



# MAKING COLLABORATIVE ADVOCACY WORK

For funders working to create big change on a tough issue, collaboration is key. Working with other, like-minded funders can bring more resources, expertise and energy to an advocacy campaign, with a resulting impact much greater than the sum of its parts. But funder collaborations can be tricky; conflicts over decision-making power and competition for resources can become sticking points that can derail an entire campaign. The Atlas Learning Project, in collaboration with Foundation Center, created a set of resources that provide insights into the value of multi-party advocacy, common sticking points and how to work through them. This includes a content series from GrantCraft that captures insights and reflections from foundation leaders about advocacy-focused funder collaboratives as well as an IssueLab collection of more than 40 publications on lessons learned from past funder collaborations.

## Atlas Learning Project

Now more than ever, funders need to learn from each other and put effective approaches and strategies into action.

***Recipes for a Successful Collaboration*** is part of the Atlas Learning Project, a suite of resources from The Atlantic Philanthropies and other experts in the field aimed to help funders think strategically about how to defend, sustain and advance progressive policy change. With smart thinking, bold action and sustained focus, funders and advocates will be better positioned to succeed in advocacy and policy change.

# RESOURCES

[The GrantCraft content series](#) dives deep into candid reflections from philanthropic leaders about advocacy collaboratives and how funders can apply lessons to their own approach. Each bite-sized resource focuses on a different aspect of advocacy collaboratives. The series includes:

- Deep dives on common “sticking points” in funder collaborations, including groupthink, personality conflicts, strategy alignment and trepidation around funding policy advocacy.
- Guidance for foundations seeking to answer specific questions, such as “Do we need additional staff to do this?” and “Does the size of the foundations involved matter?”
- A decision-making tree that surfaces important questions that are critical to answer before embarking on a collaborative funding strategy.

[The IssueLab special collection](#) brings together current reports, case studies, and evaluations on this topic, including:

- Publications highlighting achievements and lessons learned by funder collaborations in specific geographies, including the Ohio Transformation Fund, the New York Community Trust, the Community Connections program in Detroit and a collaboration of California funders working together to increase civic participation and voting in the state.
- Reports on the work of funder collaborations focused on specific issues, including implementation of the Common Core Standards, marriage equality and immigration reform.
- Reflections on what it means to be a collaborative funder and how multi-party advocacy works more broadly, including:
  - *Many Hands, More Impact*, a publication prepared by Grantmakers for Effective Organizations that provides a framework for the many different roles funders can play in supporting advocacy movements, and how they can best explore collaborative efforts for social change;
  - A report commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation examining what motivates foundations to engage in federal policy advocacy, the methods they use to do so and the results they achieve;
  - An exploration of the Packard Foundation’s work with other funders, categorized into five distinct models of funder collaboration from knowledge exchange to co-creating new entities.

**“No matter what the issue, the more funders know and trust each other, the more successful they are.”**

GRANTMAKER INTERVIEWED FOR  
GRANTCRAFT SERIES

Both GrantCraft and IssueLab hope to continue curating new resources on this topic. If you have published learning that fits the criteria of the IssueLab collection, please submit that resource to be included. Or, if you would like to share your own point of view on the sticking points and levers of success for these collaboratives, please [share your wisdom on GrantCraft](#) by submitting a guest blog.