



Being the Change

12 Ways Foundations Are Transforming Themselves to Transform Their Impact

Staffing Philosophy

1 Viewing staff as impact multipliers, not cost drivers

“If staff members with the right expertise are out there working in the communities they serve, then they can be part of the way we bring our philanthropic resources to the area.”

– Wynn Rosser, President and CEO, T.L.L. Temple Foundation

2 Designing teams based on functions, not formulas

“We moved away from a formulaic model where everyone has the same-sized grant-ee or grant portfolio. We now look at the complexity of what they’re managing.”

– John Kobara, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, California Community Foundation

3 Using size-based benchmarking as a compass, not ruler

“We shied away from a formulaic model as one or two people could make an outsized impact based on their relationships. Our staff model is based on what role we and others play in the ecosystem.”

– Jeff Mohr, Omidyar Group

Structure and Design

4 Coloring outside the lines of classic philanthropic giving

“The unique structure of aligning with leading companies as funders helps leverage innovative solutions for sustainable impact in a way that is good for all—consumers, business, and society.”

– Humanity United

5 Transforming back-office support into front-line impact

“There is greater recognition that administrative and support departments... are integral to foundations’ programmatic work. They are critical to fulfilling mission and achieving impact.”

– Olga Tarasov, Director of Knowledge Development, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

6 Busting silos between issues, people, and teams

“We’re developing more collaborative and enriching approaches to work that require teamwork and communication amongst team members.”

– Michelle Gagnon, President, Palix Foundation

Skill Development

7 Seeking out and supporting five key mindsets

“We need people who are good at bringing people together and good at thinking about how you work with a group of stakeholders on shared vision setting and alignment.”

– Erin Kahn, Executive Director, Raikes Foundation

8 Welcoming and valuing diverse and lived experience

“Many of our foundation clients are also realizing that long-term success requires more than the hire itself, it also requires paying attention to how people are supported once they are in the role.”

– Erin Reedy, Vice President, Executive Search, Koya Leadership Partners

9 Boosting breadth and depth of professional development

“Given our strategy of being the trusted resource, source of knowledge, and connector, we do strategic talent development and have adopted a strong focus on employee engagement.”

– Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

Supportive Culture

10 Committing to continuous learning and adaptation

“Our work evolves along with the context and environment in which we operate, with continuous iteration over time.”

– Chantell Johnson, Managing Director, Evaluation, MacArthur Foundation

11 Attending to power dynamics with partners

“In all cases, the goal is to ensure the foundation is able to listen, connect, and show up more authentically as partners in the work *with* and not simply *for* communities.”

– NPAG

12 Mirroring internally what is sought externally

“We realized if we were trying to make change externally then every change we want to make in the external world we have to make in ourselves.”

– Alice Evans, Director, Systems Change, Lankelly Chase

