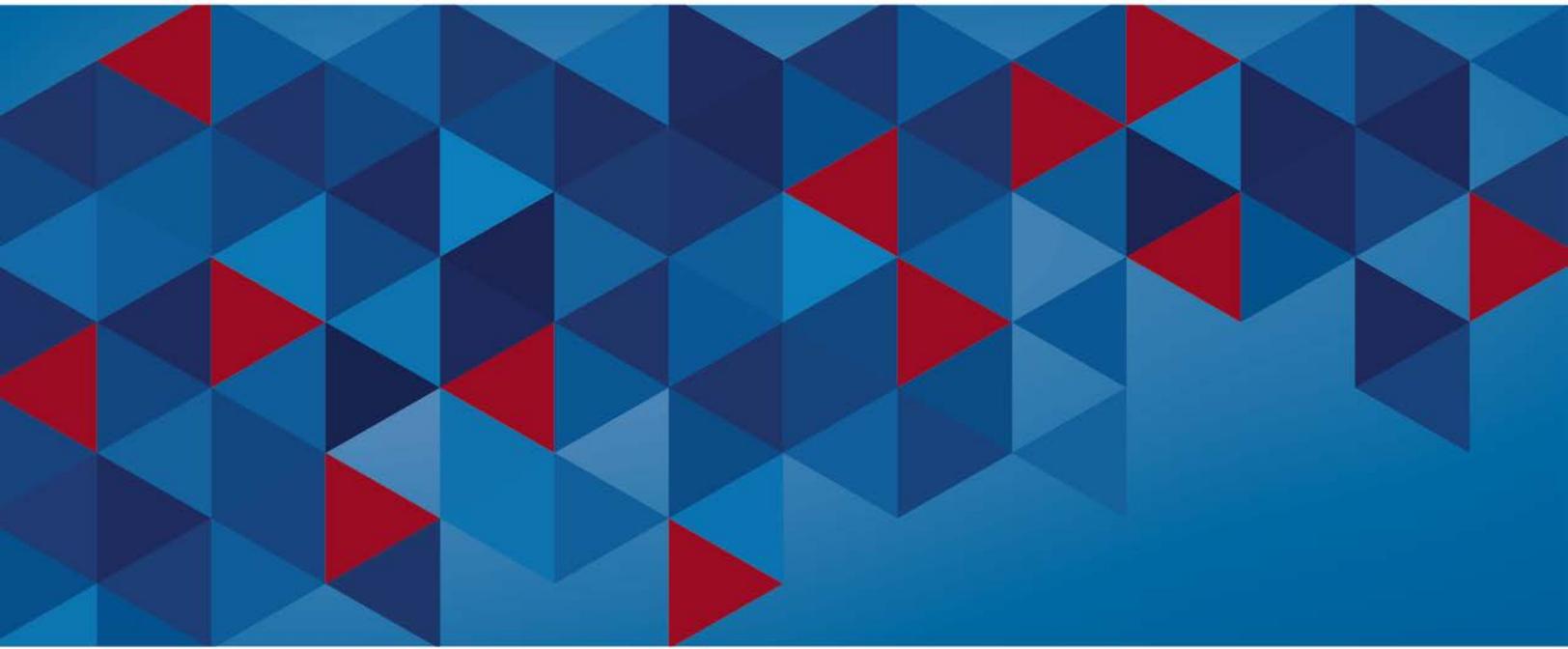


Philanthropy Fellowship Program

Concept Paper



SPRING 2020



JOHNSON CENTER
AT GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY



Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy

Established in 1992, the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy is an academic center within the College of Community and Public Service at Grand Valley State University. Our mission is to understand, strengthen, and advance philanthropy. We do this by providing competency based professional development, conducting applied research and evaluation, and creating tools that allow practitioners to use data and knowledge effectively.

Overview

The Johnson Center seeks to partner with the Michigan Nonprofit Association and Council of Michigan Foundations to help prepare a more diverse next-generation to work in the sector. Our vision is a two-year fellowship program that will provide one year of working in a nonprofit organization and one year in a foundation. Being grounded in the overall sector will lead to stronger leaders, no matter where they choose to make their careers. Fellows would typically be early- to mid-career professionals from any sector who are seeking to move into a leadership role in the philanthropic sector.

Why a Fellowship Program

Too often, the philanthropic sector is divided between the “givers” and the “receivers.” Foundation staff and donors attend different conferences than nonprofit leaders, with foundations often jealously guarding “their” spaces. Individuals who work in foundations often do not have a deep understanding of what it is like to lead or work, and create sustainable funding for a nonprofit. On the other hand, people who work in nonprofits may not understand the challenges of stewarding resources on behalf of a community or donor. We see a need for the sector to become more tightly inter-connected, with funders and nonprofits collaborating more deeply to create healthy, inclusive communities. We think a place to begin is by developing a cadre of leaders who can understand philanthropy as an ecosystem.

Within this ecosystem, we further see a need to build and retain a viable pipeline of diverse leaders both for the purposes of improving the effectiveness of the sector overall, and, as a mechanism for addressing the systemic challenges that continue to handicap communities and are especially apparent in communities of color. In fact, it is a community impact imperative that cannot be ignored. “The potential economic and social gains are significant. By 2050, 40% of the workforce and consumers in Michigan will be people of color. To create the qualified workforce and economic climate that will position the state for the future, businesses and policymakers must look to the potential of all Michiganders and take deliberate, realistic, and proven measures to enable the full participation of all.”¹ Securing the best opportunity to build our most effective workforce should start now.

Today, the racial diversity of the nonprofit sector’s workforce mirrors the state’s population. Overall, people of color (POC) represent 21% of Michigan’s population and 19% of the nonprofit workforce. However, while we have made great strides toward creating a diverse pipeline of leaders, we find that the lack of diversity in leadership positions is acute in both nonprofits and foundations. Currently, only 7% of Executive Directors are people of color².

The philanthropic sector generally subscribes to the values of diversity, inclusion, and equity yet lack the structure, time, and knowledge to operationalize and measure the impact of these values. The demand for

¹ The Business Case for Racial Equity-Michigan. W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2018

² Compensation and Benefit Report. Michigan Nonprofit Association, 2018

skills-building is apparent: Thirty-one percent of nonprofits have made attracting and hiring diverse talent their number one talent acquisition priority, with a close second (30%) prioritizing building a diverse workforce³.

The Johnson Center, MNA, and CMF are all committed to the overall philanthropic sector and to working to help the sector realize the benefits of diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging. We believe we can collaborate on a fellowship program that will be an intentional step toward securing a diverse pipeline of leaders not just for today but for an even stronger tomorrow.

Program Structure

Participants

We envision an inaugural cohort of 10 mid-level career individuals. Participants will be recruited from all sectors, including the Philanthropic sector.

Approach

CMF, Johnson Center, and MNA will develop, manage, evaluate, and oversee the **Philanthropy Fellowship Program**.

The program will be designed and centered on the partners' (CMF, the Johnson Center, and MNA) commitment to an ecosystem approach that embodies learning, diversity, inclusion, and equity. Our vision is a highly interactive program that fosters professional and personal development. Each participant will spend one full calendar year with a host foundation and one with a host nonprofit organization. As part of the participants' immersion within their yearly assignments, they will learn key elements of the organization such as program, governance, strategy, and operations.

The participants will be convened weekly as a cohort for professional development, reflection, and peer to peer engagement. The collective learning from the cohort will be shared with the hosting foundations and nonprofits; and more broadly with the Michigan philanthropic community.

Duration

A one-year planning and recruitment effort, leading to enrolling the first participants in the two-year program beginning in fall 2021.

Resource Needs

For the planning year, one FTE position to develop the overall curriculum (building on content already developed by the partners) and recruit host sites and participants.

Once fellows are working in their placements, a half-time position to coordinate weekly seminars and maintain relationships with the host sites would be needed. The foundations would be expected to pay a stipend for fellows who are placed there, and we would seek to raise funds from them to support the fellows during their nonprofit placement.

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³ 2018 Nonprofit Talent Management Priorities. Nonprofit HR, 2018