



EVANS SCHOOL
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COLLECTIVE
GRANTMAKING IN THE
PHILANOS NETWORK: A
RESEARCH REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

Philanos supports the creation, development, and expansion of women's collective giving to build women's philanthropic leadership and amplify the power of collective grantmaking. The Philanos network currently consists of 66 affiliates who have collectively granted more than \$125 million to nonprofits in their communities, with over 17,000 women engaged as members of these organizations.

This research report seeks to identify and characterize the philanthropic approach that underlies the expanding Philanos network. The report is based on a survey of all 66 Philanos affiliates, as well as interviews with the leaders of eight affiliates and several members of the Philanos executive team.

The Philanos Network is part of the collective giving movement that encompasses a wide variety of organizations in which individuals pool their donations and make collective decisions about how to grant that money to organizations in their community. Collective giving groups are composed of various types of organizations that include informal giving groups, loose networks of individuals, and formal organizations such as 501(c)(3) nonprofits.

We find that the Philanos affiliate network is characterized by a common commitment to a collective, democratic grantmaking process. This grantmaking process extends the collective giving model by pooling individual funds into larger grants and employing a collective strategic process to disburse funds to address community-identified needs. In so doing, affiliates develop women as philanthropists, create social connections, and contribute to community strength and resilience. Philanos affiliates seek to build women's philanthropic capacity by developing women's knowledge about how to identify community needs and strategically deploy resources to address those needs. This knowledge and capacity are cultivated through educational programming, pooling contributions, and engagement in deliberative grantmaking processes.

The cooperative effort and collective vision of Philanos affiliates is expressed through what we call "deliberative grantmaking." Deliberative grantmaking asks individuals to commit their own resources to a collaborative endeavor, define a focus for their giving strategy, and participate in a strategic and participatory grantmaking process that directs funds towards their strategic aim. Deliberative grantmaking also emphasizes the importance of the donor experience of giving and the possibilities for individual transformation that accompany the act of giving and the process of collective deliberation. Finally, deliberative grantmaking includes an orientation towards identifying community goals and responding to them, however community is defined. The strength of Philanos network lies in the possibilities for affiliates to adapt the collective grantmaking model to local context, local needs, and the interests and passion of individual affiliates and members.

Membership & Grantmaking

The average Philanos affiliate is almost ten years old, has roughly 240 members and makes about \$240,000 in grants each year. Philanos members are most often institutionalized organizations, with most operating either as 501(c)(3) nonprofits or as affiliates of a community foundation. While administrative arrangements vary, all are member-led organizations typically characterized by high levels of member engagement, extending well beyond

the dollar value of their philanthropic investment. Fifty-eight percent of affiliates report that two-thirds or more of their members are actively engaged in grantmaking, educational programs and community outreach.

Almost all affiliates employ a member-led, strategic grantmaking process to solicit applications, and evaluate potential grantees. All members usually have a vote in the final allocation of funds. Approximately 90 percent of Philanos affiliates have specific focus areas—issues or populations—they target with their grantmaking, but most affiliates define these areas quite broadly to create flexibility to respond to community needs.

The Philanos Network and Philanthropic Impact

Analysis of survey data and interviews with network leaders suggest that the Philanos approach is characterized by three key features: the power of women’s philanthropy, creating community through collective processes, and deliberative grantmaking for community impact.

Harnessing the Potential of Women’s Philanthropy Philanos affiliates seek to balance the goals of creating a positive impact in their communities with developing women’s philanthropic knowledge and grantmaking capacity. Philanos affiliates provide women with a place to connect, network, and develop relationships with one another, which allows women to amplify their voices. The deliberative strategy involved in collective grantmaking provides women with grantmaking experience and enhances their understanding of community strengths and needs.

Creating Community through Collective Grantmaking The transformative potential of philanthropy among Philanos affiliates comes from the collective setting in which the philanthropic endeavor takes place. The experience of active participation in the grantmaking process is a transformative experience for many members. Through deliberative grantmaking, members gain a deeper understanding of community issues and develop their ability to create a strategy for giving and assess nonprofits they are considering for funding. Nearly 70 percent of affiliates provide grant trainings to their individual members to educate them on areas such as strategic philanthropy and identifying community needs. In most organizations, the grantmaking process creates lasting relationships between members and local nonprofits.

Deliberative Grantmaking for Community Impact the focus on deliberative grantmaking among Philanos affiliates is integral to connecting, educating and empowering members—but is also central to strategies for creating community impact. All our interviewees expressed a common commitment to making their communities—however defined—better places. As independent organizations, Philanos affiliates have the freedom to fund organizations and programs that are new or trying an innovative approach to a community challenge that has not yet been proven. In this way, affiliates can serve as early or “proof of concept” funders. Many Philanos affiliates also expressed a commitment to listening to the community and maintaining the flexibility to respond to community needs.

Strength in Flexibility While Philanos affiliates share a common commitment to women’s collective grantmaking and community impact, individual affiliates craft their own strategy and chart their own course. This flexibility allows affiliates to adopt the grantmaking strategy that best fits their members and communities. Affiliates decide minimum and maximum giving amounts of members, the size, range and focus of their grantmaking activity, and the geographic scope of their giving. This flexibility allows affiliates to engage in deliberative grantmaking that adapts to member interests and community needs.

THE PATH FORWARD

While a number of collective giving groups were formed in the 1980s, these groups became a significant philanthropic force in the 1990s, with watershed moments such as the creation of the Washington Women's Foundation in 1995, and the formal articulation of the women's collective giving approach to philanthropy.¹ From the early roots of the movement, women's collective grantmaking now encompasses a wide range of organizations in the U.S. and globally.

As women's collective grantmaking grows in size and impact, Philanos affiliates are considering important strategic issues. A number of affiliates are evaluating their larger role in the philanthropic and grantmaking landscape in their communities, considering the ways they might share their experience and shape the trajectory of local philanthropy. Affiliates must also chart their strategy for membership growth and composition. While larger membership translates to more significant grant size or numbers, there may be tradeoffs between membership size and participation. As some of founding members approach retirement, affiliates are considering strategies to recruit a new generation of women philanthropists. Some organizations are also considering ways to diversify membership by increasing racial, ethnic, or economic inclusion.

What this report makes clear is that Philanos affiliates provide significant resources to support their communities, provide a means for women to grow as strategic philanthropists, and offer women the opportunity to connect with each other and their communities. The deliberative grantmaking strategy unites Philanos affiliates in a common commitment to articulating a strategic rationale for their giving, fostering inclusive participation by members, and directing collective resources towards community benefit.

INTRODUCTION

Philanos seeks to advance the women's collective giving movement throughout the United States. Collective giving is a form of philanthropy in which individuals pool their donations and make collective decisions about how to grant that money to organizations in their community. The Philanos network comprises 66 women-led collective giving organizations in 28 states, the District of Columbia, and in one other country—Australia.²

Philanos supports the creation, development, and expansion of women's collective grantmaking to build women's leadership and amplify the power of collective giving. While recent research has examined giving circles and other collective giving groups broadly (e.g., Bearman et al., 2017), this study seeks to further our understanding of Philanos affiliates. These affiliates are formalized groups driven by women that engage in collective grantmaking with the goals of creating philanthropic leaders and furthering the common good in the communities in which they work.

¹ *Washington Women's Foundation. Something Ventured: An Innovative Model in Philanthropy. Washington Women's Foundation: Seattle. 2002.*

² *This number includes one emerging affiliate that is still in the formation process and excludes affiliates that were a part of the network but are no longer members.*

The Philanos network is part of a larger movement of collective giving groups that pool funds, make grants, educate members, provide social benefits, engage members in volunteering and philanthropy, and maintain independence (Eikenberry, 2006). Research on collective giving characterizes these groups as collectives of individuals who jointly donate money to support organizations or projects and in which members have a say in how funding is given and which organizations are supported. (Bearman, Carboni, Eikenberry & Franklin, 2017, p.9). Collective giving groups provide a mechanism for members to engage in research on potential grantees, learn about grantmaking, and further their understanding of community issues. Typically, social interaction and collective learning form an important motivation for participation (Eikenberry & Bearman, 2009). Individual donation requirements are set by individual groups, often providing an avenue for individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and income levels to participate in making significant philanthropic investments. As a result, they are often described as a way of democratizing philanthropy (Bearman et al., 2017).

THE PHILANOS NETWORK AND COLLECTIVE GRANTMAKING

This project seeks to identify and characterize the grantmaking approach that underlies the Philanos network of affiliates. To do so, we used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data that included survey data of Philanos affiliates, as well as individual interviews with eight affiliate leaders and members of the Philanos executive team.

The strategies employed by Philanos affiliates sit at the intersection of three growing philanthropic movements: the rise of collective giving groups; the increasing force of women-led philanthropy; and the shift towards strategic and place-based philanthropy, which is part of what we term “deliberative grantmaking.” We use the term deliberative grantmaking to denote a set of intentional strategies employed by Philanos affiliates in pursuit of individual, social and community impact. Deliberative grantmaking involves individuals committing resources to a collective endeavor that directs funds towards a strategic aim with the goal of developing individuals as philanthropists and deepening the impact of individual giving. Deliberative grantmaking includes a range of strategic orientations towards collective grantmaking with a common orientation of creating community impact, however community is defined.

As shown in Figure 1, Philanos affiliates are positioned at the intersection of these three movements. This point of intersection defines the essence of women’s collective grantmaking. As our data and interviews show, women’s collective grantmaking is characterized by a collaborative, strategic orientation that builds on collective giving in a distinct way. Women’s collective grantmaking seeks to develop women as philanthropists, create social connections, and contribute to community strength and resilience. A distinctive feature of this approach is the focus on “deliberative grantmaking.” Deliberative grantmaking asks individuals to commit their own resources to a collaborative endeavor, define a focus for their giving strategy, and participate in a strategic and participatory grantmaking process that directs funds towards their strategic aim. Deliberative grantmaking also emphasizes the importance of the donor experience of giving and the possibilities for individual transformation that accompany the act of giving and the process of collective deliberation. Finally, deliberative grantmaking includes an orientation towards identifying community goals and responding to them. While Philanos affiliates range widely in size, scope and location, they share a common commitment to women-led, collective, deliberative grantmaking. The strength of the Philanos approach lies in the possibilities for adaptation of this central concept to local context, local needs, and the interests and passion of individual affiliates and members.

Below we provide a review of the literature on each of three pillars of the Philanos approach, then use survey data of Philanos affiliates and interviews with organizational leaders to show how the affiliates engage with and adapt the core elements of the approach.

Figure 1. The Philanos Network and Collective Grantmaking



LITERATURE REVIEW

COLLECTIVE GIVING GROUPS

Philanthropy affiliates are part of a growing movement of collective giving organizations. Recent estimates suggest that more than 1,600 collective giving groups and local chapters exist in the United States, approximately half of which have formed since 2010 (Bearman et al., 2017). Early research on collective giving organizations characterized them as “giving circles” and identified five key characteristics that defined them: (1) pooled funds that are collectively allocated; (2) education of members; (3) a social dimension with opportunities for interaction; (4) member-led governance and engagement; and (5) independence in grantmaking (Eikenberry, 2009).

While a few collective giving groups were founded in the 1980s, these groups became a significant philanthropic force starting in the 1990s. A key point was the creation of the Washington Women’s Foundation in 1995, which garnered national media attention and spurred expansion of women’s collective giving in the U.S. (Bearman, Beaudoin-Schwartz, & Rutnik, 2005; Washington Women’s Foundation, 2002). Collective giving groups have subsequently expanded across the U.S. (Bearman et al., 2017), as well as in other countries (Boyd & Partridge, 2017; Eikenberry & Breeze, 2018). Collective giving groups in the U.S. have engaged an estimated 150,000 people since their inception, contributing an estimated \$1.29 billion to nonprofits (Bearman et al., 2017).

From the early roots of the movement, collective giving now encompasses a wide range of organizations that vary along several dimensions, including the identity of their members, minimum contribution amounts, administrative structure, and giving priorities. Nationally, approximately 60 percent of collective giving groups are based on identity characteristics such as gender, race and ethnicity, and religion. Nearly half of these groups are women identified (Bearman et al., 2017). The vast majority of collective giving groups require some minimum contribution from members in order to participate in decision making, with the median required amount nationally at \$400. Collective giving groups also vary in their administrative structure: about half of collective giving groups are hosted by another organization, often a community foundation; eight percent are incorporated as 501(c)(3) nonprofits; and the remainder have either no independent legal status or belong to a parent organization. These groups have a wide range of giving priorities: 55 percent of these groups support human services, 54 percent support women’s and girls’ issues, and 52 percent support education (Bearman et al., 2017).

Researchers often categorize collective giving groups into three overarching types: small groups, loose networks, and formal organizations (Eikenberry, 2006; Eikenberry, 2009; Eikenberry & Bearman, 2009). In small groups and loose networks, expected monetary contributions tend to be lower, and decision-making is typically shared across participants. Member education about philanthropy frequently occurs in these groups, but generally happens informally; more emphasis is often placed on social activities. Groups organized as loose networks often have a core group of people who organize, plan, and make grant decisions, while other participants are active intermittently—typically through different types of fundraising events. Examples of loose networks include Dining for Women and Bread for the Journey (Eikenberry, 2006; Eikenberry, 2009; Eikenberry & Bearman, 2009).

Formal organizations, on the other hand, have more institutionalized administrative structures and decision-making processes (Eikenberry & Bearman, 2009). The vast majority of these formal organizations are either incorporated as 501(c)(3) nonprofits or hosted by a community foundation. Such groups often have a board,

committees, and even paid support staff.³ These groups also tend to have larger membership bases that contribute larger sums of money—often in the thousands of dollars—than small groups or loose networks (Eikenberry & Bearman, 2009). In determining how that money is distributed, most collective giving groups use a democratic process where each member has a vote in selecting grantees. Examples of these formalized organizations include Philanos affiliates, such as Impact 100 Cincinnati, and affiliates of the Social Venture Partners International (SVPI) network, such as SVP Seattle.

Collective giving groups typically provide a range of activities and learning opportunities in which members can be involved (Bearman et al., 2017). A recent survey found that more than 60 percent of collective giving groups provide social activities, and 58 percent provide opportunities to discuss funding recipients or current issues. Approximately 41 percent facilitate members in making site visits to the organizations they consider for funding, and 39 percent provide speakers or training on philanthropy (Bearman et al., 2017).

Previous research suggests that involvement in collective giving groups can impact participants in a number of ways. Participation in a collective giving group may spur members to be more thoughtful about their giving by encouraging them to have a social goal for their giving and to engage in research on the organizations to which they give (Eikenberry & Bearman, 2009). Members of these groups also report an increase in their knowledge about philanthropy, nonprofits, and community needs (Eikenberry & Bearman, 2009), as well as increased participation with nonprofit grantees through volunteering, board service, and additional fundraising (Rutnik & Bearman, 2005; Bearman et al., 2017). Additionally, while evidence is mixed, there is some research to indicate that participation in collective giving groups influences members to increase their total philanthropic contributions (Eikenberry & Bearman, 2009).

In addition to impacts on individual members, collective giving may also promote community building and the creation of social capital. Social capital, defined as bonding, bridging, and linking social connections among individuals, is associated with a number of positive community outcomes including trust in government and better governance (Putnam, 1993) and community resilience (Adler and Meyer, 2015). Most collective giving groups involve some face-to-face interaction and offer opportunities to participate in shared decision-making processes. Members participate in various types of learning activities and come together to deliberate over funding and other decisions, thus providing opportunities for democratic participation within the groups and building the civic capacity of members (Eikenberry, 2006). Through these learning and decision-making processes, collective giving groups help develop social capital within communities and contribute to a sense of community building. (Bearman, Beaudoin-Schwartz & Rutnik, 2005; Bearman, 2007; Eikenberry, 2006).

Philanos affiliates typically contribute to social capital and community building through their governance structures and grantmaking processes that involve members in managing the organization's priorities and selecting grantees. Through these processes, members learn about community needs and develop strategies to maximize impact, while developing social bonds with other members and nonprofits within the community.

³ All organizations incorporated as 501(c)(3)s are required by law to have a board. Some community foundation hosted organizations also have boards. Either organization type can also have a committee structure.

WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY

Women have a long history of being involved in philanthropy in the United States, but their philanthropic force has greatly strengthened in recent decades due to gains in income and education (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016; Women's Philanthropy Institute, 2010; Center on Philanthropy, 2007). The creation of the Ms. Foundation for Women in 1972 was one marker of modern women's philanthropy. The organization was created as a women's fund that would specifically support issues related to women and girls. Since then, women's giving has continued to grow through individual giving, women's funds, and collective giving groups (Mesch & Pactor, 2016). The formation of the Washington Women's Foundation in 1995 marked an important turning point in which women's philanthropic organizations began to see themselves as a means to support the wider community with their personal contributions.

Women's and men's giving differs in terms of how much they give and why they give. While women are often viewed as giving less than men, recent research suggests that women may actually be more likely to make charitable contributions than men and on average give more than men (Mesch, 2010; Simmons & Emanuele, 2007; Women's Philanthropy Institute, 2015; Mesch, Brown, Moore & Hayat, 2011). Furthermore, women's stated reasons for giving differ from men's. For example, among high net worth individuals, women are more likely than men to say that they give because their gift can make a difference, the organization is efficient, or they seek to give back to the community. Men, on the other hand, are more likely than women to give to an organization because it was an organization they had given to in the past (Center on Philanthropy, 2011).

Women's and men's giving also differs by cause. Women are more likely than men to give to causes such as health care, youth and family, religious institutions, international causes, and community organizations (Women Give, 2010). Women are as likely to give as men in the areas of education and the environment; there are no charitable subsectors where men are more likely to give than women (Women Give, 2010).

The drivers of these differences in philanthropic giving between men and women are not entirely clear. However, research suggests that there may be gender differences in empathy and altruism, prosocial motivation, and social context, and that these differences may affect philanthropic giving (e.g., Mesch et al, 2011; Eagley, 2009; Women's Philanthropy Institute, 2015; Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). As an example, women score higher on measures of empathy, and increased empathy is associated with increased giving (Mesch et al, 2011). Despite the growth in women's giving and the evidence that women have as much or more desire and capacity to give as men, however, women are still often overlooked as a philanthropic resource (Mesch, 2010).

Philanos affiliates seek to harness the potential of women's philanthropic capacity by developing women's knowledge about how to identify community needs and strategically deploy resources to address those needs. This knowledge and capacity are cultivated through educational programming, pooling contributions, and engagement in deliberative grantmaking processes.

DELIBERATIVE GRANTMAKING

The third pillar of the Philanos model is the use of deliberative grantmaking strategies in decisions about how to allocate pooled funds. This deliberative orientation parallels in many ways the rise of strategic grantmaking and strategic philanthropy in the broader sector.

As the formal philanthropic sector in the U.S. has professionalized, giving strategies have moved from a focus on “charity” that involved transferring resources of time or money to those perceived to be in need, to a focus on giving with a more transformational social purpose (Frumkin, 2006). The concept of strategic giving takes this focus on identifying and articulating social goals for giving and applies it to individual giving strategies (Frumkin, 2006). Strategic giving advocates argue that donors should define the value or social goals that animate their philanthropy and then articulate a strategic plan that aligns the donor giving vehicle, style and identity with these goals (Frumkin 2006). A key feature of the strategic giving approach is a focus on the expressive motivation and goals of the donors and the impact that giving has on the donor, as well as the grantee.

The “strategic philanthropy” approach builds on this strategy but has a much stronger focus on the impact of giving and grantmaking. This term is often identified with Paul Brest, the former head of the Hewlett Foundation, articulated in his book, *Money Well Spent* (Brest and Harvey, 2008; 2018). In this conception, strategic philanthropy implies results- and outcome-oriented giving with a focus on calculating and maximizing expected social return on philanthropic dollars. Strategic philanthropy, thus defined, puts a premium on identifying specific, evidence-based strategies for achieving specific and concrete philanthropic goals. The idea of venture philanthropy takes this further by focusing on long-term, system-level challenges funded through a combination of traditional grants and investments with expected returns (OECD, 2014). Both approaches put the focus on making investments based on the realization of clearly articulated social impacts.

Our concept of deliberative grantmaking incorporates this strategic orientation towards philanthropy. In our view, deliberative grantmaking asks those pooling funds to articulate a rationale for their overall giving strategy and to direct funds towards that aim. It also accommodates and values the donor experience of giving and the possibilities for individual transformation that accompany the act of giving and the process of collective deliberation. Approaches to philanthropic strategy often contrast giving “from the head” and giving “from the heart” and note that both are important motivations and concerns for donors (Frumkin, 2006). Strategic and venture philanthropy, on the other hand, seek to encourage philanthropists to “Give Smart” (Tierney and Fleishman, 2012). We view deliberative grantmaking by collective giving organizations as an important middle ground between the highly structured and rationalized approach of strategic philanthropy and approaches that center the needs and concerns of donors. As we argue below, Philanos affiliates employ deliberative grantmaking strategies that combine their passion for improving their communities with a concern for grantmaking strategies that maximize impact. The result is a form of philanthropy we term collective grantmaking.

METHODOLOGY

This report draws on survey data and individual interviews to better understand the characteristics of Philanos affiliates and to identify the features of the grantmaking model common to Philanos affiliates. We also identify a number of innovations and emerging trends among Philanos affiliates and the collective grantmaking movement more broadly.

Data on affiliate organizations were gathered through a Philanos online survey of affiliates. Organizational leaders, such as a board chair or executive director, completed the surveys. All 66 Philanos affiliates responded to the survey in 2018.

After an initial analysis of the survey data, we conducted semi-structured interviews with the leaders of eight affiliates. These organizations were selected to ensure variation across characteristics such as geographic location, age, size, and organizational structure. The leaders we spoke with were either the board chair, a founding/co-founding member, or the executive director. Interviews took place during July and August of 2018. We asked these leaders questions about their organization's mission, membership, organizational structure, grantmaking strategies, impact assessment, and participation in networks. One interview was conducted in person, and seven were conducted via phone or Skype. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and were recorded and transcribed. We then developed a qualitative coding system to identify themes among the responses.

FINDINGS

CHARACTERISTICS OF PHILANOS AFFILIATES

Philanos affiliates have collectively granted more than \$125 million to nonprofits in their communities, and approximately 17,000 women have engaged as members of these organizations.⁴ Affiliates made grants averaging a total of \$240,316 in their most recent fiscal year. The average membership fee is \$1,108, with \$1,000 being the median and most common donation required to join, considerably more than the median of \$400 among collective giving groups more broadly.⁵ The number of members in each affiliate ranges from 5 (an emerging organization) to 570, with average membership size being 239 members.

The average age of these affiliates is 9.5 years and includes organizations that are in the formation stage as well as long-established organizations such as the Washington Women’s Foundation, founded in 1995.⁶ Most of the member organizations are entirely volunteer run, but 19 of the 66 affiliate organizations have either part-time staff/contractor help or full-time staff.

Table 1. Characteristics of Philanos Affiliates

	Mean	Range
Grantmaking in Last FY	\$240,316	\$20,000 – \$1,019,000 ⁷
Number of Members	239 members	5 – 570 members
Membership Fee	\$1,108	\$150 – \$10,000
Age	9.5 years old	0 – 23 years old
Paid Staff	.35 FTE	0 – 4.5 FTE

Note: Means and ranges calculated using survey data of all 66 affiliates.

Members and Membership

Affiliate members are typically required to contribute a set dollar amount, which is pooled together with other member contributions to constitute grant funds. While most affiliates have a single amount required of all individual members, 21 percent of affiliates offer multiple membership levels—often as a way to attract members who might not have the capacity to give at higher levels.

⁴ Total granted is calculated from the total giving of each member organization since their respective inceptions and does not imply that all money was given during their membership time in Philanos. This number includes former members of the network.

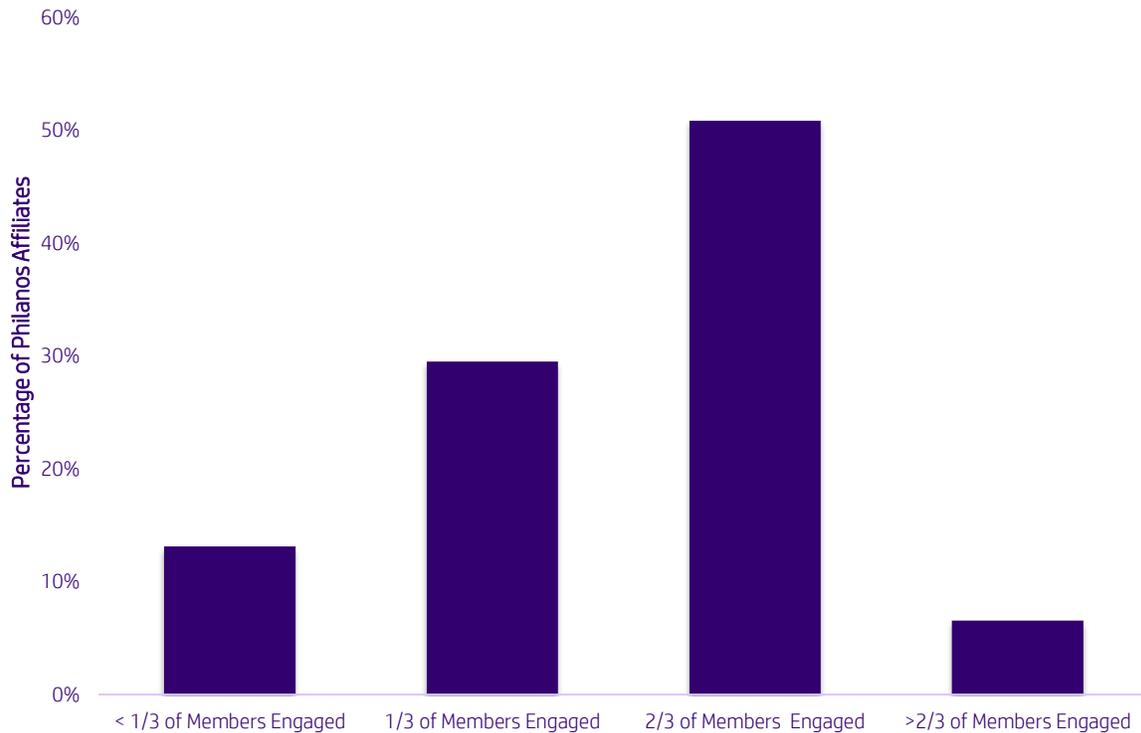
⁵ Thirteen affiliates offer multiple memberships levels at different giving levels. To calculate this statistic for Philanos affiliates, the lowest dollar amount required was used.

⁶ Age is defined as years since founding.

⁷ This range excludes new organizations that have not yet made a grant.

Individual members tend to be actively engaged within their collective giving group. Engagement includes a range of activities from participating on committees to attending educational events about philanthropy and community issues. As Figure 2 indicates, approximately 60 percent of these organizations report that two-thirds or more of their individual members are actively engaged.⁸

Figure 2. Level of Engagement Among Individual Members

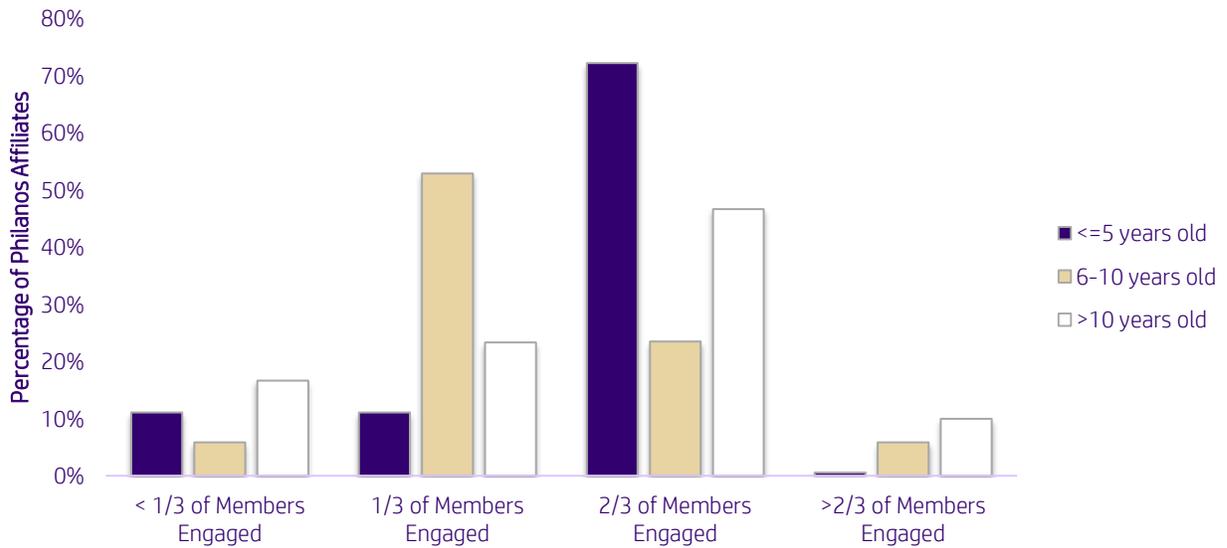


Through our interviews, we found that word-of-mouth recruiting is one of the most significant tools used for recruiting new members. Educational programming—where organizations bring in speakers to discuss community issues or philanthropy—is also viewed as an important recruitment tool, as these programs are often open to non-members. Retention rates among the affiliates we interviewed varied from about 65 percent to more than 90 percent, with organizations struggling the most to retain first-year members.

Levels of member engagement are highest in newer and in more mature organizations, as shown in Figure 3, suggesting that many organizations wrestle with member engagement as they grow but ultimately find strategies that support a high level of member engagement.

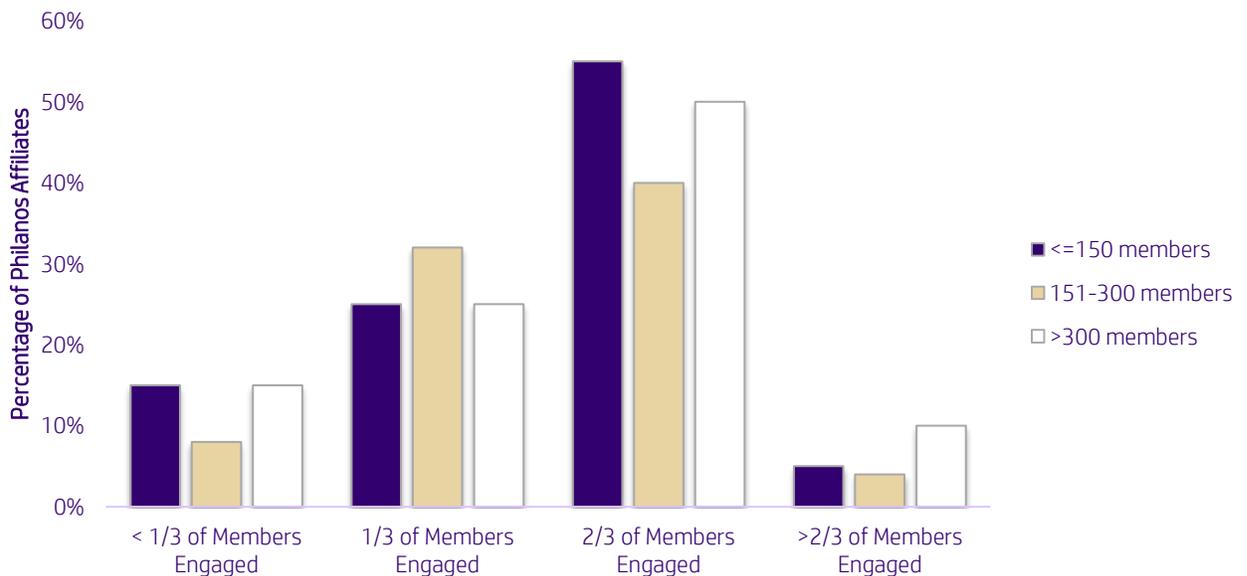
⁸ Active engagement was defined in the survey as those members who participate on a committee or attend more than one event or program per year.

Figure 3. Proportion of Actively Engaged Members, by Organization Age



While smaller organizations have high levels of member engagement, so do larger organizations as shown in Figure 4, again suggesting that organizations may evolve in their engagement strategies as the organization grows.

Figure 4. Proportion of Actively Engaged Individual Members, by Membership Size

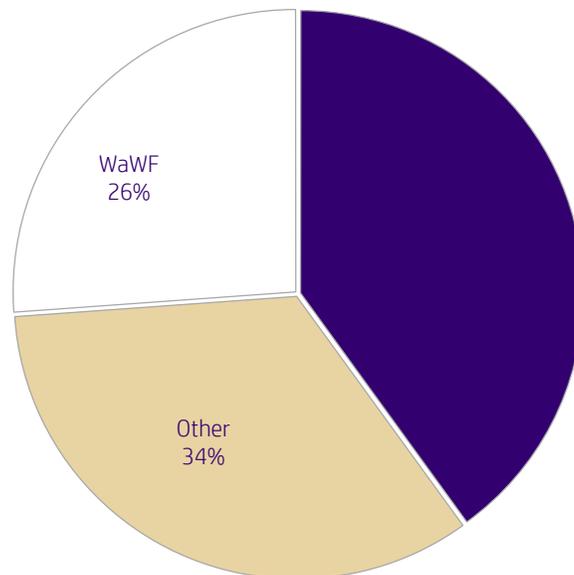


Organizational Structure

Grantmaking Model

When new women's collective giving organizations are formed, they often adopt grantmaking models from similar, existing organizations. A grantmaking model is the process through which individual member contributions are pooled, opportunities for giving assessed, and decisions made about grant recipients. The most common grantmaking model in the Philanos network is the Impact 100 model; 40 percent of Philanos affiliates identify as having adopted this model. Twenty-six percent of affiliates adopted the grantmaking model developed by Washington Women's Foundation, and 34 percent identify as either a grassroots giving circle or some other type of collective giving model.

Figure 5. Giving Models of Philanos Affiliates



Three Models for Women’s Collective Grantmaking

Washington Women’s Foundation

Washington Women’s Foundation was founded by Colleen Willoughby in 1995 to create a new community asset to educate and expand the pool of women in philanthropy. Operating as an independent 501(c)(3), WA Women’s Foundation provides members the opportunity and tools to participate in large-scale grantmaking, pooling member contributions of \$2500 to make \$100,000 grants. Member-led committees vet grants, and all members are asked to vote on a final ballot of proposals.

The WA Women’s Foundation model includes robust educational programming designed to both inform members and enhance their influence as community leaders. In 2002, with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, WA Women’s Foundation published *Something Ventured* to describe how the model could be replicated and adapted to fit the needs of other communities. The model has inspired the creation of at least 16 other similar organizations in the U.S., as well as others in Australia and China.

Impact 100

Impact 100 was founded by Wendy Steele in 2002 and operates as an open source model in which local chapters adopt the Impact 100 model and adapt it to their needs. Impact 100 chapters consist of at least 100 women who donate \$1000 to make grants in multiples of \$100,000. Impact 100 chapters issue calls for grants and then member committees review applications, perform site visits, and choose finalists, who then present their proposals to the members. Members vote to decide the final grants, and all of the grant funds go directly to the receiving organization. Impact 100 currently has 52 chapters in the United States and Australia, with 8 more chapters in development.

Giving Circles and Other Models

Many other women-led giving circles use variation on these models in their organization and governance. Some, like the Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle (BWGC), pattern their governance on Sondra Shaw-Hardy’s handbook, *Creating a Women’s Giving Circle*. Many such circles are drawn to the concept of a collaborative philanthropic vehicle that allows each member an equal opportunity to be engaged and provides a level playing field for giving. Most giving circles make use of a fiscal sponsor for their fiscal and administrative needs, often a community foundation. Circles can be created at the city, state or neighborhood level. Grantmaking circles may also be created around a collective identity or group, and seek to support that group through its grantmaking. Examples include the Asian Women’s Giving Circle in Brooklyn and SisterFund in Richmond.

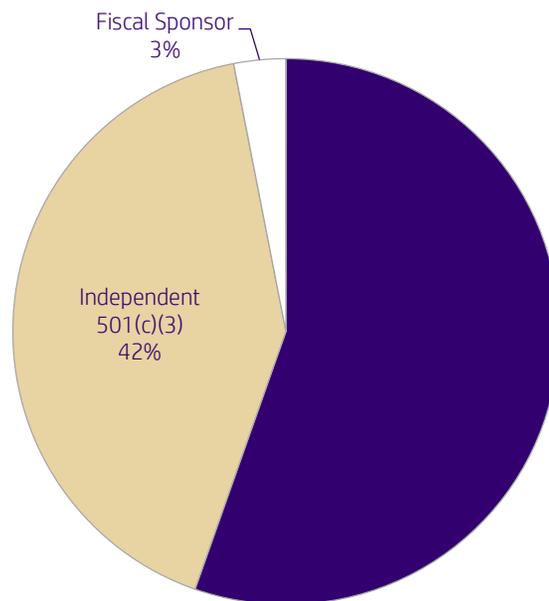
Administrative Structure

Philanos affiliates typically adopt one of two administrative structures: independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit status or affiliation with a community foundation host. Forty-two percent of Philanos affiliates chose to incorporate as an independent nonprofit registered with the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3). The percentage for Philanos affiliates incorporated as 501(c)(3)s is much higher than the national average of eight percent for collective giving

groups more broadly (Bearman et al., 2017). For affiliates incorporated as 501(c)(3) organizations, administrative functions are accomplished in-house through the nonprofit itself.

The majority of Philanos affiliates are associated with a community foundation or other fiscal sponsor. Fifty-five percent of Philanos affiliates are hosted by a community foundation, which typically means the member organization receives administrative support and fiscal sponsorship from the foundation, while maintaining independent grantmaking strategies. Three percent of Philanos affiliates have some other type of administrative structure through a fiscal sponsor.

Figure 6. Administrative Structures of Philanos Affiliates



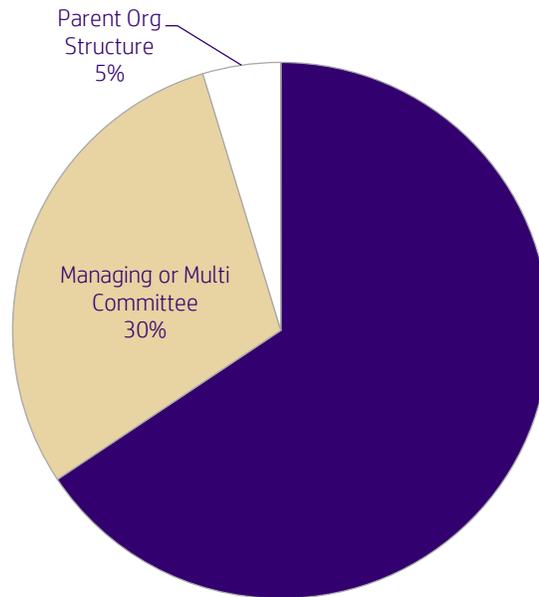
Nearly all organizations we interviewed indicated that their administrative structure provided appropriate support for their strategic aims. Organizations structured as a 501(c)(3) value the independence their structure provides, and leaders typically have the professional experience and expertise to manage the governance and reporting requirements for an independent nonprofit. Affiliates that are hosted by another organization, typically a community foundation, value the administrative support and fiscal sponsorship they receive and report that they maintain autonomy and independence in their grantmaking decisions. In many cases, leaders report that community foundation sponsorship was critical to the initiation of their organization.

Governance Structure

Affiliate governance arrangements vary by administrative structure, but all are member-led. While all Philanos affiliates that are independent 501(c)(3)s are governed by a board, affiliates that are hosted by a foundation typically have a board of directors as well. Other affiliates are governed by a managing committee or multi-committee structure. A few Philanos affiliates are governed by some other structure as directed by their host or parent organization.

As shown in Figure 7, 65 percent of Philanos affiliates have a governing or working board, 30 percent have a managing or multi-committee structure, and 5 percent have adopted the governance structure of their parent organization.

Figure 7. Governance Structures of Philanos Affiliates



Grantmaking

Grantmaking Process

Philanos affiliates employ multiple tools and strategies in their grantmaking processes.⁹ Almost all affiliates have developed a formal process for soliciting grant applications, as indicated by their use of a letter of intent (LOI) and/or a request for proposal (RFP) process to accept applications from potential grantees. Another common strategy for many organizations (45 percent) is to solicit community input on grantees or potential granting areas. In some organizations, member recommendations also informed the work of grant committees, which are typically created to assess grant applications.

Nearly 70 percent of affiliates provide grant trainings to their individual members to educate them on areas such as strategic philanthropy and identifying community needs. Another important aspect of the grantmaking process—not reflected in the survey results—is the use of site visits, where individual members meet with nonprofit leaders to discuss potential funding. Almost all organizations we interviewed used site visits in the final phase of their grantmaking process to help assess which nonprofits should be funded.

Approximately half of Philanos affiliates use some form of formal grant assessment to measure the impact of their grants. Interview responses indicate that impact assessments typically consist of nonprofits providing short

⁹ In the survey, affiliates could select one or more tools/strategies they use in their grantmaking process.

reports back to funders regarding how the money was used and what it accomplished. Figure 8 below summarizes the grantmaking and assessment strategies used by affiliates.

Figure 8. Grant Process Strategies Used by Philanos Affiliates

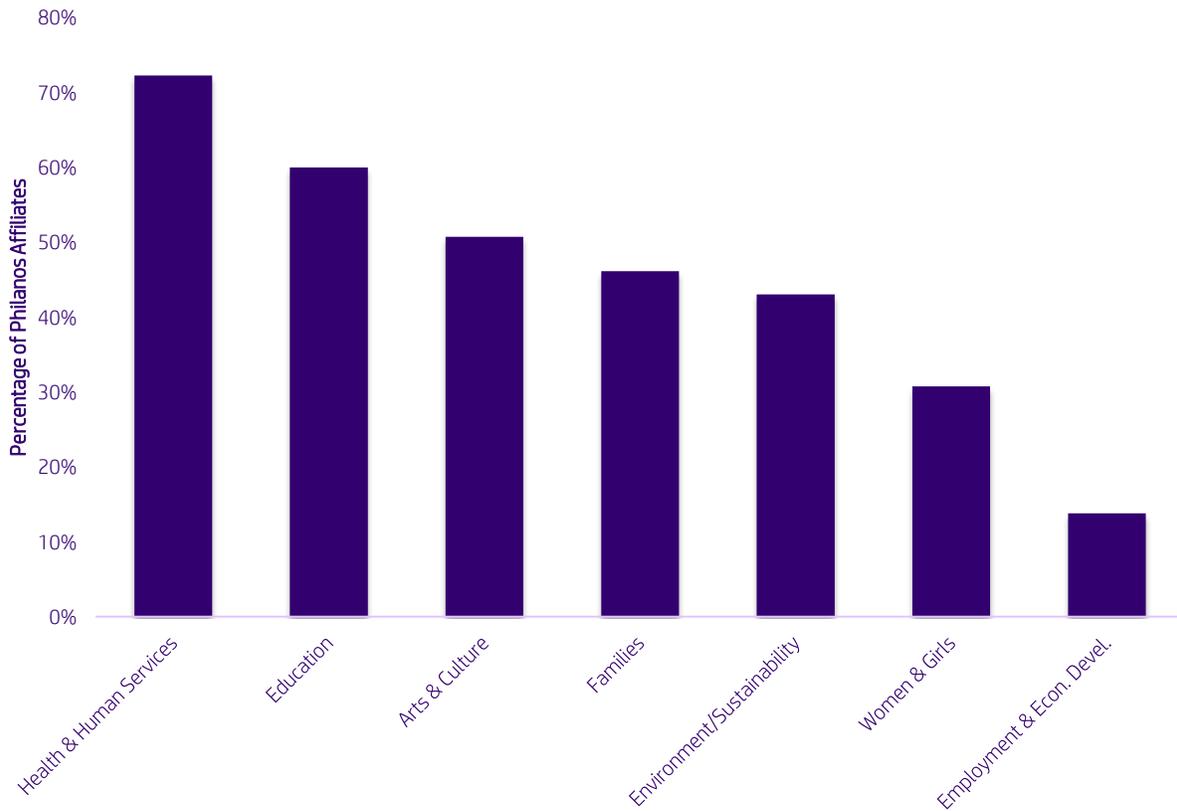


Grantmaking Focus Areas

Approximately 90 percent of Philanos affiliates have specific focus areas—issues or populations they target—in their grantmaking. For some affiliates, these focus areas remain constant across time; for others, focus areas may change on an annual or less regular basis. Most organizations in the network tend to have four to five focus areas. As displayed in Figure 9, health and/or human services is the most common focus area, with 72 percent of organizations stating this as a focus area. Sixty percent of organizations state that education is a focus area, and 51 percent state arts and culture as a focus area. Other common focus areas are families, environment and sustainability, women’s and girls’ issues, and employment/economic development.¹⁰ In addition, we found during our interviews that while many organizations did not explicitly list families or women’s and girls’ issues as focus areas, many of their grants did go toward supporting those populations, and grants to families, women and girls may form part of the social services category as well.

¹⁰ In the survey, affiliates were asked to indicate which categories would be their focus areas in the upcoming fiscal year. Organizations could select multiple focus areas and/or write in different focus areas. The seven focus areas presented here collapses related categories (such as health and human services) to improve analysis and graphical representation. The Focus Areas graph in Figure 9 represents seven of the most common issue areas indicated by members, but it is not an exhaustive list of all focus areas that affiliates listed.

Figure 9. Grantmaking Focus Areas Among Philanos Affiliates



The survey data show that Philanos affiliates are employing community-focused, deliberative grantmaking strategies. Members are widely engaged in strategic grantmaking processes, and the data suggest a number of administrative and governance structures can support this work. In the next section we elaborate the Philanos affiliate approach to philanthropy, based on this survey data and interviews with a number of Philanos affiliate leaders.

THE PHILANOS NETWORK AND PHILANTHROPIC IMPACT

What, if anything, unites the members of the Philanos network and what are the common elements of the Philanos approach to collective grantmaking? To better explore the characteristics and motivations of affiliate organizations, we draw on interviews conducted with leaders of eight affiliates from around the United States. These organizations varied from new Philanos affiliates, with groups founded in the past few years, to long-established organizations with hundreds of members.

While we found variation in the structure, strategy and organization of groups, affiliates shared a fundamental common commitment to a collective grantmaking process that amplifies individual giving, develops women as philanthropists, creates new social connections, and contributes to community resilience. Affiliates embody a democratic decision-making process, where each woman has a vote in the grantmaking process. That cooperative effort and collective vision is expressed through deliberative grantmaking that responds to community needs and seeks to build stronger local communities, however defined. The power of this approach is its flexibility. Women-centered, collective, deliberative philanthropy can take a number of forms, and these forms can change and evolve over time. Below we explore the major themes that emerged from our interview data.

Harnessing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy

Balancing a Dual Mission: Developing Women Philanthropists and Creating Community Impact

All of the organizations we spoke with sought to fulfill a dual mission: to positively impact the communities in which members live and to develop women's philanthropic knowledge and grantmaking capacity. Some organizations place equal emphasis on their desire to impact communities and to develop philanthropists, while other organizations prioritize one or the other of these goals.

The focus for some organizations is squarely on their members. For these organizations, impact comes through member engagement and development; their underlying philosophy is that developing women as philanthropists will have the largest, most systemic impact on the community. As one leader put it:

"When women get money either by earning it or inheriting it, they need to know how to donate wisely. Lots of women in our group say they're giving more and volunteering more. They're understanding how important their dollars are and seeing more giving opportunities." – Philanos Affiliate Co-Chair

Another organization composed of Asian-American women has a clear focus on giving members the experience they need to become board members:

"When we started we just wanted to channel more money into our communities. But the longer lasting impact is training members to be donors and board members. We've built fundraising into our DNA and [members] learn how to do it in friendly, sisterly way." – Philanos Affiliate Founder

Other organizations put the emphasis on grantmaking and grant impact, a point we return to below. All respondents, however, expressed strong commitment to developing women as philanthropists in addition to creating positive change in their communities.

"It's about addressing the needs of the city...and empowering women to be intentional in their giving." – Philanos Affiliate Co-Founder

Each affiliate organization strives to find the balance among these goals that best suits its members and attends to the needs of the community it serves.

Amplifying Women's Voices

For some leaders we interviewed, being a women-led organization is simply a part of who they are as an organization, and they could not imagine their organization being composed differently. For others, being a women's philanthropic organization was a particularly important and deliberate strategy for several reasons. First, several leaders mentioned that women's voices have been and continue to be marginalized, and women-led organizations help counteract that marginalization. A second reason is that in the past, women often lacked control over where money was directed in their communities, and collective grantmaking helps change that dynamic, giving women more agency and control over their own philanthropy. Finally, Philanos affiliates give women a place to connect, network, and develop relationships with one another, which allows women to amplify their voices.

"Women's voices are still not heard or represented. Having a collective voice makes it harder for us to be marginalized or ignored." – Philanos Affiliate Executive Director

Creating Community through Collective Giving

Collaboration and social connection

The transformative power of women's philanthropy among Philanos affiliates comes from the collective setting in which the philanthropic endeavor takes place. Many leaders voiced their belief that their groups provide a needed space for women to learn—collectively—about philanthropy and community issues. In these groups, women have a place to engage in dynamic conversations about issues that matter to their communities and to work collaboratively to select grantees they believe will make the greatest impact on their communities. Interviewees stated that women in their organizations learn a significant amount from one another through these conversations and grantmaking processes.

"Our organization is so collaborative, and it's important that women are working together and making connections. Being a part of something bigger than yourself is appealing to me and our members. Women get very invested in it, and it's appealing for women to be a part of the community." – Philanos Affiliate Co-Founder

"This is a safe space for women to learn together, take risks, and admit when you don't have all the answers." – Philanos Affiliate Executive Director

For most affiliates, a key form of member engagement and collaboration is the grantmaking process. All affiliates whose leaders we interviewed have an extensive grant review process, where individual members work together to determine the nonprofits that will receive their funding. As Figure 8 showed, a structured grantmaking process is common to more than 90 percent of Philanos affiliates. This process typically consists of a letter-of-intent and/or request-for-proposal process where members, often as part of a grants committee(s), review nonprofit applications, vet the organizations, and narrow down the number of potential grantees. The full membership then votes democratically on the finalists and selects the eventual grantees. In a few cases, a steering committee makes the final recommendations for a board to ratify. Organizations follow up with grantees to assess how each nonprofit used its grant funding and what was accomplished.

Almost every leader we interviewed stressed that being an active participant in the grantmaking process was a transformative experience for members. Through this process, members learn about community issues in a deep

way and develop their understanding of how to assess nonprofits they are considering for funding. Women also learn through engaging each other and sharing perspectives and experiences through the process. Being a part of this hands-on grantmaking process is particularly powerful for members.

“It is rare that someone participates in the grant process and doesn’t enjoy it. Women really enjoy the process, learning about nonprofits in the community, meeting other women, and discussing issues that matter. Everyone comes with different experiences, and that diversity of thought makes it engaging and meaningful.” – Philanos Affiliate Co-Founder

Balancing opportunities for participation in grantmaking with opportunities for education and networking was a theme echoed by almost all the organizations we spoke with. Most of the leaders we interviewed stressed the value placed by members on the social connections and opportunities created through membership. Younger members, in particular, appreciate opportunities to network with other women.

“In addition to developing philanthropists and doing good in the community, the third piece of our impact is the social network we build.” – Philanos Affiliate Board Co-Chair

Balancing member engagement with flexibility and growth emerged as another theme in our interviews. Affiliates expressed a variety of strategies around membership size and engagement. For some organizations, the focus on face-to-face meetings is a critical feature of their strategy, and members must be present at grant decision meetings in order to cast a vote. For these organizations, member engagement is a stronger priority than membership growth. For other organizations, membership strategies involve a range of options for member participation. This flexibility offers individual members the opportunity to engage in the grantmaking more deeply at points when they are able, and to step back a bit at other times, secure in the knowledge that the organization has a strong process and makes high-quality decisions.

“Our members trust the process so much and understand what we do and the vetting and the care that we put into it. They know their money will be put to good use.” - Philanos Affiliate Co-Founder

Building and amplifying community-based philanthropy

The collective focus of Philanos affiliates extends beyond the connections among members. Many organizations also connect individual members to their community and expand their understanding of the challenges faced by others. Many of the organizations interviewed include a site visit as part of the grant vetting process and noted that site visits had a transformational impact on individuals.

“Seeing programs in action [during site visits] is what is most transformational and changes how members live their lives.” – Philanos Affiliate Co-Founder

For some organizations, the grantmaking process creates lasting relationships between members and local nonprofits. One organization has begun actively matching members who wish to volunteer with grantees:

“We connect members to grantees. We put it in the hands of grantees. If they see someone on our roster that fits their needs, they can ask for it, whether it’s stuffing envelopes or serving on a board. All of our nonprofits can access our skills. They tell us what they need.” – Philanos Affiliate Founder

Other organizations report that some members are so compelled by the mission and work of the organizations they fund that they actively seek out a role in supporting those organizations. A number of leaders recounted

instances where members became engaged with grantees for the long haul, serving as long-term volunteers or as board members.

Leaders we spoke with also noted that members are drawn to their organizations by the ability to multiply their giving and thus impact on the community. Leveraging the power of their funds to improve community impact is a major motivation for many participants. The multiplicative effect of pooling donations contributes to members' sense of being a part of something that is bigger than themselves.

"You give \$1,000, but you feel like Bill Gates because you're making \$400,000 in grants. Where else can you get that? You get to make a giant impact and be involved in choosing the nonprofits. That's part of the uniqueness of the process." – Philanos Affiliate Co-Founder

Deliberative Grantmaking for Community Impact

The focus on deliberative grantmaking among Philanos affiliates is a common unifying theme. As noted above, the grantmaking process is integral to connecting, educating and empowering members. Deliberative grantmaking is also identified by affiliates as central to creating community impact. In interviews, all leaders highlighted a desire to identify high-quality organizations or individuals who were making a difference in their communities. Grantmaking processes were then organized around this goal. As the leader of one member organization stated:

"Once we get to the end of the grantmaking process, we know the nonprofits have been thoroughly reviewed both programmatically and financially. The really strong nonprofits tend to rise to the top. The process really works." – Philanos Affiliate Co-Founder

Learning about Community Needs & Respecting Nonprofits

As part of their grantmaking strategies, nearly all leaders we interviewed expressed an interest in trying to better understand community needs and ensuring that their organizations are addressing those needs. For example, one organization shifted from making grants every two years to every year in an attempt to meet growing community needs. Another organization added a new focus area to its giving as a response to what its members heard from nonprofit leaders as a rising need in the community.

Most affiliates deliberately avoid having predefined ideas or solutions that they want to fund and instead direct funding based on what they learn from community members and nonprofits. Furthermore, almost every organization we interviewed said that they try to keep grant application and reporting processes simple, so as to not consume too much time on the part of applicants and grantees.

"We really try to be respectful of the nonprofits. We want to be good stewards of our members' money, but we don't want to burden nonprofits." – Philanos Affiliate Co-Founder

"We are trying to really listen to their voices and what they think the solutions are so we're not coming in and telling them what they need." – Philanos Affiliate Executive Director

Taking Risks and Being Early Funders

Most of the leaders we interviewed highlighted the ability of their organizations to take risks with their grantmaking. As independent organizations, Philanos members have the freedom to fund organizations and programs that are new or trying an innovative approach to a community challenge that has not yet been proven.

Many leaders felt that having broad areas of focus, rather than more narrowly defined strategic focus areas, allowed them to be open to new ideas generated by the community. Several of the leaders explained how they often have been one of the first institutional funders of an organization and that their funding improved grantees' ability to attract future grants.

"What we've noticed is that one of our impacts is that we are often one of the first institutional funders of organizations. Then other foundations will follow our lead. So, we're able to attract more funding for those nonprofits. That's our impact. We find the organizations that are moving the needle and bring them additional resources."

– Philanos Affiliate Executive Director

"We like being able to take chances. We're not bound." – Philanos Affiliate Founder

"We love to be first funders. A couple of art projects we funded early on went on to receive much bigger grants. We love that." – Philanos Affiliate Founder

"We are looking for the next big idea and addressing something not being addressed. What we're doing is trying to walk line between new and exciting and well thought out that won't fall apart after we fund them. We want to take a little step out there for something exciting and unusual."

– Philanos Affiliate Founder

Place-Based Philanthropy

All our interviewees expressed a common commitment to place: to making their communities—however defined—better places. For many organizations, the commitment to place also finds expression in their relationship to a community foundation that provides administrative support and fiscal sponsorship. But regardless of governance or organization, the commitment to community improvement through their grantmaking remains pivotal. For some organizations, community comprises a neighborhood or borough, for others community denotes a city, county or for a few affiliates, an entire state. For some organizations, the community is also defined through a particular identity or community of individuals.

"Our members are passionate about taking care of our city, our community, on all sorts of levels." – Philanos Affiliate Board Co-Chair

Strength in Flexibility

Philanos affiliates share a common commitment to women's collective grantmaking and community impact. Individual affiliates craft their own strategy and chart their own course within the larger commitment to women-led, collective, deliberative grantmaking. Affiliates can also adopt the collective grantmaking strategy that best fits their members and communities. Different groups can set different minimum giving amounts as well as vary the number or size of grants that are given. Even more fundamentally, the collective grantmaking approach supports adaptation to member interests and to community needs and characteristics.

Through our interviews, we observed a number of ways in which organizations adapted grantmaking strategies for impact. This variation exists across several dimensions, including (1) provision of general operating funding, (2) size and range of grants, (3) scope of focus areas, and (4) geographic scope of giving.

Philanos affiliates differ in their provision of general operating funds as part of their grantmaking strategy. Several organizations whose leaders we interviewed enthusiastically support general operating support in order to flexibly

meet the needs of nonprofits in their communities. These groups often prioritize making investments in organizations. Other organizations we interviewed only provide project or program funding, which allows them to be clear on what they are investing in and to better track the impact of their grants. This strategy tends to prioritize funding innovative or new ideas. Several organizations we spoke with said that new ideas or innovations were particularly appealing to members.

“We appreciate and give general support; we fund it a lot.” – Philanos Affiliate Founder

“We do not fund unrestricted operating funds. We’ll fund a new program or existing program. The thinking is that we are funding something that is very definable. We are impacting a specific project or program where we can really make a difference.” – Philanos Affiliate Co-Founder

Second, Philanos affiliates also differ greatly in the size and range of grants that their organizations provide. Some organizations we interviewed choose to make a few (usually between one and five) large grants of \$100,000, while other organizations make several small to midsize grants. This allows individual organizations to develop a strategy they feel is a good fit for the communities and organizations they support. For those organizations that provide fewer large grants each year, leaders believe that is the best way to have a significant impact on the nonprofits they choose to fund. For those organizations that give several smaller to midsize grants, leaders think that a broad portfolio of grantees allows their organization to take a more all-encompassing approach to improving their respective communities. Such an approach also allows them to fund a wider range of nonprofits, including smaller organizations, and thus appeal to the broad interests of their members.

“Our members really like having a broad and diverse portfolio of grantees.” – Philanos Affiliate Founder

Third, organizations can select the breadth and focus of their grantmaking to fit community needs and member interests. Most of the organizations we interviewed have several broad focus areas, which tended to be stable across time. Leaders expressed their belief that it is important to take a holistic approach to community well-being.

“A healthy community requires you to care about multiples areas.” – Philanos Affiliate Board Co-Chair

Some affiliates believe impact comes through targeted strategy. We spoke to one organization that chose a single focus area in order to maximize the impact of its giving in that area. Two other organizations were considering narrowing the number of their focus areas in order to develop members’ depth of knowledge in one area, to maximize their impact on one area, and to reduce the volume and breadth of applications received.

Finally, Philanos affiliates vary in the geographic focus of their grantmaking, ranging from focusing on a neighborhood within a city to a metropolitan area to an entire state. In one case, an organization decided to focus on a neighborhood within a large city that the group felt was often overlooked by funders in order to fill this funding gap. On the other hand, leaders of statewide organizations believe that their organizations can and should support communities across their states.

“We want to get people thinking about giving their dollars, and giving to our part of the city.” – Philanos Affiliate Founder

“We are able to bring resources and trainings to rural parts of the state that often don’t have access to the critical resources they need.” – Philanos Affiliate Board Chair

EMERGING ISSUES FOR PHILANOS AFFILIATES

Defining a place at the philanthropic table

As a number of Philanos affiliates have grown in size and grantmaking, they have begun to consider their larger role as grantmakers in their communities. Several organizations we spoke to discussed their growing recognition as respected grantmakers within their communities. Leaders of these organizations are often invited to and participate in events with other grantmakers. By being a part of these events, these leaders are able learn from other grantmakers and also contribute the knowledge they have accumulated through their grantmaking experience.

As funder collaboratives become more prevalent, however, some leaders feel limited in their ability to fully participate in the greater philanthropic landscape of their communities. Since affiliates typically re-grant all the money they raise, they do not usually have residual funds that can be used as collaborative opportunities arise. One organization we spoke with is building an endowment fund that might permit different sorts of grants to be made as opportunities arise, and several other affiliates have developed endowments to support organizational sustainability.

“We need to find a mechanism so we have a seat at that table and can put up money to be at that table.”
– Philanos Affiliate Board Co-Chair

Growing & Diversifying Membership

While three of the organizations we interviewed were satisfied with their current size, many are contemplating whether or how they should grow their membership. These organizations know that more members translate into more money they can distribute to nonprofits, which they think will create greater impact in their communities. However, growing the size of the membership also poses challenges. Organizations may lose the close sense of community as they grow. Additional members could also lead to the need for additional administrative support, which may require paid staff.

“One challenge as we get bigger is that we are all volunteer. If we continue to grow, we would need to consider whether we want to try to get paid staff.” – Philanos Affiliate Co-Founder

Most of the organizations we spoke with were also seeking to diversify their membership along a number of dimensions. Most commonly, leaders see a need to recruit younger members into their organizations, and several acknowledged that this is an ongoing challenge. Affiliates are attempting multiple strategies to attract younger members. One strategy is to host purely social events where women have more opportunities to network. Another strategy being pursued is to offer membership levels at lower dollar amounts so that younger women, who might have fewer economic resources, are still able to join.

“We have strictly social events now, and they’ve been popular. We did a wine tasting, and it was very popular. Younger women want to be a part of philanthropy, but they also want to network.”
– Philanos Affiliate Board Co-Chair

An additional potential strategy to attract younger women is to streamline the grantmaking process. Leaders acknowledged that younger women today have limited time, often due to full-time careers and family commitments. To attract younger members who may not have the ability to commit to participating in a long grantmaking process, leaders were considering ways their organizations could shorten the grant review process.

A final challenge that many organizations wrestle with is increasing the racial, ethnic or socio-economic diversity of members. Most organizations report that their membership strategies rely heavily on the networks of current members, which may make it more difficult to reach out to different racial or ethnic communities. A number of groups we spoke with are also considering ways to diversify socio-economic participation, using strategies such as having sponsorships for members and allowing several individuals to pool funds for one membership.

CONCLUSION

Through deliberative grantmaking strategies, Philanos affiliates provide significant resources to their communities—with average annual giving of more than \$240,000 per affiliate. Through the collective grantmaking process, Philanos affiliates seek to develop women’s philanthropic capacity by building knowledge and experience in identifying community opportunities and developing grantmaking strategies to build on those opportunities. As part of this process, affiliate members develop a deeper understanding of community strengths and capacities, and are mindful to not impose their own solutions on community challenges. The democratic aspect of this process also empowers each member to have a vote and a voice in determining how grants are distributed. This deliberative grantmaking strategy unites Philanos affiliates in a commitment to articulating a strategic rationale for their giving, fostering inclusive participation by members, and directing collective resources towards community benefit.

While affiliates share a common commitment to women-powered, collective, deliberative grantmaking, the strength of the Philanos approach lies in its flexibility. Affiliates adapt their grantmaking strategies to fit to local contexts and local needs—thereby building community capacity and engaging the passion and commitment of members. As a result, deliberative grantmaking approaches can vary among affiliates. For some organizations, a deliberative grantmaking strategy may mean providing general operating funds through a large grant to one or two nonprofits, and for others it may mean providing project funding through several smaller grants to many nonprofits.

As the Philanos network continues to evolve, affiliates face emerging challenges and opportunities. Philanos affiliates are increasingly recognized as important philanthropic players in their communities. With this growing recognition comes increasing opportunities to collaborate with other grantmakers to address community needs, and affiliates will need to decide if and how they will participate in such collaborations. Furthermore, while not all affiliates are looking to grow, those that are will need to continue to actively develop innovative strategies to attract new, and in some cases, more diverse members.

The Philanos network connects three important philanthropic trends: the power of collective giving, the rising force of women-led philanthropy, and the movement towards strategic philanthropy focused on community impact, or what we call deliberative grantmaking. The network approach supports flexibility and the ability to tailor affiliate approaches to community needs. Philanos affiliates share a common commitment to improving their communities through a collective, democratic and deliberative grantmaking strategy and to nurturing women as capable, confident and committed philanthropists.

PHILANOS

Philanos, formerly known as the Women’s Collective Giving Grantmakers Network, is dedicated to supporting the creation and expansion of the collective giving model and to develop women’s leadership to catalyze greater philanthropic impact in their communities. For nearly a decade, Philanos has led a network of women’s collective

giving groups, sometimes referred to as giving circles. These organizations are transforming their communities by supporting informed philanthropic decision-making that awards high-impact grants from aggregated money to local community nonprofits. Philanos currently has 67 affiliates in the US and Australia, whose membership of 17,000 women have awarded more than \$125 million in grants since 1995.

THE NANCY BELL EVANS CENTER ON NONPROFITS & PHILANTHROPY

The Nancy Bell Evans Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy at the Daniel. J. Evans School of Public Policy & Governance supports and disseminates cutting edge research of Evans School faculty and creates innovative learning opportunities for current and future social sector leaders at the undergraduate, graduate, and executive level. Through applied research and life-long learning, the Center serves individual leaders and elevates the social sector as a whole.

The partnership between the Evans School and the collective grantmaking movement is longstanding. The Evans School published an early case study of the formation of the Washington Women's Foundation through its Electronic Hallway program. The Marc Lindenberg Center at the Evans School supported the launch of the Global Women – Partners in Philanthropy project that seeks to expand the collective grantmaking model globally. More recently, Philanos affiliate members helped endow the Colleen Willoughby Fellowship in Philanthropy Studies to honor the work of Washington Women's Foundation founder Colleen Willoughby. The Fellowship is awarded to an Evans School faculty member and is currently held by Professor David Suárez.

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