# Power-Sharing Framework

*Volume 1*

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# Power-Sharing Introduction

Formed in 2006, the [Race and Equity in Philanthropy Group (REPG)](#) is a peer-learning network bringing together foundations committed to advancing racial equity and inclusion in their programs, policies, practices, systems, and operations. In 2021, REPG members began discussing how power operates in philanthropy and the ways in which foundations can share power with grantees and communities. Subsequently, REPG created a Power-Sharing Task Force dedicated to exploring the issue further and developing resources. Drawing from these discussions, this document is the first volume of a framework that categorizes various approaches to power-sharing and associated practices for advancing power-sharing both internally and externally. This framework will help foundations to assess their progress on power-sharing.  A second volume of the framework will be released in 2024 as a paper and will provide foundation examples and profiles within each of the categories.

The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy in their [Power-Moves Guide](#) refers to three dimensions of power:

- **Building power**- this refers to supporting systemic change by funding civic engagement, advocacy and community organizing among marginalized communities
- **Sharing power**- this is about nurturing transparent, trusting relationships, and co-creating strategies with stakeholders
- **Wielding power**- this involves exercising public leadership beyond grantmaking to create equitable, catalytic change

The focus of the REPG framework will be on the dimension of **sharing power**.

**Power-sharing** is about sharing decision-making power over the deployment of capital with communities who are most impacted. Funders share power by nurturing trusting relationships and co-creating strategies with stakeholders. Power sharing is integral to community-driven philanthropy, a model that aims to address the history of the sector itself while advancing new possibilities. The model can be seen as an umbrella for trust-based philanthropy, participatory grantmaking, and the associated practices to which more and more foundations are turning as they seek to share power. In addition to external practices, power-sharing also comprises internal practices touching on how a foundation is structured, approaches decision making, reflects the communities it serves, creates space for dialogue, and supports continuous learning.

Many of the practices included below feature two approaches in philanthropy that have been gaining momentum over the last several years. The first is trust-based philanthropy, which focuses on reducing the burdens that traditional philanthropic relationships have imposed on recipient organizations in order to cultivate trust and genuine collaboration. Strict grant reporting requirements exemplify the kind of barriers that many grantees encounter, requiring them to expend time, energy, and other precious resources that are better utilized within their own community. The second approach is participatory grantmaking, wherein grantmaking

organizations share and/or cede power in decision-making processes. Grantees and communities themselves exert greater discretion over grantmaking decisions, thereby subverting the power imbalances that have long characterized philanthropy.

Both approaches call on grantmaking organizations to rethink their relationship to the organizations that they support as well as to the communities they serve. As noted in the definition above the practices fall within the umbrella of community-driven philanthropy, which emphasizes the importance of communal input for unlocking the full potential of place-based work as a philanthropic intervention. Organizations engaging in power sharing tend to implement multiple practices concurrently to achieve internal and external alignment. While the framework captures and describes many of these practices, there is an ongoing, dynamic conversation in which philanthropic practitioners are discussing practices and policies for sharing power that are not included in this document.

## Power-Sharing Practices

*External*

| Elements | Practices | Foundation Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Grantmaking procedures and reporting<br><br>(Trust-based philanthropy) | Offering multi-year, unrestricted funding<br><br>Transferring the onus of due diligence from grantee to grantmaker<br><br>Simplifying and streamlining of grant submission and reporting processes<br><br>Transparency and responsiveness on the part of grantmakers<br><br>Providing support beyond the check<br><br>Requesting and acting on feedback from grantees<br><br>Building trust with communities by demonstrating a listening and learning posture<br><br>Contributing to capacity development | International reproductive health strategy, Hewlett Foundation<br><br>Four models of community-led grantmaking, National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy |
| Participatory Grantmaking | Inviting input and participation from non-grantmakers/community members about program strategies, priorities, and/or grantmaking<br><br>Integrating a public participation component in all of the institutions' activities<br><br>Requiring that advisory or board committees include non-grantmakers/community members<br><br>Designating specific number of board or committee seats for non-grantmakers/community members<br><br>Reframing discussions about expertise | The Social Justice Fund, Pittsburgh Foundation<br><br>Red Umbrella Fund |

| Elements | Practices | Foundation Examples |
|---|---|---|
|  | Being explicit about making information and data about funded projects publicly available and making evaluation results available to public |  |
| Community-driven philanthropy | Creating focus groups with external facilitator to allow for authentic feedback from grantees and community members<br><br>Learning from communities during strategic planning process to help influence and establish strategic and grantmaking priorities.<br><br>Supporting stakeholder created grant funds (initiated and developed by community members and grantees)<br><br>Creating Community Advisory Groups (to provide steady form of feedback throughout grantmaking process from concept to evaluation)<br><br>Creating a process of deep engagement with communities in order to transition money and power over to various constituents in the community<br><br>Aligning social impact measures, methods, and investments with the values of community-led change | Amplify Fund, Neighborhood Funders Group<br><br>Tzedek Social Justice Fund (Tzedek)<br><br>Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Minnesota |

*Internal*

| Elements | Practices | Foundation Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Culture and Structures | Conducting internal audits (assess policies and procedures and ask staff, vendors, grantees for feedback)<br><br>Apply value-based lens to hiring practices (leadership and staff reflect communities served)<br><br>Decentralize decision-making structures (collective input, multiple stakeholders)<br><br>Revise job descriptions and grant agreements (address any top-down power dynamics)<br><br>Create space for reflection and dialogue and normalize conversations about power and race<br><br>Invite collaborative culture-shaping<br><br>Support continuous and ongoing learning (training opportunities for staff, ongoing assessment of community engagement)<br><br>Ensuring a purpose-driven board | Equitable recruitment and working environment, Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation<br><br>Internal conversations and democratic change, Omaha Foundation<br><br>Job requirements and compensation, Missouri Foundation for Health<br><br>Collaborative culture-shaping, Sewall Foundation<br><br>Flat decision-making model, Magic Cabinet Foundation<br><br>Engaging staff members in strategy development, Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta |

## Sources

**Trust-based philanthropy**
- [Trust-based philanthropy offers us a path to power-sharing beyond the pandemic](#) (Farrah Parkes)
- [Trust-based philanthropy](#) (The Whitman Institute)
- [Form Design for Trust-Based Philanthropy](#) (Grantbook)
- [Building a Trust-based philanthropy to shift power back to communities](#) (Stanford Social Innovation Review)
- [Feedback's role in shifting power to those least heard](#) (Listen4Good)
- [Social Justice Philanthropy Restructures to Focus on Power](#) (Inside Philanthropy)

**Participatory grantmaking**
- [Participatory Grantmaking: Has its Time Come?](#) (Ford Foundation)
- [Deciding Together: Shifting Power and Resources Through Participatory Grantmaking](#) (GrantCraft)
- [Participatory Grantmaking Aims to Dismantle Power Imbalances between Funders and the Communities They Serve](#) (Urban Institute)
- [Democratizing Family Philanthropy: Shifting Practice to Share Power](#) (National Center for Family Philanthropy)
- [How to unlock a participatory strategy: Five key enablers create the conditions for success](#) (Transparency and Accountability Initiative via Candid.)

**Community-driven philanthropy**
- [Challenges and Strategies for Building Community Driven Philanthropy](#) (GEO)
- [How Community Driven Philanthropy Can Enhance Democracy and Increase Philanthropic Impact](#) (Maurrasse and Greer)
- [How Community Philanthropy Shifts Power](#) (GrantCraft)
- [How should we measure the impact of philanthropy that supports community-led change?](#) (Dana R. H. Doan)
- [What Does It Mean To Be Community-Led?](#) (GlobalGiving)

**Internal culture and structures**
- [Trust-based philanthropy in 4 D](#) (Trust-Based Philanthropy Project)
- [Reflections on the promise of trust-based philanthropy](#) (Social Innovation Forum)
- [The Four Principles of Purpose-Driven Board Leadership](#) (Anne Wallestad)
- [Diversifying Perspectives and Sharing Power at a Family Foundation](#) (Ruth Cummings & Sharon Alpert)
- [Wielding Power with Community: Creating Pathways for Change and Transformation](#) (Linda S. Campbell)
- [If we are not prepared to govern, we are not prepared to win](#) (Dana Kawaoka-Chen)

## Additional Resources

Justice Funders, Resonance: A Framework for Philanthropic Transition

Equitable Evaluation Initiative, The Equitable Evaluation Framework™

National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, Power Moves: Your essential philanthropy assessment guide for equity and justice

Trust-based Philanthropy Project, Mapping the Movement to Redistribute Power

D5 Coalition, Analysis of Policies, Practices, and Programs for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Participatory Grantmaking Collection of articles/resources from NCRP (includes case studies and foundation profiles), https://www.ncfp.org/collection/participatory-grantmaking/

Social Impact Commons, Shifting and Sharing Power - Peer Governance and the Question of Stewardship