

Identifying & Working with Local Leaders, Volunteers and Advisory Boards

Presented by:



Heather Larkin Eason
Executive Vice President
Arkansas Community Foundation
Phone: 501-372-1116
Email: heason@arcf.org

Arkansas Community Foundation Structure

- ACF is a federation with a love/hate relationship with the thought of becoming a service bureau.
- ACF is a statewide community foundation serving all 75 counties in Arkansas.
- ACF currently has 20 Affiliate community foundations, each covering an entire county.
- ACF loosely thinks of its Affiliates as branch banks: policy and much of the back office admin are done at headquarters; the local office serves its population with local leadership and a local presence.

ACF s Approach to Rural Leadership — Identification

- Staff contacts — Who do we know (Chambers of Commerce, Leadership network, etc.)?
- ACF Board — Do we have an ACF board member in the area?
- Affiliate Boards — ACF s Affiliates know the communities surrounding their area and can help identify potential leaders for a new Affiliate.
- Donors — If our donors love us, they will love the idea of a local community foundation.
- Mass mailing — For two years ACF did a mass mailing to Chambers of Commerce, county judges, and other groups. We then responded to inquiries.
- Meetings, meetings, & meetings — You have to go in person and meet.

ACF s Approach to Rural Leadership — Training

ACF Staff: Affiliate Coordinators — Extremely effective

- board meetings
- committee meetings
- one on one training with executive directors and Affiliate board chairs
- workshops
- *The Affiliate Press* and other materials

Consultants: Endowment Development Institute — Extremely effective

- computer training
- workshops
- site visits

ACF s Approach to Rural Leadership — Training

Order of Training (if there is one)

- a. General community foundation info
- b. Board development
- c. Grantmaking
- d. Donor development
- e. Marketing and planning

How do we engage the rural leaders in the ownership and activities of the central foundation?

NAG!

ACF s Approach to Leadership — Transition

Local Level:

- Operating procedures address rotation and nominating committee
- Affiliate Coordinators continuously work on Affiliate board rotation
- Affiliate nominating committee

Statewide Level:

- ACF doesn't play a large role in either identifying, nominating, or selecting board members or ED s.
- If we know of someone, we pass along his or her name.
- Several Affiliates have advisory boards where lapsed or emeritus leaders go to die.

Resources

THE BAD NEWS:

- Tremendous resources are poured into this system and more are needed
 - 2 full time staff members
 - a large chunk of other staff time: finance, grantmaking development
 - technology
 - consultants
 - development materials
- A huge burden on development, finance, program departments

THE GOOD NEWS

- Private foundation support
- Affiliates are building their own base of support

THE FUTURE

- ??????

Lessons Learned, Advice Given

3 Toughest Lessons

- They will hear only what they want to hear.
- There is no such thing as repeating yourself too often.
- We are created a monster system that we can not completely control.

3 best things produced for ACF

- Invaluable and irreplaceable relationships
- A network of over 300 board members talking about community foundations, building permanent funds in our state, and making local grants to organizations and causes that would otherwise go unnoticed
- See 1 & 2 (that s more than any community foundation could hope for!)

3 bits of advice

- Plan, think, strategize, organize.
- Realize that most of that planning, thinking, strategizing, organizing is for naught.
- Be flexible, roll with the punches, and watch philanthropy grow in your most rural areas.