Fostering Effective Funding for Women and Girls

A Next Stage Strategy

Executive Report
of Research Conducted by
Mary Ellen S. Capek
Molly Mead
Lowell Livezey

With Foreword and
Next Steps by

Chicago
Women
in Philanthropy

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Chicago
Women
in Philanthropy

330 South Wells Street, Suite 1110
Chicago, Illinois 60606
312-409-4005

Moving forward: CWIP's next-stage strategies

Throughout its 21-year history, Chicago Women in Philanthropy (CWIP) has maintained a commitment to providing networking opportunities for women in philanthropic careers and promoting the absolute necessity of funding designated to women and girls. Our program series have long offered opportunities to learn about the particular funding needs of women and girls, to share information with like-minded colleagues, and to raise awareness about women and girls across foundation funding areas. CWIP has pioneered research documenting the disparities between funding for women and girls and the "general" population — or men and boys. This research has documented the specific reasons why targeting funding to meet the needs of women and girls improves outcomes. A practical tool resulting from that research, *ClearSighted*, provided funders with guidelines and strategies for incorporating the specific needs of women and girls in their work. CWIP's efforts have resulted in positive feedback from our colleagues nationwide who work on women's funding issues, and it has provided an approach and template that has been replicated by funders' groups concerned with the amount of funding going to other populations, such as youth and people with disabilities.

Despite these successes, in 1999, CWIP's leadership expressed concern that we had not done enough to capture the attention of the most powerful decision makers in philanthropy — CEOs and trustees. We had gone far in reaching out to the influencers of these decision makers — foundation program staff — and in helping nonprofits improve their fundraising. But the evidence about whether our work was leading to institutional change within philanthropy seemed, at best, mixed. After internal deliberation about what strategies might best reach decision makers, we decided to go directly to the source.

In 2000, CWIP commissioned national research experts Mary Ellen Capek and Molly Mead to engage decision makers in discussions about their funding and the strongest influences on it. In this case, CWIP did not set out to document funding patterns or create a specific tool. Rather, CWIP requested formative analysis to enlighten our next-stage strategies — to help us reach out to decision makers and enlist their support in moving our agenda forward.

Research respondents confirmed the importance of our aims. According to one foundation CEO:

> *"What's…important is that the institution has made itself more aware of the particular needs [of women and girls]…at both the staff and board levels. So the next time a request comes in for women and girls, staff and board are both more responsive and responsible. Success is getting the institution more responsive."*

Encouragingly, Mead and Capek's research found CWIP had already made some progress toward this goal. Many decision makers were incorporating considerations of gender in their thinking or they knew of efforts to do so within the foundations they represented.

Two dominant themes emerged:

1) When funders incorporate gender considerations into their grantmaking, they do so because of its relevance to their funding priorities, not out of concern for equity or fairness.

Funding women and girls just because they are women and girls "doesn't cut it," to quote one program officer interviewed. But funding women and girls within foundations' priority program areas does. With few exceptions, this finding held true for both trustees and professional foundation staff. Many respondents said they were aware of the work done in the early 1990s to document the percentage of foundation funding for women and girls' programs and organizations. Some said their foundations were influenced by this research; others said they were not. Most who spoke to this issue said quite clearly that it no longer serves the interests of women and girls to make funding arguments based on a "fair share" of foundation grants or dollars.

2) Grantmakers are eager for additional research and data about the circumstances of women and girls within their funding priorities so that they can more effectively fund programs and projects related to women and girls.

Respondents said they want information about women's health, women and poverty, girls and education, women and leadership, and girls' development (to name just a few areas funders focus on). And they want to consider that information so their grantmaking can be more effective. They also made clear they are interested in funding effective programs for women and girls, whether single-sex or mixed-gender[1]. Most respondents are not convinced that effective programs for women and girls are necessarily single-sex programs. Also, many respondents equate funding advocacy for women and girls with advocacy for single-sex programs for women and girls. To the extent that advocacy efforts confuse these two goals (more effective funding for women and girls compared to more funding for programs exclusively for women and girls), those efforts are likely to fail.

In sum, to continue to foster institutionalization of funding designated for women and girls, Capek and Mead point out the need for foundation staff and trustees to be able to:

- Recognize a program that effectively serves women and girls in both the single-sex and mixed-gender contexts;
- Connect the ways in which women and girls' programming — and gender-specific analysis — aligns with the goals and interests of the foundation; and
- Develop strategies for institutionalizing awareness of gender throughout all its activities.

In addition, CWIP can assist nonprofits in developing ways to "make the case" between foundation issue areas and gender, and educating funders about the benefits of targeted funding.

Based on their findings, Capek and Mead recommend five strategies for moving to the next stage in CWIP's efforts:

- Make the case for funding women and girls — whether in single-sex or mixed-gender programs — based on the effectiveness of funding, rather than on a "fairness-in-funding-level" argument;

[1] CWIP uses the term single-sex to describe programs that are open exclusively to men and boys or exclusively to women and girls. Mixed-gender refers to programs that are open to both sexes. The researchers use the term coeducational to refer to programs open to both sexes.

- Develop a major online demographic data resource to provide up-to-date local and national information on women and girls;
- Develop a website to disseminate data on women and girls and to highlight expert resource people and model funding programs;
- Develop more collection of quantitative and evaluation data to monitor progress; and
- Develop face-to-face, peer-to-peer strategies for sharing information.

CWIP's board conducted an extensive review of the report findings and recommendations and determined that it could use CWIP's resources and organizational strengths to best strategic advantage by focusing on developing face-to-face, peer-to-peer strategies for making the case for targeted funding for women and girls. This recommendation best matches existing organizational strengths, including a vital core membership base with a commitment to pursuing our agenda, and broad networks within the foundation and nonprofit communities. CWIP will also offer guidance and support to existing and emerging efforts by research institutions and philanthropic membership organizations to develop both information resources and Internet access to such resources. All of our efforts will take into account the researchers' advice that, at this time, it is arguments about effectiveness rather than fairness that best resonate with foundation decision makers.

As this report recommends, "figuring out how better to 'map' influential power networks and tap into them — comfortably, colleague-to-colleague, with both humor and expertise — offers an important opportunity to help the philanthropic community shift to the next stage of thinking about effective funding for women and girls." Thus, at this 21st anniversary juncture, we introduce the Member Advocate Project (MAP) — CWIP's initiative to capitalize on the research reported here. CWIP's board created MAP in order to: 1) revise and tighten existing programming to better support members in developing their individual advocacy skills; and 2) add organizational capacity to provide members with the resources and support they need to become even stronger advocates on behalf of funding for women and girls. The project builds on our history and looks forward to the next stage in our development. It capitalizes on our strengths as a nonprofit membership organization that uses its members' expertise and commitment as a base of support for women in philanthropy, involving them directly in systems-change activities.

Using Capek and Mead's findings, we plan to create a resource tool kit to promote funding for women and girls including strategies for message development and delivery. We are grateful to Chicago Foundation for Women for once again partnering with us by funding the start-up phase of this new project and we look forward to working with our members to move to the next stage in our efforts to pursue funding designated to women and girls. We hope that readers of this research report will join us.

Patricia Ford Linda Harlan

Special Initiatives Advisory Committee Co-chairs

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The opinions and recommendations expressed in this paper are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily represent the views or policies of Chicago Women in Philanthropy.

Introduction

In 1999, Chicago Women in Philanthropy (CWIP) launched a research project to develop and implement an informed set of strategies to reach out to foundation decision makers. Feedback from both foundation and nonprofit executives and trustees in Chicago suggests that funding for women and girls has improved over the last decade but is still not sufficient to meet their documented needs. If these assessments are accurate, what resources will prove most useful to foundation staff and trustees and make funding for women and girls more available and more effective?

This Executive Report synthesizes the main findings of the research. Researchers conducted their work in three stages:

- Researchers first met with steering and advisory committees that represent a broad spectrum of Chicago philanthropy. Both committees provided perspectives on Chicago philanthropy as well as suggestions for questions to ask and people to interview.
- Researchers then conducted three focus groups with eight leaders of women's organizations; eight leaders of nonprofits that serve both women and men, girls and boys; and six senior staff, consultants, and researchers who have worked in and for Chicago foundations. These focus groups provided important additional background on Chicago foundations' funding for women and girls from the perspectives of both program officers and grantees.
- The final phase of the research consisted of 38 confidential face-to-face and telephone interviews with CEOs, trustees, and foundation donors — leaders in Chicago's philanthropic community.

Foundation profiles

Interview respondents represent 27 Chicago-area foundations: ten private independent foundations, eight family foundations, five corporate foundations or giving programs, one community foundation, one public foundation, one donor-advised fund of a religious organization, and one pooled-giving fund. Seventeen of the 27 foundations are among the Top 50 on the Donors Forum of Chicago Members List by Total Assets and fourteen appear on the Top 50 Donors Forum of Chicago Members List by Total Giving[2]. Four foundations had assets between $900 million and four billion dollars; five had assets between $100 – $300 million; eight had assets between $15 – $100 million; five had assets less than $15 million; and five had unknown assets (four corporations and a pooled-giving fund).

Respondent demographics

The total number of 60 focus group participants and interview respondents included 16 nonprofit organization leaders, 12 foundation senior staff and consultants, 15 foundation CEOs, and 18 foundation trustees[3]. Thirteen interview respondents were male; 25 were female. Two focus group participants were male; 20 were female. Forty-five of all focus group participants and interview respondents identified as white, seven as African American, six as Hispanic, two as Asian, and one as Native American.

Research objectives and methodology

A primary goal for the research was to probe foundation leaders' thinking about how they fund women and girls — and how they think about effectiveness, innovation, and change in philanthropy generally. What are the influences on trustees, CEOs, and program officers as they make decisions about grants? Are they persuaded by peers? By information in the media? By research? By their daughters? What does it take to change foundation priorities and cultures?

Some answers to these questions may seem apparent based on the result of grant proposals funded and requests that are turned down. However, little substantive research has been done on these questions and too little is known about what influences those decisions. In fact, foundation decision-making has often been compared to a black box. Previous research sponsored by CWIP documented the percent of foundation dollars reaching women and girls in Chicago and described the mismatch between that amount and "the challenges women face as they live their lives and take care of their families."[4]

This research takes a different approach: it analyzes perceptions of leaders in the Chicago philanthropic world; it does not investigate actual patterns of giving or effectiveness of grants awarded. The research uses in-depth interviews with foundation leaders to provide thematic analyses of respondents' views and highlights the complexity of responses. Although respondents do not constitute a random sample, they are generally representative of the broader Chicago philanthropic community.

A second goal for the research was to gain

[2] Based on fiscal year 1999 information, or most current year of record.
[3] One respondent served in two of the capacities listed.
[4] A 1992 study, *ShortSighted*, which built on a 1985 study, *ShortChanged*.

Research Summary

insight into what has worked in convincing the Chicago philanthropic community to use a gender lens in their philanthropy. Using a "gender lens," as CWIP and others have defined the expression, means "examining a particular issue with a focus on the real life conditions of women and girls and acknowledging that gender is a powerful predictor of experience and opportunity."[5] Both *ShortSighted* and *ShortChanged* carefully documented patterns of giving, and almost everyone interviewed in this research acknowledged them to be thought provoking and helpful. But results of those studies also proved controversial for some funders, and several respondents reported foundation decisions to withdraw or avoid "targeted" funding for women and girls. So a third goal of the research was to identify resources and professional development strategies that are most effective in "making the case" for funding women and girls.

[5] *ClearSighted: A Grantmaker's Guide to Using a Gender Lens,* Chicago Women in Philanthropy, 1996.

Respondents represented foundations that were addressing a broad range of issues affecting women and girls. Many of those interviewed had an awareness of gender issues and could describe the use of at least a rudimentary gender lens within their foundations' existing program areas. This is in marked contrast to research from a decade earlier that showed little understanding of gender and virtually no use of a gender lens. These respondents also displayed awareness of the importance of institutionalizing that knowledge. Several respondents talked about the need to include awareness of gender and gender discrimination as part of their own institutional planning and objectives. Many respondents had heard of CWIP and acknowledged the important role CWIP played in raising awareness of the low level of Chicago philanthropic dollars reaching women and girls. Most respondents also offered thoughtful strategies for improving grantmaking for women and girls. The very thoughtfulness of their strategies indicates sophistication in their thinking about gender and points the way to a set of next steps for CWIP and other organizations working to foster more effective philanthropy for women and girls.

One dominant theme emerged from the interviews: **to the degree that funders incorporate gender considerations into their grantmaking, they do so because of its relevance to their funding priorities, not because of considerations of equity or fairness.** Funding women and girls just because they are women and girls "doesn't cut it," to quote one program officer interviewed. But funding women and girls within foundations' priority program areas does. And funders are showing greater sophistication in

the ways they understand the problems of women and girls within their foundations' program areas.

With few exceptions, this finding held true for both trustees and professional foundation staff. Many of those interviewed — more foundation staff than trustees, but still many from both groups — said they were aware of the work done in the early 1990s to document the percentage of foundation funding for women and girls' programs and organizations. Some said their foundations were influenced by this research, others said not. Most who spoke to this issue said quite clearly that it no longer serves the interests of women and girls to make funding arguments based on a "fair share" of foundation grants or dollars. Instead, **many respondents, especially professional foundation staff, said they were eager for additional research and data about the circumstances of women and girls within their funding priorities so that they can more effectively fund programs and projects related to women and girls.** In other words, they want information about women's health, women and poverty, girls and education, women and leadership, and girls' development (to name just a few areas funders focus on). And they want to consider that information so their grantmaking can be more effective.

Respondents also made clear they are interested in funding effective programs for women and girls, whether single-sex or coeducational. Most respondents are not convinced that effective programs for women and girls are necessarily single-sex programs. Many respondents, moreover, equate funding advocacy for women and girls with advocacy for single-sex programs for women and girls. To the extent that advocacy efforts confuse these two goals (more effective funding for women and girls compared to more funding for programs exclusively for women and girls), those efforts are likely to fail.

To summarize, the majority of respondents are open to — indeed would appreciate having — information that will help them understand needs of women and girls within their foundations' program areas and identify effective solutions to those needs. But most are *not* open to the charge that their grantmaking is "unfair." Most funders also prefer to fund effective programs and organizations without regard to whether they are coeducational or single-sex.

Judging from most respondents' observations, however, **there are still major barriers to more effective funding for women and girls. These barriers range from misinformation and "old boy" networks to female staff and board members uncomfortable with advocating for women and girls. However, the most difficult barrier continues to be foundation executives, trustees, and program officers who lack knowledge or understanding of gender differences and do not acknowledge that there can be disparate needs based on gender.** As a consequence, they are unwilling to use a gender lens in their funding, even within foundation program areas like "youth" where there exist reliable data documenting the different needs of boys and girls. For many of these funders, "fair share" funding arguments provoke charges of "special interest" claims (hence unfair) and other negative responses.

Persistent as these drawbacks may be, however, enough evidence emerged in this research to suggest alternative practices. Many respondents — both men and women, trustees and professional foundation staff — expressed thoughtful and strategic ideas about what it will take to prompt shifts in awareness about funding programs that work effectively for women and girls and about how to move this awareness to higher levels of institutional consciousness. Many also expressed a willingness to put their ideas into action. It will, however, take strategic, carefully organized efforts to get funders at large engaged, and it will take a precisely articulated new vision and convincing demographic data — backed up with specific examples of what effective philanthropy for women and girls looks like — to move the larger philanthropic community to the next stage.

Findings

Below is a synthesis of the findings from the three key interview questions:

1) What fosters effective funding for women and girls?
2) What prompts shifts in awareness?
3) What gets in the way of funding for women and girls?

What fosters effective funding for women and girls?

Four key factors emerged from the research. Effective funding for women and girls happens when:

- Grantmakers understand the connections between their program priorities and gender;
- Grantmakers know how to recognize a program that effectively serves women and girls;
- A foundation institutionalizes awareness of gender throughout all its activities; and
- Nonprofits are able to make connections between a foundation's issue areas and gender.

It is essential that grantmakers understand the connections between their program priorities and gender for effective funding to occur.

Evidence of increased foundation sophistication about gender dimensions in program areas showed up throughout the interviews. In some instances, respondents explicitly documented their foundations' commitment to understanding needs of women and girls. One male senior foundation executive noted, for example:

> *Domestic violence allows us a straight-shot route to looking at the lives of women, teen violence, violence in relationships, and the impact of domestic violence on kids. Also violence prevention.*

Among those respondents who described their reluctance to fund gender specific programs and organizations, at least some were aware of gender differences and were thoughtful — and questioning — about how best to translate that into effective program initiatives. A foundation CEO, for example, explained:

We focus on populations — disadvantaged inner-city people in Chicago…Our programs end up being women-focused. We aren't women-focused. Is that the better way to do it? I don't know. Some foundations focus specifically on women or on another population. That's okay, but it makes you myopic…We are more comfortable with a multi-problem focus and a multi-issue focus. Another foundation executive observed, *I am not sure if a specific focus on a population group is the way to go. I wonder about this in my funding of the elderly. Should we have a specific focus on the elderly? I am not sure. Any time you have a specific focus on a group you stigmatize and segregate that group. There are no easy answers with this question, but it is important to talk about. Given our mission, not separating out women was the best way to benefit women.*

Grantmakers need to know how to recognize a program that effectively serves women and girls.

Key to effective funding of women and girls is recognizing what effective programs look like in both women/girls-only and coeducational settings. One family foundation executive, for example, came to understand effective programming through his experience in international grantmaking:

Education and micro-enterprise are the clearest, most correlating paths for successful development.

Another executive explained:

[P]rogram areas…lend themselves to women's issues and needs, e.g., population programs get you to reproductive rights and health...[H]uman rights...include the rights of women. Human Rights Watch has a direct concern for the rights of women. Domestic economic programs have to include workforce development, and to be effective, the program has to address not only skills development but also overcome barriers to participation in the workforce. This must include child care.

A corporate foundation executive observed:

I wanted diversity to permeate my program without driving it. I was looking for help to do this inclusive work. The ClearSighted *tool*[6] *was on my desk. That helped me, and I gave Chicago Women in Philanthropy full credit. Some of the* ClearSighted *questions were just what I needed. We have used* ClearSighted *to ask, 'Who are we serving? Are we serving all groups?' We say in our materials there is a lens of inclusion through which all grants must now pass.*

When a foundation institutionalizes awareness of gender throughout all its activities, effective funding can result.

Embedding gender consciousness in a foundation's institutional culture is key for effective long-term funding strategies. One senior foundation

[6] A resource tool developed by CWIP to help funders evaluate proposals and programs.

executive brought to the interview a printout of all the programs that were coded "women" or "girls." When asked what it showed about the foundation, the executive said it was a rough indicator of the how the "culture" of the foundation supports women and girls:

This is a culture that supports projects that promote diversity in general, so when women and girls are underserved they would tend to be favored. If you say the field of women's health is about diseases unique to women, when you define it that way, any support to women's health is seen as not going anywhere else. But when you define it more broadly, people can see that it impacts families, children, etc. Somehow that's where the definition of philanthropy needs to move. It's important to point out how little money is actually going to women and girls, but also crucial to point out how important it is to have perspectives on the issues…and institutionalize them.

Another foundation CEO pointed out:

What's…important is that the institution has made itself more aware of the particular needs [of women and girls]…at both the staff and board levels so the next time a request comes in for women and girls, staff and board are both more responsive and responsible. Success is getting the institution more responsive.

Nonprofits that are able to make connections between a foundation's issue areas and gender have experienced funding success.

One major factor that emerged in the research to explain why there is more available and effective funding for women and girls is the increased effectiveness of nonprofits themselves, particularly related to improved presentations and more sophisticated fundraising strategies. A foundation consultant observed:

I work mostly with small to medium-sized nonprofits, many of them targeting women and girls. One [of my clients] is on a complete upswing, [its] budget growing by leaps and bounds…[and] not having any difficulties at all in the funding community. They work exclusively on mother-child public health issues. They have made such a convincing case that the organization is perceived to be a health organization in the funding community, not a women's organization.

The leader of a successful girls' organization pointed out:

We take in [to the foundations] the literacy project or another specific project [in their issue areas]. We don't emphasize the girls' piece.

Another noted:

We seek out funding from sources whose guidelines we fit. We intentionally don't bother with other foundations. You can't overstate the importance of building relationships with funders.

What prompts shifts in awareness?

A number of respondents described ways in which their foundations had become more knowledgeable about the needs of women and girls and more proactive in funding women and girls' issues over the past decade. Among the reasons cited for shifts in giving were:

♦ When top leadership (CEO or trustees) has a

commitment to women and girls, the rest of the foundation will follow that lead;

- A willingness to focus on women and girls arises from a personal or emotional connection to the issues, not simply an abstract intellectual understanding;
- Specific information about the needs of women and girls substantiates and compels action; and
- When foundations carefully track who benefits from their grants, they have the ability to understand whether and how women and girls are among those beneficiaries;

When the top leadership (CEO or trustees) has a commitment to women and girls, the rest of the foundation will follow that lead.

One corporate executive recalled:

> *Our domestic violence focus came out of a personal concern of our CEO, who was inspired by a newspaper article about a woman murdered by her spouse in spite of a restraining order. The first year of the initiative was spent looking at [our own] internal policies, protection for domestic violence victims in the workplace …They did training for internal staff [and] a conference for the larger business community to educate them about the impact of domestic violence on the workplace.*

A willingness to focus on women and girls is more likely to arise from a personal or emotional connection to the issues, not simply an abstract intellectual understanding.

The same corporate executive also said:

> *Men at our company didn't 'get' domestic violence concerns until they (at least some of them) finally started seeing 'what if it was my sister, my mother, my daughter.' They had to be helped to make a personal connection to the issue. Once that happens, they get it and other things start to happen…'Women' is a disembodied group that doesn't have real connection to individuals, so the dime doesn't drop, and people don't make or get the connections. Emotional ties are what have the most value and impact for making social change.*

Specific information about the needs of women and girls substantiates and compels action.

One executive asked:

> *What sparks people's awareness of gender issues? More information about demographics, facts that show where the needs are. What are the implications of funding sports activities for boys versus serving at-risk girls? Make the case on the facts. That would sell more than a philosophical discussion about gender or a 'gender lens.' Knowing the needs would be pretty compelling. The data itself would be compelling. Emphasis could be 'not withstanding the progress that's been made, there's still a lack of funding to meet those needs.'*

A former trustee observed:

> *Obviously, if a real need of specific population groups can be demonstrated, then it should be met…but I don't see much presentation of needs that are population-specific…Make the case for the need. Not because it's women, but because it's poor people, jobless, poor education, whatever.*

When foundations carefully track who benefits from their grants, they have the ability to understand whether and how women and girls are among those beneficiaries.

A senior staff member noted:

> *We track the 'spread' of the grants: youth is a priority, with a careful balance of boys and girls. Adult community programs include many that are aimed entirely or mainly at women, including: shelters, AIDS programs for newborns, sports teams' wives, single parents.*

What gets in the way of effective funding for women and girls?

Two opposing themes emerged in the research. On the one hand, respondents described a general reluctance on the part of foundations to target funding to specific populations. On the other hand, they reported that nonprofits often fail to "make the case" for funding women and girls — either because they do not argue effectively within a foundation's program guidelines or because they do not present compelling evidence for new program areas when existing ones do not adequately meet the needs of women and girls. In between these two "poles" falls a broad range of barriers that get in the way: "old boys" networks still in place; women staff and board members who are uncomfortable advocating for women and girls; class and status issues; the failure to translate international grantmaking success back to the domestic arena; and current trends in philanthropy.

Foundations generally fund issue areas without regard to specific populations and often lack knowledge of how those issues vary in populations, specifically women and girls.

Foundations generally have extensive knowledge about the issues they fund, but at least some among those represented in the interviews had only minimal information about documented needs of women and girls within their program areas, about how needs differed by gender, and about more effective gender-based solutions for everyone — men and boys as well as women and girls.

Several funders who argued they *were* supporting women and girls within their program areas actually seemed to be giving women and girls significantly less support. Lack of an intentional focus on the needs of women and girls may lead funders to believe they are doing more for women and girls than they actually are. One foundation CEO who had described several positive examples of women and girls' funding was asked, "So the percentage of funds given to girls and women would actually be quite high?" "Well, no," the executive replied. "We give our largest grants to the zoo and the museum and the Lyric Opera. So, the size of our grants to women will be quite a bit smaller than that."

In some instances, the lack of information about the needs of women and girls is compounded by a "stubborn" resistance to recognizing gender differences, misinformation, and in a few instances, outright chauvinism.

A CEO recounted:

> *One of our [male] board members…would say things like 'you can't just fund women and girls.' The female staff would look up at the ceiling... He felt that if an organization is exclusively women and girls, that's always a problem.*

A corporate foundation executive observed, "Funding women and girls is still a hard sell in many foundations. Stereotypes are elusive and often hard to document, but they affect the funding of women and girls. Some stereotypes are racial and ethnic. Others have to do with age, sexual orientation, and attitudes toward women and girls as 'less than' and the 'distaff side'." One nonprofit executive pointed out, "Immigrant women, Spanish-speaking women are often overlooked…Not only is there discrimination because of illegal status, there's the language barrier and race." Regarding age stereotypes, a senior staff member noted, "When foundations or society at large think about funding for boys, they usually think 'delinquency.' When they think of programs for women, they think of welfare-to-work, teen moms." There is also the issue of the invisibility of older women. Another nonprofit leader pointed out, "Ageism…plays itself out in terms of [the lack of] attention older women get from funders." Discomfort with issues of sexuality and sexual orientation can render programs and organizations invisible. One nonprofit staff member claimed, "Sexual orientation discrimination, gender discrimination, and stereotypes are at the root of all we do…Many foundations won't even look at us."

Finally, a number of women's organization leaders and women staff and board members commented on stereotypes of "less than" and "distaff side" that still seem to be a factor. One women's organization leader noted, "We feel discounted because we're a women-run, women-owned program. The way women approach their work gets labeled 'hobby,' taken less seriously." And, another added, "There's still a notion that women's or girls' organizations are 'junior' versions of men's or boys' organizations."

Both funders and nonprofit executives pointed out that, despite significant advances of women in philanthropy's leadership positions, some hard-to-break-into "old boy" networks are still in place.

A senior corporate foundation staffer noted:

> *I often hear from grantees and people we don't fund, 'Why are those organizations getting big dollars, and we're getting the small dollars?'… If a person on the board knows [our CEO], they go right in; if they don't know [him], it gets bumped to me…Women and people of color are thrown in together; they see me. If someone has high enough rank, he or she may get in the door. But philanthropy is still the 'old boys' network.*

Even where women have achieved leadership positions on staff and on boards, some women staff and board members are still uncomfortable advocating for women and girls.
A male CEO pointed out, "Women staff haven't been great advocates in-house: they get into the institution, get responsibility, get all involved and lose interest in advocating for women and girls… I want staff to be able to say, 'Now wait a minute, we haven't thought about how this is affecting women and girls.' I don't find many who will." A philanthropy consultant commented, however, "More 'radical' or innovative/change-oriented women don't make it up the ranks. Those who do are more like their male counterparts." Another CEO also noted, "Organizations can be inhibiting…and tokens sometimes like to be tokens and not share their power." Nonprofit executives point to similar perceptions. One reported, "If we're talking to a woman funder, she'll often say 'it's out of my hands'." Another observed, "[Women] program officers use trustees' conservatism as an excuse." These patterns grow from issues of power and perceived power as well as what some see as overt discrimination. A male CEO acknowledged, "Females who come on the board don't feel that they have freedom to speak…You can't expect folks in more fragile positions to take risks. [But] women in positions to do more don't."

Class and status issues also negatively impact funding for women and girls.
A nonprofit executive noted there are divides in the funding community, with controversial issues and oppressed populations on the one hand, and silk stocking 501(c)(3)'s — the cultural elites — on the other. Causes emerge as class-based social advantages: "Easy groups to fund are those that mobilize, e.g., pediatric AIDS. It's a social thing. It's 'who you know'." Another trustee pointed out, "Alzheimer's is now a 'social' issue; people want to be on their boards." A number of people commented on the disparities between boards and the communities their foundations serve and suggested that it would be helpful to have more representative voices at the table. A nonprofit leader asked, "Why don't foundations try to make boards more representative of underserved segments of society? Foundations are well intentioned, but [many] don't 'get it'. Clients may not have the bus fare [to make the two roundtrips required] for a 24-hour wait for an abortion. This is just not a reality for a funder if he or she is used to paying $20 to park in the Loop. Many foundations are not well-grounded in [economic] realities."

In international grantmaking, there has been considerable success focusing on women and girls. Respondents, however, told us that this international grantmaking success for women and girls has not translated back to the domestic arena. One senior foundation executive attributed international use of a gender lens to more sophisticated coordination among nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), but also pointed out that international support is "easier", "Empowering women is the best way of curbing population growth…Trustees support it for its instrumental value, not because they like women." Another CEO noted, "It's easier to

view some woman in a rice paddy as having an entirely different set of issues than someone living on the west side of Chicago."

Nonprofits are often seen as sources of funding problems, especially when they submit proposals that are weak and do not make the case effectively.

One foundation executive said, "I'm not getting good proposals. People hand me program proposals, but they don't do a good job of breaking down the complexity of the populations they are trying to serve." Another stressed,"I haven't seen many innovative program descriptions come across my desk. The proposals themselves are okay, but I think the problem is deeper. The programs they describe are weak. This is true of women's organizations as well as other multipurpose agencies. We want to fund innovative programs that address systemic solutions to persistent problems, but we're having a hard time finding them."

Current trends in philanthropy — especially a move toward fewer, larger grants — may have an unintended negative impact on women and girls

To the extent that many women and girls' organizations are small, the current trend toward larger grants is sure to have an adverse effect on these groups. One executive pointed out that there are not that many large institutions serving women, and the larger ones are not the most dynamic. She is concerned more about this trend than the track records of foundations addressing the population of women and girls per se.

Recommendations

Overwhelmingly, respondents had thoughtful suggestions about strategies for moving awareness of women and girls' funding needs to higher levels of sophistication. Given the variety of responses for next steps as well as the variety of effective funding programs for women and girls already in place, no single "magic bullet" emerges for CWIP to pursue as a next stage plan. Philanthropy is complex — the variety of philanthropic structures, the often idiosyncratic nature of foundation priority-setting, the "it's my money…you can't tell me what to do with it" syndrome — all point to the need for both subtlety and variety in any effective strategies. But heeding and building on a number of the suggestions and the good will communicated by respondents in this research should provide rich opportunities for productive new directions.

Recommendations that emerged from the research provide both funders and nonprofits with ways to strengthen effective funding for women and girls:

- Make the case for funding women and girls — whether for single-sex or in coeducational programs — based on effectiveness of funding rather than on fairness;
- Develop a major online demographic data resource to provide up-to-date local and national information on women and girls;
- Develop a website to disseminate data on women and girls and to highlight expert resource people and model funding programs;
- Develop more quantitative and evaluation data-collecting to monitor progress; and
- Develop face-to-face, peer-to-peer strategies for sharing information.

Make the case for funding women and girls — whether for single-sex or in mixed-gender programs — based on effectiveness of funding rather than on fairness.

In any new strategies launched, there needs to be a clear focus on funding effectiveness within foundations' existing program areas as well as an acknowledgment that coeducational programs and women/girl-only programs can both be effective. In meeting the needs of women and girls, the emphasis needs to be on philanthropy that works well for women and girls in whatever model or setting. Existing foundation program areas that can and should take into account the needs of women and girls must be highlighted.

The findings of this report point to a clear need for more *reliable* information. One important next step for CWIP — in collaboration with other women's funding networks, regional grantmaking associations, nonprofit and research networks, and media representatives — could be to develop a series of linked, online data banks and websites. Such resources could pull together current, detailed, documented, and indexed local demographics (which highlight gender within race and ethnicity, age, income level, geographic locations, disabilities, sexual identities, and other variables); names of expert resource people (both researchers and practitioners); and a sampling of foundations' model funding initiatives.

There already exists a useful body of demographic data — in research centers, in agencies, and in foundations themselves. Synthesizing and making existing data available in standardized formats would make it more accessible. Such data gathering need not be labor intensive or expensive: student interns "working the telephone" can gather enough existing information to "jump start" a useful database with links to existing online information. And identifying holes and co-sponsoring data gathering where no reliable data exist would provide a much-needed community resource. Such current and accessible information would provide a resource for media as well as for funders, sparking targeted and better-focused media coverage of a broad range of relevant issues.[7]

Develop more accurate quantitative and evaluation data.

There is also a place for additional quantitative analyses of grants to women and girls as well as evaluations of their effectiveness. Our research has no way of gauging the extent to which respondents' awareness of gender differences actually translates into effective grants and effective grantmaking. Does a more equitable share of poverty grants awarded to programs and organizations serving the needs of women and girls in poverty, for example, translate into helping to raise women's economic status in Chicago?

More comprehensive coding and indexing of grants using Donors Forum of Chicago classifications supplemented with those developed by the Women's Funding Network could help track grants more effectively. And an evaluation questionnaire for organizations and agencies serving women and girls in coeducational settings, as well as for organizations that serve exclusively women

[7] Many respondents noted they were more influenced by peers and by reading than by media in general, but well-publicized media coverage on specific problem areas can be effectively used as peer-to-peer "conversation pieces" within the philanthropic community.

and girls, could help shed light on what dollars are actually reaching women and girls and whether those dollars are making a difference. At the least, working with local women's foundations, researchers could survey women's funds' grantees for sources and amounts of additional funding they receive in a given calendar year.

In the current philanthropic climate, moreover, there appears to be heightened interest in, even demand for, more effective measures of grant impact. A coalition of funders through the Donors Forum of Chicago and other regional associations of grantmakers could help develop an evaluation instrument that both foundations and nonprofits could use to measure the impact of grants actually reaching women and girls and programs and organizations serving their needs.

Develop face-to-face, peer-to-peer strategies for sharing information.

There is clear evidence from the research that information about effective funding for women and girls can also be passed through "word-of-mouth," peer-to-peer. Many respondents expressed a willingness to listen, to learn more about gender differences.

Given the diverse ways the research showed people taking in and responding to new information, a similarly diverse series of activities needs to be launched. Peer-based strategies should include informal lunch meetings with colleagues, panel discussions sponsored in collaboration with other affinity groups, connections made with networks of foundation librarians to share information, and so forth. Social/professional connections will obviously vary, even within the same community. Figuring out how better to "map" those influential power networks and tap into them — comfortably, colleague-to-colleague, with both humor and expertise — seems to offer one more strategy that can help the philanthropic community shift to the next stage of thinking about effective funding for women and girls.