation made a loan of \$1 million to the NYC Nonprofit Recovery Loan Program after Superstorm Sandy, a \$26 million bridge loan program to fund legal assistance for nonprofits and help them navigate federal reimbursement procedures.⁵² The Trust otherwise does little mission investing, but can explore other ways that investing tools can support nonprofits’ long-term infrastructure and capacity needs.⁵³

The Trust does not typically make many multi-year grants, but is re-examining that practice in light of feedback from its most recent CEP Grantee Perception Report (GPR). The 2012 GPR compared the Trust to 17 community foundation peers:

- The median percentage of multi-year grants awarded by the Trust decreased from 37 percent in 2005 to 30 percent in 2012, while the median percentage of

community foundation grantees receiving multi-year funding, on average, was 32 percent in 2012.

- Grantees also received less general support – about 7 percent of grantees received core support from the Trust in 2012 compared to 15 percent from community foundations overall.
- However, the median grant size of the Trust is larger than the median grant size for other community foundations – a positive sign, given the cost of living in NYC compared to other cities in the cohort. In 2012, the median grant size for the Trust was \$50,000, while the median grant size for community foundations was \$30,000. The Trust’s leaders report that in 2015, the median grant rose to \$75,000.

The 2015 Philamplify grantee survey shows an improvement, especially in general support funding:

- 16 percent of survey respondents reported receiving general support funding.
- 35 percent of respondents reported receiving multi-year funding.⁵⁴
- 83 percent reported receiving project funding.
- 41 percent reported grant size as one of the top most effective aspects of the relationship with the Trust.

Even still, in response to the question, “Which of these characteristics could be most improved to make your partnership with the Trust more effective?” grantees ranked general support and multi-year funding in the top five. (See Table 7.)

Further, when asked what the respondent would maintain or change if she or he were president of the Trust, at least 80 responses of 246 (one third) said they would offer general support and/or multi-year funding. [See Appendix D for a more detailed table]. Small and grassroots organiza-

Table 7. Top Five Characteristics of Grantee Partnership to Improve as Reported by Survey Respondents

Answer Choice	Percent of Responses
Exposure and connections to other funding sources	49%
General operating support/use of funds for overhead	41
Grant cycle/length of grant (e.g. multi-year)	34
Grant size	30
Networking and convening among grantees and donors	30

n = 254

tions would particularly benefit from core support. Typical comments included:

- “Provide adequate general operating funds over multiple years to help organizations strengthen and improve internal operations and capacity. ... Multi-year funding to help organizations achieve greater impact given that many nonprofits work with the hardest to serve populations. Further systems change takes five to seven years.”
- “I would look to invest for longer-term impact ... investing more deeply (i.e. multi-year, larger grants) in organizations that can innovate, develop and sustain programs, which will have lasting impact in underserved communities or with marginalized populations. Strengthen the institutions, which strengthen communities.”
- “Assist more minorities and women organizations with general operating grants.”

The Trust’s analysis of grants found that typically 25 to 30 percent of grants are renewals: in 2012, 30 percent were renewal grants; in 2013, 32 percent; and in 2014, 26 percent. In 2014, the proportion of grantees who had previously received a grant (not necessarily for the same program) was 42 percent. Only 10 percent were new grantees that had never received a grant before. While the foundation acknowledges the need for general support, it insists that its discretionary grantmaking remain project-specific, because its donor-advised grants are made as general operating support. However, it is making changes to its application process and trying to increase multi-year grants as a way to be responsive to grantee feedback. Slutsky explained:

“What we heard from grantees [in the GPR] was the usual cry for general support, ‘Leave us alone; we know

what to do,’ and I get it. But it’s not a viable option for us. ... So if we are sticking with one-year grants, then we have to make the process easier [for our grantees]. We’ve made larger and more multi-year grants, but not enough to satisfy us or grantees who are saying ‘if you’re going to give three annual grants, can’t you give us one three-year grant so we can have resources committed?’ That makes sense and I get it. We set several [goals to address this request] and went back six months ago to look at how we’ve done. We got good marks on renewals and reporting. We made a lot of improvements there but not enough progress on multi-year grants and we are looking at that now. We’re about to take a proposal to the board to figure out how to facilitate those larger, high conviction bets.”

Patricia Jenny noted that providing more multi-year grants would “free up more time for program officers to be on call for grantees.” NCRP concurs that the Trust expends staff time and resources administering one-year project grants that could be better spent focusing on key goals and relationships with the communities it seeks to benefit.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The New York Community Trust is a venerable institution that has enjoyed remarkable stability and leadership continuity in its nearly 100-year history. Its adaptive and collaborative approach has enabled the foundation to respond to changing community needs, including the terrible scourge of HIV/AIDS, as well as to unforeseen emergencies such as 9/11 and Superstorm Sandy. The staff demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring that Trust-held dollars benefit communities of color, those living with poverty or disabilities, LGBTQ residents and other marginalized New Yorkers. While funding service delivery improvement is the primary vehicle it uses to achieve this, other important tools are funding advocacy to improve systems, particularly through the foundation's numerous funder collaboratives, and nonprofit capacity building.

The Trust can build on these strengths to achieve even greater progress for New York City in a number of ways. In particular, the Trust can be a true public leader, not just within philanthropy and the nonprofit sphere, but among all sectors of the city, by providing deeper support for community organizing, especially among communities of color, and by being a more visible advocate for an inclusive, equitable New York.

PHILAMPLIFY URGES THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Continue the Trust's strong commitment to underserved communities; effective partnership with

grantees; and leadership role as a convener of funders, grantees and other community stakeholders. The Trust is an exemplar for other community foundations in its unwavering support for underserved communities and equity, whether in its health, education or arts portfolios. Continuing to manifest this commitment through convening, collaboration and respectful relationships with nonprofits will ensure the Trust makes an ongoing difference for marginalized New Yorkers.

2. Increase funding and capacity building to smaller, more grassroots, community organizing groups and organizations led by people of color. The Trust staff prides itself on funding an ecosystem of types of organizations from year to year to achieve its broad goals in each program area. An examination of grants shows limited investment in neighborhood-based groups and those that are led by or directly organize residents of color, who comprise the majority in New York City. Devoting greater resources and capacity building to these types of organizations, either directly or through partnerships with other local funders that heavily support such groups, will enable the Trust to spur civic engagement and harness community activism for change. A few grantmakers expressed the wish that the Trust could collaborate with the other, much smaller public foundations to leverage its larger assets to support more small and grassroots social change organizations that do not otherwise receive Trust support.

- 3. Strategically provide general support grants to equity-oriented nonprofits and make further progress to increase multi-year funding. Doing so would free up program staff time to engage and convene more grantees and nonprofits.** The Trust aims to maximize the impact of its limited discretionary dollars through single-year, project-specific funding. This is laudable, and helps ensure that large nonprofits serving broad populations will target Trust resources to marginalized residents. But it limits the ability of smaller nonprofits to be flexible in responding to community needs and new opportunities. We urge the Trust to identify appropriate types of organizations that would most benefit from general support while still being able to ensure alignment of purpose and mission with equity, benefit for underserved communities and the foundation's other goals. The Trust has already set an intention to make more of its competitive grants multi-year, and can continue to make progress in this area. These two recommendations, along with streamlining application processes, would free up both grantees' and foundation staff members' time to focus more on achieving mission.
- 4. Take a stand more often and use the Trust's bully pulpit when it is clearly in the best interests of underserved communities in New York.** The Trust exercises leadership in many ways, including as a convener of other funders and of its grantees. Its program staff also strategically engages local government leaders around issues relevant to its nonprofit partners. Yet peers and grantees see a missed opportunity in the Trust's quiet leadership style at the top. The Trust can further advance its equity goals by raising the voices of its leaders, board and donors as advocates for the most marginalized across all sectors of the city.
- 5. Explicitly articulate a unifying vision and values statement for an equitable city. Improve communications tools, including the website, to more effectively convey how the Trust's goals and strategies align with its vision and values.** The Trust's grant-making is guided by strategic reviews in each of its funding areas and the foundation's communications tools describe grantee results well. However, stakeholders still do not understand the foundation's larger vision for NYC. More transparency about how the foundation sets strategic priorities within the constraints of its complex funding structure would help stakeholders better understand how the Trust makes decisions. The foundation needs to express a compelling vision that can unify its strategic priorities and more effectively rally donors, other grantmakers, nonprofits and communities around common goals for the city.
- 6. Explore and test out more creative donor engagement strategies and foster more connections and cooperation among donors, other public grant-making charities and nonprofits.** The Trust is very adept at cultivating donors who will leave a community legacy through the foundation, and flexible in using such bequests to meet changing needs. However, its ongoing donor engagement activities could more effectively connect donors to the communities the foundation seeks to benefit and to the nonprofits serving those communities. Other grantmaking charities in the city could be allies rather than competitors in exploring creative ways to grow diverse community philanthropy that will direct resources to empowering disenfranchised residents.

APPENDIX A

FOUNDING PURPOSE OF THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST

The purposes set forth in the foundation's 1923 resolution and declaration (R&D) are:⁵⁵

1. For assisting educational, charitable or benevolent institutions, whether supported wholly or in part by private donations or by public taxation.
2. For promoting scientific research for the advancement of human knowledge and the alleviation of human suffering or the suffering of animals.
3. For the care of the sick, aged and helpless.
4. For the care of needy men, women and children.
5. For aiding (1) individuals addicted to narcotics, drugs and intoxicating liquors, (2) released inmates of penal and reformatory institutions, and (3) wayward or delinquent persons.
6. For the improvement of living and working conditions and protection of the environment.
7. For providing facilities for public recreation.
8. For the promotion of public health.
9. For the promotion of human justice.
10. For investigating or promoting the investigation of or research into the causes of ignorance, poverty and vice, preventing the operation of such causes, and remedying or ameliorating the conditions resulting therefrom.
11. For the promotion of arts and culture.

APPENDIX B

COMPETITIVE GRANTS TO NEW YORK CITY AGENCIES BY PROGRAM AREA AND CATEGORY, 2012-2014

Program Area	Percent Total Grant Dollars	Grant Dollars (US)
Education, Arts & Human Justice	38.52%	\$32,176,642
<i>Arts & Culture</i>	17.60	14,698,179
<i>Education</i>	12.86	10,740,963
<i>Human Justice</i>	7.11	5,934,500
<i>Historic Preservation</i>	0.96	803,000
Children, Youth & Families	23.40	19,543,660
<i>Youth Development</i>	9.13	7,629,000
<i>Hunger & Homelessness</i>	4.42	3,690,000
<i>Jobs & Workforce Development</i>	4.17	3,479,660
<i>Social Services & Welfare</i>	3.30	2,759,000
<i>Girls & Young Women</i>	2.38	1,986,000
Health & People with Special Needs	21.89	18,286,000
<i>Health Services, Systems & Policy</i>	8.37	6,988,000
<i>Elderly</i>	3.35	2,794,000
<i>AIDS</i>	2.93	2,444,000
<i>Mental Health & Intellectual Disabilities</i>	2.21	1,848,000
<i>Blindness & Visual Disabilities</i>	1.51	1,259,000
<i>Biomedical Research</i>	1.46	1,222,000
<i>Children & Youth w/ Disabilities</i>	1.22	1,023,000
<i>Substance Abuse</i>	0.85	708,000
<i>Animal Welfare</i>	0.22	184,000
Community Development & the Environment	10.35	8,643,197
<i>Community Development</i>	3.98	3,325,000
<i>Conservation & Environment</i>	2.99	2,493,640
<i>Technical Assistance</i>	2.10	1,750,000
<i>Civic Affairs</i>	1.29	1,074,557
Special Projects & Philanthropy	5.83	4,873,000
<i>Special Projects</i>	5.40	4,514,000
<i>Philanthropy</i>	0.21	175,000

n = \$83,522,499

APPENDIX C

DONOR-ADVISED, DESIGNATED AND SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS TO NEW YORK CITY AGENCIES
BY PROGRAM AREA AND CATEGORY, 2012-2014

Program Area	Percent Total Grant Dollars	Grant Dollars (US)
Education, Arts & Human Justice	62.42%	\$91,052,184
<i>Education</i>	30.11	43,923,964
<i>Arts & Culture</i>	24.86	36,262,230
<i>Religion</i>	3.96	5,779,550
<i>Human Justice</i>	3.06	4,458,940
<i>Historic Preservation</i>	0.43	627,500
Children, Youth & Families	14.25	20,781,862
<i>Social Services & Welfare</i>	10.24	14,935,772
<i>Youth Development</i>	2.92	4,253,478
<i>Hunger & Homelessness</i>	0.63	921,412
<i>Girls & Young Women</i>	0.46	670,200
<i>Jobs & Workforce Development</i>	N/A	1,000
Health & People with Special Needs	14.09	20,557,557
<i>Health Services, Systems & Policy</i>	8.57	12,507,038
<i>Children & Youth with Disabilities</i>	1.77	2,580,625
<i>Biomedical Research</i>	1.35	1,967,957
<i>Blindness & Visual Disabilities</i>	1.06	1,541,890
<i>Elderly</i>	.75	1,089,321
<i>Substance Abuse</i>	.22	314,578
<i>AIDS</i>	.20	298,917
<i>Mental Health & Intellectual Disabilities</i>	.18	257,231
Community Development & the Environment	9.24	13,479,299
<i>Conservation & Environment</i>	5.60	8,163,216
<i>Civic Affairs</i>	1.97	2,872,667
<i>Community Development</i>	1.56	2,280,806
<i>Technical Assistance</i>	.11	162,610
Special Projects & Philanthropy	N/A	1,500
<i>Philanthropy</i>		1,500

n = \$145,872,402

APPENDIX D

IF YOU BECAME PRESIDENT OF THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST ...

The table below shows the primary themes and sample quotes from New York Community Trust’s grantees in response to the following questions:

- If you became president of the Trust, which strategies or practices would you continue to use? What would you maintain about the way you work with grantees?
- As president, which strategies or practices would you change in order to increase impact? What would you change about the way you work with grantees?

What strategies or practices would you continue to use?	Which strategies or practices would you change in order to increase impact?
THEME 1: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRUST STAFF AND GRANTEES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Our program officers were very good: thoughtful partners, easy to honestly discuss successes and challenges, willing to allow us to do what we do well, strategic in their own thinking and in designing the program with us.” ▪ “The degree of partnership we have had from the Trust has been outstanding, with staff deeply engaged in learning about our work, serving as thought partners, being available for discussions and connecting with other stakeholders to move our initiative forward. We would like to see this continue.” ▪ “The Trust, for over 35 years has been a funder and has always distinguished itself as having knowledgeable grants officers that asked good questions and provided valuable insights from the application process through all the interactions through to reporting. It is something we count on and I would not change.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I would increase the interaction between the grantees and the Trust, conducting site visits, increasing meetings with the organization’s staff and at various levels. To expand the contact beyond the program officer level.” ▪ “Although we do have a relationship with staff it would be even more productive to have staff visit [our organization], become aware of our daily needs and accomplishments and really become involved in our work.” ▪ “I would encourage more interaction, attending grantee events, activities, meeting boards/attend board meetings – in order to learn and understand more about smaller organizations focused on specific areas or issues.”
THEME 2: LONG-TERM, FLEXIBLE SUPPORT FOR MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Continued assistance and identification of smaller, but effective organizations working in areas that largely and positively impact communities of color and marginalized sectors.” ▪ “The Trust has been one of just a few NYC foundations that has supported community organizing for many years, and I would invest heavily in that strategy to both make the changes needed in low-income communities of color and build the leadership to sustain those changes.” ▪ “I would continue to fund programs that are working with diverse communities around issues of social justice.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The economic crisis has made accessibility to private funding sources scarce for small organizations like ours. Therefore our need for more general operating support, instead of just [for] specific projects, in order to continue having stability after 37 years of serving our Hispanic community ... and will allow better planning and ensure stability.” ▪ “Provide adequate general operating funds over multiple years to help organizations strengthen and improve internal operations and capacity. ... Multi-year funding to help organizations achieve greater impact given that many nonprofits work with the hardest to serve populations.” ▪ “I would look to invest for longer-term impact ... investing more deeply (i.e. multi-year, larger grants) in organizations that can innovate, develop and sustain programs which will have lasting impact in underserved communities or with marginalized populations.” ▪ “I would utilize an equity lens and look at grants and make concrete conversations about how many organizations they support that are led by people who are the majority of our city.”

IF YOU BECAME PRESIDENT OF THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST ...

What strategies or practices would you continue to use?	Which strategies or practices would you change in order to increase impact?
THEME 3: CONVENING AND MOBILIZING COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ "I would continue collaborating with multiple organizations, government agencies and community stakeholders in order to achieve comprehensive change." ■ "The gathering of organizations around specific issues and allowing peers to discuss ways to solve issues and then having the Trust creating [requests for proposals] based on peer input and research." ■ "I would continue to bring together grantees with similar missions to share best practices, goals and ideas." ■ "[I would] continue to occasionally convene grantees and offer collaborative training opportunities." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ "[I would encourage the foundation to] play a greater role as a convener of grantees, peer organizations, donors and other stakeholders to explore avenues for collaboration/ coordination, marshal awareness and funding resources to shared, priority issue areas, etc." ■ "[I would] have a convening with all grantees so [they] could come together and hear from the leadership all at once about focus/interest/best practices. With that [they] may also meet other like-minded organizations or get introduced to other funding [sources] that might help strengthen programs with similar values. [This] could help build more of the systemic connections between like-minded organizations." ■ "I think I would consider convening grantees, staff and even board members and other funders around specific issues to encourage working together or other joint actions that could move common issues."
THEME 4: INNOVATION AND TRANSPARENCY IN TRUST GOALS AND STRATEGY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ "As president of the Trust, I would continue to maintain an openness to innovative and strategic proposals, as well as maintain focus upon helping grantees to keep on top of anticipated changes in delivery systems within their fields. This sort of forward-thinking grantmaking is invaluable, particularly to nonprofits that are often mired in the day-to-day difficulties and hard-pressed to practice more strategic or long-term planning." ■ "The focus on investing in innovation as well as tested strategies is valuable and should continue, in my opinion." ■ "I would continue to look for areas of need where the Trust can bring together the stakeholders and provide funding across the field around a shared strategy with shared goals and measurements." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ "[I would] improve the level of transparency and frequency of communication with organizations." ■ "I would have more transparent conversations with grantees about the goals of the Trust and how grantees could better position themselves to receive support critical to their work." ■ "Clear expression of Trust's priorities over time. Heads up about future changes in direction." ■ "I would listen a little bit more to the challenges in the communities that were being helped and I would be clearer as to what the donor/Trust was looking to accomplish."

IF YOU BECAME PRESIDENT OF THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST ...

What strategies or practices would you continue to use?	Which strategies or practices would you change in order to increase impact?
THEME 5: APPLICATION PROCESS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “[I would continue] transparency about grantmaking and grantmaking practices; access to information that helps grant seekers understand funding priorities and how [they’re carried] out. Maintain an ‘open door’ approach, talking with prospective grantees and members of the nonprofit community.” ■ “The direct communication and open dialogue throughout the process (seeking the grant, getting the grant, implementing the program and evaluating results) is greatly appreciated and highly effective. The discussion of an appropriate grant amount before the proposal is written is also quite helpful.” ■ “Maintaining an open dialogue with grantees and prospective grantees – including a review of the submitted application and dialogue on key deliverables – is an incredibly effective way to clarify both a nonprofit’s intent behind a particular program, as well as the program officer’s understanding of the given issue. It also establishes a sense of partnership, which is of utmost benefit to any funding relationship.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “I think the Trust’s hands-on approach is effective, but sometimes its agenda overtakes the initial proposal and the project can end up being quite different than the original one – sometimes it works, but sometimes it doesn’t. Since nonprofits need funding, they are often willing to comply in order to get the grants but that may not be the best thing for the program.” ■ “We want the Trust to be a thought partner in our work, but there needs to be balance. We are working together, but it does not help New Yorkers in need if the Trust is driving their own agenda despite all the best strategic and program planning efforts by nonprofits.” ■ “I would make [requests for proposals] much less restrictive and pre-defined. I would also allow grantees to receive more than one grant at a time, for different projects. Or I would offer [general operating support] so grantees can focus on doing their work without worrying about RFP compliance trip wires.”

NOTES

1. See <http://www.guidestar.org/profile/13-3062214>.
2. See <http://www.nycommunitytrust.org/AboutTheTrust/ABriefHistoryofTheTrust/tabid/420/Default.aspx>.
3. Christopher R. Hoyt. "Definition of a Community Foundation," *Legal Compendium for Community Foundations* (Washington, D.C.:Council on Foundations, 1996), <https://www.cof.org/sites/default/files/documents/files/Definition-of-a-Community-Foundation.pdf>.
4. Number of trustee banks reported by NYCT President Lorie Slutsky.
5. According to the Trust's 990 for 2014, its grants and other amounts paid totaled \$156,432,431. Of that amount, it reported \$116,931,432 worth of grants from donor-advised and other funds and accounts.
6. Data on poverty levels by neighborhood can be found at: Stephen Eide, *Poverty and Progress in New York I: Conditions in New York City's Poorest Neighborhoods* (New York: The Manhattan Institute, June 2014), <https://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/poverty-and-progress-new-york-i-conditions-new-york-citys-poorest-neighborhoods-5869.html>.
7. U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts (2010 data, people reporting a single race), <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/3651000.html>.
8. Although not currently publicly available data, Jenny reported that the Trust will be releasing an online map of its grants data in the future.
9. Lyle Matthew Kan, "The Top Ten Community Foundations Funding LGBTQ Issues," Funders for LGBTQ Issues, <https://www.lgbtfunders.org/news/news.cfm?newsID=217>. Also see their "2014 Tracking Report: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Grant-making by U.S. Foundations," http://www.lgbtfunders.org/files/2014_Tracking_Report.pdf.
10. See <http://www.nycommunitytrust.org/AboutTheTrust/CollaborativeFunds/DonorsEducationCollaborative/InformationforInterestedFunders/tabid/937/Default.aspx>.
11. Jacqueline Zahora, "Underserved New Yorkers Facing Cancer Benefit from New York Community Trust Grant to CancerCare," CancerCare, February 14, 2012, <http://www.cancercare.org/blog/underserved-new-yorkers-facing-cancer-benefit-from-new-york-community-trust-grant-to-cancercare/>.
12. NYCT defines as "improve services to people by expanding, refining or adding programs."
13. NYCT defines as "improve an agency's ability to carry out its mission (e.g. train staff or board members); upgrading financial or informational systems; improving development efforts."
14. NYCT defines as "effect broad systems change or conduct research."
15. NYCT defines as "plan or explore the feasibility of new programs."
16. NYCT defines as "build the infrastructure of a neighborhood."
17. Defined in the grantee survey as promoting specific ideas or policies with policymakers, through activities such as meetings with legislators, research, public education, litigation and media outreach.

18. Defined in the grantee survey as bringing individuals together to develop their leadership and collective power to hold public agencies and businesses accountable for addressing a common problem such as crime, pollution or failing schools.
19. Defined in the grantee survey as encouraging individuals to get involved in the democratic process, e.g., promoting volunteerism; hosting community forums; conducting voter registration, education, get out the vote.
20. See *Criteria for Philanthropy at its Best: Benchmarks to Assess and Enhance Grantmaker Impact*, https://ncrp.org/files/publications/paib-fulldoc_lowres.pdf and *Leveraging Limited Dollars: How Grantmakers Achieve Tangible Results by Funding Policy and Community Engagement*, <https://www.ncrp.org/files/publications/LeveragingLimitedDollars.pdf>.
21. See <http://www.grassrootsgrantmakers.org/grass-roots-grantmaking/>.
22. U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts (2010 data, people reporting a single race), <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/3651000.html>.
23. The populations that are included in the Trust's criteria for "minority-led" are Asian, Black, Latino, Native American, other and mixed non-white. NCRP refers to "mixed non-white" as "mixed race." The foundation does not track women and LGBTQ populations as "minorities" in its coding.
24. The study, *Benchmarking Diversity: A First Look at New York City Foundations and Nonprofits*, received survey responses from 475 New York City-based nonprofit organizations. While the study did not develop a solid estimate of diversity in NYC nonprofit organizations, "the organizations that responded to the survey closely mirror the overall characteristics of New York City nonprofits across several key dimensions." In this example, respondents were allowed to determine whether they consider themselves minority-led. "Minority-led" is a term used by the New York Community Trust and Foundation Center. See <http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/diversity2009.pdf>, pg. 24.
25. "Announcing the New York Community Trust Leadership Fellows Program at Baruch College," The New York Community Trust, January 22, 2015, <http://www.nycommunitytrust.org/Newsroom/LatestNews/tab-id/626/ArticleId/267/1-22-15-Announcing-the-New-York-Community-Trust-Leadership-Fellows-Program-at-Baruch-College.aspx>.
26. As president of the Trust, Lorie Slutsky also serves as an *ex-officio* member of the board, but is counted as staff for the purpose of this analysis.
27. Of the six board members, one each is nominated by the president of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York; the mayor of the City of New York; the president of the New York Academy of Medicine; the president of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York; the chairman of Lincoln Center (originally president of the Board of Trustees of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences); and the senior circuit judge of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals of the Second Circuit.

28. Larry McGill, Brielle Bryan and Eugene Miller, *Benchmarking Diversity: A First Look at New York City Foundations and Nonprofits* (New York: Foundation Center, 2009), <http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/diversity2009.pdf>.
29. For examples, visit the websites of the California Community Foundation, Cleveland Foundation, Denver Foundation, Minneapolis Foundation and San Francisco Foundation.
30. Inae Oh, "Half of New York City Is Living In Near Poverty," *The Huffington Post*, April 30, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/30/nyc-poverty_n_5240355.html.
31. CFLeads, *Framework for Community Leadership by a Community Foundation* (Council on Foundations, CFLeads and Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group, July 2013), <http://www.cfleads.org/community-engagement/CFLeads-Framework.pdf>.
32. Ellie Buteau, Ph.D., Mark Chaffin and Phil Buchanan, *What Donors Value: How Community Foundations Can Increase Donor Satisfaction, Referrals, and Future Giving* (Boston: The Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2014), http://www.effectivephilanthropy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/CEP-Research_What-Community-Foundation-Donors-Value.pdf.
33. Kristina C. Moore, "Taking On One of the 'Dirty Dozen' Tax Scams," *Responsive Philanthropy*, Summer 2007, <https://ncrp.org/files/rp-articles/RP-Summer2007-KMoore-lowres.pdf>.
34. Rick Cohen, "Making Charitable Money Flow: Mixed Results with Donor-Advised Funds," *Nonprofit Quarterly*, August 22, 2013, <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2013/08/22/fidelity-charitable-gift-fund-making-charitable-money-flow-donor-advised-funds/>.
35. U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Report to Congress on Supporting Organizations and Donor Advised Funds," December 2011, <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/tax-policy/Documents/Supporting-Organizations-and-Donor-Advised-Funds-12-5-11.pdf#page=67>
36. Kevin Laskowski, "When It Comes to Donor-Advised Funds, the Median is the Message," *Keeping a close eye on philanthropy*, June 5, 2012, <http://blog.ncrp.org/2012/06/when-it-comes-to-donor-advised-funds.html>.
37. Rebecca Graves, Eva Nico and Carina Wendel, *Do More Than Grow: Realizing the Potential of Community Foundation Donor-Advised Funds*, CF Insights, 2012, <http://www.fsg.org/publications/do-more-grow>.
38. See <http://www.nycommunitytrust.org/GrantSeekers/Overview/CommunityFoundationGrantmaking/tabid/216/Default.aspx>.
39. Op. cit., CFLeads.
40. See <http://www.nycommunitytrust.org/CurrentDonors/OurDonorsTheHeartofTheTrust/WilliamDonnell/tabid/233/Default.aspx>.
41. "A Rebuilt and More Resilient City," The New York Community Trust, April 2013, <http://www.nycommunitytrust.org/GivingatTheTrust/HurricaneSandyGrantmaking/AREbuiltandMoreResilientCity/tabid/736/Default.aspx>.
42. See <http://www.nycommunitytrust.org/CurrentDonors/AnnualFund/AnnualFundGrants/tabid/960/Default.aspx>.

43. Whereas a spending plan legally limits payout to ensure an endowed fund can exist in perpetuity, an inactive or “dormant” fund policy allows a foundation to transfer money and/or terminate a fund to continue its charitable purpose. Peer community foundations employ this approach to varying degrees of stringency. The Silicon Valley Community Foundation considers a fund inactive when no grant recommendations or gifts are received for two consecutive years, during which time the fund’s advisor is unreachable. If the foundation cannot make contact, the board decides upon an annual payout to support their community grantmaking program, which receives the entirety of the funds if another two years pass without donor advisement.
44. Op. cit., Graves, Nico and Wendel. CF Insights defines personally engaged donors as those who a) Participated in an event organized by the community foundation, b) Participated on a committee at the community foundation, c) Referred other donors to the community foundation, or d) Taken grantmaking advice from the community foundation. See <http://cfinsights.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Do%20More%20Than%20Grow.pdf>.
45. See the Trust’s Grants Newsletter from December 2015, <http://www.nycommunitytrust.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Dec%20NSL%20Final.pdf>.
46. See <http://www.nycommunitytrust.org/CurrentDonors/HonoringOurDonors/EdwardandSallyVanLier/tabid/341/Default.aspx>. A recent evaluation of the Van Lier fellowships affirmed the program’s success as supporting artists of color.
47. See <http://www.cct.org/what-we-offer/donors/>.
48. See <https://calfund.org/wp-content/uploads/DONOR-ADVISED-FUND-FACT-SHEET.pdf>.
49. Patricia Cohen, “Racial Wealth Gap Persists Despite Degree, Study Says,” *The New York Times*, August 16, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/17/business/racial-wealth-gap-persists-despite-degree-study-says.html?_r=0.
50. Featured either in a profile, story, conversation or note.
51. In 2012 New York State had the second greatest number of registered nonprofit organizations in the nation. See <http://nccsweb.urban.org/PubApps/reports.php?rid=2>.
52. See <http://democracycollaborative.org/content/new-york-community-trust>.
53. For examples, see <https://www.missioninvestors.org/tools/case-example-the-cleveland-foundation-living-cities-catalyst-fund>.
54. The Trust noted that they provide grant renewals but not multi-year funding.
55. See <http://www.nycommunitytrust.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/RDBooklet4.pdf>.

ABOUT PHILAMPLIFY

Philamplify is an initiative of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy that aims to maximize the impact of our country's grantmakers. At the center of Philamplify is a series of comprehensive reports conducted by highly regarded researchers assessing foundation grantmaking and operations. Assessments include key findings and recommendations, along with in-depth analysis of foundations' funding strategies and feedback from peer funders, nonprofit leaders, issue experts, community members and more. By making these assessments public, Philamplify seeks to build a culture of transparency, mutual accountability and knowledge sharing.

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