Rural Philanthropy - Thinking like a rural funder!?

Views from the Field - Navigating the Rural Philanthropy Landscape

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What are we doing?

• Interviewing and surveying committed rural funders from all over the country

• Profiling completed and current major rural funder initiatives

• Surveying and interviewing national rural associations on how they would best see the value of philanthropic investment

• Field trip case studies for on the ground picture of what innovative rural philanthropy looks like

• Developing recommendations for new rural philanthropic learning structures

• Developing recommendations for one-stop shop web site for rural philanthropic sharing

• Identifying effective rural leadership models

• Blogging on our site and for curated email list of over 1000. Regular blogs for Exponent Philanthropy and starting in May for Daily Yonder.
In their quest to cultivate a renewed sense of civil society, Americans often look to urban areas for examples of what is and isn’t working in terms of bridging divides and bringing.

Rural communities may be left out of philanthropic funding for increased equity, but they’re precisely where equitable solutions are being created.

Philanthropies that focus on rural communities in Colorado, Oregon and Texas say they work more through organizers and “embedded staff” and less through gatekeeping program officers. “We no longer have program officers; we have community partners,” says one foundation official.
Defining Rural

Rural is as local people define – it’s geographic AND cultural.
Ten Tenets of Effective Rural Philanthropy
Perceptions

Political and value differences are understood in context but do not serve as barriers
Diversity and Equity – Multi-dimensional

• Work reflects and informed by the diversity of the rural communities

• Rural equity is multi-dimensional
Equity

• Racial equity
• Equity of opportunity
• Equitable economic inclusion
• Distribution of civic power
Policy Considerations (!)
Place and Issue

Place-up vs Initiative-down
Rural Grantees

Grantees will - and must - look differently than in urban
Rural Leadership

Leaders might look and sound different

Photo courtesy of Coalfield Development Corporation
Inter-area Collaboration

Working across rural towns is necessary but often difficult because of history
Language Matters
Program Models

Evidence-based is often not relevant in rural work
Value of Field Work

Get out of the office (!)
How can rural-serving health non-profits better connect with funders?
1. Via state associations, state offices of rural health and – importantly – state offices that are not health specific, e.g. transportation, education, commerce.
2. Bringing together like-minded organizations on a regional basis to provide funders with scale.
3. Inviting funders to see your stories of rural community success and assets – not focusing on deficits.
4. Understanding the funder landscape operating in your region – i.e. family foundations, community foundations, local and regional healthcare conversion foundations composition and proximity.
Resources

• Rural Health Information Hub - https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/
• Daily Yonder - https://www.dailyyonder.com/
• Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (from HRSA) - https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/index.html
• GrantCraft - http://www.grantcraft.org/
• Inside Philanthropy - https://www.insidephilanthropy.com/
• Non-Profit Quarterly - https://nonprofitquarterly.org/
• Grantmakers for Children, Youth & Families - http://www.gcyf.org/
• Grantmakers in Health - http://www.gih.org/
Where to find us...

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