



2014 – 2017

STRATEGIC PLAN

CONNECTICUT COUNCIL FOR PHILANTHROPY

Connecticut Council for Philanthropy

Strategic Plan 2014-2017

Executive Summary

Background

Over its 45-year history, the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy has become a statewide association whose members include philanthropic organizations of all types, and whose mission is to promote and support effective philanthropy for the public good.

The past two decades have seen the Council expand from a Hartford-centered organization to a statewide membership organization composed of more than 110 philanthropic organizations representing almost \$4 billion in assets and \$348 million in annual grantmaking. It functions as a network for funders, connecting grantmakers to address issues both individually and collectively; a resource for grantmaking, where funders can access critical information and services; and a voice for philanthropy, representing the philanthropic sector to key audiences and raising the understanding of the role and impact of philanthropy in the state. In addition, the Council has joined its peers in national conversations about philanthropy, elevating Connecticut's philanthropic voice and influence.

Now, with a new leader at the helm, the Council has reexamined its challenges, opportunities, and aspirations in a planning effort designed to take the organization to a new level of excellence and effectiveness.

Mission

The Connecticut Council for Philanthropy is an association of grantmakers committed to promoting and supporting effective philanthropy for the public good.

Our Commitments

- To be a leader and catalyst for philanthropic action in response to community issues
- To facilitate the regular exchange of ideas, experiences, information, and expertise among Connecticut grantmakers
- To be a reliable source of knowledge and education about philanthropy for Connecticut's grantmakers; national, state, and local leaders; and the general public
- To increase public understanding of the value and impact of philanthropy

Our Values

The Connecticut Council for Philanthropy believes in encouraging philanthropy that is guided by the values of transparency, accessibility, ethical conduct, and responsiveness to diverse populations.

Further, we value a diverse workforce and diverse leadership because we believe that this enriches and elevates our work and community.

Our Goals

Grow the Council

The Council's ability to be the thought leader and voice for philanthropy in Connecticut, and to marshal the sector's response to challenges or opportunities, depends to some extent on the proportion of the state's philanthropic organizations that are Council members. At present, the Council's membership consists of 111 organizations—out of a total of 1,500 foundations in the state. Clearly, there is abundant opportunity to grow the Council's membership, and we look to our current members to be partners in attracting others to the Council so that we continue to strengthen our collective voice and impact.

The changing field of philanthropy requires the Council to imagine how it will work with new models, structures, and types of philanthropists: high net worth individuals, venture philanthropy networks, social enterprises, and others besides the traditional foundations and corporate giving programs currently within its membership. The Council will work to bring these new types of funders into the conversation and leverage their resources to help build a stronger, more sustainable and more equitable state.

Reimagine Leadership

When asked to articulate their vision for the Council, board and Council members have emphasized that leader is the most important role the Council plays. Over the past decade, government has increasingly turned to the Council leadership for input on public policy issues ranging from human services to early childhood to disaster response to nonprofit accountability. Focusing the Council's leadership role on matters that concern the entire philanthropic community, or that are a priority for the broad public good and a majority of our members, will make the best use of resources and ensure that the Council's influence is used strategically.

The Council embraces the role of convener, voice, and mobilizer of the philanthropic community and provides its members with a centralizing force that brings together like-minded funders and fosters their collaboration and collective action. The Council will reduce its role as leader in and among the many networks and affinity groups it supports. Instead, the Council will support the identification and development of leaders from among the members of these networks and affinity groups. By doing this, the Council will create opportunities for leadership to arise from deeper levels within its member organizations, where previously it was concentrated among those at the top level. The desirable outcomes of this evolution are many: development of an active "bench" of leaders who can engage on a wider level with their colleagues statewide and build their skills; opening up leadership opportunities for a more diverse population of foundation staffers; bringing new and different voices into larger roles in the work, enabling more to be done in service to the common welfare of our state.

The Council will maintain and reinforce its voice in the national conversation about philanthropy. Connecticut's philanthropic community has success stories to share, policy positions to advance, and ideas to promote, and the Council is its vehicle to elevate them to the national stage. This role is increasingly important as state level action has become more the central force driving national policy.

Become the Idea Hub

Because of its position as a conduit between its members at the grassroots level and its peers at the national level, the Council is a natural hub where ideas are exchanged, research is disseminated, lessons learned are examined, and best practices are showcased and promoted. This activity is vital to the sector and needs to continue and expand.

The Council will prioritize its programmatic offerings, using input from its members and the Program Committee to focus on topics and types of presentations that are timely and relevant to most. It will capitalize on the expertise of its individual members and ask them to take the lead in organizing presentations in their areas of interest and knowledge. The Council will also continue to serve as a central communicator for members who are presenting programming that may be of value to others.

The Council will continue to push out new thinking that may challenge old assumptions and give rise to different and more effective approaches to philanthropy. Its connections on the national philanthropic scene with colleagues, affinity groups and resources will provide access to ideas and practices that will be brought to the attention and consideration of the Connecticut funding community. The Council is the place where new ideas and higher level conversations about philanthropy are encouraged.

Conclusion

Over the next three years, the Council's board and staff will focus their energy on achieving the goals identified in the strategic plan: growing membership, reimagining leadership, and serving as a conduit for knowledge and ideas for and from Connecticut's philanthropic sector. In addition, the Council is taking steps to ensure its sustainability as a resource for its members and the state as a whole. Specific outcome measurements have been established that will enable the board to evaluate progress toward the goals and make course adjustments as conditions warrant them.

As the Council embarks upon the implementation of this plan, the input and participation of its members will be essential for success. By leveraging the wealth of knowledge, experience, influence, energy, and commitment contained in its membership, the Council will reach new heights in its ability to galvanize Connecticut's philanthropic sector into an even more powerful force for positive change.