

NCFP CEO Cohort Councils

The NCFP CEO Cohort Councils will offer a structured process for participants to think more expansively about a current challenge or dilemma they are facing in their role. Each Cohort will be made up of a group of four CEOs sharing characteristics (age or size of foundation, years in role, etc.) or specific interest areas (working with board, managing staff, etc.).

The goal of this peer consultancy structure is to provide a safe space for each CEO participant to a) present a challenge to the group and receive concrete, helpful feedback from peers, and b) be an active listener and share guidance and advice to their other cohort members.

Cohorts will be assigned by NCFP staff and will meet for 90 minutes at each Cohort Council session. Each of the four Council participants will have 20 minutes to share a dilemma or challenge, answer clarifying questions with the group, listen to proposed solutions, and plan next steps.

This framework encourages each presenter to listen to ideas and advice without defaulting to statements like “Oh, I have already tried that” or “That would never work at my foundation.” The dilemma should be something the presenter is truly struggling with, often lacking a clear, concrete solution.

“This was SUCH a helpful, engaging and purposeful exercise. PLEASE continue to offer these. I gained such practical ideas and takeaways from my colleagues in the group.”

2021 CEO Retreat Participant

20 Minute Peer Consultancy Agenda Outline

The following agenda will be run four times in each 90-minute Cohort Council session:

1. Presenter states the dilemma, and frames a key question he/she wants answered by the group. (5 minutes)
2. The group identifies key stakeholders and asks presenter additional clarifying or probing questions about the dilemma (not judgement or advice), presenter provides short answers. At the end, the presenter may choose to reframe the key question. (5 minutes)
3. The group discusses the dilemma aloud with each other, thinking through solutions and providing other positive, constructive feedback. The presenter turns off their camera and microphone and takes notes without editorializing or responding. (7 minutes)
4. Presenter reads back to the group the suggestions he/she heard, noting which seem most feasible in the short-term. (3 minutes)