



## THE CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE PHILANTHROPY

**To:** Wendy Garen, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation  
E. Thomas Brewer, Senior Program Officer, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation

**From:** Austin Long, Director – Assessment Tools, The Center for Effective Philanthropy  
Stephanie Moline Benoit, Research Analyst, The Center for Effective Philanthropy

**Subject:** Key Findings and Recommendations from The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation  
2015 Grantee Perception Report

**Date:** June 19, 2015

---

We are pleased to share your 2015 Grantee Perception Report (GPR) results with you, and we look forward to discussing the report with you and your colleagues. Throughout the GPR, ratings from Parsons' grantees are compared to ratings from more than 40,000 grantees of over 250 funders.

In February and March 2015, The Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) conducted a survey of The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation's grantees. The memo below outlines the key findings from the GPR, as well as the methodology used to collect this feedback. Parsons' complete results are included in the online report at <https://cep.surveyresults.org/>. This memo also includes page number references to relevant data in the Foundation's formatted PDF report available for download.

Assessing funder performance is challenging, and a range of data sources is required. The GPR provides one set of perspectives that can be useful in understanding a foundation's performance, and should be interpreted in light of Ralph M. Parsons Foundation's ("Parsons" or "the Foundation") particular goals and strategy. Parsons should place emphasis on the areas covered according to your specific priorities. Low ratings in an area that is not core to your strategy may not be concerning.

### Overview

- The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation is rated higher than 80 percent of other funders in CEP's dataset for its impact on and understanding of grantees' fields, local communities, and organizations.
- Parsons grantees also rate more positively than grantees at 87 percent of other funders for the quality of their relationships with the Foundation.
- Compared to grantees of other funders, Parsons grantees rate lower than typical for the helpfulness of Foundation's selection process in strengthening their organizations or funded programs.
- The Foundation is also rated lower than typical for the helpfulness of the reporting/evaluation process in strengthening grantees' organizations or funded programs.

- In their suggestions for how the Foundation can improve, grantees most frequently request changes to the Foundation’s processes, assistance beyond the grant, and grantmaking characteristics.

## Strong Impact on and Understanding of Grantees’ Fields and Local Communities

- The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation is rated higher than 80 percent of other funders for its impact on and understanding of grantees’ fields (pg. 12).
  - The Foundation is rated similar to the typical funder for the extent to which it has advanced the state of knowledge and affected public policy in grantees’ fields (pg. 13).
- The Foundation is also rated higher than 80 percent of other funders for its impact on and understanding of grantees’ local communities (pg. 14).
  - Parsons grantees rate the Foundation in the top 15 percent of funders in CEP’s comparative dataset for its understanding of the social, cultural, and socioeconomic factors that affect grantees’ work (pg. 15).
  - Grantees describe the Foundation as “very knowledgeable, well-informed, and connected to the needs of the community” and mention that Parsons “is looked to as a pillar of support for a broad range of critical needed services in the local community.”

**Recommendation:** *The Foundation should continue to identify the most pressing needs in the community and build on its already strong understanding of and impact on grantees’ fields and communities.*



*“The Foundation is considered an expert in the community, in the issues around child poverty, child welfare health and education. Wendy is a respected spokesperson in the arena of underrepresented people in Los Angeles.”*



*“I believe the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation has made a substantial impact on the Los Angeles community and makes every effort to be nimble in supporting the organizations that serve this community.”*



*“The Foundation has been and continues to be a leader in identifying the pressing issues in our community and funding a wide variety of organizations at work to address them.”*



*“I see Parsons as supporting excellence in a variety of fields in LA; if you are funded by Parsons, it garners respect from others. This helps our organization, of course. But together, Parsons strengthens the social fabric of LA, and helps us be more effective together.”*

## Opportunities to Continue Building Impact on Grantees' Organizations

- Parsons is rated in the top ten percent of funders in CEP's dataset for its impact on grantees' organizations (pg. 16).
- Parsons grantees also rate higher than grantees at 85 percent of other funders for the Foundation's understanding of their organizations' goals and strategies, the extent to which it has improved grantees' abilities to sustain the work funded by the grant in the future, and its awareness of the challenges faced by grantees (pg. 16 to 18).
  - The Foundation is rated just similar to the typical funder for the extent to which it takes advantage of its various resources to help grantees' organizations address challenges (pg. 18).

### Grantmaking Patterns

- CEP's research across funders shows that grantees who receive a specific pattern of larger (often six-figure), multi-year, operating support grants rate their funder's impact on their organization significantly more positively than grantees receiving other patterns of grants.
- Twenty-eight percent of Parsons' grants fall into this "high-impact" pattern, compared to just 12 percent at the typical funder.
  - Grantees receiving this pattern of funding rate the Foundation significantly higher on many measures throughout the report, including its impact on grantees' abilities to sustain the work funded by the grant in the future, and the extent to which Parsons takes advantage of its various resources to help grantees' organizations address challenges.
- Parsons grantee ratings also vary by individual grantmaking characteristics.
  - Grantees who receive multi-year grants rate Parsons significantly higher for its impact on their abilities to sustain the work funded by the grant in the future, and the extent to which it takes advantage of its various resources to help grantee organizations address challenges (pg. 54).
  - In addition, grantees who received a grant of \$100K or more rate the Foundation significantly higher across several measures (pg. 56).
  - While Parsons provides a larger than typical proportion of grantees with general operating support, there were no statistically significant differences in grantee ratings by grant type. However, in comments, many grantees express their appreciation for the Foundation's flexible support (pg. 54).
- When asked for suggestions about how the Foundation can improve, the third-largest proportion of grantees (18 percent) request changes to the type, length, or size of grants (pg. 51 to 52).

### Non-monetary Assistance

- CEP's broader research finds that when grantees receive the most intensive patterns of field-focused or comprehensive assistance beyond the grant, they have a substantially more positive experience with their funders than grantees who receive other patterns of assistance.
- Compared to grantees of the typical funder, a smaller proportion of Parsons grantees receive comprehensive or field-focused non-monetary assistance.

- Three percent of Parsons grantees report receiving intensive patterns of comprehensive or field-focused assistance, compared to 15 percent at the typical funder and 17 percent for the cohort of California peers chosen by the Foundation (pg. 40).
- In addition, Parsons grantees who receive “little” assistance rate the Foundation significantly more positively than grantees receiving no assistance across most measures in the report, including the Foundation’s impact on and understanding of their organizations, and the Foundation’s impact on their abilities to sustain the work funded by the grant in the future.
- When asked for suggestions about how the Foundation can improve, the second-largest proportion of grantees (22 percent) request more non-monetary assistance.
  - In particular, seven grantees request that the Foundation provide help with securing funding from other sources, six grantees each make suggestions related to collaboration or convenings, and six grantees request technical assistance (pg. 51).

**Recommendation:** *The Foundation should consider its resources and strategy to support a larger proportion of its most closely aligned grantees with a pattern of large, multi-year, operating support grants and more intensive patterns of assistance beyond the grant.*



*“It would be great if the Parsons Foundation hosted meetings with the organizations in our field...to help us learn from each other and to facilitate our collaboration with one another.”*



*“Although I am deeply, deeply grateful for the annual core funding support and the collegial relationship I enjoy with the Foundation staff-- it would be that much more liberating of the E.D.'s anxiety if there possibilities for multi-year funding.”*



*“The Foundation provides widespread support for organizations across many fields and is considered a leader in supporting organizations and what they do best. We greatly appreciate that this Foundation supports existing or new programs and does not require an organization to espouse a specific philosophy or particular kinds of projects...”*

---

## Strong Relationships with a Desire for More Frequent Interactions

- The Foundation is rated higher than typical across all individual measures of the quality of its relationships with grantees, and its overall transparency (pg. 20 and 27).
  - Grantees rate the Foundation more positively than typical for the responsiveness of Foundation staff, their fairness of treatment, grantees comfort approaching the Foundation if a problem arises, and the clarity and consistency of Parsons’ communications (pg. 21).
- Grantees describe their interactions with Foundation staff as “clear, informative, and helpful” and mention that “staff are open to questions and providing assistance when requested.”
- Parsons program staff caseload is also higher than at the typical funder.
  - A full-time program staff member at Parsons manages approximately 89 applications and 98 active grants. At the typical funder, a full-time program staff member manages approximately 29 applications and 33 active grants (pg. 11).

### Interactions with Grantees During Grant Period

- CEP's research suggests that the frequency of foundation contact with grantees, and who most frequently initiates that contact, is a strong predictor for how grantees perceive their relationships with their funders.
- While Parsons is rated similar to the typical funder for its reciprocity of contact with grantees, a larger than typical proportion of grantees report interacting with the Foundation yearly or less often.
  - Thirty-seven percent of Parsons grantees report having contact with their program officer yearly or less often, compared to 22 percent of grantees at the typical funder (pg. 22).
  - Grantees who have contact with the Foundation at least a few times a year rate significantly higher on most measures, including their relationship with the Foundation, helpfulness of grant processes, and transparency.
- Sixteen percent of grantees' suggestions relate to the quality and quantity of interactions they have with the Foundation. In particular, ten grantees request more frequent interactions with program officers and five request more site visits (pg. 52).

**Recommendation:** *Parsons should carefully consider the capacity of and demands on staff time, and determine opportunities to continue to strengthen relationships with grantees through more frequent and reciprocal interactions.*



*"Our communication and interactions with the Foundation staff were exceptionally informative, helpful and respectful. We felt that there was a true desire to understand the needs of our community as well as the needs of our organization..."*



*"Foundation staff is responsive and open. We have a good relationship with the president and program officers. I would feel very comfortable approaching them with any problems or changes during the grant period."*



*"Good amount of communication during application and review process but have not heard from foundation in last 15 months now that we have the grant."*

---

### Opportunity to Continue Improving Grant Processes

- Parsons grantees report receiving more grant dollars per process hour required (dollar return) than grantees at 70 percent of other funders in CEP's dataset.
  - Grantees report spending a typical number of hours on grant processes across the lifetime of their grant.
- However, the Foundation is rated lower than typical for the helpfulness of its selection process and reporting/evaluation process in strengthening grantees' organizations/programs (pg. 30). While grantees comment that the Foundation's "guidelines were clear and concise," they also note that "[t]he time between request and approval made decision-making difficult."

- A larger than typical proportion of grantees (34 percent) select that it took seven months or more between submission of their grant proposal and clear commitment of funding from the Foundation, compared to just nine percent at the typical funder (pg. 32).
  - Grantees who report a period of less than seven months between submission of their proposal and clear commitment of funding rate significantly higher on several measures, including the Foundation's impact and understanding of their fields, impact on their local communities, and quality of their relationships.
  - A larger proportion of grantees receiving grants of \$50K or less report having a period of less than seven months between submission of proposal and clear commitment of funding, compared to grantees receiving grants larger than \$50K.
- At Parsons, certain patterns of interaction also correspond with more helpful grant processes.
  - A smaller than typical proportion of Parsons grantees (15 percent) indicate that they discussed their completed report/evaluation with Foundation staff, compared to 50 percent at the typical funder (pg. 34).
  - Grantees who have discussed their evaluation with the Foundation rate significantly higher for the helpfulness of the Foundation's selection and reporting/evaluation processes, and many other measures throughout the report.
  - In addition, 54 percent of grantees report exchanging ideas about how to assess the results of the work funded by the grant with the Foundation, compared to 72 percent of grantees at the typical funder (pg. 35).
  - Grantees who report exchanging ideas with the Foundation rate significantly higher on a number of measures, including the helpfulness of the Foundation's selection processes.
- The largest proportion of grantee suggestions for improvement (32 percent) mention the Foundation's selection process (pg. 51).
  - In particular, 24 grantees make suggestions related to shortening the timeline between the submission of a proposal and clear funding commitment, and four grantees comment on the challenges that the selection process poses for repeat grantees.

**Recommendation:** *Given its goals and strategy, the Foundation should determine whether it is comfortable with the perceived helpfulness of its selection process and whether there may be opportunities to streamline the selection process for grantees. Parsons should also consider its strategy and resources to discuss reports or evaluations with a larger proportion of grantees.*



*"The Foundation has been extremely supportive and helpful in guiding us through the application process, providing constructive feedback and support, and helping us to think strategically about our overall fundraising and capacity issues."*



*"It would be helpful if the process from LOI to award letter were shorter, or if the Foundation would create a more fast-tracked process for current grantees/organizations wishing to renew funding, rather than having to go through the same process as organizations that are approaching for the first time."*

## Summary of Recommendations

Based on its grantee feedback, CEP recommends that Parsons considers the following recommendations in order to build on its strengths and address potential areas for improvement:

- Consider program staff capacity and caseload while striving to build stronger interactions and communications with grantees through more frequent and reciprocal contact.
- Determine what opportunities may exist to streamline the Foundation's selection process, giving particular attention to the length of time between submission of LOIs and proposals and clear commitment of funding.
- Discuss the Foundation's strategy and whether it has the capacity to provide a larger proportion of closely aligned grantees with a pattern of large, multi-year, operating support grants, and more intensive patterns of assistance beyond the grant.

## Methodology

The Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) surveyed 308 grantees of The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation during February and March of 2015. CEP received 261 completed responses for an 85 percent response rate. This is the first GPR for The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation. Throughout the GPR, ratings from Parsons' grantees are compared to ratings from more than 40,000 grantees of over 250 funders.

## Contact Information

### **Austin Long, Director—Assessment Tools**

(415) 391-3070 ext. 127

[austinl@effectivephilanthropy.org](mailto:austinl@effectivephilanthropy.org)

### **Stephanie Moline Benoit, Research Analyst**

(415) 391-3070 ext. 161

[stephanieb@effectivephilanthropy.org](mailto:stephanieb@effectivephilanthropy.org)



# Grantee Perception Report®

PREPARED FOR  
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation

JUNE 2015



THE CENTER FOR  
EFFECTIVE PHILANTHROPY

675 Massachusetts Avenue  
7th Floor  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
Tel: (617) 492-0800  
Fax: (617) 492-0888

100 Montgomery Street  
Suite 1700  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
Tel: (415) 391-3070  
Fax: (415) 956-9916

[www.effectivephilanthropy.org](http://www.effectivephilanthropy.org)

The online version of this report can be accessed at [cep.surveymresults.org](http://cep.surveymresults.org).

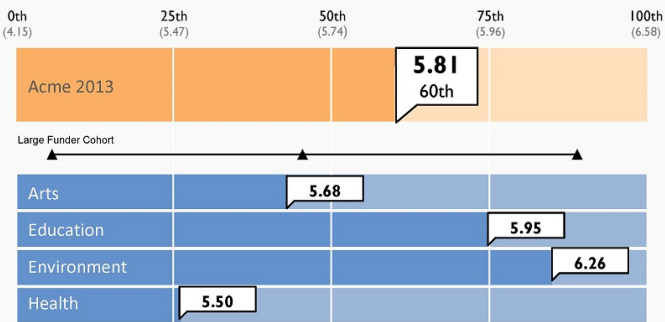


# TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW TO READ YOUR REPORT	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
GPR Ratings Summary	5
Word Cloud	6
SURVEY POPULATION	7
GRANTMAKING AND APPLICATION CHARACTERISTICS	10
IMPACT ON FIELDS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES	12
Field-Focused Measures	12
Community-Focused Measures	14
IMPACT ON ORGANIZATIONS	16
INTERACTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS	20
Interactions Measures	21
Communications Measures	24
GRANT PROCESSES	30
Selection Process	31
Reporting and Evaluation Process	34
DOLLAR RETURN AND TIME SPENT ON PROCESSES	37
Time Spent on Processes	38
NON-MONETARY ASSISTANCE	40
PARSONS-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS	46
SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FOUNDATION	50
CONTEXTUAL DATA	54
Grantmaking Characteristics	54
Grantee Characteristics	58
Funder Characteristics	61
ADDITIONAL MEASURES	62
ADDITIONAL SURVEY INFORMATION	63
ABOUT CEP	65

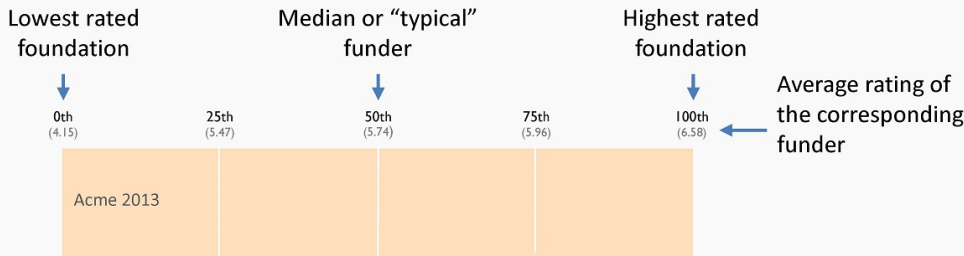
HOW TO READ CHARTS

Many of the charts in this report are shown in this format. See below for an explanation of the chart elements, or view the Video Tour.

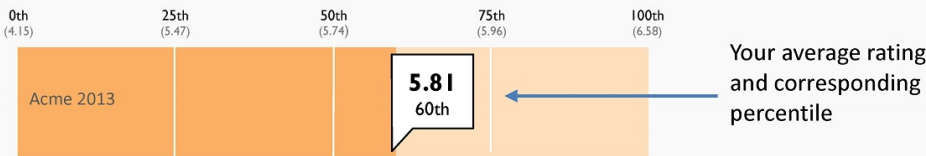


PERCENTILE SCALE

Every participating funder’s average rating is ranked along a percentile scale.



YOUR RESULTS



COMPARATIVE COHORT



SUBGROUP DATA



MISSING DATA

Selected grantee ratings are not displayed in this report due to changes in the survey instrument, or when a question received fewer than five responses.

## Executive Summary

The following summary highlights key findings about grantees' perceptions of The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation compared to other foundations whose grantees CEP has surveyed.

Throughout this report, results are described as 'more positive' when an average rating is higher than that of 65 percent of funders in CEP's dataset, and 'less positive' when a rating is lower than that of 65 percent of funders.

**Compared to grantees of the typical funder, Parsons grantees in 2015 have:**

**more positive** perceptions regarding the Foundation's:

- » Impact on their fields
- » Impact on their local communities
- » Impact on their organizations
- » Relationships with grantees

**less positive** perceptions regarding the Foundation's:

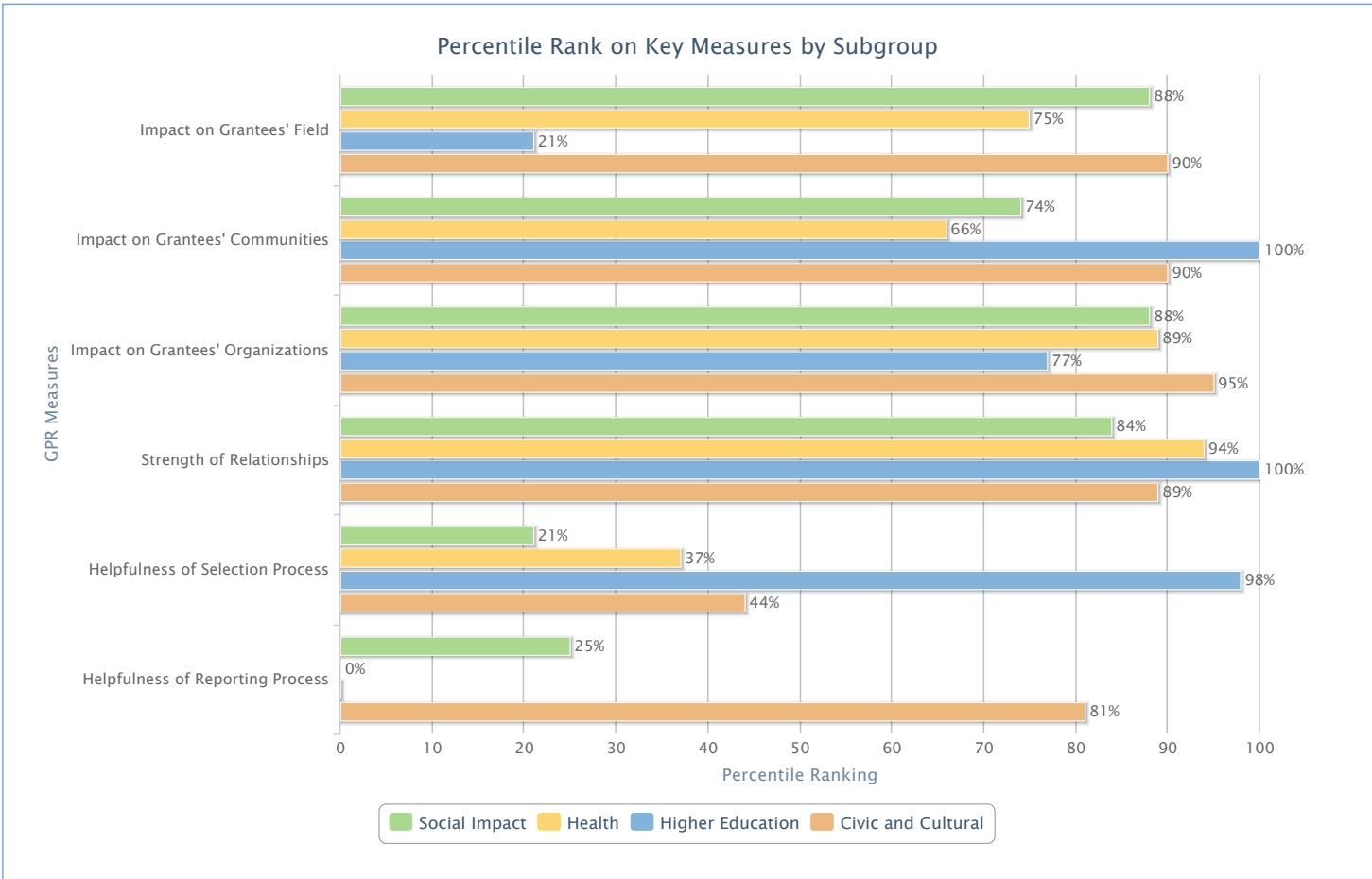
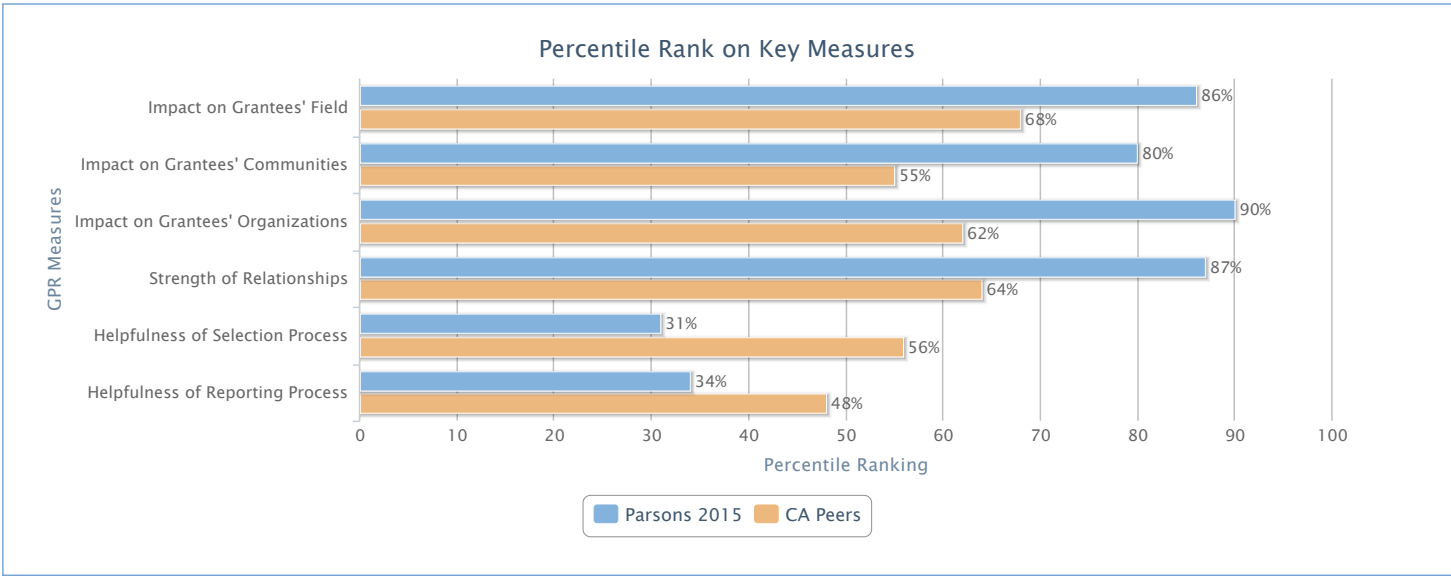
- » Selection process
- » Reporting/evaluation process

### Summary of Differences by Subgroups

There are no consistent statistically significant differences across program areas, and no group consistently rates higher or lower than others when segmented by program.

GPR Ratings Summary

The chart below shows The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation's percentile ranking on key areas of the GPR relative to CEP's overall comparative dataset, where 0% indicates the lowest rated funder, and 100% indicates the highest rated funder. Rankings are also shown for the median funder in the selected peer cohort.



## Word Cloud

Grantees were asked, “At this point in time, what is one word that best describes the Foundation?” In the “word cloud” below, the size of each word indicates the frequency with which it was written by grantees. The color of each word is stylistic and not indicative of its frequency. Thirty-two grantees described Parsons as “supportive,” the most commonly used word.



This image was produced using a free tool available at [www.tagxedo.com](http://www.tagxedo.com). Copyright (c) 2006, ComponentAce. <http://www.componentace.com>.

## SURVEY POPULATION

CEP surveyed Parsons's grantees in February and March of 2015.

Survey	Survey Fielded	Year of Active Grants	Number of Responses Received	Survey Response Rate
Parsons 2015	February and March 2015	2014	261	85%

Throughout this report, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation's survey results are compared to CEP's broader dataset of more than 40,000 grantees built up over more than a decade of grantee surveys of more than 250 funders. The full list of participating funders can be found at <http://www.effectivephilanthropy.org/assessment-tools/gpr-apr>.

For the number of responses to specific questions in the survey, please refer to the section titled "Additional Survey Information" in the online system and pages 63-64 of the report PDF.

### Subgroups

In addition to showing Parsons's overall ratings, this report shows ratings segmented by Program Area as designated within the Foundation's grantee list.

Program Area	Number of Responses	Response Rate
Social Impact	174	85%
Health	23	70%
Higher Education	9	90%
Civic and Cultural	55	83%

## COMPARATIVE COHORTS

### Customized Cohort

Parsons selected two sets of funders to create smaller comparison groups that more closely resemble Parsons in scale and scope. The group of 13 California funders below includes peers that have similar programmatic and strategy characteristics to Parsons:

CA Peers
Blue Shield of California Foundation
California Community Foundation
The California Endowment
Carrie Estelle Doheny Foundation
Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund
Walter and Elise Haas Fund
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
The James Irvine Foundation
Leichtag Foundation
S. H. Cowell Foundation
Sobrato Family Foundation
Stuart Foundation
Weingart Foundation

Parsons also selected a set of 14 funders that more closely resembles the Foundation in size and priority areas:

Regional Funders
The Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation
The George Gund Foundation
The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
Stuart Foundation
Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust
Weingart Foundation
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, Inc.
Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust
Polk Bros. Foundation
Peter Kiewit Foundation
Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, Inc.
Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation
Rasmuson Foundation
The Hyams Foundation, Inc.

## Standard Cohorts

CEP also included 16 available standard cohorts to allow for comparisons to a variety of different types of funders. A full list of standard cohorts and descriptions is below.

## Strategy Cohorts

Cohort Name	Count	Description
Small Grant Providers	44	Funders with median grant size of \$20K or less
Large Grant Providers	48	Funders with median grant size of \$200K or more
High Touch Funders	21	Funders for which a majority of grantees report having contact with their primary contact monthly or more often
Intensive Non-Monetary Assistance Providers	30	Funders that provide at least 30% of grantees with comprehensive or field-focused assistance as defined by CEP
Proactive Grantmakers	45	Funders that make at least 90% of grants proactively
Reactive Grantmakers	44	Funders that make at most 10% of grants proactively
International Funders	37	Funders with an international scope of work

## Annual Giving Cohorts

Cohort Name	Count	Description
Funders Giving Less Than \$5 Million	52	Funders with annual giving of less than \$5 million
Funders Giving \$50 Million Or More	47	Funders with annual giving of \$50 million or more

## Foundation Type Cohorts

Cohort Name	Count	Description
Private Foundations	125	All private foundations in the GPR dataset
Family Foundations	43	All family foundations in the GPR dataset
Community Foundations	31	All community foundations in the GPR dataset
Health Conversion Foundations	25	All health conversation foundations in the GPR dataset
Corporate Foundations	16	All corporate foundations in the GPR dataset

## Other Cohorts

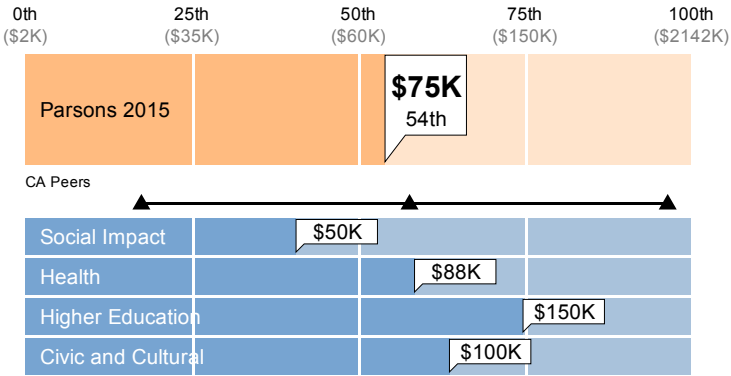
Cohort Name	Count	Description
Funders Outside the United States	20	Funders that are primary based outside the United States
Recently Established Foundations	41	Funders that were established in 2000 or later



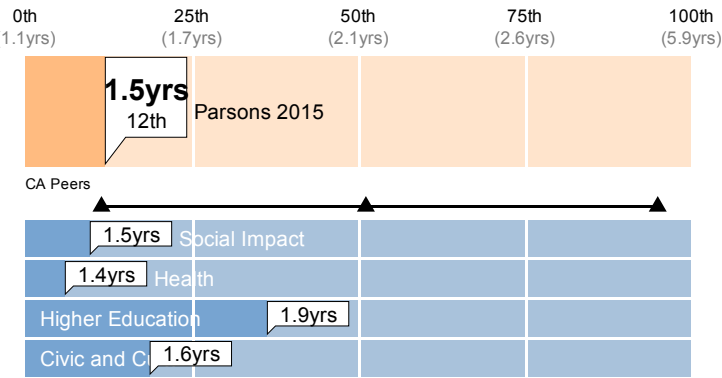
GRANTMAKING CHARACTERISTICS

Foundations make different choices about the ways they organize themselves, structure their grants, and the types of grantees they support. The following charts and tables show some of these important characteristics. The information is based on self-reported data from funders and grantees, and further detail is available in the Contextual Data section of this report.

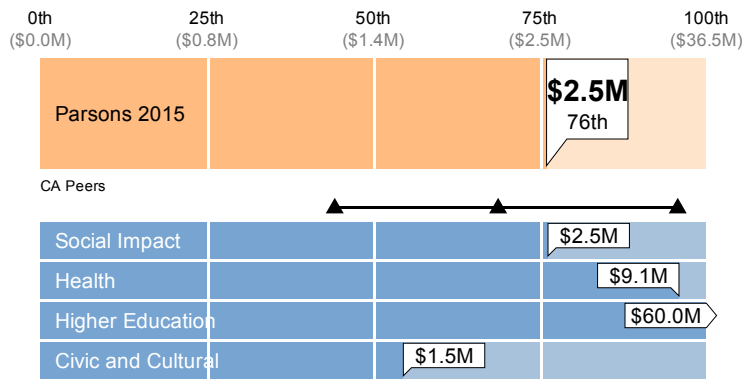
MEDIAN GRANT SIZE



AVERAGE GRANT LENGTH



## TYPICAL ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGET

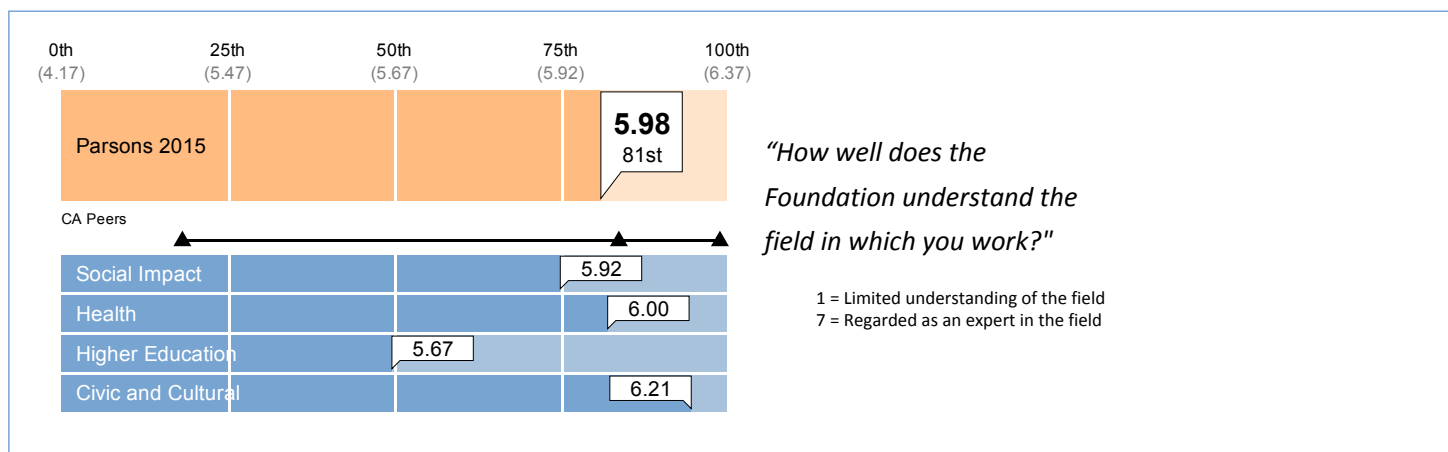
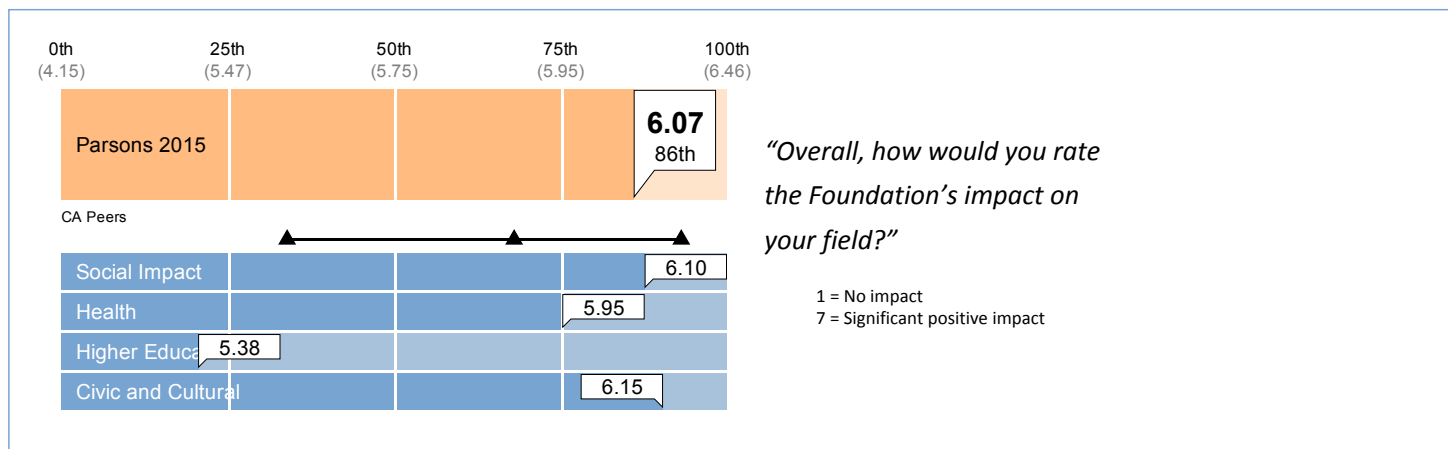


Type of Support (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Percent of grantees receiving general operating/core support	58%	20%	33%
Percent of grantees receiving program/project support	30%	64%	58%
Percent of grantees receiving other types of support	12%	15%	9%

Grant History (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Percentage of first-time grants	20%	29%	24%

Program Staff Load (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Median Funder	CA Peers
Dollars awarded per program staff full-time employee	\$4.8M	\$2.6M	\$3.3M
Applications per program full-time employee	89	29	25
Active grants per program full-time employee	98	33	34

## IMPACT ON AND UNDERSTANDING OF GRANTEES' FIELDS



### Selected Grantee Comments:

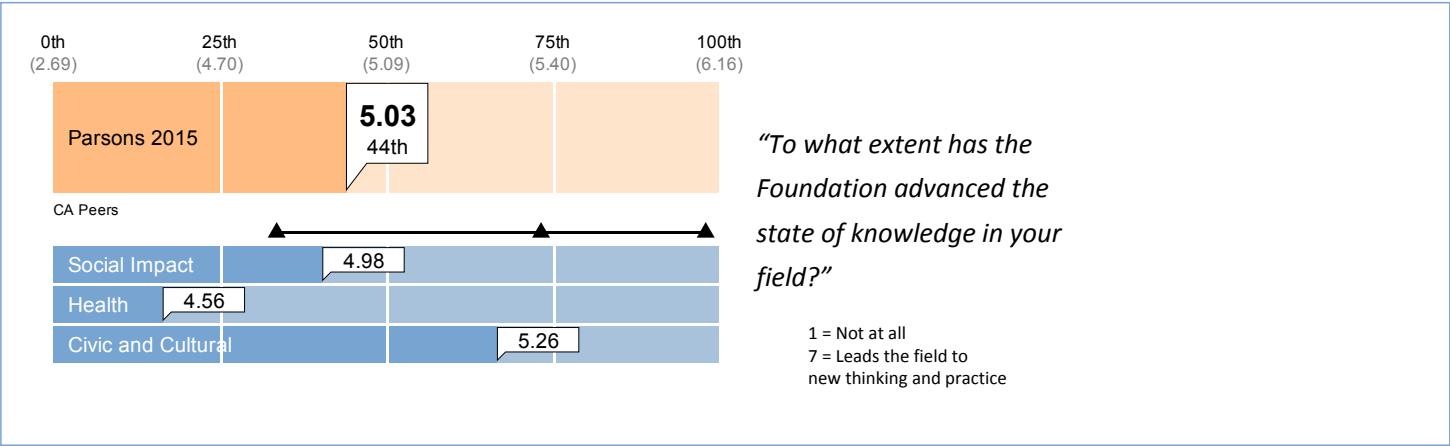
» "The Foundation is well known, respected and appreciated by health non-profits in the community. It is very supportive of community health clinics and the needs associated with those patient who use such medical facilities. The Foundation seems to understand the health disparities facing South Los Angeles and is supportive of programs and services affecting such populations."

» "I see Parsons as supporting excellence in a variety of fields in LA; if you are funded by Parsons, it garners respect from others. This helps our organization, of course. But together, Parsons strengthens the social fabric of LA, and helps us be more effective together."

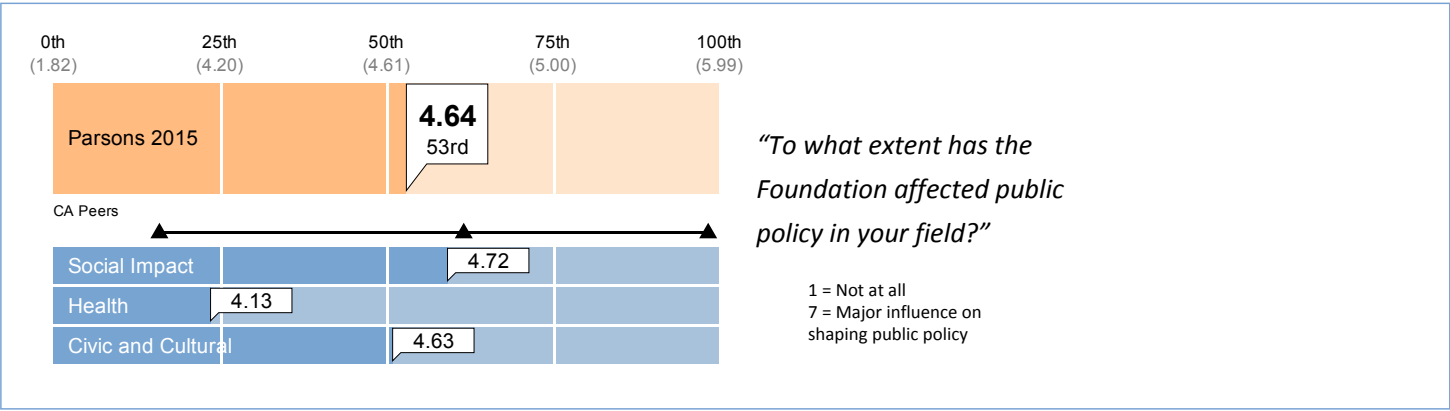
» "This Foundation has played a critical role in providing gifts to strong organizations doing really good work on behalf of students and families in the field of education. Without their support, our collective impact could not be as strong."

» "The Foundation is an ardent supporter and participant in our field. It has been funding initiatives and programs designed to end homelessness for decades and participating in forums that seek to address the complex issues of homelessness. The Foundation was very responsive and swift in assisting organizations meet the high demand for services during the most recent recession. As a result, the Foundation's impact was profound..."

Advancing Knowledge and Public Policy

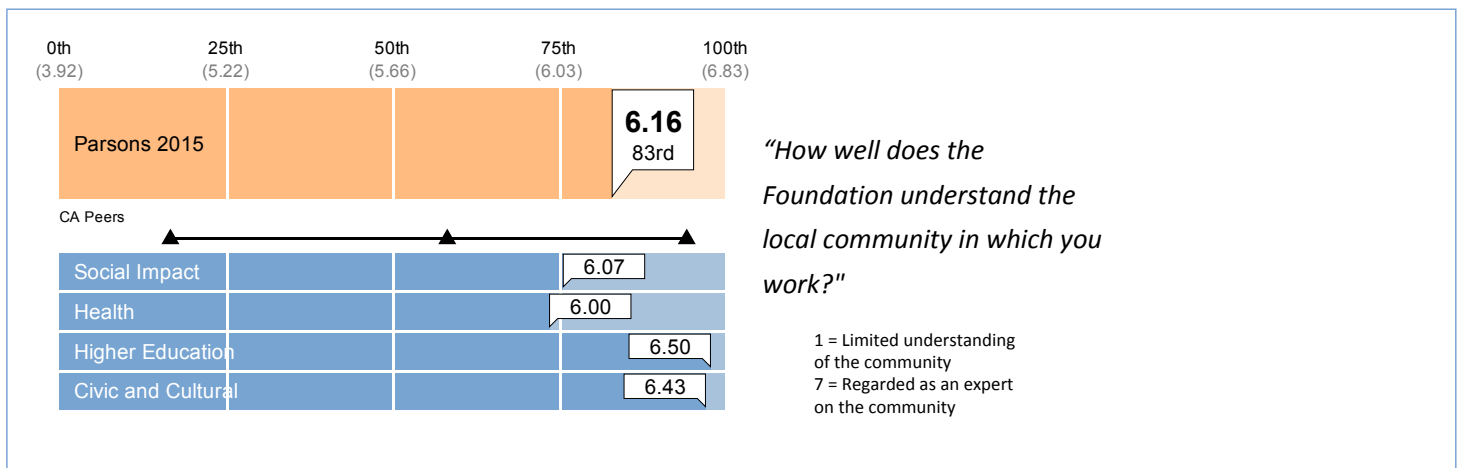
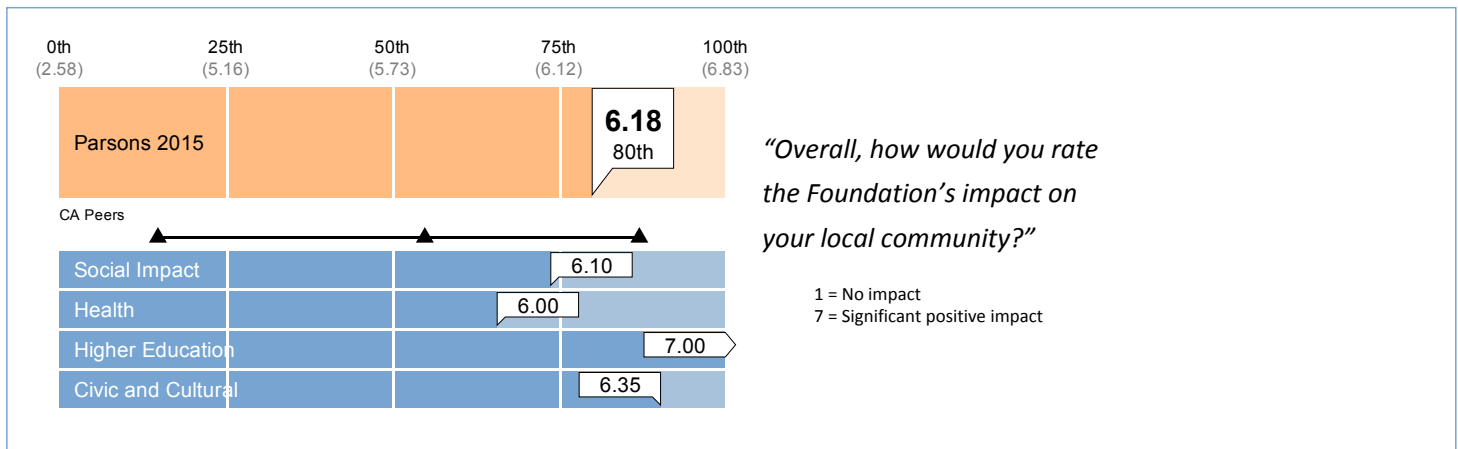


Grantees were able to select “don’t know” for this question. The total number of responses included in this measure is 150.

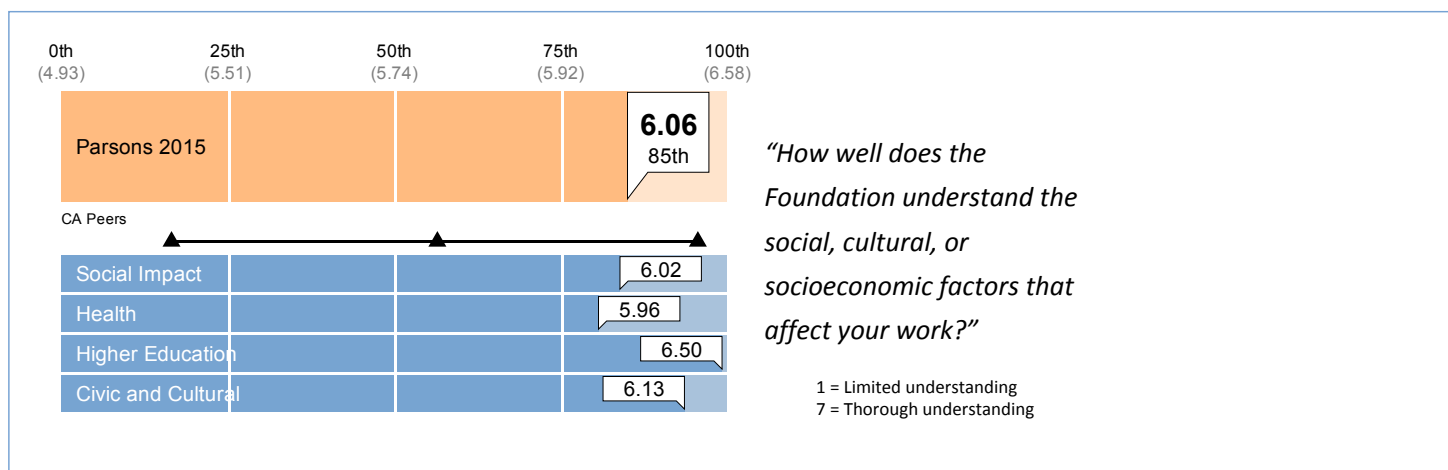


Grantees were able to select “don’t know” for this question. The total number of responses included in this measure is 103.

## IMPACT ON AND UNDERSTANDING OF GRANTEES' LOCAL COMMUNITIES



## Understanding of Contextual Factors



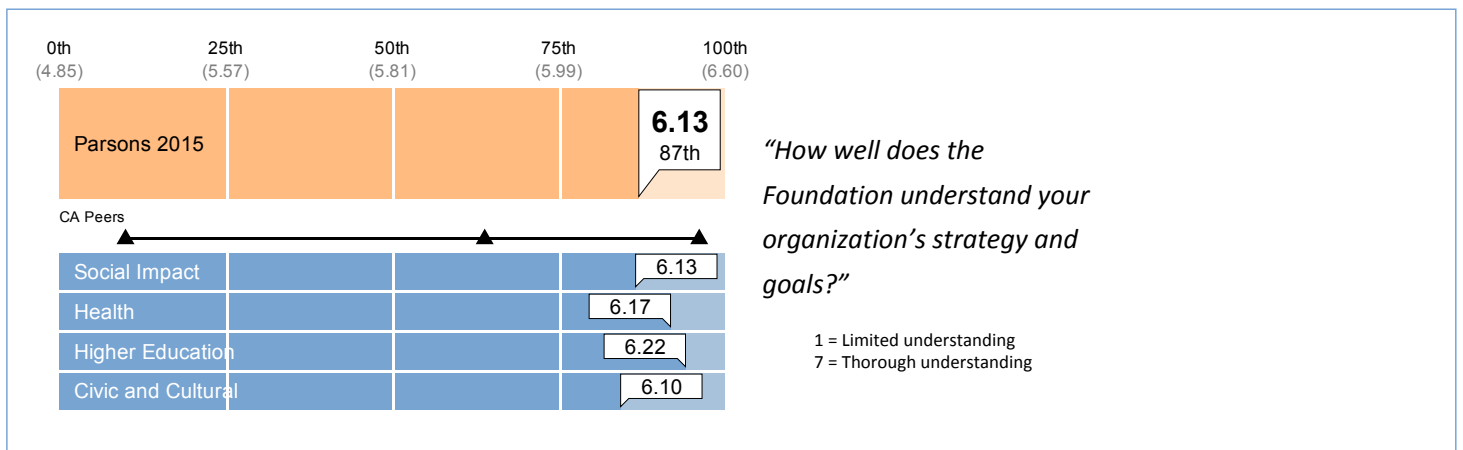
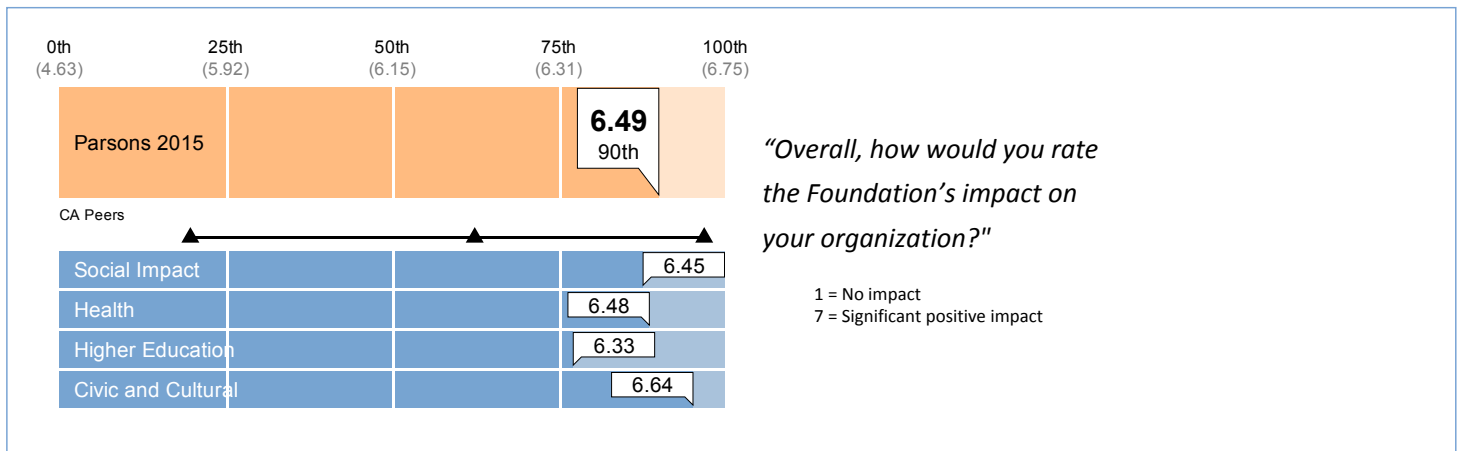
## Selected Grantee Comments:

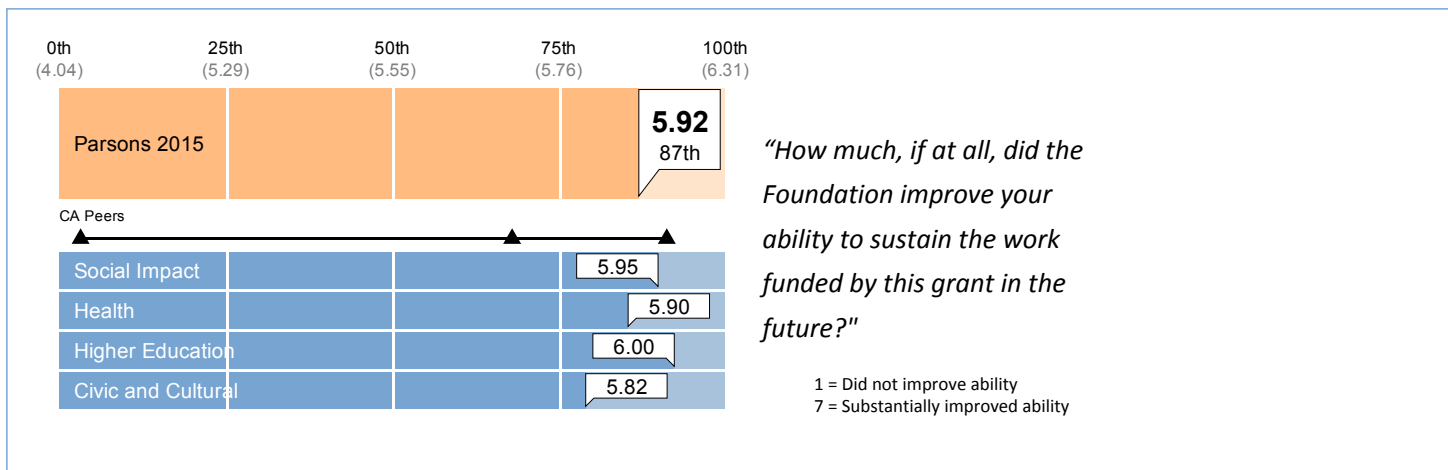
» "The Foundation is committed to making sustainable positive change in Los Angeles. The impact on the community is evident in all the success and achievement we have been able to accomplish. The Foundation had made lasting investment not only in our organization and our mission, but other nonprofit organizations we partner with in our work. This creates a truly systemic impact on improving the lives of those we serve."

» "The Foundation leadership is very knowledgeable, well-informed, and connected to the needs of the community. Their grantmaking is very focused, responsive, and strategic, which lends to a much more impactful Foundation that is supporting the core needs of the most successful and valuable non-profit organizations in the region. When compared to other foundations, the Parsons Foundation is a step above their peers in terms of understanding needs and commitment to impact."

» "The Foundation has been and continues to be a leader in identifying the pressing issues in our community and funding a wide variety of organizations at work to address them."

## IMPACT ON AND UNDERSTANDING OF GRANTEES' ORGANIZATIONS





### Selected Grantee Comments:

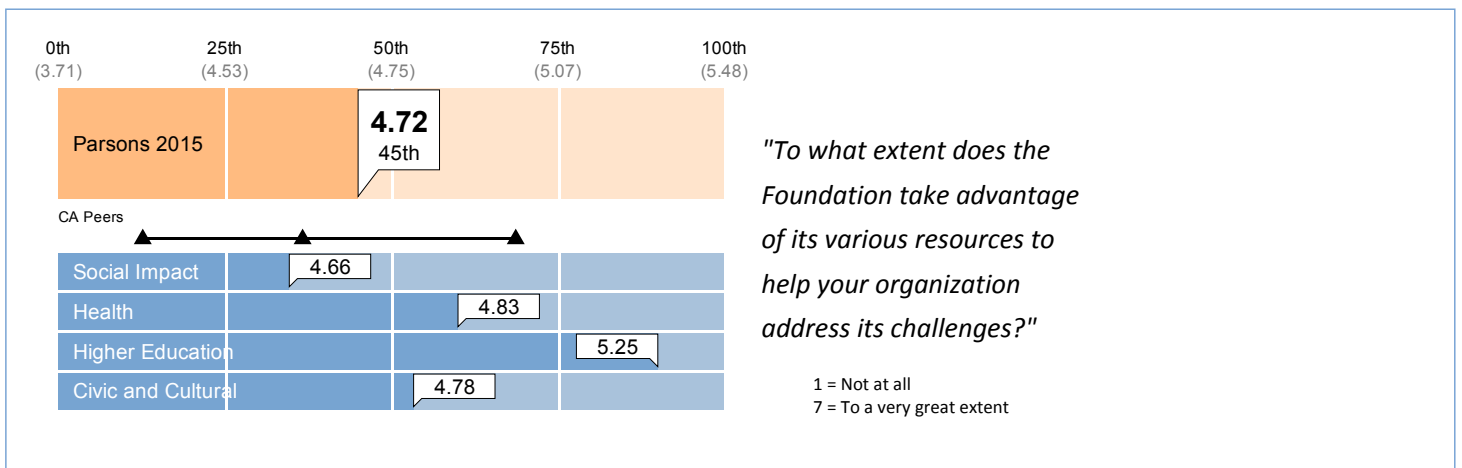
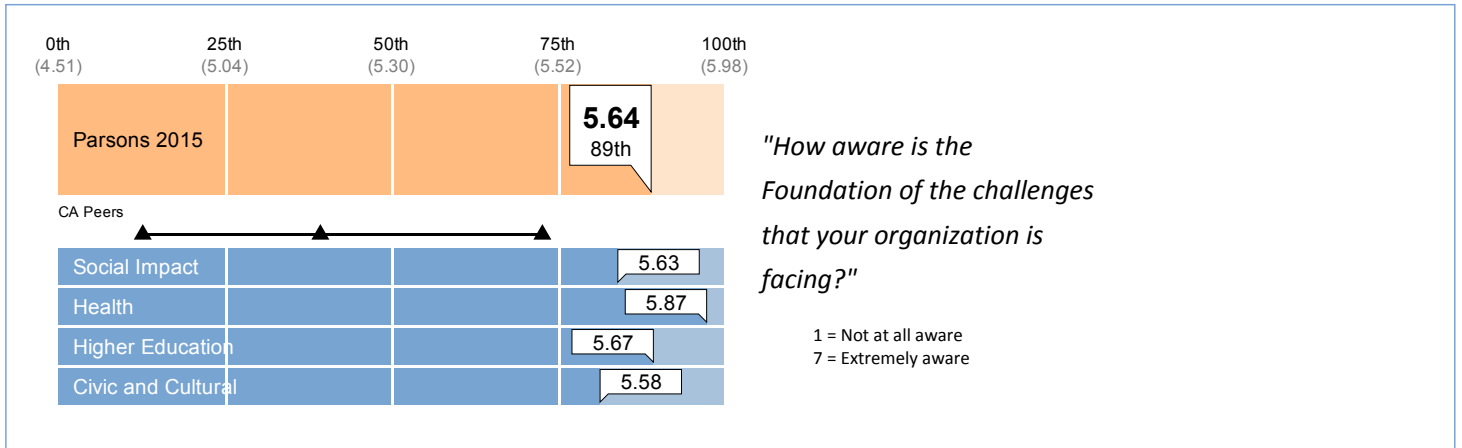
» "The Foundation provides widespread support for organizations across many fields and is considered a leader in supporting organizations and what they do best. We greatly appreciate that this foundation supports existing or new programs and does not require an organization to espouse a specific philosophy or particular kinds of projects. Rather, it sees each organization's expertise in its field and supports what is most important to help the organization do its job better, for its constituents and for the community."

» "The Foundation has been involved in researching and implementing support for how nonprofits can partner to better tackle social issues. As a leader in this dialogue, they are listening to needs and challenges organizations face, and helping to find new solutions to support the efforts of complementary organizations."

» "The Foundation's core support grants is making a big impact in the sustainability of nonprofits. They are one of the few foundations that offer this type of support even though it is highly needed in this field."



## Grantee Challenges



## Effect of Grant on Organization

"Which of the following statements best describes the primary effect the receipt of this grant had on your organization's programs or operations?"

Primary Effect of Grant on Grantee's Organization (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Enhanced Capacity	58%	29%	34%
Expanded Existing Program Work	17%	26%	26%
Maintained Existing Program	20%	20%	20%
Added New Program Work	6%	25%	20%

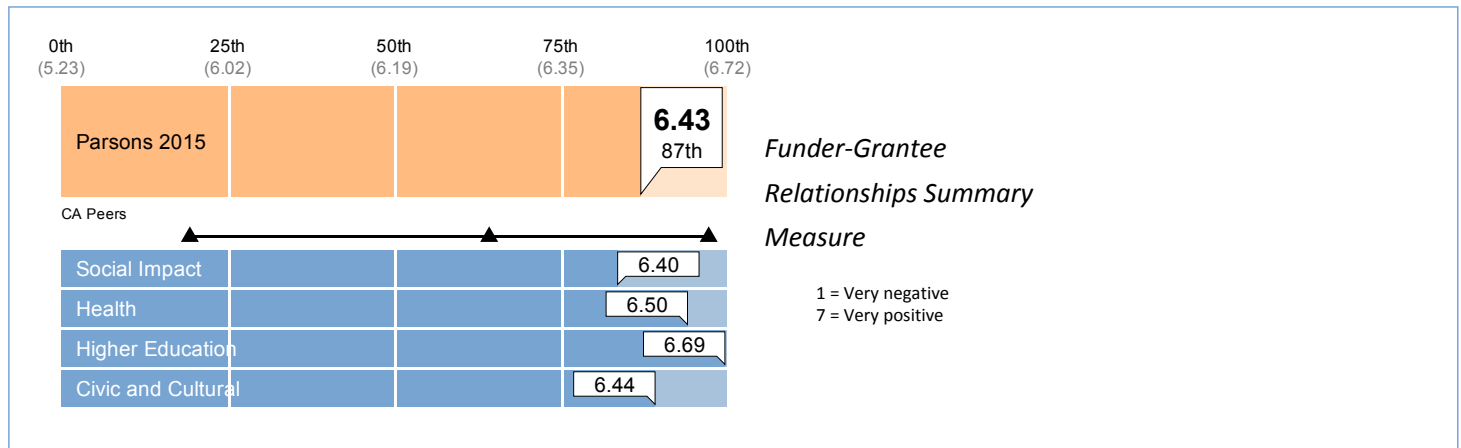
Primary Effect of Grant on Grantee's Organization (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Enhanced Capacity	54%	59%	44%	70%
Expanded Existing Program Work	18%	9%	33%	13%
Maintained Existing Program	22%	27%	11%	11%
Added New Program Work	5%	5%	11%	6%

## FUNDER-GRANTEE RELATIONSHIPS

### Funder-Grantee Relationships Summary Measure

The quality of interactions and the clarity and consistency of communications together create the larger construct that CEP refers to as “relationships.” The relationships measure below is an average of grantee ratings on the following measures:

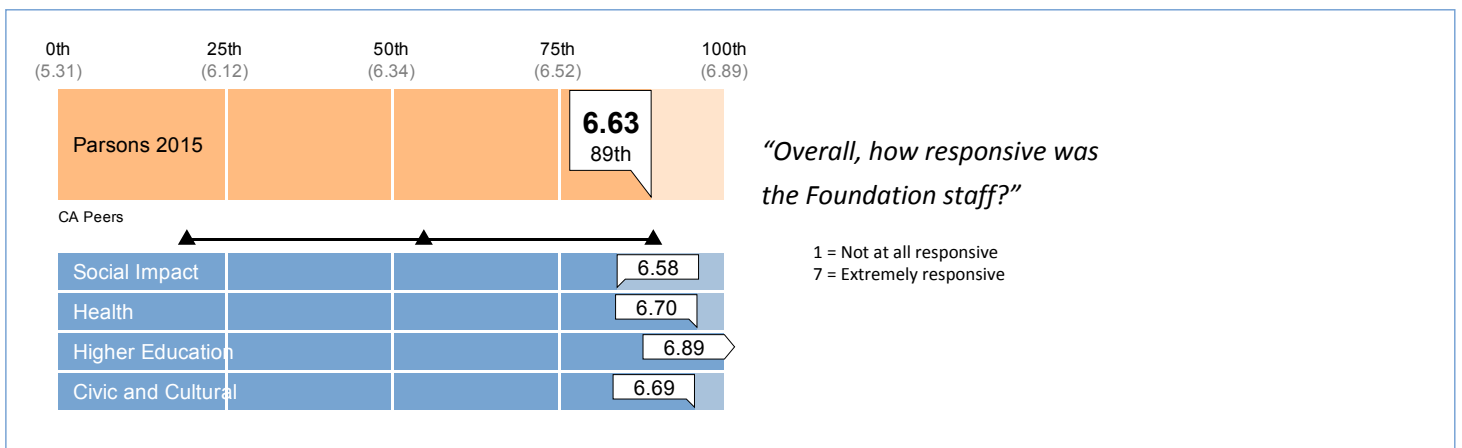
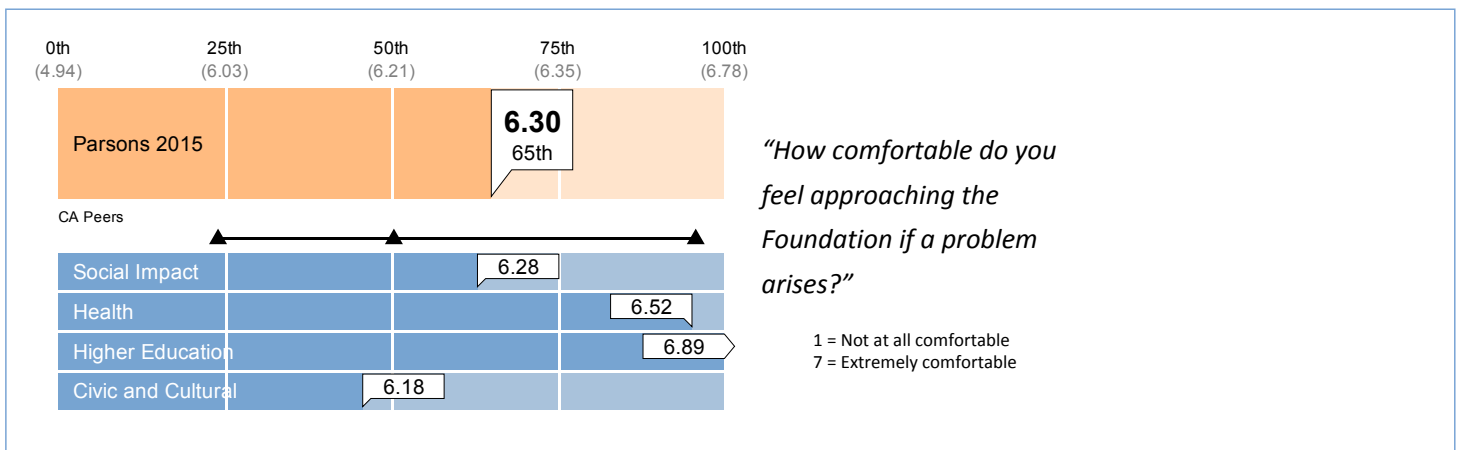
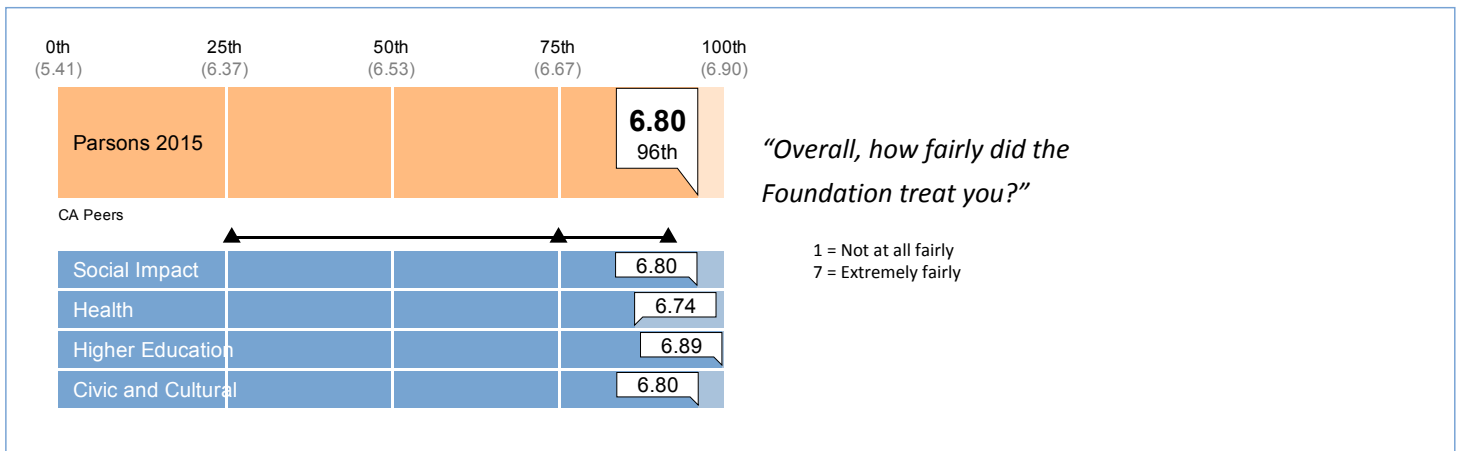
1. Fairness of treatment by the foundation
2. Comfort approaching the foundation if a problem arises
3. Responsiveness of foundation staff
4. Clarity of communication of the foundation’s goals and strategy
5. Consistency of information provided by different communications



### Selected Grantee Comments:

- » "Our communication and interactions with the Foundation staff were exceptionally informative, helpful and respectful. We felt that there was a true desire to understand the needs of our community as well as the needs of our organization... to make a significant difference in the lives of young children and families. I would say that this is one of the most professional and respectful partnerships we have been privileged to take part in. The Foundation clearly communicates its mission and is responsive to community and nonprofits."
- » "Foundation staff is responsive and open. We have a good relationship with the president and program officers. I would feel very comfortable approaching them with any problems or changes during the grant period."
- » "Good amount of communication during application and review process but have not heard from Foundation in last 15 months now that we have the grant."
- » "The Foundation is very clear about their philosophies, priorities, and processes. I feel they go above and beyond to be transparent and supportive. I appreciated the curiosity and thoughtfulness of our program officers. The way they asked all their questions showed they were most interested in understanding our organization, so they could present it in the clearest and best possible light to their board."

## Quality of Interactions



## Interaction Patterns

**"How often do/did you have contact with your program officer during this grant?"**

Frequency of Contact with Program Officer (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Weekly or more often	1%	3%	2%
A few times a month	2%	11%	9%
Monthly	4%	14%	15%
Once every few months	56%	51%	49%
Yearly or less often	37%	22%	24%

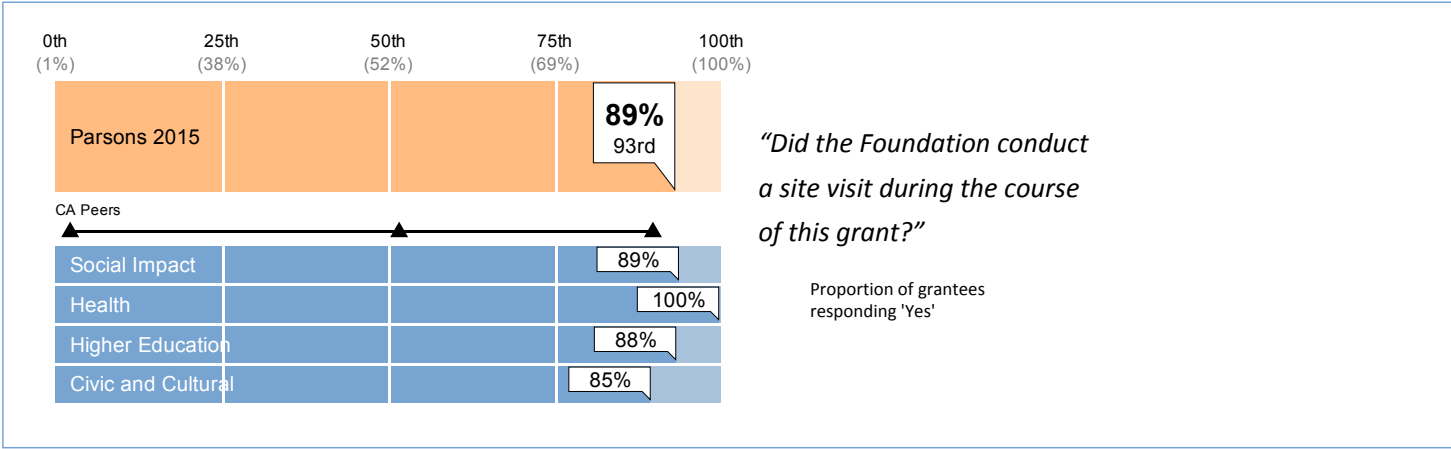
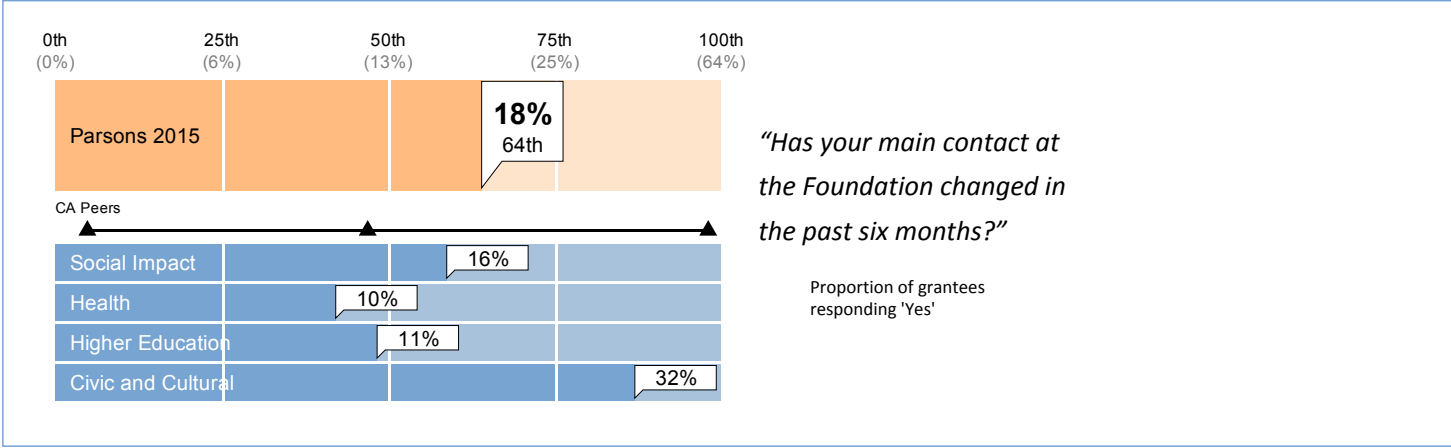
Frequency of Contact with Program Officer (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Weekly or more often	0%	4%	0%	2%
A few times a month	3%	0%	0%	0%
Monthly	2%	0%	11%	9%
Once every few months	55%	48%	78%	60%
Yearly or less often	40%	48%	11%	29%

**"Who most frequently initiated the contact you had with your program officer?"**

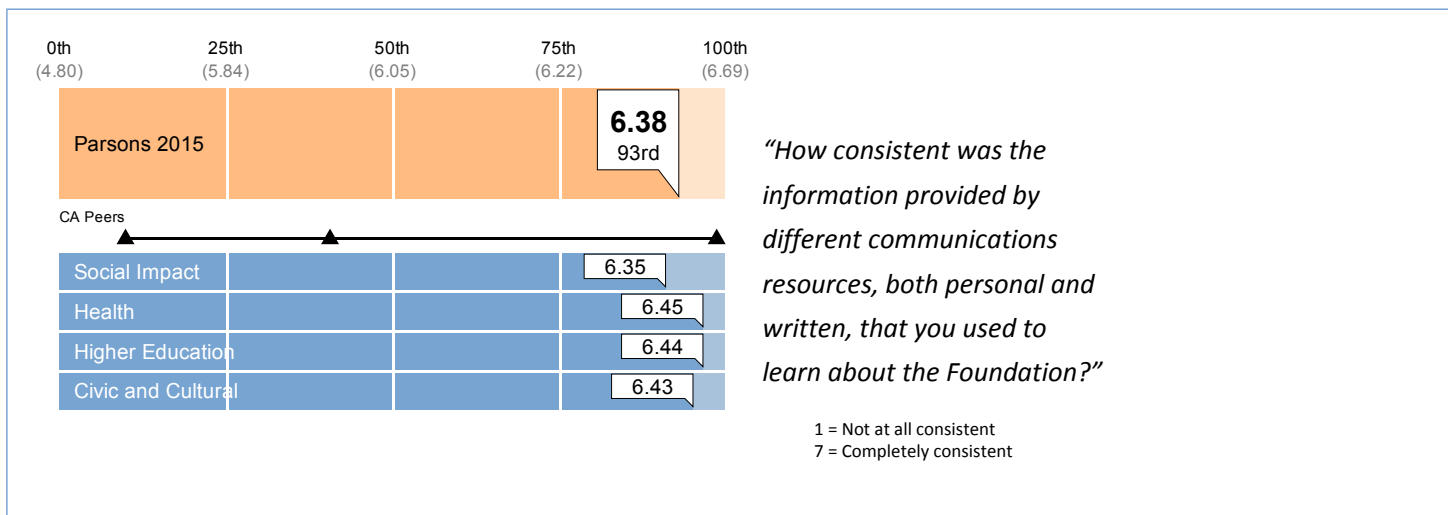
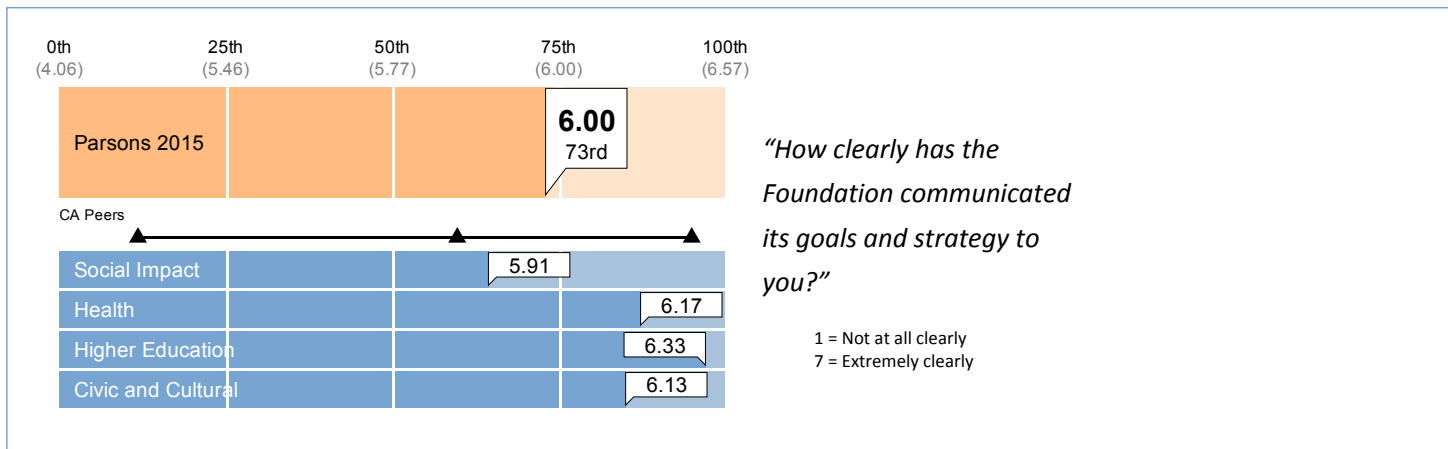
Initiation of Contact with Program Officer (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Program Officer	18%	15%	16%
Both of equal frequency	42%	49%	51%
Grantee	41%	36%	34%

Initiation of Contact with Program Officer (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Program Officer	20%	19%	11%	12%
Both of equal frequency	40%	57%	44%	39%
Grantee	40%	24%	44%	49%

Contact Change and Site Visits



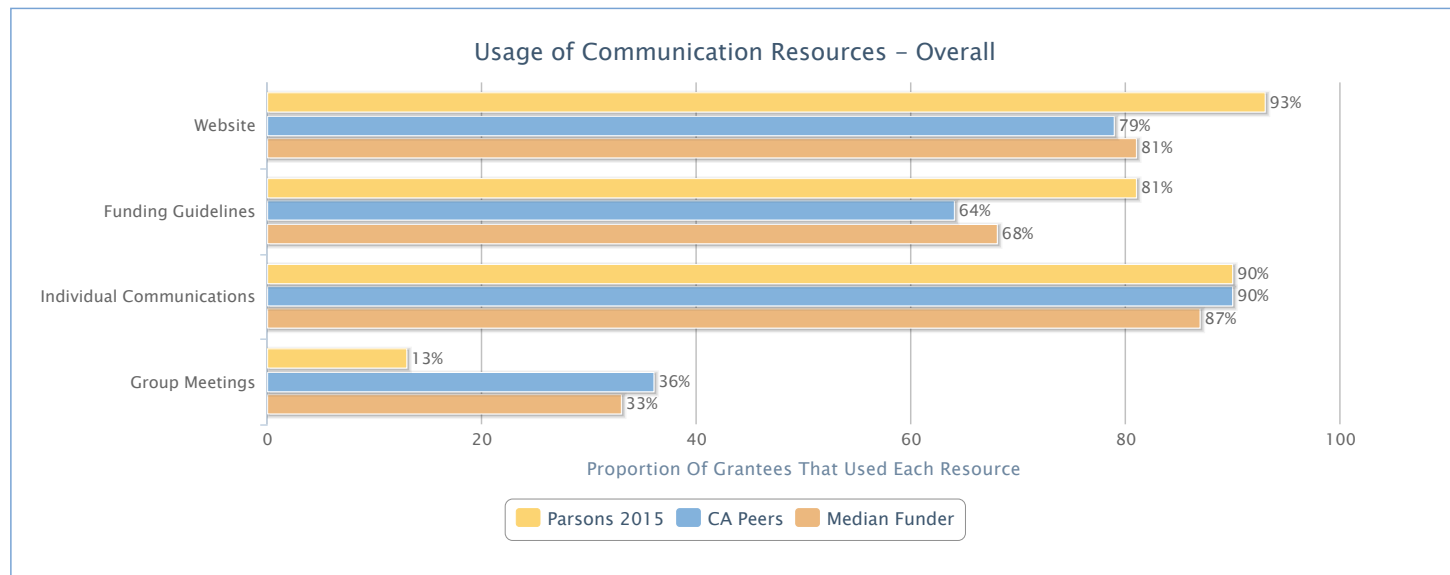
## Foundation Communication



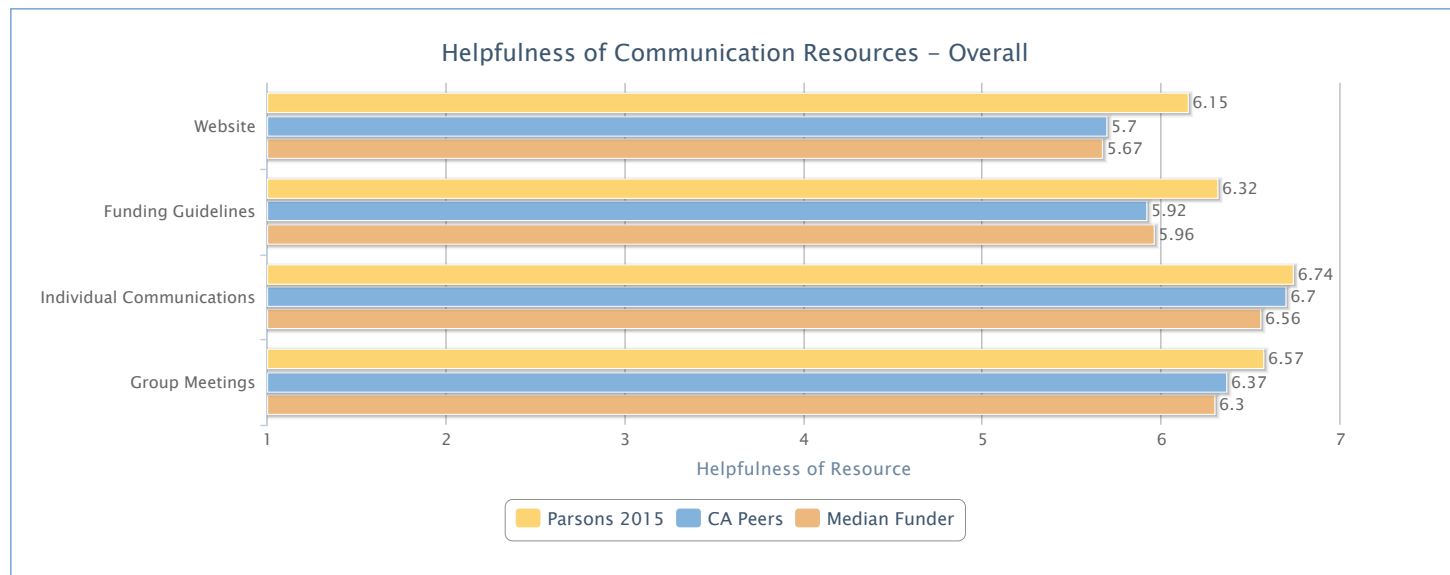
## Communication Resources

Grantees were asked whether they used each of the following communications resources from Parsons and how helpful they found each resource. This chart shows the proportion of grantees who have used each resource.

**"Please indicate whether you used any of the following resources, and if so how helpful you found each."**



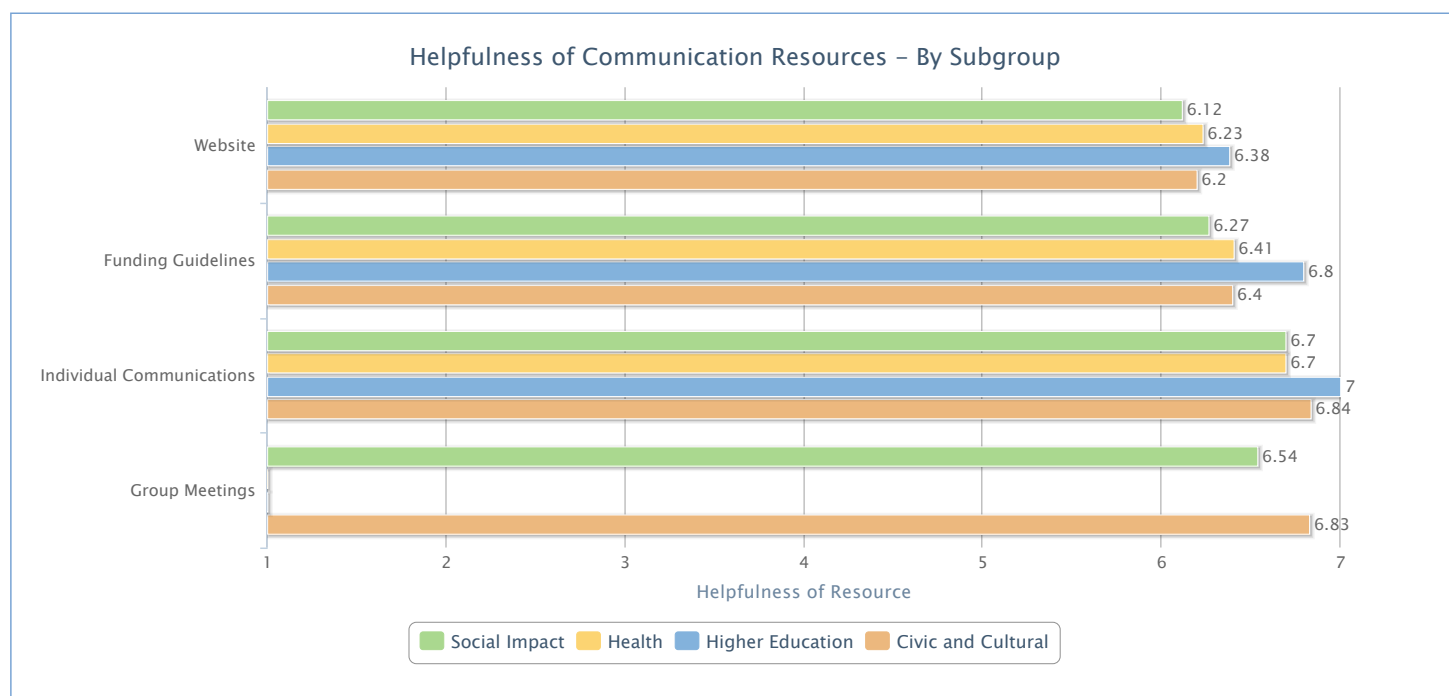
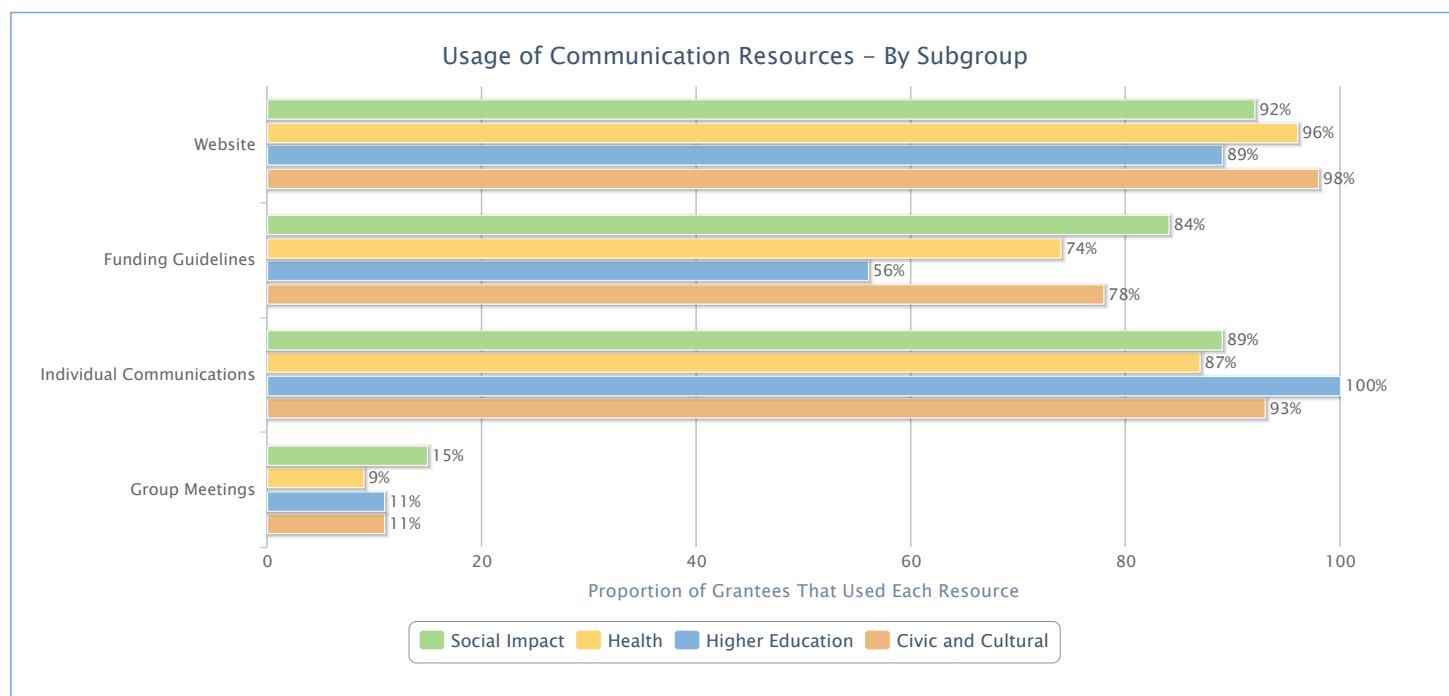
The chart below shows the perceived helpfulness of each resource, where 1 = "Not at all helpful" and 7 = "Extremely helpful."



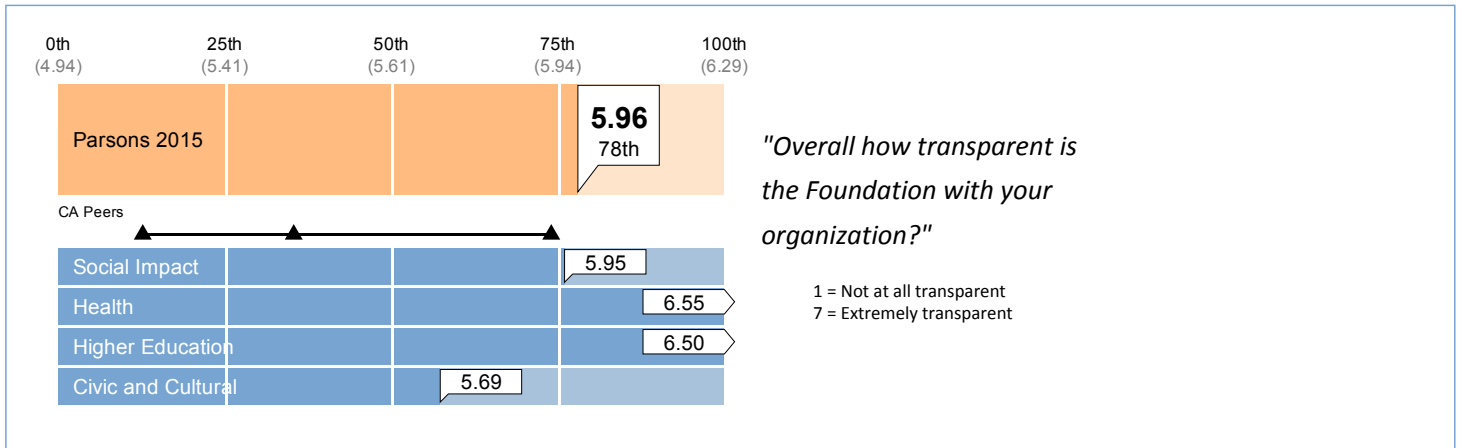


The following charts show the usage and helpfulness of communications resources segmented by subgroup.

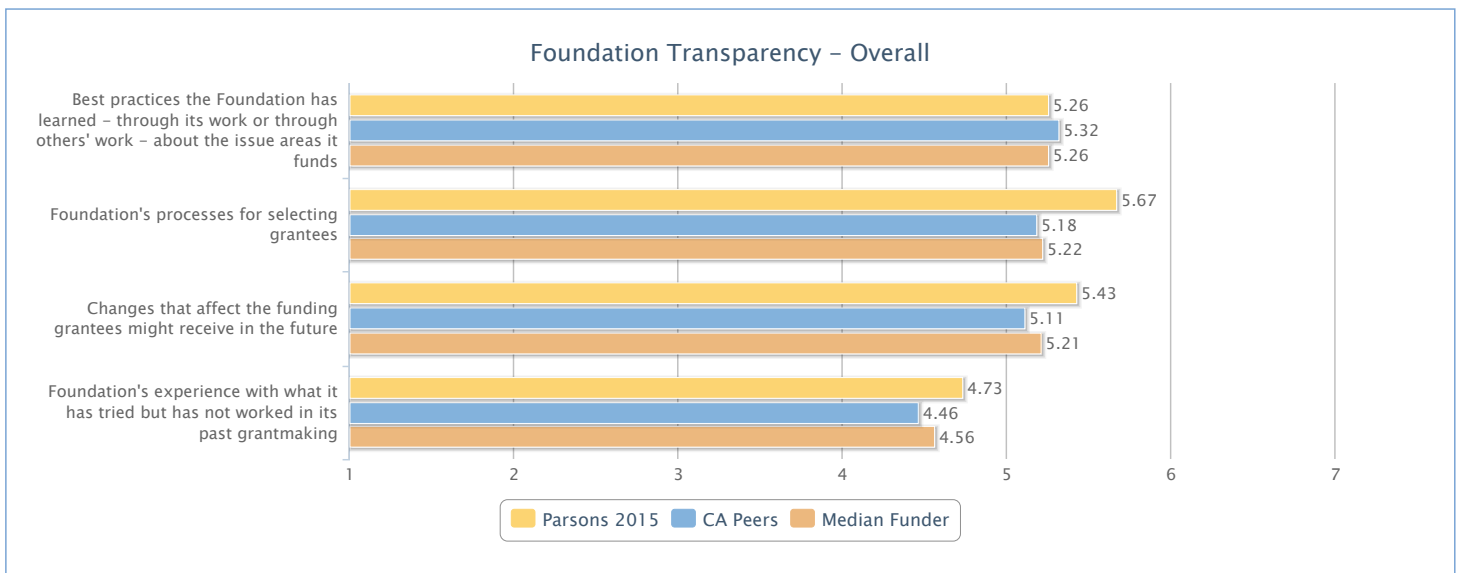
"Please indicate whether you used any of the following resources, and if so how helpful you found each."



## Funder Transparency

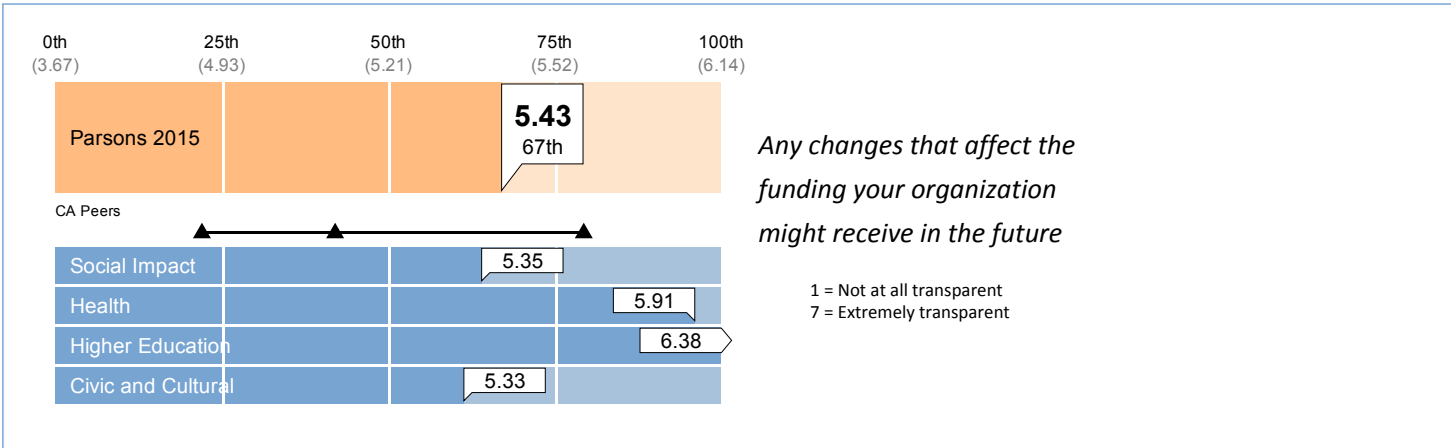
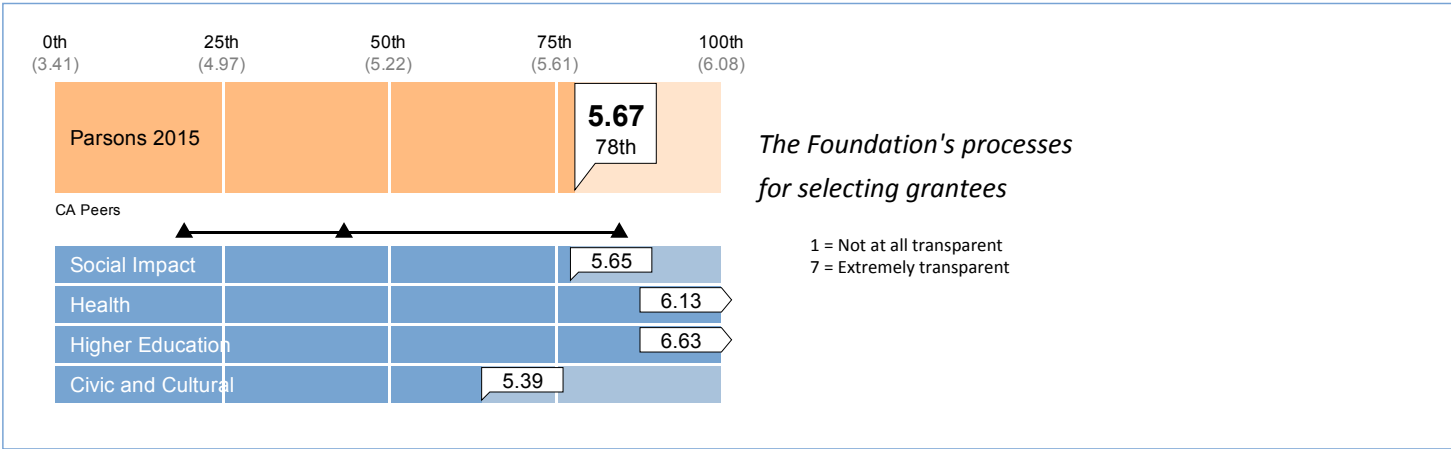


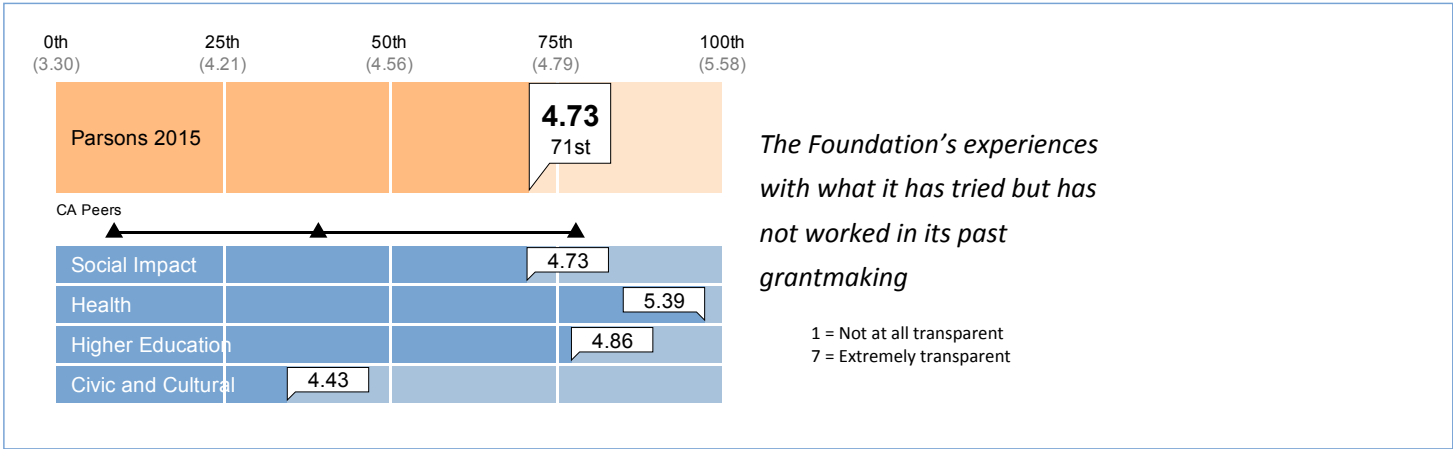
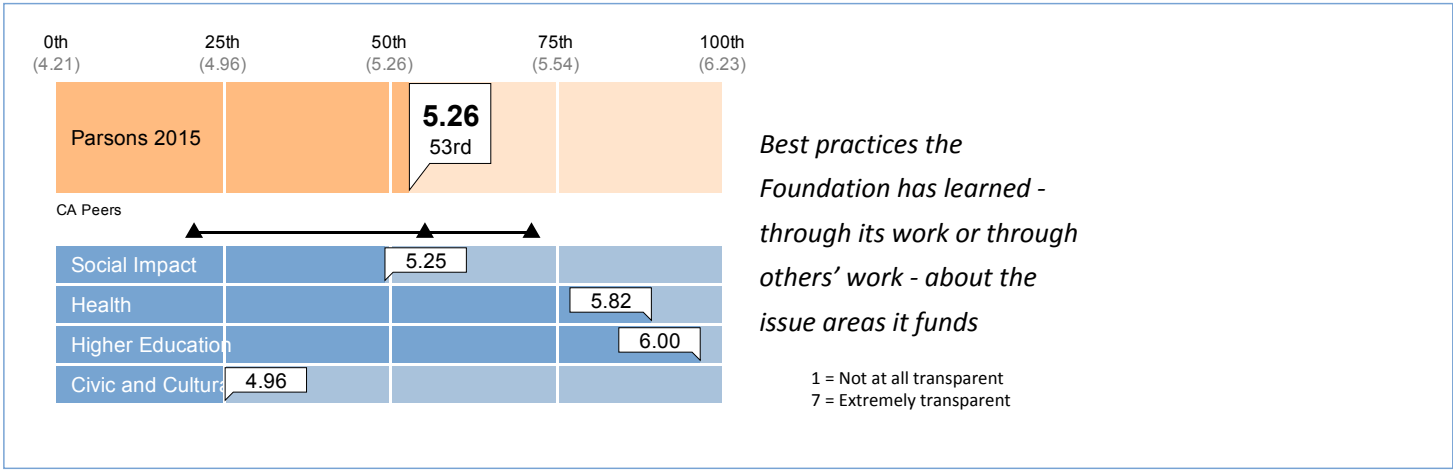
Grantees were asked to rate how transparent Parsons is in the following areas, where 1 = "Not at all transparent" and 7 = "Extremely transparent."



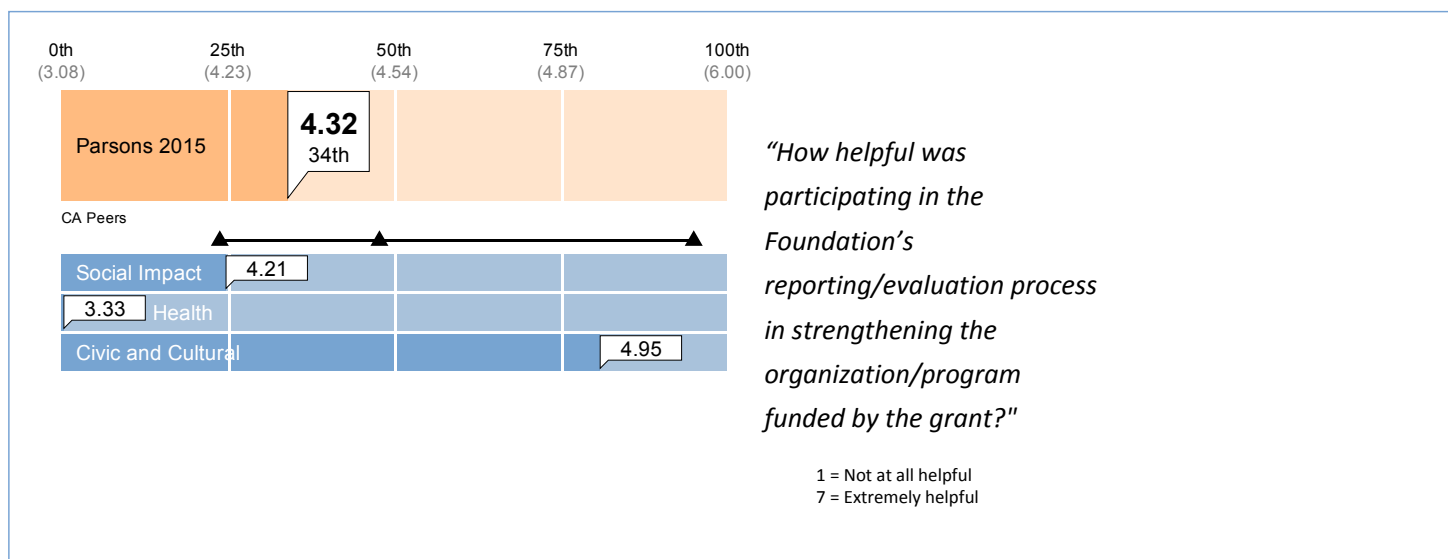
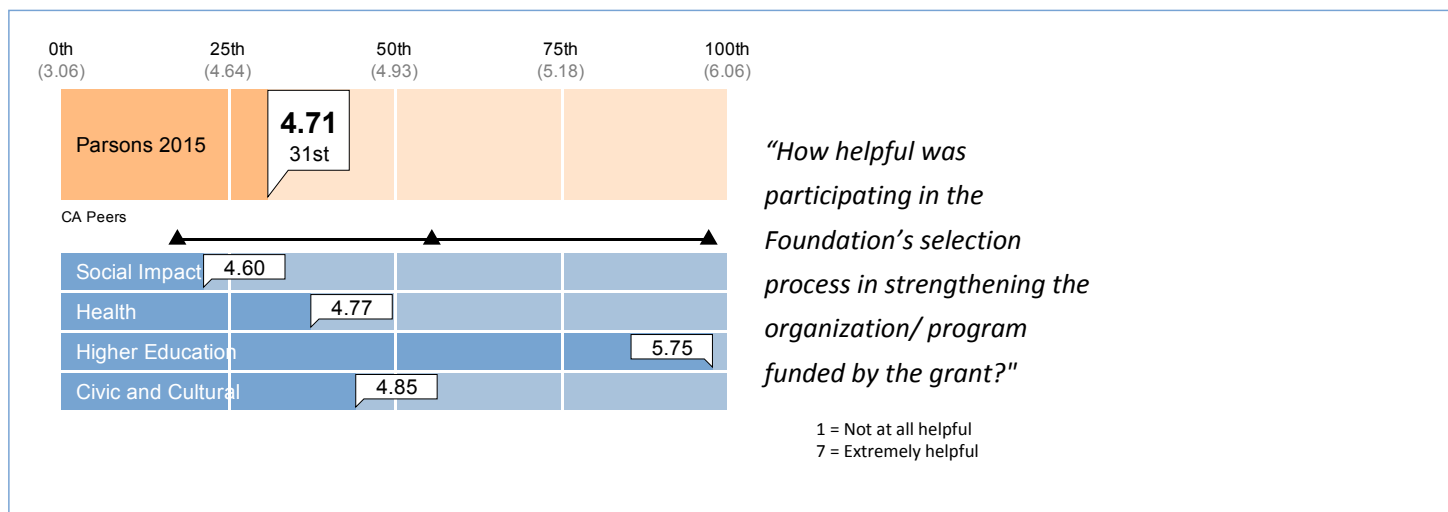
Aspects of Funder Transparency

The charts below show grantee ratings of Parsons's transparency in specific areas of its work.





## GRANT PROCESSES



### Selected Grantee Comments:

» "The Foundation has been extremely supportive and helpful in guiding us through the application process, providing constructive feedback and support, and helping us to think strategically about our overall fundraising and capacity issues."

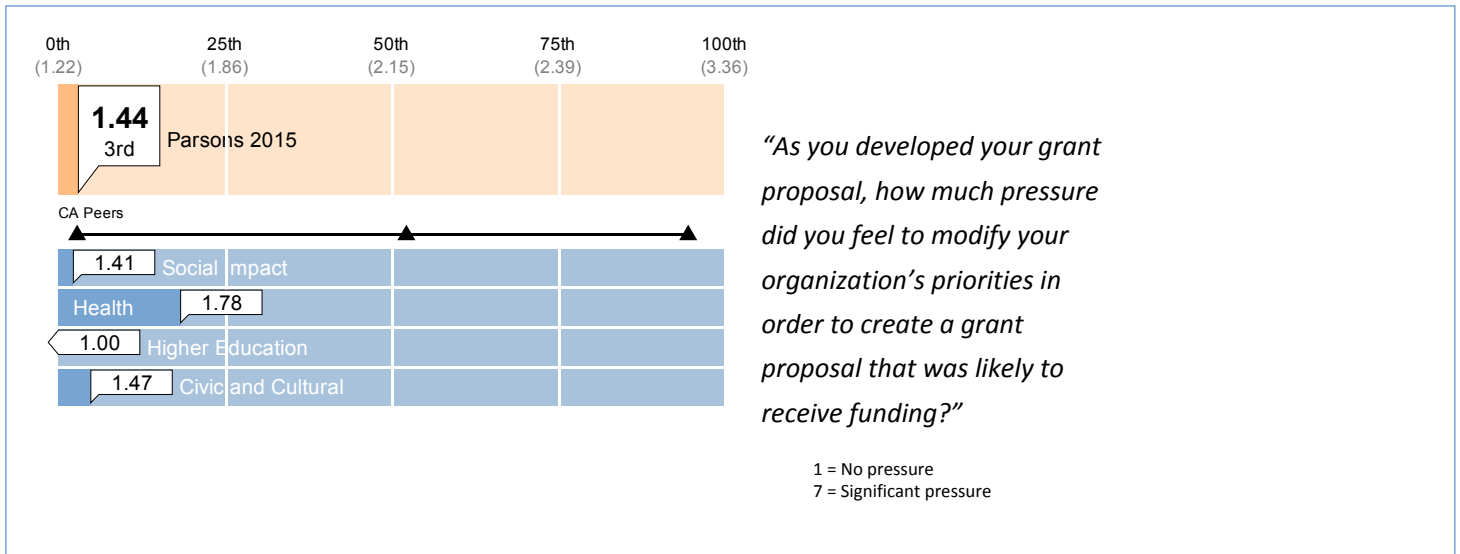
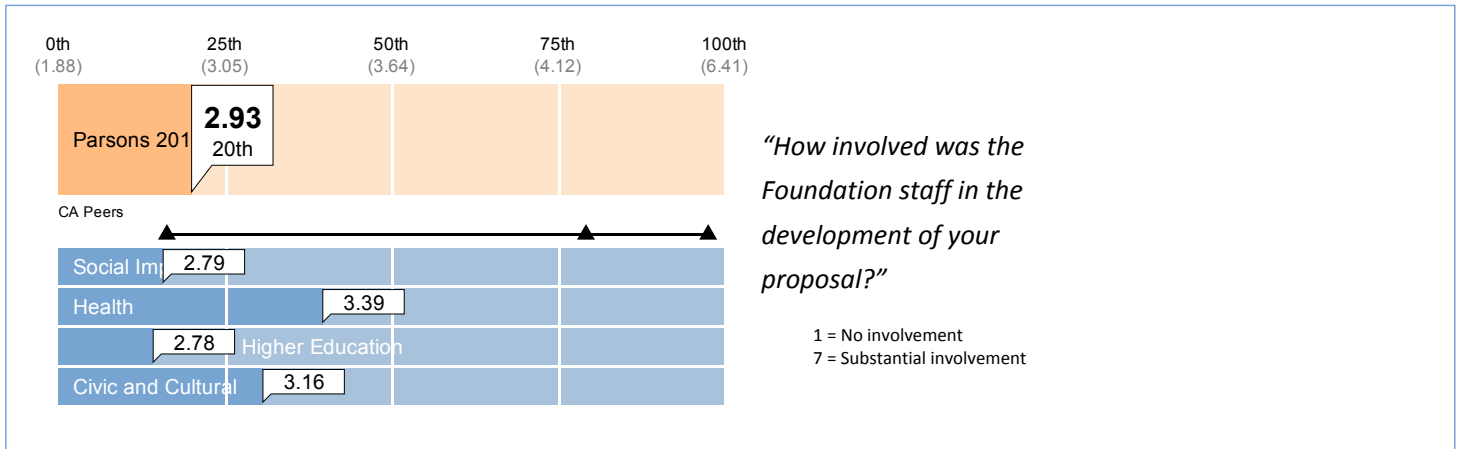
» "It would be helpful if the process from LOI to award letter were shorter, or if the Foundation would create a more fast-tracked process for current grantees/organizations wishing to renew funding, rather than having to go through the same process as organizations that are approaching for the first time."

» "I have only one suggestion -- to accelerate the grant review and approval process. We find ourselves in something of a time bind each year because we cannot submit our Letter of Intent until after we have submitted a final report for our most recent grant. And we cannot submit our full proposal until after the Letter of Intent has been reviewed and until after we have received a green light to submit the full proposal. It can then take several additional months for a decision to be made. Because this entire process can stretch out for more than six months, the Foundation is often not in a position to let us know of their decision until AFTER our ... programs actually commence."

» "The grant application is clearly articulated and when questions arose, we received prompt and helpful responses. Over the last few years, we have positive interactions with a number of different people at the Foundation."

## Selection Process

Did you submit a proposal for this grant? (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Submitted a Proposal	99%	93%	95%
Did Not Submit a Proposal	1%	7%	5%



## Time Between Submission and Clear Commitment

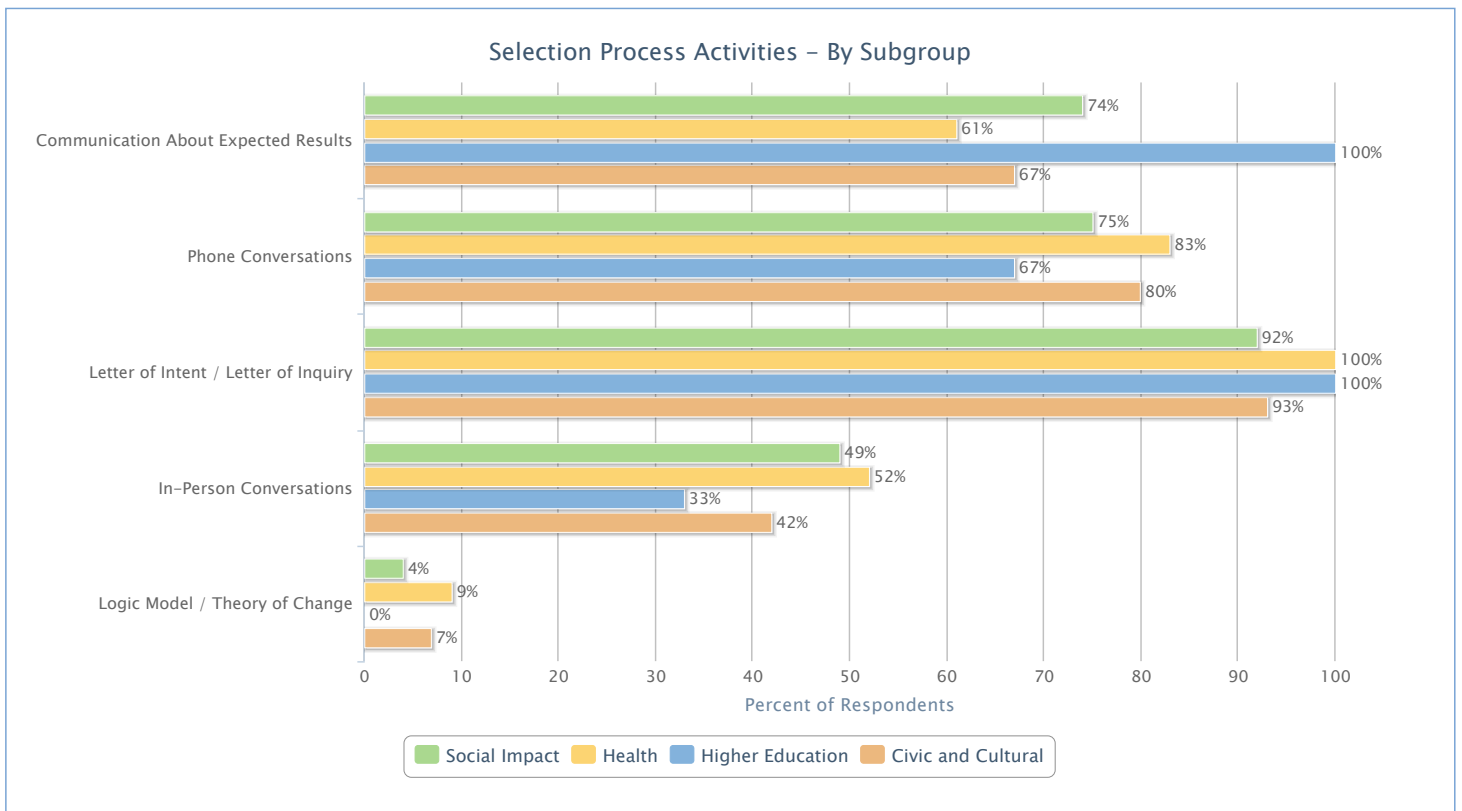
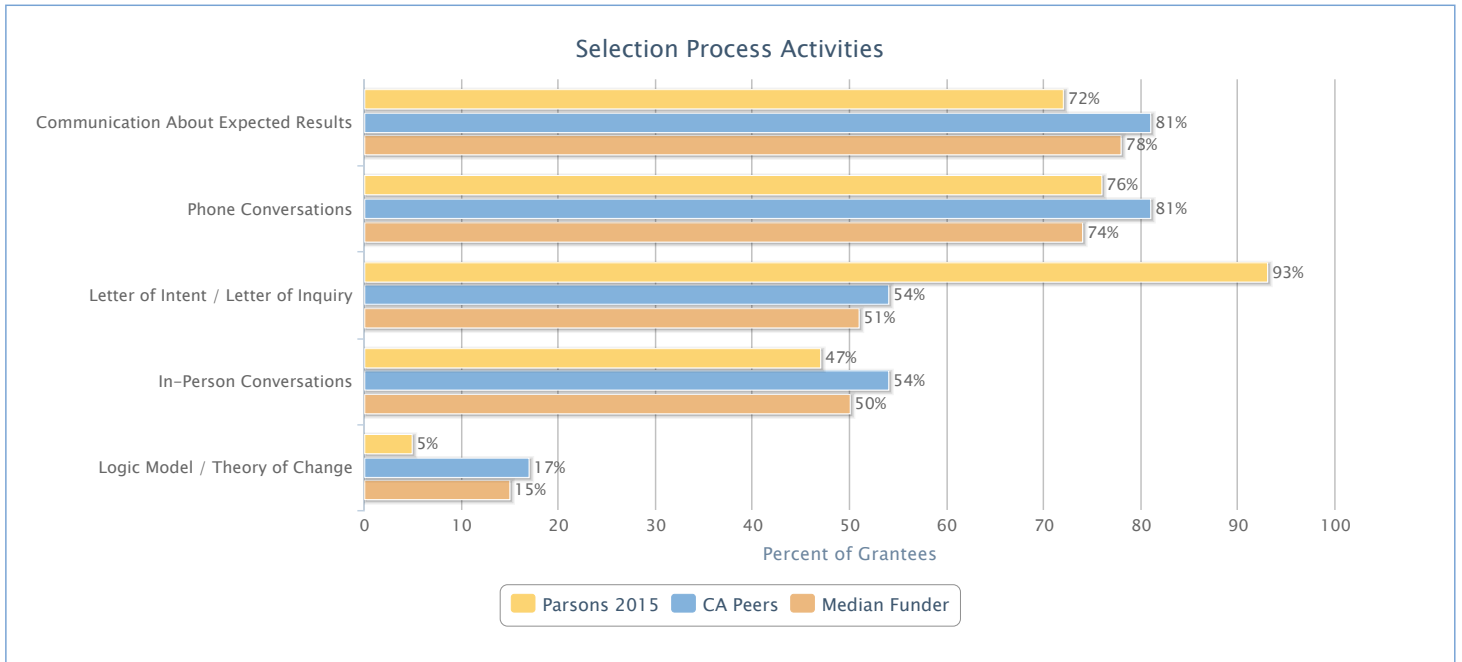
“How much time elapsed from the submission of the grant proposal to clear commitment of funding?”

Time Elapsed from Submission of Proposal to Clear Commitment of Funding (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Less than 1 month	0%	6%	7%
1 - 3 months	15%	55%	57%
4 - 6 months	50%	30%	29%
7 - 9 months	24%	5%	4%
10 - 12 months	8%	2%	2%
More than 12 months	2%	2%	1%

Time Elapsed from Submission of Proposal to Clear Commitment of Funding (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Less than 1 month	1%	0%	0%	0%
1 - 3 months	16%	4%	0%	19%
4 - 6 months	50%	57%	56%	48%
7 - 9 months	22%	17%	44%	30%
10 - 12 months	9%	17%	0%	4%
More than 12 months	2%	4%	0%	0%

## Selection Process Activities

"Which selection/proposal process activities were a part of your process?"



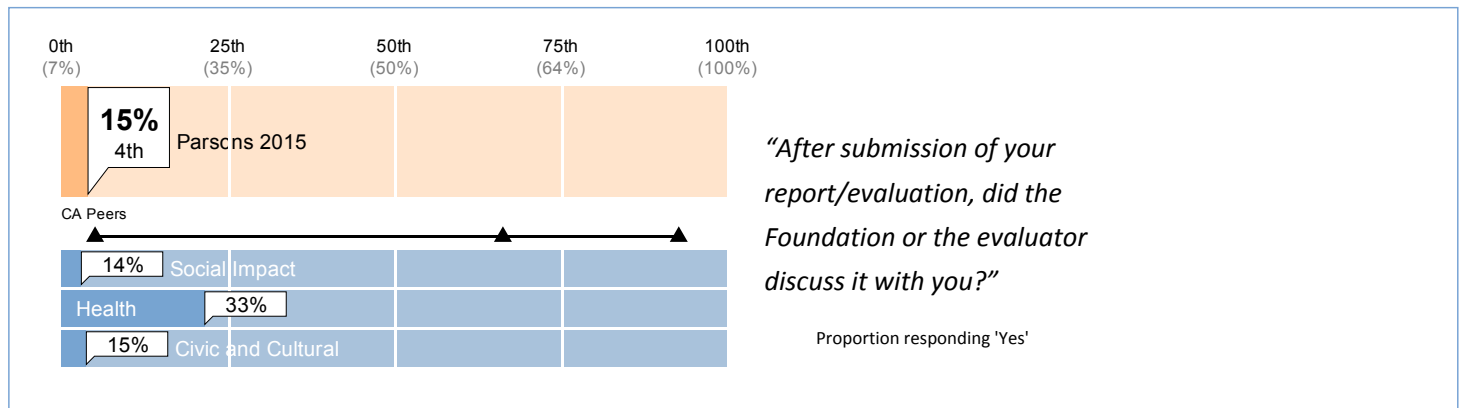


## Reporting and Evaluation Process

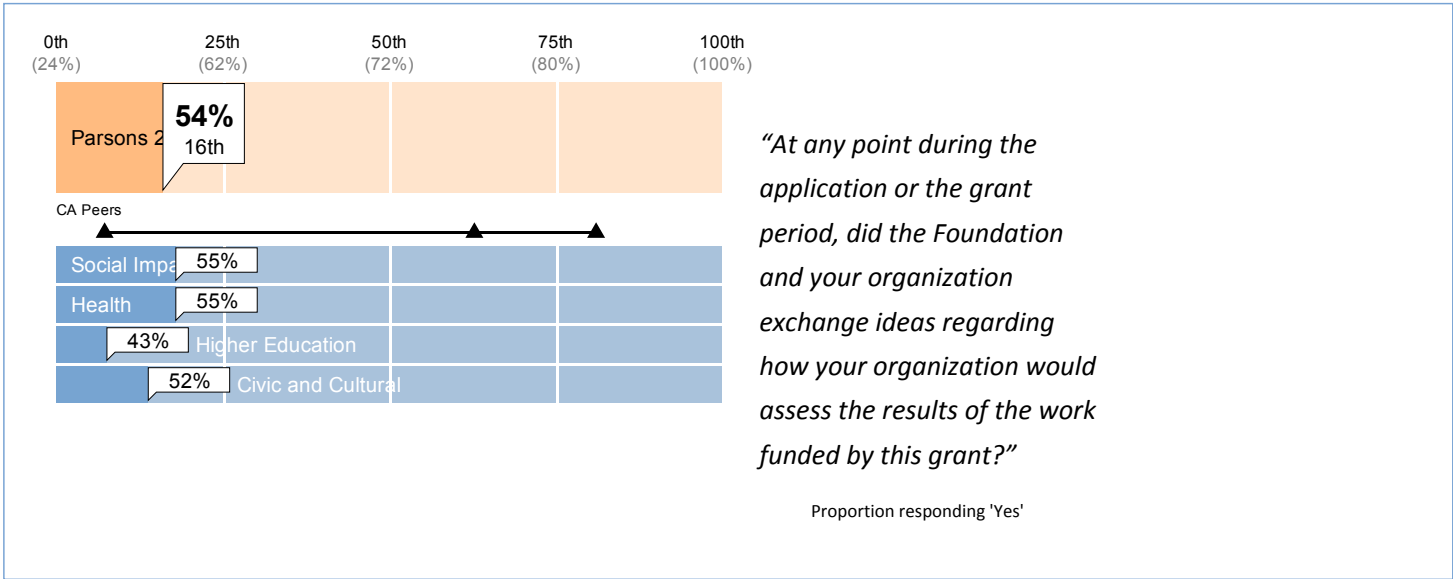
Participation in Reporting and/or Evaluation Processes (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Participated in a reporting and/or evaluation process	35%	57%	57%
There will be a report/evaluation but it has not occurred yet	61%	34%	37%
There was/will be no report/evaluation	2%	5%	4%
Don't know	2%	4%	2%

Involved External Evaluator in Reporting/Evaluation Process (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Yes	5%	20%	17%
No	95%	80%	83%

*This question was only asked to grantees who reported participating in a reporting/evaluation process. The total number of responses for this question was 88.*

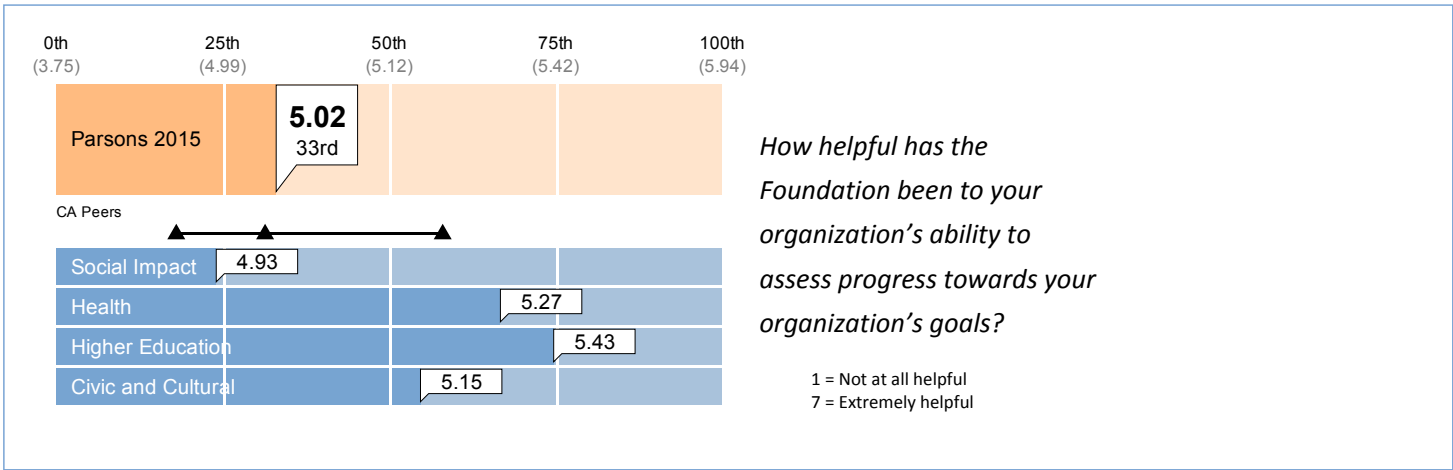


*This question was only asked to grantees who reported participating in a reporting/evaluation process. The total number of responses for this question was 87.*



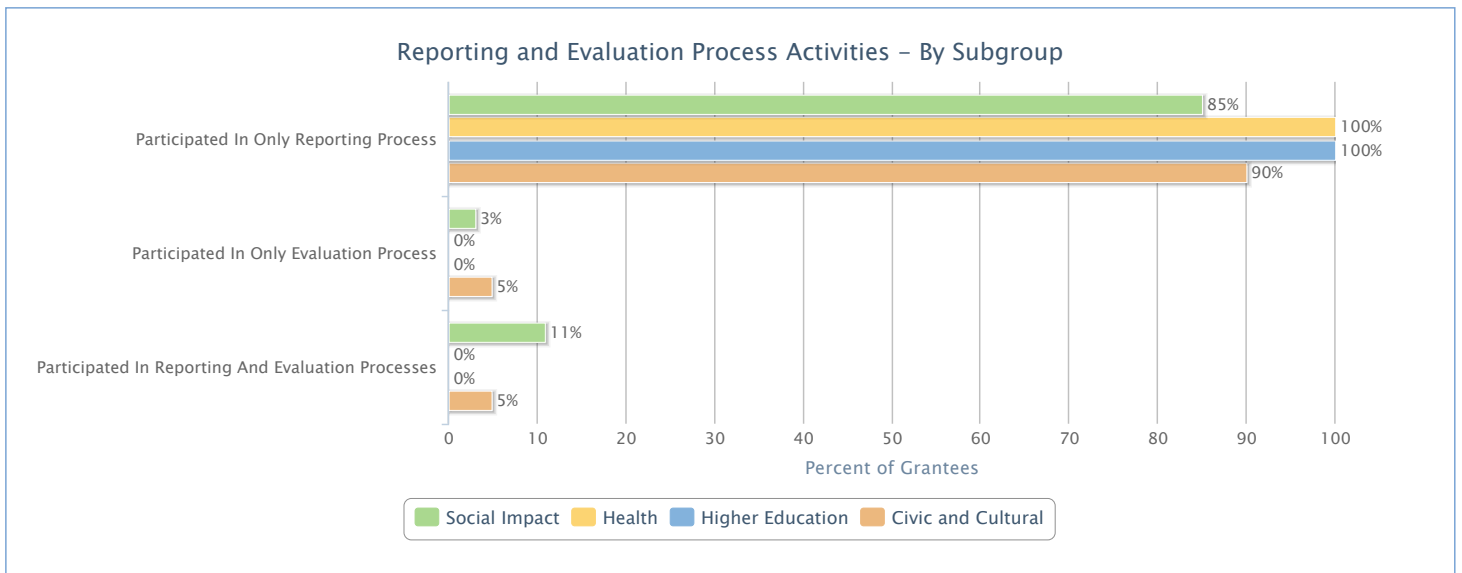
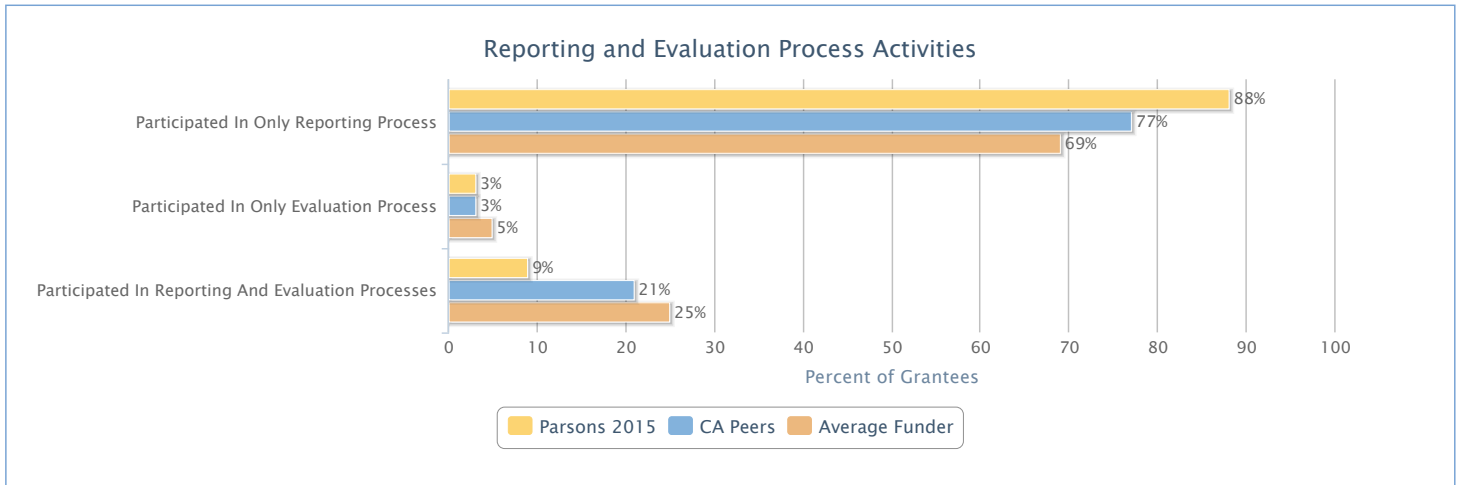
### BEHIND THE NUMBERS

Parsons grantees who report exchanging ideas with the Foundation on how to assess the work funded by the grant rate higher on a number of measures, including the helpfulness of the Foundation's selection process in strengthening the organization/program funded by the grant.

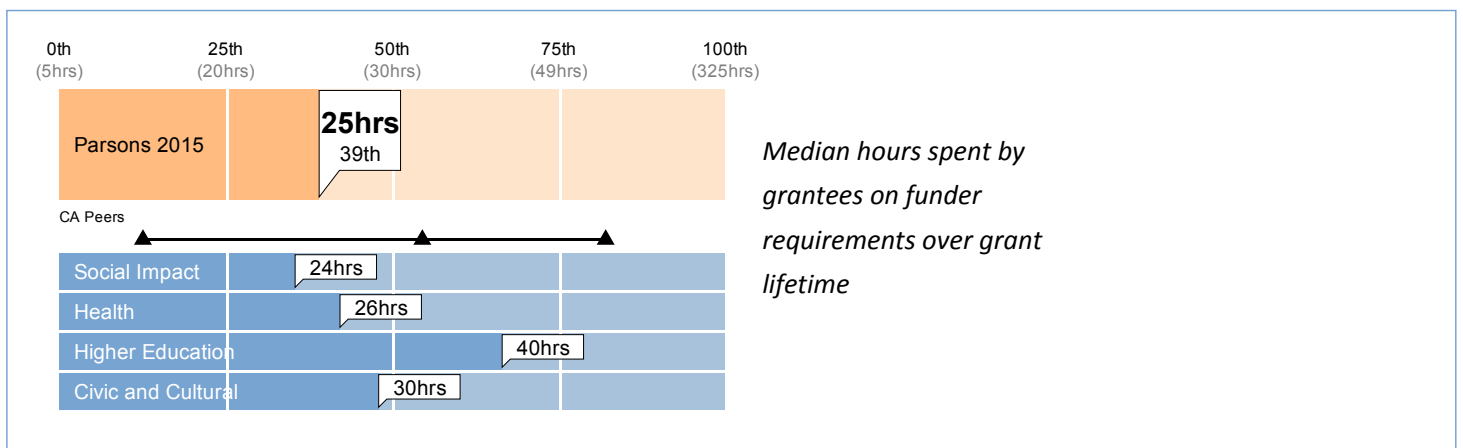
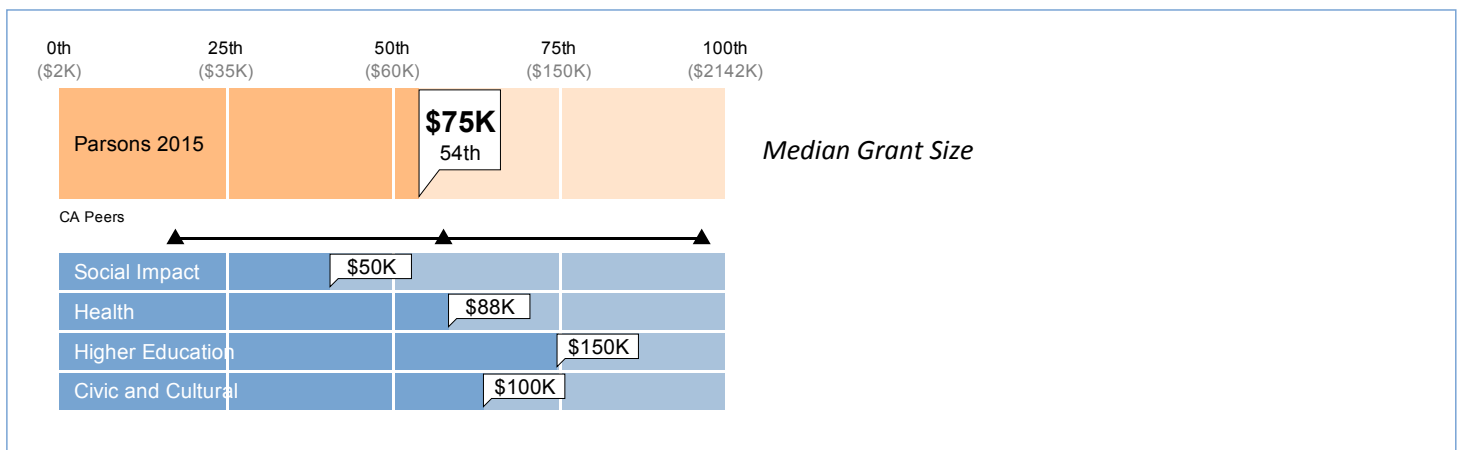
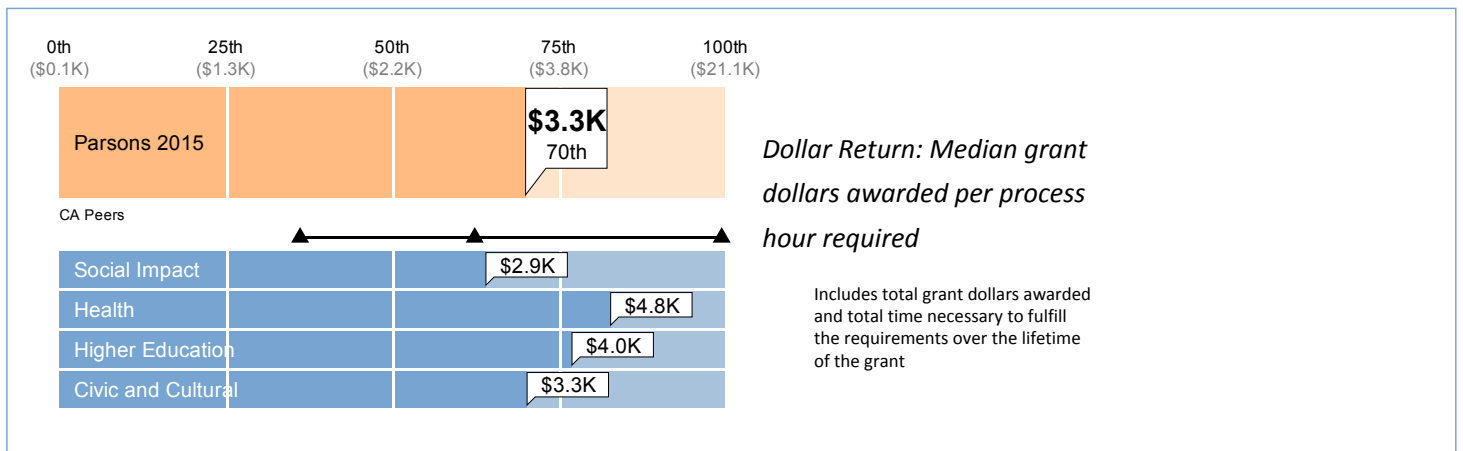


## Reporting and Evaluation Process Activities

"Which reporting/evaluation process activities were a part of your process?"



## DOLLAR RETURN AND TIME SPENT ON PROCESSES



## Time Spent on Selection Process

Time Spent On Proposal And Selection Process (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
1 to 9 hours	18%	22%	22%
10 to 19 hours	27%	22%	25%
20 to 29 hours	28%	17%	19%
30 to 39 hours	8%	8%	7%
40 to 49 hours	12%	11%	11%
50 to 99 hours	5%	10%	10%
100 to 199 hours	1%	6%	3%
200+ hours	0%	3%	2%

Time Spent On Proposal And Selection Process (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Median Funder	CA Peers
Median Hours	20 hrs	20 hrs	20 hrs

Time Spent On Proposal And Selection Process (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
1 to 9 hours	20%	22%	11%	15%
10 to 19 hours	28%	22%	11%	28%
20 to 29 hours	26%	22%	22%	39%
30 to 39 hours	8%	4%	11%	7%
40 to 49 hours	12%	26%	22%	6%
50 to 99 hours	5%	4%	11%	6%
100 to 199 hours	1%	0%	11%	0%
200+ hours	0%	0%	0%	0%

Time Spent On Proposal And Selection Process (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Median Hours	20 hrs	20 hrs	30 hrs	20 hrs

## Time Spent on Reporting and Evaluation Process

Time Spent On Monitoring, Reporting, And Evaluation Process (Annualized) (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
1 to 9 hours	65%	54%	54%
10 to 19 hours	20%	19%	21%
20 to 29 hours	7%	10%	12%
30 to 39 hours	3%	4%	4%
40 to 49 hours	3%	3%	3%
50 to 99 hours	1%	5%	3%
100+ hours	1%	4%	3%

Time Spent On Monitoring, Reporting, And Evaluation Process (Annualized) (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Median Funder	CA Peers
Median Hours Per Year	6 hrs	8 hrs	10 hrs

Time Spent On Monitoring, Reporting, And Evaluation Process (Annualized) (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
1 to 9 hours	67%	71%	60%	60%
10 to 19 hours	17%	14%	40%	26%
20 to 29 hours	7%	0%	0%	10%
30 to 39 hours	2%	14%	0%	2%
40 to 49 hours	4%	0%	0%	2%
50 to 99 hours	2%	0%	0%	0%
100+ hours	1%	0%	0%	0%

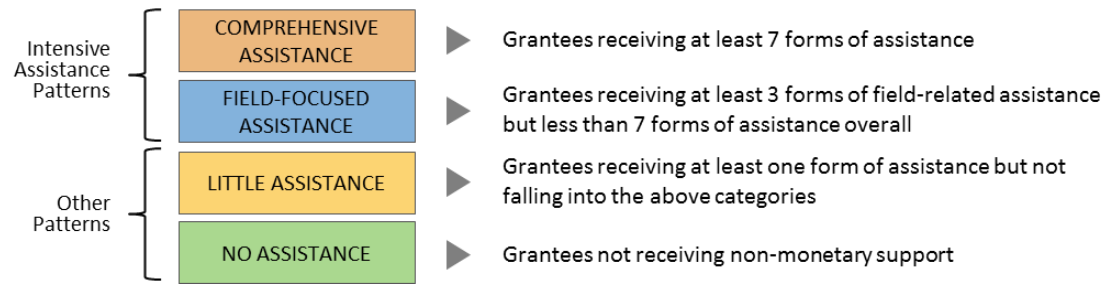
Time Spent On Monitoring, Reporting, And Evaluation Process (Annualized) (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Median Hours Per Year	5 hrs	6 hrs	7 hrs	6 hrs

NON-MONETARY ASSISTANCE

Non-Monetary Assistance Patterns

Grantees were asked to indicate whether they had received any of 14 types of assistance provided directly or paid for by the Foundation. The specific types of assistance asked about are listed at the end of this section.

Based on their responses, CEP categorized grantees by the pattern of assistance they received. CEP’s analysis shows that providing three or fewer assistance activities is often ineffective; it is only when grantees receive one of the two intensive patterns of assistance described below that they have a substantially more positive experience compared to grantees receiving no assistance.



Non-Monetary Assistance Patterns (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Comprehensive	1%	6%	5%
Field-focused	2%	9%	12%
Little	24%	37%	37%
None	74%	48%	46%

Non-Monetary Assistance Patterns (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Comprehensive	1%	0%	0%	2%
Field-focused	2%	0%	0%	2%
Little	22%	30%	22%	27%
None	75%	70%	78%	69%



BEHIND THE NUMBERS

Parsons’ grantees who receive “little” assistance rate the Foundation significantly more positively than grantees receiving no assistance across most measures in the report, including the Foundation’s impact on and understanding of their organizations, and the Foundation’s impact on grantees’ abilities to sustain the work funded by the grant in the future.

Grantees were asked to select whether they had received any of the following types of assistance provided directly or paid for by the Foundation:

Management Assistance	Field-Related Assistance	Other Assistance
General management advice	Encouraged/facilitated collaboration	Board development/governance assistance
Strategic planning advice	Insight and advice on your field	Information technology assistance
Financial planning/accounting	Introductions to leaders in field	Communications/marketing/publicity assistance
Development of performance measures	Provided research or best practices	Use of Foundation facilities
	Provided seminars/forums/convenings	Staff/management training

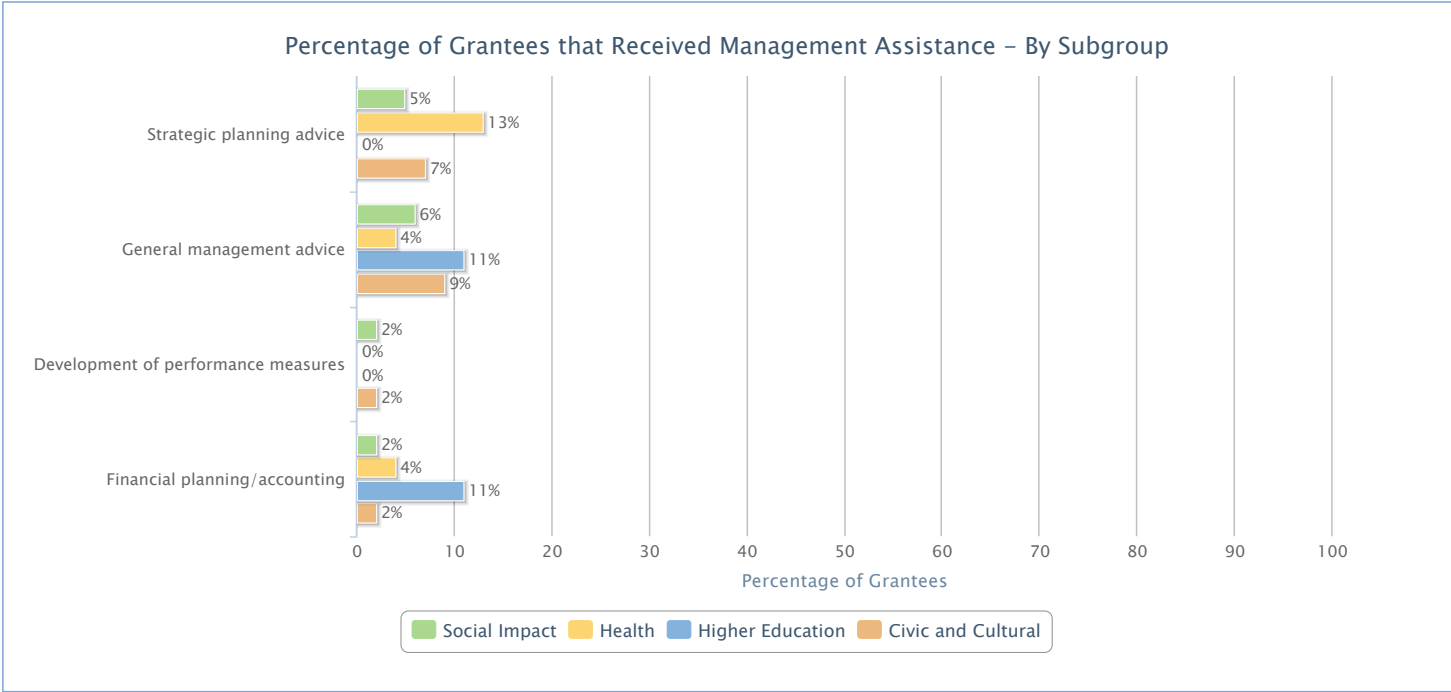
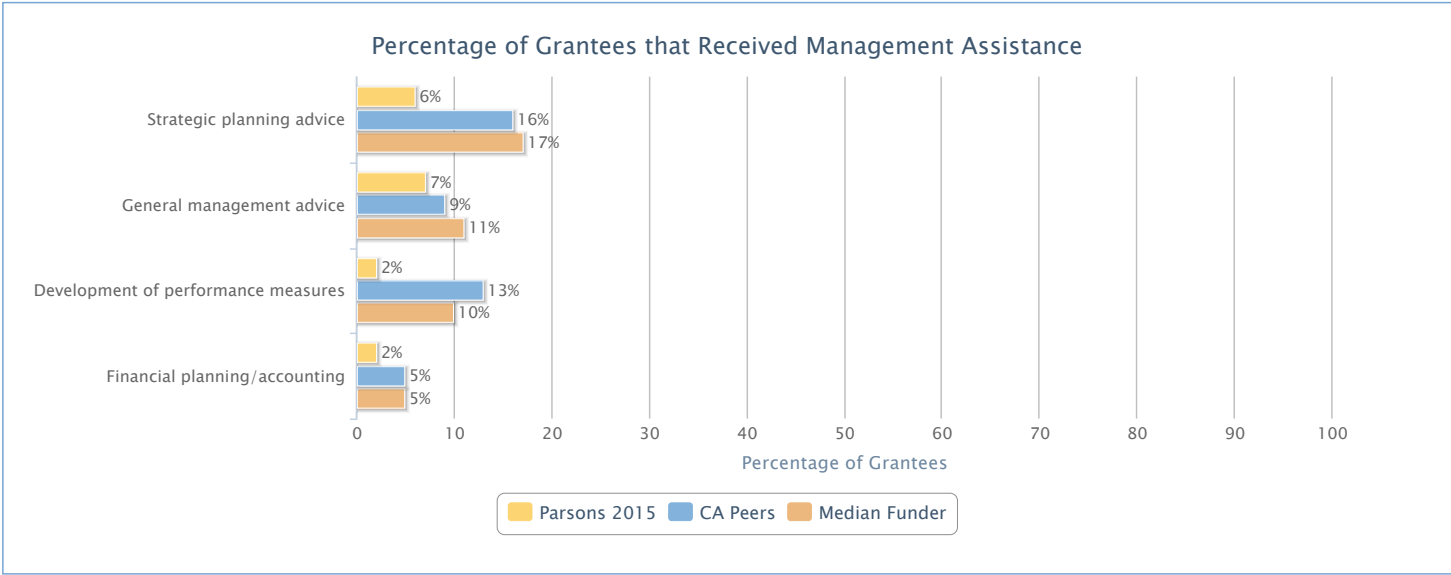
**Selected Comments**

- » *"The Foundation is a loyal supporter of our work. It is one of the few funders that will fund programs consistently without having to think up some new program or angle to satisfy the desire of the funder for something 'sexier' than sustaining good, solid programs. Other foundations hold convenings for their grantees, offer capacity building grants in addition to other funding (see John Gogian Family Foundation) and attend major grantee events, but if Parson's doesn't have that capacity, we are happy enough to receive the much needed funds without any cruise ship activities thrown in..."*
- » *"Help organizations connect with other funders (i.e. individuals and foundations) that support similar work. This would greatly assist sustainability efforts."*
- » *"We would like the opportunity to meet with other nonprofits in our community or in our field of service to better coordinate local efforts to help children and families achieve success. We think the Foundation would be an ideal facilitator since they work with other funders and support so many efforts."*



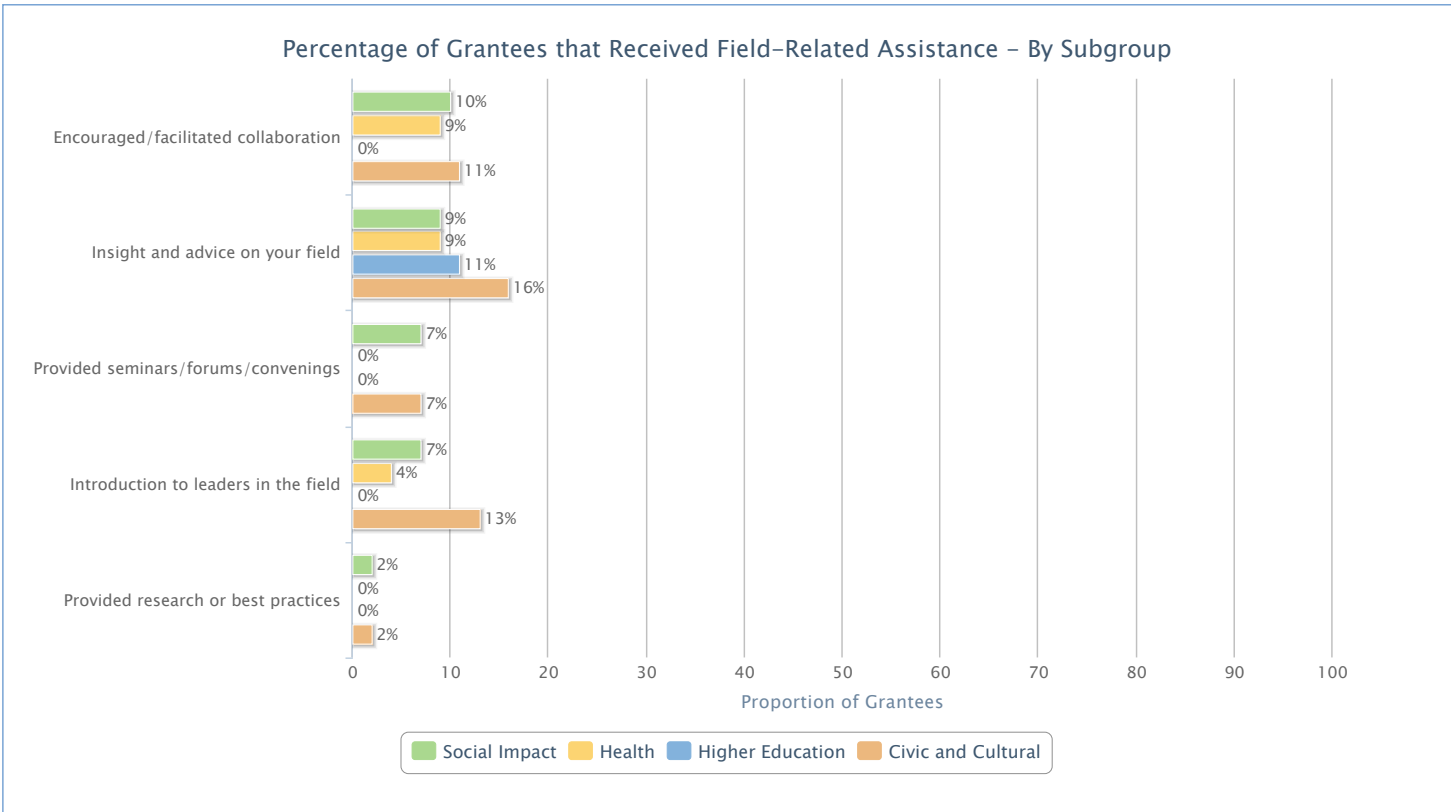
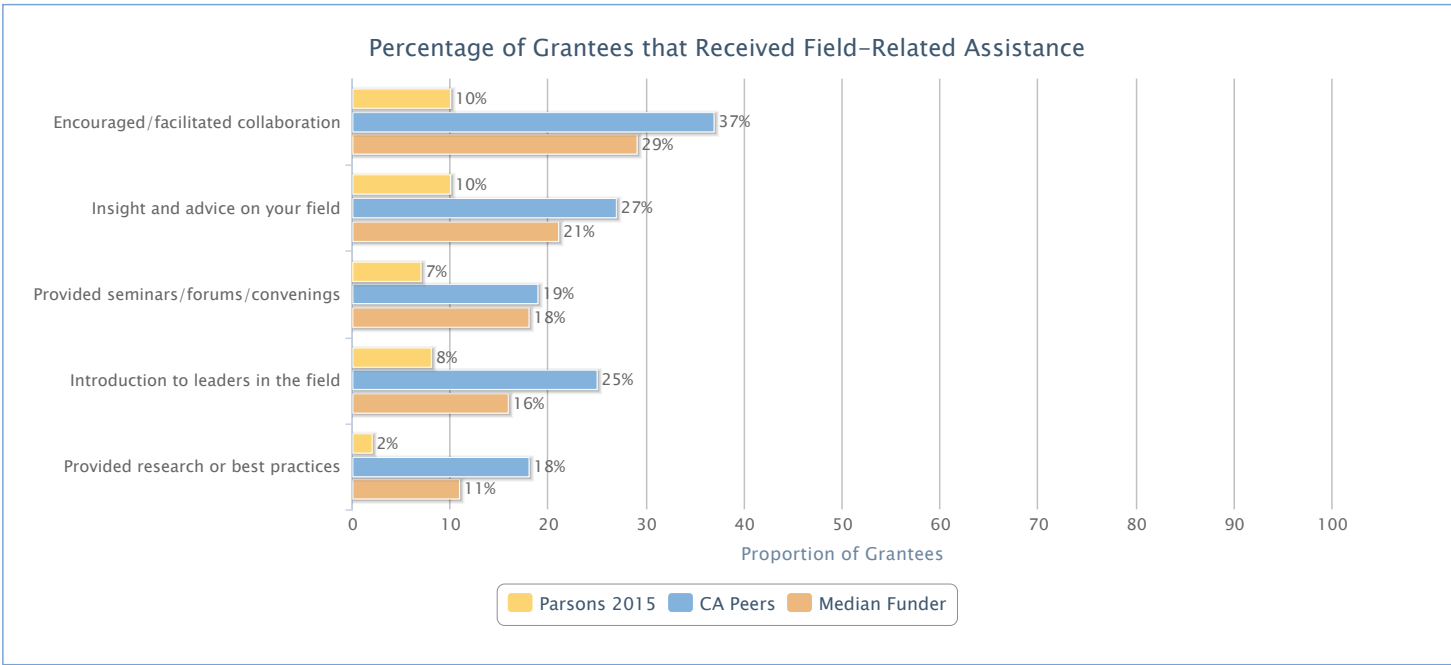
Management Assistance Activities

"Please indicate all types of non-monetary assistance, if any, you received (from staff or a third party paid for by the Foundation) associated with this funding."



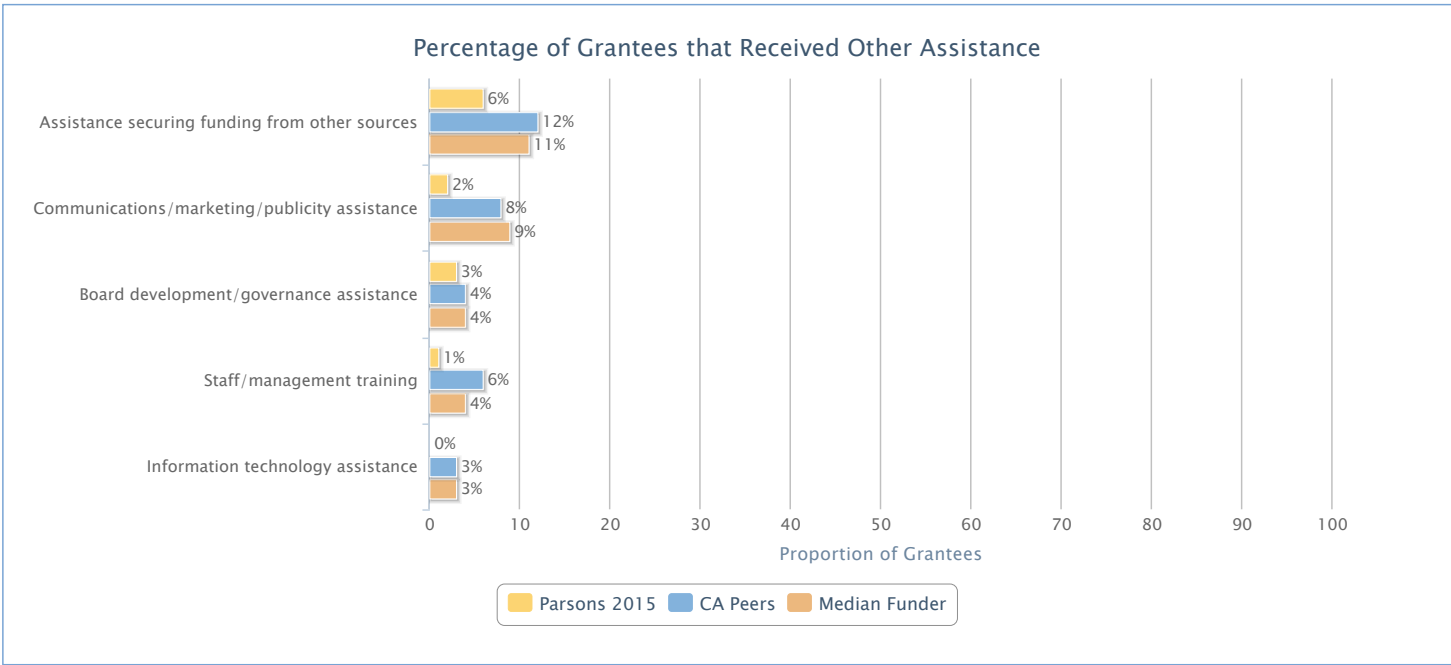
Field-Related Assistance Activities

"Please indicate all types of non-monetary assistance, if any, you received (from staff or a third party paid for by the Foundation) associated with this funding."

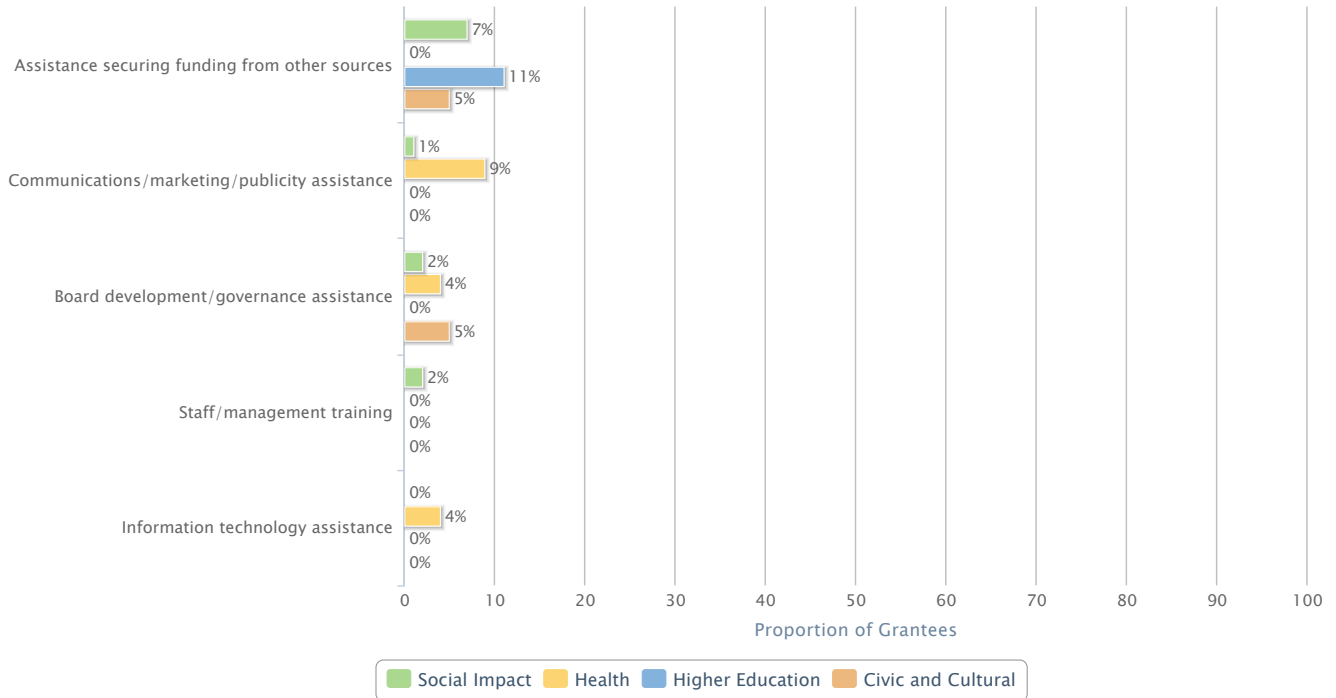


Other Assistance Activities

"Please indicate all types of non-monetary assistance, if any, you received (from staff or a third party paid for by the Foundation) associated with this funding."

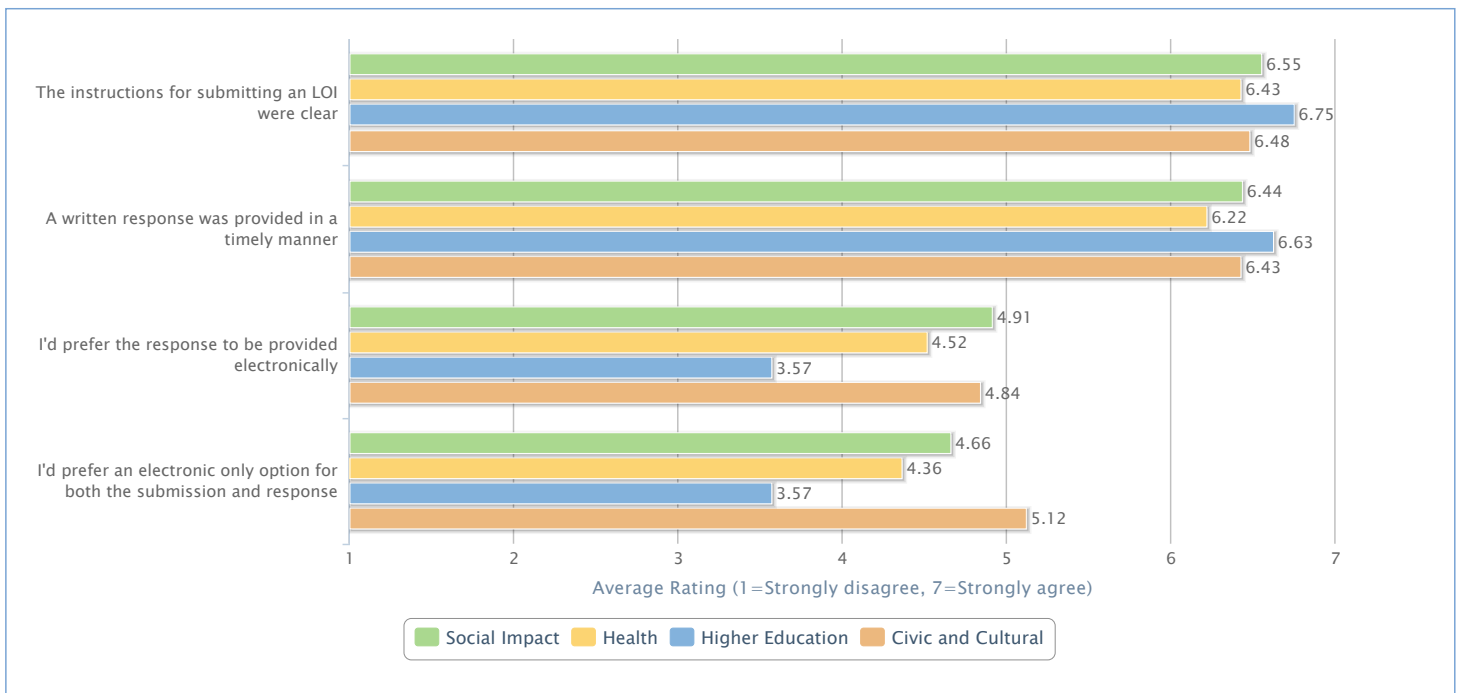
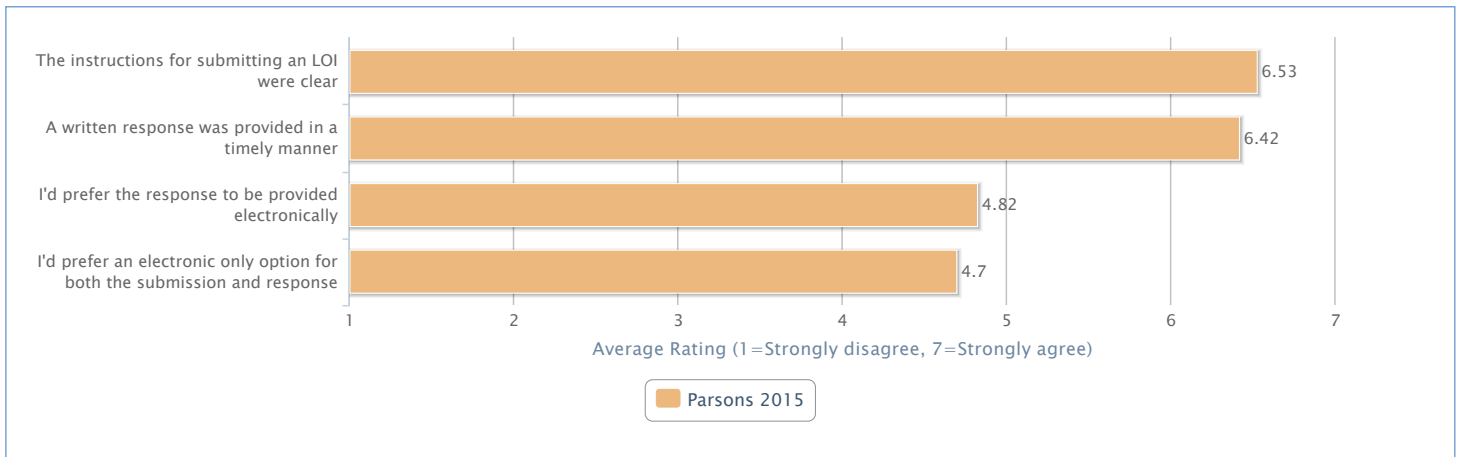


Percentage of Grantees that Received Other Assistance – By Subgroup

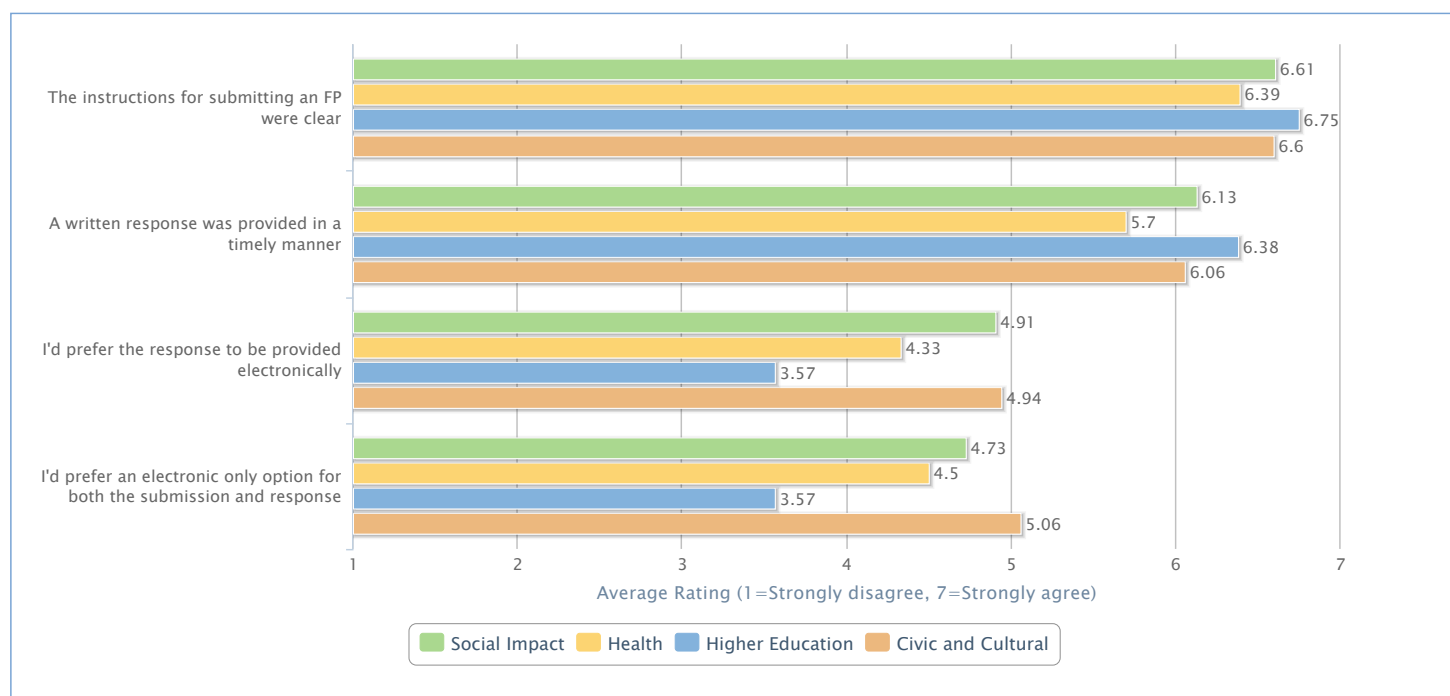
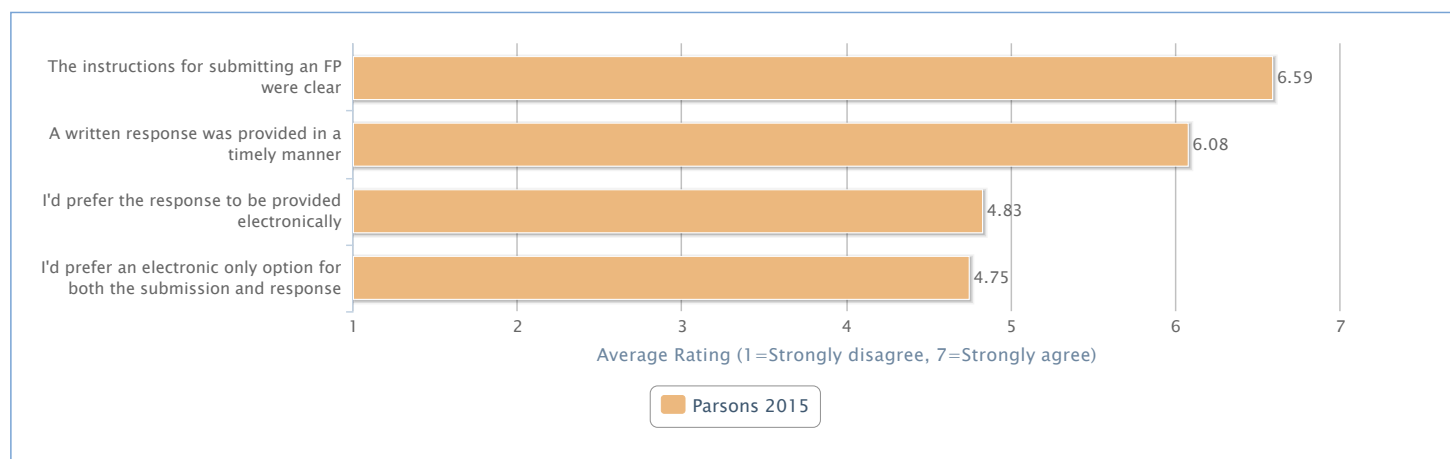


## PARSONS-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

"Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding the submission of a Letter of Inquiry (LOI):"



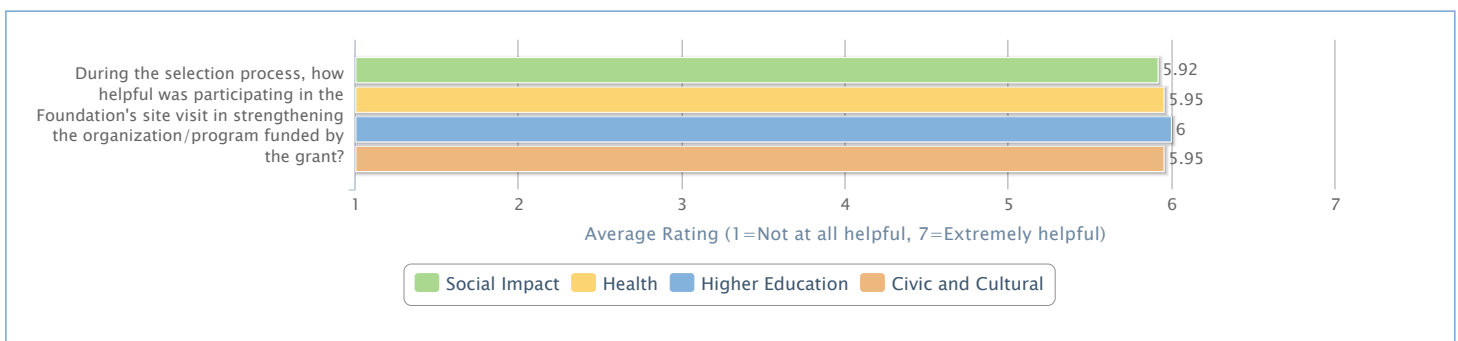
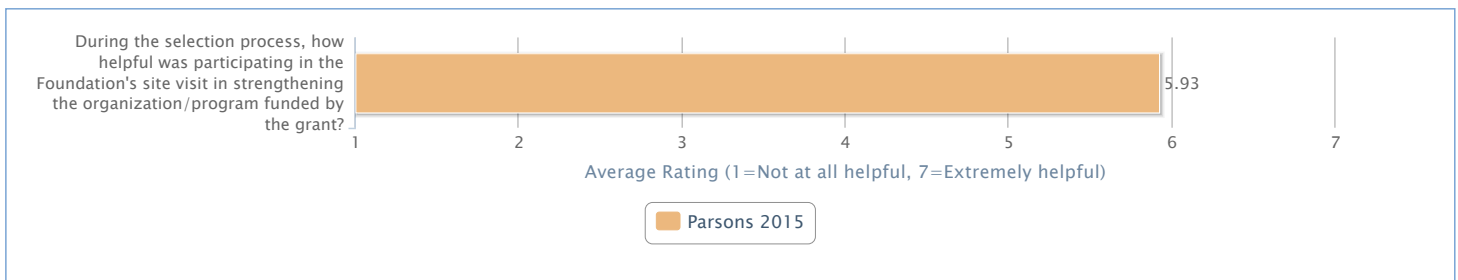
"Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding the submission of a Full Proposal (FP):"



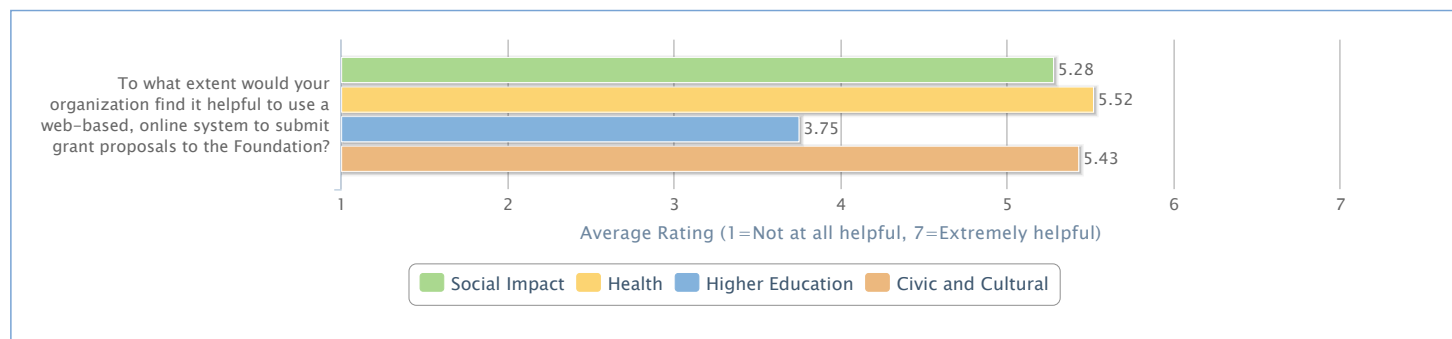
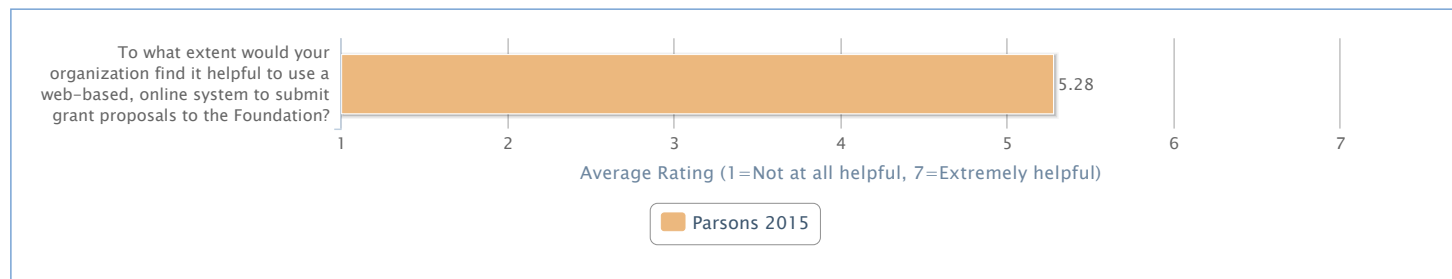
"Was a site visit part of the selection process by which your funding request was reviewed?" (Overall)	Parsons 2015
Yes	88%
No	12%
Don't know	0%

"Was a site visit part of the selection process by which your funding request was reviewed?" (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Yes	88%	100%	89%	87%
No	12%	0%	11%	13%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%

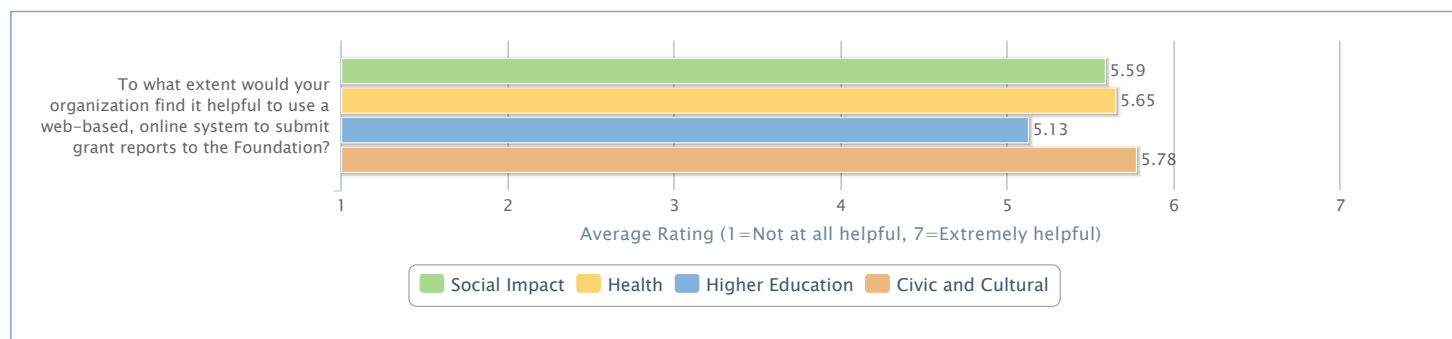
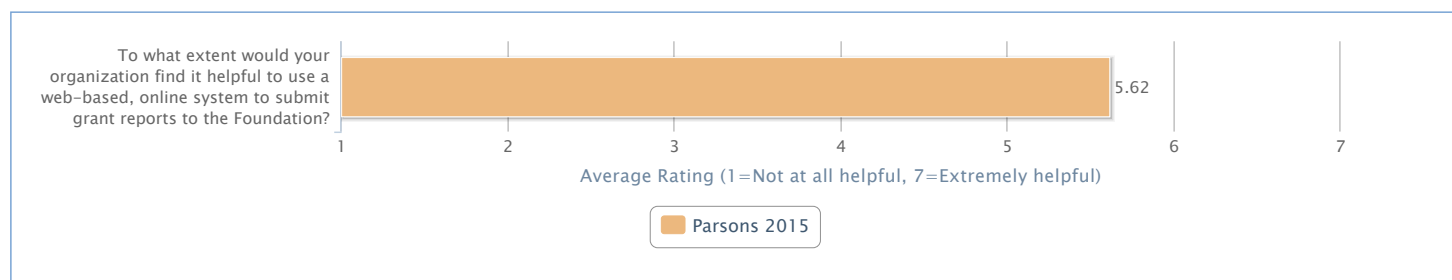
"During the selection process, how helpful was participating in the Foundation's site visit in strengthening the organization/program funded by the grant?"



"To what extent would your organization find it helpful to use a web-based, online system to submit grant proposals to the Foundation?"



"To what extent would your organization find it helpful to use a web-based, online system to submit grant reports to the Foundation?"





GRANTEE SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FOUNDATION

Grantees were asked to provide any suggestions for how the Foundation could improve. These suggestions were then categorized by CEP and grouped into the topics below.

To download the full set of grantee comments and suggestions, click [here](#). Please note that comments have been edited or deleted to protect the confidentiality of respondents.

Proportion of Grantee Suggestions by Topic

Topic of Grantee Suggestion	%
Proposal and Selection Processes	32%
Non-Monetary Assistance	22%
Grantmaking Characteristics	18%
Quality and Quantity of Interactions	16%
Foundation Communications	6%
Impact on and Understanding of Grantees' Communities	2%
Impact on and Understanding of Grantees' Fields	1%
Impact on and Understanding of Grantees' Organizations	1%
Other	3%

## Selected Comments

Grantees were asked to provide any suggestions for how the Foundation could improve. These suggestions were then categorized by CEP and grouped into the topics below.

### SELECTION PROCESS (32%)

#### » Timeline Between Submission of Proposal and Clear Commitment (N=24)

- » "I would encourage the Foundation to shorten the time between when an LOI is submitted and the grant proposal deadline. It was a challenge to plan for programming given the extended timeline we were given."
- » "The Foundation is a generous, responsive and easy to work with funder to our organization. If I had any request it would be to shorten the timeframe from application to funding approval so that there isn't such a long gap between grants. But I understand that there are limited resources and I appreciate the consistency, even if the time frame is long."
- » "The time between request and approval made decision-making difficult."

#### » Challenges for Repeat Grantees (N=4)

- » "With the timing of the grants and reporting requirements, we are not able to receive funding on an annual basis. If we are lucky we might be able to get grants for two years and one year off. We, of course, would love to be able to count on funding on an annual basis. We also understand that there is only so much money to go around, and with limited resources, we can not always receive funds annually."
- » "It would be helpful if the process from LOI to award letter were shorter, or if the Foundation would create a more fast-tracked process for current grantees/organizations wishing to renew funding, rather than having to go through the same process as organizations that are approaching for the first time."
- » "The re-funding process takes an extremely long time. From the time a grant ends to reapplying and hearing back about the proposal is a good 6 months. For smaller agencies that amount of time can put the bottom line at a great loss. This past year we were awarded a two-year grant. As beneficial as it is to not have to write another proposal after only a year, the money requested was spread a bit thin to cover two years. If an agency requests x amount for a year, a better approach might be to give that requested sum each year rather than splitting it over two years."

#### » Online Process (N=3)

- » "The Foundation application process is simple and precise at this time, however it can be further streamlined by having an online process to submit the large file documents such as financials."
- » "It would be nice to be able to submit letters of inquiry, application materials, and grant report forms electronically. The Foundation still relies on direct mail for all correspondence, which is not the most efficient nor the most environmentally friendly method of communication available."

#### » Other (N=6)

- » "Introducing the LOI was smart since the Foundation's proposal is very comprehensive, it saves an agency time if the Foundation is not interested. It would be helpful if staff were more available to talk about a proposed project before we submit the LOI, since we are only permitted to submit one per year."
- » "We had a bit of confusion over applying for a new grant. The website was not 100% clear on our ability to re-apply immediately after this grant period ends. That is a very small thing. Overall our experience has been wonderful with Parsons."

### NON-MONETARY ASSISTANCE (22%)

#### » Assistance Securing Funding from Other Sources(N=7)

- » "Opening up communication/introductions to other funders who can support our programs. If we are a good grantee we hope you can promote our organization to other grant makers. This would help all of our programs. Also, invitations to any free or low cost trainings for our staff in organization management, or anything field specific, is always greatly appreciated. We have never been invited to such by RMPF nor do we know if RMPF does this type of work, but we know that other funders do and it is greatly appreciated."
- » "Encouraging other foundations to get involved is always so important to a grantee."

#### » Convenings (N=6)

- » "If the Foundation convened similar organizations for trainings and networking, that would be very beneficial."
- » "It is appreciated when funders convene their grantees for shared learning. The Foundation has tremendous knowledge which would be great to have them impart upon all of us."

#### » Collaborations (N=6)

- » "It would be great if the Parsons Foundation hosted meetings with the organizations in our field...to help us learn from each other and to facilitate our collaboration with one another."
- » "We'd like see more collaboration among foundations themselves, coming up with best practices and combining resources and efforts to conferences, and trend forecasting in the nonprofit sector."

#### » Technical Assistance (N=6)

- » "Could use more technical support or group meetings."
- » "More emphasis in capacity building and core operation."

### GRANTMAKING CHARACTERISTICS (18%)

#### » Type of Grants (N=9)

- » "Fund capital improvement projects for projects over 10 years of age. Reserves are not often sufficient to handle some of the necessary maintenance that would enhance the environment and upgrade building systems."

» "Continue funding general/core support. The flexibility of this type of funding allows us to not only continue our work but also create innovative strategies to address community needs."

» **Length of Grants (N=7)**

» "The process is lengthy and involved—it seems it would be valuable to both the Foundation and community partners alike to focus a bit more on offering opportunities for multi-year grants. This helps allow for future planning around projects rather than starting the process over every 12-18 months."

» "Although I am deeply, deeply grateful for the annual core funding support and the collegial relationship I enjoy with the Foundation staff -- it would be that much more liberating of the E.D.'s anxiety if there possibilities for multi-year funding."

» **Size of Grants (N=3)**

» "For proven programs, it might consider occasional larger grants that would help allow the program to grow or to add new elements, instead of simply maintaining its services. However, I would not want to see an increase in funding for new programs if it meant sacrificing the foundation's policy of offering core operating support. It is one of the few foundations that consistently offers such a lifeline to nonprofit organizations."

» **Other (N=2)**

» "We have been extremely happy with our experience but wish we could receive funding more regularly."

**QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF INTERACTIONS (16%)**

» **More Frequent Interactions (N=10)**

» "More frequent contact with Program Officer would be welcomed!"

» "I would be happy to have a regular quarterly meeting where Foundation staff came to the agency or invited me to bring clients to speak to them at their offices."

» "Perhaps use an automated system to set up a check in call or coffee/lunch with all grantees to take place quarterly with Foundation staff."

» **Site Visits (N=5)**

» "Make more site visits to observe, first-hand, the impact of their investment on our community."

» "To the degree possible, we encourage the Foundation to interact with and visit fundees. We enjoy hosting other foundations' board meetings as a way to accomplish this, and we would welcome the Parsons Board."

» **Management of Contact Changes (N=4)**

» "We were never notified that our program officer left and never assigned a new one. It wasn't until I called with a question months later that I learned Mary was gone."

» "Because we were not informed of Mary Christian's departure, I am concerned that our invitations to the board and staff...may have been put aside."

**FOUNDATION COMMUNICATIONS (6%)**

» **General (N=3)**

» "Better communication."

» "This is not related specifically to being a better funder per se, but about being more transparent/communicative regarding best practices, selection process and their work in the community. In lieu of a quarterly e-newsletter with foundation updates etc. I would hope to at least see their annual report online (I don't believe there is a link but I believe we have received hard copies via mail). Also the searchable database is not as easy to use or view as others I've seen (i.e. Annenberg or Irvine). The Foundation has a much smaller staff than those other foundations though...."

» **Website (N=3)**

» "Provide a little more detail on the website around what the Foundation is looking to fund."

» "...Share more news about their recent funding and its impact on the website...Run a seminar on best characteristics of high quality proposals and reports."

» **Clarity of Communications (N=1)**

» "More clarity about their overall goals and strategies."

**IMPACT ON AND UNDERSTANDING OF GRANTEES' LOCAL COMMUNITIES (2%)**

» **General (N=2)**

» "Regular site visits have been very helpful. Perhaps roundtable discussions with fellow grantees would provide more in depth information for Foundation staff on current issues in the community."

**IMPACT ON AND UNDERSTANDING OF GRANTEES' FIELDS (1%)**

» **General (N=1)**

» "Perhaps a greater willingness to support public policy work on related issues."

#### IMPACT ON AND UNDERSTANDING OF GRANTEES' ORGANIZATIONS (1%)

» **General (N=1)**

- » "The Foundation could improve its communications with its grantees. Both the Foundation and its grantees would also probably benefit from it becoming more personally familiar with the issues grantees and communities currently face."

#### OTHER (3%)

» **General (N=3)**

- » "As I mentioned a google calendar type app to help small organizations stay on track, schedule-wise. We appreciate the Foundation's continued commitment during the downturn and look forward to expanding our request. Lots of work still to do!"

*\*Please note that some suggestions have been assigned more than one theme.*

## CONTEXTUAL DATA

### Grantmaking Characteristics

Length of Grant Awarded (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Median Funder	CA Peers
Average grant length	1.5 years	2.1 years	2.1 years

Length of Grant Awarded (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
1 year	56%	49%	42%
2 years	40%	22%	34%
3 years	2%	17%	14%
4 years	0%	4%	3%
5 or more years	1%	8%	7%

Type of Grant Awarded (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Program / Project Support	30%	64%	58%
General Operating / Core Support	58%	20%	33%
Capital Support: Building / Renovation / Endowment Support / Other	11%	7%	3%
Technical Assistance / Capacity Building	1%	4%	5%
Scholarship / Fellowship	1%	2%	1%
Event / Sponsorship Funding	0%	2%	1%

## Grantmaking Characteristics - By Subgroup

Length of Grant Awarded (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Average grant length	1.5 years	1.4 years	1.9 years	1.6 years

Length of Grant Awarded (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
1 year	62%	61%	22%	44%
2 years	35%	39%	67%	53%
3 years	2%	0%	11%	2%
4 years	1%	0%	0%	0%
5 or more years	1%	0%	0%	2%

Type of Grant Awarded (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Program / Project Support	34%	30%	22%	20%
General Operating / Core Support	59%	48%	11%	64%
Capital Support: Building / Renovation / Endowment Support / Other	6%	22%	44%	15%
Technical Assistance / Capacity Building	1%	0%	0%	2%
Scholarship / Fellowship	0%	0%	22%	0%
Event / Sponsorship Funding	0%	0%	0%	0%

## Grant Size

Grant Amount Awarded (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Median Funder	CA Peers
Median grant size	\$75K	\$60K	\$85K

Grant Amount Awarded (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Less than \$10K	2%	11%	3%
\$10K - \$24K	4%	14%	14%
\$25K - \$49K	14%	14%	15%
\$50K - \$99K	34%	17%	17%
\$100K - \$149K	21%	9%	12%
\$150K - \$299K	19%	15%	18%
\$300K - \$499K	3%	7%	8%
\$500K - \$999K	2%	6%	7%
\$1MM and above	1%	7%	7%

Median Percent of Budget Funded by Grant (Annualized) (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Median Funder	CA Peers
Size of grant relative to size of grantee budget	2%	4%	3%

## Grant Size - By Subgroup

Grant Amount Awarded (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Median grant size	\$50K	\$88K	\$150K	\$100K

Grant Amount Awarded (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Less than \$10K	1%	5%	0%	2%
\$10K - \$24K	5%	5%	11%	2%
\$25K - \$49K	15%	14%	0%	13%
\$50K - \$99K	38%	27%	0%	31%
\$100K - \$149K	21%	9%	22%	25%
\$150K - \$299K	16%	32%	44%	20%
\$300K - \$499K	2%	5%	11%	2%
\$500K - \$999K	1%	5%	11%	2%
\$1MM and above	1%	0%	0%	4%

Median Percent of Budget Funded by Grant (Annualized) (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Size of grant relative to size of grantee budget	2%	1%	0%	3%



## Grantee Characteristics

Operating Budget of Grantee Organization (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Median Funder	CA Peers
Median Budget	\$2.5M	\$1.4M	\$2.0M

Operating Budget of Grantee Organization (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
<\$100K	2%	9%	3%
\$100K - \$499K	8%	20%	13%
\$500K - \$999K	12%	14%	16%
\$1MM - \$4.9MM	40%	29%	35%
\$5MM - \$24MM	22%	17%	22%
>=\$25MM	15%	11%	11%

## Grantee Characteristics - By Subgroup

Operating Budget of Grantee Organization (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Median Budget	\$2.5M	\$9.1M	\$60.0M	\$1.5M

Operating Budget of Grantee Organization (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
<\$100K	2%	0%	0%	2%
\$100K - \$499K	10%	5%	0%	8%
\$500K - \$999K	11%	0%	0%	23%
\$1MM - \$4.9MM	40%	32%	11%	47%
\$5MM - \$24MM	25%	36%	22%	8%
>=\$25MM	11%	27%	67%	13%

## Funding Relationship

Pattern of Grantees' Funding Relationship with the Foundation (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
First grant received from the Foundation	20%	29%	24%
Consistent funding in the past	60%	52%	57%
Inconsistent funding in the past	20%	19%	19%

Funding Status and Grantees Previously Declined Funding (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Median Funder	CA Peers
Percent of grantees currently receiving funding from the Foundation	80%	78%	84%
Percent of grantees previously declined funding by the Foundation	26%	26%	22%

## Funding Relationship - By Subgroup

Pattern of Grantees' Funding Relationship with the Foundation (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
First grant received from the Foundation	20%	27%	11%	18%
Consistent funding in the past	62%	55%	89%	55%
Inconsistent funding in the past	19%	18%	0%	27%

Funding Status and Grantees Previously Declined Funding (By Subgroup)	Social Impact	Health	Higher Education	Civic and Cultural
Percent of grantees currently receiving funding from the Foundation	82%	74%	78%	76%
Percent of grantees previously declined funding by the Foundation	25%	36%	44%	22%

## Grantee Demographics

Job Title of Respondents (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Executive Director	56%	47%	53%
Other Senior Management	5%	14%	13%
Project Director	0%	12%	7%
Development Director	20%	10%	11%
Other Development Staff	13%	7%	8%
Volunteer	0%	1%	0%
Other	5%	9%	7%

Gender of Respondents (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Female	70%	63%	66%
Male	30%	37%	34%

Race/Ethnicity of Respondents (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Average Funder	CA Peers
Multi-racial	3%	2%	4%
African-American/Black	7%	7%	7%
Asian (incl. Indian subcontinent)	8%	3%	7%
Hispanic/Latino	9%	5%	10%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0%	1%	1%
Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%
Caucasian/White	71%	80%	70%
Other	1%	1%	2%

## Funder Characteristics

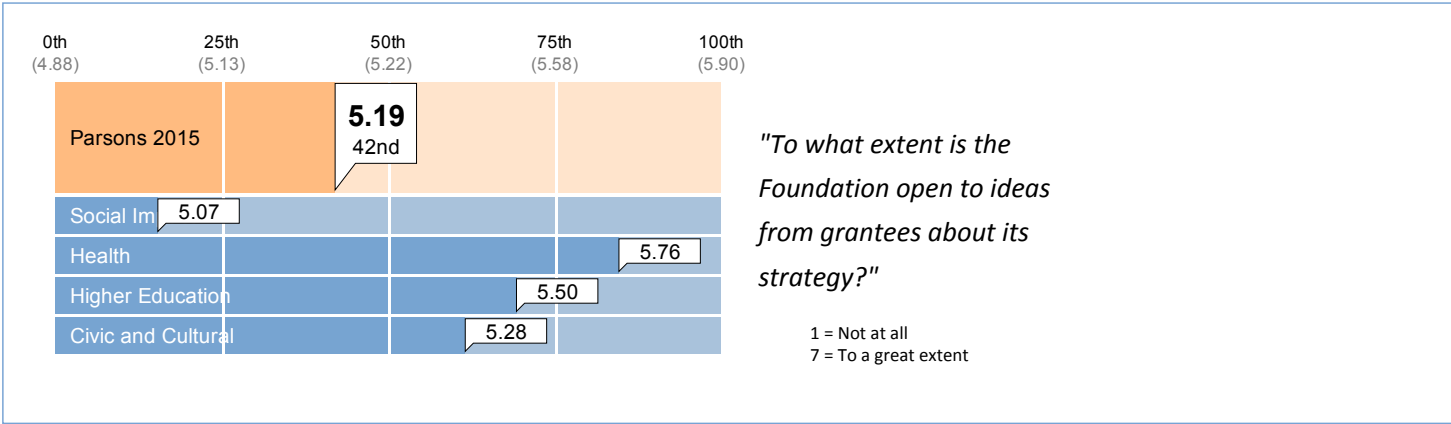
Financial Information (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Median Funder	CA Peers
Total assets	\$409.3M	\$204.8M	\$439.5M
Total giving	\$19.3M	\$13.3M	\$28.6M

Funder Staffing (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Median Funder	CA Peers
Total staff (FTEs)	9	13	22
Percent of staff (FTEs) actively managing grantee relationships	54%	40%	38%
Percent of staff who are program staff	43%	41%	46%

Grantmaking Processes (Overall)	Parsons 2015	Median Funder	CA Peers
Proportion of grants that are proactive	2%	40%	50%
Proportion of grantmaking dollars that are proactive	3%	41%	75%

ADDITIONAL MEASURES

The following measure was added in February 2015 and includes comparative data from only 13 funders.



## ADDITIONAL SURVEY INFORMATION

On many questions in the grantee survey, grantees are allowed to select “don’t know” or “not applicable” if they are not able to provide an alternative answer. In addition, some questions in the survey are only displayed to a select group of grantees for which that question is relevant based on a previous response.

As a result, there are some measures where only a subset of responses is included in the reported results. The table below shows the number of responses included on each of these measures. The total number of respondents to Parsons’s grantee survey was 261.

Question Text	N
Overall, how would you rate the Foundation's impact on your field?	232
How well does the Foundation understand the field in which you work?	242
To what extent has the Foundation advanced the state of knowledge in your field?	150
To what extent has the Foundation affected public policy in your field?	103
Overall, how would you rate the Foundation's impact on your local community?	238
How well does the Foundation understand the local community in which you work?	238
How well does the Foundation understand the social, cultural, or socioeconomic factors that affect your work?	250
How much, if at all, did the Foundation improve your ability to sustain the work funded by this grant in the future?	242
How well does the Foundation understand your organization's strategy and goals?	248
Which of the following statements best describes the primary effect the receipt of this grant had on your organization's programs or operations?	254
How consistent was the information provided by different communication resources, both personal and written, that you used to learn about the Foundation?	250
Who most frequently initiated the contact you had with your program officer during this grant?	259
Did the Foundation conduct a site visit during the selection process or during the course of this grant?	249
Has your main contact at the Foundation changed in the past six months?	250
Did you submit [a proposal] to the Foundation for this grant?	261
As you developed your grant proposal, how much pressure did you feel to modify your organization's priorities in order to create a grant proposal that was likely to receive funding?	259
How involved was Foundation staff in the development of your grant proposal?	257
How much time elapsed from the submission of the grant proposal to clear commitment of funding?	249
Was there or will there be a reporting/evaluation process?	257
Was an external evaluator involved in your reporting/evaluation process?	88
After submission of your report/evaluation, did the Foundation or the evaluator discuss it with you?	87
At any point during the application or the grant period, did the Foundation and your organization exchange ideas regarding how your organization would assess the results of the work funded by this grant?	219
Have you ever been declined funding from the Foundation?	177
Are you currently receiving funding from the Foundation?	258
Which of the following best describes the pattern of your organization's funding relationship with the Foundation?	258

Question Text	N
The instructions for submitting an LOI were clear	249
A written response was provided in a timely manner	246
I'd prefer the response to be provided electronically	242
I'd prefer an electronic only option for both the submission and response	242
The instructions for submitting an FP were clear	248
A written response was provided in a timely manner	250
I'd prefer the response to be provided electronically	242
I'd prefer an electronic only option for both the submission and response	241
Was a site visit a part of the selection process by which your funding request was reviewed?	251

## ABOUT CEP & CONTACT INFORMATION

### Mission:

To provide data and create insight so philanthropic funders can better define, assess, and improve their effectiveness – and, as a result, their intended impact.

### Vision:

We seek a world in which pressing social needs are more effectively addressed.

We believe improved performance of philanthropic funders can have a profoundly positive impact on nonprofit organizations and the people and communities they serve.

Although our work is about measuring results, providing useful data, and improving performance, our ultimate goal is improving lives. We believe this can only be achieved through a powerful combination of dispassionate analysis and passionate commitment to creating a better society.

## About the GPR

Since 2003, the Grantee Perception Report® (GPR) has provided funders with comparative, candid feedback based on grantee perceptions. The GPR is the only grantee survey process that provides comparative data, and is based on extensive research and analysis. Hundreds of funders of all types and sizes have commissioned the GPR, and tens of thousands of grantees have provided their perspectives to help funders improve their work. CEP has surveyed grantees in more than 150 countries and in 8 different languages.

The GPR's quantitative and qualitative data helps foundation leaders evaluate and understand their grantees' perceptions of their effectiveness, and how that compares to their philanthropic peers.

## Contact Information

Austin Long, Director—Assessment Tools  
(415) 391-3070 ext. 127  
[austinl@effectivephilanthropy.org](mailto:austinl@effectivephilanthropy.org)

Stephanie Moline Benoit, Research Analyst  
(415) 391-3070 ext. 161  
[stephanieb@effectivephilanthropy.org](mailto:stephanieb@effectivephilanthropy.org)





THE CENTER FOR  
EFFECTIVE PHILANTHROPY

675 Massachusetts Avenue  
7th Floor  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
Tel: (617) 492-0800  
Fax: (617) 492-0888

100 Montgomery Street  
Suite 1700  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
Tel: (415) 391-3070  
Fax: (415) 956-9916

[www.effectivephilanthropy.org](http://www.effectivephilanthropy.org)

# Complete Set of Grantee Comments and Suggestions

PREPARED FOR  
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation

JUNE 2015



THE CENTER FOR  
EFFECTIVE PHILANTHROPY

675 Massachusetts Avenue  
7th Floor  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
Tel: (617) 492-0800  
Fax: (617) 492-0888

100 Montgomery Street  
Suite 1700  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
Tel: (415) 391-3070  
Fax: (415) 956-9916

[www.effectivephilanthropy.org](http://www.effectivephilanthropy.org)

**Ralph M. Parsons Foundation**  
**Grantee Comments from February and March 2015 Grantee Perception Report**  
**Conducted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy**

*Please note that comments have been edited or deleted to protect the confidentiality of respondents.*

Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.	
Grantee Comment	
...Our growth over the years has been programmatic and not administrative. The Parsons Foundation has never pressed us to grow organizationally but has always rewarded us for active programmatic growth and improvement, for creativity and for innovation. We found ways to offer services to our [beneficiaries] without duplicating those services ourselves. We use existing resources funded by others. That the Parsons Foundation will support this kind of growth has been very helpful to us.	
...the grant proposal process was very straight forward. The Foundation staff was also helpful when needed and asked very good clarifying questions. They process took a long time, but we were told it would in advance and therefore expectations were met.	
...the process has been clear, consistent, and in line with what one should expect in working with a funder...My only less-glowing observation would be that... [during the site visit] I found [the] line of questioning to be a bit paternalistic... While I appreciate a discussion of what works and better practices, I never think that it's okay for a funder to indicate that an organization's fundamental mission shift to be more like the work of other organizations. This is even more obtuse when it follows questions like "what makes your organization different." If we do good work and have the strong evaluation methods to back it up, then judge us based on what we DO -- not what we do not. Again -- our interactions with [our program officers] have always been stellar. They are both supportive, responsive, and very, very helpful throughout the process.	
[E]very interaction we have had with the Foundation and with Wendy garden has been supportive, challenging, and critical to our growth. Ms. Garen has been as instrumental in nurturing our board and our performances...!	
[Our organization] has had a healthy positive relationship with the Parsons Foundation. There was a little mishap with our LOI in [the past] but once it was discovered the Parsons staff moved quickly to ensure we would not be negatively impacted due to their mistake. We are very comfortable knowing Parsons will fund our needs in the future.	
[Our organization] is extremely thankful for the collaborative nature of the Foundation and the operational processes were clear and very effective.	
A wonderful foundation which sees the strength of general operating support, rarer and rarer these days. The staff is supportive, Wendy Garen is accessible and welcoming, and this is one of our favorite foundations over the years. I just wish there was a way to access more funding for smaller organizations and that the response time could be shorter. Otherwise, pretty low-hassle experience.	
All excellent	
All interactions and processes were of very high quality, informative, and clear. the Foundation staff are very professional and pleasant to work with.	
All interactions are clear, informative, and helpful. Working with Parsons staff felt like working with an engaged, knowledgeable partner.	
All interactions were professional and yet very personal and responsive. All processes were transparent and clear.	
All my interactions with the Parsons Foundation throughout my career have always been clear, encouraging, respectful and on point. I truly believe that the Foundation understands the agency side of life and tries to fund the work and not the process. I think they are a role model for cooperation and understanding of true partnerships.	
All of our interactions and communications with the Foundation were welcoming, warm, and encouraging.	
All processes, interactions and communications were of the utmost quality.	

Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.	
Grantee Comment	
All processes, interactions and communications were useful and consistent. This is a Foundation that answers the phone and responds to questions. Guidance on determining which of many needs to put forth in the letter of inquiry is very helpful.	
All three have seemed clear enough, although not as engaged with us as they could have been.	
Amongst the easiest to work with	
Appreciate the clarity provided by the Foundation. The grant submission process was clear and complete	
As a new organization to the Foundation, it was difficult to gain entry to consideration. Once we made contact and were able to communicate our mission and connection with the Foundation's goals, the people at the Foundation were most helpful.	
As opposed to our experience with many other foundations, the experience with The Parsons Foundation has been wonderful. They are a true leader in the field. The other foundations look to them and follow their lead. The encouragement and support from Wendy Garen has been transformative.	
As usual, the quality of the interaction depends on the program officer. [Our] last...experience was delightful! She was really interested in our work and spent a lot of time getting to know us. We felt supported and encouraged. [Our current one] is a perfectly competent program officer, but...suffers by comparison.	
Before the LOI and then the proposal, [we] had helpful conversations with Wendy Garen. Her advice on how to structure the LOI and later the proposal were clear and accurate. the Foundation lived up to its word in every way, including time to review the full proposal. Though it took 7 months, this is a great improvement over the length of time it formerly took the Foundation to review proposals. Much appreciation to them for streamlining their review process. Jennifer Price-Letscher was the program officer I dealt with... She was exceptionally helpful, accurate, and friendly in her dealings with us. I provided updates and additional new information she requested. [They] made a site visit to [our facilities]. They were efficient, thoughtful, thoroughly professional and friendly in their actions here. Overall, through the entire process, all of us... involved in the process appreciated their helpfulness, transparency, and positive, service-oriented attitude. The fact that they were the first foundation to support a major capital project... was critically important. We knew a major award from Parsons would have leveraging power with other foundations, particularly those in our region and we have now observed this to be true as some foundations have been impressed with the size and timing of the Parsons award, and then stepped up themselves to invite large proposals. So, in addition to the funds themselves, this leveraging aspect of the grant relatively early in the fundraising cycle for the project, has had great value.	
Communication with Mary Christian was very good leading up to the beginning of our performance season. As an organization, we were disappointed (although we completely understood) that no one from the Foundation came to a performance... Additionally, we were not informed of Mary Christian's departure from the Foundation. I only found out a few months later when I tried to contact her.	
Communication with the Foundation are consistently helpful, thoughtful, knowledgeable and concise.	
Communication with the staff was courteous and very helpful in providing clarity to concepts in discussion and how they tied into/related to the Foundation priorities.	
E. Thomas Brewer was extremely kind, professional, and informative. He was very clear about the questions that would be asked during the site visit which helped us have a productive and meaningful meeting...	
Everything was good. The process is easy and the staff is very friendly and helpful.	
Excellent staff, honest, open and professional	
Extremely helpful in their guidance and very approachable.	
Extremely high quality.	
Foundation staff are extremely helpful and pleasant to work with, from inquiries about their funding interests and vetting projects, to the actual application and site visit...The program officer was extremely accommodating with her time and was engaged with the program staff and [our beneficiaries] and stopped by to answer questions. As a result of her sincere interest and enthusiasm, it was a rewarding experience for [our beneficiaries] as well.	
Foundation staff are knowledgeable, helpful and supportive; the Foundation is excellent in terms of providing the opportunity for repeat grant requests over a number of years	

Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.
Grantee Comment
Foundation staff have always been available and interested in our work, though honest if they felt they could not support it within their guidelines. Their process is among the longest of any major funder in the area, taking more than a year from first conversation to final award.
Foundation staff is extremely familiar with this organization (and presumably others), with the community and with local priorities. It is also crystal clear about its own goals and priorities, which is extremely important and helpful in crafting a proposal.
Foundation staff is responsive and open. We have a good relationship with the president and program officers. I would feel very comfortable approaching them with any problems or changes during the grant period.
Given that our funding relationship with the Foundation is relatively new, I think it has gone very smoothly. We have interacted with the Foundation in a number of other ways prior to formally applying for a grant, so that probably helped the staff as they were already familiar with our organization and could focus on getting a deeper understanding through the grant process.
Good amount of communication during application and review process but have not heard from foundation in last 15 months now that we have the grant.
Grant guidelines, due dates, expectations, and resources are all easily available from the Parson's Foundation website. Information on the website is clearly labeled and thorough. Staff is accommodating when responding to questions. The application process itself takes longer on average compared to other institutional funders that we apply. In our experience there is about an eight month gap between initiating the application process with a letter of intent and the award decision.
Great communication and interaction w/ Program Officer. Helpful in the process and felt that she was excited to share the news about funding being granted.
Half-way through the request process, we were assigned a different program officer than the P.O we had been working with initially. We found that seemed to shift the effectiveness of communication between our agency and the Foundation. The guidance from the Foundation seemed to change and we found the inconsistency frustrating and surprising.
I appreciate that by instituting an LOI process, we learn more quickly whether a request may be seriously considered, and that it has reduced the overall span of time from LOI submission to funding decision. Though our one-on-one communications with program staff were not frequent, staff seemed approachable and available whenever we initiated contact. We are particularly grateful for the Foundation's responsive approach to needs, and to its commitment to providing core operating support for cultural organizations.
I appreciate that the Foundation understands the needs of nonprofit organizations and how important flexible funding is to achieving our mission.
I appreciate the quality and depth of conversation with our program officer(s) over the years. They have helped to broaden the lens through which we view our work and report on it's impact.
I appreciated that it was only 4 months from the time of grant submission to funding. I greatly appreciated the honesty and assistance received from the Program Officer and Associate. I also appreciate the time Wendy Garen has taken to speak in various forums in the community. Her experience, wealth of knowledge and willingness to share is extremely helpful.
I feel that the proposal process for the Foundation is very long (longer than most), and inconsistent. Also, our LOI was misplaced, and it took a lot longer to process our proposal and eventually receive a grant. During our site visit, the program officer raised new questions about our finances and introduced us to [a helpful tool]...
I felt the Foundation listened to us. They did not insist that we do a new program or a program they found 'sexy'. They recognized the value of what we are doing to fill a need within several constituencies in our community and supported us with a general operations grant. Because of our small staff, we have to be very careful in general about following through on foundation requests for information, and following specific processes at different foundations. The instructions from Parsons were very clear, which made it much easier to respond. the Foundation also makes us feel welcome if we call for clarification. We spend almost all our time delivering programs, and sometimes reporting or evaluation can get short shrift. One thing that might help with reporting would be an automated reminder ala google calendar with two weeks notice of reporting requirements or other deadlines...

Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.	
Grantee Comment	
I find the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation to be one of the best with whom to communicate as an Executive Director. the Foundation staff is very knowledgeable of the LA non-profit sector, consistently kind and open-minded in discussions, and thorough in their questions and explorations during the grant process.	
I find the staff of the Foundation extremely useful, smart and helpful. This foundation has been easy to work with and very straightforward. I wish all of philanthropy was like this!	
I found everyone very helpful and friendly, which made it very easy for me to see them as strategic partners and colleagues. I have loved working with the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation.	
I found my communications with the CEO and program officer extremely helpful. They provided clear explanations and were very thoughtful in their questions and answers. I also appreciated how at ease they made me feel, which made our discussions more relevant and helpful.	
I had limited experience with the Ralph M Parsons Foundation before we were funded. I was referred to the Foundation by several colleagues. My experience in the application process was typical in terms of looking at guidelines and the website, however, my experience with Mr. Brewer was wonderful. He is very supportive and immediately understood [the complexity of our organization]. He also understood the changing and somewhat erratic nature of the health care environment. I appreciate that he understood our climate.	
I have always had a good experience working with the Foundation. I think the LOI addition has helped to streamline the process so that the wait time is not as long as in prior years. Staff is helpful, receptive, and available.	
I have had a wonderful time connecting with the PO. He's always been prompt and has answered all the questions that I have had.	
I have met with both Wendy Garen and Thomas Brewer; they were both very welcoming and showing genuine and thorough interest in our organization's mission and vision.	
I learned more about the Foundation with the in-person meeting with the Program Officer. I felt there would be a strong partnership particularly in our area...	
I really appreciated the Foundations openness to afford us the option to move our grant from one of expansion to one of support our capacity to eventually expand. It was like they read our mind and the grant came at a perfect time. THANKS.	
I replaced the Grants Manager who wrote the initial proposal for this grant. However, I completed both of our reporting requirements. I have worked with The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation at more than one agency over the years, and I have found them to be extremely helpful, supportive, and generous. Their core operating support grants allow flexibility, which is crucial in helping any agency meet its goals (particularly those of us dealing with vulnerable, high-acuity populations). If every foundation functioned like The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, my job would be far less stressful! They are an absolute pleasure to work with and it is abundantly clear that their desire is to help us achieve our mission. We are deeply grateful for their support.	
I was and still am very pleased with the involvement of the Foundation. Parsons is definitely on an extremely high level in dealing with my project/projects and I would have a hard time improving the process...	
I was very impressed by the honest and direct approach of the Foundation's liaison. Jennifer was straight forward in terms of how the Foundation could assist our...effort, and was honest in her evaluation of our request. She visited our facility, and provided specific feedback and encouragement. She is not intimidating, but instead presents the Foundation as a true partner within the Los Angeles community.	
I work with many different foundations and Parson's funding guidelines have always been consistent and clear to me. They are receptive to any questions and help they can give.	
I worked with Thomas Brewer on our grant. Thomas was professional, answered questions succinctly with great guidance. He was also very good at helping me understand the Foundation's grant process and timing. The Parsons Foundation grant...came at a critical time for [our organization]. Until we received this grant, [we were] viewed as a "start up" [without much] funding. The Parsons Foundation grant lent credibility to our mission and our ability to meet our goals. The Parsons Foundation has been a great friend and leader in Los Angeles.	
In addition to the help we received from the grant officer, our CEO who knows Wendy Garen has received direct answers to questions he had. She has been incredibly helpful.	



Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.	
Grantee Comment	
In all honesty, when we met with the Program Officer, E. Thomas Brewer, he was the consummate professional. Having recently started out in the role I was a bit nervous as this was my first meeting with a Program Officer at my new location. He was very polite and authentic and immediately put me at ease. He wanted to get to know me and my background and I was pleasantly surprised by that. Our CEO talked about how sharp he was and articulate and smart as a whip. I was very impressed with his knowledge about our organization and his genuine interest in the work we do. He is an awesome individual and our experience even before we received approval of our grant request was an overwhelmingly positive one.	
In my experience, the Foundation is friendly, clear about its own goals, and consistent in support of work that advances those goals. There's not a lot of interaction; the Foundation takes it as given that we know our work and our field, and having satisfied themselves that we are capable and responsible, they provide funding with a minimum of fuss. We greatly appreciate the straightforwardness of our relations.	
In working with our Program Officer, I found her to be friendly, well-informed and willing to help us in designing a competitive grant proposal.	
Individual communications with Foundation program officers was very helpful to understand Foundation's priorities and interests. Helped clarify what the Foundation looked for in core support and how frank/open we could be about funding gaps. I spoke to several program officers over the course of [a few] years and they all shared a consistent message.	
Interaction with Foundation staff has been consistently respectful, informative and helpful. Only thing that could be improved is speed with which the process is completed.	
Interactions with Foundation staff encouraged us (the organization) to delve into where our greatest need existed and how to convey that message to the Foundation.	
It has been a pleasure working with Thomas - he understands the community need for our work, and provides genuine enthusiasm of its goals.	
It is a pleasure to work with the Ralph M. Parsons foundation staff, they are very friendly, helpful, understanding and knowledgeable. They always available to support as we need them. There are few foundations who are like Parsons Foundation, who totally gets and understands the needs of communities like ours.	
It is a pleasure working with Jennifer, and we appreciate her enthusiasm for our work and our mission.	
It is a pleasure working with the Foundation. Staff are professional and approachable. While we don't have frequent contact with them, they have provided good counsel when we needed it, and we know that they value our work and would be happy to provide further support/ advice if necessary. Their communication is clear and helpful, as are their expectations of grantees.	
It is a pleasure working with this Foundation.	
It is greatly appreciated that the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation looks at the organization as a whole when making their funding decisions. It is also appreciated that their priorities are not limited by project type, but by the Southern California region, which allows an organization to apply for funding for what we really need.	
It is very refreshing to know that we can reach out to a foundation and have a "real" conversation about what we need to include in our proposal and how we can explain our need without sounding desperate for funding.	
It would have been helpful to have known some of what the agenda was prior to the site visit. We were told one thing and quite another thing occurred. That inconsistent (or lack of) communication put [us] in a very awkward situation.	
Jennifer Price-Letscher is a very generous and caring person who truly understood our organization and the work we do...She made the effort to clear some time in her busy schedule and come [visit for an event]. She was very genuine and truly interested and all the [beneficiaries of our work] that were speaking to her really liked her. She also had faith in us despite some [challenges we faced] and did her best to gather the most positive information she could to present to the Board. I am happy to report that our [organization] is much more stable and thanks to the Ralph M Parsons Foundation and to Jennifer Price-Letscher's efforts, our programs are stronger than ever.	
Meeting with the Program Office and CEO allowed for clear and efficient communication of our work and the Foundation's interest and capacity to support the work. The communication allowed for a clear understanding of the alignment and knowledge of the return on investment for our organization.	
My communication with the Foundation's staff and processes was pleasant and efficient.	

Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.	
Grantee Comment	
	My initial meeting during the site visit with the E.D. went very well. She was very encouraging and insightful. However, the number she suggested we change our LOI ask to [larger multi-year grant] was in stark contrast to the suggested number during the second sight visit by the Program Officer [significantly smaller single-year grant]. In the end we were granted [approximately what the Program Officer suggested]..
	My interaction with Wendy Garen was extremely helpful. She is a wealth of knowledge about the philanthropic community, especially as relates to the Foundation community. Her understanding of issues confronting nonprofits is incisive and she frequently has a very useful perspective to consider. Wendy's experience with the philanthropic community is outstanding and she is very accessible.
	My most recent experience was the best I have ever had. Wendy was supportive and forthright, and super efficient. Time was of the essence for me for my capital project and Wendy made it happen and quickly. I am so appreciative of her support and championship of our work and our capital effort.
	My only complaint about the Foundation's processes is that it can take a long time from LOI to full proposal to funding. But I do understand the sheer volume of submissions are the cause.
	My only critique is that I identified a program and wrote the proposal in September, and got funded in May. A lot changes in 6 months. I thought the staff at the Foundation understood, and was open to change.
	My program officer was very helpful in guiding me on language for my proposal. Appreciated her feedback and her support.
	Our communication and interactions with the Foundation staff were exceptionally informative, helpful and respectful. We felt that there was a true desire to understand the needs of our community as well as the needs of our organization... to make a significant difference in the lives of young children and families. I would say that this is one of the most professional and respectful partnerships we have been privileged to take part in. The Foundation clearly communicates its mission and is responsive to community and nonprofits.
	Our experience with communicating with the Foundation, and working with their processes has been excellent.
	Our experience with Foundation staff and its resources has been very positive. Staff are helpful, forthright, honest, and approachable. the Foundation has a strong reputation of understanding and supporting the work of nonprofits in the community, and letting them do that work to the best of their ability without meddling or steering to change the organizations.
	Our initial meeting with Wendy, prior to submitting the grant proposal, was engaging and focused, and we walked away with a clear plan for potential support and partnership with the Foundation. As our Program Officer, Jennifer was responsive, clear and thorough in her communications, and was a clear advocate for our proposal despite some challenges we had to work through. Throughout the process it was clear we had the same goals of service to our community. I am very impressed with the openness and collaboration of the Foundation team.
	Our organization found communications and interactions with the Foundation extremely beneficial, particularly on a face-to-face or one-on-one basis.
	Our program officer was extremely knowledgeable and clear about the Foundations priorities and what decision makers would be looking for in our proposal. On the site visit she asked excellent questions about our current programs and also about a past project funded by the Parson's Foundation. We found her to be very approachable and available to answer our questions.
	Our program officer was helpful, answering any and all questions as needed.
	Our program officer was very engaged with us throughout the entire process. He called us several times during the review process to be sure our program and design was aligned with what the Foundation's objectives. He came out for a very thorough site visit and both commented on our current submission and coached us on best practices moving forward to ensure continued/increased funding. He was very available and responsive to our team throughout the process.
	Our program officer was very flexible with use of the grant funding, revisions to the grant timeline and deliverables, and submission of paid invoices...



Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.
Grantee Comment
Our program officer, Jennifer, is personable and professional - exactly what I hope for in an interactive, evolving relationship with a program officer. She communicates well, which helped us formulate a proposal that ultimately secured funding from the Parson's Foundation. The decision-making process is long, however, it is still much shorter than it had been in the past. We are grateful regardless and it's always worth the wait.
Our program officer, Thomas Brewer, was incredibly helpful throughout the grant process. He spent a great deal of time with us at the site visit and helped us to reshape part of our request to make it more competitive for funding. Thomas was friendly, attentive and knowledgeable. His insight regarding funding in the region was beneficial and has helped us in other grant requests that we have submitted since. Overall, the Foundation presents as responsive, committed and invested in the greater Los Angeles area.
Our relationship with the Foundation is very warm and personal. Communications are clearly articulated, and our mission and goals are well understood by the Foundation. Processes are clearly outlined, and follow-up questions are answered quickly and thoroughly.
Overall, our experience working with RMPF has been extremely beneficial and pleasant. RMPF is a responsive grant maker that sees the organization as the expert in the field and doesn't try to shove their way on us, but at the same time RMPF is a real partner in that the program staff do offer suggestions to help our program improve. The annual reporting process is helpful for us, as we review our program twice a year actually. We are so thankful for the funding and for the helpful/non-burdensome grant reporting process. Other Foundations we have worked with have such burdensome reporting that we have actually turned down future grants from them. Please keep up the great work!
Parsons Family Foundation has always been very supportive and respectful in all interactions. the Foundation, particularly Wendy Garen, has watched us grow and transcend our executive transition... I always have the feeling that, although our communications are infrequent, I am communicating to an organization that knows our history and respects our reputation, and our programs.
Parsons Foundation is one of the several LA based Foundations that provides us consistent support... Over the last [several] years I've gotten to know some of their staff fairly well. Wendy Garen was kind enough to meet me in person in her office when I first took over as ED. I see their staff at numerous convenings... I feel I've always been able to be transparent and open about our challenges and issues as well as successes with Foundation staff. They feel more like a partner than a boss. Parsons hasn't done the strategic planning and changed funding priorities numerous times like some other Foundations, they fund fairly regularly (unlike others where you have to wait 3 years), they offer general operating support, and they have done some innovative leadership in the sector like the Merging Conference they held. The grant cycle before this one seemed like it took over 18 months, while this last one went much faster. Overall, I'm very pleased with Parsons Foundation.
Parsons is fortunate to have a high quality staff, led by Wendy Garen. They are a pleasure to work with.
Parsons is very clear in their funding priorities and grant request process. It's a typically involved process, but one that's clear and as stream-lined as possible.
Parson's is very professional and cares about the right priorities. In the past I thought too much time occurred between grants but this was alleviated this time by their providing us with a two-year grant
Processes: Easy to Navigate. Interaction & Communication: Needs to be improved, particularly when there's a change in program officers. Organizations need to be notified when a new program officer has been assigned to them.
Professional and respectful of our time and capacity
Program officer was helpful and responsive. Assisted in responding specific questions about our organization. Shared insights on Foundation priorities and internal grant evaluation process.
Ralph M Parson's Foundation is an excellent partner to work with. Their guidelines are clear, their process not overly encumbered and their staff professional, friendly and up front. The diversity of what they are willing to support (program, core operating, building) makes them an incredibly valuable asset to the non-profit community.

Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.	
Grantee Comment	
Ralph M. Parsons Foundation is a large entity, and their attention is highly in demand. For this reason they are not the easiest organization to contact; however, that is understandable. Because we are a mid-size organization with a past history of funding from the Foundation, as well as having names in our executive team that the Foundation personnel recognize, we were able to communicate with the Foundation. Even so, it took a long time to get a response from our LOI and our proposal.	
Recent staff transition resulted in the submission of the grant proposal to The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation by one representative of [our organization] and subsequent reports by another. Thus, the level of interaction or communication with Foundation staff during the proposal period is unknown.	
RMPF is beyond reproach. Staff interaction at all levels is professional. Their updated website, guidelines, and reporting processes are simple to use and understand, which is appreciated greatly.	
Speaking to anyone on the staff has been a pleasure. They are so amiable and wanting to help with our organization's mission. They are very helpful in what the Foundation's goals are and how they could possibly align with our organization's goals. In the dialogue, they always ask how we are doing and what has been happening. They have supported us consistently [for many years].	
Staff and leadership at the Foundation are consistent in their communications. They seem to have rigorous standards, and ask questions that indicate a seriousness of purpose, and that they are looking for evidence of excellence in our program. Staff has changed a fair amount, but whoever has worked with us has been consistent in approach with others at Parsons.	
Staff asked great questions in the follow up meeting and were responsive to questions we had throughout the process.	
Staff was always helpful and informative.	
Staff was helpful, supportive, encouraging.	
The application process was very formal but also very informative. Building the proposal initiated a number of great strategy and growth discussions. Jennifer was a pleasure to work with and incredibly helpful. It was also a real joy to have her visit a session as I think experiencing how the grant money is used is essential.	
The communication is very good. The process is well streamlined. I always knew what to expect. A pleasure to work with.	
The communication of priorities and procedures from foundation staff is consistent and clear. I have had interactions with several program officers over the years and have never had a less-than-positive experience.	
The communications received from the Parsons Foundation have always been timely and most helpful. Interaction with our Program Officer has been very helpful as well especially in clarifying guidelines.	
The first grant we received through the Parsons foundation had a great deal of back and forth with the program officer. When we re-applied I reviewed that correspondence and was able to craft a proposal that had way less questions from the Foundation. I appreciate that consistency especially considering it was with 2 different program officers.	
The Foundation had a very thorough review process, which, while was somewhat labor-intensive, resulted in a proposal that felt compelling and tailored to the funding opportunity. We have had positive interactions with Foundation staff to date.	
The Foundation has a very clear and easy-to-understand process, excellent communication and clear expectations.	
The Foundation has always been extremely responsive to any questions, flexible in terms of site visit scheduling and open in terms of communications.	
The Foundation has been extremely supportive and helpful in guiding us through the application process, providing constructive feedback and support, and helping us to think strategically about our overall fundraising and capacity issues.	
The Foundation is great at being able to listen and trust the grantees vision for the program; they are flexible and work with you.	

Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.
Grantee Comment
<p>The Foundation is one of the most responsive funders in the region. Our past communication has been consistent, frank and helpful. One of the few funders who ask for honesty and understand obstacles. Their significant support is a pivotal part of our annual budgeting process, and allows us to wisely and strategically plan for future activities. the Foundation also understands and appreciates relationship-building and partnership; our organization has had great (smart and insightful) conversations about the state of the nonprofit/funding field. It's a healthy balance that's rare.</p>
<p>The Foundation is very approachable and willing to help the applicants present as clear proposal as possible.</p>
<p>The Foundation is very clear about their philosophies, priorities, and processes. I feel they go above and beyond to be transparent and supportive. I appreciated the curiosity and thoughtfulness of our program officers. The way they asked all their questions showed they were most interested in understanding our organization, so they could present it in the clearest and best possible light to their board.</p>
<p>The Foundation is very clear and consistent. Their process is straight forward and they are very responsive to what our program needs are which is so helpful in maintaining and strengthening our programs. The Parson's foundation has always been there for us as we have grown over the years, allowing us to respond to emerging needs in our community and supporting programs for multiple years and often without requiring there be something new. This is not always the case with other Foundations but it is a welcome and critical way that we have been able to deliver strong programs and meet the needs for large numbers of children and youth in the community. Because of this kind of support we have not only strengthened our organization but have been able to partner with other organizations and have a greater impact by working together.</p>
<p>The Foundation is very responsive and willing to provide guidance around the appropriateness of request amount and the project to be considered. Between the LOI and the full proposal, staff was particularly helpful in providing such guidance, which I believe increased our chances of a successful grant.</p>
<p>The Foundation Program Officer we spoke to was most helpful. She had a clear understanding of our field and the needs and challenges we face. Her comments and assistance were invaluable. The relationship has been a partnership in many ways.</p>
<p>The Foundation provides clear and timely answers, does not 'beat around the bush' and gives substantive and helpful guidance on how to proceed. There were no questions about request amount, and the Foundation understood the importance of the project to us from the onset.</p>
<p>The Foundation seems extremely well-organized. It's funding priorities are well-communicated, and staff are open to questions and providing assistance when requested. Our program officer was open and direct about the Foundation's decision-making process.</p>
<p>The Foundation staff have always been very easy to work with and have provided guidance and support throughout the grant application process.</p>
<p>The Foundation staff is committed to being a responsive funder. They are very accessible in terms of personal communication, committed to learn more about an organization's work via site visits, and clear in communicating their focus areas for funding through their website.</p>
<p>The Foundation took six months to respond to our full proposal, but once it did, they were very helpful and we felt that Jennifer would be an advocate for our proposal. the Foundation has a clear application process with the information desired well outlined. Further, Jennifer asked very targeted questions and was very helpful to work with.</p>
<p>The Foundation understands the work and challenges of not-for-profits and is committed to investing in building stronger communities through developing organizations that can make a difference.</p>
<p>The Foundation was helpful in, 1 developing a strategy to be build capacity in non profits, 2 giving non profits tools to improve their financial process, inclusive of financial reporting and budgeting, and 3 overall giving non profits options to examine their legal status considering a diminishing market.</p>
<p>The Foundation was responsive, making the process more efficient. The site visit was also very substantive and helpful.</p>
<p>The Foundation was very easy to talk to and deal with - available to answer questions and encouraging. We had been working with Mary Christian, and are now working with E. Thomas Brewer - both individuals have been wonderful to work with.</p>

Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.
Grantee Comment
<p>The Foundation was very responsive to any of the questions that we had, beginning with following up after our final report from a prior grant all the way through the grant being awarded. Our program officer was also very supportive along the way and anytime she had questions she was very clear about the reason behind the ask.</p>
<p>The Foundation's processes and interaction with us has had a profound effect on our organization. First, as a small...organization, we do not have a development staff or a highly-evolved process for grant applications. the Foundation's requirements...have caused us to consider our mission and needs in more formal ways. The most important contribution from the Foundation was completely unexpected.. Our participation is making meaningful changes to how we view our mission, board, and approach to cultivating financial support...Our former Executive Director... raves about [Wendy's] encouragement and assistance to us in all stages of our relationship. I did have a chance to meet with Thomas Brewer when he conducted the Foundation's most recent site visit as part of our current grant. Thomas is thoughtful and, although it was his first meeting with us, he understands our mission and challenges. He has the kind of background that we don't often see in funders' staffs. We are honored to be a grantee, and inspired to be our best as a result of the relationship we have with the Parsons Foundation.</p>
<p>The Foundation's process is easy to understand. Staff is very helpful and provides direct answers to questions. I feel comfortable calling the Program Officers with questions because they are always personable and easy to speak with. Additionally, they make them selves available to speak with you and/or return calls.</p>
<p>The Foundation's processes and communications are very clear. Interactions with the Foundation have been helpful in understanding what they are interested in supporting.</p>
<p>The Foundation's processes were very clear and the staff were extremely responsive and helpful.</p>
<p>The Foundation's processes, interactions and communications are logical, timely and very helpful. There is a true effort on the part of Foundation staff to guide the organization on its way forward as an entity and how it can most effectively present its case.</p>
<p>The Foundation's staff were very helpful throughout the process. We were given the opportunity to provide updated financial statements as they became available, which showed a much stronger financial position. We greatly appreciated the flexibility of the Foundation as we moved through the process. The site visit was a very positive experience, allowing us the opportunity to share some of the changes that had occurred within the organization.</p>
<p>The grant application is clearly articulated and when questions arose, we received prompt and helpful responses. Over the last few years, we have positive interactions with a number of different people at the Foundation.</p>
<p>The grant process is pretty straightforward. The staff is very friendly, professional and responsive. I found the site visit to be very helpful since the staff gave us feedback on the proposal and areas we could strengthen. My program officer is very responsive and I feel comfortable contacting him about future grants and our organizational needs.</p>
<p>The grant process was very clear. The LOI requested specific information, and the grant proposal guidelines were clear and concise. the Foundation staff was helpful when needed and met individually with our organization's leadership as well as answered questions promptly on the phone.</p>
<p>The grant writing process was very streamlined. The LOI was consistent with the proposal. I felt perfectly comfortable with speaking with either Ms. Christian or Ms. Garen. They were extremely helpful and pleasant to work with. The experience was refreshing to work with professionals who understand nonprofits and youth development.</p>
<p>The guidelines on the website could be a little more clearly defined in terms of any nuances in what the Foundation is looking to fund. Those extra details have been helpful however during conversations with the Foundation staff.</p>
<p>The initial meeting with Wendy Garen to introduce her to new leadership...provided a well-timed opportunity to share our vision for [our organization], and discuss our focus on sustainability and planning for the future. The site visit with Thomas and Nicole was very informative, and provided the opportunity to answer questions about our programs, and provide first-hand exposure to our approach...</p>

Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.
Grantee Comment
The length of time from proposal submission and grant award is painfully long. That the Foundation still sends program staff on site visits is extremely helpful and welcome. It is a vital part of foundation funding to have face-to-face time with representatives of the Foundation, as well as their having an opportunity to see and meet staff of the organization requesting support.
The mission of the Foundation was firm and clearly stated and helpful in informing the development of the LOI and proposal.
The officer who conducted our site visit was extremely knowledgeable and thorough. We received a capital grant, and he clearly had a background in architecture which gave him a clear understanding of why and why we were asking for funding. His questions were also very applicable. He also was very helpful in answering our questions about potential future funding from the Parsons Foundation as this was our first grant.
The Parson Foundation's process, interactions and communications were timely and relevant to our proposal. We felt the Program Officer assigned to us, Mary Christian was knowledgeable of our field and communicated effectively. She spent ample time during the site visit to ask reflective questions to better assess our... programs while learning more about how our mission aligned with the Foundation's. The quality was excellent.
The Parsons Foundation has been a long time supporter of our organization and we are grateful for their assistance. We take their comments and suggestions very seriously and strive to improve our operations accordingly.
The Parsons Foundation has provided funding (not annually) but consistently [for many years]. Overall the Foundation has been very easy to work with and we feel that we are being evaluated fairly. Our interactions for many years were directly with Wendy Garen, then Mary Christian and now with Jennifer Price-Letcher. We had our first formal site visit during the most recent grant application process (with Mary Christian). Foundation staff has generally been responsive to communications we instigate, but there has not been any communication initiated from the Foundation during the grant period - whether check-ins or reminders or other types. Some of the Foundations or Government agencies with larger staffs have e-newsletters regarding their funding activities.
The Parsons Foundation is a sophisticated philanthropic organization. It has a knowledgeable approach to philanthropy based upon its long history of grantmaking and its leadership in the philanthropic community. the Foundation is clear about its grantmaking objectives and communicates that well to potential grantees. They are friendly, direct and honest.
The Parsons Foundation is truly one of the most outstanding Foundations that we have in Los Angeles. They provide excellent technical assistance, appropriate and significant funding and a very caring and committed staff. They are also strong leaders in the philanthropic community and are looked to by both the nonprofit and funding community for guidance and professional assistance. The staff is very knowledgeable about the nonprofit community and as a result very helpful in helping to create and sustain grant goals and objectives. They are responsive and caring and want programs and organizations to succeed. This is very motivating for the management team at organizations.
The personal approach that's provided to the grantee is amazing. the Foundation stands way above the rest when it comes to being able to personally share and learn as partners with mutual interests. We always have felt welcomed to ask questions and to be completely honest about our goals, challenges and share opportunities on the horizon. You never got the sense that there was an impenetrable glass ceiling of separation between the grantor and grantee.
The process is very straight forward and efficient. Decision making is timely. Some foundations create a power dynamic and that is NOT the case with the Parsons Foundation. The entire team is respectful and they approach the work with interest and collaboration-rigorous questions but then great to work with to move any initiative forward.
The process is very user friendly. We were delighted to have a site visit by Thomas Brewer..., and to have access to him via email and phone subsequent to the site visit. The only item that can be a bit confusing is the postcard acknowledgement of final report: US Mail does on occasion get lost and we are uncertain at times if the report has indeed been received or the card been sent...



Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.	
Grantee Comment	
The process of applying for funding is consistent and clear. Staff are extremely responsive and helpful. The funding culture of the Foundation is one that should be adopted by others. We are honored and grateful to be among those awarded funding.	
The process was very helpful.	
The processes are efficient. The staff is accessible. The entire process was very positive.	
The program officer was very helpful and genuinely interested in our work in the field...	
The quality of Foundation's processes, interactions, and communications are always top notch. They are professional, consistent, helpful, and direct. the Foundation staff always exudes a high standard in all of their interactions -- whether in-person, on the phone, or via email.	
The quality of our interactions with the Foundation and been very positive and productive. We feel that staff is approachable and engaging. They are excellent to work with.	
The quality of the Foundation's process is highly professional, consistent and efficient. I am a new Executive Director for [our organization] so my experience with the Foundation was to conduct a Progress/Final Report on a...grant...The first Installment had been issued before I started, however there was a Final Report due before the 2nd installment could be issued. The Foundation very effectively notified me of the deadline for the Program/Final Report. So, I would say that although I was a new transitioning ED, the Foundation system readily notified the organization of a pending deadline that as a new incoming ED may have missed. Please thank the Foundation for their effectiveness and efficiency.	
The quality of the process was outstanding. Thomas was incredibly thorough, informed, interested, and considerate. It was a joy and a pleasure to work with him. Very professional and constructive. Questions were thoughtful, supportive, and made us think.	
The quality seemed top-notch and clear.	
The quality was high in all three areas. The process was made clear early on and was adhered to yet was flexible enough to adjust when we did not need funding as early as originally expected. The interactions with staff were always extremely professional and pleasant, without exception. The communications were consistently clear and pleasant (very important as a grantee!).	
The Ralph M. Parsons application and guidelines are quite thorough and comprehensive. We feel that applications like this give our organization an advantage because of our comprehensive programs and evidence based practices. We have been advised that the letters of support that the Parsons Foundation most values are those from our clients. This was a helpful tip and we were able to supply several such letters. After our submission, the Foundation was very thoughtful in letting us know that there would be a significant delay in reviewing our application. This information was important to our own budget projections. The review happened sooner than we thought it might. We were impressed with the attention and focus Mr. Brewer was devoting to our request. He was professional, responsive, attentive and encouraging throughout the process. His site visit was thorough and he had a keen interest in the work we are doing. Afterwards, he made it a point to follow through with positive feedback about the staff and leadership of the program and agency.	
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation does excellent work. We appreciate their focus on tangible results in our community.	
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation has always been accessible, transparent and helpful. Its grant application process and reporting requirements are straightforward and fair. It is not encumbered by multiple layers of bureaucracy. Wendy Garen...exhibits all of the leadership qualities that one values in a philanthropy leader -- good judgment, sensitivity, receptivity, and a sophisticated understanding of the needs and assets of the Los Angeles region. Although the Foundation has approved [many] of our grant requests over the past two decades, it has also turned down several of our requests during that period because we were seeking support for projects that were not clearly in alignment with the Foundation's goals. Because Wendy was candid with us about why these proposals were not approved, we achieved a better understanding of where the goals of the two institutions intersect.	
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation has provided superior quality in all of their processes and communications. It has been a pleasure to have their ongoing support over the years. Our agency truly appreciates the general operating support to fill the funding gaps of restricted government contracts or other private funding sources.	

Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.	
Grantee Comment	
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, of the many I work with, is the most professionally run, consistent, and thoughtful, in my opinion. At the same time the staff are courteous and approachable. It may help that our organization comes to the Foundation only on occasions of true need for transformational capital projects or programming. It is always a pleasure to work with the Parsons Foundation.	
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation's processes are efficient and timely in their selection process and communications. We felt informed of our grant application status throughout the process. Interactions with the Foundation's staff were most supportive in helping us refine our proposal, report, and in thinking about our future grant seeking strategy.	
The relationship with the Parsons Foundation and this organization pre-dates my arrival as Executive Director... This is the first time I have ever applied to the Parsons Foundation and they have always been transparent and very helpful. They are also a great philanthropic citizen in Los Angeles/Southern CA and are innovators in pushing the non-profit sector to reach new heights.	
The site visit was extremely helpful since our organization was undergoing an executive director transition after we had submitted the complete application. The site visit enabled us to speak freely about our current needs and then understand the Foundation's framework for making a decision given our situation...	
The staff and leadership of the Foundation are genuinely and consistently smart, interested and savvy. They are leaders in the Los Angeles philanthropic community, and understand the importance of well-run programs to strong, measurable outcomes.	
The staff is extremely responsive and very helpful in thinking through an approach for our proposal which would have the best chance of funding.	
The support is very much appreciated and it's clear the Foundation's dedication to empowering communities is consistent.	
There was a little confusion over when invoices should be submitted for reimbursement. That was easily clarified with a conversation...	
This is a highly professional organization. They execute their mission effectively and with great empathy for grantees. I would think that this would be a wonderful environment in which to work.	
This is a very supportive and clear foundation. It is a pleasure to work with their staff and leadership. Thanks to them, our organization has been able to expand services and maintain during periods of challenge. We are grateful.	
This is the most responsive and supportive foundation relating to arts funding in Los Angeles County. They have a true commitment to the arts as engines for social change and the process is very clear and straightforward. The staff is extremely responsive and supportive. If I were a Beach Boy, I'd write a song called, "I wish they all could be Ralph. M. Parsons grants."	
Thomas Brewer, RMPF Program Officer, is extremely professional. For our site visit he came prepared with thoughtful questions... He spent the time to see a demonstration of our ...program and toured our [facilities]. Responses for information are timely. He has attended our... performances and we sense an authentic feeling of support...	
Typically we would initiate contact with the Foundation to ensure that our program met their funding priority. The Grants Manager serves as the primary point of contact and then communicates with the Executive Director in their weekly meetings.	
Very clear and efficient	
Very helpful and appreciate the candor.	
Very Succinct and Clear	
We apply for a large number of foundation support grants each year - either for operating or capital (depending on our needs). The Foundation has always been one of the most responsive to changing needs in the community and to agency issues that we deal with. We have always had excellent working relationships with program staff who take the time to understand our programs and help us tell our story in the most effective way to the Foundation. I cant speak highly enough of the Foundation, your work and your staff.	

Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.
Grantee Comment
We appreciate the support and leadership from the Parson's Foundation... the Parson's Foundation understands our needs and the needs for access to care for the most vulnerable children in our community. Working with the Program Officer Jinhee Kim was an asset because of her understanding of the needs...for low income children, her understanding of our community and the scarcity of providers..., and her exceptional understanding of the mission of the Parsons' Foundation.. our Executive...Director...has been proud to name the Parson's Foundation as one of our lead supporters.
We are extremely appreciative of the accessibility of program staff, their willingness to engage and think deeply about the best-fit program for funding, and their support throughout the process. We always felt that there was an "open door policy" and that we could ring up with a question throughout the application process--and we did so! I really can't think of downsides or negatives to report at this time!
We are used to this process taking 6 months or longer, however, the "not knowing" for so long, makes it difficult to truly plan for budgeting. Therefore, we submit many, many applications with numerous funders, in the hope that enough of them will say "yes" so that our grant budget goals are met or exceeded.
We believe that the Parsons Foundation was very user friendly, yet highly professional.
We deal with a number of Foundations and Parsons is the best! The people are friendly, transparent and helpful. Wendy Garen has been particularly helpful to us in understanding the way Parsons works and the way other Foundations work.
We enjoy working with the Foundation and find Foundation staff to be accessible, responsive, experienced and helpful. Staff understand well the exigencies associated with running a nonprofit and we are able to have realistic and meaningful interactions that are much appreciated.
We feel that the Foundation deeply understands our work and mission, and this has developed over years of working together... We view the Foundation as a potential partner for a variety of initiatives and projects...Conversations and site visits are thoughtful, helpful, and collaborative.
We feel that they not only maintained excellent communication with our organization but also encouraged an open and welcoming line of communication. Friendly and approachable staff.
We felt completely supported through every step of this process.
We first submitted a letter of inquiry and were subsequently invited to submit a proposal. The process was fairly fast, the entire process took 10 months. We applaud the Foundation for being both diligent and efficient in its application process because it enables organizations to better plan, allows it to share the outcome of its request with potential funders when appropriate or necessary and illustrates the organization's Fund position. The interactions with the Foundation staff were professional, informative and timely. They returned calls promptly and always encouraged us to contact them if we had any questions. The communications were clear and consistent from one platform to another.
We found the Foundation to be fair, flexible, supportive and understanding of our work and situation.
We found the Foundation to be very helpful in development of our grant proposal. Mr. Brewer's site visit was very informative and very helpful in understanding more about the Foundation, the grant process, and all that the Foundation does. A great experience.
We found the Foundation's process to be straight forward, understandable and only moderately difficult to complete.
We found the information we needed extremely accessible. Our phone calls to the Foundation were either answered promptly and/or returned in a timely manner. All of our questions were answered in an open and candid manner and our process proceeded very smoothly. We knew where we were in the process at all times. Our site visit was scheduled well in advance, and our Program Officer was cordial, knowledgeable and helpful. Overall, our experience with the Foundation has been extremely positive. Everyone has been professional and responsive. An extremely nice group of people to work with.
We had a new grant writer who worked on this grant for our organization and he told me the website was very helpful as a guide for completing the application process. He also used prior grant proposals to the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation for guidance. While the process may seem to us as lengthy, it isn't too labor intensive, which allows us time to concentrate on program delivery.



Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.
Grantee Comment
We have appreciated the well-structured process for grant applications, starting from the postcards that confirm receipt of our LOIs and proposals to the formal invitation to apply for the grant to the phone calls from the Grant Officer and the site visit. Throughout the process, Parsons has proved to be a great listener to the current needs and challenges facing our organization.
We have been a grateful beneficiary of the Foundation's support for [many] years. During that time, we have found the Foundation not only to be a generous partner but a thoughtful one. Our mission...is not always easy for people to understand. The Foundation, however, has been quick to grasp and embrace our model of service... The complexity of braided funding streams is something the Foundation understands and appreciates, and we have always felt that no matter how many layers of programming, administration or management separate us from meeting our goal, the Foundation understands that complexity and supports our role in bringing a much-needed service to people who are severely disadvantaged. It is a pleasure and an honor to count among our supporters The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation.
We have found both the leadership and project managers to be very thorough, fair and interested in both the projects that we have submitted, and these projects ability to align with the Foundation's interests. The application is straight forward and clear about the materials that are needed, and the organization is exceedingly responsive to letters of interest and intent. All levels of the organization ask pointed questions focused on the continued success of our organization with a genuine interest in partnering with thriving organizations committed to serve the public.
We have had several years of one year funding through the Foundation, initially we received programmatic funding and then we were asked to apply for core support...the Foundation's website is a bit outdated but the reporting and application guidelines are clear. Even though we have been funded for many years our funding amount has mostly stayed the same and the Foundation has not made renewal easier. We still have to wait for the grant to end then submit a report and then submit a proposal and there is usually a 6-13 month window between applying and receiving the new grant so we go often a year being unfunded and then receiving the funding again. We have other sources of funding but having multi-year or quicker renewals would be so much easier. Additionally this time we had to submit an LOI and then a follow up grant proposal, again this is after having a long term relationship with the Foundation. The Foundation staff is generally responsive but not particularly friendly and seem a bit out of touch with the realities of community orgs...
We know that Parsons needs a lot of time to process a grant application and we allow for this. This can be looked at as being thorough and making sure it is a good fit. All-in-all, we have found the staff and the Foundation goals to very in-touch with the needs of our community, economy etc.
We love working with the Foundation. Staff are always very helpful and participate in the process with us.
We see the Foundation as innovative, supportive, and flexible.
We very much enjoyed working with Jennifer who conducted the site visit. She was truly interested in our work, engaged in our process and made us feel a great sense of validation.
We worked with Jinhee Kim who was very helpful not only during the application and reporting processes...As we approached the time for a site visit during the last grant cycle, Jinhee was leaving and Jennifer came for the site visit. She was enthusiastic, asked good questions and showed curiosity about our work.
Website presented clear guidelines, timelines, LOI procedures, content, and attachments necessary to be considered by program officer. Invitation was specific in what was now required and evaluation procedures by staff.
Wendy Garen is the face of the Foundation and is very willing to have an open conversation regarding funding potential. You leave a meeting with her knowing where you stand and if it is worthwhile to pursue the funding further. No waste of time with Wendy. Based on the discussion, did a "reset" on the ask for funding, which in the end was far more helpful to the health of the agency.

Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.
Grantee Comment
<p>We've very delighted with the open communication from our Program Officer and his ability to connect our work to real impact. Furthermore, he is thoughtful, open and thorough. Unrelated to our current grant, it is also important to note that Wendy Garen's commitment to improving communities at-large has led to amazing opportunities for our organization within and beyond the Foundation's capacity. She is generous in sharing her connections within the philanthropic community, which has led to our ability to forge new relationships with key foundation leaders. Furthermore, Garen's commitment to innovation will continue to help to propel our industry for years to come.</p>
<p>While I have not had extensive experience working with the Foundation based on my tenure in the organization, I have had great communication with my program officer and feel that the Foundation understands extremely well the innerworkings on a non profit organization. They are very flexible and understanding to changes that occur within the organization while still being very clear on their commitment to fidelity. They are one of the best foundations to work with in my experience so far.</p>
<p>With this grant, the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation provided our organization with general operating support for the first time. This demonstrated the Parsons Foundation's insight into the field and vision. While general operating support is crucial to sustain all our life-enhancing programs, it is all too rare for major institutional funders to provide it. In addition, the Foundation increased it's support... This further deepened the relationship between our organization and the Foundation. We are hopeful that the Foundation will continue to support us with increased support for years to come. Both times that the Foundation considered applications from us, the program officer conducted a site visit to our location. The site visit was important to enhance the Foundation's understanding of our organization, and provide a face-to-face relationship.</p>
<p>Working with Jennifer and the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation staff has been clear, consistent and not over-bearing. We knew what was expected of us and felt that RMPF was a partner in this endeavor.</p>
<p>Working with our Program Officer was a thorough and detailed process. She asked a lot of great questions and did her due diligence as a funder. This was a proposal and foundation grant that we took very seriously so we made sure to dedicate the time and effort to this partnership.</p>
<p>Working with Wendy Garen and her staff has been nothing short of exceptional, ranging from scheduled meetings with specific outcomes to questions and check-ins along the way.</p>
<p>You staff is a pleasure to work with... All of your staff with whom I have contact seem so happy, grounded, smart, relaxed and humorous. We had a conversation about our organization's growth and the information Thomas gave regarding the LOI process and content was extremely helpful. the site visit with Jennifer was exciting, like we get to strategize about changing the world. The format of the LOI was excellent. We ended up sharing our Parson's LOI with countless individual donors and stakeholders, as it was the most useful and concise articulation of our strategic repositioning that we needed to share with everyone. Personally, I LOVE the website and the up-front articulation of the importance of arts and culture to community. This is so relevant to our work... Parsons is the only foundation we work with that puts the connection between art and community health on its home page. It feels amazing to us.</p>

**Ralph M. Parsons Foundation**  
**Grantee Comments from February and March 2015 Grantee Perception Report**  
**Conducted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy**

*Please note that comments have been edited or deleted to protect the confidentiality of respondents.*

Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.	
Grantee Comment	
...	As a new organization, the grant helped "legitimize" the organization and as a result, a number of other funders came on board. This has helped us build a financial stable organization that can serve more low income, high achieving students... The investment by Parsons had immediate impact on [our organization] but it will also have impact on the community in years to come.
...	We appreciate the independence of the Foundation so that we can continue to serve people who are homeless in areas that have been historically under-served.
...	General operating support provided by the Foundation supported us as we expanded our [program] and added...services for our clients.
...	The impact of Ralph M Parson's investment has transformed the lives of thousands of people in our community...Your investment has also helped to open the hearts and minds of our community to better understand the issues of homelessness and underserved communities.
...	The Ralph M. Parson's Foundation has given [our organization] a voice and has partnered with [us] to become part of the solution. We are grateful to them for their vision and their commitment.
...	the support of the Parsons Foundation is extremely important to our work... Recognition by The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation elevates the reputation of the [our organization]. In a landscape filled with many, many non-profit [organizations], to have their support is a singular honor. It speaks to the efficacy of our organization in both administrative capabilities and program importance.
A grant from the Parsons Foundation allows us to leverage additional program support from other institutional funders and individual donors.	
As part of the NSI they are helping non-profits to think and act strategically for sustainable futures. I think they are pushing for more leadership and support in this area and I commend them for that.	
As this is a capital grant, the impact will be significant in the coming years. We are aware of other organizations with whom we will be working who receive operational and other funding from the Foundation, and we know the positive impact of their work in the community, and the Foundation is an important partner.	
As we received a capital grant, the impact of the Foundation specifically for us has been fairly internal. We are unaware if the Foundation supports the work we conduct through other organizations.	
At a time when many nonprofits were hit hard by the down turned economy - decreased giving and extreme government funding cuts - support from foundations became critical to many of us maintaining our core programs. Additionally training and encouragement to collaborate with other agencies ensured we were all working together to share resources and to prevent clients in need from double dipping the limited resources available. By working together we have been able to continue to provide critical housing, food, educational, health and support programs for those most in need in our communities. Our operational grant also allowed us to sustain a new program...Because our services meet base needs...I can honestly say that the impact at time is life saving, and definitely prevents...health care issues.	
Based on my understanding and that of my peers, the Parsons Foundation is a primary funding source for may nonprofit organizations throughout LA. Without knowing too much about their impact, my first instinct would be to say they have an enormous impact on the LA landscape through their support of other non profits.	

**Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.**

**Grantee Comment**

By being a lead funder of [our organization], Parsons is having a tremendous impact on multiple fields throughout the Los Angeles community... With Parson's support, [our organization] is exploring potential partnerships across sectors, overhauling our [work] to serve a multiplicity of sector lenses, and evaluate the impact of our programs through an...[inquiry] process to lay the Foundation for sustainable growth. By supporting [our organization's] collaborative and grassroots model..., the Foundation's grant will impact many lives and communities throughout Los Angeles.

By building capacity organizations will have stepping stones to move forward through usage of state of the art tools.

By funding the work that we do the Foundation has allowing us to impact our community.

Community health centers are in a unique position with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Our program officer was understanding of our situation and was able to share best practices learned from his experience...

Considering that human services is one of the lowest funded areas of nonprofit work, the Parsons Foundation makes a point of focusing its funding priorities on those areas that serve the disadvantaged and focuses it funding on operating funds. Unrestricted funds are the life's blood of a not-for-profit organization and provides flexibility in these uncertain times. More funders need to support organizations as the Parsons Foundation does through general operating grants.

Core operating support, so difficult to obtain, has allowed our organization to build reserves. This strengthened our organization and gave us breathing room to develop programs and other funding streams. This Foundation, because of its reputation also made it possible for us to obtain larger grants and new foundation partners.

For [many years,] the Parsons Foundation has been a consistent funder of our organization and has made a huge impact on hunger issues in the community we serve.

Foundation allows us to expand...programming that is rare within our field...

From speaking with colleagues in the not-for-profit sector, the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation has a reputation for providing sustaining support to nonprofit organizations with strong outcomes and effective leadership...President Wendy Garen has direct knowledge of the grantee organizations, and the Foundation is seen as a genuine partner in improving the community.

Funding from the Parsons Foundation serves as an imprimatur of sorts, encouraging other foundations to fund you. Their funding base is large enough to have an impact should they choose to go in a particular direction.

Has enormous impact on our organization's ability to effectively serve our community comprised of low to very low-income population.

Homelessness dynamics are clearly understood by the Foundation President and staff. Presentations at various seminars by them show a in-depth understanding of the circumstances and challenges that we face and the funding opportunities. Funding is flexible in how we can use the support in maintaining the designated program within staff review.

I am aware that the CEO is active in our medical arena. She frequently is a guest speaker and is accessible publically. Beyond that it is difficult for us to judge what the Foundation's impact on our field or community is.

I am aware that the Foundation financially supports many agencies serving Foster Youth. Our shift to [our] approach will improve our care and effectiveness, so the investment the Foundation made was very important and impactful.

I am not aware of all the activities from the Foundation in the field of education and educational leadership and the dynamics of support for unusual stand alone programs.

I am not aware of any initiatives

**Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.**

**Grantee Comment**

I am not sure of the Foundation's impact on the field or the community. As for our organization I think having the Foundation fund our organization for so many years has made a great impact, they have been funding our...work before others did and the partnership is certainly appreciated. I am not sure how much they understand our mission or strategy though as they are focused on funding services which are a huge part of what we do but we also want to make systemic change...and those parts of our work are not funded. the Foundation does not seem to have a big vision, not one they communicate, and so its difficult to sell them on ours.

I am unsure, but Thomas' knowledge is very strong, and cannot help but impact the supported sites...

I believe the Foundation does a great job of understanding the specific need that exist within the education space in Los Angeles. Wendy Garen is often on panels and is great at being involved in conversations relevant to what they fund. the Foundation has been a generous supporter of our organization and our work and has been a catalyst for our growth in Los Angeles.

I believe the leadership stance that the Foundation has had in co-facilitating non-profit collaboration, partnerships, mergers, is very beneficial. I also believe that the Foundation's support of Non-Profit Leaders has been exemplary as it relates to investment in their growth through the Stanford Graduate School Program.

I believe the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation has made a substantial impact on the Los Angeles community and makes every effort to be nimble in supporting the organizations that serve this community.

I believe they have funded other Foster Family non-profits which has great impact on our field. I understand that the ED was in conversations with LA County about some potential initiatives regarding visitation location opportunities for foster parents. I am unaware of what has happened since I first heard about it...

I can only speak to how they have positively impacted our agency...by their ongoing support of our program and the services it offers.

I didn't get the sense that the Foundation had a strong understanding of our work and local community... I think because the program officers are generalists, it's understandable that not everyone would have a deep understanding/expertise in the ... community [we serve]. I did feel that once we made our case to our program officer and the Foundation, they were very invested and committed to support the needs of our community.

I do not see impact on our field or community especially since we have most often received general operating support. The impact we have felt is that we have a generous foundation that is willing to provide renewable funding for our programs, not asking us to create new programs in order to receive funding. I wish all the other foundations could follow their lead!

I have not experienced the Foundation this way; I truly believe they see us as the experts in the field that have the knowledge.

I hear about Parson in many meetings I attend. Well respected in the NP community.

I only know that the Parsons Foundation has been very supportive of our organization and has helped us tremendously to sustain our...programs in the communities that we serve.

I see Parsons as supporting excellence in a variety of fields in LA; if you are funded by Parsons, it garners respect from others. This helps our organization, of course. But together, Parsons strengthens the social fabric of LA, and helps us be more effective together.

I think this particular foundation sets the bar for the LA area.

I think youth homeless is relatively new and a hot topic as of late. I think the Foundation can play a significant role in dealing with youth and young adults who face housing insecurity.

If the Foundation works to impact change or public policy, I am not aware?

In general, TRMPF's willingness to provide core support to nonprofits is very important to the sector. I also think that TRMPF is thoughtful about how it distributes money across the large and diverse SoCal region. I know that TRMPF supports capacity-building in general, which helps build strong, sustainable nonprofits.

In [our field], the impact on our organization is immense. We rely completely on donations, grants and fund raising activities to realize our budget as we provide service...for free. Every penny of general operating support we can find is absolutely essential to program delivery.



**Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.**

**Grantee Comment**

In the field of arts and cultural, Parsons Foundation is a true innovator, not afraid to do what others will not dare.

Information gathered through meeting and conversation have assisted our organization in understanding the general issues related to communities in which we provide services. Insights gathered in those interactions has helped to shape this organization's ability to maximize its effectiveness in program development and building organizational capacity.

Interesting question. While I can clearly tell you that Annenberg Foundation does Annenberg Alchemy to help build capacity for ED's & their boards to fundraise, and Weingart leads the charge for providing core operating support, I'm not sure I could clearly tell you if or what Parsons Foundation big push is for the non-profit field. I do know they helped lead the conversation a couple years back in encouraging non-profits to consider mergers. Other than that, I can tell you that we, and a number of my colleagues in the after school youth world, rely on significant support from Parsons, year after year, to keep our lights on and doors open. And they don't require us to jump through a million hoops, frame ourselves differently, or change the nature of what we're doing to fit their guidelines. I think that is their main impact. Parsons is like the cool uncle that supports you for being who you are and believes in you to carry out your mission.

Involvement in NSI and other connections with thought-leadership in the nonprofit sector makes Ralph M. Parsons foundation a unique and dynamic leader in the Los Angeles philanthropic landscape.

It is a leader in supporting core support and capacity building, which is critical to our field

It is difficult to say since it seems other foundations are strongly self-promoting the impact they're having on the domestic violence field but I don't hear or read the Foundation doing the same.

It is our belief that all Foundations need to better understand how devastated the non-profit sector was by the worldwide financial meltdown and ensuring great recession. We believe that Foundations could have the most impact on the sector if they would develop strategies to re-capitalize the sector

It seems that the Parsons Foundation has it's hands in most cutting edge or best practices in our specific field of homelessness and at-risk families and youth as well as non-profit governance and organization practices...

Its consistent funding of our...program's core operating costs, making a grant every few years, has been extremely helpful in making this program viable over the [years].

Not many foundation are there to give for General operating support. Parson is one of the Foundation who took the lead to support non-profits during economy difficult times providing general operating support. This action not just helped [our organization] but many other organization who benefited from the Foundation.

Not sure about the impact in the field. But the Foundation does have an impact on our community and organization through its ongoing support.

Our [services] are provided free to the community and the Foundation has generously allowed this gift to the community to continue to thrive. It is a vital part of our community culture... We have...quotes and feedback through... surveys that show how much this support fosters appreciation of [what we offer], as well as the community who has made it possible for many to [participate] who would not otherwise be able to do so were they not offered for free.

Our field is environmental, and traditionally not treated with any particular importance by the Foundation. It appears there is potential for change in this respect based on staff comments.

Parsons Family Foundation has had a great impact on the organization in terms of greatly needed core operating support. Additionally, as a highly esteemed woman who is a leader in her field, Wendy Garen's knowledge and appreciation of our work and standing in the community has meant a great deal to me as an Executive Director.

Parsons Foundation is respected as a key contributor to higher education initiatives in the Los Angeles area. I am not attuned to the impact it has on broader community issues. I know for my [organization], The Parsons Foundation support for this project...was critical, particularly in that it was the first Foundation support received.

Parsons is a major leader in the Los Angeles region, not only through funding but as an overall leadership presence. Being part of the Parsons network has been extremely helpful.

Parsons is demonstrating their leadership in the field by offering technical assistance through conference attendance (e.g., Stanford Social Innovation) and conferences (e.g., Collaborations)

**Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.**

**Grantee Comment**

Parsons staff shows exceptional understanding for the community we serve and for the work we do.

President and Program Officers regularly participate in conferences, panels and seminars to help educate organizations and other funders.

Program officers know the community, know the work, and each have a deep knowledge in a specialized area (or several). They understand Los Angeles, and understand how leadership affects programs and programs affect impact.

Providing consistent, core operating support at significant levels has allowed grantees in the community to stabilize and enhance their programs, without jumping through unnecessary hoops, like forming unnatural collaborations with other nonprofits, or creating new, innative programs. Supporting the continued good work of nonprofits is a tremendous investment, and shows the nonprofits that the Foundation trusts the nonprofits expertise to know how to achieve the desired results in the target populations they serve.

Senior management at Parson's maintains good awareness of real-time community challenges (as does program staff). This plays a huge role on the impact we have on healthcare in... Los Angeles. Parson's "gets it."

The are a reliable funder of arts orgs of all sizes throughout Los Angeles. They are open to new applicants, although it can take a few times before they feel you are ready to submit a full proposal. They expect organizational competence, which is critical and encourages smaller orgs to "get their act together" in order to compete for funding. They support and reward persistence and efforts toward best practices and good organizational change and growth.

The Foundation clearly understands what we as community clinics are faced with in regards to limited funding and patient demand/need.

The Foundation does a great job of knowing Southern California as a whole. While they may not know much about building affordable housing..., they definitely know the need in SoCal to house the thousands of homeless individuals and families.

The Foundation frequently emerges in conversations with other youth-serving organizations as a critical supporter for lifting up the academic achievement of low-income youth.

The Foundation fully understands the work we do which is key to having an impact. They have funded direct program needs that target the audience we are trying to help and with their funding other foundations have matched their funding. Over the years their impact on our programs has been dramatic.

The Foundation had a very significant impact on my organization's ability to try to enhance our services through capacity building and other strategies. They enabled us reorganize our infrastructure, market our services and reach out to the community..

The Foundation has a consistent presence and commitment to supporting what organizations do, rather than putting forward its own initiatives and expecting organizations to carry out that agenda. The impact on the field is therefore that organizations can do and be supported in what they do best.

The Foundation has a great impact on our community as the funding support allows us to continue to provide free critical services to people in need.

The Foundation has a strong impact on our field through the provision of core operating support funding. This type of funding is essential for non profit organizations and the Parsons Foundation is a leader in this type of funding. Our organization is located in...an area that has not had a great deal of major foundation investment and support. In the last couple of years, the Parsons Foundation has invested in our area by providing grant support to organizations thus providing us with the opportunity to go to other funders and show that a major Los Angeles area foundation supports our community.

The Foundation has a strong interest is education and human services. They consistently fund worthy and well managed nonprofits with demonstrated track records in the field. They have been a significant source of income for us that has enabled us to grow and expand our...program.

The Foundation has allowed our organization to provide a voice for underrepresented voices... As the demographics change in our community, there is more and more need for the cultural understanding of cultures. the Foundation has provided us to have that voice be heard through the arts.

**Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.**

**Grantee Comment**

The Foundation has been a strong and consistent supporter of our organization and our field. It has made a significant contribution through its fidelity, not only to our organization but to aging services in Los Angeles County. With the population aging so rapidly, this commitment will be ever more important in the coming years.

The Foundation has been and continues to be a leader in identifying the pressing issues in our community and funding a wide variety of organizations at work to address them.

The Foundation has been critical in supporting many worthy nonprofit organizations--translating into services to vulnerable communities and individuals throughout Los Angeles. the Foundation has had a tremendous positive impact on our organization and the community. Funding has helped us expand our capacity to provide services. These services provide thousands of [our beneficiaries] with the chance for a better life.

The Foundation has been involved in researching and implementing support for how nonprofits can partner to better tackle social issues. As a leader in this dialogue, they are listening to needs and challenges organizations face, and helping to find new solutions to support the efforts of complementary organizations.

The Foundation has been very generous in our community, helping to advance a number of worthy causes. It is seen as one of the few resources available for large capital projects.

The Foundation has demonstrated a willingness to support effective impact for families and also sustainability for NPO's. As a nonprofit ..., recognizing the role of organizational stability and sustainability is critical to effectiveness. We feel we had very honest and respectful conversations with our program officer to reach those goals.

The Foundation has enabled us to continue to serve the children and families in our community with the quality programs and services we offer...

The Foundation has had enormous impact on the arts in Los Angeles and the SoCal region but I am not sure this is promoted as much as the other major arts foundation funders like The James Irvine Foundation. The current grant from the Foundation is extremely valuable to us as other funders' priorities have shifted or have become so narrowly focused on one specific aspect of the arts or target audience (is arts education only, youth only, or audience engagement only) that require a modification of our priorities or risk lose funding.

The Foundation has helped us to build capacity and extend our mission in our community.

The Foundation has supported many programs... that serve low-income, disadvantaged populations. Many of these programs are collaborations between [us] and local nonprofits, thereby leveraging additional resources and expertise to make a bigger difference in the lives of the needy population.

The Foundation is a key funder in this region and their support enables many art- and education-related programs and organizations to provide quality programming. Funding from the Foundation also raises the profile/ credibility of an organization.

The Foundation is an ardent supporter and participant in our field. It has been funding initiatives and programs designed to end homelessness for decades and participating in forums that seek to address the complex issues of homelessness. the Foundation was very responsive and swift in assisting organizations meet the high demand for services during the most recent recession. As a result, the Foundation's impact was profound...

The Foundation is clearly committed to improving southern California's services for low-income communities and youth.

The Foundation is committed to making sustainable positive change in Los Angeles. The impact on the community is evident in all the success and achievement we have been able to accomplish. The Foundation had made lasting investment not only in our organization and our mission, but other nonprofit organizations we partner with in our work. This creates a truly systemic impact on improving the lives of those we serve.

The Foundation is considered an expert in the community, in the issues around child poverty, child welfare health and education. Wendy is a respected spokesperson in the arena of underrepresented people in Los Angeles.



**Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.**

**Grantee Comment**

The Foundation is highly regarded in arts and arts education and thinks strategically and systemically for long range solutions. We feel very honored to be a part of the grantee cohort and we believe that as we seek additional funding for our program the "endorsement" of funding by the Foundation will provide leveraged opportunities.

The Foundation is looked to as a pillar of support for a broad range of critical needed services in the local community. We would be in trouble without them!

The Foundation is making a big impact in our community and on our organization by giving us funding for general operations. These are the hardest dollars to raise, and the ones most foundations seem reluctant to give. The Foundation understands that we don't have elves to do the back office work for our [organization]...By saying, in effect, "We believe in what you are doing and will trust you to use these dollars to good effect", the Foundation is fundamentally and profoundly supporting our mission... They allow us to spend more time on accomplishing our programs and less on keeping body and soul together. In today's economic environment, that's an enormous boost. In concert with that, the Foundation is changing the way other Foundation's see their roles, too. Parsons is respected and listened to; Ms. Garen is seen as a leader in the field, so when the Foundation takes this path, others follow. Planning for our organization is simpler and more reliable with a partner like the Foundation providing consistent, general support. The dearth of arts support in our community is appalling. In spite of Governor Brown's one year increase of \$5,000,000 in appropriations for the CA Arts Council in 2014-15, California still ranks 46th among the 50 states in arts support. if that increase is not sustained, we will slip back to 50th. Even with the increase, CAC's total grant from the general fund is \$6.1 million dollars or 11 cents per Californian. If we received Minnesota's \$6.54 in support, the general fund commitment would be \$248,520,000. Individual and corporate-giving follow suit, with Los Angeles ranking below Cleveland in Civic donations to non-profits. This makes the Foundation's support all the more important, both in practical terms and as an example of the impact funding has on the communities non-profit organizations serve. [Our organization] has made great strides in spite of very difficult financial times...Parsons has been a large part of that success... So the Foundation's efforts have made a lasting impact on our organization.

The Foundation is one of the few major funders to our field...willing to support emerging organizations – particularly those such as ours that are hard to categorize and do not provide services directly to individuals. The Foundation's understanding of our field is well above average for large funding organizations. Most of the best-managed...organizations in our area receive at least some support from the Foundation. It also says something that the large but poorly-managed ones aren't grantees. I am not terribly well connected to the funding or grantee communities, but as a member of [this] community for many years, the Foundation is one of the very few commonly known supporters of the work many of us do. This is significant, as a number of funders have withdrawn support for [organizations in our field]. The Foundation's impact on our own organization was summarized briefly in a prior question, but their impact has been major. Their guidance...has given us the courage to make some difficult decisions about our internal structure and how we think about communicating with our various stakeholder groups. As mentioned previously, I have not met Wendy Garen, but feel that we have a real partner there...We are very fortunate to have these relationships.

the Foundation is one of the larger and more visible funders in the Los Angeles areas. Along with highly respected staff, this gives them the opportunity to meaningfully impact the field in our community. They have done so by collaborating effectively with other funders, being highly engaged with strengthening Southern California Grantmakers, and being responsive to the needs of nonprofits in the community.

The Foundation is providing valuable support to dozens of cultural organizations, strengthening their ability to accomplish their missions and providing necessary breathing room to focus on big picture issues. In person meetings with Foundation staff have offered interesting, insightful and helpful input on local and region issues, as well as the Foundation's priorities. the Foundation values relationship-building and we have always felt comfortable picking up the phone and engaging in a conversation with Foundation staff, asking for capacity building resources or to be connected with a leader in the field.

The Foundation is regarded as a major supporter of the arts and arts education in Los Angeles.

**Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.**

**Grantee Comment**

The Foundation is seen as a leader in our field and their commitment to general operating support is lauded.

The Foundation is well known, respected and appreciated by health non-profits in the community. It is very supportive of community health clinics and the needs associated with those patient who use such medical facilities. The Foundation seems to understand the health disparities facing South Los Angeles and is supportive of programs and services affecting such populations.

The Foundation is widely known as investing in our community. We are fortunate that two the Foundation's interest focus on the areas and services we provide... Our agency strives to be the premier provider of services to disadvantaged children and families in Los Angeles County. This requires us to constantly re-evaluate and re-imagine our services and our facilities. The grant from the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation supported our efforts to deliver the best services in our field. The Parson Foundation's willingness of funding general operating grants is tremendously helpful in our being able to utilize funds where they are needed most. Funding from Parsons has helped to establish and expand our programs, enhance our service delivery, and has strengthened our overall infrastructure.

The Foundation leadership is very knowledgeable, well-informed, and connected to the needs of the community. Their grant making is very focused, responsive, and strategic, which lends to a much more impactful Foundation that is supporting the core needs of the most successful and valuable non-profit organizations in the region. When compared to other foundations, the Parsons Foundation is a step above their peers in terms of understanding needs and commitment to impact.

The Foundation provides important core operating support to many important organizations in [our area]. the Foundation's broad focus ensures that it stays responsive to the most pressing needs in the community.

The Foundation provides periodic support that facilitates the growth and development of the organization.

the Foundation provides significant and consistent support to a large number of organizations that are working to improve the quality of life in Los Angeles, particularly for those who lack income and access to services...To know that we can, from time to time, depend on the Foundation to offer operating support with minimal hoop-jumping allows us to move our programs forward confidently, responding to the needs of clients and the community more than to the dictates of a funder.

The Foundation provides widespread support for organizations across many fields and is considered a leader in supporting organizations and what they do best. We greatly appreciate that this foundation supports existing or new programs and does not require an organization to espouse a specific philosophy or particular kinds of projects. Rather, it sees each organization's expertise in its field and supports what is most important to help the organization do its job better, for its constituents and for the community.

The Foundation recognizes the need for vital services which our agency provides and is an expert in supporting the community. Our relationship with the Foundation has allowed us to leverage additional funding because we are trusted in the community to do the work and provide the best care for our clients.

The Foundation seems to impact all three to some degree, although, aside from funding, it is not apparent how much.

The Foundation stepped up for us at a time when the agency was changing leadership and in a moment of crisis/opportunity, and the ROI has been exceptional. We consider the Foundation to be a foundational partner and supporter.

The Foundation supports after-school programming throughout the area, and has supported new commitments...to meet the needs of underserved, at-risk children in our school district.

The Foundation understands the obstacles we are over coming and respects our creative approaches...

The Foundation understands well the importance of operating funds to keep nonprofits strong in the areas of human and financial capacity. It supports need wherever it is and whatever it is - with a goal to help nonprofits remain strong, relevant and forward-thinking.

The Foundation's contribution to our [organization] will allow us to provide additional critical services to the homeless and at-risk homeless adults in Los Angeles.

The Foundation's core support grants is making a big impact in the sustainability of nonprofits. They are one of the few foundations that offer this type of support even though it is highly needed in this field.

**Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.**

**Grantee Comment**

The Foundation's expertise in our region is broadly distributed across many fields. As a responsive grantmaker, the Foundation supports organizations in our community and relies on those organizations to be experts in disparate fields; the Foundation does not focus its own expertise on a specific field.

The Foundation's generosity has helped many affordable housing providers expand or sustain their programming which provides services targeted towards housing retention by low-income and special needs residents.

The Foundation's impact in our field, community, and/or organization has been exponential. By funding certain communities, the Foundation is bridging the service gaps experienced by children and families, thereby helping the community flourish and enrich the lives of its cohabitants.

The Foundation's insightful commitment and approach to civic and cultural grantmaking is extraordinary. The fact that it recognizes the importance of the arts to improving lives as well as access to cultural experiences for all is truly commendable. Awareness of the rarity and critical need for operating funds is also remarkable, visionary, and reflects a deep understanding of the challenges that non-profit grantseekers face.

The Foundation's involvement is making it possible for us to grow a program...The...community, and those students and families impacted by the program, will continue to benefit from both a health, safety and learning perspective.

The Foundation's support for our... work in the field of mental health services... is significant. With the Foundation's support we are not only able to provide critical services, the required reporting assists us in evaluating our progress and preparing our results to share both to the Foundation and beyond - to stakeholders and community.

The Foundation's support makes it possible for us to keep our doors open and continue to provide services. Their support is truly imperative for us.

The Foundation's support signals high credibility to other funders. It is a cornerstone of support that anchors our endeavors. The [field] pays close attention to whom and what the Foundation is funding, given its longevity in the community and the thoughtfulness with which it approaches funding existing and newer ventures. We were a turnaround situation [a few] years ago, and the Foundation's support helped legitimize our enterprise among... funders and with major donors.

The Foundation's support was critical for our organization this year, as we expanded...and needed resources to help sustain our rapid growth.

The Foundation's...commitment to [our organization] allows us to plan for our programs over time during a critical period... It provides stability as we shape [our] vision [for the future]...We look forward to sharing this plan with the Foundation. The Foundation is a leader in the Los Angeles community evidenced by participation in year-round opportunities for nonprofits that give us access to leadership through panels, conferences and receptions. The Foundation has a deep understanding of the nonprofit landscape and the potential for collaboration and new opportunities. We turn to Foundation leadership for advice and insights.

The grant awarded to our organization enabled us to continue to serve the underserved children in our community... The Ralph Parsons foundation understood this need.

The grant we received from the Foundation was the largest grant received to date for our capital project and really helped open the door for us at other funding institutions. Most funders have shown a preference for funding organizations located in the Metropolitan or central Los Angeles area... we often are passed over for grants in both areas just based on our geographical location. It was a great feeling to hear that the Parson's Foundation tries to extend its reach to communities like ours...

The leadership of the Parsons Foundation wants to be close to the community and is very knowledgeable about nonprofit work.

The most recent grant our organization received was substantial--something of that size makes an incredible impact on our organization. At the same time, being able to list the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as a supporter also has an important impact, lending credibility to our work and our vision.

**Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.**

**Grantee Comment**

The non-profits and arts providers that the Foundation supports need the support of funders like the Foundation. We can only speak for ourselves, but over the years, support from the Foundation has been critical to our work... Because the Foundation meaningfully supports the work of excellent non-profits that meaningfully impact the community - the Foundation meaningfully impacts the community, the field and of course those individual organizations. The Foundation is a critical partner in the work that we do, as are all private and public Foundations.

The ongoing support of the Foundation has been instrumental for our organization. And the impact of the Foundation on the community is enormous. The Foundation has been successful in spreading its funding to many smaller organizations who do and, might always, need to rely on Foundations to make ends meet and to serve the underserved. The Foundation makes a point of fulfilling that need in ways other large foundations do not.

The only aspect I can address is our ability to leverage other funders to give at the same level.

The Parsons Foundation assisted a new...organization...and its contribution allowed the project to be completed as planned.

The Parson's Foundation has allowed [our organization to serve] more children while providing them the tools to prevent [worse outcomes in] the future.

The Parsons foundation has been willing to fund [our work for many years]. We are deeply grateful for their partnership.

The Parsons Foundation is a leader in Los Angeles. I am not familiar with any work they have done in [our field]. However, I do know they are leaders in supporting new strategies and programs that might make significant changes in the lives of children.

The Parsons Foundation is a leading foundation in the out of school Youth Development fields. They are doing great work in education. The Foundation understand the work that is being done from nonprofits around supporting a youth's education whether it is learning technology skills and connecting those skills to both academic and workforce success or doing college readiness and parent involvement programming.

The Parsons Foundation is a significant partner in the arts and culture community - but in the last two questions (has the Foundation increased the field's knowledge or affected public policy), I had to say "I don't know" because my view is primarily development. I would expect the Foundation to be influential in public policy, but I don't have first hand knowledge to know that a specific policy was led by the Foundation. the Foundation is very generous and loyal to its grantees and has a great impact on life in Los Angeles.

The Parsons Foundation is at the core of the community of Los Angeles. Without the Foundation life would be far less enriched.

The Parsons Foundation is one of the leading supporters of cultural programming in the Southern California region. They help institutions regardless of size as long as their ability to follow through is demonstrated and the quality of programming and projects is high. I believe they lead by example, and in doing so improve the institutions that seek their support.

The Parsons Foundation is very supportive of education in Los Angeles. Their investments have been extremely helpful many organizations focused on the plight of public K-12 education. While Parsons isn't seen as a thought leader in the world of charter schools, their support in LA has been an important component of the success of charter schools here in LA.

The Parsons Foundation maintains a strong presence as a philanthropic leader in our field of arts education and our community. We value the direct impact they have made on allowing arts programs to flourish for underserved children and youth through their partnerships and grants. The impact they have made on [our organization] has been to increase our ability to service more children at a greater capacity through their general operating grant. As our organization continues to work on building sustainability and provide [our services] , we are grateful for the role that the Parsons Foundation plays in coming alongside as an invested partner.

The Parsons Foundation's General Operating support positively impacts the non profit community by enabling organizations to sustain the work. The Foundation is one of the few that can be depended upon for ongoing general operating support, which continues to be a challenge for organizations.

**Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.**

**Grantee Comment**

The positive contributions of RMPF's funding and expertise can be seen throughout the nonprofit community in Los Angeles. It appears they have scaled back from higher education, however, at a time when organizations like ours are facing multiple challenges. Having the broad insight of the RMPF staff during this time when the landscape in higher education is changing rapidly would be fantastic. Sometimes we need to hear from those outside of the academy about best practices that are working for nonprofits in other service sectors.

The Ralph M Parsons Foundation has a powerful impact on the marginalized youth and adults of Los Angeles County by funding agencies both large and small that are proven to be effective in ... providing services that assist them in finding better employment and educational opportunities.

The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation has a tremendous impact on the Los Angeles community.

The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation has had a tremendous impact on our organization and on the lives of our clients. Our process of developing effective strategies, researching best practices and measuring program impact have been shaped by our relationship with the Foundation.

The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation is at the forefront of philanthropy in the local community, not simply because it is one of the largest foundations in Los Angeles, but because it is playing a leading role in defining how foundations can have a transformative impact through strategic giving.

The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation is considered on of the top 3-5 "go-to" foundations in Los Angeles for supporting non-profits whose mission is to help those in deep need.

The Ralph M. Parson's Foundation is one of the few remaining large foundations that supports a number of societal issues - including programs like [ours]... It also supports education, health as well as civic and cultural programs. This broad visionary support is desperately needed as several of the larger regional foundation's are narrowing their grant focus and excluding substantial community issues.

The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation is one of the leaders in the support of arts and culture in Southern California. They get it on all levels. For non-profits of any size, the Foundation has provided support on exploring excellence in the arts, marketing strategies to build audiences, sustainability of smaller non-profits..., and creating greater access to arts education. the Foundation also understands, I believe, the profound impact of a multi-year grant to a program that is ready to grow and blossom. The outstanding reputation of the Foundation is recognized by other foundations, so their support often can lead to new foundations supporting the non-profit. Lastly, from the leadership to the program officers and staff, there seems to be a consistent curiosity and interest in the progress of grantees in meeting their grant objectives.

The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, along with the Weingart Foundation (and I believe one other organization), has had a tremendous impact on homeless service organizations throughout Los Angeles. Their understanding of the need for core operating support grants has been crucial to keeping many organizations in business, without requiring perpetual growth (a business model that is simply not sustainable nor wise during difficult economic times).

The RMPF is important and respected. They are one of the few foundations who still fund the arts in Los Angeles, and look for excellence and impact on Los Angeles.

The support and community presence reveals that they are passionate about the work they do.

The support of the Foundation for our project added legitimacy to the project.

The support received from the Foundation has allowed [our organization] to continue to provide [our services]... This work has positively impacted the lives of many [beneficiaries].

There is simply no way we can do the community work we do without the generous support of Foundations like The Ralph M. Parson's Foundation.

They are a leading funder in the field and in the community. They participate in local gatherings of community leaders, nonprofits and funders. They absorb the lessons from the field and share them as opportunities present themselves.



**Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.**

**Grantee Comment**

They are an active, engaged group. I think their greatest impact is understanding the context of the work underway around the region and their role in providing support, not more barriers. They understand the disruptive impact a funder can have for good or bad. They have been willing to partner and to move ahead alone. Wendy's experience and perspective is vital for balancing what's new with what matters. She does not react to the trend of the month. That steady hand is so important for nonprofit organizations to focus on the mission they hope to accomplish in communities.

They provide much needed funding for many nonprofits in the community. They help organizations of all sizes which is a good thing. Not all foundations will fund smaller organizations.

This foundation has played a critical role in providing gifts to strong organizations doing really good work on behalf of students and families in the field of education. Without their support, our collective impact could not be as strong.

This Foundation stands head and shoulders above many others because it actually allows the grantee to propose projects of highest strategic priority rather than requiring us to propose projects based on theirs...RMPH support is that much more valuable to the community than it would be otherwise.

This grant has proved absolutely fundamental in the stability of our programming, as well as the forward planning of the expansion and growth of our programs. We are reaching more students this year than ever before, and we hope to continue to do so.

This is a regional foundation, so its impact is felt primarily on a local level...we have very few foundation partners left who are willing to support educational institutions with urgent capital projects. We are very grateful for our longstanding partnership with the Parsons Foundation and for its support for private higher education in Southern California.

We can only comment on how the Parsons Foundation has impacted our [organization], which has been significant as the funds from the Foundation supported general operations which pay for many items which tend to be less attractive to many other supporters yet are needed to keep the organization thriving. We as an organization can not state enough how important general operating funds are in order to deliver our mission.

We have not engaged in a broader discussion, but this survey is prompting me to reach out.

Well, Wendy Garen is Chair of the Southern California Association of Philanthropy and her vision leads the robust body of philanthropists throughout our community, county and region.

While I am unaware of the Foundation's work with regard to my organization's particular issue/mission, I feel the Foundation is a thought leader on issues affecting the nonprofit sector, and a wisdom holder about community issues in general.

**Ralph M. Parsons Foundation**  
**Grantee Comments from February and March 2015 Grantee Perception Report**  
**Conducted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy**

*Please note that comments have been edited or deleted to protect the confidentiality of respondents.*

What improvements would you suggest that would make the Foundation a better funder?
Grantee Comment
Following the lead set by the Weingart Foundation to include a "matching gift" provision with a funded grant, a specific amount that is to be a Board Restricted Fund, allowing the organization a year to raise the match, at which time, Parson's would send their incentive match. I think this is an outstanding strategy, especially for those organizations with operating revenues under \$10 million, to build operating reserves.
1) Share more news about their recent funding and its impact on the website. 2) Run a seminar on best characteristics of high quality proposals and reports.
A more rapid review process would be helpful.
Although I am deeply, deeply grateful for the annual core funding support and the collegial relationship I enjoy with the Foundation staff -- it would be that much more liberating of the E.D.'s anxiety if there possibilities for multi-year funding.
As I mentioned a google calendar type app to help small organizations stay on track, schedule-wise. We appreciate the Foundation's continued commitment during the downturn and look forward to expanding our request. Lots of work still to do!
As previously mentioned, it would be very helpful to grantees if the Foundation could reduce the time it takes to move from submitting a letter of interest to hearing the Board's decision on the proposal.
As stated earlier, the time frame is the only negative factor. the Foundation is one of the best, most reliable, most straightforward and honest foundations to interact with in Los Angeles.
Be more open to new organizations.
Because we were not informed of Mary Christian's departure, I am concerned that our invitations to the board and staff...may have been put aside.
Besides hiring me on as a Program Officer, I'd say it would be great if Parsons Foundation offered some kind of specific "capacity building" support that you could apply for in addition to, or on top of the program or operating support similar to what Dwight Stuart Youth Fund does. It's often hard to find funds to purchase new computers, plan a staff or board retreat, upgrade to a new client or donor database, etc. when you're focused on funding existing programs. And ..., it would be great if Parsons offered a 3-year \$225,000 grant, similar to what CA Wellness Foundation does, so you could feel some sense of stability over a longer period of time. There's no better feeling than creating your next year's annual budget, knowing that you already have funds locked in.
Better communication
Can't really think of any areas that need improvement, based on our present and past experience with the Foundation.
Can't think of any way they could improve.
Compared to most funders, the Foundation is an already excellent funder
Consistency in Program Officer relationship would have been appreciated during this past cycle.
Continuation of multi-year grant funding so as to create greater stability of core support for community-based social services nonprofit organizations so as they look to build additional revenue from other sources.
Continue funding general/core support. The flexibility of this type of funding allows us to not only continue our work but also create innovative strategies to address community needs.
Continue to provide general operational support so that NPO's can function properly. This is an important service that the Foundation offers, as so many funders want to pay for specific program supplies, which is wonderful, however, ... It takes general operating support to cover expenses such as rent, utilities, insurance, audit/tax prep, etc.
Continue to provide much needed core support.

What improvements would you suggest that would make the Foundation a better funder?
Grantee Comment
Continue to remain open. I really appreciated having the ability to call and speak to a program officer about our program over a course of year. I was able to focus on areas of our capacity that needed strengthening before submitting a LOI.
Continue with advocacy for social justice and children.
Could use more technical support or group meetings
Decrease the time that it takes to receive a approval/denial from the Foundation.
Due to the diversity of our community and changing demographics, foundations should require diversity policy as part of their application process. Organizations should make diversity policy according to their strategic plan. As America approaches 2042, our community is not fully prepared as the US Census suggests that America will be majority minority. Southern California is already there but the representation of minorities in the performing arts is not quite there. Perhaps the Foundations should urge organizations to consider goals of equity, diversity and inclusion at all levels of the organization - board, staff, volunteers, artists etc.
Encouraging other foundations to get involved is always so important to a grantee.
Everything went really smoothly in working with the Foundation. I suppose the hope for all non-profit grantees is a faster turn-around time at all stages, however we realize that isn't always a realistic request when so many proposals are received.
Excellent process. Keep doing what you're doing.
For proven programs, it might consider occasional larger grants that would help allow the program to grow or to add new elements, instead of simply maintaining its services. However, I would not want to see an increase in funding for new programs if it meant sacrificing the Foundation's policy of offering core operating support. It is one of the few foundations that consistently offers such a lifeline to nonprofit organizations.
Fund capital improvement projects for projects over 10 years of age. Reserves are not often sufficient to handle some of the necessary maintenance that would enhance the environment and upgrade building systems.
Hard to say given the responsibilities of field staff in funding activities in the community. Not sure how they could be better because my relationship with Parsons has always been excellent and responsive from the top to the secretaries in the office. Personally I think that the Parsons Fnd. is doing an excellent job....It has always been a pleasure to work with them and hopefully we will continue to do so in the future.
Help organizations connect with other funders (i.e. individuals and foundations) that support similar work. This would greatly assist sustainability efforts.
I actually do not have any suggestions for how the Foundation can become a better funder. I have known for many years how excellent they are and what a powerful impact they have in the community
I am too new in this position to be able to offer meaningful suggestions about this. This year I will have an opportunity to discuss some additional funding ideas with them, including seeking recommendations for other sources for financing them. For an organization of our size, they have given us a start on being able to develop new relationships, and that is something any small and growing organization needs as much as they need current funding.
I believe they are a superb funding organization
I believe they are already a great funder.
I believe they are as good at this as any foundation I've worked with
I don't have any recommendations for improvement.
I have no complaints, just 2 suggestions. 1) A shorter funding cycle. 2) Since Parsons is such a leader in our field, it would be nice to know the other grantees and explore ways we might work together better.
I have no recommendations. I think they are great!
I have no suggestions. I greatly appreciated a grantees gathering...a couple years ago that was highly informative about communications of arts & cultural non-profits. I would love to attend something like that again!
I have not had a consistent contact at the Foundation.



What improvements would you suggest that would make the Foundation a better funder?
Grantee Comment
I have only one suggestion -- to accelerate the grant review and approval process. We find ourselves in something of a time bind each year because we cannot submit our Letter of Intent until after we have submitted a final report for our most recent grant. And we cannot submit our full proposal until after the Letter of Intent has been reviewed and until after we have received a green light to submit the full proposal. It can then take several additional months for a decision to be made. Because this entire process can stretch out for more than six months, the Foundation is often not in a position to let us know of their decision until AFTER our ... programs actually commence.
I really appreciate the Foundation capacity support - this is a type of grant we had never sought and it was a first. It was empowering for us to have this opportunity! Looking forward to sharing the growth we achieved as a result!
I think the Ralph M. Parson's Foundation is among the best in their own strategic planning and focus of the programs they want to support. As a result of their own clarity, they know what they will support and what does not fit into their categories for support.
I think they pretty much do it all very well. I don't have any insights about how Parsons can improve.
I think you are doing a great job! I wish I could give you some feed back that would help, but to be honest, you have been amazing in your support, encouragement and education. Thank you!
I would be happy to have a regular quarterly meeting where Foundation staff came to the agency or invited me to bring clients to speak to them at their offices.
I would encourage the Foundation to shorten the time between when an LOI is submitted and the grant proposal deadline. It was a challenge to plan for programming given the extended timeline we were given.
I would like all foundations to invest more than the minimum required by federal law. The recession is not over for most nonprofit organizations. Only the most established, linked to the most wealthy. I don't think they can be a better funder. I think they are a great example of why foundations exist.
I would like to see them more involved in our programming as participants and I would like to receive news blasts from them around the priorities that they are funding and any type of developments on their end. Additionally, if they could create more opportunities for me to work with other funders or connect with other individuals who may be interested in supporting our work, this would be extremely valuable.
I would stress that the Foundation continue to fund core operating support, and remain responsive to community identified needs.
If the Foundation convened similar organizations for trainings and networking, that would be very beneficial.
If they could continue to streamline their review process a bit, that would be nice, but it is in a reasonable range now, so this is not a criticism, just a minor suggestion.
In my experience, the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation is considered to be one of the top-tier funders in the city, both in terms of the impact of their grants and in the accessibility and professionalism of their staff. I cannot think of any improvements that could improve that reputation.
Introducing the LOI was smart since the Foundation's proposal is very comprehensive, it saves an agency time if the Foundation is not interested. It would be helpful if staff were more available to talk about a proposed project before we submit the LOI, since we are only permitted to submit one per year.
It is appreciated when funders convene their grantees for shared learning. the Foundation has tremendous knowledge which would be great to have them impart upon all of us.
It is difficult to determine how the Foundation could better serve the non-profit community. I am sure there are internal efficiencies that could be visited to enhance their processes, but to the outside world, Parsons is considered a highly efficient organization.
It would be great if the Foundation were able to connect grantees doing similar or complementary work, so we could share resources and/or maximize impact. For example, we are always looking for space for our youth programming, since we have limited programming space (and availability) at our location. Perhaps other grantees have space they would be willing to share on weekends.
It would be great if the Parsons Foundation hosted meetings with the organizations in our field...to help us learn from each other and to facilitate our collaboration with one another.
It would be helpful if the process from LOI to award letter were shorter, or if the Foundation would create a more fast-tracked process for current grantees/organizations wishing to renew funding, rather than having to go through the same process as organizations that are approaching for the first time.

What improvements would you suggest that would make the Foundation a better funder?
Grantee Comment
It would be nice to be able to submit letters of inquiry, application materials, and grant report forms electronically. the Foundation still relies on direct mail for all correspondence, which is not the most efficient nor the most environmentally friendly method of communication available.
It would be wonderful if the Foundation moved to an online/digital platform to manage grant proposals and reports.
Just the overall time period from start to finish is lengthy. Would be helpful if it could possibly be closer to six months than nine.
Make it as easy to apply for a general operating support grant as a program grant. Seems like the barrier here may be the board rather than the staff, especially when funding new organizations. But it shouldn't really make any difference and in our case, GOS probably would have been slightly easier. (Certainly from an administrative standpoint.)
Make more site visits to observe, first-hand, the impact of their investment on our community.
Make turnaround times much shorter from proposal to approval.
More clarity about their overall goals and strategies.
More emphasis in capacity building and core operation
More frequent contact with Program Officer would be welcomed!
More frequent conversations with assigned Program Officer and multi-year funding.
More of the same :).
Multi-year investment.
My experience with the Foundation has been very positive. Between the website, funding guidelines and communications, I have always had a clear idea of what they fund and their expectations of grantees. Perhaps greater understanding of the Foundation could come from online vehicles, such as a webinar with current grantees. Having participants communicating interactively with the CEO and staff could be helpful for the grantees to learn more about the Foundation and from each other.
No improvement need to be made by the Foundation. They are a responsive-grantmaker that listens to the community and challenges grantseekers to be business minded, oriented people when looking for funding. the Foundation makes us feel as if we are partners investing in a program that will be a change-agent in the communities we serve and the people whose lives we are transforming.
No improvement needed. the Foundation is a leader among funders in our region.
No improvements are necessary.
No improvements needed. Very constructive and positive experience.
No recommendations for improvements.
No specific suggestions - very pleased with contact.
no suggestions. I think they're doing a great job!
No suggestions. Doing a great job.
No suggestions. I wish all my funders were as clear and easy to work with as the Parsons Fnd.
None at this time. Overall a good experience and communication was honest regarding prospect of funding and timeline.
None, other than I wish the endowment was larger so they could disperse more grants in the same exact way!
Not sure at this time. As we work more with the Foundation I will be able to comment.
Not sure, I think they are doing a wonderful job.
Nothing comes to mind at present time.
Nothing I can think of. All of our communication with the Foundation staff has been forthright and clear.
Omit the LOI process for organizations that have been previously funded unless they are applying under a different funding area.
One area that could be helpful would be to shorten the time between application submission and grant award.
Opening up communication/introductions to other funders who can support our programs. If we are a good grantee we hope you can promote our organization to other grant makers. This would help all of our programs. Also, invitations to any free or low cost trainings for our staff in organization management, or anything field specific, is always greatly appreciated. We have never been invited to such by RMPF nor do we know if RMPF does this type of work, but we know that other funders do and it is greatly appreciated.

What improvements would you suggest that would make the Foundation a better funder?
Grantee Comment
Our experience has been very positive!
Our experience with the Foundation has been enormously positive. Support of and understanding of our work by the Foundation and our program officer encourages us as we serve those in our community who would have nowhere else to go.
Parson's Foundation is right up there with Weingart, Keck, Ahmanson, etc. Does not get much better than that.
Perhaps a greater willingness to support public policy work on related issues.
Perhaps use an automated system to set up a check in call or coffee/lunch with all grantees to take place quarterly with Foundation staff.
Provide a little more detail on the website around what the Foundation is looking to fund.
Providing multi-year funding for orgs they trust and have relationships with. Provide larger grants. Streamline the application process so there are less hoops and the timeline is shorter. Provide other support to organizations (other funders connect us to media, offer their meeting space, offer trainings etc.) Having a clear vision of what they want to achieve
Quite honestly, I cannot think of any specific improvements.
Regular site visits have been very helpful. Perhaps roundtable discussions with fellow grantees would provide more in depth information for Foundation staff on current issues in the community.
Remember to include us on the public list of grantees! Otherwise, I have no recommendations. The new website looks great. (By the way, I just saw that the word that came to my mind, "responsive", is predominant in the word cloud. I answered that question before checking the site). We are proud to be grantees precisely because the Foundation continues to be thoughtful, discerning, and relevant in its philanthropy.
Shorten grant lock-out periods
Shorten the funding cycle so we can apply and receive funds annually. This would help with projected budget planning.
The Foundation application process is simple and precise at this time, however it can be further streamlined by having an online process to submit the large file documents such as financials.
The Foundation could improve its communications with its grantees. Both the Foundation and its grantees would also probably benefit from it becoming more personally familiar with the issues grantees and communities currently face.
The Foundation has been a tremendous funder. As this was a first-time grant, these comments should be taken from that perspective, as the Foundation may already be implementing these strategies: Use their role as a philanthropic leader to bring together strategic partners, host a forum offering an exchange of ideas among their grantees, and offer additional resources that they believe may be of benefit across the board to their grantees.
The Foundation is a generous, responsive and easy to work with funder to our organization. If I had any request it would be to shorten the timeframe from application to funding approval so that there isn't such a long gap between grants. But I understand that there are limited resources and I appreciate the consistency, even if the time frame is long.
The Foundation is a loyal supporter of our work. It is one of the few funders that will fund programs consistently without having to think up some new program or angle to satisfy the desire of the funder for something 'sexier' than sustaining good, solid programs. Other foundations hold convenings for their grantees, offer capacity building grants in addition to other funding (see John Gogian Family Foundation) and attend major grantee events, but if Parson's doesn't have that capacity, we are happy enough to receive the much needed funds without any cruise ship activities thrown in. :)
The Foundation is doing a great job, it is approachable, flexible and professional. There is really no specific improvement to recommend.
The Foundation was very straight forward and helpful to work with. Our experience with some other foundations is that it took a team of eight people 35 man-hours to complete THEIR application. By comparison, our application to The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation only took about one-half THAT amount of time.

What improvements would you suggest that would make the Foundation a better funder?
Grantee Comment
The health environment continues to shift and will continue for the next few years. Don't know what will happen with the 2016 "Fiscal Cliff" but we still need core support to keep up with the increased access under the Affordable Care Act and the required technology that we are mandated to achieve. Thank you for all you do!
The Parsons Foundation is already considered a role model for other institutions and we wish that more Foundations operated with the same level of communication, transparency, and organization as the Parsons Foundation. I've personally learned a lot from hearing Wendy Garen speak at "Meet the Funder" events. Her expertise and honesty is insightful and refreshing. Offering more opportunities like this and/or sending invitations to grantees could be very beneficial. We know that providing feedback on every proposal is an impossible task. However, perhaps the Foundation would consider offering constructive feedback on proposals to a few applicants each year, especially for ongoing partners. Hearing positive feedback and constructive advice for improvements could greatly benefit applicants. Alternatively, perhaps hosting an annual workshop that provides feedback and specific examples of excellent proposals may also help.
The Parsons Foundation is an excellent funder. No suggestions.
The people we communicated with during this process were attentive and interested in our work. In the end, we received funding as a result of our grant application. Because we were funded, I can make no suggestions for improvement since the system seems to have worked for us.
The process is lengthy and involved--it seems it would be valuable to both the Foundation and community partners alike to focus a bit more on offering opportunities for multi-year grants. This helps allow for future planning around projects rather than starting the process over every 12-18 months.
The re-funding process takes an extremely long time. From the time a grant ends to reapplying and hearing back about the proposal is a good 6 months. For smaller agencies that amount of time can put the bottom line at a great loss. This past year we were awarded a two-year grant. As beneficial as it is to not have to write another proposal after only a year, the money requested was spread a bit thin to cover two years. If an agency requests x amount for a year, a better approach might be to give that requested sum each year rather than splitting it over two years.
The time between LOI and Grant Award feels a little long. However, the funding is so greatly appreciated and the staff are absolutely amazing communicators, supporters and I'm sure this is merely a function of the volume of work that this process entails combined with overall resource capacity.
The time between request and approval made decision-making difficult.
The turnaround time from LOI to funding is a bit long. Shortening process would be ideal.
These surveys are one data point, but if you want to connect with grantees, have them come to a meeting and get to know them. Or visit their offices. Solicit informal emails, etc.
They already do a very good job. I often wish there were more opportunities to hear Wendy Garen's perspective and knowledge-- I know she has vast experience, and when I have received advice from her, it has been invaluable.
They've already moved toward funding core operating support, which is what's necessary and critical in healthcare, especially now.
This foundation is the most reasonable, easy-to-work-with funder in my experience. I was surprised not to receive a site visit, and I have found recent site visits with other funders informative and productive. It's great to see faces and walk around the office together.
This is not related specifically to being a better funder per se, but about being more transparent/communicative regarding best practices, selection process and their work in the community. In lieu of a quarterly e-newsletter with foundation updates etc. I would hope to at least see their annual report online (I don't believe there is a link but I believe we have received hard copies via mail). Also the searchable database is not as easy to use or view as others I've seen (i.e. Annenberg or Irvine). the Foundation has a much smaller staff than those other foundations though....
To the degree possible, we encourage the Foundation to interact with and visit fundees. We enjoy hosting other foundations' board meetings as a way to accomplish this, and we would welcome the Parsons Board.
Totally satisfied with current operations with eventual electronic processing to save time.

What improvements would you suggest that would make the Foundation a better funder?
Grantee Comment
Truly, the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation is among our closest partners and most easy to work with funders. I am not sure I could make a suggestion in this regard.
Try to reduce the time in between grants for programs that need another grant
We are pleased with our interaction with the Foundation and can not come up with any needed improvements. However, it would be helpful if foundations such as Parsons can help organizations like ourselves develop relationships with other foundations.
We are very pleased with the Foundation's funding process.
We do not have any suggestions at this time.
We had a bit of confusion over applying for a new grant. The website was not 100% clear on our ability to re-apply immediately after this grant period ends. That is a very small thing. Overall our experience has been wonderful with Parsons.
We have been extremely happy with our experience but wish we could receive funding more regularly.
We have no suggestions. We feel that their program is an excellent one, and navigating it is easy.
We think that the Foundation is fair, well organized and exceedingly generous and wouldn't recommend any changes.
We think the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation is an outstanding, very professionally managed foundation and have no suggestions on how they could improve.
We were never notified that our program officer left and never assigned a new one. It wasn't until I called with a question months later that I learned Mary was gone.
We would like the opportunity to meet with other nonprofits in our community or in our field of service to better coordinate local efforts to help children and families achieve success. We think the Foundation would be an ideal facilitator since they work with other funders and support so many efforts.
We would like to be helpful here, fortunately, we have found the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation to be thoroughly transparent. professional, and helpful.
We would like to see the Foundation lead a movement among Foundations to re-capitalize the non-profit sector, particularly the social service/social change organizations who were so impacted by the Great Recession; lack of adequate working capital and reserves contributes to organizations not being able to operate as effectively and efficiently as they otherwise could.
We'd like see more collaboration among foundations themselves, coming up with best practices and combining resources and efforts to conferences, and trend forecasting in the nonprofit sector.
We've always had a great relationship with the Foundation. As a staff member, I have had many respected colleagues from the Foundation who have worked with me, and I cherish those relationship as two sides of the same coin.
With the timing of the grants and reporting requirements, we are not able to receive funding on an annual basis. If we are lucky we might be able to get grants for two years and one year off. We, of course, would love to be able to count on funding on an annual basis. We also understand that there is only so much money to go around, and with limited resources, we can not always receive funds annually.

**Ralph M. Parsons Foundation**  
**Grantee Comments from February and March 2015 Grantee Perception Report**  
**Conducted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy**

*Please note that comments have been edited or deleted to protect the confidentiality of respondents.*

Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of online grant processes in the future?
Grantee Comment
I don't have any advice to offer.
Not to make the process too technically difficult; make it a user-friendly-format. Please allow sufficient number of words/characters/characters-with or without-spaces.
Allow grantee to save and return to their work before submission. Allow for sufficient space to thoroughly answer each question.
Although I do prefer being able to submit an electronic version of LOI's, Proposals and Reports via email, I am less inclined to prefer a standardized on-line application process where the Foundation uses a standard structure with character limits etc. Having to force-fit our proposal into a standard format and length limitations makes the process harder rather than easier.
An evaluation for feedback on its view of our grant reports would be wonderful.
An online grant process does not have to mean an detailed application. Sometimes a simple email submission of one PDF document for grant proposals and grant reports can be sufficient to make submissions simpler.
Anticipate that the system will fail at some point and have a policy/procedure in place to deal with that. Right now, I'm dealing with a foundation whose online portal has failed for the first time in 5 years. They are being generous in not penalizing applicants; I know of at least one federal portal that has not been generous in that way. Overall, online applications have become far more reliable now than they were 5 to 10 years ago; be sure to have the bandwidth and servers to deal with the rush of activity that occurs at deadlines (I'm sure you all know this). Also, when creating response formats within online applications, please choose a system that allows for easy cutting and pasting. If possible, be generous with the amount of text you will allow to fit within a box, perhaps by having an overall limit to text (or characters) as opposed to a certain limit in each box. By allowing an overall limit, you let applicants have some freedom to choose to write where it is most important for their particular program or institution--there is variation across institutions, so being able to accommodate this is helpful. I'm speaking from recent experience with an online format that was clearly geared to small nonprofits and not to a higher ed institution; I'm sure the reverse situation would be just as frustrating for a small nonprofit.
As a grantwriter, the downside of online applications is the prescribed space limitations for each section of the application. The RMPF's current open format (with a limit on total pages) permits us to write in greater length where needed, and less for other topics.
As more and more foundations and other funding organizations go to online grant processes, this has become the norm. However, when the online process has multiple boxes to complete, each with a word limit, it is frustrating to try to present ideas cogently. One thing I prefer about paper proposals is the freedom to express ideas in the way they seem most logical and in the length needed to explain the program. Overall page limits are not a problem. It is just more difficult to fit each section into a pre-determined number of words.
As the organization progresses toward more online access for grantees, please don't erode your current wonderful level accessibility by phone and email.



Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of online grant processes in the future?
Grantee Comment
<p>As you know we can talk at great length about our programs, however if your reviewers value succinct and concise descriptions it will save you time in reviewing applications to institute character or word limits. Allowing grantees to submit media such as photos, video, press, etc. is helpful in telling a more complete story of the programs that we seek funding. But again, if you allow the submission of these materials you might consider setting limits on size or number of items submitted and format of items uploaded. It is helpful to grantees when the funder offers a download of the entire application up front, which allows us to draft our responses in Word and copy/paste those responses into the online application. If you make this option available please also include any character or word limits.</p>
<p>Avoid redundancy in questions. Allow enough characters, but expanding the word threshold, to tell the full message and need for funds.</p>
<p>Based on our experience with other funders, online submission of proposals and reports is usually simpler than hard-copy submission. However, some online submission formats are restrictive (word count limitations, very specific questions), which doesn't always allow grantees sufficient flexibility to tell a compelling story or make a case. Rigid budget categories in some online submission processes also prove challenging. If the Foundation moves toward greater reliance on online submissions, we would encourage open-ended questions and flexibility in budget line items, which will allow grantees to submit in formats they are already using.</p>
<p>Based on our experiences with online grants processes with other foundations, it would be helpful to ensure staff available for tech support and backup (or alternative submission) mechanisms in case of technical difficulties. Also, submitter should receive a full copy of the proposal emailed back to them once submitted, and possibly a copy of the submitted proposal and reports available on the Foundation website through an organizational log in.</p>
<p>Because we are a presenting organization, it is very important for us to be able to include images and video of our work. I find that application guides (like the one provided by the LA County Arts Commission for their OGP program) are very helpful. It is frustrating to not be able to view the application or questions offline before commencing the process. Word count tabulation is also important. A hard copy application allows for formatting that allows me to highlight certain items, so I prefer an online application that allows bullet points and spacing (and doesn't count extra spacing in the word count limit).</p>
<p>Best to go with an established system and setting up parameters in word limits versus character limits</p>
<p>Challenges for online applications: character limits, difficult to edit, difficult to print drafts, printed documents are hard to read, lost data during the entry process. Positives: uploading of documents (board list, IRS letter, audit, etc.) Interfaces tend to get better; if using one, please be sure the word or character limits are rational! The worst is wasting time to shave just a few characters off a narrative response. I recommended checking with other foundations. I've wondered what it is like for reviewers.</p>
<p>Check with Enterprise Community Partners and The Weingart Foundation. Also the California Community Foundation has a good interim and final report submission process.</p>
<p>Commit to developing a very "user friendly" system. Nothing is more frustrating then having an electronic system with glitches.</p>
<p>Customize the user experience as much as possible to each of the program areas. Many funders who use electronic systems take a one-size-fits-all approach, and cultural organizations struggle to try to answer questions that are clearly aimed more at social service or educational organizations. We know that the Parsons Foundation values the cultural field and understands our needs, and hope that an online grants system would reflect that.</p>
<p>Do not allow technical problems with online process to become a reason not to support a project/organization. Letting technical problems derail a well developed proposal that took huge time investment has been one of biggest frustrations with some online processes.</p>
<p>Do not be limiting in your word count; it seems that some of the online web applications have less space/word count to answer deep/thoughtful questions. Also, allow for ample size when uploading attachments (i.e. annual reports, program booklets, etc.)</p>
<p>Don't limit responses to unreasonable character limits. Need ability to save and then come back to later.</p>
<p>Don't make the format too specific. For example, allow for cut and pasting of answers to questions.</p>
<p>Ensure opportunities for submitters to reach help desk or in-person support as needed.</p>

Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of online grant processes in the future?
Grantee Comment
Ensure that applicants can download a PDF or Word version of the application template. Ensure that the PDF or Word version of the application template is an exact copy of the online form. Ensure the online form includes a stated character/word limit for each section, if applicable. Ensure that online form word or character counts match the word/character count feature in Microsoft Word. Use an online form that allows applicants to complete the application over time, not compelling them fill in all sections in one sitting.
Ensure that the form is easy to use.
Face to face or in-person visits are the best means of being in contact with an organization. However, as an arts organizations, our performances are in the evening or on weekends which make it hard for the Foundation to view the quality or impact of our work. An online application may give the Foundation an opportunity to view our work on a private link. There may be some supplemental information that may readily be at hand that can be sent quickly via email. We have also determined that there is more error in delivery by the post office than by online delivery. It also saves paper.
Fantastic! Makes the whole process easier and saves trees. Also, don't have to worry about the application getting lost in the mail or spend time lining up at the post office.
Field tests with a limited number of grantees and then go to scale if the testing deems appropriate.
Flexible forms. Allow cut-and-paste from word documents. Allow for attachments that can include graphics, tables and other non-text responses.
From a grantee perspective, it is often difficult to convey the message in an online grant application. We are unable to use charts, graphics and photos that help us tell our story. Proposals become boring text and are not as impactful. From a funder perspective, online grant applications may sometimes be more difficult for reviewers to read.
Grantrequest.com has some serious limitations... chiefly, that you have to create a unique account for each entity, and the URLs for the entities aren't guessable, so you have to constantly refer back to notes and emails to determine what login you're using on which site. The UI is not terribly intuitive either. It's far from my favorite submission process. Kaiser and United Way have their own internal platforms which are pretty well done. Maybe they would be willing to share their code.
I am delighted to use online grant processes. I am sometimes frustrated by the restricted characters...but that is understandable. One of our other funders brings grantees together so that we can see how we fit in to the overall strategy of our funding area. That is incredibly helpful! I would also welcome the opportunity for professional development/leadership opportunities.
I am experienced person who has been in the field of education for [many] years and has built[several] schools...What I like about the Foundation is that they have respect for my ability to do what I say I am going to do. Going online sounds good...but nothing compares to the conversations and site visits of the folks who run the Foundation. I hope that the Parsons Fnd will keep the personal touch that it has had for the years that I know about Parsons..... it is well led and all of the staff people are knowledgeable and helpful. No matter how hard I tried to describe what I am doing or going to do with the dollars...NOTHING beats a site visit and conversation with the officer from Parsons.
I do feel you tend to lose the human touch when you develop the online grant process. But, I completely understand it's way more efficient when you're processing hundreds of applications to have everything become automated. We've started to do the same for our online Volunteer applications and such. It would be very incredible if someone in the sector led the charge so that Parsons, Weingart, Eisner, Ahmanson, Annenberg, and every other major CA Foundation used the same online portal, where we on the non-profit side could both submit LOI's & Proposals, and report on Program Numbers & Impact. Sort of like a more jazzed up version of Guidestar. It would be great if we didn't have to send our Audit, 990, List of Board of Directors, 501 c-3 letter, etc. out 100 times a year to 100 different Foundations. Some want them all merged in the same pdf. Others want them separately. Some want paper versions mailed. Some want emailed. If there were somewhere you could just update once every six months or year and the Foundation could download, it would make our life a lot easier. Also a place where as a Foundation you could quickly aggregate numbers & impact of your funds as a whole for all the non-profits you fund.
I do not have a preference between paper submission and online submission. It seems to me, online submissions allow a foundation to have all information submitted in a consistent manner and may provide some efficiencies to the Foundation.



Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of online grant processes in the future?
Grantee Comment
I don't have any advice at this time on evaluating the potential uses of online grant processes.
I find some online processes awkward because at times the questions are not relevant to our request and the forms don't have a "not applicable" option. Even in this survey there are places where a "not applicable" choice would be more precise than the options given. Also sometimes there are arbitrary word limitations in certain fields that don't enable us to accurately and fully explain our request. (I'm not referring to page limits: I understand why those are important. I'm referring to word limits in answers to specific questions.)
I have no advice in this area. I have enjoyed Parson's process, as is.
I have no advice on that subject. Personally, I like both options for submission.
I have no advice right now.
I hesitate to fully endorse an online system. The software that is used in the industry is still a little clunky, and I like the opportunity to write a really strong written narrative with a page limit versus word or character limits, so perhaps having boxes and character limits for certain pieces (mission, history, etc.) but allowing the attachment of a proposal still? Perhaps using something like dropbox for submission of LOIs, proposals, reports? The Jewish Community Foundation uses Hightail and this works well for submitting reports along with pictures, newsletters, and other pieces to support each report.
I highly recommend that the Parsons Foundation convert to using an online grant process. However, the online process must include a system that immediately acknowledges the receipt of a submitted grant proposal by email. I had a terrible experience in which an online letter of intent that I submitted to a foundation was lost in cyberspace. Unfortunately, I did not find out until it was too late to apply for the grant.
I like when foundations bring their funder in the same areas together for sharing of ideas. While not necessary, if done well, its often very powerful!
I love the idea of electronic submission!
I prefer a written proposal over an online proposal. Online proposals by their nature can be restrictive both in terms of space allowed for answers, as well as the questions asked. As a result, a great deal of information may be overlooked simply because it does not fit into the online proposal in a way that makes sense. Online proposals tend to ask for information that the Foundation wishes to hear, rather than information that is important to the description of the program being proposed.
I prefer an online submission process. However, it is sometimes difficult to incorporate all information needed when there are character limits within submission fields. It's much easier to navigate an online system that uses word limits over character limits.
I think for the younger, emerging grant staff at the agency, this is a good thing. I am too much of a dinosaur now to see value in this.
I think that we have had both positive and negative experiences with online grant/report processes through other funders. If the Foundation does opt for an online portal, it would be unique and beneficial to bring together grant writers to work through the process and system and provide feedback along the way.
I think the option is great, but being "old school" I think sometimes online only feels impersonal. We found that the personal relationship we hope to build with the Foundation and staff who we work with to be invaluable.
I understand that foundations that receive a large volume of proposals may wish to streamline the application process by moving it online, but as a grant writing professional, I assure you that you will get a less polished proposal. I have spent hours cutting perfectly well- written and clear proposal sections down to a minimalist jumble of words just to meet an arbitrary character limit. I am all for brevity, but not if it detracts from the substance and content of the proposal. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to communicate in a meaningful way from person to person, unfettered by character limits and submission matrices. Please stick with the existing process!
I would highly consider implementing this type of online system. It is highly more efficient on our end and it allows for streamlining all communication.
I would love to have had the application instructions digitally rather than a piece of paper.
I would prefer a section requesting a narrative instead of a detailing of questions requiring responses not necessarily applicable to one's program. It can require a lot of mental/linguistic gymnastics sometimes to complete applications with boxes asking for a particular way of describing one's proposal.

Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of online grant processes in the future?
Grantee Comment
I would say that over 80% of foundations who have switched to online proposals have had so many problems with technical issues or clarity of what they want that we have had to contact those foundations a number of times for assistance. Please understand that in smaller non-profits we wear MANY hats and are involved in operations and everything else in the business unlike larger non-profits who have people who just do grant writing that all the labor of uploading and needing expertise in technical skills takes so much time and many times a learning curve is involved that is quite time-consuming. In other words, if you are going to do this make it SIMPLE to do.
I would strongly and fervently request that the application and response process be done on line.
If electronic submissions save a non-profit organization from having to submit multiple copies of proposals (and/or reports), that is a big help!
If the Foundation moves to an online submission and reporting platform, please look at many options and choose one that allows you to come back and complete the rant or report in more than one sitting, and that the platform has clear instructions and saves data that has been entered.
If there is a character or word limit on any answer, the system calculates both as you type and displays progress.
If you go forward with the online cyber-grants system, please do not limit the characters and words in responses. It would be a lot better to give organizations the space they need to make their case and then judge the effectiveness of the case-making by quality of content and track record. I hate it when the site visitors go away. I hate it when philanthropy becomes a matter of electronic communication. I don't necessarily believe these types of efficiency best serve the field, the applicant, or those who benefit from the organizations' contributions. If you want to use online grant process to ease the evaluation of the grants, I can understand that, but there is a great danger that mechanizing the process can desensitize the evaluator and the evaluated. Keep it human, face to face, real time.
I'm very impressed with the Foundation and would like to extend some constructive criticism or suggestions. However I was left with such a positive impression via Ms. Brewer that I cannot think of anything.
In general we do not like online grant processes. We think an overall limitation to space / character count is more effective then sectional character counts. This allow us to use more words where we think they are needed. Also, online applications rarely allow tables and other graphics which can present data in a much more efficient and understandable manner.
In many ways, submitting online proposals is a mixed bag. It's easy and saves printing and postage costs (especially when it comes to printing the Form 990); however, many systems have set up arbitrary character or word limits in the "boxes" into which responses are put. I am ALL about word limits -- believe me -- but I imagine the Foundation would prefer we spend our time crafting succinct and thoughtful responses, not on finding the best three words to cut by combining verbs or deleting two adjectives. I find the best online processes to be those that allow the applicant to upload a proposal rather than cutting and pasting responses into boxes. This way, a more flexible page-limit system can be applied.
In my experience, it takes a few cycles for the on-line grant applications to work.
Include sufficient upload capabilities for large files and varied file formats
It can be time consuming to cut and paste relevant content into the appropriate places within an online application. It can also be very time consuming to adhere to strict character and word caps. Hopefully these two aspects of electronic submission will be developed carefully so applicants' time is not used inefficiently.
It is extremely difficult to answer, for example, 10-15 questions with a limited word or character count. Also we frequently spend a great deal of time trouble shooting with the Foundation's technical staff rather then time spent on writing the proposal.
It is helpful to have an electronic application process. Please develop something that allows you to work on your proposal, save it and come back to it another time.
It is helpful, but it is not that much more work to do a written submission/mailed proposal and LOI.
It is important to allow organizations to save and return to their work. Often times when entering a budget into a pre populated chart can be difficult. It has worked better for us to be able to upload an excel file.

Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of online grant processes in the future?
Grantee Comment
It is very helpful if the system pre-populates fields for previous applicants, such as address, contact info, mission statement, etc. so that it doesn't have to re-entered each time a proposal is submitted (although the ability to edit is possible). Also, if documents such as the 501c3 have already been uploaded, they do not need to be uploaded each time a new application is submitted, unless there is an update. I also prefer applications that allow you to upload your own budget, rather than enter it into fields on the application, which can be time consuming, especially when line items are not always listed in the same way as the organization, which requires recalculating of fields.
It may be an opportunity to streamline what info you gather and at what part of the process. For example, which questions are informational vs. which ones most influence the decisions on whether the grant is made. Make the questions available to applicants so they can work on it offline and complete online. The ability to save progress and come back to the system is really critical, as are little details like word count/character count (i.e., if it's actually one, don't say it's the other). Do adequate testing or a pilot with some grantees to get feedback before fully rolling it out, and maybe even a focus group up front to learn what works / not for other online grant systems. Make submission deadlines local time.
It might be an opportunity to keep responses very succinct and to focus on exactly what information the Foundation would like to learn about from the organization.
It reduces the stress on the organization.
It should be possible to transfer the account from one person's email to another's - for example if an agency pays for grantwriting services one year and the username and password are connected to the grantwriter, it should be possible to transfer the completed application to a staff person at the agency in the future if the agency elects not to hire an outside grantwriter. Also, any very important notices should be given by letter, by phone, or in person as well as online just in case there is some sort of computer glitch that makes receiving this news difficult online.
It would be helpful for Foundation staff to remember that a sufficient amount of space is required in order to answer questions and address issues adequately.
It would be ideal to be able to change our Grants Manager name and email when there is a transition in [our] staff. Most foundation online grant processes don't allow this and it makes is cumbersome. The new person ends up logging in as the old person, to retain the history and pre-populated fields. And then eventually they start a new entry as themselves but lose the pre-populated fields.
It's easiest to electronically submit documents, rather than fill out forms. If you go with a form option, make it easy to view and copy all of the questions that will be asked on the form (with length limits) so answers can be drafted and reviewed in MS Word, and then entered into the form once everything is finalized.
Just make sure that the instructions on the website are clear; and there is a contact person to address glitches.
Keep the online grant process as direct as possible and provide a contact person who is able to be reached to answer questions about the content of the grant as well as how to use the software required. If possible, include reminders about the deadlines of reports due and how to submit these documents.
Keeping the questions as broad and open as possible would be beneficial. If the application is too specific to the Foundation it often takes a lot of time to fill out the application.
LA 84 foundation has a good system.
Lead the way to create a common ap for LA foundations
Live help line. Understand that some non-profits don't have great I.T.
Maintain flexibility and keep questions basic and straightforward.
Make sure that the portal functions and make sure that any forms you use are able to be spell-checked.
Make sure the submitting party can easily copy their proposals for their files.
Make the process clear and simple, allowing at least 2 login credentials per organization (for the development staff and the management team i.e. Executive Director), have a PDF or Word version of the application and/or report on the website so that applicants can download it and review and collect the necessary information before starting the application or reporting process online.
Many other foundations have worked out the "kinks", so don't think they need to reinvent the wheel :).

Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of online grant processes in the future?
Grantee Comment
More and more foundations and other enterprises are functioning online. It is convenient and faster, and the business norm. Combined with the Foundations high touch approach, and its strong relationships, online resources will simply make things easier for applicants without losing that personal touch that the Foundation is so wonderful at providing.
Most all of the application we submit to funders are currently an online process.
Most important that the website is easy to navigate and doesn't require a lot of training to learn how to use the system. The application format should be set in the most simplistic terms. There must be a point person we can contact when we have questions or need clarification on certain items in the grant proposal online form.
Most of the proposals we submit happen online now, so this is not a problem for us. If RMPF chooses to go to an electronic platform, it would be great if they could make sure to have enough space in the character fields for us to submit proposals of adequate length. Submitting our financials online would be a great step in the right direction as far as we are concerned.
Most on line grant processes at this point in time are full of maddening "bugs" that make them difficult to use and difficult to understand. I think the technology has not been sufficiently developed in this area.
Much like this survey, our organization's mission and needs do not fit neatly into pre-selected boxes. This often means that trying to request a grant from a foundation through an electronic form, paints us into inappropriate corners. VERY frustrating. We would much rather submit requests and reports on paper.
My only suggestion would be allowing adequate character/ word counts so a potential grantee can convey their needs, goals and impact.
On line grant applications can be quick and efficient however we do request space for comprehensive narrative, which will help us convey the total and wholesome impact achieved with foundation support. At the same time we do wish to continue to work with program officers with whom we can build relationships and learn processes and factors that constitute success.
One primary advantage is easy access and preparing future applications and reports with preloaded general information.
Online application and reporting seem more efficient for both parties - the applicant and the Foundation, easier to track, less delivery issues (postmarks, deadlines). I think development staff are more and more comfortable with the digital method.
Online application systems simplify the mechanics of submitting (and receiving) grant applications. But online systems can be rigid, and too many funders appear to adopt an off-the-shelf solution without really thinking how the system will affect applicants. The instructions Parsons now provides for grant applications are clear, direct, and relatively simple. They elicit the information Parsons needs to make a decision. If these directions could be translated directly to an online system, and that would make the work flow better in the Foundation's offices, I would be all for it. One difficulty that perhaps online systems could help to resolve is that every funder asks for the organization's financial information in slightly different ways--different questions, different calculations, different documents. So although we send essentially the same information to them all, we have to craft a variety of reports to accommodate the different ways of asking. If funders could come together around a standard set of financial questions for applicants, it would save organizations some time and effort that we could put to more productive use.
Online applications can be challenging if the software is inefficient or difficult to use. Old fashioned post mail or receipt deadlines still work.
Online applications have some advantages, but they tend to destroy the individual character of a non-profit, what it is providing to the community.. Suggestions: Provide a draft of the form/template that can be downloaded as a Word document; PDFs created additional work. Be very clear on the maximum text allowed for responses. Avoid high-volumes of data boxes (one for first name, another for last name, another for phone number, individual boxes for each budget line and amount, etc.) as this add a lot of time to the application process. Allow for additional materials to be included such as photos and videos to supplement the proposal - not everything can be expressed in the written word.
On-line apps do not allow the writer to submit graphics or tables. We always find it helpful to be able to submit a portion of the proposal in a format other than the plain text that is the on-line format.

Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of online grant processes in the future?
Grantee Comment
<p>Online grant application processes can be good if they allow applicants flexibility in determining the appropriate content and length of their applications (within reason of course). On the other hand, these processes can be counter-productive if they force the applicants to adhere to rigid formats and formulaic responses.</p>
<p>Online grant forms are a good idea in theory, but end up being so much more complicated and less convenient than being to email documents directly. For example, there are usually awkward space settings and restrictions that make it difficult to organize information in the way that would make the most sense for our organization and our grant. Also, the person writing the grant report is only one of many people who need to review the text before anything is submitted. This means even more work, because we have to cut and paste the questions (and the character limit) into a word document, write the draft, send the draft to several people on staff to edit, then cut and paste all our answers back into the online form. It ends up being significantly more time consuming. If we could log in and submit a word document, that would be relatively easy--it's the online forms that create the biggest hassle for us.</p>
<p>Online grant portals tend to have horrible UI, so I'd encourage you to develop a website and a user experience that is pretty seamless.</p>
<p>Online grant processes are great as long as there are ways to see the questions in advance to prepare and also a ways to save your application and responses as you proceed.</p>
<p>Online grant processes are helpful and efficient but that should not mean that personal communications with the Foundation should be minimized.</p>
<p>Online grant processes are sometime limited in character amounts and we don't find this helpful when trying to communicate our mission also when printing complete proposal/loi/report; we are sometimes not able to print out what exactly was submitted for record keeping.</p>
<p>Online grant processes are the industry standard to which funders should aspire. Direct mail is no simply no longer the most efficient nor the fastest nor the most environmentally friendly method of correspondence. Grantees are already accustomed to online processes for the California Cultural Data Project as well as for grant application to other local funders such as Annenberg Foundation and Weingart Foundation, to name just a couple. Even government agencies such as the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council and the LA County Arts Commission all have digital-only application processes.</p>
<p>Online grant processes, when designed and implemented well, can make submissions more efficient. Character limits are generally helpful in creating succinct narratives. Uploading documents such as program/project budgets rather than inputting numbers is always preferable.</p>
<p>Online grant tools take the warmth out of the process. Crafting on paper, printing, signing and mailing, although not the most efficient, carries with it a human touch that online resources are stripping away. Web-based tools reduce the grant seeker to a blue, linked title and a half a dozen on-screen pages of text. As the tools evolve, reach toward online grant processes with friendly interface and an ease-of-use (auto-filled fields, etc.). Also, try to preserve some personal communication, even if only by email, that keeps the people in the process, not just computers.</p>
<p>Online grantmaking is changing how we interact with foundations for good and bad reasons. Good, because we are consistently changing due to the digital age; however, the online process can be bad because it can also mean that the communication with the Foundation would be as consistent as when we request the opportunity to submit a letter of intent.</p>
<p>Online grants can be frustrating in that they require only a certain amount of words or characters per field in each question. This makes it a challenge to encapsulate what the writer needs to say in order to clearly describe a comprehensive program with many parts. Also, there must be a way to communicate to the grant writer that they must first write the narrative according to the online questions in a word document first. Then upload each answer in its entirety. This is because there are always errors in uploading to a web based portal and sometimes the information can be lost in the upload. So if it is not saved in a word document first the grant writer loses all of their narrative information and has to start over. I have written proposals for twenty years and find online proposals to be more frustrating due to these indues. And they happen around 40% of the time.</p>



Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of online grant processes in the future?
Grantee Comment
Online grants can be helpful provided they are not ones that have hundreds of data entry fields that take many hours to complete. The best ones are pre filled with info from previous grants or conversations and allow submission of files in Word or pdf. Furthermore, ones that link the original grant materials with the updates/reports make grant management easier for both the Foundation and the grantee.
On-line proposals and reports can be very convenient, however, the formatting is often constricting. We often have found that once moving to an on-line system, the number of questions increases but the amount of additional useful information is not commensurate with this increase.
Online requests and reports are still difficult to use. Being limited to a specific number of characters in a response or being limited to a certain kind of response (like a numerical or date answer) limit thorough and thoughtful answers. Although I like reducing paper and postage costs, I've found online requests to be a challenge.
Online submission and reporting would reduce paperwork significantly, but sometimes seems less flexible than other formats.
Online submission is quite helpful. Honestly, it allows me to work on my proposals or LOI's from locations other than at work.
Online submission processes are very convenient for potential grantees. The ability to submit both proposals and reports online saves time and money.
Online submissions and evaluations are becoming the standard, so it would be helpful to have the Foundation follow the same industry-wide standards.
Online submissions are much more effective in terms of costs, time and effort.
Online submissions are very helpful from a grantee perspective. Online submissions reduce costs, ensure timely delivery, and save resources. It is also helpful to have the report organizational structure provided in an online medium.
Online submissions reduce paper and most generate automatic reminders for reports, etc. This helps to eliminate errors in grantee reporting and foundation staff managing timelines. Should the Foundation choose this method, it will be important for the Foundation to provide a PDF sample of the questions that can be printed prior to application completion. Often times, this is not provided and it can double the time needed to complete online grant applications.
Our experience with online grant processes has been that it is very difficult to fully explain your funding request as most limit the characters or words that can be submitted. The online grant request process diminish the opportunity for the organization to fully explain its experience, value in the community, program services and other essential information that we would like funders to know about us. We found that the LOI and full grant application for the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation to be a great vehicle to fully communicate our ideas and plans and would that If the Foundation decides to convert to an online grant process, they not change the page limits allocated in their current LOI and full proposal process.
Our experience with online grant processes is that more often than not they limit flexibility, have bugs that are hard to fix, and are often difficult and cumbersome to use.
Our umbrella institution requires an online submission of its own, which I have found to be cumbersome and intolerant of exceptional circumstances. Online submissions need to be flexible and open ended if they are to serve well.
Please allow us to save and return to the application process and for a print option. Too many online grant processes do not allow for a print out of the proposal.
Please avoid the online systems which severely limit character count. Those seem overly restrictive.
Please be reasonable with word limits. Allow spaces to answer the questions effectively.
Please be sure that the process of using an online system does not create more work for grantees than the previous process. Consider the user experience and workflow, particularly the ability for the Executive Director to support/oversee staff in completing the online form.
PLEASE DO NOT DO IT
Please do not use cybergrants, which has a lot of problems.
Please do not use the common grant application. The cybergrants seems to be efficient and easy to use for the applicant.
Please don't be too stingy with word/character count limits. :)

Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of online grant processes in the future?
Grantee Comment
Please don't lose the personal connection with the program officer. It is really great to talk through answers, challenges and issues with someone who believes in your organization. Online submission makes it easier to collect data but can sometimes feel more impersonal.
Please don't use overly restrictive character counts. allow some graphics, photos, charts to be included. 1. A pop up note that suggests/reminds applicants to use Word if that is the safest way to draft and edit the application. 2. Ensure that attachments that are uploaded can be removed and re-uploaded if needed before the "submit button" is hit 3. Auto-save if possible. 4. Upon submission, it is really nice to get the full application automatically emailed in the body of an email as confirmation. 5. The ability to see the application after it's been submitted.
Please make it user friendly (as clear as your current guidelines) and what ever you can do to prevent the program from crashing during the process would be so greatly appreciated. The worse experiences with on line grants have been when the program has failed and the work put in has been lost. Sadly this has occurred way to many times and with some very large corporations and organizations. So much so, that I now prepare my document first in in word and then cut and past into the on-line form.
Please make sure that the on-line format does not dictate the content i.e. that there is enough space to answer the questions and to make the case. Please also provide a human component, meaning that the on-line process does not take the place of the ability to talk with the Foundation personnel.
Please provide character or word limits up front. It can be frustrating when that information is not readily apparent.
Please the system easy to navigate.
Please use a system that allows users to save their work and return at a later date. There are still a few online proposal systems that require the proposal be submitted in only one sitting, and this is not a convenient option. Please allow plenty of megabytes for the submission of online attachments, as many files such as 990s are large files.
So many are doing it now that we've become accustomed to the practice. Our only request is that it be clear about the maximum content. We prefer words instead of characters and we like the ability to print a pdf of our application so we can review before submitting.
Some online grant applications are very limited in the amount of space that is allowed, and since one size does not fit all, I would recommend the option to attach documents in lieu of only providing boxes or forms. Also, some grant applications have not allowed the organization to save and return to the document to finish it at a later date. I highly recommend having a feature that would allow this, as well as letting multiple users access it to review and add information. Often several sets of eyes are reviewing or working on a document at our organization and it's helpful to be able to print a copy of the full application to share with others.
Some online processes are extremely restrictive in what information they will accept and the formatting they require. We find it difficult to fit our information into these forms, so I am way of online processes unless they are more open-ended.
Some other electronic processes do not allow for printing off the full proposal and/or reports (hence the submitting organization never gets a full copy of what it submitted), or ability to go back and work on the proposal/report.
Some use a web based application others prefer documents emailed, both work for us. The California Endowment uses a more formal web based system that allows for sharing of documents and signatures, we like it.
Sometimes I find it more cumbersome to use an on-line application.
Sometimes online submission processes are too regimented or limit responses
Sometimes when a foundation moves to an online system, the length of the LOI and/or proposal reduces dramatically, or specific questions have very limited character or word counts. It would be best (from the grantees perspective), to keep the online proposal format similar to the hard copy format initially, and then change in subsequent years.
Strongly encourage the transition to online grant processes as more efficient method and reduced paper volume.

Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of online grant processes in the future?
Grantee Comment
That upon submission of the report, a pdf version is automatically returned to the person who submitted the grant for filing purposes. This will help the submitting organization with tracking and accountability.
The best online system we've used are ones that have a login and allow the organization to access and leave the site without losing information. They have a username and password. Another option, if you did not want to manage an online grant portal, that also works great is having the ability to email LOI's, applications and reports to a particular foundation staff member.
The Biggest limitation to the online forms are the word count limitations. Specifically, you may not need 1000 words to answer a proposal question, but you may need more than 1000 words to answer an evaluation question. In other words, for some questions they require more than the limit where some require far less. Online forms tend to lack thoughtfulness in their restrictions. In order for us to access our answers to questions for looking back at later, with some online applications, there's no way to see what's not in the visible section of the online window. There are some platforms that allow you the ability to look back at past proposals and see the questions and your answers in full. We strongly recommend utilizing those platforms. Otherwise online actually creates a two step process by which we submit online but then have to recreate the application on our own word document copying the question and the answer... it's cumbersome. But using a proper platform would be fantastic.
The challenge for an applicant agency with an online grant process is that it can be difficult to elaborate and provide thorough answers in the spaces provided. The space requirements can sometimes be too restrictive with an online form.
The challenge with some on-line applications is the strict character/word count limit often makes it difficult to respond fully to the questions or to provide relevant illustrations. Whether a foundation requests hard copies of proposals or electronic application, I believe should depend on the preferences and working style of the Foundation board.
The greatest benefit of online submissions is the ability to know immediately that a proposal was received.
The one area in which the Foundation seems a bit "old school" is its practice of submitting LOIs and proposals in hard copy, and corresponding via hard copy. It seems it would be more efficient for the Foundation to receive and send communications electronically.
The online grant process does make grant submission easier. The ability to upload required documents and save your work for future completion is very helpful. Also, having consistency in the overall grant process with the Foundations makes the entire grant writing process easier, especially for the smaller staffed agencies. It would be extremely helpful to be able to save the completed grant in a PDF file to reduce paper too!
The simpler the form, the better. Please make sure it is easy to start and stop working on an application and pick it up later. Some of the banks require that we retake the eligibility quiz every time we want to start working on a proposal again.
The site visits by the Foundation are extremely helpful and appreciated. The accessibility and openness on the part of the staff is welcomed. Creating a faster turn around from letter of inquiry to final award would be appreciated.
The trend toward shorter word count with attachments challenges us to be brief and focused but saves time. Once the grant is approved I think it would be helpful to line up objectives stated in the proposal and make reporting and tracking easier to report progress against those items simpler; completed, in process, other with explanation. short answer around impact and measurement
The use of an online grant system streamlines the application for the applicant. It is very clear what information is required. Foundations often use consistent fields. It would be helpful to incorporate open comment fields for further explanation, especially when an application requires the input of numbers (numbers served, budgets, financial information, etc.).
There are numerous effective examples in the field to use as templates.
This appears to be the trend and it does make it often easier for organizations such as ourselves with a small administration staff.
This is the way the future is going. We are used to on-line applications. Go for it!
This seems to be standard practice.



Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of online grant processes in the future?
Grantee Comment
This seems to be the easiest way to move forward for recipient organizations. The key question is whether or not the Foundation Staff and Board Members can adapt to this change and still be efficient.
This systems are very convenient. However, there needs to be back by telephone for technical and substantial questions.
To ensure that they have responsive IT staff to resolve any issues that may arise with the system.
To seek information from other foundations about software systems and best practices for online processes
To some extent we appreciate being able to submit applications and reports on line because we get, usually, instant feedback saying that our documents were received. On the other hand, we have run into some issues with submitting on line that make the process difficult. Advice for The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation going forward would be to be certain that the online system is user friendly.
Use a system that automatically does spell check. Use a system that allows applicant to work on the application at different times.
User friendly format and flexibility to incorporate additional data or attachments if needed.
Very often the lay-out of the application is limiting and causes additional work.
We are very much in favor of electronic communication as a means for easier and quicker communication. Our staff and key volunteers are very comfortable with technology, and welcome anything that reduces paperwork. We would also welcome (for any grantor) an ability to make informal 'what if' proposals short of formal requests. We would not engage is that with all of our funders, but we would with this foundation due to the high degree of trust we have in them.
We believe that transferring to an online grant process is ideal because many foundations are streamlining the process by being more succinct with the digital age.
We don't like the space limitations so often associated with online applications and reports.
We find the Cultural Data project is useful to other funders as a way to learn about us; Parsons may find it useful also.
We have an outside grant maker so I am not sure that an online process is best for us.
We have found an on-line process (for submitting LOIs, proposals and grant reports) to be extremely helpful. It is also useful to be able to access previous grant requests and grant reports from the on-line system.
We have mixed feelings about online submissions. On the one hand it saves paper, and cuts down on time needed to print and the expenses to mail proposal packages But, on the otherhand- Some foundation's websites have many glitches, and caused problems in our submissions. Limits to the documents we are permitted to upload is problematic, because there are times we would like to supply more information or documents, but online applications usually have limits. Space or word limits are very difficult - those actually are more rigorous than being able to include all the information we feel is needed for a compelling, competitive application. Also, we have found that it is very difficult to contact with a live person at foundations who rely solely on online submissions.
We have worked with several foundations previously with online proposals and reports. Sometimes we have two staff with two separate email addresses preparing and editing the same proposal. Some foundations will not allow this. This means that more time must be spent to prepare and edit the proposal. It is a real problem for us since we are small. Sometimes there is not enough word count permitted to clearly express our case for support. While I agree with the need for brevity and the discipline required to do it, I think adequate space needs to be provided in some instances. Since we are both an education oriented and human services agency, sometimes I am uncomfortable with having to choose the best one that will receive funding when only one option is given on the on line application. Sometimes it is difficult to print the text of an online application for our paper files. I would be much more in favor of online applications if these issues were addressed in all cases.
We would suggest the Foundation explore online options that are user-friendly, offers the ability for easy formatting, and is on a secure site.
We've found the simpler the better. Any system that keeps the user in mind and is built to function intuitively is best.

**Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of online grant processes in the future?**

**Grantee Comment**

While I appreciate the need for character or word limits so that foundation staff are not overloaded, it is appreciated when the limits are not so low that a good response is impossible. Having a PDF available of the questions - along with any word/characters limits - helps in the offline planning of what to submit. If you want to have different questions for each of the funding priorities, make then separate applications. Having a bunch of questions that are not relevant to the project I'm applying to gets confusing. Please do not use an online form as an excuse to suddenly ask twice as many questions, especially if they will become redundant. Sometimes it can help to split up types of questions - i.e., history and mission separate from overall activities.

With online grant processes, I would recommend that there is a reply mechanism with each submission. I always am concerned that everything has been received by the funder. When there is an immediate reply / that all information has been received, then I have something for my files. However, some foundations do not have a reply online, which necessitates a follow-up phone call. Also, there should be a phone number in case the applicant has problems with the online application. Announcements of an invitation to submit a full proposal or a grant award should be sent by mail. I have had experiences with email servers not functioning properly, which delayed receiving timely communication about the status of a request.



THE CENTER  
FOR EFFECTIVE  
PHILANTHROPY

**“Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of online grant processes in the future?”**

**Most Frequent Grantee Suggestions**

1. Please make sure that the system is user-friendly, simple and intuitive.
2. Don't be overly restrictive with word or character counts as this is the most challenging part of online applications.
  - a. Please provide the word or character limits clearly for every section.
  - b. If possible, please use word counts or page limits instead of character counts.
  - c. Please use a form that displays the number of words or characters being used when text is entered into a field.
3. Please include the ability to save the application as you go so that text entry does not have to occur all at once.
4. Have the application available for download as a Word document at the beginning of the application with any word/character/page limits included.
5. Make sure instructions on the website are clear.
6. Have a staff member who can be available to answer questions and troubleshoot over the phone when issues arise.
7. Allow attachments for tables, images, videos and other media, which can sometimes convey grantees' work in better ways than a text form.
  - a. Include sufficient upload capabilities for large files and varied file formats.
8. Send confirmation of receipt when a proposal is submitted that includes a copy of the submitted application for record keeping.
9. Bring in grantees to do user-testing of online application before the official release. Build feedback loops as you create the new process and system.
10. Ensure that personal interactions and communications with Foundation staff remain part of the process. Accessibility is important to grantees.

**Other Suggestions:**

- Features that grantees asked for:
  - Ability to cut and paste text from a Word document
  - Ability to print full application before and after submission
  - Spell-check function
  - Ability to review previous grant requests and grant reports
  - Ability to change login information when there is a staff transition at the grantee organization

- Ability to pre-populate certain fields with previous grant proposal information
  - Report deadline reminders
- Be sure to have the bandwidth and servers to deal with the rush of activity that occurs at deadlines.
- Keep questions flexible so that grantees can skip questions that do not apply to them or include a “not applicable” option.
- Some grantees suggested that the Foundation transitions to an online submission of documents instead of an online form.
- Customize application by each program area.
- Multiple logins per grantee.
- Allow upload of grantee budget instead of requesting that the information is entered in specific line items designated by the Foundation.

**Examples of Online Systems Mentioned by Grantees:**

- The California Endowment
- Enterprise Community Partners
- The Weingart Foundation
- California Community Foundation has a good interim and final report submission process
- LA 84 Foundation
- Kaiser
- United Way
- The Jewish Community Foundation uses Hightail and this works well for submitting reports along with pictures, newsletters, and other pieces to support each report
- California Cultural Data Project
- Annenberg Foundation
- National Endowment for the Arts
- The California Arts Council and the LA County Arts Commission

**Ralph M. Parsons Foundation**  
**Grantee Comments from February and March 2015 Grantee Perception Report**  
**Conducted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy**

*Please note that comments have been edited or deleted to protect the confidentiality of respondents.*

<b>The Foundation has a policy of rotating Program Officer assignments among grantees in order to deepen grantee relationships with the Foundation. How do you feel about this policy?</b>	
<b>Grantee Comment</b>	
I believe it better to work with consistency through a person who knows the grantee more deeply.	
I think it's good cross-training and presents good learning opportunities that will strengthen the Foundation's understanding of a myriad of community issues.	
I understand the Foundation's point of view in this regard, and it's always nice to have multiple points of contact within a single institution. Because of the way that different issues/missions are financed however, it's sometimes easier to work with a program officer who is familiar with those mechanisms. The same person every time can decrease the time we end up needing to spend explaining our finances.	
It is sometimes difficult having to rebuild relationships with several different Program Officers, however rotations can prevent us from assuming that we have the Program Officer's support.	
[Our organization] is open to working with any program officer as assigned, allowing us to broaden the reach and share the organizations work with the Foundation team.	
A good idea.	
A great idea--it exposes us to more of the Foundation and its work, and may give us the chance to share our work with different perspectives.	
Agree that there's value in rotating program officers, though would like to have the same program officer with assigned organization for at least two funded cycles so as to have continuity in communications, support and understanding of issues. Would be nice to have a transition "hand-off" where the outgoing program officer visits with the new program officer so as to ensure a smoother transition.	
Agree with the policy	
All of our Program Officers have been wonderful. We like the rotating system.	
Ambivalent about this. See pros and cons.	
Ambivalent. It's fine during the active grant process - from LOI to final report - but in between, it's not always clear who we should contact with questions.	
As an organization, we welcome the opportunity to introduce our programs to more individuals.	
As this is our first grant, we have only met one officer. He seemed to have a great understanding of our work, which made it a pleasurable experience to meet with him. We are unaware if he was chosen specifically for his expertise in our field or not.	
Contacts are infrequent.	
Do not have any concern regarding this policy.	
Everyone I have worked with at the Foundation has been consistent- and this policy may be a part of this consistency. Therefore, I would support this practice.	
Fine	
Fine except I think taking advantage of an officers knowledge of a program and comparing what has happened to what was promised cannot be as good if the officers continue to rotate.	
From a grantee perspective, it's great. Generally it's beneficial to get to know different program officers at a Foundation and to multiple perspectives.	
Given that each program officer has taken a similar approach, this has not been a problem in terms of preparing proposals.. But staff do not seem so accessible. The program officer who did our site visit is no longer there, so I do not know who to call. I do not feel we know anyone (other than Ms. Garen) well enough to call and speak extensively about an issue, concern, or problem. Knowing that Ms. Garen is not so accessible, I would hesitate to call unless something was extremely serious.	
Given the relatively hands off approach once a gen op grant is provided, I'm not sure I have an opinion either way.	
good	

The Foundation has a policy of rotating Program Officer assignments among grantees in order to deepen grantee relationships with the Foundation. How do you feel about this policy?
Grantee Comment
Good
Good and bad -- it's great to meet new people; however, this policy also means starting again -- having the same conversations you've had in the past with the same foundation. In this sense, both the Foundation and the organization are probably wasting a bit of time on repeating content.
Good idea. It is helpful to receive the perspectives of several program officers, and to have a more well-rounded relationship with the Foundation by knowing with more than one individual. This makes the support feel more foundational, as opposed to driven by one person, and therefore more stable.
Great idea.
Have not had that experience.
I agree with the policy to rotate program officer assignments. Because of this, I perceive that grants are evaluated based on the objective merits of the applicants, rather than any personal relationships from individual program officers.
I agree!
I am a first year grantee so I am not too sure.
I am comfortable with that process.
I am neutral.
I am not familiar but look forward to learning more as a hopeful long-term grantee.
I believe it is a good practice as it allows organizations to foster relationships with more of your staff.
I believe relationships grow with time.
I can see the advantages and disadvantages. It would seem to necessitate frequent learning curves for each Program Officer, which could be time consuming. However, the concern of staff attrition is decreased.
I can see the wisdom of such a practice so that the organizations can develop a deeper relationship rather than individuals. The danger is that the officers will have a learning curve to deal with each new organization. Of course, that may benefit the organization if their previous relationship had an issues.
I can understand that you want to be tied to the Foundation, not to a particular person, but there is a level of trust when you know the person you are working with, and that allows for more deep insightful work, I think. I would prefer to stick with one person if possible.
I don't have any issue assuming they are all as professional and friendly (not stuffy like other Foundations) as our last one!
I don't like the policy because there is no opportunity to deepen relationships with the grants officers.
I feel a bit ambivalent. We like the idea of meeting more of the Foundation staff and getting their different perspectives. However, we also like that we have Foundation staff that are familiar with our work and can see all of the ways that we grow and progress. There are pros and cons for this policy.
I feel that this could work in practice but not sure that our organization has experienced a deepening relationship. In fact, I don't believe we were notified when our program officer left the Foundation. This goes back to not receiving much communication from the Foundation outside of grant award letters and receipt confirmations.
I have no direct experience with this policy, but I think it's a valuable practice.
I have no problem with that policy. Both Program Officers have been very approachable and committed to understanding our organization and how the Foundation can best impact our ability to serve our clients.
I have not experienced it yet so not much to add, but can imagine that it could have pros and cons. I can see the value, especially when there is staff turnover. But if it was every cycle/every year, that would be hard on grantees and may not actually lead to depth.
I haven't thought about it before, but that is interesting. It allows for multiple relationships between the organization and the Foundation. In some cases, if a program officer leaves, that can mean the end of funding for an organization and it has to start over from the beginning.
I like being able to establish a relationship with a particular program officer, but I do see the value in rotating.
I like when program officers visit in pairs so you don't lose touch with the program officer with whom you have built your relationship. Perhaps this isn't the most sustainable but it is helpful to the grantee.
I like working with the same person. However, I understand why the Foundation does this.
I love it! I like getting to know all of the Program Officers.

The Foundation has a policy of rotating Program Officer assignments among grantees in order to deepen grantee relationships with the Foundation. How do you feel about this policy?	
Grantee Comment	
I love this policy. I love the various program officers that we've gotten to know as well. It really helps to reinforce the family/partnership feel.	
I prefer to deal with one program officer over time; it makes dealing with each other much more efficient. Building a relationship over time is more rewarding than starting afresh every proposal. There is a natural rotation of program officers anyway (I realize sometimes that's a long cycle). But either policy is workable. In my experience with Parsons ([many] years), they have an excellent record of hiring program officers that are great to work with.	
I prefer to deal with the same Program Officer over time in order to get to know the person better and for that person to have enough time to truly get to know our agency and its staff.	
I prefer to have a relationship with one particular Program Officer so that we are not starting from scratch each time.	
I really like our current Program Officer. She is one of the best in Los Angeles. She also knows [our field] and our program very well...and is both smart and helpful!!! Would very much like to keep her	
I respect the intent of this policy, and would certainly support it. Having said that, I would not want to forgo my contact with Wendy Garen. I would welcome a site visit or a conversation with any of the Parson's staff, if it would be of use.	
I support this policy.	
I think is a good idea.	
I think it is a good idea, as long as contact with former Program Officers continues in some fashion. Perhaps the rotation should be after a certain number of years (3-5) as I think the relationships are important in making sure we, as a grantee are meeting the Foundation's goals with our funding, and the insight and direction provided by a Program Officer can only get stronger over the years.	
I think it is a good policy in that it provides an opportunity for the Program Officers to have a better understanding about the services being provided in the communities it supports.	
I think it is a good policy to help expose grantee to various people within the Foundation and for those various people to have experience with other areas that the Foundation supports.	
I think it is a good policy. It is nice to know all of the staff and to know that the staff is well rounded.	
I think it is a good strategy.	
I think it is a great idea to have rotating Program Officers as long as the officer has a grasp on the organization without having to start from scratch every time. We realize there is transition happening at Foundations as well as organizations so as long as we are consistent in managing our relationship, it is a great opportunity.	
I think it is helpful for an organization to engage numerous officers from the Foundation to our work, as you then feel a) more connected to the Foundation and b) feel as if more people in the philanthropic community understand and can speak about our program. I do think it is helpful to be able to continue to contact previous program officers who you have invested time in building relationships with.	
I think it is probably counterproductive. My intuitive sense is that we build a relationship with a particular officer, and I'd prefer to stay with someone who already knows my organization.	
I think it's a great idea.	
I think it's a great idea; officers become knowledgeable about many fields and the comprehensive work on the Foundation. I've found our 2 different grant officers helpful, thoughtful and thorough.	
I think it's fine. I had a new program officer and he was great.	
I think it's great. The more folks we can bring on board to understand what we do, the better. I feel that if foundation staff moves to another organization, they will carry their good opinion of us with them, so I'm fine with it.	
I think program officers should be assigned with a grantee for at least 3 years before rotating.	
I think that is a good idea.	
I think that is an excellent policy.	



The Foundation has a policy of rotating Program Officer assignments among grantees in order to deepen grantee relationships with the Foundation. How do you feel about this policy?
Grantee Comment
I think that this would be a great way to connect with more staff from the Foundation. I get the sense that there is a lot of communication and collaboration happening among the program officers, so I am not concerned about anything being lost in the transition between officers. I do appreciate the prospect of developing a stronger relationship with our current officer as he has firsthand experience with our program and design, but am open to the rotation of officers so long as we don't have to start the relationship over from the beginning.
I think that's a good idea so both the Grantee and Program Officer can have the opportunity to work with different staff and different grantees.
I think the rotation should not necessarily be standardized. Depending on the nature of the work and or type of funds being used, I could imagine greater continuity being helpful.
I think there's pros and cons for the rotation of program officers. On one hand I like the exposure to different program officers, and I appreciate that the PO have broad knowledge of the non profit field. On the other hand, it is difficult to build a relationship with the PO when there are frequent rotations.
I think this is a good idea in that it gives the program officer fresh lenses to see the programs that the Foundation is funding through different perspectives.
I think this is a very good policy because more than one person at the Foundation will be familiar with the non-profit organization. the Foundation will be better equipped to assess the non-profit organization.
I think this is an excellent suggestion. Building a new relationship with a rotating Program Officer would help the organization / continue to grow and seek ways to become more efficient and effective. It's very powerful to have to introduce an existing program and request for funding to a new pair of ears. Also, questions from the new Program Officer would probably help the organization / think about their request in a different way.
I think this is good. It allows agency to get to know the Foundation staff.
I think this is helpful since more than one staff would know about my organization. I would also have a relationship with more than one staff at the Foundation.
I think this is smart. You also reduce the chance of nepotism for future grant proposals.
I understand the policy. It's a great way to keep everyone on their toes. That being said, it's nice to develop a good working relationship with a program officer over a longer period of time.
I understand the reasoning, but keeping the same Program Officer for organizations requesting grant funds again would be helpful in that the officer would be familiar with the success of any past projects.
I understand this process but would prefer to keep the Program Officer we started with. He was frighteningly good and so easy to work with.
I understand why this is done, but we felt like we had lost a family member when Jennifer was rotated out. It takes a long time to explain our work, our context, and our vision for the future. Would prefer not to have to do that each time with a new program officer. On the other hand, if we hadn't liked our original program officer, our answer could have been the opposite!
I understand why this makes sense from the Foundation perspective, but from the grantee perspective it can feel like you are starting over.
I was not aware of this; I'm not sure if this will work to deepen a relationship, but I'm definitely open to it.
I would actually prefer the opportunity to develop a relationship with one particular person who would understand the history of our grantee/grantor relationship with more depth.
I would appreciate getting to know all of the Parsons Foundation staff in this way. So far, the ones I've met have been helpful, bright and collegial people.
I would do a SWOT analysis on this policy and see how the PO's feel about it. I know that it's tough building new relationships on our end with new people given that we have hundreds of partnerships out in the community already. Perhaps the Foundation can do a luncheon with new/old grantees annually so that NPOs can connect to other NPOs while getting to know the Foundation staff...
I would prefer a single program officer with deep knowledge of my field. This would deepen our organization's relationship to the Foundation.



The Foundation has a policy of rotating Program Officer assignments among grantees in order to deepen grantee relationships with the Foundation. How do you feel about this policy?	
Grantee Comment	
I would prefer having a longer term relationship with a single program officer. Fortunately, the person at the top at Parsons has not changed which has been great, but at other foundations we have a deeper relationship with staff because we have had a chance to get to know the program officer over a longer period of time.	
I would prefer the Program Officer assigned to us would stay the same for as long as possible. Therefore, we would not have to constantly re-introduce ourselves, explain our organization and updated changes to new Program Officers each time.	
I would prefer to stay with my original grant officer.	
If a rotation of Program Officer assignments with grantees is helpful to the Foundation help to deepen relationships, that's fine. Would that require all Program Officers to be knowledgeable of all of the areas of interest (i.e.. social impact, higher education, health, civic/cultural)? It seems possible that a rotation across all of these areas as opposed to within each could cause some loss of knowledge or awareness of the nuances or specialized knowledge linked with each area.	
If goal is to build relationships with organizations, it's a disadvantage to rotate program officer assignments. If rotating though, it should be 3-5 years in length.	
In my experience it is odd since in my case neither of my former program officers are still with the Foundation so at this point, I don't even know who to send updates to. But as I said before, I appreciated the consistency of focus between program officers.	
In practice, maintaining a relationship with the same program officer is preferred. It gives him/her time to deepen their relationship with our organization.	
It depends on how often they are rotated. If it is once every 3 to 4 years, there is enough time for the program officer to get to really know the organization. If it is a shorter time frame, a solid relationship may not develop.	
It feels reassuring to have one point of contact during the grant period.	
It has good and bad pieces to it. If the same, no new ideas and thinking emerge. If it is new people, you have to continually reeducate and they have little institutional knowledge.	
It helps to know a program officer long enough to develop a relationship of openness and trust.	
It hinders relationship building with the Foundation.	
It is a policy that we welcome.	
It is always a pleasure meeting new people. Thomas Brewer was instrumental in us pursuing and securing [a grant] for program funds from another foundation new to our organization. We are incredibly grateful for this lead and introduction.	
It is always nice to have a relationship with a Program Officer for at least a couple of years, but I don not mind exposing more people to the work of our organization. The most helpful aspect when rotating Program Officers is when the Foundation takes time to bring the new Program Officer up-to-speed with the organization's work and history before interactions begin with the organization.	
It is fair. But organizations also benefit when a program officer knows the organization really well (as happens when the organization works with the same program officer over many years).	
It is helpful to have a consistent contact over a period of time.	
It is okay. Though sometimes we miss the person we have been working with on a prior basis.	
It is wonderful, as the more people we can share our work with...the better.	
It seems odd. My relationships with other foundations are stronger when I have the same program officer year after year.	
It sounds like a good policy and we are in agreement.	
It's a good idea to have several people on staff familiar with us as a grantee, as it's difficult when a program officer leaves a foundation and it feels like your connection has been lost.	
It's always nice to work with the same Program Officer year after year, but I also appreciate knowing that there are multiple people at the Foundation who are invested in our success.	
It's an interesting policy. In some ways it broadens the relationship with the Foundation rather than deepening it, since it means we have short term relationships with Program Officers, rather than giving them an opportunity to see our continued, long-term growth, or giving us an opportunity to get to know our Program Officer over time, in deeper ways.	

The Foundation has a policy of rotating Program Officer assignments among grantees in order to deepen grantee relationships with the Foundation. How do you feel about this policy?	
Grantee Comment	
It's fine to get to know other program officers. We also see merit to continuing a relationship with a program officer as it allows for them to more fully understand organizations at a deeper level.	
It's good because more people at the Foundation will get to know our agency's and its work.	
It's nice to develop a personal relationship but it's also nice to meet new staff	
It's nice to have a single point person. Over time you develop a relationship with them and they understand your organization's culture. I understand the thought process behind rotation, but my guess is that in practice it does not deepen the relationship, but rather puts both the Foundation and the grantee in the situation where we are constantly starting over.	
It's ok by me	
It's okay with me.	
It's understandable, but wouldn't be my preference. We fight changing relationships in so many places, that this just becomes another challenge to our work.	
It's very helpful to work consistently with a program officer who knows the organization, so I'm not convinced rotation is a value added.	
Knowing a few of the Program Officers already, I can see strong consistency in their level of professionalism and competence. I would feel comfortable working with any of the Program Officers I know. However, it does seem a bit disruptive to move assignments from the perspective of getting to know a grantee, working with them a short time, then passing along what you know to the next assigned Program Officer - seems like historical knowledge of the grantee can be lost in that process.	
Like all practices, it has an upside and a downside.	
Love it! Sometimes RMPF funding can be taken for granted; having to present our case to a new program officer upon each new request keeps us on our toes. Since Wendy Garen has been there for so long, and because she knows so many of us grantees, I suspect that many of us feel we have a constant and reliable source of wisdom in her.	
Love it.	
Makes sense, although it is helpful when a program officer knows your organization well, rather than having to start from scratch.	
Mixed feelings. I like having the same Program Officer as it allows relationships to be developed which then can deepen the Foundations understanding of the agencies programs, goals, and learning needs/challenges. The rotation of Program Officers can also add fresh insight. Personally I like the same Program Officer, but I am very relational.	
Mixed feelings. maybe rotate every 2 years so a program officer has a chance to build a little more rapport with Agency and build upon last year.	
Mixed feelings. Working exclusively with one program officer would allow us to show growth and progress toward our goals and maturation as an organization more effectively.	
Mixed, I enjoy your team so I don't mind rotating.	
Mixed. If we were to apply for another grant, it would be great to have the same program officer with whom we already have a relationship. However, we would also appreciate expanding our relationship through working with other program officers.	
Mixed. It's a little like changing doctors - you might get a new or fresh perspective, but it's helpful to interact with someone who already knows your history and challenges. All the Program Officers have been intelligent, knowledgeable and helpful people. Over the years I have met with three different Officers and each time I always feel a little disappointed that I don't have the opportunity to meet with the person I am familiar with. That being said, each new Officer has been insightful and great to work with.	
My experience with my Program Officer was very good. I think that there are benefits to rotating the Program Officers but there might be additional time needed at each rotation to bring Officer's up to speed. In the single Program Officer the grantee can build a relationship with a long history, but that's not to say that a rotation would be harmful to building a relationship between the organizations (grantee-grantor) overall.	
Neutral - we have enjoyed working with all the staff we have been paired with.	
No opinion.	
No opinion?	

The Foundation has a policy of rotating Program Officer assignments among grantees in order to deepen grantee relationships with the Foundation. How do you feel about this policy?	
Grantee Comment	
No problem with the policy	
Normally, I wouldn't like it :). However, the quality and depth of interpersonal skills of each program officer with whom I have worked has made this a non-issue.	
Not a problem for us since they seem to communicate well internally.	
Not great. We like our PO.	
Okay with policy.	
One of our core values for both organization operation and in the provision of service and activity is that everything gets done as a result of relationships. Therefore, rotating Program Officer assignments can interrupt the investment that we and the Program Officer make in building a strong relationship. However, there is also value in developing new relationships as long as the Foundation supports the time that must be invested to develop them well.	
One problem with this is that some program officers will not be very familiar with our work and what we do, so it seems to be more challenging to make our case as to why our grant proposal should be funded. Because our community is [one] that is not traditionally considered to have issues, we end up having to not only explain our agency's work and proposal, but also educate the program officer about why our target population is even in need. In one way, it's good because program officers get better educated about the community. But in other ways, it feels like a disadvantage to have to educate a new program officer about a community and issues they might know very little about.	
Only issue would be that the Foundation has never communicated that with us while a grantee. Have never heard from foundation checking in since our award.	
Policy definitely support a broader mutual understanding by both the grantee and the Foundation. It also always the grantee to share its story with multiple people.	
Prefer consistency	
Prefer continuity, but rotation is welcomed	
Prefer to have someone who track so for an extended time	
Prefer to work with one Program Officer	
Probably a good idea in that there could be bias with long term program officers.	
Rotating program officers is also a great idea because it gives organization's/agency's the opportunity to talk to more people of the services provides and the impact they are having in their clients lives.	
Rotation of program officers allowed for different insight to our programs based on site visits and presentations and broadens our relationship with the Foundation overall staff. We welcome this process.	
Seems fine, but warm hand-offs would be preferred.	
Seems helpful so long as the "new" program officer has time to become familiar with the grantees	
Seems like good concept to institutionalize relationships, but frequency of rotation might need to be reviewed in such a policy to ensure solid relationships are initially established.	
Sounds good to me.	
Sounds good!	
Terrific. It's great to get to know all of the program staff.	
That is OK but it is certainly easier to have a program officer who is familiar.	
That might work for the purpose of giving your employees exposure to multiple grantees, or it might help if you have a retention problem within your organization. On our end, while it might not make a difference with regard to the outcome of the original grant application, there might be a lack of continuity when it comes to revisiting goals and expectations. While your program officers might complete reports rather well, there might be a tidbit of information left out of a written report that could resurface during a follow up phone call or a site visit that only the original program officer would know. Depending on how critical that information is to the result of the follow up phone call or site visit, that lack of continuity could have drastic effects for the grantee.	
That seems like a good idea, so that there's more than one connection to the Foundation. My organization had received a grant from Parsons before, but this was my first Parsons application for my organization. One thing to consider is staff transition among the grantees - as executive directors and development staff move, the relationship to Parsons gets disrupted, even if the program officer doesn't change.	
That sounds like a great idea.	

The Foundation has a policy of rotating Program Officer assignments among grantees in order to deepen grantee relationships with the Foundation. How do you feel about this policy?	
Grantee Comment	
The advantage is the opportunity to get to know another Foundation staff member who has a new perspective. The disadvantage is not continuing a meaningful relationship with the previous program officer, so we try to stay connected, in general.	
The downside to this policy is that we have to "start all over" in building knowledge and understanding of our organization with each new relationship.	
the Foundation should allow enough time for the Program Officer and the grantee to build a relationship. Rotating Program Officers can hinder that process.	
There are benefits with both policies, the proposed one and the current one.	
There is clearly a learning curve-Thomas was amazingly thorough. On one hand, I think that having more program officers familiar with our work is a good thing, I believe it increases the work needed to understand the work that we do.	
There is definitely an advantage to this policy in that all of the program officers become more acquainted with an organization and the relationship between the Foundation and the organization has the opportunity to grow deeper. However, there are disadvantages as well. It can take longer for the development officer and the program officer to grow a strong relationship. The program officer must become a generalist that knows hundreds of organizations, rather than a specialist that can become well-versed in one field of interest. By changing program officers each year, we may lose some momentum, knowledge, or lessons learned in those annual transitions. Perhaps the Foundation would consider a hybrid approach that would involve having a program officer assigned for a two to three year period to grow and deepen the shared knowledge and relationships, but still transition every few years to ensure that there are multiple program officers that know each institution.	
This allows the organization to have multiple contacts with the Foundation, which is an advantage for both the Foundation in reviewing proposals, and for the grantee in welcoming a greater number of people to become familiar with what we do.	
This can slice both ways. It's really nice when your PO understands your constraints in running your business. But sometimes fresh eyes help too.	
This field is about people, and at first, I was attached to our Program Officer and was disappointed when they were changed. But as my relationship deepened with another Program Officer, I saw the wisdom of this policy. When a grant cycle ends, I say goodbye but not farewell to our Program Officer, and know that I'll be developing another colleague in the field through the next process.	
This has not affected me personally, but based on my experience with a number of foundations I think it is important to have a consistent program officer involved with the organization. The trust level is deepened, the knowledge is enhanced and the ongoing relationship is beneficial to the organization's need for ongoing guidance and support	
This is a good policy, however, it limits the level of in depth knowledge program officers have regarding an organization. It takes a while for changes and the impact of our work to materialize, so by the time they do, the program officers who helped shepherd the model or initiative are no longer working with the organization due to the rotating policy.	
This is a good policy.	
This is a great way for more than one person in the organization to learn about a grantee's work.	
This is fine, though I would prefer to be in contact with the staff member with whom the conversation originated.	
This is good!	
This is not preferred. I believe this would limit our comfort in calling to address potential challenges that might arise with any given grant, in the unlikely event challenges occurred. In addition, it's important to us that our program officer fully understand our work and why it's important. Some program officers don't correlate our [organization] with true community impact because milestones achieved often span over the course of multiple years.	
This is not standardly the case through other Foundations so we are not able to compare. Although all staff are wonderful, to have one P.O. I feel is nice as they become a familiar voice/face associated to the Foundation.	
This is perfectly fine.	

The Foundation has a policy of rotating Program Officer assignments among grantees in order to deepen grantee relationships with the Foundation. How do you feel about this policy?	
Grantee Comment	
This policy makes sense in that it allows the Foundation to see us through several sets of eyes and it allows us to gain broader perspectives of the Foundation.	
This process is fine.	
This seems reasonable although I have certainly enjoyed working with our present Program Officer.	
This would be fine. However our experience has been long periods between grant invitations (up to 10 years) so it's probably not applicable.	
Thomas Brewer has been fabulous.	
We agree and feel this policy allows up to develop a more robust relationship with the Foundation when we are introduced to more program officers.	
We agree with that policy.	
We appreciate this strategy but it has not been our particular experience.	
We are very open to working all members of the Foundation, but have truly enjoyed the interactive process with E. Thomas Brewer, and his genuine concern for our program and thoughtful inquiry about the program's inter-relatedness to our overall operation. He also expressed encouragement of [our organization] reaching out to the Foundation to explore other ways and means of partnering in the future.	
We believe it has pros and cons. It's great to get to know a few members of the Foundation staff, but it can also cause confusion regarding who to speak to when questions or issues arise. It can also limit your ability to form a close relationship with a Program Officer so that you feel comfortable reaching out when you're facing problems. That said, we also recognize it is important to maintain unbiased opinions so close relationships may not be conducive to that.	
We enjoy meeting the various program officers. All are top notch.	
We find it very helpful.	
We found it made the effectiveness of our communication with the Foundation inconsistent. We experience how important individual, personal relationships are to philanthropy and the opportunity to build stronger relationships with Program Officers at the Foundation make ultimately strengthen our relationship with the Foundation.	
We have always been happy with out program officers.	
We have always enjoyed interacting with new program officers over the years. But our enduring point of contact has always been Wendy Garen, for which we have been very grateful.	
We have been fortunate in that both Wendy and Thomas have been excellent program liaisons. As recipients we do not feel slighted at all. I think it is a great strategy, but only if people of that caliber are in the rotation.	
We have enjoyed working with all assigned staff. Having a new grants officer assigned gave us an opportunity to "reintroduce" our organization.	
We have enjoyed working with different Program Officers. Wendy has also always been accessible and forthcoming. We really enjoy the way the Foundation operates.	
We have enjoyed working with Thomas Brewer, our current Program Officer. His knowledge base, experience, skills and awareness of our field has been beneficial for our organization. We would hope that if the Foundation rotates the Program Officers, that they do it in a collaborative manner whereby the existing Program Officer introduces the new Program Officer either via telephone or site visit.	
We have had positive experiences with all of the program officers we have worked with through the years. Other foundations however who we work with year after year have a wealth of knowledge about our organization and our history and therefore can access our programs and agency better.	
We have only dealt with two Program Officers so I'm not sure how much of an impact the policy has. It did not change my perceptions of the Foundation.	
We have seen the policy at work and think it makes sense both for the program officers to learn and get to know different organizations and for our organizations to make our cases to a variety of people over the years.	
We have worked very well with Wendy and Thomas for the last two grant requests, and are happy to work with any and all foundation staff. Our experience has been very positive with everybody so far!	



The Foundation has a policy of rotating Program Officer assignments among grantees in order to deepen grantee relationships with the Foundation. How do you feel about this policy?
Grantee Comment
We like having someone who is familiar with us and our programs. We are lucky that we had Jennifer Price-Letcher as our grant officer, but we also have a relationship with Wendy Garen. We feel comfortable with Jennifer, but we also benefit from having such a good relationship with Wendy.
We like it either way. It's nice to retain a relationship with one person, but then again, it's nice to connect more broadly and have the relationship stronger that way. While it might feel more comfortable to stick with one person, ultimately the rotation probably makes the whole relationship and process stronger.
We understand the need, but appreciate institutional memory
We welcome sharing our message...with as many program officers as possible.
We welcome the idea of rotating program officers. While we can build a relationship with an program officer as an advocate for our organization, we welcome the opportunity to talk to other staff members about the work we provide and lasting change our services are making in the lives of people we serve.
We welcome the opportunity to meet new program officers but would prefer this happen every 2-3 years rather than every year. Part of having a good relationship is being able to build a rapport over time.
We would be open to this policy.
While I understand the reason behind this policy, it does feel like we are starting from scratch with the Foundation when we have to establish a relationship with a new program officer.
While I was at first disappointed that I would not maintain the same relationship with a program officer year over year, I think it's a great idea on the part of the Foundation to rotate their program officers, both for the Program Officers benefit and the grantees. It is unique from what I have seen as well.
While it is very valuable to foster long-term relationships with Program Officers, rotating assignments allows a breadth of relationship between the Foundation and grantees. Sometimes a fresh perspective from a new Program Officer results in new and interesting ways to present the grantee to the Foundation. If the Program Officer is well-informed about the grantee and its relationship with the Foundation, then the grantee does not need to explain as much background/history to the Program Officer. If the grantee needs to start from scratch with an under-informed Program Officer, it's a bit more challenging. However, we have worked directly with the Executive Director on our grants, so neither situation has arisen with this Foundation.
While we enjoy having one person over a long period of time, we very much appreciate what we learn by meeting several different staff.
While we understand the thought process behind rotating Program Officer assignments, we find it helpful to continue our relationship with the same Program Officer. We believe that person has spent time getting to know us, our work and our challenges. As mentioned previously in this survey, our program officer was helpful to us outside of the grant request process.
Would prefer working with the same Program Officer over time.



THE CENTER  
FOR EFFECTIVE  
PHILANTHROPY

## **The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation**

### **February 2015 Grantee Survey**

#### ***CEP Confidentiality Policy:***

*The Center for Effective Philanthropy has surveyed more than 80,000 grantees of over 300 foundations and always treats responses as **completely confidential**:*

- *We **do not** report or share individual results or identifying characteristics with the Foundation.*
- *We will only report your response in aggregate with other responses.*

**Please respond online by March 20, 2015**

*Please respond to as many questions as possible. Previous respondents have found that this survey takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.*

**Foundations are listening: Your response is very important and will help foundations improve their ability to work with grantees.**

*Please feel free to contact Laurel Mitchell at CEP with any questions:*

*Toll Free: 866-545-0800 ext. 255, or at 617-492-0800 ext. 255*

*Email: [survey@effectivephilanthropy.org](mailto:survey@effectivephilanthropy.org)*

*Thank you for your participation in this study.*

[www.effectivephilanthropy.org](http://www.effectivephilanthropy.org)



## THE RALPH M. PARSONS FOUNDATION – ABOUT YOUR FUNDING

*Please choose a recent grant from The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation (referred to as “the Foundation”) to keep in mind when answering the survey. Choose a grant you know well. If your organization received other grants from the Foundation for which you were not the main contact, other members of your organization may have been asked to fill out the survey for those separate grants.*

### (CUSTOM QUESTIONS)

A. From which of the Foundation’s program areas did you receive your grant? *(Please check only one)*

- ☐ Social Impact
- ☐ Civic and Cultural
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Higher Education
- ☐ Other *(please specify)*: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Don’t know

B. Who was your primary contact at the Foundation for this grant? *(Please select only one)*

- ☐ E. Thomas Brewer
- ☐ Mary Christian (as of July 25, 2014 no longer with the Foundation)
- ☐ Jennifer Price-Letscher
- ☐ Nicole Larsen
- ☐ Ricardo Lima
- ☐ Wendy Garen
- ☐ Don’t know
- ☐ Not listed

C. At this point in time, what is one word that best describes the Foundation? *(Note: this is a standard question that will be added at the end of this section.)*

\_\_\_\_\_





## ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION

1. What is the name of your organization? *(Please note this question is optional. If you indicate your organization's name, your responses will remain **confidential** and your organization's name **will not be shared** with the Foundation.)*

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the approximate annual operating budget of your organization (in U.S. dollars)?

\$    ,    ,    .00

3. Are you currently receiving funding from the Foundation? *(e.g., answer "No" if your grant(s) from the Foundation has ended and you are no longer receiving funding from the Foundation)*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

## GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE FOUNDATION

4. How clearly has the Foundation communicated its goals and strategy to you?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
Not at all clearly ←————→ Extremely clearly

5. Overall, how would you rate the Foundation's impact on your organization?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
No impact ←————→ Significant positive impact

6. Overall, how would you rate the Foundation's impact on your field?

☐ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
Don't know No impact ←————→ Significant positive impact

7. Overall, how would you rate the Foundation's impact on your local community?

☐ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
Don't know No impact ←————→ Significant positive impact



## ABOUT YOUR FUNDING

8. Describe the recent grant from the Foundation about which you are responding.

a. Type of funding: *(Please check only one category)*

- ☐ Program/project support
- ☐ General operating/core support
- ☐ Capital support: building/renovation/endowment support/other
- ☐ Scholarship or research fellowship
- ☐ Technical assistance/capacity building
- ☐ Event/sponsorship funding

b. Total number of years of approved funding for this grant: \_\_\_\_\_ years + \_\_\_\_\_ months

c. Total funding committed in U.S. dollars for this grant:  
*(Please include the full multi-year value committed for this grant)*

\$    ,    ,    ,    .00

9. Which of the following best describes the pattern of your organization's funding relationship with the Foundation? *(Please check only one)*

- ☐ This is the first grant my organization has received from the Foundation
- ☐ My organization has received consistent funding from the Foundation in the past
- ☐ My organization has received inconsistent funding from the Foundation in the past
- ☐ Don't know

10. Which of the following statements best describes the primary effect the receipt of this grant had on your organization's programs or operations? *(Please check only one)*

As a result of receiving this grant...

- ☐ We added program work that was new to the organization
- ☐ We expanded a specific program that already existed
- ☐ We maintained our ability to conduct an existing program that would have otherwise been reduced or discontinued
- ☐ We enhanced our capacity to conduct all of our work
- ☐ Don't know/Not applicable

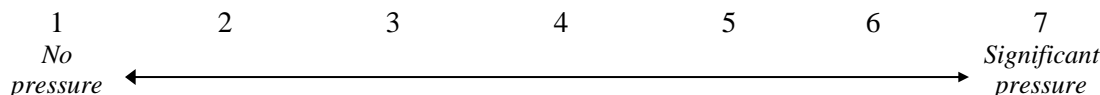
## GRANT SELECTION

11. Did you submit a proposal to the Foundation for this grant?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No *(skip questions 12, 14, and 15)*
- ☐ Don't know *(skip questions 12, 14, and 15)*



12. As you developed your grant proposal, how much pressure did you feel to modify your organization's priorities in order to create a grant proposal that was likely to receive funding?



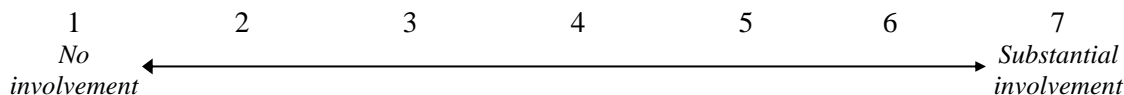
13. Which of the following, if any, were part of the selection process by which your funding request was reviewed? *(Please check all that apply)*

- ☐ Letter of intent/letter of inquiry
- ☐ In-person conversations with Foundation staff at the Foundation's office
- ☐ Phone conversations with Foundation staff
- ☐ Communication about the specific results to be achieved by this grant either in exchanges with Foundation staff (email, phone, or in-person) or within the formal grant proposal
- ☐ Logic Model/Theory of Change
- ☐ None of the above

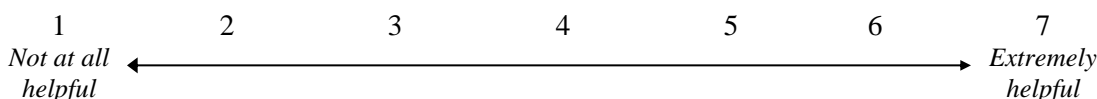
14. How much time elapsed from the submission of the grant proposal to clear **commitment** of funding?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 month   | <input type="checkbox"/> 10 months – 12 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 month – 3 months  | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 12 months   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 months – 6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 months – 9 months |  |

15. How involved was Foundation staff in the development of your grant proposal?



16. How helpful was participating in the Foundation's selection process in strengthening the organization/program funded by the grant?



## GRANT REPORTING/EVALUATION

*Questions 17-20 refer to any reporting or evaluation that occurs after the grant was approved.*

17. Was there or will there be a reporting/evaluation process? *(Please check all that apply)*

- ☐ There was/will be no report/evaluation *(skip to question 21)*
- ☐ Yes, there will be a report/evaluation but it has not occurred yet *(skip to question 21)*
- ☐ Yes, we have participated in a reporting process *(continue to question 18)*
- ☐ Yes, we have participated in an evaluation *(continue to question 18)*
- ☐ Don't know *(skip to question 21)*

18. Was an external evaluator involved in your reporting/evaluation process?

- ☐ Yes                      ☐ No                      ☐ Don't know



19. After submission of your report/evaluation, did the Foundation or the evaluator discuss it with you?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

20. How helpful was participating in the Foundation's reporting/evaluation process in strengthening the organization/program funded by the grant?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
*Not at all helpful* ← → *Extremely helpful*

## INTERACTIONS WITH THE FOUNDATION

21. How comfortable do you feel approaching the Foundation if a problem arises?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
*Not at all comfortable* ← → *Extremely comfortable*

22. How often do/did you have contact with your program officer during this grant?

☐ Weekly or more often

☐ Once every few months

☐ A few times a month

☐ Yearly or less often

☐ Monthly

23. Who most frequently initiated the contact you had with your program officer during this grant?

☐ Most frequently initiated by your program officer

☐ Most frequently initiated by you

☐ Initiated with equal frequency by your program officer and you

☐ Don't know

24. Did the Foundation conduct a site visit during the selection process or during the course of this grant?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

25. Please estimate the total number of hours you and your staff spent on each of the following activities related to this grant from the Foundation.

a. Grant proposal creation and selection process:

☐ \_\_\_\_\_ hours

*OR*

☐ Did not occur

b. Foundation-required grant monitoring, reporting, and evaluation:

☐ \_\_\_\_\_ hours

*OR*

☐ Did not occur



26. Please indicate whether you used any of the following resources, and if so how helpful you found each. *(Please check all that apply and note that the Foundation may or may not offer each of the following resources.)*

	We used:	How helpful was it? (1= Not at all helpful, 7= Extremely helpful)
The Foundation's published funding guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
The Foundation's website	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Group meetings with Foundation staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Individual communication with Foundation staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Other <i>(please specify)</i> : _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>	

27. How consistent was the information provided by different communication resources, both personal and written, that you used to learn about the Foundation?

<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Used one or no resources</i>	<i>Not at all consistent</i>						<i>Completely consistent</i>

28. Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions, and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation. *(You are not limited in the length of your response.)*

---



---



---

29. Has your main contact at the Foundation changed in the past six months?

☐ Yes                      ☐ No                      ☐ Not applicable

## YOUR FUNDER'S IMPACT ON YOUR ORGANIZATION AND YOUR FIELD

30. Please indicate all types of non-monetary assistance, if any, you received (from staff or a third party paid for by the Foundation) associated with this funding. **Please note the Foundation may or may not provide any of the following types of assistance.**

☐ No other assistance was provided.

### **MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE**

	We received:
General management advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategic planning advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial planning/accounting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of performance measures	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **FIELD-RELATED ASSISTANCE**

Encouraged/facilitated collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------------------	--------------------------



- Insight and advice on your field ☐
- Introductions to leaders in the field ☐
- Provided research or best practices ☐
- Provided seminars/forums/convenings ☐

**OTHER ASSISTANCE**

- Board development/governance assistance ☐
- Information technology assistance ☐
- Communications/marketing/publicity assistance ☐
- Use of the Foundation's facilities ☐
- Staff/management training ☐
- Assistance securing funding from other sources ☐
- Other (*please specify*): \_\_\_\_\_ ☐

31. How much, if at all, did the Foundation improve your ability to sustain the work funded by this grant in the future?

☐ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
*Don't know/* *Did not* *Substantially*  
*Not applicable* *improve ability* *improved ability*

32. How well does the Foundation understand your organization's strategy and goals?

☐ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
*Don't know* *Limited* *Thorough*  
*understanding* *understanding*

33. How well does the Foundation understand the field in which you work?

☐ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
*Don't know* *Limited* *Regarded*  
*understanding* *of the field* *as an expert*  
*of the field* *in the field*

34. How well does the Foundation understand the local community in which you work?

☐ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
*Don't know/* *Limited* *Regarded*  
*Not applicable* *understanding* *as an expert*  
*of the community* *of the community* *on the community*

35. To what extent has the Foundation advanced the state of knowledge in your field?

☐ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
*Don't know* *Not at* *Leads the field*  
*all* *all* *to new thinking*  
*all* *all* *and practice*

36. To what extent has the Foundation affected public policy in your field?

☐ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
*Don't know* *Not at* *Major influence*  
*all* *all* *on shaping*



37. Please comment on the impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact. *(You are not limited in the length of your response.)*

---



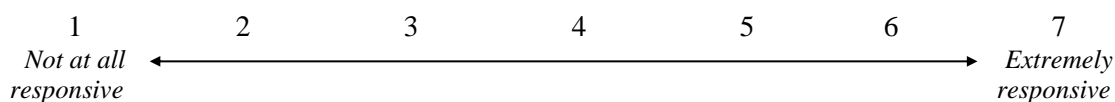
---



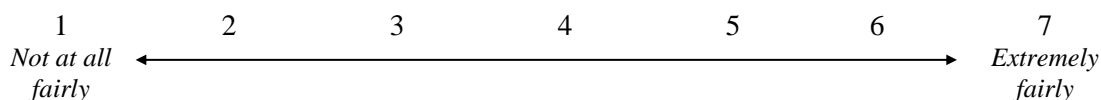
---

## OTHER IMPRESSIONS

38. Overall, how responsive was Foundation staff?



39. Overall, how fairly did the Foundation treat you?



40. What specific improvements would you suggest that would make the Foundation a better funder? *(You are not limited in the length of your response.)*

---



---

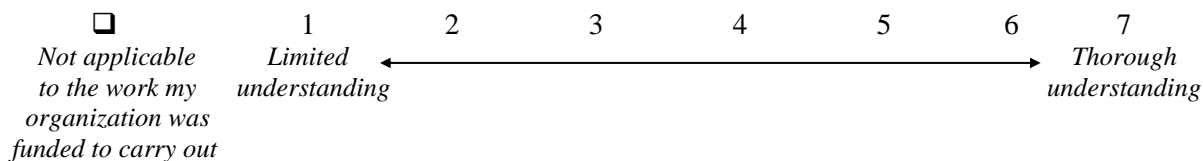


---

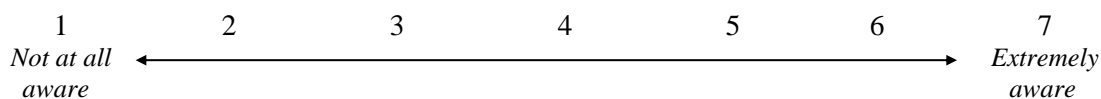
41. At any point during the application or the grant period, did the Foundation and your organization exchange ideas regarding how your organization would assess the results of the work funded by this grant?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Don't know

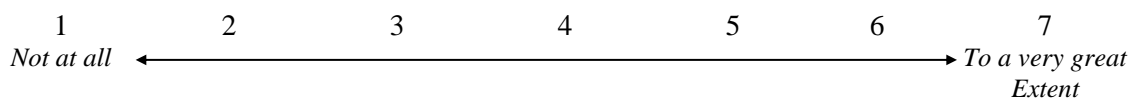
42. How well does the Foundation understand the social, cultural, or socioeconomic factors that affect your work?



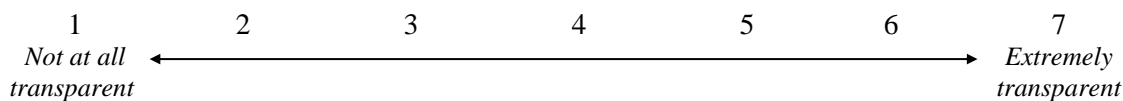
43. How aware is the Foundation of the challenges that your organization is facing?



44. To what extent does the Foundation take advantage of its various resources to help your organization address its challenges?



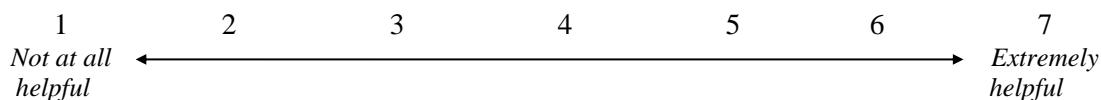
45. Overall how transparent is the Foundation with your organization?



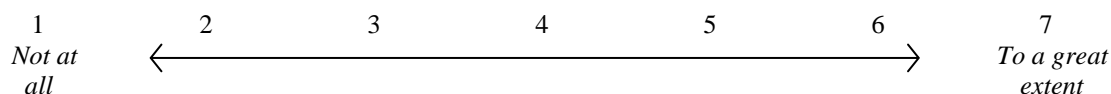
46. Please rate the Foundation's transparency in the following areas

	Not at all transparent					Extremely transparent	
The Foundation's processes for selecting grantees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Any changes that affect the funding your organization might receive in the future	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Best practices the Foundation has learned - through its work or through others' work - about the issue areas it funds	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The Foundation's experiences with what it has tried but has not worked in its past grantmaking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

47. How helpful has the Foundation been to your organization's ability to assess progress towards your organization's goals?



48. To what extent is the Foundation open to ideas from grantees about its strategy?





## THE RALPH M. PARSONS FOUNDATION – ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

- D. Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding the submission of a **Letter of Inquiry (LOI)**:

	Don't know	Strongly disagree				Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly agree
The instructions for submitting an LOI were clear	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A written response was provided in a timely manner	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'd prefer the response to be provided electronically	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'd prefer an electronic only option for both the submission and response	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

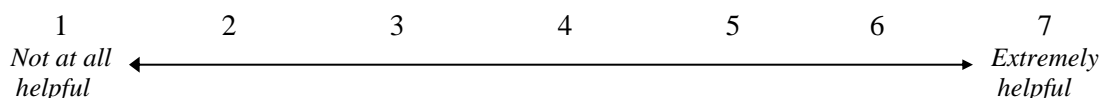
- E. Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding the submission of a **Full Proposal (FP)**:

	Don't know	Strongly disagree				Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly agree
The instructions for submitting an FP were clear	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A written response was provided in a timely manner	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'd prefer the response to be provided electronically	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I'd prefer an electronic only option for both the submission and response	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

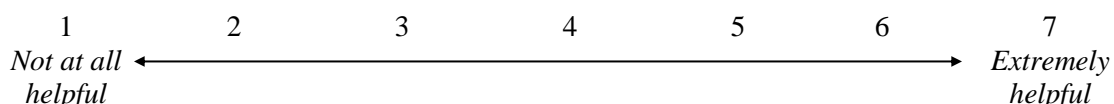
- F. Was a site visit a part of the selection process by which your funding request was reviewed?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (*skip to question H*)
- ☐ I don't know (*skip to question H*)

- G. During the selection process, how helpful was participating in the Foundation's site visit in strengthening the organization/program funded by the grant?



- H. To what extent would your organization find it helpful to use a web-based, online system to submit **grant proposals** to the Foundation?



- I. To what extent would your organization find it helpful to use a web-based, online system to submit **grant reports** to the Foundation?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*Not at all helpful* ←————→ *Extremely helpful*

- J. Based on your experience with other foundations, what advice would you offer The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation as it evaluates the potential uses of an online grant processes in the future? *(You are not limited in the length of your response.)*

---

---

---

- K. The Foundation has a policy of rotating Program Officer assignments among grantees in order to deepen grantee relationships with the Foundation. How do you feel about this policy? *(You are not limited in the length of your response.)*

---

## DEMOGRAPHICS

49. Have you ever been declined funding from the Foundation?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

50. What is your position? *(Please check only one)*

- ☐ Executive Director/CEO
- ☐ Other Senior Management
- ☐ Project Director
- ☐ Development Director

☐ Other Development Staff  
☐ Volunteer  
☐ Other (*please specify*): \_\_\_\_\_

51. What is your gender?

☐ Male  
☐ Female

☐ Other

☐ Prefer not to say

52. What is your race/ethnicity? *(Please check all that apply)*

☐ African-American/Black

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native



- ☐ Asian (including the Indian subcontinent)
- ☐ Caucasian/White
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino
- ☐ Pacific Islander
- ☐ Race/ethnicity not included above
- ☐ Prefer not to say

***Thank you for participating in this important survey. Your time and candid feedback are appreciated.***

