

Creating a Women's Fund
Within a
Community Foundation

**A Philanthropic Strategy
for Women and Girls**



Chambers Family Fund

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*Chambers Family Fund
2006*

Acknowledgments

Many people supported the creation of women's funds within the community foundations highlighted in this publication. Early on, John Freeman of Wyoming, Sidney Armstrong of Montana and Frank Merrick and Susie Graves of Oklahoma were enthusiastic and receptive to the idea of a women's fund within their community foundations.

Without the dedication of the women's funds' advisory board members, chairs and many other volunteers, these women's funds would not be successful. The leaders of the community foundations were, and continue to be, very supportive of the women's funds within their community foundations. This is essential for such a partnership to thrive.

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Introduction

Chambers Family Fund championed the creation of women's funds in Wyoming, Montana and Oklahoma with dollars and ideas. Merle Chambers, President of Chambers Family Fund, wanted to create something permanent in the states where her family's oil business operated. In 1999, Chambers Family Fund launched an initiative to increase philanthropic support of organizations serving women and girls in Wyoming, Montana and Oklahoma. Partnering with community foundations in those states, Chambers Family Fund created new statewide women's funds: Wyoming Women's Foundation, Women's Foundation of Montana and Women's Foundation of Oklahoma.

From the beginning, we believed it was essential to raise an endowment so that each women's fund could exist in perpetuity. To gain visibility and respect in the community, it was important that the new fund have resources to make grants early on and to have adequate operating support for initial staffing. We made a \$500,000 challenge grant to raise a \$1 million endowment for each fund, awarded \$250,000 for grants and provided \$125,000 in operating support over five years while the women's funds grew their endowments. The feedback from our community foundation partners has been that this three-part, multi-year funding approach was both creative and comprehensive and worked to make the women's funds sustainable as quickly as possible, creating a strong foundation for the women's funds' success.

Partnering with community foundations has worked well for many reasons that will be discussed in this publication. It is important to note here, however, that none of these states had existing women's funds and the well-established statewide community foundations were experienced in serving their relatively small, widely distributed and often rural state populations. These community foundations provided the necessary infrastructure to support the creation of viable women's funds and were an obvious choice as potential partners for Chambers Family Fund.

An advisory board guides each of the three funds. It is comprised of women who live in the state, understand women's and girls' issues, know the needs of the area and invite others to invest in the women's fund as a permanent local grantmaking organization. Advisory board members support and promote the goals of the women's funds — providing philanthropic support for organizations serving women and girls, building women's philanthropy and promoting systems change.

The number of women's funds in the country and around the world is growing steadily. Each one has great potential to improve the lives of women and their families and thereby their communities. We hope this information will both inspire and guide community foundations to explore and support the creation of women's funds if no women's funds exist in their communities.

Why This Publication?

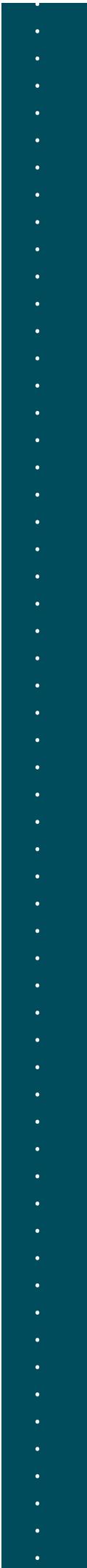
The process of creating a new women's fund requires thoughtful planning and strong commitment. *Creating a Women's Fund Within a Community Foundation* is based on Chambers Family Fund's five-year experience championing women's funds in Wyoming, Montana and Oklahoma. It is designed to share what we have learned, to provide successful strategies to make such partnerships work and to offer recommendations based on our experience. It emphasizes the importance of building an endowment to provide a permanent source of grantmaking revenue for responding to the needs of women and girls.

We expect the primary audience for this publication to be leaders of community foundations. We hope that champions and other community leaders who are interested in creating a women's fund will also find it useful.

The first step is to read PLANNING. If the answer to the question, "Is a women's fund in our community foundation's future?" is "Yes" then move on through ESTABLISHING and BUILDING to learn more about our experience creating and growing an effective, permanent women's fund within a community foundation.

PROFILES of Wyoming Women's Foundation, Women's Foundation of Montana and Women's Foundation of Oklahoma provide an overview of these funds and a summary CONCLUSION follows. RESOURCES end the publication and SAMPLE DOCUMENTS for your reference are provided on the enclosed disk.

This publication and sample documents are also available online at <http://www.chambersfund.org>.



P lanning

- *Why Create a Women's Fund Within a Community Foundation?*
- *What Are the Needs of Women and Girls in Your Community?*
- *Is a Women's Fund in Your Community Foundation's Future?*
- *What Is the Timeline?*



Why Create a Women's Fund Within a Community Foundation?

A women's fund brings attention and funding to a segment of our population that has traditionally been underserved. Wherever you are in the world, women and children make up the majority of those living in poverty. Investment in the economic development and stability of women and girls helps to break the cycle of poverty and to ensure the safety and vitality of communities. The needs of women and girls are significant and the creation of a vehicle to meet these needs can be an extraordinary asset for a community foundation and for the geographic area it serves.

Women's funds empower women, listen to women's voices and help to break the cycle of poverty. Women's funds have been doing this at the local, national and global level for over 30 years. Yet, according to Women's Funding Network (WFN) research, less than 7% of private philanthropy in the U.S. is devoted to supporting programs specifically targeting women and girls. If 70% of those in poverty are women and children, then the 7% of private philanthropy funding for women and girls is insufficient in meeting the overall need. The establishment and growth of women's funds are critical.

Despite the statistics, there are many examples of partnerships where women leaders address solutions to community problems with astounding results. Women often see issues as family and community problems to be solved and are willing to put energy and commitment behind the struggle for a better life and the sustainability of the whole.

Women's philanthropy has not reached its full potential. A women's fund can serve to expand women's philanthropy and empower women as philanthropists.

Why Women's Philanthropy is Critical

- *70% of those in poverty in the U.S. are women and children.*
- *Women and their children make up a growing percentage of the homeless population.*
- *Two-thirds of those making minimum wage for their work are women.*
- *Women still only earn 76 cents for every dollar men earn and for women of color the gap is even larger.*
- *On average, a woman with a bachelor's degree earns \$8,000 less than a man with a bachelor's degree.*
- *1 in 4 women in this country have been raped, sexually assaulted or physically abused.*
- *In 2001, 12% of women ages 65 and older were in poverty compared to 7% of men in this age group. For African-American and Hispanic women over the age of 65, the poverty rates were 42% and 49%, twice that of white women.*
- *In the U.S., only 33% of women have health insurance coverage through their jobs compared to 53% of men.*

*Women's Funding Network,
Creating Sustainable Social Change
in Your Communities, 2004*

Donors who have never participated significantly in philanthropic efforts may be attracted to a women's fund because it appeals directly to women's motivations and it benefits other women and girls.

Why Bring Women to the Philanthropic Table

- *It makes sustaining healthy communities a real possibility.*
- *Women are creative and effective leaders for building community change.*
- *Women are key assets as both donors and grantee partners.*
- *If you don't, someone else will and you will have missed an important opportunity that will positively impact the growth of your community and the growth of your community foundation.*

A Brief Overview of Women's Funds

Women's funds have been in existence for more than 30 years. The first fund to grow out of the modern women's movement, the Ms. Foundation for Women, was established in 1972. The number of women's funds steadily increased to more than 100 funds by the 1990s. The Women's Funding Network continues to expand with new funds in the United States and around the world. The Women's Funding Network was founded in 1985 to advise, strengthen and empower women's funds and it currently has 115 member funds, 22 outside of the United States. This international membership organization provides programming and expertise to build the capacity of its member funds.

"Our association with the Women's Funding Network has been useful not only in terms of what we do with the women's foundation but in things we learned that can be applied to the community foundation such as rigorous marketing, mentoring and board development."

*Linda Reed
Women's Foundation of Montana*

Women's funds have highlighted the needs of women and girls nationally and around the world. Women's funds' constituencies and donors often engage in and articulate a distinct message for social change. When common societal problems such as those found in health care, education and the workforce are considered in terms of how they specifically affect women and girls, the most effective solutions often require nontraditional approaches. Women's funds focus their activities to assure that women are fully contributing members of society.

In large part, women's funds grew out of the women's movement's emphasis on economic equality. Women's funds work to ensure that women and girls have fair pay, opportunities for economic security and greater decision making power over money. They also work to change systems, to improve women's incomes and their ability to provide adequately for their families.

A women's fund uses a gender-focused lens in grantmaking to effectively address the issues and barriers that women and girls face. Women's funds accomplish great things, improving the lives of women and girls and thereby their communities.

Examples of Women's Funds' Activities

- *Stimulate the use of microfinancing programs and other mechanisms to help women start their own businesses, one of the most direct routes to empowering the disenfranchised*
- *Assist advocacy programs for gender pay equity, women's access to credit and legislative changes to increase the economic security of women and their families*
- *Provide the backbone of support for such critical work as women's anti-violence programs including shelters, rape crisis centers and medical and court systems*
- *Support solutions for the successful transition from welfare to work*
- *Encourage family planning services and teen pregnancy prevention programs*
- *Establish training for women re-entering the workforce*
- *Identify emerging needs and develop cutting-edge strategies to confront social injustices*
- *Help women gain access to health care*
- *Fund programs for girls to expand their educational and career horizons*
- *Support educational, recreational and athletic programming for girls*

Women donors often seek a cause or organization that has a social change aspect to it. They want to develop relationships with other people who share their passion for social change and see personal involvement as a very important aspect of the entire philanthropic experience. An increasing number of women are choosing to support programs that strive for systemic change rather than ones that provide direct service to a specific number of people. They spend time investigating the importance of an issue and the ability of an organization to impact it. Once women are committed, they are more likely to support an organization for the long-term, viewing their gifts as investments in the future of individuals, their communities and the world. In this way, philanthropy is beginning to rival voting as the social change tool of choice for women.

The Value of Creating a Women's Fund Within a Community Foundation

Creating a women's fund within a community foundation can be a very successful strategy for meeting the needs of women and girls and for expanding women's philanthropy. The women's fund's mission and strategies complement those of the community foundation and a women's fund shares the community foundation's focus on meeting community needs, expanding philanthropy by attracting new donors and building endowment. Operations are similar, the missions aligned and each benefits from the synergy of their partnership.

Benefits for the Community Foundation

The start-up energy of a women's fund can be stimulating and refreshing for a community foundation. By focusing its

research and grantmaking on women and girls, the women's fund increases the understanding of community needs and positions the community foundation as a partner to address those needs. The women's fund will serve new constituents and increase the community foundation's visibility through its grantmaking to organizations serving women and girls. The women's fund expands grantmaking to organizations serving women and girls without supplanting existing community foundation grants.

The women's fund will attract donors, grantees and visibility that will expand the community foundation's reach in the community. The women's fund will also attract new volunteers, expanding the community foundation's support base. Women's funds typically attract women donors, many of whom are new to philanthropy, who are then exposed to the work of the community foundation as well.

A new women's fund benefits a community foundation by heightening awareness of the community foundation's role in serving the community, generating greater community participation and increasing its reach and the diversity of its donors and volunteers.

Benefits for the Women's Fund

The partnership between a women's fund and a community foundation provides the women's fund with philanthropic expertise, visibility and a solid organizational foundation. The women's fund benefits from the community foundation's proven track record as a philanthropic leader. This credibility allows the women's fund to attract larger donations sooner because donors are more likely to give significant gifts to an established organization with a

solid reputation. Donors will have the comfort of knowing their contributions will be well-managed and wisely invested. The women's fund will have the opportunity to invest its endowment in the community foundation's large and more diverse portfolio.

The community foundation's policies and operational structure permit the women's fund to jump-start its fundraising and grantmaking efforts. Women's fund staff and volunteers are free to concentrate on raising money and making grants without the burden of the organizational and administrative considerations that an independent fund would need to undertake. These efficiencies also minimize operational costs allowing the women's fund to build its endowment more quickly.

Finally, the women's fund will immediately have connections throughout its geographic area through the community foundation's established contacts and existing database information. It will also benefit from economies of scale in joint marketing activities with the community foundation.

"Our women's foundation has done so much for our community foundation. A community foundation can be difficult to understand and to market. The women's fund has provided an issue people can actually understand. That leads them to learn more about the community foundation and why there would be an association between the two. We have been introduced to new types of donors and educated about new trends in philanthropy."

*Ralph Yaeger
Women's Foundation of Montana*

What Are the Needs of Women and Girls in Your Community?

The first step in planning for a women's fund is to determine the needs of women and girls in the proposed fund's service area. A needs assessment will provide information necessary to understand the challenges, opportunities and gaps in service for women and girls in the community.

The needs assessment helps establish a research-based agenda and sets a clear direction for the women's fund's eventual grantmaking. Women's funds use needs assessments to determine where to make grants, avoid redundancy in grantmaking, establish a baseline of data against which future accomplishments can be compared, identify potential grantee partners and maximize the impact of grants.

What to Include in a Needs Assessment

There are two important needs assessment components that provide information to guide a new women's fund.

A Research Needs Assessment

- *Gathers and analyzes statistical and census data about women and girls in the community — this research should be focused on issues such as poverty, numbers of female-headed households, population and demographic information, wage comparability among women and men, childcare availability and costs, barriers to economic self-sufficiency and comparisons to other geographic regions*
- *Identifies the barriers women and girls face*
- *Determines what needs to change*

An Organizational Needs Assessment

- *Identifies organizations in the area serving women and girls*
- *Evaluates the strengths of programming for women and girls*
- *Determines the gaps in service*
- *Assesses the capacity level of existing organizations to provide services to women and girls or to create systems change*

The community foundation and the women's fund must work closely with whoever is chosen to conduct the needs assessment. Many communities have universities, research organizations and independent consultants that have this expertise.

One potential resource for research needs assessment data is the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR). The institute publishes a series of *Status of Women in the States* reports. Between 1996 and 2004, IWPR produced individual reports on women's status in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as biennially updated reports on national trends. The reports look at indicators related to economics, health, rights and demographics. They utilize a variety of sources, primarily federal government agencies, and compare performance levels to indicate progress over time.

A women's fund needs to evaluate the resources available in the community in order to choose the best approach for conducting the organizational needs assessment. The organizational needs

assessment may involve a survey of area nonprofit organizations by mailed questionnaire, telephone survey and/or focus groups. It is specific to the local community by definition, so data sources will vary by geography. The women’s fund may want to engage a local nonprofit association, graduate school of public affairs or consultants specializing in nonprofit research to locate and search databases of community nonprofit and government organizations in order to supplement information available through the community foundation. The community foundation and the women’s fund must work closely with any third party that is retained to develop survey and focus group questions and direct data collection.

“Be sure the questions you ask of organizations are the specific questions that will yield useful data.”

*Susie Graves
Women’s Foundation of Oklahoma*

Using the Results

The results of a needs assessment are critical elements in determining a women’s fund’s future direction. Information and analysis from the needs assessment provide the women’s fund with a basis for its grantmaking priorities, its fundraising strategies and its communication planning.

With information about the status of women and girls and the challenges they face in the community, a women’s fund can target its grantmaking to address the identified needs. It can use the information to articulate to potential donors the local importance of the women’s fund. The data from the research will also help the women’s fund develop compelling messages for media and public awareness campaigns.

The results of the organizational component of the needs assessment will include a list of organizations serving women and girls, many of which may provide services aligned with the women’s fund’s grantmaking priorities. These organizations can be included in a list of organizations to receive a request for proposal (RFP) from the women’s fund. They are also potential partner organizations for strategic proactive funding addressing specific issues.

Putting Needs Into a Larger Context

Two of the priority areas for the women’s funds in Wyoming, Montana and Oklahoma are the economic self-sufficiency of women and systems change. Considering the results of a needs assessment within these areas allows a women’s fund to build a bigger and more integrated picture of the needs of women and girls and a comprehensive set of strategies for effectively addressing these needs.

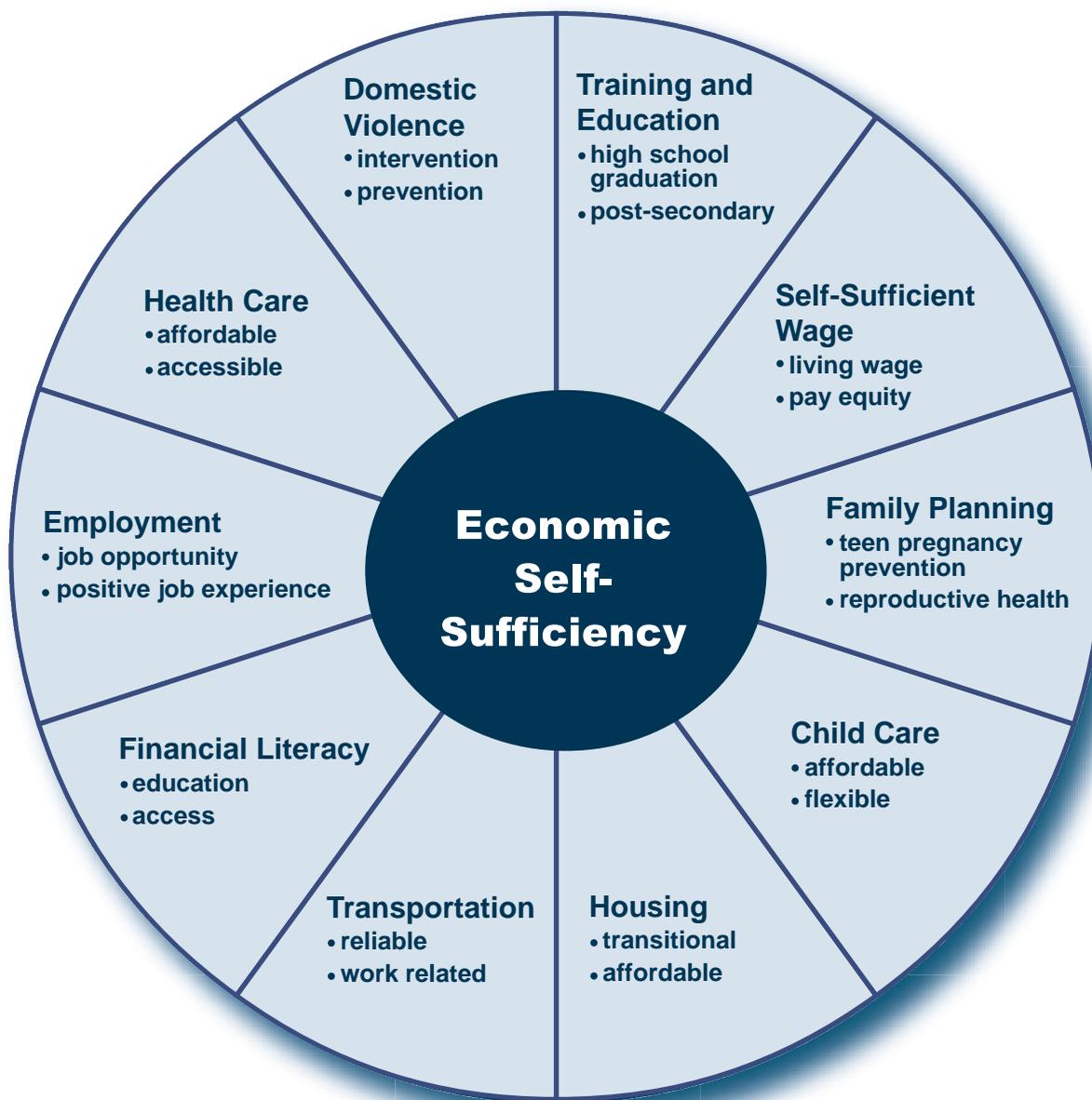
Economic Self-Sufficiency

One of the primary goals of many women’s funds is for all women to be economically self-sufficient and/or economically independent. Women lacking economic self-sufficiency struggle to adequately provide for themselves and their families.

Economic self-sufficiency for women is impacted by many factors. It is helpful to visualize the complexity of the issue in order to respect the depth of investment in multiple factors required to make change.

A chart adapted from The Women’s Foundation of Colorado illustrating some of the myriad of factors affecting economic self-sufficiency follows. With limited grantmaking dollars, a women’s fund may choose to focus on only one or two of the factors affecting self-sufficiency.

Factors Impacting Economic Self-Sufficiency



Systems Change

Women's funds have learned that the current systems of institutions, programs and policies often limit the opportunities and resources available for women and girls. The purpose of systems change funding is to address root problems and to make fundamental, lasting and positive differences.

The Requirements of Planned Change

- *Assessing the situation requiring change*
- *Articulating the desired change*
- *Developing a plan for change*
- *Identifying change agents and implementing the plan*
- *Sustained support, attention, patience and perseverance*
- *Developmental growth in knowledge, skills and feelings*
- *Sufficient resources*
- *Time and attention to building networks that model and mentor*
- *Broad support of the local community*
- *Incremental infusion into existing programs and policies through collaboration and cooperation among participants*
- *Small, incremental behavioral change*
- *Changing a single element triggers other changes throughout the system*

The Change Process

- *Focuses on problems with systems not individuals*
- *Is long range and not a snapshot event*
- *Alters beliefs, attitudes and behaviors*
- *Impacts all within the system*
- *Requires a critical mass of individuals to advocate and implement*
- *Is an ongoing, constantly improving process*
- *Creates an environment receptive to continual improvement*
- *Requires the participation of those impacted by the change*
- *Involves diverse constituencies working together*
- *Changes the rules under which everyone operates*

“Women's funds provide the leadership to bring grantees and donors together, address emerging issues, alert to changing trends and craft sustainable solutions. This puts them at the forefront of the social change movement.”

*Chris Grumm
Women's Funding Network*

Is a Women's Fund in Your Community Foundation's Future?

A community foundation and the women's fund it creates both benefit from an increased ability to meet specific community needs of women and girls, a synergy of purpose, economies of scale and the attraction of new donors. The mutual benefits and efficiencies resulting from such a partnership are compelling motivators for the establishment of a women's fund. Creating a women's fund within a community foundation helps expand the reach of services to women and girls in rural and geographically diverse areas and expands the possibility of participating in women's philanthropy to areas where women's funds do not currently exist.

The creation of a women's fund within a community foundation can be an energizing and rewarding endeavor for both the foundation and the community. As in all successful ventures, the creation of a women's fund within a community foundation requires thoughtfulness, patience, commitment, shared leadership and vision. The women's fund will be something new and different within the community foundation and an understanding and appreciation of the differences will help create a mutually beneficial partnership.

To maximize the benefits for both a community foundation and a women's fund, the foundation board and staff and the women's fund advisory board and staff must value the relationship, strive to establish open and respectful communication and view the success of the women's fund as a mutual goal. When the decision to create a women's fund is made, the community foundation will be saying "yes" to a new and motivated partner. Here are some points to consider when

determining whether or not the community foundation has the commitment and resources necessary to make the vision of a women's fund a reality:

- *Does a women's fund fit with the values and priorities of the community foundation?*
- *Does the community foundation board have an appreciation of the need for a women's fund in its community as well as an understanding of how and why it is different from other funds?*
- *Does the community foundation have an interest in increasing funding for women and girls?*
- *Does the community foundation have an interest in creating a designated vehicle that will attract women donors and expand philanthropy?*
- *Is the community foundation willing to position the women's fund as a complementary organization worthy of its own visibility?*
- *Can the community foundation expand its staff responsibility and operations as necessary to support a women's fund?*
- *Is the community foundation willing to seek out and dedicate the financial and human resources necessary to make the women's fund successful?*
- *Is the community foundation willing to conduct a needs assessment of the community to gather essential information that will guide the women's fund's grantmaking?*

“The women’s fund fits with the mission of the community foundation. It helps donors achieve their charitable intent in the most efficient and effective way possible, it helps communities/organizations create permanent endowments to sustain their work and it is a convener and catalyst for community initiatives.”

*Susie Graves
Women’s Foundation of Oklahoma*

Structure of a Women’s Fund Within a Community Foundation

The community foundation is the legal entity, the holder of the 501(c)(3) IRS status. A women’s fund is governed by the community foundation board, advised by a volunteer advisory board and supported by the women’s fund’s staff, hired or designated in agreement with the community foundation.

Chambers Family Fund recommended the creation of an endowed fund as the structure of the women’s funds in its partnerships with the community foundations of Wyoming, Montana and Oklahoma. This structure establishes a fund focused on building an endowment to provide a permanent source of funding for women and girls.

A women’s fund within a community foundation is not a donor advised fund because there is/are no donor advisor(s). Instead, the advisory board, which is comprised of community members, recommends grants and makes operational decisions. It is important that the advisory board understand its role within the structure of the community foundation. The

advisory board’s role is primarily fundraising, grantmaking and promotion of the women’s fund. It also has some operational functions such as budgeting operational dollars, marketing and communication and strategic planning.

“The community foundation needs to choose to create a women’s fund based on the women’s fund being complementary rather than competitive to what else it is doing. The community foundation has to have a real affinity for the subject matter and understand the potential of the fund.”

*Linda Reed
Women’s Foundation of Montana*

Champions

In this context, we refer to individuals or organizations that make a long-term commitment to partner with the community foundation to start the women’s fund as champions. They may support the women’s fund with a substantial contribution and/or with time and expertise. While it is possible to create a women’s fund without a champion, their vision and experience, as well as financial and fund development resources, often carry significant benefits for the women’s fund. If the women’s fund is started and supported by a champion, it may be valuable to have that person on the advisory board as well.

Champions can participate in a variety of ways to support the new women’s fund. A champion may provide challenge grants to jump-start fundraising and attract donors. They may contribute regrants or operating dollars to allow the women’s fund to concentrate fundraising efforts on

building the endowment. They may also fundraise for the women's fund to stimulate others in the community to contribute. A champion may promote the women's fund by giving media interviews, public speaking, event hosting and by participating in promotional activities.

To find potential champions for the women's fund, a community foundation might look to past and present board members, donors, donor advised funds, private foundations that fund women's and girls' issues, women in the community and local activists for women's and girls' causes.

In Wyoming, Montana and Oklahoma, Chambers Family Fund filled the champion role by contributing both dollars and expertise. We initiated a challenge grant to raise a \$1 million endowment for each fund and awarded regranteeing and operating support while the women's funds grew their endowments. We also served on the advisory board of each fund during the first years of their growth.

"The creation and development of the women's fund would not have been possible without a champion. Merle Chambers and Chambers Family Fund inspired the community foundation to partner in this endeavor, provided leadership in the beginning and challenged other women to embrace philanthropy as a means of creating change in their community."

*John Freeman
Wyoming Women's Foundation*

The Women's Funding Network

The Women's Funding Network (WFN) has extensive experience, expertise and resources to assist an organization or individual interested in creating a women's fund. Membership benefits include access to innovative capacity building programs, organizational development tools, consulting sessions, an online knowledge base, a wide variety of publications and networking opportunities at trainings and the annual conference. Its goals include increasing members' collective assets, leveraging their assets and heightening their visibility.

"Over 110 women's funds on five continents have collectively made over \$40 million in grants annually and given over \$200 million in grants over the past 20 years. WFN member organizations have collectively amassed over \$300 million in assets."

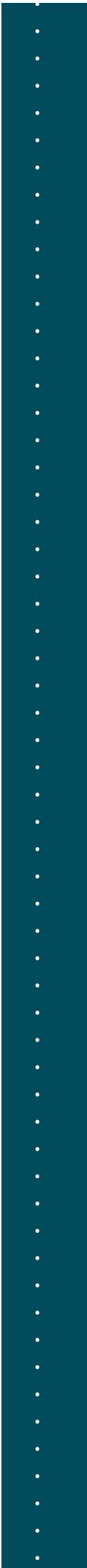
*Chris Grumm
Women's Funding Network*

Many women's funds that are part of community foundations are members of the WFN, joining under the women's fund's name rather than the name of the community foundation. The WFN can connect a community foundation to other community foundations that have women's funds and make referrals to consultants with experience in creating and working with women's funds.

What Is the Timeline?

The timeline for building a women's fund within a community foundation will depend on the women's fund's goals, but the following can be used as a general activity guideline.

| 1 — 6 months | 6 — 12 months | 12 months + |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gauge the interest of the community foundation board in creating a women's fund• Identify champion(s)• Register the name of the women's fund• Conduct a needs assessment to determine the needs of women and girls in the community• Develop a budget• Establish an endowment fund | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enact agreements and create governing documents• Designate staff• Select an advisory board chair• Select and convene the advisory board volunteers• Publicly announce the creation of the women's fund• Begin endowment fundraising• Create a strategic plan• Set fundraising priorities• Define a grantmaking process and make initial grants | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refine grantmaking process and procedures as grants continue to be made• Create and implement a communication plan to keep the fund visible to the public and to potential donors• Celebrate and publicize milestones• Review the strategic plan annually and revise as needed• Maintain an active, well-trained advisory board• Nurture relationships with the community foundation and the advisory board• Cultivate existing donors• Review fundraising priorities and continue endowment fund development |



*E*stablishing

- *Agreements and Governing Documents*
- *Designating Staff and Administrative Responsibilities*
- *Selecting and Convening the Advisory Board*
- *Building an Endowment*



Agreements and Governing Documents

Written agreements provide the framework for establishing a women's fund within a community foundation and clarify roles, expectations and responsibilities. Governing documents set forth policies for the advisory board and staff, operational rules and procedures plus the mission and purpose of the women's fund.

Since the community foundation is the legal entity responsible for the women's fund, it will create and sign agreements establishing the women's fund and governing its operations. Champion(s) may also sign agreements with the community foundation regarding their financial contributions to the women's fund.

Designating Staff and Administrative Responsibilities

Staffing is funded by the community foundation or by dollars raised by the women's fund. The women's fund staff may be shared with the community foundation, but it is preferable to have at least one dedicated women's fund staff person. Since the women's fund does not have its own 501(c)(3) status, the women's fund staff is employed by the community foundation.

It is important for the community foundation to consider the needs of the women's fund advisory board in staffing plans. It is helpful for the women's fund to use the skills of existing community foundation staff in areas such as database management, accounting and investments because it is best if these functions are not duplicated.

Staff support for the women's fund can be provided by one person or divided among several staff people, but it is critical to have one person as the designated liaison between the community foundation and the women's fund, as well as the primary contact for the advisory board. This lead staff person may be called the executive director or another appropriate title, but giving the lead staff person a women's fund title will be helpful in establishing the women's fund's identity.

First and foremost, lead staff must be committed to the women's fund mission. They need to have good relationship skills and varied experience since the responsibilities will be broad, including fundraising, donor development, responsive and proactive grantmaking and managing volunteers. In addition to leadership responsibilities, the staff will also have administrative responsibilities such as communication with the advisory board and meeting coordination.

The level of staffing in the women's fund will depend on available financial and human resources and will likely change over time. Staffing models vary as community foundations identify the most appropriate and effective staffing for the organization.

"The right staff person has been in the community a long time, knows the players, is well-respected, has worked in nonprofit organizations for social change, is very self-motivated, doesn't need a lot of oversight and is willing to work in cooperation with the advisory board."

*Jane Ragle
Women's Foundation of Southern Arizona*

Investing time and energy to maintain open and regular communication among staff members in the women's fund and the community foundation and with advisory board members and other volunteers is important. Sending informal emails and holding brief meetings where people are encouraged to share information about what they are doing, contribute ideas and feedback and bring up issues of interest to all creates a positive working environment, contributes to consistent organizational messaging and minimizes duplication of effort.

Administrative Fee

The community foundation will typically charge an administrative fee for managing the women's fund's endowed fund. This fee is generally less than two percent of the endowment fund value. Community foundation services covered by the administrative fee may include:

- *Investment fees*
- *Accounting*
- *Financial reporting*
- *Grant database and tracking*
- *Grantmaking process*
- *Grant reporting*
- *Donor/pledge database and tracking*
- *Donor/pledge reporting*
- *Formal donation receipt and thank you letters*

Database

One of the advantages of the women's fund's affiliation with a community foundation is that a community foundation has the capability to track individual donors and pledges to the women's fund separately in its database from those of the

community foundation. The grant management database can administer grants made. Therefore, there is typically no need for the women's fund to invest in new stand-alone fundraising tracking or grant management systems.

Reports

The women's fund's advisory board needs to receive timely financial reports generated by the community foundation. Quarterly reports are ideal and assist the advisory board in planning and managing the women's fund's activities. The following reports are suggested:

- *Operating — budget to actual figures, total expenses and fund balance information*
- *Gift — donor names (if not confidential), contribution date and amounts, pledge and challenge information*
- *Endowment — total gifts received, endowment earnings, fees and overall endowment growth*

Operating Expenses

Typical operating expenses for the women's fund may include:

- *Staff salaries and benefits*
- *Consultant/facilitator fees*
- *Travel and conference fees*
- *Marketing material and website*
- *Supplies, reference materials, dues and subscriptions*
- *Telephone, postage and copying*
- *Donor development such as meals and informational presentations*
- *Board meetings and site visits*
- *Special events such as luncheons, celebrations and grantee convenings*

Selecting the Advisory Board Chair and Members

It is essential to select the first advisory board chair in the early stages of developing the fund and this may be one of the most important initial decisions. The chair's leadership and ability to communicate with others engages both volunteers and donors. The advisory board chair will work closely with the community foundation staff to establish the fund and make organizational decisions before the advisory board is formed. Regular communication between the chair of the women's fund advisory board and the chair of the community foundation board is recommended. It is very helpful for a member of the advisory board to sit on the community foundation governing board.

“It is important to have the right person as board chair — someone who is a clear and definite leader — someone who has a clear vision and the ability and knowledge of people throughout the state who can be players — someone who doesn't need any of the credit, will give the time necessary, runs an excellent meeting and holds people accountable for what they said they would do — someone who specializes in board work so she has a good understanding of the kind of people to get on the board — someone who knows the initial board members and has worked in philanthropic communities for a long time.”

*Frank Merrick
Women's Foundation of Oklahoma*

It is important to have a talented and diverse advisory board to advise the women's fund. The advisory board for the women's fund is typically formed once the governing documents have been enacted, after staff have been designated, the needs assessment has been conducted and initial

marketing materials have been created. In our experience, if the advisory board is formed before these operational pieces are in place, its efforts may be diverted from fundraising and grantmaking responsibilities.

The advisory board chair and community foundation staff work together to select and approach potential advisory board members for the women's fund. The women's fund advisory board chair, with the help of the community foundation staff and the champion(s), should create a prioritized list of potential board members based on candidates' passion for the mission, combination of skills and diversity. A grid may be a helpful tool in charting the skills, demographics and diversity of potential board members. The advisory board chair then contacts these individuals, meets with them to discuss the roles and responsibilities and asks them to help steward the organization.

The advisory board provides an opportunity to develop the leadership and philanthropy of women who serve on the board. The experience of many women's funds has been that the advisory board served as a springboard for a significant number of women who are now leaders in the broader philanthropic community.

A diverse advisory board assists the women's fund in developing its pool of volunteers and in making connections with community decision makers. Diversity in the areas of ethnicity, age, life experience, career focus, sexual orientation, geography, ability/disability and skills is recommended.

Backgrounds to consider for advisory board members include: academician, business owner, fundraiser/fundraising consultant, community volunteer, grantmaker, finance professional, government agency administrator, nonprofit leader, marketing/PR professional, attorney and champion/major donor.

Advisory Board Members' Roles and Responsibilities

The roles of the advisory board as a collective include:

- *Making annual contributions*
- *Fundraising and developing lists of prospective donors*
- *Planning for the future*
- *Promoting the women's fund*
- *Reviewing the budget and rules and procedures*

When the women's fund is in a position to engage in grantmaking, the advisory board will have the following additional responsibilities:

- *Establishing grantmaking priorities and strategies*
- *Reviewing grant applications and making site visits with staff*
- *Making grant recommendations*
- *Monitoring grants and evaluating past grants*

The roles of individual members of the advisory board include:

- *Adhering to ethical standards, including disclosing any conflicts of interest*
- *Making what is, for that individual, a significant financial contribution to the women's fund to indicate a personal commitment to its mission*
- *Participating in fundraising activities*
- *Participating in meetings and conference calls*
- *Keeping informed on issues pertinent to the women's fund and women and girls in the community*
- *Promoting the women's fund*

The advisory board and staff share responsibility for the women's funds' activities and the continual clarification of roles and responsibilities is essential. As the women's fund grows, activities increase and volunteer roles may become more segmented. For example, functional committees may be created in which individual advisory board members take leadership roles in areas of their own expertise, such as communications and grantmaking. Segmenting these responsibilities helps guide and strengthen staff support and allows staff to work more effectively with advisory board members.

"In selecting advisory board members, I thought about age, geography, skill sets and life experiences. Our meetings are very spirited. We don't always agree, but we are able to get to focus pretty quickly. We have people who know what they believe so we are very quick to focus on the crucial issues — we understand you can't do everything and can't be everything to everybody. We are used to thinking strategically. Members need to have reasonable, rational points of view and the ability to listen to others. Regardless of abilities, I asked myself 'Can this talented woman work with others?' Some very able people cannot and don't make good board members."

*Anne Morgan
Women's Foundation of Oklahoma*

Operational Guidelines

Number of Advisory Board Members

The size of the advisory board should be proportionate to the size and activities of the fund. A range of five to twelve members is small enough to be manageable and supported by staff and large enough to be diverse.

Frequency of Meetings

The frequency of meetings will depend on geography. If the women's fund is state-wide, travel may be very time consuming and three meetings per year with monthly conference calls may be more manageable. If the women's fund is community-based, the advisory board may be able to meet more often.

Terms

It is important to have a stable advisory board, especially in the early years, to create a culture, a track record and an institutional memory. It is also important to bring in new advisory board members to recharge the board with energy and ideas. Terms are best set at three years, renewable for one additional three-year term. The initial advisory board membership can be staggered by drawing lots for terms with one-third starting with one-year terms, one-third starting with two-year terms and the remaining one-third starting with three-year terms. The women's fund may choose to create an honorary advisors council to ensure former advisory board members stay engaged and informed.

Conflict of Interest Policy

It is wise to have all board members sign a conflict of interest policy annually and disclose any potential conflicts prior to grantmaking decisions.

Structure

Initially, an advisory board can designate a point person for each of its major focus areas — fundraising, communication, grantmaking and governance — rather than create a committee structure. As activities increase, the size of the advisory board may also increase and a committee structure may become necessary. The complexity of the advisory board's structure should be relative to the size of the fund and its level of activities.

Strategic Planning

Actively engaging the advisory board and staff in strategic planning as early as possible within the first year of operation will create a solid foundation for the women's fund.

Elements of a Basic Strategic Plan

- **Mission Statement**
What the women's fund has been formed to do and/or achieve and for whom
- **Goals**
The list of priority areas to which all resources of the women's fund will be consistently targeted and applied
- **Strategies**
Guidance for how and when goals will be achieved, including specific measures of success
- **Tactics**
Specific activities through which strategies are implemented and the assignment of operational responsibility to specific volunteers and staff

The process of creating a strategic plan requires the group to set the funding priorities of the women's fund and to agree on goals and strategies to successfully fulfill its mission.

A strategic plan document serves as a roadmap for the women's fund's direction, operations and activity plans. Clearly defined purpose or mission, goals and strategies help to guide grantmaking, fundraising and other activities and can be used in the future to refocus the women's fund's priorities. It is also a framework from which opportunities for growth can be identified and strategies to manage them outlined. Strategic plan documents often include both short-term and long-term goals.

Most importantly, the strategic plan should be developed in coordination with the community foundation to ensure that it is complementary to the community foundation's overall strategic plan and direction. It is likely that the strategic plan will result in specific goals addressing the areas of fundraising, communication, grantmaking and possibly advocacy or research. There are many ways to structure an effective strategic plan and many resources available to guide a women's fund through this process.

Training

Once the initial advisory board has been established, and prior to any substantive work, a training session for everyone will be helpful. The board will be most successful if it begins its work fully informed about the fund and its mission, the responsibilities of the advisory board members and staff, the women's fund's working relationship with the community foundation, results of the needs assessments and key topics relating to women and girls in the community. An orientation session is also important when new members join the advisory board.

The first meeting of the advisory board is an important opportunity for members to establish relationships with each other, meet staff, learn about their roles as board members and receive information about issues.

Advisory Board Orientation Meeting Topics

- *Introductions*
- *Women as philanthropists and women's funds*
- *Results of the needs assessment*
- *Mission and priorities for funding*
- *Relationship to the community foundation*
- *Role of the advisory board and individual members*
- *Fundraising*
- *Communication*
- *Grantmaking*
- *Future meeting schedule*
- *Social time for building relationships*

Building an Endowment

Chambers Family Fund's experience in establishing new women's funds in community foundations has shown that building an endowment is very effective as the initial priority fundraising goal for a women's fund. Focusing fundraising activities on building an endowment is important because an endowment is permanent and generates funds annually that the women's fund can use for grantmaking.

Without an endowment, a women's fund, in addition to raising funds to support its operations, must raise the dollars it needs each year to award grants to community organizations. This creates an annual cycle of fundraising for regranteeing that must be repeated every year. Multiple demands for fund development can drain staff and volunteers.

The pressure will often be great to forego endowment building in favor of maximizing current grantmaking. Resist. As the chart on page 27 demonstrates, endowment building is not in competition with grantmaking in the long-term. To the contrary, it actually increases resources for grantmaking.

With an endowment, a women's fund has a permanent and secure source of funding for grantmaking to organizations serving women and girls. The endowment allows the women's fund to plan ahead based on the projection of an annual payout. It also provides more flexibility in grantmaking commitments. With an assured level of payout from an endowment, a women's fund can consider making multi-year grants. An endowment creates stability, makes planning for perpetuity possible and can make the difference in sustained financial viability.

Contributing to an endowment fund often appeals to donors who recognize its lasting

value. Increasingly, donors look for endowment funds as an option for their philanthropic dollars and as an opportunity to make planned giving commitments. Endowment donors often become consistent annual donors as well.

Leveraging the generosity of one donor champion or a group of donors through a challenge or match is a good way to start or grow an endowment fund. Donors are often attracted to the fact that their contributions may be doubled or tripled. Challenge grants are typically time limited, thereby creating a sense of urgency that stimulates even greater activity in building the fund.

The community foundation's expertise and experience in building endowments will be very valuable to a new women's fund.

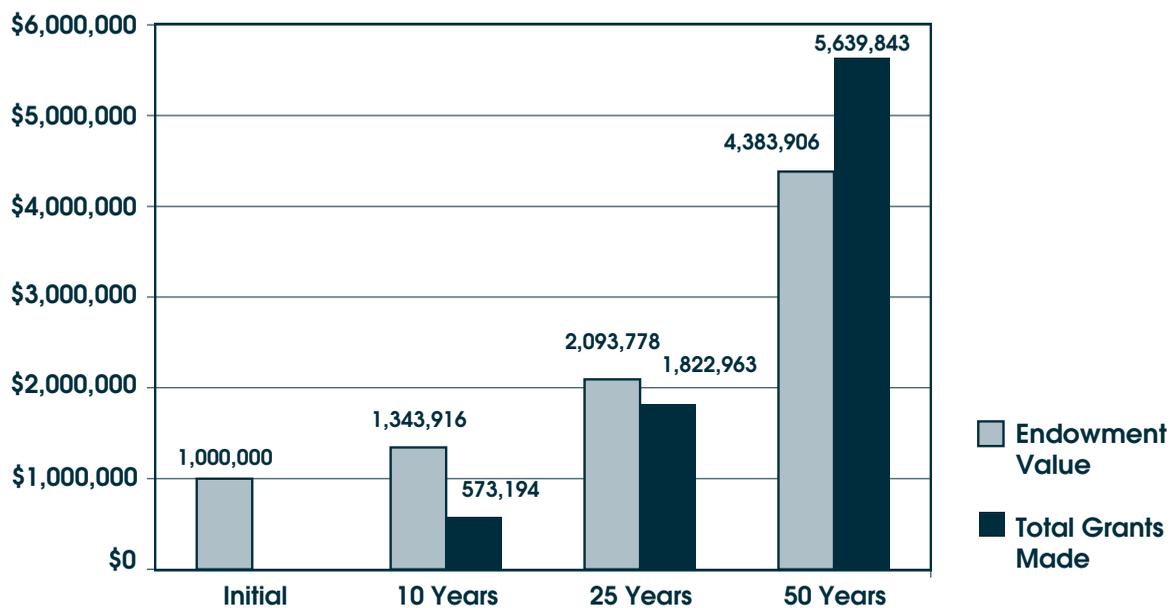
"You absolutely have to raise an endowment. You'll never get any place without it. Without it you are constantly raising money that is going out the door."

Anne Morgan
Women's Foundation of Oklahoma

The following chart illustrates the value of building an endowment over a period of 50 years, assuming 8% annual growth and 5% annual payout.

A \$1 million endowment will generate approximately \$80,000 per year in earnings. At a payout rate of 5%, \$50,000 can be awarded in grants to the community the first year. The amount for grants will increase as the size of the endowment increases. Without additional contributions to the endowment, that same \$1 million will be worth \$1.3 million in ten years and \$2.1 million in 25 years with the 5% payout being spent for grantmaking each year. If the \$1 million endowment had not been established, the women's fund would need to raise nearly \$570,000 over ten years to achieve the same level of grantmaking and the \$1.3 million endowment fund would not exist.

Potential Growth of \$1 Million Initial Endowment Over 50 Years





*B*uilding

- *Developing Financial Resources*
- *Making Grants*
- *Spreading the Word*



Developing Financial Resources

A women's fund, especially as a new organization, will need to devote substantial time and energy to fundraising to acquire the financial resources needed to accomplish its mission. Developing a fundraising plan that outlines tactics, activities and roles and responsibilities in relation to specific fund development goals identified in the strategic plan can be useful.

Funding Needs

We have described the importance of focusing on building an endowment as a women's fund's first priority goal for fundraising. A women's fund will also need funding for operations and initial grant-making dollars while the endowment grows.

The community foundation typically provides some operational support for the women's fund, both as it is getting started and on an ongoing basis. This financial commitment needs to be decided from the beginning so that the women's fund advisory board has a clear understanding of the additional operating funds it must raise to support the women's fund's mission and the goals of the strategic plan. The women's fund may want to request operating support from other foundations. Some foundations that do not contribute to endowment funds may provide funds for operations.

Grantmaking dollars will eventually come from the payout from the endowment fund. If the women's fund wants to make grants to organizations that serve women and girls before its endowment has reached a sufficient level for the payout to cover those awards, it may want to consider targeted fundraising to an individual donor or a private foundation for regranteeing funds. This strategy ensures that the broader fundraising efforts of the women's fund are not diverted from endowment building and operations.

Fund Development Strategies

- **Mailing List Development**
Advisory board members and staff can draw on their own community knowledge and contacts to build an initial mailing list for invitations, newsletters and solicitations.
- **One-on-One Personal Asks**
Staff and advisory board members can work with the community foundation to develop a list of potential donors to approach for major gifts and then meet with each potential donor to present the women's fund as an option to help the donor achieve her or his philanthropic goals.
- **Grant Proposals to Private Foundations**
Staff and advisory board members identify potential funders, coordinate proposals with the community foundation and manage grant reporting.
- **House Parties**
Small parties hosted by advisory board members in their homes can be an effective means of raising awareness of the women's fund and soliciting donations.
- **Multi-Year Pledges**
Encouraging donors to give over a period of years can be an effective means to sustain donor commitment and minimize the number of asks.
- **Website and Electronic Newsletter, Media Messages, Direct Mail**
These tools can be used to implement fundraising strategies.

Fund Development

Successful fundraising requires the talent and commitment of both staff and advisory board volunteers. The women's fund staff

provides support for advisory board fundraising, coordinates fundraising activities and serves as a contact for donors. The advisory board chair takes responsibility for directing fundraising activity and ensuring that advisory board members meet their goals. Advisory board members bring additional human resources to the effort and link the organization to potential donors.

The women's fund should plan and coordinate its fundraising efforts with the community foundation. Establishing a coordinated process between the community foundation and the women's fund for contacting prospective donors and tracking donors and pledges avoids duplication of effort and maximizes the effectiveness of donor communication for both organizations. Often the women's fund will be raising dollars using fund development strategies that are not traditional for the community foundation.

Women's Fund Donors

Donating to a new women's fund will appeal to people who are already passionate about women's and girls' issues, who want to have a positive effect on individuals and the community and who believe in leveraging dollars to increase their impact. They value the opportunity to be part of women's philanthropy by contributing to a women's fund that focuses its grantmaking. For these reasons, it is often effective for the community foundation to market its women's fund as an opportunity for donors interested in contributing to a reliable, permanent source of grants to organizations serving women and girls.

Some donors may express their preference to contribute to grantmaking so that their donation is put into play immediately in the community. However, the women's fund needs to articulate the wisdom of building an endowment and that contributions to it build a source of grantmaking funds for perpetuity.

Many women's funds have developed a philosophy of donor recognition that is inclusive. Most women's funds do not segment donors by levels of contributions, but recognize them alphabetically in materials and reports. It is important to recognize contributions with a thank you letter and a personal phone call from an advisory board member.

Changes in Development Priorities

The women's fund advisory board should regularly assess the women's fund's needs and refine its fundraising plan to effectively address them. When a women's fund meets its initial endowment goal, and as staffing and operating needs increase, fund development priorities will likely change. At this stage, the women's fund may consider:

- *Building an operating reserve for future administrative costs*
- *Coordinating with the community foundation to offer planned giving resources and expertise as an option for women's fund donors*

A women's fund may choose to place a greater emphasis on soliciting unrestricted contributions, in addition to fundraising for the endowment, after the endowment goal is met. The women's fund may want to consider the following options for allocating unrestricted contributions:

- *To support operations, with contributions in excess of operating needs being designated to the endowment*
- *By size, with larger contributions going to the endowment and smaller contributions supporting operations*
- *Equally between operations and the endowment fund*
- *To supplement the endowment fund's payout for grantmaking*

Making Grants

Grantmaking is the most important function of a women's fund. It is largely through grants to nonprofit organizations that the women's fund pursues its mission. A women's fund must devote sufficient time to planning grantmaking strategies and developing a grantmaking process.

Ideally, a women's fund has a champion or other sources to provide regrantsing funds to start grantmaking after the needs assessment is completed and reviewed. In this way, the women's fund gains visibility and can make an immediate impact on the community. Without another source of regrantsing dollars, the women's fund may decide to wait to make grants until the initial endowment goal is met and its payout is sufficient to supply grantmaking funds. Chambers Family Fund provided regrantsing dollars to the women's funds in Wyoming, Montana and Oklahoma to make grants in the first five years of each fund's operation.

"It would have been hard to sustain the raising of our endowment if we weren't able to make grants along the way."

*Susie Graves
Women's Foundation of Oklahoma*

Grantmaking Process

The grantmaking process should be easy for potential grantees to navigate. The complexity of the application and reporting processes are best kept in proportion to the amount of dollars given.

Since the community foundation and the women's fund both make grants, it is important to coordinate the grantmaking processes. However, because the women's fund may be making grants differently and

will have limited funds in the early years, it may be more effective to schedule the women's fund's grantmaking process independently of the community foundation's process. We recommend that a women's fund create an annual grant cycle with one proposal deadline and one grant distribution cycle per year. The list of organizations identified in the initial needs assessment may be used for the first request for proposal.

The women's fund will find it helpful to develop a consistent process for evaluating grant proposals and grants awarded. This process need not be complicated, but it provides the means for evaluating success and challenges. The evaluation process and the grantmaking process can be refined as needed over time.

Initially, the women's fund may choose to fund as many grantees as possible to establish itself in the community. As the fund continues to make grants, it will learn more about the needs of women and girls and how best to meet those needs. Grantmaking will likely become more focused in subsequent cycles. And, as the women's fund gains more experience and knowledge of the community, it will increasingly be able to leverage its grant dollars and to identify more opportunities for systems change funding.

Initial Grantmaking Process

- Utilizing the organizational component of the needs assessment to target organizations for possible funding
- Distributing a request for proposal (RFP) that introduces the women's fund, its grantmaking priorities and schedule and that requests proposals from organizations that are aligned with the women's fund's mission
- Staff reviewing and summarizing proposals aligned with the women's fund's priorities
- Advisory board and staff selecting organizations needing site visits or phone calls
- Making the final selections and allowing enough time to identify potential leverage and systems change opportunities

“Because we made grants while fundraising for the endowment, we made the women's fund more attractive to donors. We were putting money in play as well as investing for the future.”

*Frank Merrick
Women's Foundation of Oklahoma*

Grantmaking Priorities

A women's fund's grantmaking priorities should be based on the results of the local needs assessment. As the women's fund gains experience making grants and evaluating its grantmaking program, it will likely review and refine its goals and strategies for future grant cycles to ensure that grantmaking stays focused on the needs of women and girls in the community.

As a result of the needs assessment and the grantmaking process, the women's fund will acquire a broad overview of the needs of the community and be in a position to recognize both service overlaps and gaps. Through its grantmaking, the women's fund may be able to create opportunities for grantees to work together on systems change or capacity building, thereby maximizing the impact of the women's fund's grant dollars. For example:

- Funding organizations with similar programs to learn from one another and to collaborate for more efficient programming
- Awarding a training or planning grant to build an organization's capacity
- Funding the creation of a resource tool such as a legal rights guide or a self-sufficiency calculator that benefits women and girls across the community, not solely the clients of one direct service nonprofit

An example of grantmaking priorities follows.

Women's Foundation of Oklahoma 2006 Grantmaking Priorities

The Women's Foundation of Oklahoma will make grants and fund systems change impacting:

- *The Economic Self-Sufficiency for Women*
- *The Future of Girls*

in the following priority areas:

1) Promoting Systems Change

Focus of Impact: *Community/State*

Objective: *Grantees promote change, reform legislation or policies and eliminate barriers.*

Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- *research, analysis and assessment*
- *planning change*
- *building awareness*
- *altering community beliefs, attitudes and behaviors*
- *convening and coalition building*
- *grassroots organizing*
- *public sector advocacy*
- *private sector advocacy*

2) Providing Specialized Direct Services

Focus of Impact: *Individual Women and/or Girls*

Objective: *Grantees assist Oklahoma women and girls in the face of added challenges or obstacles to their provision of services.*

Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- *specialized direct services*
- *specialized prevention/early intervention*
- *specialized rehabilitation*

3) Enhancing Organizational Capacity

Focus of Impact: *Service Provider or Agency*

Objective: *Grantee develops, maintains or improves its capacity for systems change or its capacity to provide services to Oklahoma women and girls in the face of added challenges or obstacles to the provision of services.*

Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- *strategic planning*
- *long-term planning*
- *technical assistance*
- *needs assessment*
- *program or agency evaluation*
- *convening service agencies or providers*
- *infrastructure*

Spreading the Word

Building the identity of a women's fund is critical. An effective launch announcement and donor recruitment strategy will clearly reflect the women's fund's positioning and key messages. All written material, media communication, website, events and training should consistently include the same points.

As time goes on, it is important to review communication goals and strategies, refine the positioning and key messages and revisit the tactics used to ensure that the women's fund is maximizing the impact and reach of its communication efforts. Communication strategies may shift from focusing on the establishment of the women's fund toward efforts to build and sustain it. Documenting successes and gathering stories from the beginning are very important. They enrich the messaging and are significant to capturing the organization's history. Over time, messaging will change to highlight the fund's grantmaking success and the community programs with which the women's fund is involved. It may also prove beneficial to move away from print material as the primary communication vehicle and utilize more communication aspects of the web and electronic distribution methods.

A women's fund will set specific communication goals, strategies and tactics in its strategic plan that complement those of the community foundation.

"Communications can't just be about asking for money – they also need to say 'this is what we're doing'."

*Linda Reed
Women's Foundation of Montana*

Women's Fund Communication Goals

- *Create public awareness and identity for the fund*
- *Broaden the donor base and support development strategies*
- *Bring attention to the needs, programs and services that are already available or needed in the community for women and girls*
- *Lead collaborative efforts of groups interested in issues relevant to women and girls*

Communication Plan

Creating a communication plan may assist in prioritizing, budgeting, scheduling and evaluating the effectiveness of a women's fund's communication activity. It also includes positioning, key messages and communication tactics.

Positioning Statement

A positioning statement is the basis for all communication. In several sentences it describes and identifies what is important to the fund, differentiating it from other funds or fundraising. For example: "The Women's Fund of ___ is the leading funder of change for women and girls in ___. We raise money to build an endowment that provides a reliable, permanent source of grants to invest in improving the lives of women and girls. The Women's Fund of ___ is an endowed fund of the ___ Community Foundation."

Key Messages

A women's fund's message, image or "brand" is shaped by every contact the organization has with the outside world,

whether it is through words, visual images or other forms of contact from speaking engagements to individual telephone conversations. Clear and consistent messaging is one of the most powerful ways a women's fund makes a statement about who the organization is and what target audiences need to know about it and its work.

Key messages provide details about the issues, solutions, actions and results upon which the women's fund focuses.

- *The issues: "Women still experience barriers that prevent full participation and fairness in society and keep them from fully contributing to their communities."*
- *The solutions: "We raise money to build an endowment that provides a reliable, permanent source of grant money to be invested in the lifelong economic self-sufficiency of women and brighter futures for girls."*
- *The call to action: "We invite you to be part of the movement to invest in solutions for women and girls." The more specific a call to action is, the better.*
- *The results: "Funds will be spent wisely. Our organization is operationally efficient through the utilization of shared resources and expertise."*

Tactics

These include public and media relation activities, launch schedule and event plans, development of written material, website creation, advisory board training, events planning, creation of a speakers bureau and more. Target audiences may be the same or different for various tactics used.

A women's fund might use the following communication schedule at various stages of its development and as the budget allows.

Start-up to \$500,000 Endowment

- *Create logo/graphic identity*
- *Develop consistent key messages*
- *Release media announcements*
- *Develop initial list of potential donors and begin database management*
- *Create website*
- *Develop appropriate collateral to support annual direct mail donor solicitation, including brochure and response card*
- *Hold informational gatherings and presentations*
- *Establish direct mail plan beginning with annual appeal letter*

\$500,000 to \$1 Million Endowment

- *Establish electronic newsletter*
- *Expand direct mail campaigns to two per year*
- *Release media announcements*
- *Create annual report*
- *Secure public service announcement*
- *Hold informational gatherings and presentations*
- *Develop video/CD/DVD to support donor solicitation*

Over \$1 Million Endowment

- *Maintain electronic newsletter*
- *Expand direct mail in number of campaigns and number reached*
- *Release media announcements*
- *Develop advertising and/or public service announcements*
- *Create a special event to raise funds and expand awareness*
- *Hold informational gatherings and presentations*
- *Market the women's fund to financial advisors, businesses and women's organizations*

Communication Tools

It is important for a women's fund to create and maintain its own image to generate public awareness and extend its visibility, yet it must also have a partnered identity with the community foundation. This can be achieved by coordinating efforts and communication tools. It is also recommended that all women's funds materials include the phrase "an endowed fund of ____ Community Foundation."

There are many options to choose from when deciding how and where to communicate for impact. Partnering with the community foundation will enhance the effectiveness of both organizations' marketing efforts and tools may be developed and used jointly.

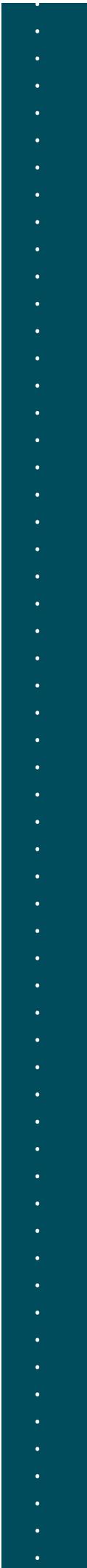
A women's fund may want to coordinate some material with the community foundation for joint use and incorporate the women's fund into the community foundation's portfolio of giving options. A community foundation is likely to have materials for financial advisors, including information about planned giving. Information about the women's fund may be included in the packet as well. The women's fund should also be featured in the community foundation's annual report and newsletters. Media announcements may be made jointly with the community foundation or by the women's fund alone.

Tools that Differentiate the Women's Fund From the Community Foundation

- *Logo*
- *Letterhead*
- *Promotional brochure and fact sheet*
- *Advertising or public service announcements*
- *Website*
- *Direct mail letters and reply cards*
- *Video/CD/DVD to illustrate grantmaking priorities*
- *Major donor packet which includes board and advisory board member bios, funding priorities and methods, research, statistics, grants made, donor giving options, a business reply envelope and information about the community foundation*
- *Electronic newsletter/report to donors*

"There is a lot of activity on the communications side, but it will take a long time to really become effective. When you are building awareness, it takes time; it is the repetition of the message that works."

*Anne Morgan
Women's Foundation of Oklahoma*



*P*rofiles

- *Wyoming Women's Foundation*
- *Women's Foundation of Montana*
- *Women's Foundation of Oklahoma*



Wyoming Women's Foundation

Mission: The Women's Foundation invests in the economic self-sufficiency of women and the future of girls.

- *Founded in 1999, affiliated with the Wyoming Community Foundation*
- *\$1,190,000 endowment as of June, 2006*
- *Over \$269,000 awarded in grants to community organizations as of June, 2006*
- *Two part-time dedicated staff and two interns*
- *Ten advisory board members*
- *Website <http://www.wywf.org>*

The Wyoming Women's Foundation began in 1999 with the support of Chambers Family Fund. The extent of the challenges facing women and girls in Wyoming became clear as a result of a needs assessment that was completed early in the establishment of the women's fund. Wyoming has some challenging barriers to overcome. Statistics indicate that Wyoming ranks nationally among the very bottom states for per capita income and that Wyoming's gender wage gap is the worst in the nation (*Status of Women in Wyoming, 2004*). To address these issues, the Wyoming Women's Foundation invests in the economic self-sufficiency of women and the future of girls.

The foundation:

- *Builds a permanent endowment that will ensure funding to enhance the lives of women and girls in Wyoming for generations to come*
- *Makes grants to Wyoming organizations that help women and girls attain economic self-sufficiency*
- *Creates statewide awareness of the barriers to economic self-sufficiency and supports systems changes to eliminate those barriers*

The Wyoming Women's Foundation's advisory board has ten members. The foundation's executive director attends weekly meetings of the community foundation staff to facilitate communications between the women's fund and the community foundation. Services and support from the community foundation to the women's fund are provided on an ongoing basis. These include office space, computers, grant tracking systems and accounting services.

Funding, as well as leadership, is provided by the Wyoming Women's Foundation to organizations that promote long-term change for women and girls in focus areas including continuing education, job training, development or placement, access to and affordability of childcare, support for teen mothers and wage equity strategies. The foundation's grantmaking process starts with an annual mid-summer RFP. Following proposal review, organizations are selected to receive a site visit or an in-depth telephone interview by Wyoming Women's Foundation board members or staff.

The Wyoming Women’s Foundation granted over \$269,000 as of June, 2006, including funding to:

- *Our Families Our Future, a new statewide system for low income single mothers offering what a woman needs to become self-sufficient through a comprehensive service model including job training in nontraditional high paying fields, life skills programming and counseling.*
- *The Wyoming Council for Women’s Issues for the publication and statewide distribution of a 200-page legal handbook, The Legal Rights of Women in Wyoming. The purpose of this handbook is to improve the lives of low to middle income Wyoming women by increasing their knowledge of their legal rights.*
- *Health Services of Campbell County (HSCC) for teen pregnancy prevention programs and education for young women about reproductive services regardless of their ability to pay. HSCC developed “Think it Over,” a program to educate young women about reproductive options and pregnancy prevention with support from the foundation.*

The Wyoming Women’s Foundation’s advisory board continues to focus on systems change. Other plans include continuing to build the endowment and a new fundraising goal to raise and secure sufficient operating funds to increase the fund’s organizational capacity. Increasing the fund’s visibility across the state by further strengthening relationships with Wyoming media is also a priority, as well as continuing to engage the support of new donors and volunteers.

“The Wyoming Women’s Foundation is truly a foundation for and by women and we will continue to shine a spotlight on the increasingly important role played by women in philanthropy.”

*Laurel Parker West
Wyoming Women’s Foundation*

Women's Foundation of Montana

Mission: To promote the economic status of women and create a brighter future for girls in Montana.

- *Founded in 1999, affiliated with the Montana Community Foundation*
- *\$1,125,249 endowment as of June, 2006*
- *Over \$241,000 awarded in grants to community organizations as of June, 2006*
- *A quarter of a community foundation staff person's time plus additional community foundation staff time as needed*
- *Nine advisory board members*
- *Website <http://www.wfmontana.org>*

In May 1999, the Montana Community Foundation enthusiastically committed to creating a women's fund with the challenge grant from Chambers Family Fund. Statistics from the Institute for Women's Policy Research indicate that the earnings of Montana women are the lowest in the nation and that more than one-third of female-headed households live in poverty. The Women's Foundation of Montana researched the needs of women's organizations in Montana and in its 2001 needs assessment the foundation learned that, in addition to increased levels of financial resources, the organizations' greatest needs were for attitudinal shifts regarding the role of women in society and the workplace. There was also an expressed need for organizations working on women and girls' issues to share information, expertise and experience in order to build a more efficient network serving women and girls.

As a result, the foundation convened representatives from 22 of Montana's women's groups in April, 2002. This laid the groundwork for a strong statewide network and ongoing opportunities for the exchange of knowledge, experience and expertise, particularly among organizations operating with few resources in isolated rural Montana. Convening participants stressed the importance of organizational advocacy at local, state and national levels for stronger education and training programs, jobs, benefits and economic development. The goal is to secure an environment in Montana where women and girls can realize their potential and succeed.

Utilizing a model proven successful by other women's funds, the Women's Foundation of Montana works on improving access to education, supporting positive early job experiences and strengthening sustainable economic self-sufficiency for women and girls. This in turn reduces teen pregnancy and increases the number of women and girls who complete their education. The foundation:

- *Funds programs that build economic self-sufficiency for women and help girls to become economically self-sufficient in adulthood*
- *Provides operating support to organizations creating systemic change that will increase opportunities for economic self-sufficiency for women and girls*
- *Promotes awareness of the issues affecting economic self-sufficiency for women and girls and builds support for systemic change to enhance the economic status of women*

Over \$241,000 has been awarded in grants by the Women's Foundation of Montana through June, 2006, including funding for:

- *A two-year collaborative among four local YWCAs to form a statewide partnership with credit unions to teach financial literacy workshops at each site, create a common identity and share experience, successful programming and best practices. Each YWCA had originally submitted a proposal requesting funds to improve services to women and girls, but the four had not been formally connected. The foundation funded their collaboration and leveraged capacity building resources in this grant.*
- *Montana's Consumer Credit Counseling's banking amnesty program to provide financial literacy classes and a checking account to low income women with past credit problems. Programs are held in Helena, Missoula, Havre, Kalispell, Butte, Bozeman and Billings.*
- *General support grants to facilitate the Montana welfare reform advocacy and initiatives of Working for Economic Equality and Liberation (WEEL), a poverty advocacy group. WEEL advocated for legislation that allowed TANF recipients to receive benefits while caring for their infants at home. This program has become a national model.*

Montana is one of only five states to offer a tax credit for planned gifts to qualified endowment funds. The foundation staff and advisory board use this as an opportunity to discuss bequests, asset conversion and other forms of planned giving with donors.

"The women's foundation gives us something to talk about in a very substantial way, illustrating what a community foundation can accomplish. Our association with the Women's Funding Network has been useful not only in terms of what we do with the women's foundation but in things we learned that can be applied to the community foundation such as rigorous marketing, mentoring and board development."

Linda Reed
Women's Foundation of Montana

Women's Foundation of Oklahoma

Mission: The Women's Foundation of Oklahoma invests in the economic self-sufficiency of women and the future of girls.

- *Founded in 2003, affiliated with the Communities Foundation of Oklahoma*
- *\$713,696 endowment as of June, 2006*
- *\$100,000 awarded in grants to community organizations as of June, 2006*
- *Four community foundation staff devote a portion of their time to the women's fund*
- *Ten advisory board members*
- *Website <http://www.wfok.org>*

Overcoming barriers and empowering women and girls to realize their potential is a stated goal of the Women's Foundation of Oklahoma. The foundation is the newest of the three women's funds included in this publication. It was founded in 2003 and raises money to build an endowment that provides a reliable, permanent source of grants to invest in economic self-sufficiency for women and brighter futures for girls. The Women's Foundation of Oklahoma expects to reach its \$1 million endowment goal in 2007.

The Women's Foundation of Oklahoma chose ten advisory board members with diverse backgrounds and skills. The executive director of the Communities Foundation of Oklahoma also serves as the executive director of the Women's Foundation of Oklahoma. Both organizations are housed in the community foundation's office.

Donors were approached personally by the women's foundation during the endowment building phase of the women's fund rather than being contacted through direct mail appeals. Six or seven fundraising events for the fund are held each year and responsibility for maintaining individual donor contacts are a priority for the advisory board. Two fundraising parties were hosted by men for men and raised approximately \$100,000. The Women's Foundation of Oklahoma has also been successful in securing contributions from foundations, corporations and civic organizations with an emphasis on direct contact.

Statistics show that Oklahoma women earn substantially less than Oklahoma men. The Institute for Women's Policy Research ranks Oklahoma as the second overall worst state for women in the nation. The 2006 grant cycle will fund systems change, enhance and build organizational capacity and provide some funding for specialized direct services.

The foundation began its grantmaking in 2004 and has funded 15 nonprofit agencies, awarding \$100,000 in grants through June, 2006, including:

- *Technical assistance through an advocacy consultant to Resonance/F.O.R.C.E. for legislation change initiatives directed at improving circumstances for women who have been involved with the justice system (including access to vote, eliminating discriminatory housing, employment obstacles and the revocation of cosmetology licenses). Other Resonance collaborations have resulted in programs such as FOCUS (Female Offenders Committed to Ultimate Success), the Legal Outreach and Coordination and JobsNOW!.*

- *A treatise identifying and summarizing Oklahoma laws, statutes and judicial opinions impacting women and girls that was prepared with a grant from the women's foundation. This collaborative effort includes area law schools, legal clinics and women's organizations and will generate a publication on the legal rights of women in Oklahoma.*
- *A grant to the Community Action Project of Tulsa County for seven Tulsa area agencies to utilize an internet-based Oklahoma benefits eligibility screening tool, benefit calculator and electronic application generator for 30 public benefit and work support programs. This online tool increases an agency's ability to ensure that its low income clients connect to all the available resources that can help them achieve self-sufficiency.*

The Women's Foundation of Oklahoma has a partnership with two television stations, one in Oklahoma City and the other in Tulsa. Each station runs a series, one story per month. One station uses four-minute interview scripts with a women's foundation board member speaking on relevant topics; the other station produces six-minute unscripted interviews with a women's foundation representative. Among the topics have been back-to-school pressures on teenage girls, domestic violence, women and divorce, financial issues facing Oklahoma's older women, teen pregnancy and the status of Oklahoma's incarcerated women.

These programs have raised awareness of the current status of women and girls in Oklahoma using simple statistics. They have generated community discussion around the issues and highlighted many organizations and state agency services.

They leave viewers, whether in need of service or not, wanting more information or wanting to help, with valuable contact information. As a result, organizations that serve women and girls are also contacting the Women's Foundation.

This successful communication experience with television has now led the foundation to a new partnership with the local PBS affiliate for a longer segment about education and quarterly features on other women's issues and programs in Oklahoma.

"The Communities Foundation of Oklahoma sees itself as a leader in the community. It is a feather in its bonnet to have the women's foundation."

*Susie Graves
Women's Foundation of Oklahoma*

Conclusion

Chambers Family Fund's creation of women's funds in Wyoming, Montana and Oklahoma has been successful, yet not without its challenges. We conclude by emphasizing our lessons learned for those creating a women's fund within a community foundation.

The success of a women's fund's grantmaking stems from an understanding of the opportunities and barriers for women and girls in the community. A thorough needs assessment should be conducted as early as possible in the creation process. An understanding of the economic and social profile of women and girls in the area to be served, including their needs, current services available, organizations participating in service delivery and any apparent gaps or new opportunities for assistance, becomes a road map. Once a clear picture of the needs of women and girls is defined, the women's fund can use the information to establish its mission and focus its activity on addressing the needs of women and girls by raising community awareness and making grants.

The commitment and support of the community foundation is critical to the success of the affiliated women's fund and needs to be firmly established from the beginning. The leadership of the community foundation must value and support the mission and strategies of a women's fund, believe that gender-based grantmaking is an important contribution to the health and future of a strong community and be committed to the financial success of the women's fund.

An understanding of the differences between the community foundation and the women's fund in grantmaking focus and fundraising activity and the commitment of the community foundation to support the women's fund in establishing its own identity and philanthropic positioning will be beneficial to both organizations. Clear policies, documentation, roles and responsibilities, operational and marketing support and the provision of financial and human resources must be discussed on an ongoing basis through open communication between the women's fund and the community foundation.

A strong, engaged and well-trained advisory board for the women's fund is another critical key to its success. The selection of a diverse advisory board brings a wide variety of resources to the women's fund. The advisory board's most important responsibilities include actively fundraising, grantmaking and promoting the women's fund. In addition, the advisory board's input on the women's fund's strategic plan, governing documents, marketing activity and fundraising plans can be helpful. Regular communication between the women's fund's advisory board and the community foundation is one effective means of maintaining mutual understanding.

Building an endowment is a vital initial goal for a women's fund. It establishes a permanent source of grantmaking dollars that eliminates an annual cycle of fundraising for regranteeing dollars that can drain both staff and volunteers. And, while development goals and fundraising strategies will change over time, a secure endowment allows the broader fundraising efforts of the women's fund

to be targeted as needed while the availability of grantmaking dollars from the payout of the endowment continues to be ensured.

Grantmaking is the most important role of the women's fund. It is the process through which the needs of women and girls documented in the needs assessment and then translated into the women's fund's strategic plan are addressed. The women's fund can build a strategic grantmaking program by creating and clearly communicating specific grantmaking priorities that are aligned with its mission and inviting appropriate organizations serving women and girls to apply for grants. The grants of the women's fund should not supplant the grants of the community foundation to organizations serving women and girls, but rather complement and increase them. Grantmaking raises the fund's visibility in the community and generates awareness of issues affecting women and girls.

Communication and marketing influence the success of a women's fund from the moment it is created. All communication has an impact on how the women's fund is perceived in the community by current and potential donors, grantees and the women and girls it has been established to serve. Key messages are most effective if they are well-defined and consistent in all tools used. While the women's fund's messaging may change over time, the core identity and purpose of the women's fund will remain the same. Communication and marketing activities strengthen its position in the community from launch. Marketing is also effective when used to support the women's fund development goals and strategies and may be different from those of the community foundation.

It is important for the women's fund to maintain some flexibility in its identity. At times it will be most effective for the women's fund to cultivate a distinct identity in the community. In other instances, the women's fund will benefit from highlighting its identification with the community foundation. It is critical that the community foundation supports the women's fund's strategic communication goals with an understanding of its unique position and identity.

We have looked at the three phases of creating a women's fund within a community foundation: planning, establishing and building. There are lessons to be learned in each phase and sometimes the lessons learned in one phase resurface again later in a slightly different form. However, the end result — the creation of a permanent funding source dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls in the community — is very worthwhile.

Our experiences in Wyoming, Montana and Oklahoma have led us to a greater understanding of and appreciation for the positive impact women's funds can make in a community. We hope that sharing what we have learned along the way will help others in their efforts to create a women's fund within a community foundation.

We hope you decide to embark on this exciting journey. When women and girls prosper, communities thrive!