

GRANTEE PARTNERSHIPS: DO AND DON'T

These notes summarize the Foundation's values and philosophy related to grantee engagement and partnerships, with lessons learned through work with grantees and funder colleagues.

DO	DON'T
<p>Exemplify the value of being in service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get into the grantee's shoes; learn from them how to help. • Build trust; be open to feedback, share learning and mistakes; be flexible. • Demonstrate respect through demeanor, actions, and words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forget how you are perceived as a funder. We are unequal partners; this dynamic will affect the information and perspectives available to you. • Say yes or give advice without considering whether the grantee might benefit and become more resilient by solving a challenge for themselves.
<p>Maintain accountability to the Foundation's board and leadership, and to the field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear about expected results. • Apply tough love when appropriate. • Focus on solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neglect to discuss guidelines and guardrails. • Get too far down the road with an organization whose request you may end up having to decline.
<p>Focus on finding partners who stand the best chance of achieving shared goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance enthusiasm with objective assessment. • Take time to support planning processes and analysis to inform new projects and players. • Create space to adjust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume you can "fix" a potential partner who is insufficiently capable or doesn't quite share the goal. • Rush to create new organizations or coalitions; consider what exists and whether potential partners need more time to develop the work on their own.
<p>Be a thought partner, connector, and co-creator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on asking questions. • Recognize that we are working with experts who generally know what's needed. • Remain open to, and value, different perspectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be afraid of or shirk from tough conversations. • Prescribe answers. • Neglect to pay attention to what we can learn from the grantee.
<p>Contribute to a culture of continuous learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus evaluation on improvement. • Share the Foundation's evolution and learning. • Draw on the wisdom and experience of colleagues from the Foundation, partners, and the field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow evaluation to become focused on compliance. • Neglect to engage colleagues in problem solving and learning.
<p>Be prepared to pull the plug if the grantee can't resolve issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and monitor risks from the start so a problem can be addressed before it gets out of hand. • Engage in thoughtful and strategic dialogue with the grantee and its leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become so enamored of a model that you fail to recognize its weaknesses. • Rely on assumptions or neglect to engage in conversations about course corrections. • Let an organization get too big, or expand without first having its house in order.