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PRACTICAL WISDOM FOR GRANTMAKERS

**No.8 IN A
SERIES**

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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

INVESTING IN INDIVIDUALS

leadership development programs

investing in
individuals

PAGE 2 **Introduction**

PAGE 6 **Why support leadership development?**

Leadership is valuable in its own right, but for grant makers it may serve other goals, like building stronger, better-led organizations; enriching a social-change agenda with diverse voices; and even improving one's own grant making by bringing you closer to innovators and effective agents of change.

PAGE 9 **Basic compo- nents of a leadership development program**

Leadership development grant making can take many forms, depending on the goals it's meant to serve. But a few elements are common to most programs: a clear set of skills or qualities the program will cultivate, some amount of financial support, mentoring by seasoned leaders, networking among participants, and projects for the participants to work on. Other elements, like technology, research, evaluation, and communication are also common.

PAGE 16 **Management issues to consider**

As with any new area of grant making, leadership development requires time and planning to explore the field, build support within your grant-making organization, and decide on who will carry out the program activities? Beyond that, it's useful to look ahead, to determine how long the program should continue, with what long-term benefits.

PAGE 21 **How to you recruit and select partici- pants**

The way participants are sought and chosen will play a big role in determining the nature of the program and, to some degree, its outcome. Grant makers sometimes seek participants themselves and sometimes use outside nominators and reviewers. Some use formal recruitment and nominating processes. Others prefer to work more informally. In many cases, an important challenge is seeking participants from outside the grant maker's familiar circle.

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Research and evaluation issues: What do you want to learn?

Building a research component or an evaluation into a leadership program is not only a good way of learning whether the program is effectively designed and implemented and whether it achieves its desired effects. Research can also be a way of learning more about leadership generally – what makes it effective, and what effective leaders need to excel.

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Additional ways to support leaders

A formal program isn't the only way to support leadership in areas of interest to a grant maker. There are also many ways to build it into other activities and grants: supporting and recognizing outstanding leaders of grantee organizations, bringing leaders together for discussion and mutual support, and raising leadership issues in the annual report and other communications.

Share what you have learned about leadership.

Throughout this guide, in boxes like this one, we will highlight issue areas for which we think further input would be particularly helpful. We hope you won't limit your contributions only to these topics. But please take these boxes as a particular invitation to share your thoughts and ideas by sending us a note through our Web site (www.grantcraft.org/contact.html). We will offer excerpts from these comments in future updates.

This guide was written by Deborah Meehan, with assistance from Ellen Arrick. It is part of the GrantCraft series, sponsored by the Ford Foundation.

Publications and videos in this series invite foundation practitioners to join conversations with their peers about strategic and tactical issues in philanthropy. They are meant not to give instructions or prescribe solutions, but to spark ideas, stimulate discussion, and suggest possibilities. Comments about this guide, or other GrantCraft materials, may be sent to Jan Jaffe, project leader, at: j.jaffe@grantcraft.org

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Introduction

“The leaders of the future are not likely to come riding out of the sunset on white chargers — heroes without heroism. Many will instead be ordinary people with extraordinary commitment. Their styles will be different. Their accents will be different and so will their color and complexion. What most will have in common, however, is an understanding that what makes one an American is neither genetics nor geography, neither ideology nor theology, but the commitment to a set of values described in the preamble to the Constitution as forming a more perfect union.”

— From “Globalization and Civil Society: The Implication for Leaders in the Nonprofit Sector,” presented by Ambassador James A. Joseph, International Project on Nonprofit Leadership, University of New Orleans, December 14, 2001

Many grant-making organizations focus their resources on the programs that deliver a needed service or work for social change in their communities. But what about the individual or group of individuals who run the program or lead the change effort?

Some grant makers recognize that there are times when they can help people to become stronger leaders or help build a field or a community by focusing their grant making directly on leadership. Sometimes these efforts focus on organizations, as part of a larger “nonprofit capacity-building” strategy where leadership is one of several organizational issues being addressed. In other cases they may be designed to support leadership within a particular program or field of work.

Sometimes these grants support existing leadership development programs; sometimes they involve the creation of an entirely new program. As this guide will explore, grant makers have varied reasons for engaging in leadership development work — ranging from a desire to move resources closer to the community level to a goal of bringing people from diverse sectors together to create social change. However grant makers describe the reasons for supporting it, leadership development can represent a useful way to help accomplish grant-making goals.



What is your view of leadership? Share other perspectives on what constitutes leadership — either definitions from the leadership literature, and/or examples drawn from leadership programs you are familiar with. To share your thoughts, send us a note through our Web site: www.grantcraft.org/contact.html

What do you mean by leadership? What qualities are you looking for?

When asked to define the kind of leadership they wanted to support, the grant makers who contributed to this guide often referred to books or articles about leadership that reinforced their thinking. Here are the leadership qualities our contributors emphasized, along with some of the writings that inspired them:

■ Fosters collaboration

"There is a growing understanding that patterns of hierarchical leadership that served us in the past are not well suited to the global complexity, rapid change, interdependency, and multifaceted challenges of the next century."

Leadership in the 21st Century
Rethinking Leadership: Working Papers, the Kellogg Leadership Studies Project
Kathleen E. Allen, Juana Bordas, Gill Robinson Hickman, Lorraine R. Matusak, Georgia J. Sorenson, and Kathryn J. Whitmire
Academy of Leadership Press, 1998

■ Rooted in public values

"The stronger the value systems, the more strongly leaders can be empowered and the more deeply leaders can empower followers. The transformational dynamic that mutually empowers leaders and followers involves ... the wants and needs [of people], motivation and creativity, conflict and power. But at its heart lie values."

Transforming Leadership: The Pursuit of Happiness
James MacGregor Burns
Atlantic Monthly Press, 2003

■ Creating community driven solutions

"The crisis in our communities is not the result of a lack of services but rather a lack of democracy. Stronger democracy relies on the participation of individuals who, while they may face problems, feel they have power over their own lives — and a responsibility to contribute to the lives of others. Self-determination is the essence

of democracy and the commerce of civil society."

The Quickening of America: Rebuilding Our Nation, Remaking Our Lives
Francis Moore Lappe and Paul DuBois
Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994

■ Crosses boundaries

"The key is people talking and working together across the boundary lines that traditionally divide and diminish a community — people from government, corporations, social agencies, ethnic groups, unions, neighborhoods and so on. Relationship building is the key to breaking political gridlock and being able to take action in the public interest."

Boundary Crossers: Community Leadership for a Global Age
Neal Peirce and Curtis Johnson, foreword by John W. Gardner
Academy of Leadership Press, 1997

■ Promotes systems change

"An important challenge of building community capacity is to focus on moving leaders from an isolated, special interest or problem focused approaches to community issues to an approach that embraces the community's overarching and interconnected concerns in order to achieve system-wide change."

Lessons Learned About Grassroots Leaders
An Analysis of the Kellogg Foundation's Grassroots Leaders Initiative
Campbell & Associates, St. Paul., Sept. 1997

■ Engages in peer exchange and learning communities

"Individuals and organizations must function in a mode of inquiry,

knowing that nobody knows and everybody can learn continually ... this requires communities of commitment where people are continually learning how to learn together."

The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization
Peter M. Senge
Doubleday/Currency, 1990

■ Integrates opportunities for reflection and renewal

"We need to break from the action on a regular basis to consider if our actions are congruent with our values and vision. We also need to identify behaviors, rituals, or people that inspire us to reconfirm our commitment to our values and vision."

Ethical Leadership: In Pursuit of the Common Good
Bill Grace
The Center for Ethical Leadership, Seattle, 1999

■ Encourages new leadership

"A new type of leadership is needed. New leaders build bridges, establish free spaces where citizens can be supported as community change agents and problem solvers, and continuously foster the emergence and growth of new leaders."

Practicing What We Preach: Creating Transforming Organizations
Paul Schmitz and Lisa Sullivan
The Johnson Foundation, The Wingspread Journal (Vol. 19, No. 4), 1997

For some additional definitions of leadership go to:

<http://www.grantcraft.org/catalog/leadership/links.html>

Why support leadership development?

Grant makers invest in leadership development for many different reasons. There are three broad categories of goals and benefits that grant makers are interested in when they support this work:

- Stronger and more effective leaders and organizations
- Social change in a community, region, or field
- Benefits for the grant maker's own organization

STRONGER AND MORE EFFECTIVE LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Grant makers acknowledge that the success of many grants and organizations ultimately depends on the strengths and skills of individuals. Many contributors see leadership development as a way to support specific individuals and provide them with skills, experiences, and resources that will make them and their organizations more effective. Leadership development can, for example:

- **Impart specific skills and provide learning experiences** – for example, communication, management, and organizational skills that help nonprofit leaders manage their organizations better, improve relationships with staff, and be more effective advocates for their vision.
- **Provide opportunities for respite** that help keep nonprofit leaders from “burning out” and either leaving their work or becoming stale.
- **Encourage leaders to reflect on practice** – a national grant maker noted that involving leaders in co-producing knowledge was a good way to encourage reflection:

“Reflection is a learning tool. And a lot of leadership programs try to find ways to do it, asking participants to keep journals, for example. And I think the challenge is to design reflective opportunities that have real coinage, that are really embedded in programs and don't seem sort of peripheral to the work. And one of the advantages of our research effort is that it is that kind of reflective tool.”

- **Give nonprofit leaders visibility and prestige**, thus enhancing their standing (and by implication, their effectiveness) in their own communities. Some grant makers emphasize the importance of recognition as a way to sustain leaders working in adverse conditions and help them attract new resources for their work. As one grantee put it:

“The increased recognition and activity made possible by my award helped me to get additional money and resources. I was able to put on dances, organize youth conferences, and initiate a Cesar Chavez day. It brought new attention.”

- **Create a network of contacts** that reduces the isolation nonprofit leaders often experience, by introducing them to other like-minded leaders who can offer support, advice, skills, and resources. Sometimes the network can be useful in unexpected ways. For example, one leadership program alumna used her network to recruit someone to succeed her on a nonprofit board. The experience of having been in an intense program together was a good way to see how the prospective board member would work in a group. Another participant observed the program she attended gave her a new set of contacts:

“Now I know people who are lawyers, accountants, who work for the police department, in government, at the university. I view them as resources I can call up. I can sit next to them on boards and know they bring an entirely different expertise than I do.”

SOCIAL CHANGE IN A COMMUNITY, REGION, OR FIELD

Many contributors view leadership development as a way to change what is happening in a particular community or in a field (like human rights, education, or health care) by increasing skills, role models, credentials, resources, and opportunities for people who work in the community or field, and by bringing them into contact with new perspectives or approaches to social change. For example a Midwestern foundation that wants to improve community health care supports a leadership development program that helps physicians learn how to tackle policy and systemic health care issues in their institutions and communities.

Leadership development can also be a useful strategy to increase the visibility of people of color, women, young people, or others who have been underrepresented in leadership roles in a community or a field. Many of these benefits also accrue at the organizational level as well — organizations with diverse leadership and with access to other perspectives on social change are also likely to be more effective in their work.

Contributors to this guide observed that leadership development can help:

■ **Identify new voices** from communities or groups that are not well represented in their localities or in their field — such as people of color, women, young people, or rural people — and help them become more visible and powerful. For example, a grant maker in a mid-sized family foundation working in the South commented, “We worked with an

affordable housing coalition. Through the [leadership development] process they figured out that they could not deal with racism and advocate for people they did not know. The organization has been redesigned and is now membership and constituency driven. The staff has almost completely changed. The organization is led by people trained from the community.”

■ **Encourage collaboration across sectors or fields.** Some leadership development programs bring non-profit leaders into contact with leaders from business or government, so they can build partnerships across sectors or at least get a different perspective on their own work. Grant makers have begun to experiment with leadership development programs as a way to connect individuals from the service and advocacy fields, as well as to connect leaders across fields and issues.

One nonprofit leader who joined such a collaboration reported:

“I did feel odd in the mix because most people were from health and human services, family programs, and direct services, and I was the first program in environmental justice to come in. I was afraid at first that I wouldn’t be able to connect to their work. But my being here allowed me to connect our community to environmental justice issues and now they are learning how environmental justice affects their work and their clients. Take gangs and violence in their schools — we were able to show them how lead poison is related to aggressive

NEW CONNECTIONS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Sometimes important connections get made after the formal program has ended. A leadership program graduate who worked in the field of employment and disability rights organized a pot luck dinner in order to meet the 45 other alumni of her program who lived in her region. Among the people she met were an officer at the Federal Reserve Bank and a vice president from a local college.

These were, she said, “people with whom I would never have had contact except that I accessed this network. But the three of us collaborated on a project to create microenterprise opportunities for people who were disabled. And in six months, we changed the language of the National Rehabilitation Act, and locally we changed the statewide use of Department of Rehab funds — which was responsible for dispensing \$6 million of federal and state funding — as opposed to creating another 501(c)3 that is fighting to get \$100,000. And it was only because of that leverage of these three odd people working together — the *unusual suspects*.”

Contributors to this guide have supported leadership development for a broad range of purposes, among them:

- Encouraging new voices and innovation in criminal justice work
- Developing indigenous leadership in a rural Native American community in the mid-west United States
- Increasing the diversity of leadership in the substance-abuse field
- Engaging non-profit organizations in building coalitions across racial and ethnic groups
- Building a critical mass of leadership in the violence-prevention field
- Increasing the tenure of executive directors of community-based organizations by connecting them with peers who serve as a source of learning, support and collaboration.

behavior and violence. We were able to bridge the gap about an element that was affecting their work.”

- **Broaden the perspective of non-profit leaders.** By exposing participants to leaders who work on other aspects of a social problem or who use different strategies for social change, leadership programs can help participants see beyond the needs of their own organization and learn how they might work for systemic or policy change.

For example, a grant maker described the experience of a participant who conducted litigation for a children’s rights organization:

“His job was to sue state and city services programs for not doing their job well. After going through the program, he had new respect for people who worked for change inside the system, and he saw that this would make his work more sustainable. As a result, he decided he wanted to change the system from the inside, and is now a deputy chancellor for education in a large city.”

- **Support the start-up of new organizations or fresh approaches** to solving social problems. Leadership development programs can be an opportunity to support innovators with passion for a new idea by providing them with start-up costs and technical assistance to develop their idea. Some leadership programs focus exclusively on identifying and supporting new social entrepreneurs.

BENEFITS FOR THE GRANT MAKER’S OWN ORGANIZATION

Working with leadership development can help grant makers:

- **Identify resources, information, and human capital.** When leaders come into direct contact with grant makers, they can function as a source of fresh ideas and information about the fields and communities they work in. Leadership program alumni can also become new staff, board members, or consultants for grant makers. A grant maker in health care described some of the returns that leadership programs had for his foundation:

“We invite [program alumni] in for our proposal reviews and for our medical fellowship’s program development. Several of our fellows we use as evaluators of our program. All the fellows programs give our foundation access to a group of people who are a locator service for good advice ... It’s a networking opportunity in the fields we fund.”

- **Get directly involved in social change.** Because the focus of leadership development is on the individual or on groups of individuals, rather than on institutions, this kind of work can also bring grant makers into contact with a tier of smaller organizations that might not have been eligible for routine grants. Grant makers often feel that supporting leaders is a more direct way to support community change at the grassroots level.

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Basic components of a leadership development program

While leadership programs can vary widely, they tend to share some common elements. Whether you choose to support an existing program or develop a new one, the program's components should support the particular leaders you are targeting and the purposes for which you set up the program.

For example, is the focus on the individual or the organization? On experienced people or individuals new to a field? Is the focus on creating a leadership corps across organizations within a field? On building new cross-sector partnerships within a community? It might be helpful to keep questions such as these in mind while considering which elements to support and in what way you want to incorporate them. These questions are also closely connected to the selection and recruitment process, which we'll explore in the next section of this guide.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES & CURRICULUM

While leadership development programs all share a commitment to increasing the skills and effectiveness of the participants, according to our contributors, programs vary in

- the types of skills and experiences that they convey to participants,
- whether there is a fixed "curriculum", or
- whether individual participants, or the cohort, create a "learning plan" outlining their own learning objectives.

Types of skills and experiences

Leadership development programs vary in their curriculum and methodology,

but there are some skills that the programs commonly try to help their participants achieve. These include:

■ Learning to work with diversity.

Leadership development programs typically try to help participants appreciate differences in race, culture, gender, and class, and develop an ability to work with and on behalf of people different from themselves. Our contributors identify some of the ways in which leaders engage with issues of diversity, including:

- strengthening personal identity and cultural esteem,
- learning about and appreciating other cultures,
- understanding issues of power and access to resources, and
- developing the capacity to work across divisions of race, class, gender, region and sector.

■ Understanding group dynamics.

Leadership program participants often learn how to work with groups – in teams, as collaborators, facilitators, and negotiators – and learn different ways of communicating. For example, one leader learned to change his communication style to make his work environment less confrontational: "Rather than say, 'This would be better for the program,' I learned to say, 'I feel this might be beneficial,' or 'How would you feel about this idea I have?'"

■ Relating policy and practice.

Leaders who have been working in organizations that deliver services or operate programs may not always see how their work connects to a

TYPICAL COMPONENTS OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

- Learning objectives and curriculum
- Financial support
- Learning from peers
- Mentoring and coaching, both during and after
- Action projects
- Technology support

In addition, grant makers who support leadership development programs sometimes build in opportunities for:

- Research and evaluation
- Activities to communicate with the broader public about the leaders' work

HOW THEY DID IT/WHAT THEY DID

A GROUP LEARNING AGENDA

A health care funder described her program's curriculum:

"With our partner, we designed a program for experienced mid-career managers, twelve days over eight months. It begins with a four day retreat, and then there are four two-day retreats. Topics include negotiation, situational leadership, spirituality, diversity, networking, team development, communications, and a small management piece. They work on group projects that they can propose or select from. We recruit projects with the help of an outside advisory committee. The class of twenty-five subdivides into groups of six to eight. We have hired a coach to work with the teams on their projects. We debated the project piece and the pros and cons of one larger project and decided one project could not accommodate everyone's interests. Smaller projects can be based in the participants' organizations and bring an immediate return back to the organization. The group project develops the team's capacity to identify, analyze, and develop solutions to problems."

larger system. As a participant observed, "When I became a fellow, some of us were working on policy and others, like me, were running programs. We used to argue a lot at first about whose work was most important, and then we began to see how important we all were to changing the system. I still run a program, but I also help mobilize our folks to advocate for policy changes."

- **Developing reflective and contemplative practices.** Leadership programs can provide an opportunity for leaders to understand their own leadership practices and think about whether their work is going in the direction they want it to go. A leadership participant observed how important it is to "make the time to reflect on what you learned the day before. That should be the first priority. It improves our ability to do the work we do."

Curriculum

The components of a leadership development curriculum may be determined by the grant maker, perhaps with help from advisers, or by a grantee partner who operates the program, or by the participants themselves.

Programs that offer a curriculum use a variety of approaches that may include seminars, workshops, residency programs, internships, community service learning, field study trips, coaching, or technical assistance.

Whether a curriculum is designed by the grant maker, a grantee organization, or the participants themselves, one of the most important components for many programs is the opportunity for peers to learn from one another.

A grant maker supporting a national leadership program describes this kind of learning:

"One of our best sessions was about building coalitions when the partners are of unequal power, for example, small organizations wanting to ally with unions around day-labor organizing. What are the successful dynamics that help you form those alliances? And how do you keep your agenda from being hijacked by a coalition partner that has a more extensive focus than you? That was a very interesting conversation ... because there were lots of people who were engaged in those kinds of coalition building [strategies] and because the leaders had enough time to have an in-depth conversation about them."

What is your experience with curriculum? What is the right balance of grant maker versus leadership participant involvement in curriculum design? GrantCraft is interested in examples of curriculum “models” that have worked for you.

To share your thoughts, send us a note through our Web site at: <http://www.grantcraft.org/contact.html>

Group learning agendas or individual learning plans?

Many contributors describe a core curriculum around skills they want to develop in all participants, yet they also recognize that participants have specific individual needs. Some grant makers provide a fund for individual learning. In addition, coaching/mentoring, internships, and field study trips can provide a way to tailor the experience to participants’ particular needs.

Many leadership programs use assessment tools, including feedback about the leaders from the organizations or communities they serve, as an initial step in developing a learning plan. Assessment tools help program participants assess their strengths and identify the areas that need work.

A sampling of learning plan activities described by contributors included:

- Nonprofit management classes – e.g., fund and board development
- Systems change seminars

HOW THEY DID IT/WHAT THEY DID

AN INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN

†A grant maker who developed an individually-focused leadership program found that it took some time to get the program off the ground:

“We formed a leadership pilot program and invited a small number of grantees who had expressed interest. We made available to them a coach who could make them aware of resources and different approaches to leadership, and who could help them think through what they needed. A fund was set aside to support their learning activities. But we were really disappointed that it did not take off very quickly.”

At the suggestion of the coach, the foundation convened the group to talk about what was holding them back.

“The convening was really important to give them permission to get away from the day-to-day, and still it took some time to get plans from grantees and requests for financial support. We identified a common area of interest and put together a one-day training on collaborative leadership for the group.”

As a result of this experience the foundation decided to customize its approach through a mini-grants program:

“We invited a diverse group of 40 of our grantees who fit with our focus on community building. We held a 2-day retreat that was professionally facilitated. We had a leadership development expert and coach on hand to help grantees with their plans. All participants were invited to submit mini-grant applications. In the two years we have made 24 mini-grants that have supported participation in leadership development programs, specific training areas, coaching, and a sabbatical leave. We are getting ready for a second convening to deepen our learning.”

- Media and public speaking opportunities
- Travel study trips to learn about innovative programs
- Personal leadership coaching or mentoring
- Second language classes or tutorials
- Retreats for reflection, renewal and respite

TAX IMPLICATIONS OF FINANCIAL AWARDS

Financial awards are considered taxable income. Several grant makers described the importance of counseling award recipients about setting aside funds to cover estimated tax payments.

This advice was particularly important for awards in support of start-ups. If awards are not made through a fiscal sponsor or to a 501(c)3 organization, the IRS considers the award to be income and the individual recipient becomes responsible for taxes on it.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Leadership development programs typically provide some form of direct financial support to the participants, their organizations, or the projects they develop. Contributors to this guide described several types of financial support that leadership programs can provide:

- **Travel and training subsidies for leaders to participate in group activities.** These costs may vary greatly based on the geographic range of the program — whether the necessary travel is local, regional, or international. “We invest \$10,000 per participant,” one funder said, “to cover the costs of the training sessions, coaching, and travel to regional meetings.” This did not include staffing or the costs of program administration.
- **Support for individual learning plans.** Grant makers described support ranging from \$5,000 to \$35,000 for such things as seminars, coaching, retreats, skills-based workshops, travel study, trips, language study, field studies, and classes. One grant maker provides each leader with an Independent Learning Account of \$30,000 to pay for the recipient’s own choice of learning activities.
- **Stipends.** Some leadership programs provide the equivalent of a salary or stipend for participants while engaged in field study, community service placements, and internships. Other grant makers provide a grant to the organization to compensate for lost work time of program participants. Said one grant maker: “Our program provides \$15,000 stipends

to participants, medical and health coverage, and an additional \$10,000 is invested in the costs of program activities and related travel.”

A grant maker for a national foundation working in health care added, “We have augmented the leadership program with sabbatical funds budgeted for up to three months. They are available along with organizational grants we make to our awardees.”

- **Organizational or new project support.** Some leadership programs offer their participants seed money for a new project or program, or provide support to help the leaders’ existing organizations develop needed infrastructure: “We now have organizational development grants (small and large) that all of our leadership program participants can apply for. These capacity-building mini-grants have been put into place as a result of our learning that this is one of the biggest needs of these leaders.”

One grant maker provides both organizational and individual support: “We make an award of \$105,000 to the organization and \$15,000 to the individual leader. They can choose what to do with the award. It is partly used for coming to meetings and personal and professional development. Some gets used for their [core] work. They have to provide a plan for how they will spend the money.”

- **Support for a learning or collaborative project.** Some leadership programs try to encourage ongoing collaboration among alumni by establishing a fund for collaborative

projects. In other cases, program participants have pooled their individual project awards in order to pursue joint projects. “We began by providing \$10,000 to fund a project by each of the participants on our area of focus. This is not a lot of money. So we changed it to a pot of \$240,000 and asked the cohorts what types of projects they would like to collaborate on.”

■ **Recognition awards.** Some leadership programs provide awards with no strings attached, as a way of recognizing the recipients’ accomplishments. Grant makers made these awards either directly to an individual or to their organizations as an acknowledgement of their work.

LEARNING FROM PEERS

Building a group relationship encourages participants to learn from each other and helps leaders develop group process skills and the ability to work across traditional boundaries of race, issue, or sector. Some leadership programs use group decision-making exercises as a way to help leaders develop work more effectively in groups. Other leadership programs look for ways that the cohort group can serve as an immediate and long-term source of new ideas, learning, and resources to all participants.

For example, some programs create opportunities for the leadership participants to visit each other’s work sites. In one instance, a leader working in the field of employee rights invited the group to participate in a demonstration that occurred weekly in front of a restaurant that used unfair

WORKING WITH DIVERSITY WITHIN THE GROUP

Grant makers observe that when they assemble diverse groups in leadership development programs, a certain amount of conflict may arise, even if only below the surface. As a seasoned grant maker observed, “Fellows come with very different backgrounds in class, education, and experience. We encourage the group to appreciate the strengths that each person has to contribute to the project.”

Our contributors warn that it is a mistake to assume that the program can deal with diversity in one session. (To read about one grant maker’s experience, go to: <http://www.grantcraft.org/catalog/guides/leadership/links.html>). Even the best training will only lay some framework for issues that must be addressed in all aspects of the program design.

For example, language can divide or unite participants:

“One of our recipients spoke Spanish as a primary language. We found a translating group that appreciates the significance of the group process and uses technology that is not too invasive. We vary which language weaves the session. It is not always in English. The importance of translation processes conveys all sorts of larger messages about who you value.”

Another grant maker understood that participants had cultural differences in the way they related to issues of money. His program hired a consultant to work individually with participants on their financial award budgets. Yet another leadership program director learned that the young participants in the program were asking the staff to help them deal with serious personal issues. The program recognized this challenge and trained its staff to use external support services when appropriate.

employment practices. Describing the group session that followed, the grant maker said, “It was clear that the people who participated [in the demonstration] had gained an insight into the work of [the leader] in a way that they never could have if he had just described it himself in a meeting. And it triggered ideas about collaboration that they would not have had if they hadn’t seen what was happening in [that neighborhood].”

Contributors to this guide note that even as early as the design stage of a leadership development program, it

Working with a diverse group.

Please let us know about approaches you have used to ensure that diverse perspectives and experiences are valued within the leadership group. What other strategies have you used to encourage dialogue across difference? To share your thoughts, send us a note through our Web site at: www.grantcraft.org/contact.html

MINI-CASES

SHADOWING: AN ALTERNATIVE MENTORING TOOL

A nonprofit leader working in the environmental justice field in the Midwest took part in a leadership development program that allowed her to “shadow” the leaders of a similar organization in New York City. Her organization was about to enter a community-based research project with a university.

She observes, “The group I went to visit had many more years of experience than we did. They had partnerships with a university. After my visit, my organization was able to negotiate our role with a university, including getting some staff positions for our project. When I started out, we had a \$70,000 budget. We learned from the organization [we visited] that we could raise money in different ways — it raised our sights. Now our budget is a half a million.”

THE POWER OF PEER LEARNING

A leadership program participant describes how a group exercise changed her decision-making approach:

“[The exercise] was a simulation that we were all stranded on a river. Our canoes had tipped. We each had to make choices about our survival. I made a choice and I was so adamant, the group went with me. Well, I picked the wrong choice. So, I got lost and the whole group got lost. They said: ‘You are powerful. If you have that much influence as a leader you have to be careful.’ It had a big impact on me. I’m slower now to select what I think is the right choice. Is my information accurate? If I’m wrong, I want to be wrong with good evidence. I don’t want to make mistakes based on false assumptions.”

is not too soon to begin thinking about how to keep alumni involved.

As one experienced grant maker observed: “Leadership development doesn’t happen in a few days over one or two years. Alumni are critical.”

In addition to helping other alumni with ongoing advice, support, and connections, program alumni can be an important resource to the leadership program. They may continue to be engaged with the leadership program as:

- Nominators
- Readers on a selection panel

- Mentors and trainers, or
- Knowledgeable sources of information and ideas for grant makers and their partners.

The creation of a formal mechanism or network to connect alumni may increase the likelihood of a continuing exchange of resources and collaboration among former program participants.

Some programs have encouraged their alumni to stay connected by providing seed money for alumni projects and collaboration, hosting regional gatherings for active fellows and alumni, creating a “senior fellow” status for those asked to serve as mentors to new fellows, and offering continued financial support for conferences and learning seminars.

Many programs describe those who participate in this continuing relationship as “fellows” rather than “alumni,” to encourage participants to think of it as a lifelong service.

MENTORING AND COACHING

Coaching is an important way to respond to the individual needs of participants, provide leadership skills to them in the context of their work, and augment staff resources.

One grant maker committed to working with individuals in the community context invests heavily in coaching. Participants attend learning institutes with members of their organization and other community leaders, they participate in grassroots leadership community learning clusters, and their coach visits them on site to provide leader-

ship coaching in the context of the work or community environment.

Mentors may be either paid or unpaid, and are typically more experienced practitioners working in a similar leadership program provides stipends for young environmental leaders to work on a full-time project under the guidance of a project advisor who also serves as a mentor. This program offers orientation sessions for project advisors to help them become more effective mentors.

ACTION PROJECTS

Many leadership development programs include having participants work on a project, either individually or as part of a group, as a way for them to test their ideas and apply their new skills in a real-life setting.

In some cases, participants apply to the program and are accepted based on the merits of a project they've already identified and will implement during the program. In other cases, participants may develop a project proposal in collaboration with other members of their group.

Grant makers describe two types of projects that participants may pursue, either individually or in groups:

■ **Projects in which participants are meant to apply new skills or to work collaboratively with one another or with a community.**

These projects engage leadership program participants in researching an issue, building a new network, or creating a new community agenda. In one case, a group of young leadership participants found they

ACTION PROJECTS: ISSUES TO CONSIDER

The design of a project component should fit the grant makers' overall goals and level of resources for the leadership program. Experienced grant makers suggest thinking about the following issues:

- Is the project meant primarily to increase the participants' own learning, or to promote change in a community or specific field?
- Does the project benefit an existing organization or create a new one?
- Is the project designed to increase individual skills or the collaborative problem-solving skills of a group of participants?
- What financial resources does the grant maker have available to support the project?
- What kinds of skills and technical support do participants need to implement the project?

needed to listen closely when they presented their ideas about social change to community residents:

"You are supposed to get ideas of what they, the community members, want. I had my own ideas, like let's do tutoring, have a youth group, and let's promote higher education. The community members wanted job training, more civil services brought into the community, gang prevention, and issues involving police brutality. It reminded me of our *Power and Privilege* workshop. They taught us not to assume we know anything and to instead go off what people tell us. I went in there with my own ideas, because that is what my community (where I am from) wanted. But that is not necessarily what this neighborhood wanted."

■ **Projects meant to create a new program or organization, or to test**

Pros and cons of action projects. Please share your thoughts about the issues that grant makers face with regard to:

- *Supervision/mentoring of action projects*
- *The cost of carrying out action projects*
- *Expectations from leaders about future financial support from grant maker for these projects*
- *Integration of what is learned from the action projects with the rest of the leadership program*

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a new approach to solving a problem. Some leadership programs are designed specifically to support “social entrepreneurs” to start a new project or organization. In others, the project may focus on developing the capacity of an existing organization to try a new approach. Experienced grant makers warn that some types of projects will require a greater investment of funds. Social entrepreneurs generally receive \$35,000 to \$75,000 for individual start-up efforts, and larger grants may be needed to help existing organizations expand their operations.

Some grant makers provide social entrepreneurs with other resources beyond financial support:

“We support 10 fellowships to create a social justice project. Some have a hosting organization for the project, and some incorporate as nonprofits. We provide financial support and technical assistance. All fellows receive monthly e-notes [electronic newsletters] with articles, and they get connected to a broader range of funding.”

Participants who are starting a new organization need information and technical assistance related to organizational start-up issues. As one grant maker observed, “Start-ups need a great deal of technical support. Instead of buying support, we have dealt with this by networking the new fellows to the existing resource of former fellows.”

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

While a ListServe® or electronic bulletin board holds great potential as a tool to link leadership program participants to one another during and after their participation in a program, contributors to this guide observed that electronic communication works best after face-to-face relationships have been established. As one program operator notes, “You can say all the things that you want about high tech, but it never beats high touch. We need to be in a room with other people to discuss these issues.”

Many leadership programs aim to increase participants’ ability to use technology and their understanding of how to use it in their work.

A leadership program participant who started a new organization to help Native Americans gain access to high quality health care described the role of technology in this work:

“Our mission is to advance cancer care and services. Our Web site serves as a virtual social worker — diagnosis, treatment, how do I pay for this, sources, and links to other organizations that can provide advocacy. There are fellows who are information technology experts. We’ve been able to pick their brains and learn how they have used the Web to get their messages out, to gain funding, and to link with others.”

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THE LEADERSHIP LEARNING COMMUNITY: A RESOURCE FOR GRANT MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS

This guide is the result of a collaborative effort between GrantCraft and the Leadership Learning Community (LLC). Deborah Meehan, the guide's author and a former Kellogg Foundation Leadership Fellow, is the community's founder and director. GrantCraft's editors asked Deborah to answer some basic questions about the community and its resources:

Q. What is the Leadership Learning Community, and who can join it?

A. It's a community of practitioners — those who run leadership development programs, grant makers who fund leadership development, scholars who conduct research about how to develop leaders, and of course individuals and organizations who provide leadership development services. This community of 450 individuals and 150 organizations shares a commitment to connecting our learning, our practice, and our resources to strengthen the leadership development efforts in which we're involved. All who support these values are welcome to join the community. A membership application is available on our Web site (www.leadershiplearning.org).

Q. What resources are available through this community and how might they be useful to grant makers?

A. The community's resources are meant to be helpful to grant makers new to this field, as well as experienced leadership grant makers who want to deepen their understanding of leadership or are looking to share what they're learning with others. These resources include:

■ **A web-based directory and profiles of specific leadership development programs.** For example, let's say you're a grant maker thinking about leadership. You're going to have questions of how and why, but also of who. Who are other funders who have done this work? Who's doing it in

my region? How might I contact them? The directory allows you to search leadership programs by the target population they serve, by the type of program model, by the region the program is in, by the type of financial support they offer.

■ **Links to resources on specific topics.** Most grant makers entering this field of work do a scan of the field. What we've been trying to do is build a central repository of this experience — so that each funder doesn't have to redo that work. Then, if they want to go deeper, they can build on the research that has already been done. You can tap into this *knowledge base* of the learning community on our Web site. It's organized around themes such as evaluation, curriculum, diversity, or alumni development.

In addition to these scans conducted by foundations, there's a resource guide on evaluation. We also post material that goes beyond the experiences of individual participants, for example, summary notes from focus groups with youth on interethnic leadership.

Q. How can grant makers build connections to other people working on leadership?

A. Members can join **virtual learning communities** on topics such as technology or evaluation, and they can participate in **face-to-face conversations** with other grant makers, practitioners, and scholars working on leadership in their regions. (There's a list of these regional learning circles on our Web site.) One of the really compelling things that led to our creating this community is that there don't seem to be nearly enough forums where grant makers can sit down in partnership with practitioners — not necessarily their own grantees, but people working in a common interest area or a field — and be partners in problem solving.

What are the management issues to consider?

You may already have begun a process of exploration to determine whether leadership development is an appropriate path for your organization. Our contributors encourage you to be clear about why you want to fund leadership development and what you hope to achieve through this work. They suggest having internal conversations with staff, senior management, and trustees as well as focus groups with grantees to explore questions such as:

- How can support for leadership development contribute to the change you want to promote?
- What leadership practices do you value most and want to support?
- What type of support would make the greatest difference?
- How close do you want your organization to be to the leadership pro-

gram? How involved do you want to be in recruitment, selection, and operation of the program?

- Are there existing leadership development programs that can serve the need you have identified, or do you need to create a new program?

BUILDING INTERNAL SUPPORT FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership development is a departure from the traditional culture of grant making, which works through organizations. A leadership development program may require a different level of administrative support to handle the frequent contacts with individuals. If there is not strong endorsement from senior levels of management, grant makers involved in leadership development sometimes feel isolated within their own organizations.

Comparing outcomes associated with leadership development programs and those attached to other kinds of grant projects can be like comparing apples and oranges. The results of leadership development will be revealed over a much longer time span, and may not lend themselves to quantifiable measurement. These differences can make it difficult for grant makers to make the case for leadership development investments within their organization.

It can also be a challenge to build connections between the leadership participants and other program areas of your foundation. As one grant maker observed:

“We have tried to build connections, but it is difficult. Our commitment is to find new leaders as well as people already identified by the foundation.

HOW THEY DID IT/WHAT THEY DID

EXPLORING THE FIELD

A grant maker described the process one foundation used to develop a regional leadership program for health care managers:

“We started with focus groups around the region, asking people from our communities what they would want. We hired two contractors, one in health to survey the health field, and one who conducted a national search of executive leadership programs. After a full survey, we took our findings into a focus group again to look at what was out there and to begin identifying common aspects of these programs.”

“After more sustained learning, we did a comprehensive RFP to coordinating agencies in the western United States. We had for-profit, not-for-profit and academic institutions. We selected one that had run programs and had lots of experience. They were part of a health policy center and connected with a business school that had done lots of research on leadership. They had some evidence about what works because of their research around the world. We wanted to be confident that we were selecting someone with content background and also, as a new program, we wanted someone with credibility and the perception of quality.”

Most of the folks are not our grantees, so it's a double-edged sword. If they are not already grantees, it's hard to convince [our colleagues] that people outside their own selection process warrant support."

On the other hand, some contributors to this guide received strong support for leadership development within their foundations, including from foundation presidents and board members who had had personal experience with leadership development programs. Another contributor observed that because his trustees were from a corporate background, they were very comfortable with the concept of investing in individuals.

Grant makers with experience in leadership development advise that there are a number of ways you can engage others in your organization and increase internal support for leadership development:

- Create opportunities for senior managers and trustees to interact with program participants at receptions, site visits, and project presentations.
- Invite program officers from your organization to participate in key training opportunities.
- Develop a mentoring program matching participants with program staff in your organization.
- Align focus areas of your leadership program with grant making program areas of your organization, so there will be increased benefits from the intelligence brought by participants.
- Structure program staff interests into the program in the beginning, with an explicit expectation about their

portfolios helping to underwrite the program.

MANAGING AND FUNDING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Our contributors describe three basic approaches to managing and funding leadership development:

- Supporting existing nonprofit leadership programs with a proven track record is a valuable option.
- Working with intermediaries to develop and run a program is another option for many grant makers who do not have the internal capacity to address a specific leadership niche but want to work with a partner on the design and operation of a program.
- Finally, some foundations develop and run leadership programs themselves.

Each approach has advantages and disadvantages that need to be considered in light of the goals of the leadership program and your organization's overall values.

When does it make sense to support existing leadership development programs? Many existing programs provide opportunities for grant makers entering the field to accomplish their leadership objectives. You can find short profiles and links to a number of existing leadership programs through the directory at www.leadershiplearning.org. Some of the advantages of supporting existing programs include:

- **You can build on a known track record.** Existing leadership development programs have a record of accomplishment and established

alumni networks. As one grant maker suggested, “Look at programs that are out there that could bring a lot of added value because they already have national networks. Even if a program does not exist to address a specific focus, maybe it could be developed as part of an existing program that already understands leadership development.”

■ **Working with established organizations can be efficient.** It may cost less to support an existing program that already has infrastructure, systems, and connections to communities or fields you want to support than to start a new one.

■ **Good programs need support.** Funding existing programs or working with established programs to adapt their work to your needs will help strengthen the field of leadership development. The manager of one such program observed: “We face significant funding challenges,

because typically foundations invest in and brand their own leadership programs and then don’t invest in existing programs, because they already do leadership development.”

When is it helpful to work with a leadership development intermediary?

Contributors chose to work with intermediaries for several reasons:

■ **It can reduce the administrative burden.** Running a leadership program is time-consuming and can be complex. Administering programs is not part of the experience or culture of many foundations, but an intermediary may already have the staff and systems in place to do it.

■ **Partners can add value.** In addition to administrative capacity, an intermediary can bring program development experience, a leadership curriculum, training resources, and a diverse staff. Intermediaries can often develop a more candid relationship with participants and can be more available to them for advice and technical assistance.

■ **Distance can be helpful.** Establishing an intermediary as a bridge between the funder and the leadership program can help to create a “safe space” for program participants. This is especially helpful when the funder is located in the same community as the leadership participants.

One grant maker describes the benefits and challenges of working with a partner this way:

“If you are really going to hand it over, you have to trust the coordinating agency. We don’t have much time for

Working with intermediaries.

What has been your experience with different types of intermediaries — nonprofit support centers, universities/academic centers, etc.? What are the pros and cons of each as an intermediary? To share your thoughts, send us a note through our Web site at: www.grantcraft.org/contact.html

SELECTING INTERMEDIARIES

Most grant makers use a competitive RFP process to find and identify partners. Common values are very important among the selection criteria. Grant makers also consistently stress the importance of selecting a partner with the ability to recruit and work with diverse groups. As one grant maker described the decision, “We picked our partner because they were very diverse and close to the ground, with the ability to generate a pool of candidates who were not the usual suspects.”

Another concern is the extent to which leadership development is central to the intermediary’s mission. One grant maker observed, “We wanted to make sure that this program was at the core of their interest and not an ‘add on’ that would take them in an entirely new direction. We developed a list of 23 potential partners and invited this group to apply. We got 19 proposals and went through a selection process. We selected four and looked for those who also brought resources to the table, especially with regard to outreach.”

day-to-day design work, so our function is to brainstorm and to act as checkpoints. We meet every three months on the latest design work. It is difficult to find the right people to do it in the way that you, the grant maker, think it needs to be done, because any institution that is strong has its own culture and experiences. It takes real stretching to find the common ground.”

But working with an intermediary can also reduce opportunities for the grant maker’s own firsthand learning.

Observed one grant maker,

“The biggest downside to working with an intermediary is that it creates a unique and ambiguous relationship, because the person directing the program is not a foundation employee.”

Should you run a leadership development program as an operating program of your own organization?

Although operating a program within a grant-making organization is labor intensive, a number of contributors to this guide have chosen this route and describe some of the advantages:

■ **Building connections is easier.** The leadership program participants and grant makers develop a much closer relationship and a greater understanding of each other’s interests.

■ **The leadership program can be a source of human capital.** It can be a great training field for potential foundation consultants, staff, and board members. Over half of the members of one foundation board were graduates of leadership programs sponsored by the foundation. The program can also provide staff development opportunities for those close-

est to the program and foundation-wide, and an opportunity for firsthand learning about issues on the ground.

■ **Operating it yourself gives greater control and more opportunities for learning.** By keeping the program close, especially during the development stages, the grant maker has more control over the extent to which the program design and delivery will reflect the funder’s values, principles, and desired results. A more hands-on relationship also gives the grant maker more opportunities for firsthand learning from program participants.

They can be eyes and ears for the grant maker in identifying important trends, innovations, models, and potential grantees. This closer connection can be helpful to leaders as well, potentially giving them greater access to the foundation’s financial resources and contacts.

■ **There may not be other options.**

There may be no other organizations in a specific region or field that can provide the needed level of leadership development support.

One grant maker shares advice about deciding on the right approach:

“Distinguishing work that is ‘mission critical’ or not may determine how close you want your leadership program to be and how much input you want to have over it. Our program is seen as signature work of the foundation. If you give it to a grantee, it becomes their program funded by you. You need to decide early on: How do you want it to be known? How much influence do you want to have?”

COST AND TIME INVOLVED

How much time and money is it going to take? Several contributors felt it was important to emphasize the foundation's values when assessing the effort and costs of investing in leadership development.

The amount of grant-making resources that leadership development programs demand – that is, the amount of **program staff time and money** – will depend on a number of factors. These factors include:

- **Operating structure.** Running a program in-house will be more labor intensive than making a grant to an existing program or contracting with an intermediary. But a number of contributors caution against trying to reduce costs and time by underfunding intermediaries or existing leadership programs. They note that if it is labor intensive and costly for a foundation to run a leadership development program, it will also be

costly for their partners. Contributors consistently underscored the importance of investing for the long haul.

- **Level of interaction with program participants.** Even when using intermediaries, many grant makers maintain a high level of interaction with the program because the personal contact with recipients is rewarding. The design and selection periods may be the most intensive periods of involvement, but coaching, training, and alumni relations may also require staff or volunteer time.
- **The financial awards offered.** The awards to the individual participants and/or their organizations are potentially one of the most costly components of a leadership development program. Programs that provide the funds to help participants to implement a new program or service, or to create a new organization, require significant resources.
- **Geographic focus.** Decisions about whether to draw leaders locally, regionally, or nationally have cost implications for travel and lodging expenses, as well as for the recruiting and selection process.
- **Scale of the program.** The number of participants, the number of times participants are convened, and the duration of the program are other factors with cost implications.

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Planning for the future. In addition to charging fees to participants, are there other methods grant makers or program operators have used to sustain leadership programs beyond the initial funding period? To share your thoughts, send us a note through our Web site at: www.grantcraft.org/contact.html

SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

Experienced grant makers advise that you should begin thinking early about how and whether a leadership program will continue to operate over time. Many grant makers make a long-term commitment to support the work of the intermediaries that operate their leadership programs. Others encourage the intermediaries to diversify their funding base. This can be difficult if a leadership program is already seen as the signature program of a single foundation

When the plan for the program is ultimately to be funded by diverse sources, it may be helpful to approach other potential funders at the very beginning. This will broaden the ownership of the program and enable funding partners to help design a program that meets their needs and program interests. Before launching a new program, one grant maker investing in regional community leadership initiatives asked local community foundations if they would consider supporting the intermediaries if the program was achieving its objectives.

How to recruit and select participants

Whether you are planning to create a leadership program yourself or to work with an existing program, recruitment and selection of participants are important variables with the power to shape the outcomes of a leadership development program. The pool of applicants and the choices you (and your partner) make among them should reflect your specific goals for the leadership development program, as well as the overall goals and operating style of your organization.

- **For example, if your goal is to enhance the skills, status, or effectiveness of leaders and their organizations,** you may want to recruit participants from among your own organization's grantees as a way to narrow the field of potential candidates.
- **If the focus of your leadership program is to provide leaders with opportunities for renewal and reflection,** you may want to target experienced rather than emerging leaders.
- **Grant makers for whom leadership development programming is an opportunity to support grassroots work** will need to adopt, or encourage their partner to adopt, recruitment and selection strategies that identify community leaders who may be unknown to them.
- **Similarly, if your goal is to increase the diversity of leadership in a field,** you or a grantee partner will need to find recruitment and selection strategies that reach beyond the usual circles. (See *Looking for Applicants Outside the Usual Circles* on page 22.)

- **If you want to encourage interdisciplinary approaches to solving social problems,** your recruitment and selection process would be designed to yield a cohort of leaders from diverse disciplines and settings.

While most contributors agree that a strong pool of applicants is desirable, experienced grant makers warn that reviewing every application you receive can be slow and costly. One contributor described her surprise when the recruitment process generated more than 3,000 applicants for 20 places in her foundation's leadership program. Before opening up the recruitment process, it is a good idea to think about and plan for how you will manage the response to the applications you get. To reduce the burden on both applicants and reviewers, some leadership programs use a two-tiered approach, with a short initial application form at first, and then a more extensive application for a smaller pool.

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

These are some of the strategies for recruitment and outreach that our contributors recommend:

- **Use nominators with expertise in a particular field.** For programs targeting a specific population or set of issues, the use of nominators with expertise or contacts in that community or field can help narrow the search for appropriate candidates. A number of grant makers rely on their own grantees, program alumni, and well-known community-based organizations to generate nominees. A nominations process has the advantage of being

THINKING ABOUT THE COHORT AS A WHOLE

As you design a recruitment strategy, it's important to think about the factors that contribute to a cohesive group, including some common level of experience. One participant, reflecting on a recent leadership program experience, observed that "the level of experience of the participants was too diverse. All were executive directors, but some were new and had no previous experience. I felt more like a mentor, and that I was contributing to others, rather than getting something out of it. It was a big investment of time compared to what I got out of it."

LOOKING FOR APPLICANTS OUTSIDE THE USUAL CIRCLES

Contributors to this guide suggest some of the following techniques to recruit outside the usual circles:

- Expand your search to include community colleges and community bulletin boards.
- Recognize that not every good candidate has the skills to produce a good proposal or application. Hold technical assistance seminars to help them with the application process.
- Personalize your recruitment by visiting with organizations doing good community work and asking them for recommendations.
- Ask for help from a diverse pool of grantees.
- Be sure that your partners, application readers, nominators, and selection committee reflect the diversity you want to achieve.

Open application or nominations? GrantCraft is interested in your experiences with using open applications versus nominations. Let us know how each of these two strategies met your program goals. To share your thoughts, send us a note through our Web site at: www.grantcraft.org/contact.html

a way to control the number of applicants. It also is a mechanism to identify people who would not learn about the program through typical outreach avenues and who might not see themselves as leaders, or who might need additional encouragement to apply. Many of the grant makers who used nominators also publicized their programs and encouraged self-nomination. One contributor identified an additional benefit to using nominators:

“Then participants are nominated by someone who knows their work, we have someone we can go back to later for their feedback. We can ask them about changes in the participant’s organization and leadership.”

■ Conduct an outreach campaign:

A number of contributors use an open recruitment campaign and distribute applications through community-based organizations, other foundations, nonprofit management centers, universities, Web sites, leadership development networks, and former program graduates.

■ Target your recruitment to increase the diversity of your pool.

Many contributors described the need to recruit a diverse pool of participants as core to their values and to the accomplishment of their program goals. They underscored the need to create new pipelines as part of their recruitment campaigns. As one grant maker explained, “To develop a deep understanding of what divides communities and come up with innovative ways of solving problems, you have to include folks

that are legitimate representatives of their communities.”

Another grant maker described how program participants applied their understanding of diversity to benefit the leadership program:

“We did not get the diversity we wanted in our first applicant pool, so we asked one of the teams to take this on as their project. They changed the materials to include photos of who we wanted to recruit, they looked at outreach and developed new mailing lists, and they looked at our language.”

- **Make the application process “user friendly” and accessible.** Consider making the initial inquiry very short, with an expanded application issued to a smaller number of candidates, and consider translating the application for people whose first language is not English.

SELECTION PROCESS

Grant makers or their grantee partners typically use teams of advisers or readers to help them choose among applicants. Readers may include their own program staff, field experts, program alumni, community representatives, academics, and representatives of intermediaries and of other foundations. Advisers may be paid as consultants or serve as volunteers. They may meet as a group or provide feedback individually. Sometimes it is helpful to use a score sheet or other methods, such as having more than one reader for the same application, to make sure the review is evenhanded. (See the GrantCraft guide *Using Competitions and RFPs* — page 11, Working with

Advisers – for a discussion about advisers and their roles.)

How will you handle interviews?

Contributors commonly used advisers to conduct interviews of individual applicants, and some look for additional information about how candidates will behave within their cohort.

For example, some grant makers use a group problem-solving exercise in the selection process. It can show who works well in a group, who is inclusive, and who leaves people out. The benefit of this exercise, according to one grant maker, is that, “there are some folks who are used to taking charge and others who will follow. It shows who works well together, who has the potential to work well together, and who leaves who out.”

The interview process itself can be of benefit to the applicants. For example, one program conducts interviews over a two-day period. When not being interviewed, applicants spend time with each other and hear from expert speakers.

What about those not selected?

The application process is likely to generate many more strong applications than you can support. Are there other ways to work with applicants who aren't chosen for the leadership program?

To share your thoughts, send us a note through our Web site at: www.grantcraft.org/contact.html

SHOULD YOU RECRUIT INDIVIDUALS OR TEAMS?

There has been some debate among leadership development practitioners about whether the practice of selecting individuals for leadership development programs is divisive to communities because it may be perceived as anointing leaders and recognizing a few individuals for the collective contributions of many. Some contributors also expressed concern about the potential loss to organizations if leadership program participants use their new skills and networks to leave their organizations and advance their careers. Others view the transition of leaders to new roles as a sign of their increased influence and leadership success.

Grant makers have responded to this debate about the dangers of uprooting or singling out leaders by adopting a variety of strategies:

- Looking at leadership as a collective effort within a community. Leadership programs that acknowledge the community context for leadership reflect the reality of how work actually gets done. As one grant maker observed, providing learning opportunities to individuals may allow them to apply their new skills on behalf of social change, but “some participants also report their frustrations as the lone voice for change in resistant organizations.” By selecting teams in communities where there is already broader support and readiness for change, this grant maker hopes give participants a greater chance of achieving their goals.
- Focusing on systemwide leadership. One grant maker described a program that provides leadership development for teams of people engaged in key systems within a community, like education or health care. This approach enables participants to see themselves as working for change within a larger field.
- Locating opportunities to support shared leadership. There may be other ways to broaden the reach of a leadership program. “Even where individuals are chosen,” said one grant maker, “we decided to have them invite two additional people from their programs to attend the four meetings.”

On the other hand, there are times when bringing people together from the same organization can make it difficult to have a candid discussion because of power dynamics among trustees, executive directors, and staff. One grant maker held a focus group to decide whether to support an individual or team approach, observing “we thought you might need a few people to implement change.” Based on the discussion, this grant maker decided to support an individual model, because “people speak more freely than they would with colleagues present.”

Research and evaluation issues: What do you want to learn?

EVALUATING IMPACT: APPROACHES, METHODS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation commissioned a review of the evaluation experiences of 55 leadership development programs, and identified some of the ways that these programs evaluated the outcomes and impact of their work with leaders.¹

For excerpts from this report, as well as a link to the complete text, go to: <http://www.grantcraft.org/catalog/guides/leadership/links.html>

¹ **Evaluating Outcomes and Impacts: A Scan of 55 Evaluations.** By Claire Reinelt, Development Guide/DDI, August 2002.

WORKING WITH PRACTITIONERS TO CO-PRODUCE KNOWLEDGE

“Our focus is to understand the work that leaders do rather than try to understand the characteristics that leaders have.”

Sonia Ospina, Associate Professor of Public Management and Policy
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School
of Public Policy, New York University

Bringing scholars and practitioners together to co-produce knowledge is a new approach to bridging the gap between leadership theory and practice. To learn more about this approach and an example of how it has been implemented by Ospina and colleagues, go to: <http://www.grantcraft.org/catalog/guides/leadership/links.html>

Research and evaluation can help grant makers to understand whether leadership development programs are effectively designed and implemented, and whether they are having the desired effects. As a grant maker in youth development put it, “The big question is how do you know what works. In the long run how will we know if our work with fellows has had an impact on the kids and families? It is important to figure out how you would define success, what would be some of the proxy indicators that you would use so that you know whether what you are doing is making the kind of difference you want to make.”

Research and evaluation also help in pinpointing what factors contribute to successful leadership, and what leaders need in order to function effectively. In this regard, useful research may take the form not just of scholarly inquiry, but reflection on practical learning as well. For example, one contributor described drawing from the work of leadership program participants to develop learning in the field: “A major element of our program is the research piece. Our decisions about how to do it, and insistence that it be practitioner informed, came from concern that literature [about leadership] is not always useful because it is not grounded in practice and does not reflect the complexity of practice.”

As you think through what kind of learning about leadership development you want to accomplish, experienced grant makers recommend that you consider such questions as:

■ **What are you trying to achieve through your leadership investment?** Deciding up front what kinds of results you want (for example, individual, organizational, community, or field impacts) will help to frame the evaluation questions and suggest indicators of success. One grant maker framed these questions this way:

“Making an investment in individuals means we are not making program service grants. So the litmus test is, how do you show results? This isn’t like making a service grant where you show the number of people served and the board thinks it’s swell. How do you show that investing in people for \$200,000 is as valuable as the services you could have bought?”

■ **Who is the audience for the learning or evaluation?** Is it the participants themselves, the staff implementing the program, the grant maker’s board of trustees, or a broader audience outside your organization? Different audiences may have different needs for information.

■ **What approaches, methods, and sources of information are most suited to the type of learning you need to do?** An evaluation that seeks to document the program’s impact on social change in the larger community will ask different questions and use different approaches than one that tries to document personal change experienced by individual leaders.

Additional ways to support leaders

There are many ways to support grantees' leadership development needs, both on the individual and organizational level. Some of the ideas shared by our contributors about leadership development can also be incorporated into other parts of an organization's grant making programs and strategies, either instead of or in addition to more traditional leadership programs. Here are a few suggestions:

- Include funds in program grant budgets for leadership seminars, conference attendance, individual retreats, staff retreats, staff development, leadership coaching, field study trips, and travel costs associated with these types of activities.
- Make technical assistance and leadership development support, such as coaching, available to executive directors, staff, board members, and constituents.
- Review grants for their attention to individual and team development, and emphasize the importance of such issues in grant guidelines and in counseling applicants.
- Support organizations that pay attention to developing the leadership of their constituents and that promote them to significant board or staff positions.
- Recognize the work of exceptional grantees – for instance, through an award ceremony, newsletter, letter from the foundation president, breakfasts, etc.
- Support efforts to convene leaders across organizations by introducing grantee leaders to one another, by building opportunities for convening them into grant budgets, and by offering them foundation meeting space.
- Include a discussion of leadership in your organization's annual reports and program publications and on your Web site.

Communications strategies.

Do you have examples of effective ways that grant makers and program operators communicate with the broader public about leaders and leadership? To share your thoughts, send us a note through our Web site at: www.grantcraft.org/contact.html

Key lessons from grant makers

- **Be really clear about what you want to accomplish.** Before launching a leadership development program, it is important to identify what kinds of outcomes you hope to achieve, and at what level – individual, organizational, community, or field?
- **Consider working with an existing program.** It is important to think about how much ownership of the leadership program your organization wants or needs to have. Contributors to this guide consistently emphasize the importance of looking at what is out there and supporting it when possible. As one grant maker urged, “The field has really exploded in terms of numbers. Now we can’t name the programs. Don’t be territorial but collaborative. See what else is being done.”
- **Build internal support for your leadership development program.** Grant makers emphasize that it is important to build relationships between the staff and trustees of your organization and the leadership development program and its participants.
- **Pay attention to diversity** in staffing, partnering, selection, and curriculum. “Look at the various levels at which leadership happens. Think about the limitations of the ‘best and brightest’ approach. Without a new funding pipeline you won’t advance the community.” Adds another grant maker: “Diversify your staffing. It is of the utmost importance. You have to be the change you want.”
- **Invest in the alumni component** of your leadership development program. “There is an almost criminal under-use of the graduates of these programs as resources for social change. God forbid anyone should say there are 3,000 people in America, passionate around some education reform possibility, and that one could identify, communicate with, and mobilize them around some specific change opportunity! What a waste of a precious resource in the one society most organized around advocacy!”
- **Be prepared to make a long-term investment.** “Anyone who supports leadership development through funding needs to commit to a long-term experience to see the consequences, learn the lessons, and build critical mass.”

WHERE THE EXAMPLES COME FROM

This guide explores the experiences of grant makers and others who have supported leadership development in a variety of settings and reflect the practical wisdom they have acquired. More than 50 grant makers and leadership development program directors, intermediaries, and consultants generously and candidly shared their time, experiences, and learning about funding leadership development. Grant makers contributing to this guide came from large and small foundations and national, regional and community foundations. The ideas and suggestions they shared represent a broad range of leadership development program models in education, health, children and families, racial justice, youth and many other fields.

Other ways to use this guide

This guide was written not only for grant makers who may be considering grants in the field of leadership development, but for anyone interested in leadership and in ways of cultivating, improving, and promoting it.

Most efforts in philanthropy (maybe all) depend to some extent on the energy, vision, and skill of the people who lead them. So even if leadership development isn't a central objective of your grant making, this guide may be helpful as a lens through which to look at other fields of interest and to consider how your grants affect leaders and leadership in that field.

The guide could then serve as a springboard for conversations on that topic with other people who are important to your work (including the people you look to for leadership). For instance:

■ **With your board:** The people who lead your organization may have a distinctive perspective on the leadership of the causes they care most about, how effective that leadership is, and how your organization can contribute to making it better. The guide could help draw board members' attention to the possibilities of leadership development and raise questions for board and staff members to explore together.

■ **With grantees:** All grants affect leadership, though not all grant making is designed with that fact in mind. This guide could provide background for a discussion with grantees on how the grants they receive contribute to their own leadership, and how other grants support the people and organizations on

How did you use this guide?

Please let us know if this guide has been helpful to you, and if so, how you used it, with whom, and with what result. To share your thoughts, send us a note through our Web site at: www.grantcraft.org/contact.html

whose leadership they depend. The guide might even help grant makers solicit ideas and proposals for future grant making in this area.

■ **With colleagues, advisers, and outside experts:** If you are seeking advice on aspects of leadership, or looking for consultants, intermediaries, or others to help in shaping a leadership program, this guide might help you and them outline some issues to explore and begin formulating ideas.

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