

Coaching and Philanthropy

AN ACTION GUIDE FOR GRANTMAKERS

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AN ACTION GUIDE FOR GRANTMAKERS

Produced in partnership by

CompassPoint
NONPROFIT SERVICES

**Leadership
that Works**
COACHING AND TRAINING FOR VISIONARIES

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INFORMING CHANGE

With support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The Harnisch Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund.



GRANTMAKERS FOR EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS

Grantmakers for Effective Organizations is a community of more than 350 grantmakers challenging the status quo in their field to help grantees achieve more. Understanding that grantmakers are successful only to the extent that their grantees achieve meaningful results, GEO promotes strategies and practices that contribute to grantee success. More information on GEO and a host of resources and links for grantmakers are available at www.geofunders.org.

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About the Coaching and Philanthropy Project

In partnership with Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, BTW *informing change* and Leadership that Works, CompassPoint Nonprofit Services launched the Coaching and Philanthropy Project to assess and advance coaching as a strategy for building effective nonprofit organizations.

The CAP Project is a deep dive into learning about the nonprofit sector's support for and use of coaching, something no one has examined to this extent before. The result is a large body of information and ideas that the CAP Project seeks to consolidate and share with peers in the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors and in the field of coaching.

This guide draws on data that we have collected for more than three years as part of the second phase of the CAP Project. During this period we have gathered information and suggestions from hundreds of individuals, including nonprofit leaders who have received coaching, coaches who have provided coaching to nonprofit leaders, intermediaries and others who arrange for nonprofit coaching, and grantmakers who support coaching in a variety of ways for their nonprofit grantees.

Research for the CAP Project included four different surveys completed by nearly 300 respondents, two dozen interviews, and focus groups and listening sessions with more than 50 individuals. This data collection effort built on the first phase of the CAP Project, which assessed the prevalence and types of support for nonprofit coaching.

Since coaching in the nonprofit sector is a fairly new practice, much of our research has looked at the early adopters of coaching — that is, grantmakers, nonprofits and coaching providers that are experimenting with various approaches as they try to determine when coaching works best and what methods and strategies are most effective.

The CAP Project is funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The Harnisch Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund.



Online Toolkit at www.compasspoint.org/coaching.

Also available from www.geofunders.org.

Acknowledgments

The CAP Project partners thank everyone who informed this work, including all those individuals who participated in our many data collection efforts, as well as the individuals listed here, who provided invaluable insight into the context of this work:

John Bennett, Lee Hecht Harrison
Michael Carr, Social Advocates for Youth
Cynthia Chavez, LeaderSpring
Ann Deaton, DaVinci Resources
Edie Farwell, Sustainability Institute
Belma González, B Coaching & Consulting
Stephanie McAuliffe, David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Paula Morris, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund
Rick Moyers, Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation
Peter Reding, Foundation for Inspired Learning
Rich Snowdon, Life Coach for Nonprofit Leaders
Shiree Teng, David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Judith Wilson, master certified coach

Individuals who gave considerable time and effort to the creation of this guide include Leonor Alfonso, Holly Minch, Paula Morris and William Ryan.

We offer a huge thank-you to William H. Woodwell Jr. for his help in writing this publication.

We offer deep thanks to the grantmakers for this project: the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The Harnisch Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund.

We also owe much gratitude to Linda Wood and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund for their strong partnership and leadership, and to Chris Kwak of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for her unwavering support of coaching and of the efforts of this project from its inception.

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DELIVERING ON COACHING'S PROMISE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FIELD

INTRODUCTION

Shelley Hoss and her leadership team worked with a coach when Hoss was redefining her role and responsibilities as president of the Orange County Community Foundation in Irvine, California. “I needed to move from an operating-focused role to a more external and ambassador-focused role, and that meant delegating and empowering my direct reports to take on more internal responsibilities,” she explained.

Hoss said the coaching she received through the support of The James Irvine Foundation was invaluable in helping her and her colleagues settle into their new roles. “The coach helped us figure out how to work through the inevitable style differences that existed between us so we could create a system where we could work together more effectively,” she said.

.....

After the long time executive director retired, **Lindsey Buss** took the top job at Martha’s Table, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit that provides food, clothing, educational programs and enrichment opportunities to children, youth and families.

Buss identified a need for significant changes at the organization — and he used a coaching grant from the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation to help him plan how to make those changes. “We needed to professionalize,” he said, noting that the organization had evolved from a “mom-and-pop” operation to an entity with a staff of 70. “We needed more internal controls and more infrastructure, and I knew it would be a struggle.”

During the yearlong coaching engagement, Buss said his coach allowed him to keep a “big-picture view” of the challenges facing Martha’s Table and what he and the staff needed to do. “There were so many things going on in the organization that it helped to keep checking in about the key issues and where we were going,” he said.

People have always known intuitively that leaders shape their organizations. It's just common sense. But recent scholarship in management studies is providing a growing understanding of how leaders contribute — or don't — to an organization's prospects and success. Leadership development, in turn, has emerged as a priority in all sectors; organizations invest billions of dollars annually in activities intended to enhance the leadership abilities of senior executives, board and staff.

Leadership development can mean a lot of different things — from MBA-style programs and sabbaticals for executives to classroom training and wilderness outings for current and future leaders. Coaching, which the business sector has long viewed as a way to support current and emerging leaders, is just beginning to take hold in the nonprofit world as a core leadership development activity.

Coaching, as the term is used in the pages that follow, is a process that supports individuals to make more conscious decisions and take more effective action. The focus of this guide is one-on-one coaching of organizational leaders — with the coach providing customized support to improve the effectiveness of individuals and teams so that they, in turn, can lead their organizations to deliver better results for the communities they serve.

Coaching requires the active engagement of the coach and coachee in setting goals for their relationship, developing a schedule and plan for coaching, and tracking the coachee's progress, among other activities. But coaching also requires the active support of grantmakers. Grantmakers, in fact, can play a crucial role in promoting and advancing coaching as an effective way to support leadership development for nonprofits.

In order to play this role, however, grantmakers need more (and better) information about what coaching is, how it fits as a strategy for leadership development and organizational effectiveness, how to invest well in it, and how to help grantees become more conscious consumers of coaching.

About This Guide

This guide was created as a resource for grantmakers as they explore these and other questions about coaching. The guide has three parts:


Master the Basics provides grantmaker executives, program staff, board members and others with a common understanding of what coaching is and its prevalence as a form of leadership development and of building organizational effectiveness for nonprofits.

Make the Case provides grantmakers with information, perspectives and "talking points" to help build support for and interest in coaching among their staffs, boards, colleagues and grantees.

Make It Work provides grantmakers with practical guidance and suggestions for making coaching work in areas that range from assessing grantee readiness for coaching to evaluating coaching results.

The guide also includes examples of grantmakers that have embraced coaching as an important form of support for grantees, as well as recommendations for the field of philanthropy as it seeks to broaden the use and effectiveness of coaching.

Despite coaching's potential as a response to the leadership challenges facing nonprofits, it is still underappreciated and underused as a strategy for supporting nonprofit leaders and their organizations. We hope that the information in this guide will help expand grantmakers' understanding and awareness of coaching so they can make smart decisions about whether and how to integrate coaching into their ongoing work with grantees.

For more information and resources on coaching in the nonprofit sector, please visit the CAP Project's Online Toolkit at www.compasspoint.org/coaching. Throughout this guide, the Online Toolkit icon () refers readers to specific resources that are available online.

Master the Basics

WHAT IS COACHING?

The CAP Project defines coaching as a process that supports individuals to make more conscious decisions and take more effective action. In a coaching relationship, an individual with leadership and coaching experience (the coach) provides customized support to one or more nonprofit leaders (coachees) for a limited period of time.

Although a coach might on occasion cross over to a directive role, the coach's principal job is not to tell leaders what to do but to help them figure out the best approaches to the challenges and opportunities associated with leading their organizations.

In contrast to some other forms of leadership development support, which often provide general guidance applicable across a range of situations and organizational contexts, coaching is tailored to the coachees.

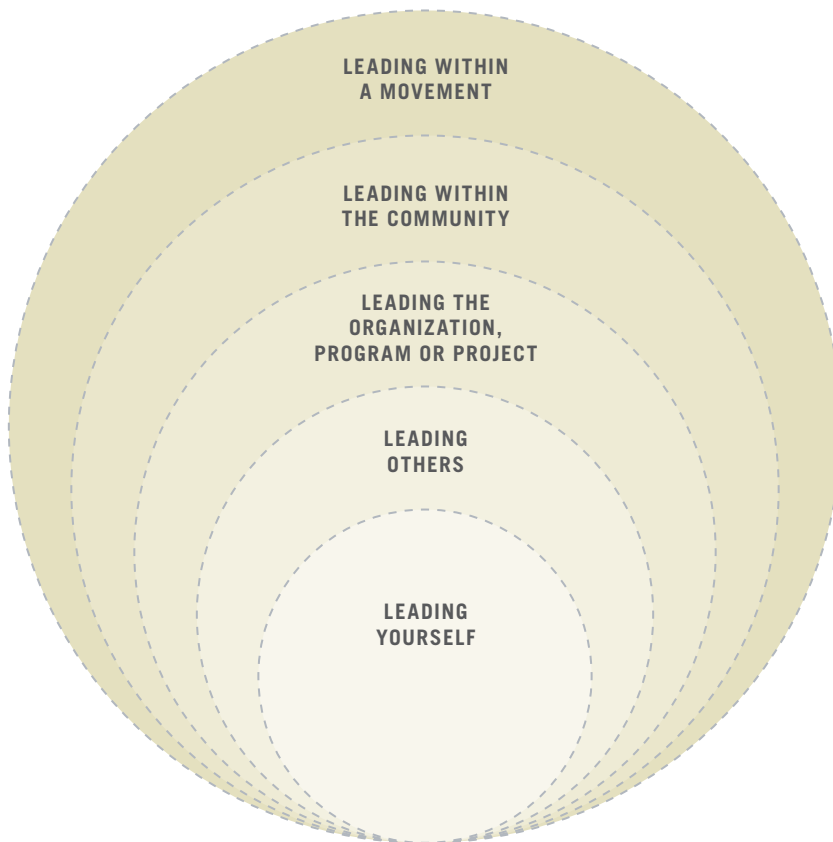
The content of coaching is based on coachees' experiences and their reflections on their strengths and weaknesses, the specific contexts in which they are working, and their hopes and aspirations for themselves and their organizations.


Several different types of coaching are available, including organizational, life and career coaching. The focus of the CAP Project's work is organizational coaching. While this type of coaching inevitably touches on personal and career issues confronting the leader, the focus is on the needs of the leader within the context of the organization. Organizational coaching is therefore what GEO considers a contextual form of leadership development — one that creates opportunities for individuals to develop their leadership capacities as they address challenges and opportunities facing their organizations.¹

¹ See Kathleen P. Enright, *Investing in Leadership, Volume 2*, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, 2006.

Coaching Can Have a Ripple Effect

One hallmark of effective coaching in the nonprofit sector is a clear link between individual development and improvements in organizational performance. Coaching can have a ripple effect on organizations, communities and entire movements as an individual or team begins to lead more effectively.



► Source: CompassPoint Nonprofit Services. Adapted from the work of the Center for Creative Leadership, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, David Day and the Building Movement Project. See also The Leadership Development Investment Framework from the Leadership Learning Community, available in the Online Toolkit.  www.compasspoint.org/coaching

Coaching or Consulting?

Grantmakers, nonprofit leaders and others sometimes are not sure how to distinguish between coaching and consulting. We define the difference as follows:

- ▷ Coaching provides one-on-one support for leaders in making more conscious decisions and pursuing actions in their professional or personal lives that benefit the organizations they lead. This can include generating personal insight into areas needing change in attitudes, behaviors or habits.
 - ▷ Organizational consulting focuses more broadly on the whole organization. Consultants typically work with executive leaders, senior staff and board members on strategies, structures, policies and procedures to improve the effectiveness of the organization.
-

HOW COMMON IS COACHING?

Coaching has become a popular form of leadership support among private-sector businesses. A 2008 survey by the American Management Association found that 52 percent of North American companies use coaching, and more than half of these are using coaching more now than in the past. According to the *Harvard Business Review*, the private sector in the United States spends more than \$1 billion on coaching each year.²

By comparison, coaching remains an emerging practice in the nonprofit sector. “Daring to Lead,” a 2006 study that followed up on nonprofit executives surveyed in 2001, states that coaching “is becoming a more frequent tool for sustaining and improving executive leadership.” According to the report, 25 percent of nonprofit leaders said they had used a coach, although the report’s authors acknowledge that the term *coaching* can mean different things to different people.³

GEO’s research shows that coaching is gaining attention among grantmakers as a potentially effective form of leadership development support for grantees. In GEO’s 2008 survey, *Is Grantmaking Getting Smarter?*, 27 percent of grantmakers who supported leadership development in the previous two years said they provided grants for coaching; 24 percent reported supporting coaching through direct assistance within the same period.

IN WHAT FORMS IS COACHING OFFERED TO NONPROFIT LEADERS?

Coaching for nonprofit leaders can come in a variety of forms:

One-on-one coaching (external or internal).

A coach is assigned to one nonprofit leader. The coach can be an external provider of coaching or a member of the organization’s staff who has been trained in coaching. The goal of one-on-one coaching is to develop the leader’s capacity and skills to address a range of personal and professional issues that affect job performance and organizational success.

Manager as coach. Nonprofit managers can serve as coaches to other staff members, providing training on an ongoing basis as a means to develop staff members’ skills and effectiveness.

² Stratford Sherman and Alyssa Freas, “The Wild West of Executive Coaching,” *Harvard Business Review*, November 2004.

³ Jeanne Bell, Richard Moyers and Timothy Wolfred, “Daring to Lead: A National Study of Nonprofit Executive Leadership,” a joint project of CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and the Meyer Foundation, 2006, p. 23, available from www.compasspoint.org.

Peer coaching. Peers from one or more organizations assemble at a central location to receive training in coaching and to share support, feedback and materials; they help each other address leadership needs or organizational priorities.⁴ This type of coaching can be useful in reducing isolation, providing opportunities for leaders to talk through issues and brainstorm solutions, and offering a confidential forum for learning from peers.⁵

Targeted coaching (sometimes called content coaching). A coach works with a nonprofit leader to help develop his or her capacity and skills to address discrete, well-defined organizational issues that focus on specific topics or content areas, such as human resources or board issues.⁶

Blended or hybrid approach (organizational development consulting and coaching). This technique combines coaching with other methods of improving organizational effectiveness to address larger organizational development goals and issues.

Team coaching. A coach or group of coaches works with a team of nonprofit leaders from the same organization. The goal of this approach is to help the group work more effectively as a team over time while developing the skills team members need to achieve their shared goals.

Other types of coaching include executive transition coaching and community coaching. For a complete list of types of coaching and descriptions, go to the Online Toolkit.

 www.compasspoint.org/coaching

Grantmakers and nonprofits should consider which type of coaching to use, based on the needs, interests and characteristics of the organization and the coachee. It is important to note that the different types of coaching borrow techniques and approaches from each other — for example, external coaching by a professional leadership coach might include targeted content coaching on specific issues such as finance.

How Do Nonprofit Coachees Find Their Coaches?

- 30% Through a management support organization
- 26% Through a professional colleague outside their organization
- 14% Through a grantmaker
- 12% Already knew or had previously worked with their coach

Source: CAP Project Nonprofit Coaching Survey, 2009.

⁴ Marshall Goldsmith and Louis Carter, *Best Practices in Talent Management: How the World's Leading Corporations Manage, Develop, and Retain Top Talent* (San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2009).

⁵ UPS Foundation, CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and Harder+Company Community Research, "The Leadership Development Program for Women Executives in Underserved Communities Evaluation Findings," June 2007, available from www.compasspoint.org/content/index.php?pid=19#Women.

⁶ Cambria Consulting uses the term *targeted coaching* to describe coaching designed "to help companies accelerate efficient and focused behavior change to address specific, well-defined issues." See www.cambriaconsulting.com.

WHAT DO NONPROFIT LEADERS WANT TO GAIN FROM COACHING?

Many nonprofit leaders view coaching as a way to develop and hone key leadership and management skills. When asked why they wanted a coach, 67 percent of coachees surveyed by the CAP Project chose “to develop leadership skills/confidence” as a high priority.

A majority of coachees also gave high priority to enhancing management skills or confidence,

developing a better balance of the personal and professional in their lives, and managing organizational change more effectively.

Nonprofit leaders using CompassPoint’s coaching referral and matching service have cited a similar assortment of motivations and goals. The table that follows presents “coaching intake themes” derived from that service during a 12-month period, ranked in order of priority.

	REASONS FOR SEEKING COACHING HELP	PRIORITY ISSUES
1	Managing Others	Delegating, giving feedback, dealing with different personalities or leadership styles, managing up
2	Self-Awareness	Identifying or refining communication style, identifying personal strengths and personal vision
3	Self-Management	Managing time, organizing work, managing stress
4	General Leadership/ Sharing Leadership	Transitioning from manager to leader, embracing power and responsibility of position, communicating vision, obtaining alignment of vision, maintaining external relationships, strengthening and managing board relationships, building self-confidence, developing bench strength, developing staff leaders, beginning to plan for succession
5	Change Management	Developing personal strategies for managing change, obtaining buy-in from others, developing new identity as organization, dealing with emotions of change, managing culture change
6	Targeted Content Coaching	Developing capacity and skills to address discrete, well-defined organizational issues such as finance, board development or raising funds
7	Work-Life Balance	Dealing with burnout, prioritizing work, caring for self, setting boundaries, saying no
8	Personal Professional Development	Planning for professional development, career planning, identifying strengths and weaknesses as they relate to personal growth
9	Transitioning Out/ Transitioning In	Transitioning Out: Developing an exit plan, determining when to leave and what’s next, letting go, dealing with “founder’s syndrome” Transitioning In: Dealing with pressures facing the new executive director or manager, meeting expectations, understanding the “what” of the job and how to set up self for success

Source: CompassPoint, Coaching Referral and Matching Service Intake Data, September 2008 – September 2009.

WHAT DOES THE TYPICAL COACHING ENGAGEMENT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

Grantmakers and other supporters and providers of coaching have adopted various approaches to the scheduling and format of coaching sessions. Some prescribe a specific number of coaching sessions according to a set schedule, whereas others prefer a more flexible approach.

Coachees typically believe sessions should be held more frequently at the beginning (e.g., weekly or biweekly), with adjustments to the schedule as time goes on. Depending on the length of the engagement, many coaches and coachees periodically revisit their relationship (and renew their coaching contract with each other) at various milestones (e.g., quarterly). The purposes of renewing the contract include adjusting strategies and plans, ensuring that the coach is still meeting the coachee's needs, and confirming that the coachee remains committed to the coaching process. CompassPoint's experience with its coaching referral service suggests that coachee commitment can drop off significantly in the absence of contract renewal.

Most coaches and coachees with whom we spoke during the CAP Project preferred to meet for sessions lasting an hour or more. Between sessions coaches often invite coachees to stay in touch through e-mail or telephone on an as-needed basis.

Regardless of the precise schedule and format, coaches, coachees and grantmakers tend to agree that consistent and frequent meetings (in person or by phone) are a critical element of a successful coaching engagement. Although time is a huge pressure for many nonprofit leaders, some coachees complain that they actually need more regular coaching sessions and that sessions are sometimes too far apart (e.g., a month or more).

Most coaches and coachees say they prefer at least some in-person sessions because they find it easier to build rapport and trust and observe nonverbal communication. But grantmakers should not underestimate the power of telephone coaching. For some coachees, phone sessions deliver a number of important advantages — they are easier to schedule and reduce travel time and costs. The decision about how to structure a coaching engagement can come down to the learning style of the coachee. Visual learners might want and need more in-person contact, for example, while others are more auditory and find it easier to concentrate when they are meeting by telephone.

Coaching in Practice

- ▷ On average coachees surveyed by the CAP Project used a coach for 12 months for an average of three hours per month.
- ▷ Coaching engagements ranged from three months to five years, and the amount of coaching ranged from one to 10 hours per month.
- ▷ Twenty-nine percent of coachees surveyed by the CAP Project met with their coaches in person, 26 percent met with their coaches by phone and 45 percent used both methods to meet with their coach.

Source: CAP Project Nonprofit Coaching Survey, 2009.

Note: Individuals were eligible to complete the survey only if they had been coached a minimum of three months.

WHEN TO USE COACHING

WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL WANTS TO ...	COACHING CAN ...
Excel in a new role and strengthen competency	Help the individual set priorities and/or develop key leadership skills
Function more efficiently, deal with being overwhelmed or achieve better work-life balance	Help the leader prioritize and make choices about what is important and how to manage time and set boundaries
Become a stronger supervisor and/or use coaching skills to manage others	Aid the individual in increasing self-awareness and developing management skills while providing the experience of having a personal coach as well as guidance in effectively coaching others
Address feelings of "loneliness at the top" or isolation in a leadership role	Provide a confidential partner who allows the individual to share concerns that he or she may not feel comfortable sharing with staff, board members or grantmakers
Transfer to a new role or function	Assist the individual in planning a successful move and in preparing for additional leadership responsibilities
Develop a career path	Help the individual to define career goals, inventory talents and skills, and explore and evaluate job options, either within the current organization or elsewhere <i>Note: This type of coaching is often considered career coaching.</i>
Leave the organization	Help the individual determine what's next, support the process of letting go and create a good ending with the organization

WHEN AN ORGANIZATION NEEDS TO ...	COACHING CAN ...
Ensure a successful organizational transition (e.g., the departure of an executive or a reorganization)	Assist individuals and teams in defining changes in roles and responsibilities, and in identifying system and process changes
Accelerate organization-wide change (e.g., growing or consolidating programs, creating a culture of collaborative decision making or integrating advocacy work in the organizational mission)	Bring greater focus and accountability to leaders as they develop new strategies for managing people and programs, building buy-in and accelerating change
Tap employee potential	Help develop and support good performers whose potential is not fully realized
Take advantage of learning opportunities such as external training, peer networks and sabbaticals	Provide opportunities for leaders and key staff members to think about and plan how to put new learning into practice within the organization

WHEN COACHING IS NOT THE BEST SOLUTION

Coaching is not a cure-all. In fact, coaching can be precisely the wrong approach to the challenges facing an organization and its leaders.

WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL IS ...

A BETTER RESPONSE WOULD BE ...

New to a task or role <i>and</i> his or her competency level is low	Training, guidance or mentoring from someone with experience in the task or role (perhaps with coaching as a follow-up to help the training take root)
Not a good fit for the job or the organization and the organization decides that it is time for the individual to move on	Reassignment or termination with proper human resources support <i>Note: Coaching is not meant to be punitive or a last-ditch effort before firing. Coaching also is not meant to be used to evaluate a staff member.</i>
Dealing with significant personal or psychological problems that interfere with job performance	Referral to therapy

WHEN AN ORGANIZATION ...

A BETTER RESPONSE WOULD BE ...

Has systemic issues that are causing poor performance (for example, the organization lacks a clear business model or strategic plan, the organization is too dependent on one funding source, financial controls are lacking, or the board and management are shirking key responsibilities)	Targeted consulting in key functional areas with coaching as a support for larger interventions <i>Note: Do not engage a coach to fix a systemic issue beyond the control of the coached individual. Rather, coaching can support an individual to determine what is within her or his control and how to proceed accordingly.</i>
Is facing an internal crisis	Targeted consulting or mediation with coaching support to help navigate the situation(s) and extract useful lessons for the future
Has leadership that has not engaged in a serious and honest conversation about challenges and the need for change	Facilitation, mediation or training in giving and receiving feedback or managing conflict

GRANTMAKER

CASE STUDY

GRANTMAKER: The James Irvine Foundation

COACHING KEY: Offering coaching as the linchpin of a broader initiative to support nonprofit executives

MORE INFO: www.irvine.org/fla

The James Irvine Foundation created the Fund for Leadership Advancement to enhance the leadership capacity of executive directors of selected grantee organizations. Through the fund, the grantmaker provides what it calls “flexible and tailored support,” which may include coaching, executive education, organizational development consulting and peer learning opportunities.

From 2006 through 2009, the fund awarded \$2.7 million in grants to 43 organizations. Grants ranged from \$35,000 to \$75,000, with a significant portion of the money going to coaching.

“Coaching became an important intervention from the start of the program,” said Martha Campbell, Irvine’s former vice president for programs. “Coaches become a real focal point for all of the other leadership advancement work that grantees are doing. They bring it all together.”

The Irvine FLA is managed by a team of staff from across the organization’s three core program areas, with additional assistance provided by an independent consultant and coach, Carol Gelatt. Current grantees are invited to apply for funding through the program; if selected by the FLA team, they work with Gelatt to prepare a plan and objectives to carry out under the two-year grant. To date nearly all grantees have selected coaching as one intervention they use the grant money to pay for.

Gelatt’s expertise in coaching and organizational development enables her to work with each grantee organization to scope out its plan for using coaching to advance its leadership development goals, and to help identify prospective coaches.

Gelatt provides coach referrals for grantees, but grantee organizations are also free to identify their own candidates based on conversations with colleagues and staff. “Grantees have to be able to select a coach of their choosing — that is critical,” Gelatt said.

Once an organization has a coach, Gelatt holds a “kickoff call” with the coach and coachee so they can agree on the goals and objectives of coaching. During this call, Gelatt helps everyone understand how the coaching should support the other leadership advancement activities that the grant is paying for.

During the program, Gelatt checks in with coaches and coachees at six-month intervals to see how they are doing. “We don’t want to hear what each session was about, and we don’t even want a written report,” Campbell said. “Our main interest is in seeing that they’re doing OK and that the work is delivering results.”

The Irvine Foundation engaged BTW *informing change* to evaluate 20 grantees that participated in the first three FLA cohorts. Among the key findings: Executive directors and their colleagues reported numerous ways in which participants enhanced their leadership, including better delegation and improvements in their ability to work with their senior team and board. This, in turn, led to positive changes in the organization, such as greater shared leadership and vision.

Executive directors also reported that coaching was the most effective form of support in helping them achieve their FLA goals. “The coach role served as a linchpin of the FLA grant and helped to focus, coordinate and sequence fund activities throughout the grant period,” according to the evaluation.⁷

⁷The James Irvine Foundation and BTW *informing change*, “What Helps Leaders Grow: Highlights from the Fund for Leadership Advancement,” 2009, p. 7, available from <http://irvine.org/images/stories/pdf/eval/flainsightreport.pdf>.

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CASE STUDY

GRANTMAKER: Aepoch Fund

COACHING KEY: Exploring team (or systems) coaching in addition to one-on-one coaching for nonprofit leaders

MORE INFO: www.aepoch.org

Aepoch Fund is a small grantmaker in the Bay Area of California. It makes grants to individuals, organizations and movements working on issues that range from social justice and arts activism to environmental sustainability. In 2009 the grantmaker completed an 18-month pilot project that provided resources for coaching to 16 individuals.

Aepoch's foray into coaching was largely the result of the advocacy of Director Laura Loescher, who helped start the foundation in 2006. Loescher had experience and training as a coach. She said she views coaching as "a way to make a leveraged contribution to social change" by increasing the leadership capacity of nonprofit leaders.

As part of the pilot, Aepoch Fund provided coaching support to a team of leaders working at Californians for Justice, a statewide grassroots organization. The support was based on a systems coaching model developed by coaches Julie Davidson-Gómez and Belma González.

González explained in an interview that systems coaching focuses on the leadership team as a "unique entity, rather than simply the sum of its individual parts." The goal is to get the individuals to work more effectively as a team, based on a shared understanding of the organization's overall mission and goals, as well as each person's role in achieving them.

At the start of the coaching, CFJ was in the midst of several transitions, including the unexpected departure of the organization's executive director and a restructuring of staff roles and responsibilities under a new co-directorship model.

The organization also was beginning to notice the effects of the recession on its contributions and finances, and it was seeking to design and implement new strategies for fund development.

Aepoch Fund provided support for five members of the CFJ senior management team to receive individual coaching support for about a year. The team as a whole then received three months of coaching. During this time Davidson-Gómez and González convened two mini-retreats for the group and one follow-up coaching session by telephone.

In an evaluation of the team coaching, one participant wrote that it gave participants a "common language and framework to think/talk about our work and our work relationships." The coachee added: "The intentional conversations about building/designing a partnership were great."

In 2009 Aepoch Fund launched a new iteration of the Aepoch Coaching Fund. Loescher said she expected this cohort of coachees to number around 20. Based on its experience with the systems coaching model, the grantmaker will make a point of assessing whether grantees might benefit more from team coaching than individual coaching. "If there are issues that would be better addressed by a team, then we will potentially offer team coaching," Loescher said.

GRANTMAKER

CASE STUDY

GRANTMAKER: Fieldstone Foundation

COACHING KEY: Training nonprofit leaders to serve as coaches in peer-to-peer engagements

MORE INFO: www.fieldstone-homes.com/foundation/LeadershipNetwork/TheCoachingNetwork.asp

The Fieldstone Foundation bases its support for nonprofit leaders on a peer-learning model. The grantmaker's Executive Learning Groups enroll 11 nonprofit leaders in a series of monthly one-day seminars during a six-month period to explore specific challenges and opportunities confronting their organizations with the help of a trained organizational development specialist and facilitator. To date 900 nonprofit leaders have participated in the groups.

Shortly after initiating the Executive Learning Groups, the California-based grantmaker began to approach selected participants about becoming peer coaches for other nonprofit leaders. The group facilitators recommend prospective coaches. If the coachees agree to become coaches, they are enrolled in a four-day curriculum of intensive coach training that the grantmaker developed on its own.

Once they have gone through the training, the coaches become part of the Fieldstone Foundation's Coaching Network, which offers a "12-month, one-on-one, peer coaching relationship" to nonprofit executive directors who apply to the grantmaker for coaching assistance.

Any nonprofit can apply for help from the Coaching Network; an organization does not have to be a current or former Fieldstone Foundation grantee. After applicants submit answers to basic questions about their organizations and the leadership challenges they face, a facilitator working for the grantmaker calls them for an in-depth discussion of what they want from a coach.

"We want to make sure we don't have organizations or individuals in crisis," Fieldstone Foundation Executive Director Janine Mason said of the grantmaker's

up-front assessment of potential coachees. Rather, she said, the foundation's intent is to provide coaching for individuals and organizations that are interested in moving to a higher level of performance and effectiveness.

Next, the foundation staff works with its coaches and facilitators to try to create the best match of coach and coachee for the applicant. "We work hard to make sure we find a coach who matches the coachee's learning style and interests, and who might have some experience dealing with the types of issues they are facing," Mason said.

After the matchmaking is done, the grantmaker asks coachees to participate in a thorough professional assessment conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership. Coachees spend an hour with a facilitator from the center who interprets the results and encourages (but does not require) them to share those results with their coaches.

Fieldstone also provides coach and coachee with a basic outline of how they might want to structure their relationship. Coaches and coachees in the program often meet every other week, with phone calls supplementing the in-person sessions. "We don't think you can do this in less than four hours a month," Mason explained.

To keep track of how things are going, Fieldstone Foundation staff and facilitators meet with the coaches every quarter to ask about progress and to explore some themes that are surfacing in the coaching relationships. At the end of the year coaches submit an evaluation of the coaching engagement to the grantmaker; the evaluation touches on the general effect of the coaching on the individual and organization without divulging confidential details.

Make the Case

WHY SHOULD GRANTMAKERS CONSIDER SUPPORTING COACHING?

A variety of reports and research efforts have documented the urgent leadership challenges facing nonprofits today. Nonprofit leaders are burned out; young and emerging leaders are not sure they want to stay in the sector because of the low pay, work-life imbalance and other concerns; and the sector needs to attract and develop hundreds of thousands of new senior managers as a result of its expanding complexity and size.⁸

In the face of these challenges, coaching can provide nonprofits and their grantmakers with a powerful, cost-effective strategy for developing and supporting current and future leaders.

“This is a new and promising tool for leadership development for nonprofit leaders who find themselves in an increasingly challenging and often isolated role,” said Sylvia Yee, vice president of programs for the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, which supports coaching for participants in its Flexible Leadership Awards program (see case study, page 25).

Especially at a time when many nonprofits are facing enormous financial and operational challenges brought on by the economic crisis that began in the fall of 2008, grantmakers see coaching as a way to help ensure that nonprofit leaders have the time and space to make careful decisions. Coaching can provide targeted support to leaders in making the difficult choices that lie ahead — that is, in identifying what is vital to their mission and what they must keep, what they need to cut, and how to change the ways their organizations work in order to have greater impact.

In addition, by helping current and future leaders manage and reduce stress by finding answers to the personal and organizational challenges that keep them up at night, coaching can make an important contribution to keeping more good people in the sector and helping them grow as leaders.

⁸ On burnout see CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and the Meyer Foundation, “Daring to Lead.” On young and emerging leaders of nonprofits who decide to seek employment in other fields, see Bell, Moyers and Wolfred, “Ready to Lead? Next Generation Leaders Speak Out,” a national study produced by CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Meyer Foundation and Idealist, 2008. On attracting new senior managers see Thomas J. Tierney, “The Nonprofit Sector’s Leadership Deficit,” 2006, The Bridgespan Group, available from www.bridgespan.org/learningcenter/resourcedetail.aspx?id=946.

Coaching's Primary Benefits

According to David Coleman, a seasoned executive coach working with nonprofit leaders, the primary benefits of coaching are as follows:

- ▷ Helping leaders gain new perspectives on themselves and their situations
- ▷ Building the confidence of leaders
- ▷ Retaining valued employees
- ▷ Developing new leaders
- ▷ Bringing renewed energy to longtime leaders so they can recommit to the tasks ahead

Source: David Coleman, "A Leader's Guide to Executive Coaching," *Nonprofit Quarterly*, Spring 2008.

One private-sector organization that has invested heavily in coaching is Deloitte, the international accounting and consulting firm. Deloitte has found that coaching can lead to greater personal satisfaction, improved team performance and ultimately higher profits for the company.⁹ According to Stan Smith, founder of Deloitte Career Connections, career coaching alone has saved Deloitte more than \$150 million because of reduced attrition.

Another corporate supporter of coaching is Microsoft, which offers executive coaching for employees "who have the potential for, and strong interest in, taking on more senior, critical roles as individual contributors or managers." Microsoft's rationale for supporting coaching: "A coach offers a third-party, objective support for the leader's improvement efforts" and focuses on "changing leadership behavior in the workplace." Microsoft also invests in Peer Learning Circles, which use coaching and feedback to advance leader development.¹⁰

Although nonprofits have unique needs and characteristics, coaching can deliver to nonprofit organizations many of the same benefits that it provides to businesses like Deloitte and Microsoft, connecting individual development to better organizational results.

WHEN DOES COACHING WORK BEST?

The top reason why private-sector companies turn to coaching is to develop "high potentials" or to facilitate transition, according to a 2009 *Harvard Business Review* article. "Ten years ago, most companies engaged a coach to help fix toxic behavior at the top. Today, most coaching is about developing the capabilities of high-potential performers," Diane Coutu and Carol Kauffman report.¹¹

In the nonprofit sector many coaches, coachees and grantmakers consider coaching to be especially valuable

⁹ Paul Parker and Mark McLean, "Creating a Coaching-Centered Work Culture," panel presentation at ICF Annual International Conference held in Long Beach, Calif., October 2007.

¹⁰ Goldsmith and Carter, *Best Practices in Talent Management*, p. 201.

¹¹ Diane Coutu and Carol Kauffman, "What Can Coaches Do for You?" *Harvard Business Review*, January 2009, p. 1.

at an “inflection point” in the life of an organization — for example, when its leaders and senior staff are dealing with an executive transition, the organization is embarking on a new mission or strategic plan, or the organization is undergoing an expansion in programs or funds.

“The most successful grants we have made for coaching are to executive directors facing a pivotal moment in the life of the organization,” said Rick Moyers, director of programs for the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation in Washington, D.C. “These are times when people need help managing change and sorting through a number of competing priorities.”

Grantmakers and nonprofit leaders also value coaching as a catalyst for enhancing the effects of other interventions designed to develop leadership and organizational effectiveness. James Kass, executive director of a San Francisco nonprofit, Youth Speaks, was working with a coach while he was participating in a Stanford University program for executives in the arts. “I found the coaching created a place where I could work with someone to bounce ideas back and forth about what I was learning and how to apply it,” he said.

Nonprofit Leaders on the Benefits of Coaching

In the CAP Project’s survey of coachees, almost two-thirds said coaching was “very effective” compared with other types of leadership development support and tools for organizational effectiveness, such as training, workshops, classes or seminars. Here are a few comments from coachees with whom we spoke during the project:

“I am **less frenetic and more present** as a result of the coaching. Now, instead of rushing to answer 50 e-mails at once, I pause and take a breath and realize I have a choice of what to do next.”

“Through coaching ... I have a sense of owning this job and a **sense of competence and assuredness about doing the job** that I think would have otherwise taken years and years (and lots of heartache and not great learning experiences) to gain.”

“I am altogether **more confident, and more willing to stand up for my ideas and vision** within my organization because of coaching. I am also willing to be more visible within the larger community, which is a big deal for me.”

“I am trying to be **more sensitive to process and relationships** as opposed to being so outcome-focused. It is hard, but I have come to realize that in order to work with boards and staff, I need to develop my emotional intelligence.”

“[Coaching] helped us deepen our commitment to our shared leadership model, challenged us to be **more intentional and open in our communication**, and opened our eyes to the abundant strengths and skills we share.”

Barriers to Coaching

Despite clear interest in and enthusiasm for coaching among many nonprofit leaders and grantmakers, most nonprofit organizations and their funders still have not used this form of customized leadership support. The CAP Project has identified several barriers to the sector's greater consideration and use of coaching as a leadership development and organizational capacity tool.

“Our funders won’t support this kind of work.” Despite growing understanding among grantmakers that nonprofits need more flexible kinds of support for their operations, including boosting their effectiveness, philanthropy as a whole continues to favor restricted program support for grantees. In GEO’s 2008 survey of grantmakers, fewer than half (44 percent) said they had supported leadership development activities in the previous two years. The level of support declined for smaller grantmakers, with just one in four foundations with assets of \$10 million or less saying they had provided leadership development support.

“Coaching is hard to measure.” One reason why grantmakers shy away from providing this type of support is the perception that it cannot be measured. Because of the confidential nature of the coach-coachee relationship, grantmakers and nonprofit boards sometimes have the sense they are funding something they cannot track. However, the CAP Project found that grantmakers have devised simple systems for obtaining and receiving feedback from coaches and grantees (and their organizations). Such systems can help grantmakers assess how things are going while still respecting the confidentiality of the coaching engagement. (For more on evaluating coaching, see “How do we ensure that coaching delivers results for individuals and their organizations?” page 32.)

“Coaching leads to attrition.” Another concern of grantmakers is that their coaching investments may result in individuals leaving their organizations. In some cases coaching does lead to attrition, as with other leadership supports. For grantmakers, then, it is important to view coaching as an investment in not just the leadership of a specific nonprofit organization but in the sector’s overall leadership. If an individual decides to leave an organization because it is not a good match, grantmakers could view this as a success rather than a failure of coaching — especially if the leader stays in the sector and is able to apply newly acquired skills and capacities to the work of another organization. It could also be good for the organization or movement if the leader leaves in part because he or she is too burned out, or has lost energy and passion.

“Coaching is too expensive — we couldn’t get away with spending money on *that*.” In the typical nickel-and-dime world of nonprofit budgeting, coaching can be a victim of the “scarcity mentality” (both real and perceived) that exists among so many nonprofits today. Executive directors have a hard time justifying investments in leadership development and organizational effectiveness when they could use that money for programs to help their clients. Concerns about the costs of coaching largely ignore that these costs can be nominal in relation to overall nonprofit budgets, and even in relation to the overall compensation packages of most nonprofit leaders. Cost concerns also ignore the return on investment that can come from coaching, which can be considerable.

“Coaching doesn’t seem reflective of my leadership style or my community.” Some nonprofit leaders, particularly people of color, are reluctant to seek coaching because of the perception that it does not address the racial and cultural issues that many individuals face in leading their organizations. Indeed, the CAP Project’s research found a lack of racial and ethnic diversity among trained or certified coaches in the sector, as well as a lack of diversity in the dominant coach-training programs. A related barrier is that the term *coaching* does not resonate with some leaders of color, who told us they prefer terms such as *elder*, *mentor* or *guide*. One step to overcoming these barriers is to ensure that grantees have a choice among a diverse group of coaches. Coach trainer Peter Reding at Coach for Life Training told us that the notion that “a good coach can coach anyone” is a barrier to effective coaching and to ensuring a good match between coach and client. “Human beings want to be with someone they can relate to,” he said, adding that a coaching relationship will be more successful to the extent that the coach connects with the client based on factors ranging from nonprofit executive experience to race, ethnicity and gender.¹²

“We don’t know what it is or how to do it right.” Also holding coaching back as a tool for developing leadership and building organizational effectiveness for nonprofits is a lack of awareness among nonprofit and grantmaker leaders. Many in the sector still are not certain what coaching is, how it is funded or even where people can find a coach. A fundamental misunderstanding about the goals and the nature of coaching compounds the lack of awareness among many in the nonprofit sector. As we noted earlier, for example, some view coaching as a practice intended to move people out of their organizations — when, on the contrary, the specific plan for most coaching engagements is to help coachees become more successful in their current jobs. In addition, some view coaching as remedial — the goal is to try to “fix” problem behaviors — when in reality the goal of the practice is to help top performers maximize their potential.

¹²For more information on issues of diversity in coaching — including the CAP Project’s Coach Training Pilot Project, which is working to increase the number of coaches from diverse backgrounds in the sector — go to the Online Toolkit. www.compasspoint.org/coaching

HOW DOES COACHING CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL NONPROFIT LEADER?

Research into adult education and human learning demonstrates that learning takes hold more powerfully when people are asked to wrestle with an idea themselves, come up with their own answers and share their findings with their peers. This is the “self-directed learning” model advanced by adult education expert Malcolm Knowles.¹³

Coaching is self-directed learning with help — namely, from the coach. As Gail Ginder, a longtime coach, told us, “Coaches try and ask the right questions to help clients discover for themselves the solutions that work best for them and their organizations.”

A safe space for reflection. Coaches, coachees and grantmakers regularly refer to the transformational impact of coaching on nonprofit leaders. Coaching provides a safe space for leaders to air their concerns about their jobs and about the problems facing their organizations — and to consider solutions.

Since coaching is confidential, leaders, especially executive directors, appreciate the opportunity to break out of their isolated roles, talk to someone about their strengths and challenges, and chart a productive path forward for themselves and their organizations.

Increased self-awareness. A major outcome of coaching for the individual leader is a higher level of self-awareness, which, along with self-management, many consider to be a prerequisite for strong leadership.

To the extent that coachees understand and reflect on their strengths and weaknesses as leaders, they can use the coaching relationship for new thinking and for adjustment of their leadership styles and behaviors as needed — for example, by changing how they interact with the staff and board, by delegating more responsibilities to others, or by making other changes in how they set priorities and allot their time.

Many coaches and organizations that sponsor coaching for nonprofit leaders recognize the importance of self-awareness in successful coaching and start the process by offering a range of opportunities for self-assessment, such as feedback on an individual’s work performance, strengths and areas for improvement from the individual’s colleagues and peers.

Higher levels of confidence, clarity. Coachees regularly report that coaching strengthens their ability to step into their leadership roles with greater confidence. Coachees also say coaching gives them a higher level of clarity about their career goals. It can yield a stronger commitment to their current position, and for some a clearer understanding that it’s time to leave. (See “Barriers to Coaching,” page 20, to find out why concerns about attrition should *not* be a barrier to investing in coaching.)

Coaching also has helped many participants clarify specific aspirations that relate to their development as leaders, including decisions to continue their education, gain or strengthen specific skills, or shift their current job responsibilities.

¹³Malcolm Knowles, *Self-Directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers* (New York: Cambridge Book Co., 1983).

HOW DOES COACHING CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF THE LEADER'S ORGANIZATION?

Nonprofit leaders, grantmakers and other coaching proponents regularly refer to the ripple effect coaching can have on organizations (see graphic, page 7).

As an individual or team begins to realize personal benefits from coaching, those benefits can spread throughout the organization to enhance its overall efficiency and effectiveness.

Better leadership and management. The CAP Project's survey of individuals who have worked with an executive coach for at least three months found that respondents believe coaching contributed to significant improvements in key leadership and management skills. Coachees' responses to open-ended questions pointed to the benefits accruing to their organizations. They said coaching helped them manage more effectively the staff and personnel issues, as well as the finance and fund-raising responsibilities, of their jobs. They also said they were better equipped to handle conflict in their organizations because of coaching.

Nonprofit leaders also reported to the CAP Project that coaching helped them lead their organizations through a variety of changes, including mergers, quick program growth and organizational restructurings. And foundation staff members reported that while coaching is not always the impetus for organizational change, it often contributes to an acceleration of the pace of change within grantee organizations.

Smoother transitions. Coaches, coachees and grantmakers alike especially value coaching as a means of helping organizations manage executive transitions successfully. For example, as Girls Incorporated of Alameda County (California) prepared for the exit of longtime executive director Pat Loomes and the transition to new leadership, the organization used grant funds from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund to pay for leadership coaching for the board and staff, plus consulting and training in fund development, succession planning, governance and other crucial areas.

"The coaching made it so we had a vehicle to discuss things, a shared experience in some ways that helped us be on the same page," Loomes said.

Stronger leadership teams. Last but not least, coachees note that coaching has helped them understand that they cannot do the job of running their organizations on their own; they say coaching helped them take steps to strengthen staff and board leadership teams and to improve communication and interpersonal relationships with colleagues.

Foundation staff also reported improved involvement of and relationships between the executive director and the board as an important effect of coaching. This, in turn, can create greater focus on the organization's overall direction and mission by staff and board leaders.

GRANTMAKER

CASE STUDY

GRANTMAKER: Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation

COACHING KEY: Customizing coaching to the needs of grantees

MORE INFO: www.meyerfoundation.org

For more than 15 years, the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation in Washington, D.C., has provided Management Assistance Program grants of as much as \$25,000 to current grantees to help strengthen their leadership and management. In 2003 Meyer added coaching to the toolkit of services that grantees could fund through the program.

The grantmaker's support for coaching is in part the result of Director of Programs Rick Moyers's own experience with coaching as a critical form of support for nonprofit leaders. Before joining the Meyer Foundation, Moyers served as executive director of a small nonprofit. In that position he engaged in a variety of consulting and training opportunities but found nothing that helped him as much as coaching.

"I know from experience that the executive director position is a lonely job, and coaching provides a crucial sounding board," Moyers said.

Moyers said the main appeal of coaching for the Meyer Foundation is that it can be custom-tailored to meet a grantee's needs.

"We are giving leaders resources to find the right coach for them, and they can work with that person to design an engagement that gives them exactly what they need," Moyers said. He added that he could not think of another form of leadership or management effectiveness enhancement that is as responsive as coaching to the needs of grantees.

The Meyer Foundation provides MAP grantees with a high degree of flexibility in how they use coaching. It offers the names of three or four coaches to grantees, who then interview the coaches and make their own decisions about whom to hire and how to structure the coaching engagements.

In addition to the MAP grants, the Meyer Foundation supports coaching through the grantmaker's Exponent Awards, which recognize up to five nonprofit leaders each year with grants of \$100,000 for two years for leadership development. Recipients can use the award money for a combination of coaching, continuing education or activities designed to strengthen the organization's board or senior management team.

Since the Meyer Foundation started offering coaching to grantees, Moyers has become even more convinced of its value in developing leadership and management effectiveness for grantees.

"The best coaches tap all of the intelligences, the strengths and the creativity of the client," he said.

"There is nothing else we could do as a grantmaker to make that happen as effectively as coaching."

GRANTMAKER

CASE STUDY

GRANTMAKER: Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund

COACHING KEY: Capturing lessons learned while becoming a major supporter of coaching for nonprofits

MORE INFO: www.haasjr.org

The Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund supports coaching for participants in the grantmaker's Flexible Leadership Awards program, which offers an array of leadership development supports to selected grantees.

According to Linda Wood, the foundation's senior director for leadership and grantmaking, the fund approached coaching with both curiosity and concern. FLA's design expressly links the development of leaders with well-defined organizational goals, and Wood wanted to ensure that any coaching it offered would develop leaders' ability to advance those goals. "We wanted to be intentional and mindful in all of our leadership investments that the organization is the client, and organizational results are what we're after," Wood said.

After extensive discussions with both coaches and observers of the coaching field, Wood and her colleagues determined that coaching could well prove to be an effective resource for helping leaders advance their most important organizational goals. Still, according to Wood, the fund did not position itself as an advocate of coaching. FLA leaders would have to determine for themselves the relevance of coaching to their goals.

The results were unexpected. Coaching quickly became one of the most popular and highly valued resources for the nonprofit leaders. In the first two years of the FLA program, participants' expenditures on coaching totaled \$495,000, or 20 percent of the program's total outlay of \$2.5 million. This makes coaching the single largest expenditure category in the program, and the fund a leading supporter of coaching.

Early grantee feedback indicated that leaders were using coaching to advance both their own development and their immediate organizational goals, achieving the linkage at the heart of the FLA design. As one grantee wrote in an evaluation of the program, compared with other forms of leadership development, "coaching is a more transformative experience, and it has ripple effects way beyond whatever the presenting organizational challenge is."

Recognizing that it is now in the vanguard of foundations that support coaching, the fund is engaged in a determined effort to capture lessons about how and when coaching works best. Evaluator William P. Ryan of Harvard's Hauser Center recently completed a review for the fund of the role of coaching as a leadership development strategy for the nonprofit sector; he also assessed it as a cornerstone activity of grantees of the FLA program.

Ryan's review found widespread consensus that the hallmarks of good coaching are clear, measurable goals linking individual development and organizational performance, which aligned coaching perfectly with the fund's approach to leadership development as a driver of well-defined organizational goals. He also recommended various improvements to the fund's support for coaching, including a stronger focus on "readiness criteria" to make sure the grantmaker is selecting good candidates for coaching.

To access the Haas, Jr. Fund's report on its experience investing in coaching, go to the Online Toolkit.



www.compasspoint.org/coaching

Make It Work

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF GRANTMAKERS IN SUPPORTING AND ADVANCING COACHING?

The CAP Project's research has affirmed that coaching can be an important strategy for improving the effectiveness of organizations and their leaders throughout the nonprofit sector. However, in order for this promising practice to take hold and reach usage rates comparable to those in the business world, grantmakers will need to invest more in coaching for their grantees.

Increased support for coaching, in turn, will require increased understanding among grantmakers of how to make coaching work best as a leadership development and organizational effectiveness tool for their grantees.

When grantmakers have turned to coaching in the past, they have tended to view it as a stand-alone form of support. But the CAP Project's research has shown that coaching can have a positive impact when grantmakers offer it to nonprofits in the context of larger grantmaking efforts, such as leadership development programs and organizational effectiveness initiatives.

Therefore, we encourage grantmakers to think differently about coaching and to broaden the ways in which they support it — chiefly, by combining it

with other investments in nonprofit leadership and organizational capacity (e.g., off-site training, peer support groups, and targeted consulting for board and staff leaders).

Grantmakers also can support grantees to become more conscious consumers of coaching by helping them clarify the purposes of a coaching engagement and providing them with information about what coaching is, what it is not, how to screen and select a coach, and how to tell when coaching is not working. For more resources and answers to all these questions, go to the Online Toolkit.



www.compasspoint.org/coaching

In addition, grantmakers can help grantees and colleagues become more aware of the value of coaching and its potential influences by sharing stories and information about the success of coaching, along with tools that can help contribute to coaching success.

HOW CAN WE KNOW WHAT STRATEGIES ARE RIGHT FOR US AND OUR GRANTEES?

Every grantmaker will need to figure out an approach to supporting coaching that addresses the specific needs of its grantees, as well as the foundation's mission and operating style. Grantmakers that are new to this work, or that want to expand and refine what they are already doing to support coaching, need to consider a number of important questions, such as the following:

- ▷ What are the grantmaker's goals for strengthening the leadership and organizational effectiveness of grantees, and how can coaching support those goals?
- ▷ What is the most effective way for the grantmaker to invest in coaching — and in what instances will it work best for grantees? (See “When to Use Coaching,” page 12, for more.)
- ▷ What form of coaching will help grantees the most, that is, one-on-one coaching for the executive director, a “blended model” of coaching and other effectiveness-building tools, peer coaching, targeted content coaching, team coaching and/or coaching for emerging leaders? (See “In what forms is coaching offered to nonprofit leaders?” page 8, for more on the different types of coaching.)
- ▷ Are there ways to integrate coaching into other organizational effectiveness and leadership development programs that the grantmaker already supports?
- ▷ How can the grantmaker provide nonprofit leaders with resources and encouragement to apply coaching skills in their day-to-day work with others so that coaching becomes more embedded in the organization?

When explored with board members, staff, grantees, and other grantmakers, these and similar questions will help grantmakers develop strategies that make sense for their grantees. The key to success is to connect support for coaching to broader grantmaking goals. Coaching then becomes a strategy for achieving the mission by ensuring that grantee board members, chief executives and senior staff have the support they need to lead their organizations successfully.

HOW CAN WE KNOW IF A GRANTEE IS READY FOR COACHING?

After a grantmaker has identified the strategies and types of coaching that are appropriate for its grantees, assessing grantee readiness to participate in a coaching engagement is a crucial next step. Grantmakers can help ensure that prospective coachees exhibit the characteristics needed for successful coaching and that their organizations are prepared to support the coachees as they enter into a coaching engagement.

Individual readiness. Coachees report that other tasks within their organizations can sometimes take precedence over coaching. That is why it is important for grantmakers to be clear at the outset about the level of time and energy required to ensure successful coaching and why it is important to assess the capacity and the willingness of participants to make coaching work within their schedules.

As important as knowing that coachees have the time to make coaching work is knowing that they have a willingness to learn and to adapt their leadership styles. William P. Ryan's evaluation of the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund's Flexible Leadership Awards program identified a number of “leader assets or attributes” necessary for effective coaching. These include openness, curiosity, a learning orientation, an appetite for change, a willingness to be introspective, and an interest in and capacity for strategic thinking.¹⁴

¹⁴ For a copy of William Ryan's report, go to the Online Toolkit.  www.compasspoint.org/coaching

Questions to Consider: Coaching Readiness

Grantmakers need to know that grantees are ready for coaching. Whether a funding organization is working on its own or through an intermediary, the grantmaker should be sure to ask these types of questions:

- ▷ Is the individual or team prepared to devote the time needed to make coaching work, including time for meetings and “homework” in between?
- ▷ Is the individual or team ready to work on personal or leadership issues that affect job performance?
- ▷ Is the individual or team open to new ideas and new ways of doing things to facilitate positive change and growth?
- ▷ Are the prospective coachees experiencing personal challenges or crises that might get in the way of successful coaching?
- ▷ Do board members and staff leaders support coaching for the individual or team? Do others in the organization understand the reasons for and goals of coaching?
- ▷ Is the organization experiencing a change in strategy, leadership or external conditions that can become a focal point for coaching?
- ▷ Is the organization suffering because of interpersonal conflicts or other problems that might blunt the effects of coaching?

To download a coaching readiness questionnaire, go to the Online Toolkit.

 www.compasspoint.org/coaching

Researchers Diane Coutu and Carol Kauffman agree that an executive’s motivation to change is crucial to the success of coaching. In a *Harvard Business Review* article about their survey of 140 coaches, they write that one of the most important questions coaching sponsors can ask as they assess a potential coachee’s readiness is this: “Is the executive highly motivated to change?” They continue: “Executives who get the most out of coaching have a fierce desire to learn and grow.”¹⁵

Organizational readiness. Beyond assessing the readiness of coachees, it is important to consider the readiness of grantee organizations for coaching. Coaching will be more successful if it garners the support of an array of board members and staff leaders in an organization; in other words, the base of support for coaching should extend beyond the person or people who are being coached. This means grantmakers should take steps to ensure that key individuals, such as board members, senior leaders and supervisors, understand and support coaching for the organization’s staff.

In addition to assessing readiness and acceptance among board members and senior leaders, grantmakers and their partners can conduct a broader assessment of the grantee organization to see if it has reached a stage where coaching can provide an effectiveness boost. As we noted earlier in this guide, coaching is not intended as an intervention for organizations in crisis, but it can be quite effective for organizations experiencing an “inflection point” such as rapid growth, an executive transition or other significant change.

For organizations and individuals that are *not* ready for coaching, grantmakers can consider a range of other supports. Such support could focus on developing specific competencies in the nonprofit leader — for example, in areas such as finance, strategic planning or human resources. Or, if the grantmaker finds that the organization is facing board and staff conflicts or other serious problems, the grantmaker could consider providing support for board development or mediation. (For more on when not to use coaching, see page 13.)

¹⁵ Coutu and Kauffman, “What Can Coaches Do for You?” p. 3.

IS THIS SOMETHING WE SHOULD DO ON OUR OWN OR THROUGH AN INTERMEDIARY?

Many grantmakers that provide support to their grantees for coaching do so through intermediaries — individuals and organizations assigned to manage the day-to-day work of maintaining a stable of coaches for grantee use, ensuring good matches between grantees and their coaches, keeping tabs on how coaching is going, and performing other related tasks. For example:

- ▷ The Annie E. Casey Foundation works with the consultants at Community Wealth Ventures to provide coaching and other effectiveness-building support to two cohorts of grantees (see case study on page 37). The Casey Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation also work with CompassPoint to provide coaching to transitioning executives.
- ▷ Blue Shield of California Foundation has assigned the job of running the Clinic Leadership Institute, which includes a coaching component, to the staff at the Center for the Health Professions at the University of California, San Francisco (see case study on page 36).

Using an intermediary can have a number of benefits, starting with saving grantmakers money and time they might otherwise devote to building a staff team to manage the coaching process. Intermediaries also can bring expertise to the process so grantmakers can be more confident that coaching is based on proven methods. Last but not least, intermediaries can help create a buffer between the grantmaker and the coaching engagement. If a grantmaker is not involved in the day-to-day oversight of coaching, grantees may feel more comfortable sharing their challenges and frustrations with a coach.

Of course, not all grantmakers feel a need to manage coaching through an intermediary organization. Some, like the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, provide grants to grantees for coaching and allow them to manage the process of finding a coach and structuring the engagement themselves, while the foundation provides referrals and advice as needed.

HOW CAN WE ENSURE GRANTEE ARE WORKING WITH THE RIGHT COACHES?

As in any other relationship, the success and endurance of the coaching relationship relies on strong chemistry between coach and coachee. Where coaching fails, it is often because the coach and coachee failed to click. Grantmakers should therefore make sure that grantees have a choice of coaches. This can mean building a diverse pool of available coaches (based on age, race or ethnicity, gender, and other factors) and allowing grantees to conduct interviews and sample sessions before making a decision.

Ensuring a good match. LeaderSpring's Executive Coaching Program, which makes one-on-one coaching available to participants in the organization's two-year fellowship program, has established a careful and thorough matching process, providing both coachees and coaches with a choice in identifying their partners. The process includes sample sessions between coaches and coachees, after which participants complete a feedback form to document their initial impressions, their willingness to be matched with each other and any perceived barriers to working together.¹⁶

Assessing coaches' qualifications. Chemistry is not the only consideration in ensuring a successful match between coach and coachee. Grantmakers also should ensure that the coaches who are working with grantees have appropriate coaching experience and skills, as well as an understanding of the unique challenges facing nonprofit leaders.

¹⁶ Regina Sheridan and Kim Ammann Howard, "Enhancing Nonprofit Leadership Through Coaching: LeaderSpring's Executive Coaching Project," *BTW informing change*, October 2009, available in the Online Toolkit.  www.compasspoint.org/coaching For more on the LeaderSpring program, see www.leaderspring.org.

Should Coaches Be Certified?

The importance of certification for coaches is a matter of substantial debate within the nonprofit sector. Given the varying quality of coaching education programs, the lack of standards and other factors, at this time the CAP Project believes that certification should not be a crucial determining factor in the decisions grantmakers and others make about whom to hire as a coach.

Rather, paying close attention to the skills and background that prospective coaches bring to their work is important. The CAP Project found a growing interest among grantmakers and nonprofit leaders in seeking “bridgers” — that is, coaches who bring both a deep understanding of the nonprofit context and deep knowledge of the core competencies and ethical guidelines of coaching.

To download the report on coaching competency guidelines, go to the Online Toolkit.

 www.compasspoint.org/coaching

An individual’s knowledge of coaching can come from a combination of formal training and experience as a coach. In reviewing the qualifications of a coach, grantmakers and their partners should find out more about the coach’s previous coaching engagements: Were they a success? Did they help the individual’s organization? Can the coach provide references?

Some grantmaker staff members with whom we spoke said that coaches with nonprofit experience, including service as an executive director or board member, are better able to help nonprofit leaders and organizations because of these coaches’ greater understanding of the unique challenges of the sector.

The CAP Project’s interviews with coaches affirmed this belief. Nonprofit coaching, some of them told us, can be more difficult than coaching in the business sector because of the complexity of the operating environment for nonprofits, as well as the ambitions of the nonprofit sector (e.g., ending racism versus increasing product sales). Transferring coaching principles and practice across sectors was a key concern among those who said nonprofit experience is important.

“I didn’t want to have to explain to my coach how nonprofits are different,” said Lindsey Buss, president and CEO of Martha’s Table, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit. “You need to hit the ground running in these relationships, and for me it helped to know that my coach was comfortable dealing with the peculiarities of nonprofit life.”

Building a diverse pool of coaches. Grantmakers and nonprofits also should seek out coaches who have experience working with diverse groups and who are able to address challenges related to sexism, racism and other relevant issues facing many nonprofit leaders.

The CAP Project has identified a lack of cultural and ethnic diversity among trained coaches working in the nonprofit sector. Specific ethnic groups are underrepresented, as are individuals from mainstream populations who have experience working with diverse populations. This can present a challenge for grantmakers and nonprofits as they seek coaches who can establish strong and effective working relationships with diverse nonprofit leaders.

“There can be a sense in the field that once you are a coach, you can coach anyone. I don’t believe that,” said Belma González, who has worked as a coach in a number of grantmaker-funded leadership programs. She added: “Life experience and values and other factors are important to the success of a coaching relationship.”

While many nonprofit leaders specifically ask to work with coaches of color or with coaches of a specific gender, others indicate little preference when asked. The bottom line: Grantmakers should pay attention to the diversity of coaches who are available to work with grantees. If the group is overly homogeneous, grantmakers may want to cast a wider net for coaches and perhaps collaborate with colleagues to explore ways to bring more people of color into the field.

The CAP Project launched the Coach Training Pilot Project in an effort to increase the number of coaches from diverse backgrounds who are committed to working within the nonprofit sector. For more information, go to the Online Toolkit.

 www.compasspoint.org/coaching

Questions to Consider: Selecting the Right Coaches

Grantmakers should ensure that the coaches who are available to work with grantees have the qualifications, expertise and temperament that can contribute to a good coaching engagement. Some questions for grantmakers and their partners to consider:

- ▷ Does the coach have formal training in coaching?
- ▷ How much coaching experience does the coach have? With what types of organizations?
- ▷ What were the results of the coach’s previous coaching engagements — both for the individual coachees and their organizations?
- ▷ To what extent does the coach have leadership experience, coaching experience or both in the nonprofit sector?
- ▷ What core coaching practices and principles drive the coach’s approach to coaching?
- ▷ What does the coach do to build a strong working relationship with coachees?

To download a guide to selecting a coach, go to the Online Toolkit.

 www.compasspoint.org/coaching

HOW DO WE ENSURE THAT COACHING DELIVERS RESULTS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS?

Because coaching centers on a confidential relationship between two individuals, many grantmakers report being wary of collecting information about the coaching experience; some say they typically gather less information about coaching than they require for other funded work. This creates a challenge for those who are interested in tracking the results of coaching for individuals and organizations.

Setting goals. Many grantmakers and their partners have created successful systems for ensuring that coaching is delivering results. It all starts with connecting coaching to specific goals and outcomes for individuals and organizations.

“Every coaching experience should be a journey with a clear and definable destination, and the coach is responsible for managing the pathways,” say coaches Madeline Homan and Linda Miller, authors of *Coaching in Organizations: Best Coaching Practices*.¹⁷

When nonprofit coachees reported that a coach’s strategies or techniques posed a barrier to the success of coaching, one of the top complaints was that the coaching was not founded on a concrete plan, goals or structure. Related complaints cited by some coachees included a belief that the coaching was “too touchy-feely” and that there was “not enough accountability from the coach.” In some cases these types of complaints can be the result of confusion about the precise goal of coaching — for example, a coach may be intent on providing life coaching, while the coachee and the organization are more interested in organizational or career coaching.

William P. Ryan’s evaluation of the coaching component of the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund’s Flexible Leadership Awards program shows a connection between the extent to which coach and coachee agree on clear goals and the coachee’s satisfaction with the experience. “The executive directors whose coaching centered on identifying and working to change discrete attitudes and behaviors — rather than developing leadership broadly — expressed the highest satisfaction” with their coaching, Ryan reported.¹⁸

Assessing impact. Once the coach and coachee determine the specific goals of coaching, those goals can become the basis for assessing its impact. Assessments can look at progress toward reaching coaching goals, as well as how specific design elements contribute to the successes or shortcomings — or both — of coaching.

Currently, the degree to which information is collected about coaching experiences and effects varies considerably. Some grantmakers and their partners take a completely hands-off approach and request no information at all, while others have conducted more rigorous evaluations of coaching. Most supporters of coaching fall somewhere in the middle. They request information through simple work plans and brief progress reports that indicate whether the coaching process is on schedule and whether goals are generally being met. Some grantmakers (or their intermediaries or both) also hold debriefing meetings with coaches, coachees, supervisors or others following a coaching engagement.

Grantmakers and other coaching providers that want to assess the results of coaching often collect data from the coachees. For example, participants in Aepoch Fund’s pilot coaching program agreed to complete a simple evaluation form after the first three months of coaching and again at the end of the six- to nine-month award period. Coachees filled out the evaluation form with the understanding that their coaches would not see what the grantees said. The forms asked coachees a range of

¹⁷ Madeleine Homan and Linda J. Miller, *Coaching in Organizations: Best Coaching Practices* (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), p. 59.

¹⁸ For a copy of William Ryan’s report, go to the Online Toolkit. www.compasspoint.org/coaching

questions about their experience in the program and what they learned while working with their coaches.

In addition to providing opportunities for “self-reporting” by coachees, some grantmakers collect complementary information from others who work with coachees — including organizational peers, supervisors and direct reports. One of the most rigorous strategies grantmakers and others have used to obtain multiple perspectives about impact is pre- and post-coaching assessments of the coachee’s performance that seek the perspectives of colleagues. Others have used interviews and surveys to gather similar types of third-party perspectives.

Clarifying expectations. While the CAP Project found widespread interest in stronger assessments of the impact of nonprofit coaching, it is important to note that some proponents of coaching disagree about the feasibility and importance of strictly quantifying its results. For example, coaches Stratford Sherman and Alyssa Freas, in their 2004 article in the *Harvard Business Review*, argue that “the essentially human nature of coaching is what makes it work — and also what makes it nearly impossible to quantify.”¹⁹

In addition, grantmakers and their partners need to have realistic expectations when assessing organizational outcomes connected to coaching. Coaching, for example, cannot by itself solve the problems or challenges faced by an organization. Similarly, because the personal benefits of coaching usually come first, nonprofits, grantmakers and others might need to wait longer than they would like to see organizational outcomes.

“It’s important to have clear expectations about the outcomes you want to see,” said coach and independent consultant Carol Gelatt. “The outcomes you will see earlier are very much about the individual leaders and their perception of themselves. It takes longer to see organizational outcomes.”

Questions to Consider: Assessing Coaching’s Impact

Grantmakers and their partners should weigh the following questions as they think about how best to assess the impact of coaching on the individuals and organizations involved:

- ▷ What information is already being collected about grantee impact — and how can the impact of coaching be included?
- ▷ What level of evidence of impact do people want and need?
- ▷ What do those involved in the coaching relationship (e.g., coaches, coachees, grantmakers) want to learn so they can adjust the design and implementation of coaching supports, as needed?
- ▷ Is the coaching based on goals or a contract that identifies desired outcomes and that can serve as the basis for assessment?
- ▷ What can the coach, grantmaker and others do to ensure that data collection and reporting activities respect the confidential nature of coaching?
- ▷ Are all stakeholders clear and comfortable with the proposed methods and timing of data collection and reporting?
- ▷ If the coaching supports are part of a larger intervention, how can reporting and evaluation assess the impact of coaching? At the same time how can assessment of coaching be connected to other data collection efforts?

¹⁹ Sherman and Freas, “Wild West of Executive Coaching,” p. 2.

The Costs of Coaching

- ▷ Fifty-eight percent of coachees surveyed by the CAP Project said that a “grant or funder” had paid for their coaching fees; 52 percent said their organizations paid the fees (respondents could choose multiple responses). Just 12 percent said they had paid for the coaching themselves.
- ▷ Respondents were paying a mean of \$121 per hour for coaching services; the range was \$20 to \$325 per hour.
- ▷ Ninety-four percent said their coach charged for the service, while 6 percent received pro bono coaching.
- ▷ Two-thirds (67 percent) of coaches participating in the Leadership Coaching Learning Circles, a pilot project to build community and share best practices among coaches in several regions around the country, offered reduced rates to nonprofit clients. The same percentage (67 percent) said they package coaching sessions for nonprofit clients (e.g., three sessions for a set price).

Sources: CAP Project Nonprofit Coaching Survey, 2009. CAP Project Coaches Survey, 2009.

HOW SHOULD WE PAY FOR COACHING — AND HOW MUCH?

Grantmakers and other supporters of coaching vary widely in how they compensate coaches. Aepoch Fund and other grantmakers often ask coaches to discount their standard hourly rate for work with nonprofit grantees. However, Blue Shield of California Foundation compensates coaches in its Clinic Leadership Institute at their regular rates. The grantmaker explains that it wants to pay “full freight” to ensure that coaches are fully engaged in the work.

One trend of note is an increase in pro bono coaching by coaches who feel called to contribute their time to nonprofits.²⁰ While pro bono coaching can certainly be helpful, the CAP Project, as well as many of the grantmakers we talked to, has some reservations about this growing practice.

Specifically, when the coachee is contracting directly with the coach, pro bono coaching can contribute to the perception that coaching is not especially valuable or important. This perception can result in canceled coaching appointments and a lack of commitment on the part of coachees to the work required between meetings. Additionally, many coaches offering pro bono service do so in order to meet their hour requirements for coaching certification, which may pose a quality issue.

The lesson for grantmakers: Do the due diligence, and interview potential coaches in search of the best match, rather than going with the coach offering free services.

Another cost consideration for grantmakers is whether to have grantees pay a percentage of the costs of coaching. While many grantmakers would like to completely subsidize coaching fees, the CAP Project recommends that grantees pay some money in order to have some skin in the game. Organizations receiving grants for coaching from Aepoch Fund, for example, agree to pay a portion of the fee for each coaching session (usually 20 percent of the total cost), with the grantmaker covering the rest.

²⁰ The Harnisch Foundation has created a special Web page devoted to pro bono coaching on its Coaching Commons Web site at www.coachingcommons.org/category/gift-of-coaching/.

GRANTMAKER

CASE STUDY

GRANTMAKER: French American Charitable Trust

COACHING KEY: Integrating coaching with other forms of consulting and support for building organizational effectiveness

MORE INFO: www.factservices.org

The French American Charitable Trust supports coaching through the grantmaker’s Management Assistance Program, which provides an array of effectiveness-building services to FACT grantees. After approving grantee requests for assistance, FACT matches the organizational development needs of specific grantees with the skills of a vetted pool of consultants and coaches. Overseeing the work on behalf of the grantmaker is Emily Goldfarb, an independent consultant and coach.

FACT grantees are community-based social change organizations throughout the country. Through the MAP they receive \$42,000 worth of consulting services (plus \$10,000 to \$15,000 for travel and other expenses) in 18 months. In some cases, according to Goldfarb, grantees will seek permission to spend some of the money on coaching. In other cases, Goldfarb will recommend coaching to grantees while she is doing the needs assessment that inaugurates every MAP grant.

Of 11 consultants on the MAP team, four consider themselves coaches. Often FACT will assign more than one consultant to work with a grantee — one person might be providing organizational development consulting or working with the board or both, for example, while another is providing coaching to the executive director and other staff members.

“We tend to provide coaching as part of a larger system of supports for these organizations,” Goldfarb said.

She encouraged grantmakers considering coaching to view it as a support for multiple staff members, not just the executive director. “People too often focus on coaching just for one person — usually only the ED is eligible — and then that one person returns to an organizational system that is unsupportive of the ways in which they are trying to change or where only the ED is receiving support and others are still left on their own,” she said.

GRANTMAKER

CASE STUDY

GRANTMAKER: Blue Shield of California Foundation

COACHING KEY: Providing coaching as part of a broader initiative supporting emerging leaders

MORE INFO: www.blueshieldcafoundation.org/programs/healthcare-coverage/clinic-leadership-institute.cfm

The mission of Blue Shield of California Foundation's Clinic Leadership Institute is to prepare emerging leaders of California community clinics and health centers to be "effective and passionate agents of change in today's evolving healthcare environment."

According to the foundation's director of healthcare and coverage, Brenda Solórzano, the institute considered coaching to be a crucial programming element from the start. "We recognized that these emerging leaders often do not have a confidential place where they can go to explore the things they need to be thinking about and doing as they advance in their careers," she said.

The grantmaker assigned the job of running the CLI to the staff at the Center for the Health Professions at the University of California, San Francisco. Through the institute, coachees receive nine hours of coaching for 18 months while they are participating in other CLI activities such as seminars, leadership projects and peer networking groups.

Coaches meet with coachees according to a set schedule of one-hour sessions, with coaches checking in on a monthly or bimonthly basis. The first one-hour session is a face-to-face meeting, with subsequent sessions by telephone. The positive response to coaching led the institute to add six hours of post-grad coaching for those who have completed the 18-month program.

Lynette Worden, who works with Planned Parenthood Mar Monte in Roseville, California, said working with a coach was "the main highlight" of her participation in the institute. "I was matched with somebody I really connected with," she said. "It's opened my eyes to what a leader can be."

Worden is not alone in citing coaching as a crucial element of the program. Interim evaluations of the first year of the CLI found that participants were already expressing "considerable appreciation for and satisfaction with" the coaching they received. According to the evaluation, "coaches challenge participants and support them in taking action to confront barriers and further develop their leadership."

GRANTMAKER

CASE STUDY

GRANTMAKER: Annie E. Casey Foundation

COACHING KEY: Targeting coaching to the financial and fund-raising challenges facing two cohorts of grantees

MORE INFO: www.aecf.org

In 2009 the Annie E. Casey Foundation contracted with the nonprofit consulting firm Community Wealth Ventures Inc. to provide coaching and other support to Casey grantees as they struggle with the consequences of the economic downturn.

According to Patrick Corvington, who oversaw the program for the Casey Foundation, grantees had increasingly expressed interest in one-on-one support as they faced tough decisions, such as reducing hours and staff and meeting increased demand for services. Because many grantees were facing similar challenges related to the state of the economy, the grantmaker set out to offer coaching in the context of a cohort-based effectiveness-building program.

The program targets two cohorts of Casey grantees: large, high-performing nonprofits that are recipients of the grantmaker's Families Count awards, and smaller, community-based organizations that are part of Casey's Kids Count network. After the foundation offered all its grantees in its two networks the chance to participate, the process kicked off with an organizational assessment of participating organizations' finances, management and programs.

Based on the initial assessment, the consultants at Community Wealth Ventures worked with each organization's executive director (or other designated leaders) to develop a "service plan" outlining the frequency of coaching, priority issues and goals for the engagement.

The coaching took place over six months, with telephone appointments once a week to once a month. The consultants supplemented coaching with webinars and other forms of cohort-based support.

Margie Hale, executive director of West Virginia Kids Count, said the coaching she received through the Casey grant helped her wrestle with a range of thorny issues, from expanding funding diversity to strategic planning and board development. "The coaching was fantastic. It gave me a much better handle on the issues we are dealing with right now and how to respond," she reflected.

DELIVERING ON COACHING'S PROMISE

Recommendations for the Field

We believe that coaching, when done well, is an effective tool for strengthening the leaders of nonprofit organizations and making them more effective. Our research has convinced us that an investment in effective coaching for nonprofit leaders is an investment in their organizations and the communities they serve. Therefore, we encourage grantmakers to use this publication as the start of a learning journey focused on how best to support coaching as a strategy for advancing leadership development and organizational effectiveness among grantees.

However, our research also has helped us understand that coaching still has a long way to go before it can have a significant impact throughout the nonprofit sector. Too many people are unfamiliar with coaching; it is underused, underfunded and misunderstood, and a lack of professional standards adds to the confusion about what coaching is and how it can help. Also, our research suggests that the pool of trained, qualified coaches from diverse backgrounds is too small to meet the unique needs of nonprofit leaders and their organizations.²¹

Grantmakers, working collectively and individually, can play an essential role in overcoming these challenges and barriers to coaching, and in helping the sector realize coaching's potential as a leadership development and organizational effectiveness tool.

For individual grantmakers we recommend a thorough examination of how to make coaching work for their grantees, based on some of the ideas and suggestions included in the "Make It Work" section of this guide. Meanwhile, for the field of philanthropy as a whole, we offer the following recommendations for advancing the understanding and practice of coaching:

Document and share coaching practices, models and impacts. To build on the knowledge base that this project has identified, we recommend that grantmakers work together to collect data related to coaching and to reflect on those data and their implications. In particular, we identified a need for a handful of well-chosen, appropriately funded and more rigorous evaluations of promising coaching interventions than have been supported by grantmakers to date, along with return-on-investment information. Using similar evaluation methods and metrics across

²¹ For more information on issues of diversity in coaching — including the CAP Project's Coach Training Pilot Project, which is working to increase the number of coaches from diverse backgrounds in the sector — go to the Online Toolkit. www.compasspoint.org/coaching

evaluations would strengthen these efforts. These evaluations also should analyze why some coaching situations were not effective. Ultimately, these evaluation efforts could contribute to the development of a common understanding about the organizational and field-level benefits of coaching, as demonstrated by improvements in organizational capacity, leadership retention and development, and social return on investment.

For examples of the types of evaluations that can help advance the field's understanding of coaching, see the reports from The James Irvine Foundation and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund in the Online Toolkit.

 www.compasspoint.org/coaching

Support more rigorous standards. Grantmakers can support more effective coaching for nonprofit leaders by developing coaching standards specific to the nonprofit sector. These would address the need for a shared understanding throughout the sector of (1) what makes a coach qualified to work effectively with nonprofits (including standards and recommendations covering coaching competencies, coaches' training, nonprofit experience, etc.) and (2) how to structure an effective coaching intervention (including screening and selection recommendations, readiness requirements, guidelines for structuring a coaching engagement, reporting standards, guidelines for fees and grantmaker subsidies, etc.). For more information on suggested competencies for coaches working with nonprofits, go to the Online Toolkit.

 www.compasspoint.org/coaching

Invest in coach recruitment and training and build coaches' capacity and effectiveness.

We have confirmed the need for coach-training programs that address the unique nature of nonprofit organizations. Additionally, to advance the practice of coaching in the sector, grantmakers should consider investing in such strategies as mentoring for coaches and the development of larger learning communities for coaches working with nonprofits.

Consider issues of diversity in coaching.

Grantmakers can play an important part in ensuring diversity among coaches by supporting access to coach training for people of color and for other underrepresented groups. According to our review, the accredited coaching programs and schools typically express a philosophy that celebrates diversity, but they may not have formal policies, programs or practices in place to attract a diverse group to the profession. One participant in the CAP Project's Coach Training Pilot Project framed the problem in these terms: "While I believe that formal training and certification are helpful to coaches, the structural void in culturally relevant content in coach schools today is forcing many of us to have to create our own curricula and vision." As a first step we recommend supporting coaches of color to work with the coach-training field to develop training that is relevant to both the nonprofit sector and communities of color. Other recommendations include providing nonprofit and cultural competence training to *all* coaches seeking to work with nonprofit leaders, particularly mainstream coaches who may need assistance in bringing a cross-cultural perspective to their work.

Explore coaching as an opportunity for

"second acts." According to GEO's *The Departing: Exiting Nonprofit Leaders as Resources for Social Change*, one aspect of the demographic shift in nonprofit leadership that no one has addressed is how to leverage the talent of executive directors who are transitioning out of their organizations. Many of these individuals have said they are not ready (or cannot afford) to retire outright. For grantmakers invested in keeping departing leaders engaged, we suggest investing in coach training (and certification where appropriate) for former executive directors who have transitioned out of their positions but are looking for ways to continue to contribute to nonprofits. Investing in the training of individuals who understand the nonprofit context and have practical, hands-on experience may be of great value to the next generation of nonprofit leaders.

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With capable coaches at their side, nonprofit leaders can learn more about themselves, about their organizations, and about how to manage people and conflicts, how to delegate responsibility for day-to-day tasks, and more. No other intervention can teach these things better than effective coaching, and we hope that grantmakers, both individually and as a field, will work hard to advance the application and practice of coaching in the years ahead — so that more nonprofit leaders and their organizations can see firsthand what good coaching can do for them.



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