

Preparing for Succession by Preparing the Next Generation

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We survey our members regularly to learn about their grantmaking, governance, investments, and administration. We also learn what keeps our members up at night. What consistently tops the list? *Succession*, or the crucial task of passing the leadership baton. Whether involving the next generation, a new board member, or a new hire, successful succession is no small feat.

Building a pipeline of philanthropic talent to assume key leadership roles—on the board, on staff, or otherwise—is one way to position your philanthropy well for succession. Through our Next Gen Fellows Program, a 6-month training intensive for philanthropy's future leaders, we've been lucky enough to have a window onto what readies the next generation for great work in the field.

Whether you're a future leader, a founder interested in passing the torch, or a seasoned professional looking to hire Gen Y staff, we have tips for you.

Our thanks to members of Exponent Philanthropy's inaugural 2013 Next Gen Fellows Program for some of the insights here. To learn about the 2014 Next Gen Fellows Program for yourself or a young person in your life, see exponentphilanthropy.org. The program begins June 23, and applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Find a Community of Peers

Philanthropy can be a lonely enterprise at times, and particularly so for young people. Connecting with a community of trusted peers can build confidence and make all the difference.

As Dana Karlsson Champion of The Cedar Tree Foundation (cedartreefound.org) put it after participation in our Next Gen Fellows Program, "Everyone helps each other. You end up with both a sounding board and a cheerleading section."

Luckily, there are great ways to connect locally and nationally with young people involved in giving.

In your home community, look for local chapters of Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy (EPIP; epip.org) and Young Nonprofit Professionals Network

(YNPN; ynpn.org). For example, here in Washington, DC, EPIP just hosted the gathering *Impact Investing 101*. YNPN's recent offerings include the workshops *Understanding Self: Building a Foundation for Your Leadership* and *Finance: Building & Managing Your Budgets to Mission*.

You might also find a giving circle for young people at your local community foundation. For example, in Durham, NC, the Triangle Community Foundation (trianglecf.org) runs The Beehive Collective, a giving circle for young women engaged in their community; it also hosts a giving circle for younger African American men.

Nationally, put your Exponent Philanthropy membership to work! We're always happy to connect you with younger members of our network, or tell you more about our trainings and other resources for members of the next generation and those who work with them.

Says Laurel Williams of Striive, Inc., a next generation chief operating officer, "Our time to become leaders

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and advocates is quickly approaching, and our task at hand is large and extremely important. Don't go it alone."

Educate Yourself From Within Your Organization and Beyond

Giving well—thoughtfully, strategically, and effectively—is not easy, and making time for education is crucial.

Here are areas to consider that are of particular interest to the next generation.

- **Your history**—Contrary to the common concern that a younger generation will move philanthropy in new and potentially frightening directions, we find the next generation to be keen to understand and respect history. Create space for your stories to be shared.
- **Legal matters**—For foundations in particular, the legalities of giving are complex and often counter-intuitive. Understanding the basics in this arena is crucial.
- **Investments**—Many next generation leaders are hungry to understand investments—and often raise questions about aligning investments with mission—but may lack the background or the confidence to ask the right questions. Consider carving out time for your investment professionals to educate the next generation one-on-one, or secure this essential training from outside parties.
- **Strategies beyond dollars**—Research tells us that Gen X, Gen Y, and beyond are interested in being hands-on in their giving, not wanting to simply write checks. Are there opportunities for your future leaders to organize site visits? Provide technical assistance to grantees? Participate in an upcoming nonprofit convening?
- **Trends**—From crowdfunding to design thinking, learning about the trends affecting today's philanthropy allows younger leaders to keep the giving timely and bring fresh ideas to the table.
- **Impact**—Today's younger generations are quick to question the difference philanthropy is making. Make it a priority to learn about ways to move philanthropy toward greater impact and assess your progress.

Where and how to get this education?

Great sources abound, from our resources and those of our colleague organizations (e.g., Council on Foundations, National Center for Family Philanthropy,

Grantmakers for Effective Organizations) to publications like the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* and dozens of philanthropy blogs. You'll also find local learning opportunities through regional associations of grantmakers and topical learning opportunities through various philanthropy affinity groups. Nonprofit resource centers in many communities also offer short and low-cost trainings relevant to funders.

Start with one or two sources that pique your interest; they are sure to lead to others.

What happens when young leaders become educated? They are more willing to step up and speak up, bringing fresh perspectives, knowledge, and energy to the philanthropic enterprise.

"If we're passionate, informed, and vocal we can really make a difference in philanthropy," says Campion.

Share Power and Responsibility, Really

To *truly* open the door to next generation leaders, you must share power and responsibility. And yes, this means things may change.

"Current funders have to really trust that younger generations will not only be enthusiastic about answering their call to philanthropic service," says Alexis Marion of the Frieda C. Fox Family Foundation (fcfox.org), "they will also be able to continue the work of those before them."

Whether it's web design or social media or passion for a particular community or giving area, harness the excitement young leaders bring to the table, and find suitable—and real—roles for them to play in your philanthropy.

"People rise to the standards they are held to," says Lucy Cantwell of New Belgium Family Foundation, "so something like a silent seat at the table so younger folks can see how things work (but no bump up in voting power) isn't good enough in my opinion. It doesn't ask enough from the younger folks."

Sharing power and responsibility is a two-way street, of course. For young people, whether a paid staff member, a volunteer, or a member of a giving family, make it a priority to get clear about your own voice, your own passions, and your own connection to your philanthropic endeavor. Gaining this clarity helps you contribute more effectively to the philanthropic effort at hand, and to make it your own.

So go ahead. Take the leap. Make it your own. Succession is a certainty in most philanthropic endeavors, and everyone fares better with good preparation.