

Our Steps to a Collaborative Grantmaking Fund

Setting up a collaborative grantmaking fund that acknowledges the opinions and expertise of local communities is not easy. However, bottom-up approaches can ensure that the delivery of resources is rapid and effective. Here are the steps we took to make that happen:

Step One: We Identified Philanthropic Partners

- Set up a financial mechanism via a 501(c)3 to accept donations. (Any group with 501c3 status should be able to establish a fund program)
- Establish an easy way for people and organizations to contribute and send out communications to various networks to begin accepting donations.
- If possible, identify regional partner(s) in advance of any disaster.

Step Two: We Gathered Available Resources

- Work with existing networks to identify available resources, local community based organizations, regional and local leaders and programs already on the ground.
- Enlist the financial support of local, regional and national foundations - working together to build one responsive and inclusive fund is more efficient than ad-hoc campaigns

Step Three: We Observed and Collected Information

- If possible, tour the affected area and gather first-hand accounts of the situation.
- Contact people on the ground and/or travel to the impacted region to get an understanding of the current conditions and specific needs of the residents.

Step Four: We Enlisted the Help of Local Advisors

- Identify trusted local advisors to determine priorities and oversee the distribution of resources and funds (Advisory Group Criteria and Conflict of Interest Policy)
- Make sure your advisors come from a diverse set of backgrounds, have varying perspectives and interests in the community (link to list of the first advisor list - if available)

Step Five: We Coordinated In-person Meetings of Advisors

- Gather Advisors on their home turf. Honor their time, and the fact they are dealing with putting their own lives and communities back together even as they work to help on the bigger picture.
- Meeting should establish fund priorities, set up the application and grantee guidelines and establish protocols that are sensitive to the activities of groups on the ground

Step Six: We Communicated, Received, and Disbursed

- Spread the word about the pooled fund within your existing network and ask partners to reach out to their own networks to begin the process of receiving grant applicants from local groups, programs and interventions
- Disperse emergency funds as necessary

Step Seven: We Moved Resources Rapidly

- Make process for application easy and accessible (online may or may not be best if access to computer for most grantees is not possible)
- Schedule one day (or two) to gather advisors to decide on grant recipients - remember time is of the essence; respect the time of your advisors and your applicants!

Step Eight: We Deepened Connections Between Local Advisors

- Social networking and relationship building is key to the legacy and long-term effects of the fund
- Encourage local advisors to meet and collaborate regularly, inside and outside of fund activities