

12 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DETROIT FUNDERS

These recommendations were developed through a collaborative design process led throughout 2015 by Allied Media Projects and Detroit People's Platform. Endorsers of the recommendations are listed on page 5.

1. DEVELOP MECHANISMS FOR AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION FROM STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITIES IN SETTING FUNDING CRITERIA AND PRIORITIES.

- Regularly engage grantees and leaders from stakeholder communities to evaluate the effectiveness of funding programs, and to shape the design of funding programs.
- Utilize engagement methods such as:
 - Surveys
 - Listening sessions and focus groups
 - Participatory budgeting
 - Collaborative design
- Resist the impulse to fund in reaction to fads and trends. Work diligently to understand the solutions that are already underway and direct resources towards effective work that is emerging from grassroots communities.

2. COMMIT TO UNDERSTANDING THE FULL DIMENSIONS OF, AND ACTIVELY WORK TO DISMANTLE STRUCTURAL RACISM AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY IN METRO DETROIT.

- Trustees, board members, executives, and staff members should participate in high-quality anti-oppression trainings to build understanding of how gender and sexual identity, disability, citizenship status and other factors compound systems of racism and economic inequality.
 - Specifically study how systems of racism and economic inequality have been reinforced and/or resisted throughout the history of philanthropy in the U.S. and through the specific history of your foundation.
 - Ask: what role has philanthropy played in furthering inequality and the marginalization of communities of color?
 - Ask: when has philanthropy been most effective at creating social justice?
- Commit to more funding and better funding programs that specifically benefit marginalized communities. Prioritize funding to people-of-color-led organizations and to African American and Latino-led organizations in particular.
- Commit to recruiting more people of color to the staff and board of your foundation. Build a staff and board that is representative of the diversity of our communities.

3. CREATE PATHWAYS FOR SMALL, GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS TO ACCESS FUNDS.

- Design funding programs which specifically benefit smaller organizations.
- Encourage and support larger, established organizations to develop regranteeing programs in collaboration with grassroots organizations in order to support a more diverse ecosystem of large, medium, and small organizations working strategically together.
- Lower the financial barriers that prevent smaller organizations from participating in funding programs.
 - Understand that the “certified audit” process can be an expensive and cumbersome process for smaller organizations. Whenever possible, offer an alternative approach to measuring an organization’s fiscal readiness to receive funding.
 - Invest in organizations which provide high-quality fiscal sponsorship support so that they may serve as intermediaries in directing funding to smaller organizations
 - Provide dedicated technical support funding for smaller organizations to build their financial management and fundraising capacities
- Whenever grant applications require online submission forms, provide technical trainings for organizations with lower digital literacy.
- Invest in intentional outreach to smaller community groups to encourage and support their participation in funding programs.

4. DEVELOP MORE NUANCED WAYS OF MEASURING SUCCESS.

- Value the growth of relationships and the development of intangible skills, not just quantitatively measurable outcomes.
- Create mechanisms through which funders, grantees, and stakeholder communities collaboratively define indicators of “success.”
- Specially resource grantees to develop an evaluation practice and to dedicate time for authentic, in-depth evaluation.

5. PREPARE ORGANIZATIONS TO CREATE DEEP, TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE.

- Support organizations to conduct root-cause analyses of the problems which they are trying to solve and provide resources for them to do the long-term work of deep learning and leadership development. Make grants with extended periods of 5 - 10 years which will allow organizations to develop and implement this holistic approach.

- Support “emergent strategy” as an alternative to “strategic planning.” The practice of “emergent strategy” encourages organizations to be more iterative, adaptive, and resilient in response to ever changing conditions.
- Support organizations to experiment with trial and error and to course-correct along the way.

6. IN ADDITION TO PROJECT FUNDING, PROVIDE GENERAL OPERATIONS SUPPORT.

- Dedicate funding for overhead costs and strong administrative functions. Such general operating funding will allow organizations to build the necessary infrastructure to implement high-quality programs and projects.
- Support grassroots organizations with sufficient funding so as to allow them to retain talented staff through competitive compensation and multi-year employment commitments.

7. NURTURE AUTHENTIC COLLABORATION ACROSS ORGANIZATIONS.

- Take the time to understand where networks and relationships already exist. Instead of funding the launch of new coalitions, whenever possible direct funding towards organizations who already serve as network facilitators and coalition builders.
- In order to reduce redundancy and competition, support strategic coordination and collaborative vision-building between multiple organizations working in the same field.
- Provide resources in the form of funding and training to support conflict resolution between organizations who may have misunderstandings or disagreements which prevent them from working together towards common goals.

8. PROVIDE MORE CAPACITY-BUILDING, RESOURCES, AND TRAINING FOR GRANTEES TO DEVELOP NON-GRANT REVENUE STREAMS.

- Identify innovative organizations who model best practices in earned revenue and social enterprise. Facilitate learning exchanges that allow grantees to learn from these models.
- Provide dedicated funding and training for grassroots organizations to increase their financial independence. Trainings may include business planning, financial management, social enterprise and earned revenue.

9. PROVIDE FUNDING FOR A MORE ACCESSIBLE CITY AND REGION – ONE THAT IS ACCESSIBLE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, SENIORS, PARENTS AND CHILDREN, AND NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS.

- Dedicate resources for organizations to make their programs more accessible. Fund organizations who are working towards greater systemic accessibility in all aspects of life, including education, transportation, and housing.
- Provide trainings for grantees on best practices for accessibility.
- Develop metrics to ensure that organizations are working towards greater accessibility in the form of childcare, multilingual resources, ADA compliance, and in other areas.

10. ADDRESS CONCERNS ABOUT THE IMPACTS OF GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT.

- Recognize the importance of Detroit’s long-time, majority African American residents, its Latino residents, and other communities of color, in the city’s stability and recovery. Do not fund economic development initiatives which will result in the displacement of these residents.
- When community groups raise concerns about potential displacement or marginalization of low income communities of color, work proactively to understand and address these concerns.

11. INVEST IN A HEALTHY, PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AND MODEL DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES IN YOUR ORGANIZATIONS.

- Acknowledge the disproportionate influence that foundations have had over local politics in recent years. Work to *decrease* the political influence of foundations over the coming years, while *increasing* the influence of the general public through programs that build a civic community and civic engagement.
- Publish a statement describing your foundation’s approach to transparency and openness. Specifically disclose any and all policy goals, and any political and corporate connections which may influence these goals.
- Support the development of strong community advisory councils in order to encourage greater accountability and neighborhood-based power in local government.
- Support participatory budgeting initiatives at the municipal level and model what these initiatives can accomplish by implementing participatory budgeting within your own organizations.

12. WORK TO ESTABLISH A CULTURE OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN FUNDERS AND GRANTEES.

- Proactively work against the culture of elitism and separation that has historically defined many foundations' relationships to their grantees.
- Build co-learning and relationship-building opportunities between funders and grantees, for example: through joint research initiatives, experiential learning opportunities, or travel study delegations.
- Respect community expertise and actively listen when there is disagreement. When community members disagree with your approach, use this as an opportunity to learn from and do more effective work to serve grassroots communities. Organizations who disagree with a policy or priority of your funding programs should never be disqualified from funding opportunities as a result of such disagreement.

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE ENDORSED BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS:

- Allied Media Projects
- American Indian Health and Family Services
- Asian American Center for Justice
- Community Connections and Lower Eastside Community Grant program
- Detroit Equity Action Lab at the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights
- Detroit Future Schools
- Detroit Future Youth
- Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation
- Detroit Jews for Justice
- Detroit People's Platform
- Detroit Represent!
- Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice
- Economic Justice Alliance of Michigan
- Emmanuel Community House
- James and Grace Lee Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership
- Michigan Welfare Rights Organization
- MOSES
- Mothering Justice
- North End Woodward Community Coalition
- Nortown Community Development Corporation
- Oakland Avenue Artist Coalition
- Restaurant Opportunities Center
- Rosa Parks Institute
- Storehouse of Hope
- Street Democracy
- The Foundation of Women in Hip Hop

- **We the People of Detroit**
- **WNUC FM Community Radio**