



Grantee Relationships and Power Dynamics July 8, 2021

Description

Power dynamics are inherent in traditional philanthropy: a funder gives and a grantee receives. This imbalance has the ability to inhibit productive, honest partnerships and stymie successful outcomes. It is often difficult for a grantee to discuss their needs and concerns when their financial future is on the line. Funders must acknowledge these dynamics with grantee partners and learn how to responsibly navigate positions of privilege and power. In this webinar, learn how to build authentic relationships with grantees through trust-based practices and other approaches that will reduce power imbalances and lead to more effective partnerships.

Replay Link

View the webinar [replay here](#).

Summary and Resource List

Webinar Takeaways

Power dynamics are inherent in a funder and grantee relationship. Often nonprofits change their mission to adjust to the funder guidelines for grant dollars they are seeking, to fit the specific grant application or reporting requirements.

Power dynamics also show up as:

- Nonprofits spending many hours on lengthy or complicated applications, instead of dedicating time and resources to their own critical missions
- Grantees are unable to provide truthful feedback to the funder on their relationship, application process, or overall organizational struggles for fear of losing funding
- Organizations are uncomfortable or unable to share what support they truly need
- Funders do not provide opportunities for grantees or those with lived experience to share input or suggested solutions

While these dynamics are often in play, many funders are working against these harmful dynamics to build more trusting, authentic partnerships with their grantees. There are many ways to reduce power dynamics, including:

- Deepen your listening practices and feedback loops
 - Funders can create pathways for feedback with grantees and the communities they serve. [Fund for Shared Insight](#) focuses on nonprofit feedback practice, funder listening, participatory grantmaking, and other strategies for building meaningful connections between philanthropy, nonprofits, and individuals and communities.
 - Learn more from their [resources](#).

- Employ trust-based philanthropy practices
 - There are six practices of trust-based philanthropy:
 - Give Multi-Year Unrestricted Funding: general operating support provides greater flexibility to put funding to work where it's needed most
 - Do the Homework: funders should spend the time getting to know their grantees
 - Simplify & Streamline Paperwork: reduce unnecessary and burdensome application and reporting requirements
 - Be Transparent & Responsive: open communication and transparency builds trust between funder and grantee partners
 - Solicit & Act on Feedback: funders should solicit feedback from those with lived experience and listen to their expertise of their grantee partners
 - Offer Support Beyond the Check: funders can provide non-monetary support that increases grantee's organizational capacity.
 - Learn more from the [Trust-Based Philanthropy Project](#).
- See your partners as people, professionals, and subject matter experts
 - Where you meet, how you dress, and how you approach conversations with partners matters. Meeting grantees where they are—literally and figuratively—is helpful.
 - Be responsive to emails, calls, and other forms of communication
 - Create platforms for grantees to speak directly to board members and other principal decision makers

Resources

- [100% That CEO: Self-love in the Social Sector](#) (Philanthropy Network Greater Philadelphia, 2020)
- [A Rebalancing Act: How Funders Can Address Power Dynamics](#) (NPC, 2020)
- [Bridging the Power Divide: How Family Funders Share and Shift Power](#) (NCFP, 2019)
- [Claneil Foundation](#)
- [The Case for General Operating Support](#) (The Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2018)
- [The Dance of Deceit](#) (SSIR, 2004)
- [Ensuring that Our Help Does No Harm](#) (The Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2017)
- [Fund for Shared Insight](#)
- [How Claneil Foundation Puts Relationships into Practice](#) (NCFP, 2020)
- [Listening & Feedback: A Funder Action Menu](#) (Fund for Shared Insight)
- [Listening, Learning, Reassessing: Translating Potential to Effectiveness](#) (The Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2019)
- [Moving from Deceit to Trust: The Necessity of Listening](#) (The Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2021)
- [Nord Family Foundation](#)
- [Power Dynamics in Family Philanthropy](#) (NCFP, 2020)
- [Power Moves](#) (National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy)
- [Putting Grantees at the Center of Philanthropy](#) (GEO and SSIR Blog Series)
- [Seven Habits of Excellent Work with Grantees: Practical Tips for Program Staff](#) (William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, 2020)
- [Trust-Based Philanthropy Project](#)

Featured Speakers



Anthony Richardson is executive director of The Nord Family Foundation and oversees the foundation's day-to-day operations including fiscal management, program development, strategic direction and community relations.

Prior to joining the foundation in 2015, Anthony served as a councilman at-large in the City of Lorain, where he was the youngest person of color elected to an At-Large seat in the city's history. During his second term, Anthony served as chairman of the Police, Fire, and Legislative Standing Committee, and sponsored legislation to increase hiring goal percentages for racial minorities and women on city projects. In 2012, Anthony served as the civic and political chair for the Lorain City Schools

Levy Committee, which helped the school district pass its first levy for new operating dollars since 1992. Later that year, Anthony was invited by the Obama Administration to attend a "Working Meeting on Fiscal Cliff" at the White House. In 2017, he was appointed by Ohio's Superintendent of Public Instruction to serve as chairman of the Lorain Academic Distress Commission, a joint local and state committee established to turnaround Lorain City School District.

On a national level, Anthony serves as a board member for Funders Together to End Homelessness, The Center for Effective Philanthropy and The Corella & Bertram F. Bonner Foundation. He is also a Philanthropy Ohio board member.

In 2017, Anthony received Philanthropy Ohio's Emerging Philanthropist Award. He is also featured in The Chronicle of Philanthropy's "The Influencers: People Quietly Changing the Nonprofit World."

Anthony holds a bachelor's degree from Oberlin College and a juris doctorate from The Ohio State University's Michael E. Moritz College of Law.



Melinda Tuan is Fund for Shared Insight's managing director, guiding and facilitating the collaborative's operations, communications, grantmaking, evaluation, and more. As an independent consultant to senior leadership at philanthropic organizations around the country, Melinda promotes, crafts, and implements strategies for effective philanthropy. Prior to starting her consulting practice in 2003, Melinda co-founded and ran REDF, a social-venture capital fund; served as a manager at a national healthcare nonprofit; and worked as a management consultant. She enthusiastically brings her unique combination of business, leadership, evaluation, and management skills to helping mission-oriented organizations meet their goals, care for

people, and better the world in which we live.



Mailee Walker became executive director of the Claneil Foundation in 2007. Prior to joining the Claneil Foundation, she was vice president, communication/program officer of the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation. She previously served as executive director of the Stanford Medical Youth Science Program and project coordinator for the Neighborhood Improvement Initiative in California. Mailee serves as a board member of Ones Up and The Philadelphia Award. She is an advisory board member for the Center for Effective Philanthropy. She is a member of Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, and Asian Mosaic Fund Giving Circle. Mailee earned a BA in urban studies from Stanford University and an MBA in change management from the Wharton Graduate School of Business. She is an alumna of the Coro

Fellows Program, the Center on Philanthropy's Jane Addams Fellowship, and Leadership Philadelphia.