

call for papers

For Two Themed Issues of *The Foundation Review*

Abstracts of up to 250 words are being solicited for Volume 11, Issues 1 and 2, of *The Foundation Review*. These two issues, sponsored by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the Walton Family Foundation, the McKnight Foundation and the Kauffman Foundation, are focused on the two related issues: 1) how foundations promote their own organizational learning; and 2) how foundations learn collaboratively with others, including grantees, community stakeholders, government and other funders.

Abstracts for the Foundation Learning issue (11.1) are due May 15, 2018. Abstracts for the Collaborative Learning issue (11.2) are preferred by May 15 but will be considered if submitted by July 15, 2018.

Some of the issues that might be addressed in the Foundation Learning issue include:

- **What does organizational learning look like in foundations?** What are foundations currently doing to promote staff reflection about key turning points in their work? How are foundations utilizing the resulting lessons to improve their programs and strategies? What are they hoping to accomplish as a result? What are the barriers to learning – time, resources, expertise, etc.?
- **How are foundations linking evaluation, learning, and action?** How is empirical evidence being incorporated into foundation learning systems? How are learning systems different when integrated with evaluation? How do foundations navigate the tension between learning and accountability, particularly in relation to evaluation? How do they insure that learning is moved to action?
- **Who is responsible for foundation learning?** What are the different ways foundations have structured their learning systems? Are they generally part of the evaluation function, or are they separate? To what extent are program, operations, and other staff involved in these systems?
- **What tools and frameworks have been shown to support organizational learning effectively and efficiently?** Are there tools for different audiences? What are the special needs and opportunities related to engaging foundation boards around organizational learning?
- **To what extent and in what ways are foundations addressing equity in their learning and evaluation practices?**
- **What are the roles and responsibilities of external consultants in supporting organizational learning systems?**
- **How might learning practices be influenced by the type of strategy being pursued?** For example, are they different when the strategy is emergent vs. clearly defined?
- **Where is organizational learning generally focused** — e.g., learning to improve internal operations, specific grantees or programs, foundation strategy, the field more broadly, or elsewhere?

Much of the benchmarking research on organizational learning in foundations has emphasized internal rather than external learning. For the Collaborative Learning issue, articles might address issues such as:

- **What does collaborative learning look like currently?** What are foundations doing to promote collaborative learning with others, including grantees, community stakeholders, government and other funders?

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- **What tools and frameworks have been shown to support foundations engaging their communities in learning?** Are there tools for different audiences? How can learning be effectively moved to action?
 - **How is equity addressed in community learning?** How do foundations navigate power differences when engaging communities in learning activities?
 - **Are there differences in collaborative learning based on the geographic context** — for example between a local, place-based initiative vs. an international program?
 - **What tools, frameworks, or practices are most effective with different audiences, such as community members, community leaders, and other funders?**
 - **How are foundations addressing learning and accountability to communities?** What role does transparency play?
 - **Systems interventions generally benefit from learning with other stakeholders.** What are effective strategies for managing learning in this context?
 - **What are the roles and responsibilities of external consultants in supporting collaborative learning among multiple stakeholders?**

Abstracts are solicited in four categories:

- **Results.** Papers in this category generally report on findings from evaluations of foundation-funded work. Papers should include a description of the theory of change (logic model, program theory), a description of the grant-making strategy, the evaluation methodology, the results, and discussion. The discussion should focus on what has been learned both about the programmatic content and about grantmaking and other foundation roles (convening, etc.).
- **Tools.** Papers in this category should describe tools useful for foundation staff or boards. By “tool” we mean a systematic, replicable method intended for a specific purpose. For example, a protocol to assess community readiness and standardized facilitation methods would be considered tools. The actual tool should be included in the article where practical. The paper should describe the rationale for the tool, how it was developed, and available evidence of its usefulness.
- **Sector.** Papers in this category address issues that confront the philanthropic sector as whole, such as diversity, accountability, etc. These are typically empirically based; literature reviews are also considered.
- **Reflective Practice.** The reflective practice articles rely on the knowledge and experience of the authors, rather than on formal evaluation methods or designs. In these cases, it is because of their perspective about broader issues, rather than specific initiatives, that the article is valuable.

Book Reviews: *The Foundation Review* publishes reviews of relevant books. Please contact the editor to discuss submitting a review. Reviewers must be free of conflicts of interest.

Please contact Teri Behrens, Editor of *The Foundation Review*, with questions at behrenst@foundationreview.org or (734) 646-2874.