

# Roles & Rules:

## Developing Rural Service Operating Guidelines & Principles

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Tuesday, 3:45-5:45 p.m. Room #4, Meeting Room Level

**Pat Vasbinder**, Consultant, Former Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation

**Bill Pratt**, Program Director, Montana Community Foundation

### Session Topic

The focus of this session is how and why a community foundation establishes a set of operating principles, guidelines and rules for how the central foundation and its local/rural divisions or funds relate to each other — operationally, culturally, legally and so that each feels it is part of the same foundation community — and the content of those guidelines.

### Strategic Issue Breakout Session Flow

The flow of the breakout session will go something like this:

CSG Lead	Intro, Context, Introductions	5 minutes
Pat Vasbinder	NHCF Approach and Experience	20 minutes
CSG Lead	<i>Question Queue</i> for Pat	15 minutes
Bill Pratt	MCF Approach and Experience	20 minutes
CSG Lead	<i>Question Queue</i> for Bill	15 minutes
CSG Lead	<i>Instant Advice</i> : Open it up for others to present their approaches and challenges for advice and comment from Pat, Bill and other participants	Remainder of time

We will engage two process innovations during this session:

1. *The Question Queue*. We will ask participants to write their questions (and constructive ideas) on post-it notes for posting throughout the session — posing them to Pat, Bill, each other, or the cosmos. We will begin using these during Q&A. Aspen CSG will work with the presenters to answer any questions that are not answered during the session on the RDPLN website in the week or two following the workshop.
2. *Instant Advice*. In the last segment of the session, we will ask any participant to pose in 5 (or fewer) minutes a situation they are facing in relation to the breakout topic, and then we will ask participants for their Instant Advice responses of one minute or less (with post-its encouraged as well).

Note: We may adjust this process a bit, but you get the idea.

(over)

## **Presentation Outline**

Here are the questions we asked Pat and Bill to focus on during their initial *Roles & Rules: Developing Rural Service Operating Guidelines & Principles* presentation.

1. **The Structure.** For context, tell us what rural coverage structure you think your foundation (NHCF for Pat, MCF for Bill) represents. (See attached draft *Rural Coverage Structures and Characteristics* matrix).
2. **The Guidelines.** Describe as concisely and usefully as possible your foundation's *current operating guidelines and rules* in relation to establishing and maintaining rural area funds or divisions. Please address if relevant:
  - a) Once established or mature, what deal does the central foundation offer its component rural entities (whether divisions, funds, affiliates, whatever). That is, what will the central foundation do for and provide to the local rural entity, and what must the rural entity do for itself or provide to the central foundation — in relation to:
    - program/grantmaking
    - donor services and endowment building
    - foundation-region-wide community-building
    - local and central governance
    - organizational management/finances/administration?
  - b) What is required of and provided by each party (local and central) in the initiation/organization phase for a rural/local component— if it differs from the deal in (a)?
  - c) Are there any other stages of development between organizing and mature? If yes, what are they and how does the deal in (a) differ with them?
  - d) How do the central and rural/local bodies hold each other accountable for and enforce these guidelines and rules?
3. **The Principles.** What motivated you to establish these guidelines? Is there a set of principles or values that you have used to write and revise them?
4. **The Process.** What process did you use to establish these guidelines and who participated in it? What was the review and approval process? What process do you use for ongoing review and revision of the principles and guidelines?
5. **The Lessons.**
  - What are the top 3 *toughest things* your foundation experienced in establishing and maintaining these principles and guidelines?
  - What are the top 3 *best things* that have happened for your foundation as a result of establishing these principles and guidelines?
  - What 3 *lessons or pieces of advice* would you offer to another community foundation that wants to develop formal principles and guidelines?