advisors are limited to three-year terms, and the Springs Foundation chose to create staggered durations to encourage continuity. Francie Close, family member and trustee of the foundation, notes that, “Even those who were very apprehensive about having outsiders involved now acknowledge it’s the best thing going for us. We value their opinions enormously. It’s how we make sure real needs and community voices drive the agenda.”

Other useful strategies exist for families seeking to include the viewpoints of others without asking them to serve on the board or an advisory board. Some of these include:

- Inviting speakers to board meetings or luncheons;
- Meeting with representatives of the local community foundation, Jewish Federation, or United Way to learn about key projects and programs they are involved in;
- Holding a focus group on a specific program area;
- Commissioning or participating in a community needs assessment; and
- Developing a survey of grantees or community leaders about the strengths, weaknesses, and overall effectiveness of the foundation.

Regardless of the strategy chosen, finding ways to include outside perspectives is a proven means of informing family discussions and long-term foundation strategies.

Involving Nonfamily Members and Considering Diversity

While some families choose to include community representatives and other individuals outside the family on one or more advisory committees, a growing number include nonfamily members as official board members of the foundation. According to Trends in Family Foundations Governance, Staffing, and Management from the Council on Foundations, nearly three of five respondents had boards that included nonfamily members (community representatives and/or family or business associates). One family foundation board member explains: “The board members believe that outsiders can

There are many well-documented reasons for including individuals from outside the family and from a variety of backgrounds on the board. Nonfamily board members can enhance the work of the foundation by:

- Bringing specific expertise or experience that is missing from a board;
- Serving as a neutral moderator for family disagreements and discussions;
- Evaluating staff performance when the staff person is a family member;
- Providing an outside perspective, and an intellectual curiosity to the board, expanding the family’s vision for the foundation; and
- Increasing the diversity of the board, and allowing the foundation to be

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**A Statement of Inclusiveness**

One foundation that has actively reflected on the value and importance of diversity is the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, based in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The foundation’s board formally approved the adoption of a Statement on Inclusiveness, which reads in part:

The Foundation has the conviction that inclusiveness benefits everyone and is not only compatible with but also promotes excellence. The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation’s grantmaking policies reflect the belief that organizational performance is greatly enhanced when people with different backgrounds and perspectives are engaged in an organization’s activities and decision-making process.