



THE HEALTH FOUNDATION  
OF GREATER CINCINNATI

**You talked.**

**We're listening.**

The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati places a large emphasis on evaluation because it shows us the progress we are making on achieving our mission. We ask our grantees to evaluate the projects we fund, and we also evaluate ourselves and our own work. We listen to the community regularly to see if we are addressing the region's important health needs. Community members serve on the advisory groups of each of our four focus areas. Each year, we take a critical look at our grantmaking and see how well the projects we fund match the strategies the advisory groups and the community helped us set. We also ask grantees for feedback about our work. In the past, we have done this ourselves. In 2004, we hired the Center for Effective Philanthropy, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, to survey our grantees from 2002 as part of a larger survey of foundations from across the country.

Through surveys of grantees of many foundations, the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) has identified a number of factors that come into play in the funder-grantee relationship. In the 2004 Grantee Perception survey of 3,513 grantees from 29 foundations, the CEP found that The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati ranked very highly on survey questions related to two of the factors most valued by grantees: "Quality of Interactions with Foundation Staff" and "Clarity of Communication of a Foundation's Goals and Strategy." Our grantees rated us above average throughout the survey overall. In addition, in its analysis report of our grantees' responses, the CEP noted that The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati was "Overall, an exemplary funder."

How did we stack up against the 28 other foundations in the survey? And what advice did our grantees give us on how we can improve our performance? The results are inside.

# Who Participated in the Survey

In March and April 2004, the CEP surveyed 3,513 grantees from 29 foundations on the grantees' perceptions of their foundation funders. The foundations ranged in size from assets of less than \$250 million to assets of more than \$500 million, and 8 foundations had a national focus and 21 had a regional focus. The foundations were:

- The Ahmanson Foundation
- Paul G. Allen Foundations
- [The Assisi Foundation of Memphis](#)
- [Baptist Community Ministries](#)
- Bradley-Turner Foundation
- Bush Foundation
- The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
- [Connecticut Health Foundation](#)
- Eden Hall Foundation
- [Endowment for Health](#)
- The William Stamps Farish Fund
- The GAR Foundation
- Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund
- [The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati](#)
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Kalamazoo Community Foundation
- W. K. Kellogg Foundation
- [Maine Health Access Foundation](#)
- The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation
- Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation
- Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
- New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- Omidyar Foundation
- [Quantum Foundation](#)
- [Rose Community Foundation](#)
- Surdna Foundation
- Victoria Foundation
- Wilburforce Foundation

Eight of the foundations were smaller, regionally focused health foundations (noted in blue). The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati's results were compared with the 28 other foundations and the subset of these smaller, regionally focused health foundations.

## How We Stack Up

The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati scored the highest of all 29 grantmakers in 3 of the 11 categories covered in this survey: interactions with grantees, clarity of communication of the Foundation's goals and strategy, and non-monetary assistance—the first two of which are a component of the factors most valued by grantees. We were the highest of the health foundation cohort on an additional indicator: impact on the grantee organization. As one of our grantees said in the survey:

*The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati is an incredible organization. They set a clear agenda with targeted program areas, and they really work with you to help you be successful. At the end of the day, it's all about resources positively impacting the community.*

Results of the 11 indicators follow. Recommendations from grantees on how we can improve are on page 6. For more information about the Center for Effective Philanthropy report, please visit our web site at <http://www.healthfoundation.org/gpr> or call 513.458.6621.

## Impact on Grantees' Fields

The “Field Impact” category of the survey looked at grantee perceptions of how much impact a foundation had on the fields in which the grantees work. Overall, we were about average compared to all of the foundations in this survey but were the second highest of the health foundations.

Within this category, grantees rated the foundations on:

- understanding of the fields in which the grantees work,
- advancing knowledge in the grantees’ fields, and
- the foundation’s effect on public policy in grantees’ fields.

The Health Foundation was the highest rated foundation overall on “advancing knowledge in the grantees’ fields” and the highest of the health foundation subset on “understanding of the fields in which grantees work.”

## Impact on the Community

This category from the survey asked grantees their perceptions of a foundation’s impact on their local communities. Our grantees perceived us to have a significant or positive impact, putting us on par with the other foundations in the survey. As one grantee wrote:

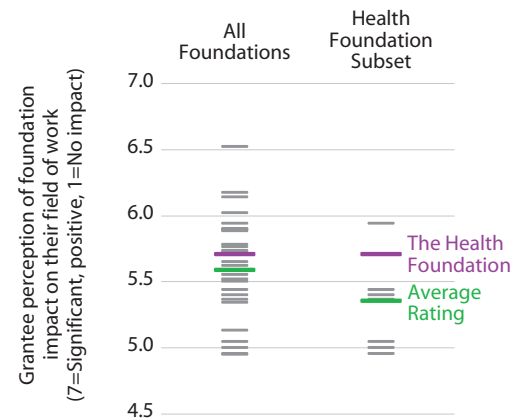
*The foundation’s staff is very knowledgeable, motivated and skilled in encouraging development of needed programs in the community.*

## Impact on the Grantee Organization

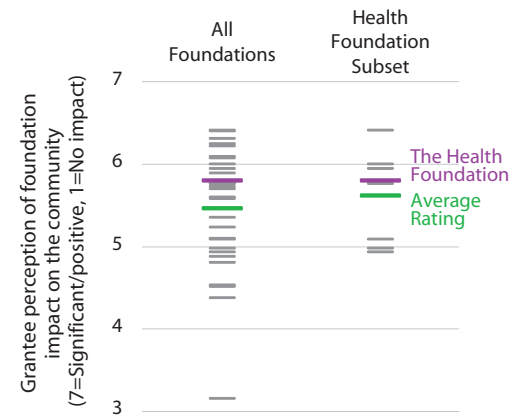
In this category of the survey, grantees rated the foundations on the impact the foundations had on the grantee organizations. This category included questions about how well the foundations understood the grantees’ goals, strategies, and socioeconomic context.

Overall, we were about average in our impact on our grantee organizations. Our grantees feel we have a good understanding of their organizational goals and strategies and a very good understanding of the ethnic and class context of their work. In addition, our grantees reported

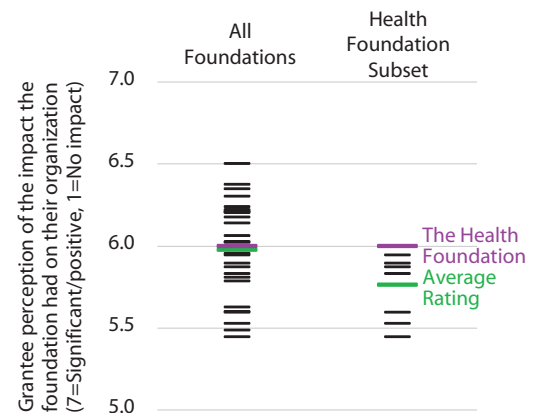
### Impact on Grantee's Fields



### Impact on the Community



### Impact on the Grantee Organization



that we are responsive to their organizational needs and that we have helped them:

*...to develop new services, to think about creating new lines of business, and to develop best practices in service delivery.*

## Satisfaction with the Foundation

Overall, our grantees were as satisfied with the Health Foundation as other grantees were with their own funders. We were above average compared to the health foundation subset.

One component of this category was how successful grantees regarded their grants from us to be in achieving expected outcomes. About 40% of our grantees reported that their grants met expected outcomes, and over 50% reported that their grants exceeded expected outcomes.

## Interactions with the Foundation

In this category, grantees were asked their perceptions of their interactions with the foundations. We were the highest rated foundation of all 29 foundations in the survey in this composite category.

Within this category, grantees rated the foundations on the following issues:

- how comfortable grantees feel approaching the foundation when problems arise,
- responsiveness of foundation staff, and
- fairness of foundation treatment of grantees.

The Health Foundation scored in the top 3 of the 29 foundations on the first two issues and in the top 6 on the third issue. In addition, we were the highest rated of the health foundation subset on “responsiveness of foundation staff” and the second highest of the health foundation subset on the other two issues.

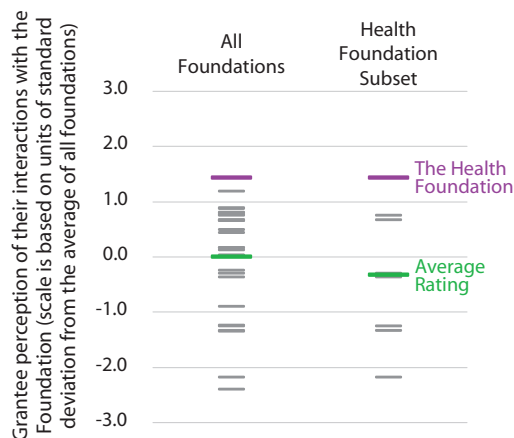
## Communication of Goals and Strategy

The Health Foundation was the highest rated foundation overall on grantee perception of the clarity of the foundations’ communications of goals and strategies.

### Satisfaction with the Foundation



### Interactions with the Foundation



About 70% of our grantees reported using published funding guidelines or our web site to learn about our goals and strategy. The vast majority of our grantees reported using personal communications such as individual communication (90%) or group meetings (80%) to learn about our goals and strategy. As one grantee wrote:

*Between verbal communications, letters, their web site, and their weekly e-mail, we usually have a pretty good idea of what's going on and what they consider to be important.*

## Non-Monetary Assistance

This category describes grantees' perceptions of the frequency and value of a foundation's provision of "non-monetary" assistance, or support and other assistance beyond grant funds. The Health Foundation by far was the highest rated foundation in this survey in this category.

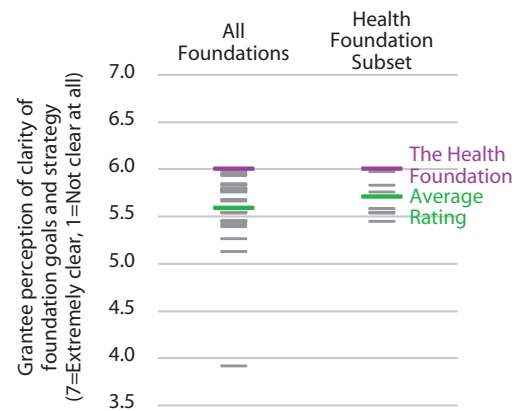
Over 90% of our grantees reported receiving some non-monetary assistance, including general management or strategic planning advice, development of performance measures, provision of research or best practices, seminars and convenings, health data assistance, and communication and marketing assistance. Overall, our grantees rated the non-monetary assistance they received from us as above average in helpfulness.

## Helping Grantees Secure Other Funding

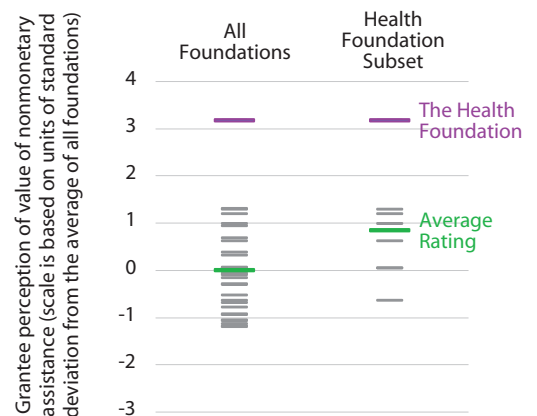
In this category, grantees rated the foundations based on their perceptions of a foundation's efforts in helping the grantees secure funding from additional sources. This included both the frequency of active foundation assistance as well as the impact of that assistance. Our grantees rated us above average in funding influence.

Over 60% of our grantees reported receiving active assistance from our staff in securing other funding. This assistance included suggesting other funders, sending letters of support, making phone calls, and attending meetings.

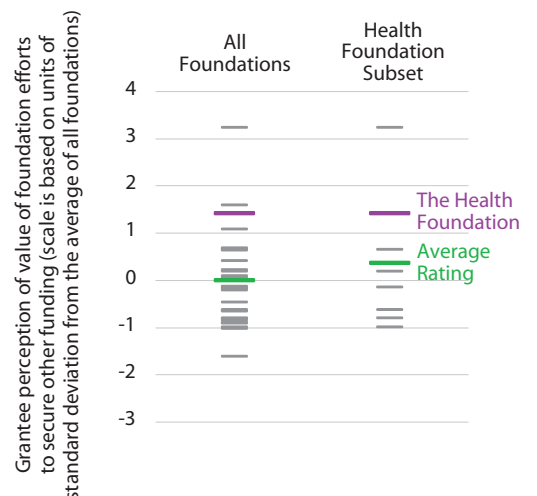
## Communication of Goals & Strategy



## Non-Monetary Assistance



## Assistance Securing Other Funding

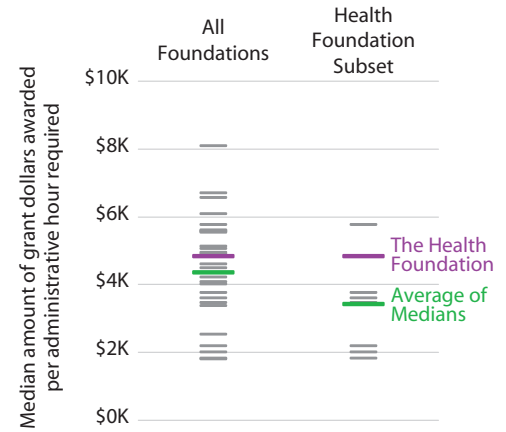


## Dollar Return on Grantee Administrative Hours

This composite measure reflects the dollar value of the grant divided by the total time necessary to fulfill administrative requirements over the life of the grant (proposal creation through evaluating and monitoring the grant).

The Health Foundation was at the median in this category compared to the other foundations. Although our median grant size was similar to other foundations, we require slightly more time than average on administrative requirements. However, we also tend to fund longer-term projects than other foundations in the survey.

## Dollar Return on Grantee Administrative Hours

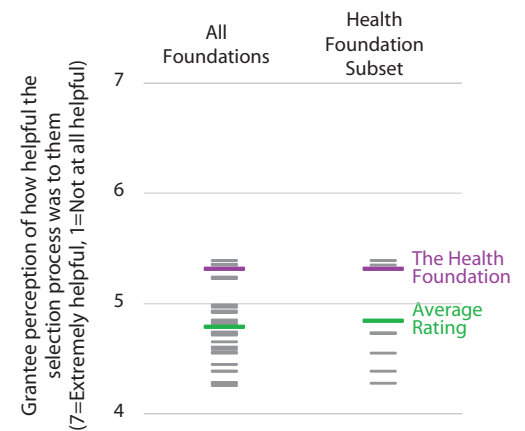


## Helpfulness of Selection Process

Overall, our grantees rated our selection process as above average in helpfulness and said we kept them better informed about the status of their request compared to most other foundations. Although we require more information (such as financial information, site visits, and letters of intent) during the application process, we also assist grantees in developing their proposals. As one grantee wrote:

*The Foundation's staff are always available to work with you and to provide guidance in making sure you produce a quality application for funding.*

## Helpfulness of Selection Process



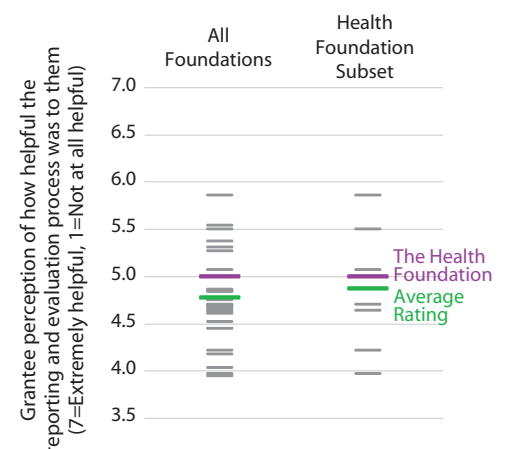
## Helpfulness of Reporting and Evaluation Processes

The final category in this survey rated grantees' perceptions of the foundations' evaluation processes. (Note: The survey defined "evaluation" as any activity considered by grantees to be a part of an evaluation.) Our grantees rated our evaluation process to be of average helpfulness.

All our grantees surveyed reported that their grants included an evaluation, and 90% reported that a member of our staff discussed their completed evaluation with them, the highest percentages in the survey. Grantees were also appreciative of the assistance our staff provides for evaluation and reporting:

*The Health Foundation [is] very thorough, and [has] the time, skills, and facilities to provide training on the process. The staff support has been absolutely phenomenal and valuable.*

## Helpfulness of Reporting and Evaluation Processes



# How We Can Improve

During the survey and through other interactions with Health Foundation staff, grantees have also shared ways we could improve:

- *Grantees feel the Health Foundation is more interested in our own goals and strategies than in the goals of grantees or potential grantees.* Because of the strategic funding model we have adopted, this is a valid perception. We have chosen four focus areas in which to concentrate our funding, and we do a limited amount of grantmaking outside of these areas. By funding strategically in these four areas, we feel we have a more effective impact than if we funded a hodgepodge of health projects.

At times, it may seem like we focus too much on our strategies and not enough on the needs of our grantees and the community. However, we developed our focus areas with community input and regularly return to the community for help in refining these strategies. And, we work with each grantee to make sure that the funded project will meet both our goals and our grantees' goals.

If you have a health-related project that you would like to discuss it with us, please contact one of our program officers at 513.458.6600. They are always available to listen to your ideas and can help determine how your project might fit into our strategies and what refinements might be necessary to make it competitive for funding.

To learn more about our advisory groups, which are made up of community members and help us shape our strategies, or to share comments or suggestions with us, please visit our web site at <http://www.healthfoundation.org/community>

- *Grantees are hesitant to approach the Health Foundation due to our focus on sustainability.* We focus on project sustainability to fulfill our mission: to “invest in enduring projects that improve...access to healthcare for all.” Our program officers are always open to discussing a project, even if it's unclear how that project might be sustained after our funding ends. Because we place such a high emphasis on sustainability, we help our grantees accomplish this as much as possible through multi-year start-up grants. Recently, we have begun awarding second grants to further assist start-up organizations, including challenge grants to give organizations a boost with fundraising.

Since we can't indefinitely support the projects we fund, we also help grantees learn to sustain themselves. One way we do this is through our capacity building program, which includes workshops, technical assistance, and other activities to help nonprofit organizations build the skills they need.

To learn more about our capacity building program, which includes workshops, staff consultation, and other technical assistance around fundraising, evaluation, sharing results with the community, data collection, and other topics, please visit our web site at <http://www.healthfoundation.org/capacity>.

- *Grantees have not seen that we've had an impact on public policy.* It is important to note that the Health Foundation cannot do or fund lobbying. However, for many of the projects we've funded, sustainability depends upon changes in federal, state, and local funding streams. During our first years of operations, we focused on building solid grantmaking and community partners and in understanding the areas in which we fund. Based on what we have learned trying

to improve access and quality in health care, we have started making grants that might affect public policy; this is an important next step in our evolution as a foundation.

- *Our grant administration requirements are sometimes burdensome and frustrating.* Through this survey and others we have performed, our grantees have told us that our grant administration requirements can seem overwhelming. Sometimes, different Health Foundation staff have given different answers about what applications or evaluation materials should contain.

At the same time, grantees find especially our evaluation process to be extremely helpful in gathering support from the community and other funders. Grantees also use and appreciate the assistance we offer to help them be successful in meeting these requirements.

To help reduce the burden and confusion, Health Foundation staff are working together more closely to make sure that our staff understands the components, requirements, and content of application and evaluation materials and to reduce confusion. We have recently revised our application and annual report materials to align them with each other and to reduce duplication and unnecessary work on the part of grantees. Program officers are also willing to work with prospective grantees to clarify what is needed, even before a proposal is submitted.

Although we try to make the grant administration process as easy as possible, we still require grantees to submit regular reports and a complete evaluation of their projects for two reasons. First, we want to make sure that the project is on track to succeed and that the money is being spent as it was intended so we can be good stewards of our endowment. Second, tracking outcomes during the evaluation allows grantees to demonstrate that the project is making a tangible difference in the lives of the people they serve. Having these outcomes makes it easier to approach other funders—including government departments, businesses, other foundations, and private donors—because grantees have evidence that their projects work. Along each step of the reporting and evaluation process, we support our grantees through workshops, one-on-one consultations, and other technical assistance. We are also available to talk with grantees and other organizations about our requirements and how they could be modified to make grant administration easier on our grantees.

To learn more about our capacity building program, which includes workshops, staff consultation, and other technical assistance around fundraising, evaluation, sharing results with the community, data collection, and other topics, please visit our web site at <http://www.healthfoundation.org/capacity>.

## We're Still Listening.

If you have questions or comments or would like to know more about The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, please feel free to visit our web site at <http://www.healthfoundation.org> or call us at 513.458.6600 or toll-free 888.310.4904. We welcome the opportunity to speak with you about our work and about how we can work together to improve health in our community.

