



Time, Treasure, Talent, & Testimony: Giving by Women of Color in Chicago

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 2020

Written by BECOME: Center for Community Engagement and Social Change
in collaboration with Chicago Foundation for Women

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It is important that those who decide where resources go reflect the diversity and interests of the various communities these resources intend to serve in order to ensure they are allocated effectively. However, the decisions made around grantmaking and donations are frequently disconnected from the communities who could benefit most from resources and decision-making power, despite the skill, insight, wisdom, and motivation contribute to guiding resource allocation in their communities. Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW) seeks to address this gap by engaging communities (women in particular) of color as philanthropists within and for their communities.

At the core of the effort to improve diversity, equity and inclusion in fundraising is the need for any fundraising nonprofit to embrace cultural humility. Cultural humility seeks to rectify a history of exclusion in the field of philanthropy and build a constructive and loving relationship with communities.

Background and Purpose

Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW) is a community-based foundation investing in work that supports basic rights and equal opportunities for women and girls. It seeks to more deeply engage women/communities of color to increase resources going to communities of color and ensure donors reflect the communities served by CFW and its grantee partners. CFW partnered with BECOME: Center for Community Engagement and Social Change to conduct a formative evaluation to determine what drives philanthropic giving and volunteer time among women/communities of color and how to more deeply engage, expand, and sustain giving. CFW defines donors as people giving of their time, talent, treasure (i.e., monetary contribution), and testimony (e.g., educating or recruiting others through sharing their experience).

Data Sources and Methods

BECOME conducted a mixed methods evaluation using a Culturally Responsive approach, including document review, surveys, focus groups, and interviews. As part of the evaluation and in collaboration with CFW, they facilitated a community visioning session and convened a Committee for Community Engagement and Evaluation, a group of community and board members, who facilitated interviews and focus groups with colleagues, peers, community leaders, and community members. Committee members were trained on evaluation goals, purpose, methodologies, and data collection.


Through the evaluation, we answered questions around philanthropic drivers, building authentic relationships with communities, capacity building needs for the foundation, and donor supports to sustain this work.

Data was obtained from historical CFW documents; interviews and focus groups with 34 women of color; surveys completed by 541 CFW partners and their constituents, of which approximately 49% self-identified as women of color and 51% as European-American; interviews with three staff members; a strategy session with eight staff members; and one focus group with six Giving Circle and Giving Council members.

Key Findings

Findings from the evaluation can be interpreted through a broader lens of cultural humility - a mindset of openness, valuing, learning from, and responding to people and communities that are culturally different from one's own. Cultural humility is constituted by the following:

- ▶ Critical self-reflection
- ▶ Valuing the person/community
- ▶ Openness and learning from the community
- ▶ Building a relationship with the community

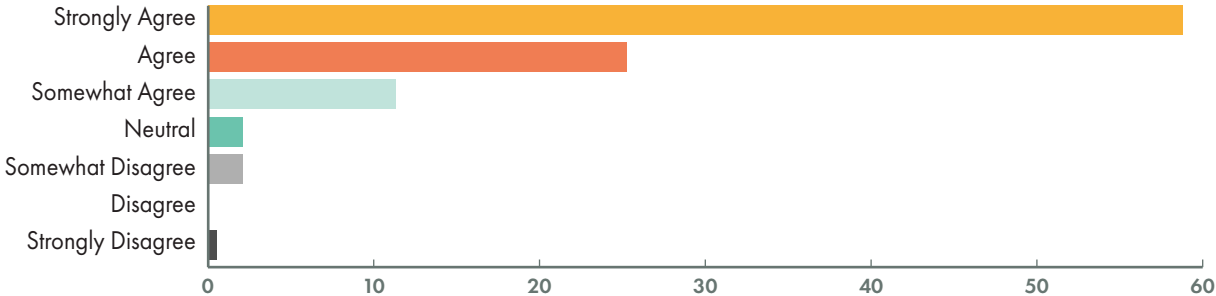


Philanthropic Drivers

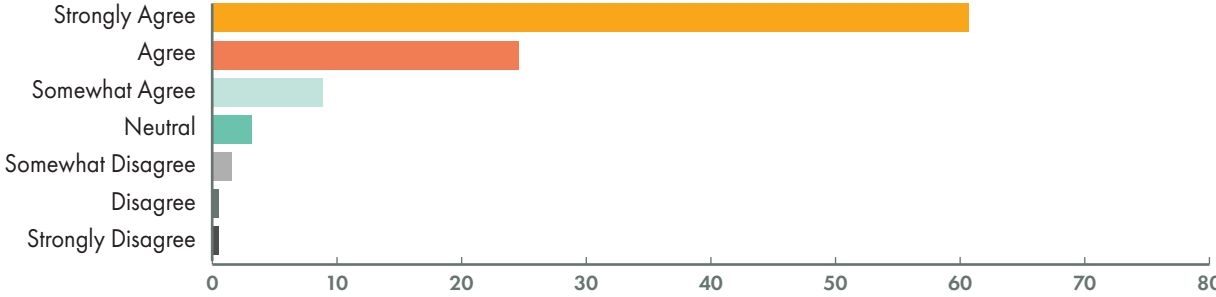
What factors and sources of information, and at what level of importance, influence decisions to give/what drives giving by women of color?

Most women of color agreed that they see donating as a tool for social change, as a way to advocate for causes that are important to them, and are more likely to donate to causes that impact them personally or their communities.

Survey Results:
I see donating as a tool for social change.



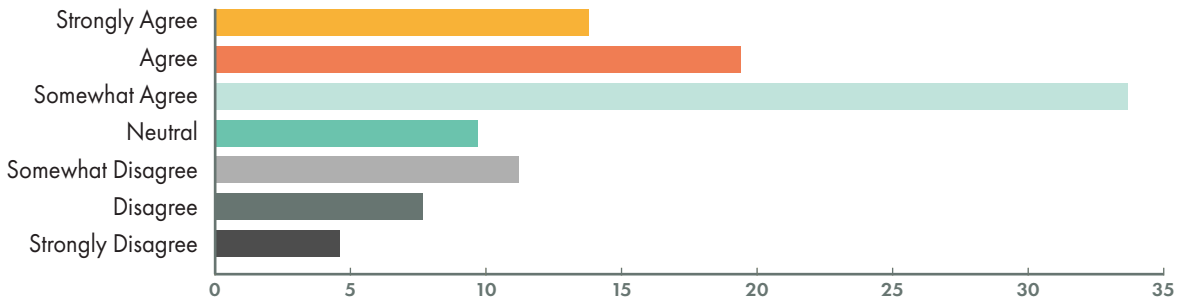
Survey Results:
I see donating as a way to advocate for causes.



Even with this commitment to broader social or community change, evaluation participants prioritized helping those closest to them and issues and organizations that have impacted them personally.

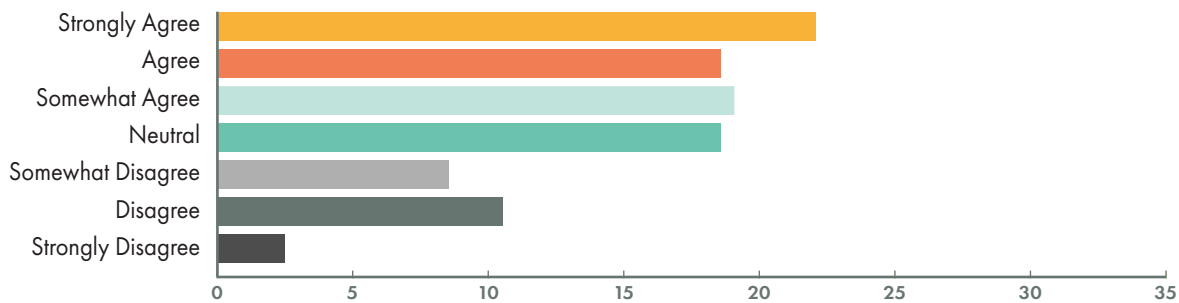
Survey Results:

I am more likely to donate to causes that have impacted me personally (i.e., illness in family, support for social justice cause based on your personal identity or community you grew up in.)



Survey Results:

I am more likely to give to a friend in need.



Women of color evaluation participants also prioritized donating to places of worship.

The top three giving priorities for women of color evaluation participants were education, race/equity, and health causes or organizations.

Most women of color who engaged in philanthropy indicated that they had positive experiences with donating money in the past.

Participant donors typically gave to organizations in the communities in which they live and work.

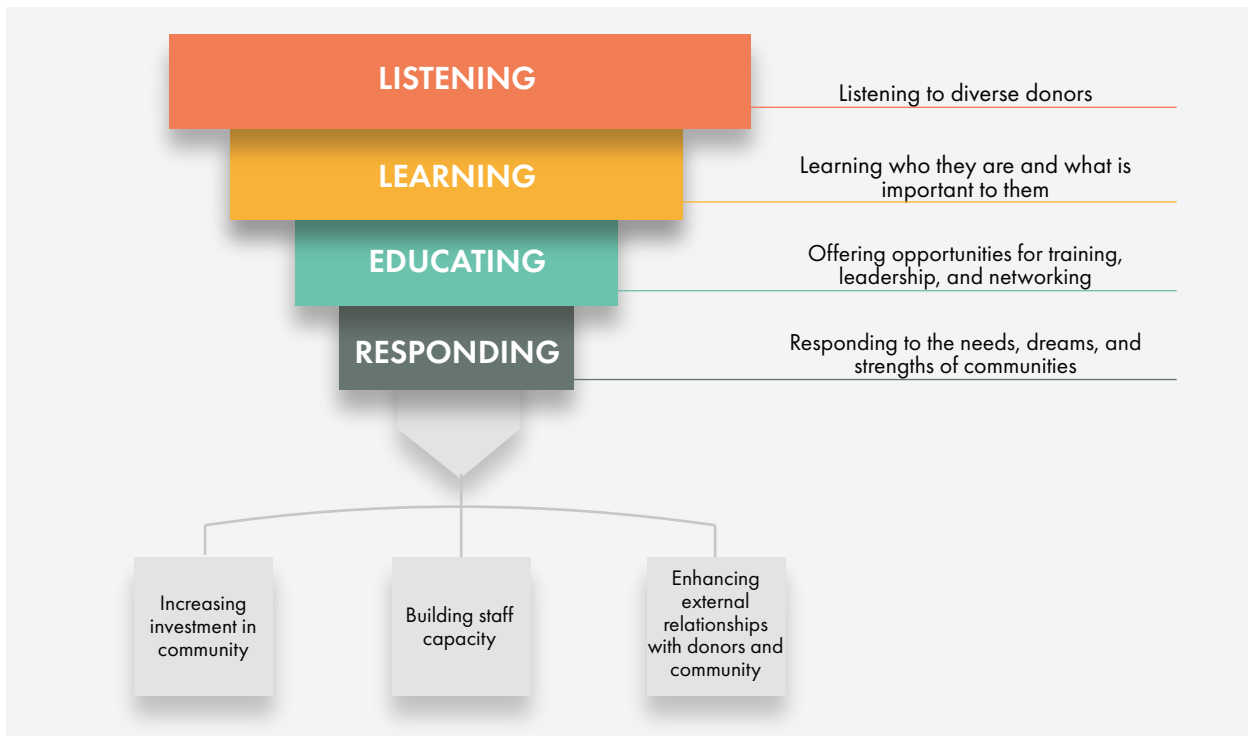
There was a strong sense that the leadership of the organization should reflect the demographics of the communities they serve.



Relationship Building

What does it take or what would it take for CFW to build lasting relationships and trust with communities of color?
How should CFW demonstrate its awareness and value for the whole person (i.e., the various aspects of identity for people)?

Listening to diverse donors, learning who they are and what is important to them, and responding to their needs can create mutually supportive relationships that can meet the goals of CFW and communities of color.



An organization’s awareness and emphasis on valuing the whole person and their intersectional identities can play a key role in decision-making around engaging in philanthropy. This is especially relevant for women of color given how their various identities have been used as a basis for marginalization.

Preferred Methods of Communication (most preferred to least preferred):

- 1 Through a fundraising event or an ask for donations made at an event
- 2 Someone I know personally reaching out on behalf of the organization/cause
- 3 A personal face-to-face appeal from a staff member of the organization/cause
- 4 A social media campaign, such as through Facebook or GoFundMe
- 5 An email appeal from the organization/cause
- 6 Doing my own research online through the organization’s website and resources like charity navigator
- 7 An appeal sent in the mail
- 8 A phone call

The need to build community and provide opportunities for networking also came through consistently; relationships that are mutually beneficial were important to the evaluation participants. They want to know that through their own philanthropy they can connect with other women of color leaders and community members.



Capacity Building

What are the capacity building needs at CFW in order to sustain and expand this work of engaging diverse communities in philanthropy?

The work of maintaining and expanding engagement of diverse community members as philanthropists included suggestions around how to be effective community ambassadors, which includes skills in deep listening and community engagement. Due to the focus on communities of color, knowing the overall sociopolitical context and how it influences them within the framework of structural racism is also key to successful engagement and relationship building. Structuring community ambassador positions to spend a significant portion of their time in the community with community members or organizations is a crucial foundation on which to build staff capacity.



Donor Supports

What are the additional supports (stewardship, training, education, etc.) CFW's diverse donors most need in order to sustain and expand this work?

The trainings in deep listening, community engagement, and structural racism mentioned above do not only apply to the staff and leadership of CFW, but also apply to CFW donors. This also requires expanding the perspective of donors and engaging them more fully outside of fundraising needs, such as potential community ambassadors or agents of community change. Additionally, donors need more information around who CFW is and what CFW does, especially for or with their communities.

Recommendations

Recommendations are structured in the frame of cultural humility, guided by the experiences and insights of the evaluation participants, analysis of the data, professional reflections on the evaluation process, as well as principles of community engagement.

Value the Person and the Community

Intersectionality

Once CFW defines for itself what intersectionality means to the nonprofit, use an intersectional lens at both personal and community levels.

Intentional communication

Seek out opportunities to engage diverse donors in preferred ways. Also consider what is conveyed in all communications (or the lack of), be it intentional or not, to communities of color.

Be Open and Learn from the Community

Learning requires person-to-person/group interaction, listening, and study of the historical and socio-political context of a community. CFW, as well as other fundraising nonprofits, should create more frequent opportunities to engage with and learn from communities of color.

Build a Relationship with the Community

To better understand and to build authentic relationships, there must be organizational infrastructure, time, and resources dedicated to relationship building.

Define community

A definition of community crafted by CFW and other fundraising nonprofits - one that is centered on the organization's priority population - will help to focus efforts and provide parameters around resource allocation and relationship building.

Appoint community ambassadors/ community liaisons and create subcommittees

Train community ambassadors and create subcommittees based on organizational goals and initiatives as extensions of the fundraising nonprofit. Consider developing different types of distributed community participation in the nonprofit.

Build ambassador capacity

Help community ambassadors and staff be representatives, advocates, and critical friends (e.g., a voice that holds the nonprofit accountable) for both the fundraising nonprofit and the communities they serve. Train advocates and staff on active listening, community engagement and organizing, and structural racism.

Agile organizational infrastructure

Adjust internal infrastructure to be more agile in collaborating with community ambassadors and responding to community needs.

Accountability and transparency

Follow through on commitments to communities, including long-term engagements, continuous learning activities (such as evaluation), transparency with communities around fundraising nonprofits' commitments, and consistent commitment of time and money to communities. Establish an accountability structure and process, including the identification and tracking of metrics of success, critical self-reflection, and community ambassadors serving on community accountability panels.

Critical Self-Reflection

Ensure regular collective reflection as an organization around how it is abiding by its values, how it conducts work in a culturally humble way, and around its individual and collective implicit bias.

Racial equity

Build staff capacity and ability to impact the work through regular, consistent, and intentional conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion, what it means for staff personally, and what it means to the

nonprofit. Conduct regular internal evaluation around progress or barriers to these types of goals and understanding and changes in long-term systems or structures.

All levels of the organization

Critical self-reflection is needed at all levels of the organization, from staff to Board of Directors, to have sustainable change and impact for both the fundraising nonprofit and the communities it serves.

Organizational structure and resources

Organizations must also allocate the staff and leadership time and resources to be a critically reflective organization.

Conclusion

This evaluation sought to answer questions about what drives philanthropy for communities of color and how a fundraising nonprofit can build relationships with and engage diverse communities to create agency and meet communities' needs. The women of color who participated in this evaluation expressed a desire for fundraising nonprofits to know and spend time in their communities, to build authentic relationships with community members, and to recognize the intersectional nature of their identities while taking into account the diversity within communities. They were motivated as donors by issues personal to their lives and that lead towards social change. They suggested using communications and fundraising efforts to build on these relationships between community members and the fundraising nonprofit and as opportunities for donors to network with each other. To help build connections between fundraising nonprofits and communities, participants suggested that staff and donors serve as community ambassadors.

However, to become a culturally humble fundraising nonprofit requires a specific mindset, policies and practices, and skillset. Building internal and donor capacity is paramount. There must be an investment of resources to create the authentic relationships with communities, especially communities that have been marginalized.

Both the product (i.e., data) and process of the evaluation show that taking the time and resources to invest in engaging communities of color in philanthropy can yield:

More informed choices around where to invest/give resources in communities of color (which has greater likelihood of having an impact that communities need and want)

More diverse voices and talent engaged with and working on behalf of the fundraising nonprofit and their communities