2015 Center for Effective Philanthropy Grantee Perception Report

Since 2006, the Foundation has partnered with the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) every other year to survey grantees about their perceptions of, and experience with, the Foundation. Responses to the survey are compiled into CEP’s Grantee Perception Report (GPR), which CEP has designed to provide comprehensive, actionable feedback for the Foundation. The Foundation’s grantees are critically important partners in our efforts to build a Culture of Health, and our success depends significantly on them. The survey includes a range of questions that are fielded among grantees of all 300 foundations that participate in the GPR, as well as some questions that are only asked of RWJF’s grantees.

An advantage of CEP’s survey is that it allows us to compare ourselves with our philanthropic peers. We created a custom comparison group of 14 foundations that have more than $1 billion in assets each and whose grantmaking is similar in size and scope to RWJF’s.

The 2015 GPR includes data from grantees who were funded by the Foundation at any point during 2014. CEP fielded the survey in early 2015; 414 grantees responded, a 55 percent response rate, which is higher than for our peer funders.

The charts in this overview will highlight grantees’ perceptions in four key areas. These are: (1) grantee relationships—fairness in treatment and responsiveness of Foundation staff; (2) communication of our goals, strategy, and funding guidelines; (3) advancing knowledge and providing objective information; and (4) influencing leaders across sectors to prioritize health. Data is also provided on the median amount of time grantees spend on the proposal and selection process. Where applicable, comparisons among peer funders will be referenced.

The findings from the 2015 GPR paint a generally positive picture of the Foundation and our work. In most areas, we are doing roughly the same or better than in 2013. We also continue to do very well compared with our peers in several key areas. Three findings warrant further monitoring. First, we need to track how grantees rate the Foundation in providing objective information. On this question, our results are similar to 2013, but down from 2011. This finding could be explained by the new Culture of Health strategy, which may be viewed as a shift away from our legacy of work providing timely and objective analyses in key fields. We will need to continue to monitor this issue and ensure our grantees know that we will continue to support such important work as we build a Culture of Health. A second area we will want to watch is our influence on leaders in health and health care, which has declined since 2011. Finally, the clarity of guidelines about our funding priorities fell significantly in 2015. This is not unexpected, given our new strategic direction, but we will look for this question to swing upward in subsequent years. Due to the limited opportunities for deeper analysis in the GPR, we plan to explore these issues more deeply in our forthcoming reputation survey, which we expect to field in 2016.

As we have historically, we will share the findings from the survey widely within the Foundation and make them available externally as part of our commitment to transparency. The GPR feedback provides us the information we need to ensure that our flywheel maintains momentum and we continue to power toward progress.

Relationships

Below are two of the measures that the Center for Effective Philanthropy includes in their larger construct of "relationships." In each area, grantee ratings increased in 2015, and we continue to surpass the average of our peer funder group.

† Questions of the perception of grantee-funder relationships include:
- Fairness: Overall, how fairly did the Foundation treat you?
- Responsiveness: Overall, how responsive was Foundation staff?

† All survey questions ask respondents to rank the Foundation using a Likert Scale of 1 to 7, with 1 signaling no agreement and 7, strong agreement. Values depicted on this chart are of the percentage of grantees that responded with a 6 or 7.
Communication

Perceptions of our communications with grantees remains important to monitor as the Culture of Health strategy is embraced and amplified in their work. The increase in the clarity of our goals and objectives is particularly notable, given this new strategic direction. The lower value of grantee perceptions of clarity of Foundation funding guidelines suggest there is opportunity for clearer and more concise information as we continue to implement our new strategy.

Questions of the perception of funder-grantee communications include:

- **Clarity of Foundation Communication of Goals and Strategy:** How clearly has the Foundation communicated its goals and strategy to you?

- **Clarity of Guidelines about Funding:** How would you assess the clarity of RWJF’s guidelines for what it will and will not fund? (Note: This is a custom question fielded only about RWJF grantees, thus there is no value for Peer Funders.)

*All survey questions ask respondents to rank the Foundation using a Likert Scale of 1 to 7, with 1 signaling no agreement and 7, strong agreement. Values depicted on this chart are of the percentage of grantees that responded with a 6 or 7.*
Reputation

The Foundation has a strong history of providing support to advance knowledge in the fields in which we work and of providing objective information. These constructs are critically important, given the importance of the knowledge development and dissemination needed to build a Culture of Health. Slightly lower values in each of these areas signal that continued monitoring will be important, and we will use our 2016 reputational survey to explore these issues more deeply.

Questions of the perception of the Foundation’s reputation in the fields in which grantees work include:

- Advancing knowledge in grantees’ fields: To what extent has the Foundation advanced the state of knowledge in your field?
- Providing objective information: Thinking about the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, how strongly do you associate the Foundation with the ability to provide objective information? (Note: This is a custom question fielded only about RWJF grantees, thus there is no value for Peer Funders.)

All survey questions ask respondents to rank the Foundation using a Likert Scale of 1 to 7, with 1 signaling no agreement and 7, strong agreement. Values depicted on this chart are of the percentage of grantees that responded with a 6 or 7.
Influencing Leaders

Our ability to support and influence leaders within health and health care and across sectors is an essential part of our work to build momentum for our movement to improve population health, well-being, and equity. A new question that we added in 2015 asks grantee perceptions of our ability to influence leaders across sectors to prioritize health. Both measures signal opportunities for the Foundation to increase our support of leaders in different fields.

† Questions ask grantees' perception of the Foundation's ability to influence leaders to prioritize health. These include leaders of:

- health and health care organizations
- across sectors

(Note, these are custom questions fielded among RWJF grantees, thus there are no values for Peer Funders.)

† All survey questions ask respondents to rank the Foundation using a Likert Scale of 1 to 7, with 1 signaling no agreement and 7, strong agreement. Values depicted on this chart are of the percentage of grantees that responded with a 6 or 7.
Time Spent on Proposal and Selection Processes

Data on the Foundation’s internal processes have provided, and will continue to provide, useful feedback. The range of time that grantees indicate spending across program areas on proposals and related tasks signals that we may need to streamline application processes.

Grantees were asked to estimate the number of hours spent on their proposal and related tasks in advance of getting an award letter from the Foundation.