



Philanthropy and Policy: A Partnership in Leadership

As philanthropy continues to strive to improve the quality of human life, there is an increased awareness that philanthropic leadership *demand*s involvement in the public policy process, at all levels of government, in order to best support positive, long-term outcomes for children, youth, and families.

Why Fund Policy and Advocacy

Grantmakers have significantly impacted public policy, bringing about systems change at the local, state, and federal levels. Their tools for success include:

- Convening diverse stakeholders
- Making recommendations based on research, analysis and best practices
- Developing public education and communication messages
- Educating and engaging policymakers
- Building coalitions and organizational capacity
- Evaluating the impact of public policy efforts

Relevant, timely and easily digestible information about community needs is of tremendous value to policymakers. Moreover, funders can support groups that hold policymakers accountable to their promises and that help ensure they are responsive to the most vulnerable and voiceless in our society.

In some instances, the impact is felt immediately. In others, change is more incremental, reinforcing that philanthropy needs to be willing to be engaged for the long haul. Philanthropy needs to be nimble enough to take advantage of opportunities to influence policy and advocacy when these arise. Developing clear criteria on choosing policy priorities can help prepare grantmakers to easily identify such opportunities and to do so in a strategic way that aligns with their missions.

What Philanthropies Can Do

As GCYF works to make—and keep—children and families a priority at the local, state, and federal levels, we hope you will join us to:

- Create alliances across movements, issues, and geographies, to form partnerships that ensure that the needs of children, youth, and families—and the impact on local communities—are kept front and center.
- Support advocacy and political strategy efforts on behalf of children, youth, and families, and identify leverage and impact points.
- Maximize existing resources on behalf of the most vulnerable—including finding ways to make shrinking endowments and program budgets go the distance.
- Further build solidarity and a network of support for innovative thought leaders in CYF philanthropy and the fields we support, and inspire new energy around the desire for change and claiming new ground for children, youth and families.

About GCYF

Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families (GCYF) is one of the largest national philanthropic affinity groups, with members ranging from small family foundations to large independent foundations.

With a diverse membership base of local, regional and national grantmaking organizations across the country—including trustees, vice presidents, executive directors, and program officers and associates—GCYF is uniquely positioned to lead and provide assistance to all types and sizes of foundations and their staff who are committed to working on behalf of children, youth, and families.

For more information on GCYF, visit www.gcyf.org

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