



REPORTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD FUNDERS GROUP

“Oh, The Times Are Hard and Wages Low”

Henry Allen, Executive Director,
The Discount Foundation

When we hear old songs with refrains like the one in this title, we sometimes think that in the United States the truly hard times and miserable wages are a part of our past, some 20, 50 or 100 years ago. Unfortunately, that is not true. At the recent Neighborhood Funders Group Annual Conference in Durham, N.C., I participated in a learning tour sponsored by the Working Group on Labor and Community. We spent a day with organizers and leaders of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), visiting a labor camp where undocumented immigrants live and work in virtual indentured servitude. The workers’ courage and belief in the possibility of a better future were as inspiring as the work and living conditions were appalling.

Many funders are addressing economic and social injustice by working with community organizations, faith-based groups and unions in the struggle to obtain just wages and full democratic participation in American society for low-wage workers.

The movement to raise the minimum wage is an important part of the effort. Congress enacted the minimum wage law in 1938 to lift millions of American workers and their families out of poverty, and for many years it did provide a wage floor that generally improved the living standards of workers. However, the federal government has failed to raise the minimum wage since 1997, when it was set at \$5.15/hour. In real value, the minimum wage is at its lowest level since 1955. If the minimum wage had simply kept up with the rate of inflation, the wage today would be \$9.68/hour.

In addition to the shockingly low level of the current federal minimum wage, a number of other policies have contributed to rising income inequality over the past 25 years. These include undermining the democratic right of workers to organize unions; restructuring federal tax policies to favor the wealthy; globalization; reducing the number of full-time jobs; and the decimation of health, child-care and affordable housing programs.

Low-wage workers and their allies have begun to organize more effectively to redress the decline in the minimum wage. One long-time community organizer describes this response as a “revolution in the states.” During the past 21

continued on page 6

Civic Participation: Engaging Voters and Foundations Year-Round

Joanne B. Wright, Consultant,
Non-profit and Philanthropic

For many of the grassroots organizations around the country that just finished an intense bout of voter participation work, Election Day is not the finish line. “What happens after the elections—that is democracy. Elections are just entry points, and between elections is the period when democracy happens,” says Guillermo Quinteros of the Solidago Foundation.

“Off-year” voter education is some of the most important civic participation work, according to Frank Pierson, of the Arizona Industrial Areas Foundation. IAF brings leaders to the state capital almost every day of the legislative session to meet with legislators and state officials and discuss their non-partisan human development policy

continued on page 8

IN THIS ISSUE

Report to Members	2
2006 Conference Photos	4
The Time for Philanthropy	10
People and Resources	12

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Report to Members

by Maria Mottola and Martha Toll, Co-Chairs

Annual Conference

Was that a great conference or what? Let us begin by thanking each of you for joining us in Durham, N.C., for our annual conference. Congratulations to our conference co-chairs, Mary Mountcastle and Jonathan Macaranas, as well as to our hardworking and dedicated conference planning committee. Not only did they do an excellent job of developing a program that provided each participant with opportunities to learn new strategies, they actually convinced more than 200 adults to wear colored bracelets and play with puzzle pieces! Amazing!

Our conference addressed the important theme of *Building Community, Building Assets: Race, Place and Equity*. Participants examined the impact that asset-building strategies and programs are having on low- and moderate-income families and communities, and how public, private and philanthropic organizations around the country are partnering to build the personal and financial resources needed to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency.

We are grateful to our speakers and presenters, who did an excellent job of providing information and resources, and stimulated us to re-examine the way we approach our work. From the pre-conference learning tour to the closing plenary, funders were challenged to investigate their thinking and practices concerning some of the key issues facing philanthropy.

NFG Accomplishments

As we reflect on our 2006 activities, we want to commend our colleagues on the board and NFG staff for their efforts in continuing to provide thoughtful leadership and informative and educational programs for our members.

Our policy papers and issue briefs continue to be timely and insightful. Through our working groups we

will continue to provide opportunities for funders to connect and develop programs in specific issue areas.

Here are a few highlights from the year:

NFG Issue Brief

Defending the Dream: How Funders Can Curtail Predatory Lending to Help Individuals and Communities aims to show why philanthropy needs to concern itself with predatory lending practices. This paper explores the role funders can play in deterring this practice, while protecting low-income individuals and communities, and advancing wealth-building strategies in the process. The brief highlights specific cases where interventions by funders, activists, policymakers and lenders have helped curtail abusive predatory lending practices. If you would like to receive a free copy of this issue brief, please go to the NFG Web site (www.nfg.org) and download the paper, or call NFG staff to obtain a hard copy.

Public Policy Paper

More Than Shelter: A Grantmaker's Guide to Housing Programs and Policy was published in April. This is the fifth in a series of housing policy papers, intended to help grantmakers better understand affordable housing issues and to encourage strategic public and private investments in housing. More Than Shelter provides a brief overview of major issues in affordable housing. It provides examples of tools and strategies that foundations have used to address housing issues. In addition, it presents conceptual models grantmakers can use for creating housing and community-development strategies.

PRI Makers Network

About two years ago, a number of NFG members approached us to help coordinate a new association of grantmakers interested in the use of Program

Related Investments to support their mission. This effort soon gained a name—PRI Makers Network—and a staff person, as NFG ramped up activities to help expand the use of PRIs.

In October 2005, the network launched its Web site (www.primakers.net) and in January 2006, 150 grantmakers attended the first national PRI Conference at Stanford University. The second national conference is being planned for early 2008. The Network continues to build on its mission to provide a forum for networking, collaboration, training and capacity-building for funders, including those not yet making PRIs or other social investments.

PRI Makers Network offers NFG members additional support for their work, and encourages grantmakers who are not members to become familiar with the work and mission of the NFG.

Community Giving Resource (CGR)

NFG developed CGR three years ago to encourage and empower donors to target funding to some of the issues facing low-income communities. Please visit the Web site at www.community-givingresource.org. The CGR continues to expand its offering of free tools and resources to individual donors interested in supporting disadvantaged communities. Its content is accessible, and it gives prospective donors strategic advice and inspiring stories of donor success. The CGR breaks down complex issues like housing, jobs and education into manageable pieces, illustrating the ways individual donors can make a difference.

Professional Development Programs

Over the course of the past year, NFG has held workshops and provided resources at many of the philanthropic gatherings around the country. Through our outreach and professional development efforts, we have raised awareness in the field and influenced grantmakers to consider supporting low- and moderate-income people in overcoming

the social and economic justice issues facing them.

Our membership is strong and continues to grow, even though many of our members experienced significant programmatic and leadership changes during the year. It is a testament to our strength that we have continued to receive both human and financial resources to sustain our work.

Our accomplishments and activities have made 2006 a highly successful year for NFG. We will continue to increase the depth and reach of our program work and offerings.

We thank the many volunteers who, throughout the year, have offered their time, talents and expertise to make NFG a strong, credible voice in the philanthropic community. Our work is not possible without the active support of our members who serve on the various committees and working groups. Thank you!

We invite others who would like to participate on a committee or a working group to contact staff at the NFG office and/or a board member for more information. We encourage participation by anyone with interest; our members are our strength.

As we look forward to 2007 and beyond, we begin the year with excitement and anticipation. Our board members will hold their annual retreat in January to finalize our next three-year Plan for the Future. Our mission and core values remain constant: to increase philanthropic investment in community-based efforts to organize and improve the economic and social fabric of low- and moderate-income urban neighborhoods and rural communities.

We will continue our current programs and activities—including NFG Reports, public policy papers, the annual conference and workshops at Council on Foundations conferences—while increasing and enhancing our use of technology to better serve our members.

We especially want to thank all who have made a sponsorship, general support or

special project grant to NFG. Our work would not be possible without your generous support. Thank you to all of our members for their continued support and involvement in NFG.

New NFG Staff Member

Please welcome Sherita Jackson, new Operations and Membership Manager. Sherita comes to NFG from the Community Technology Centers Network, where she was the membership coordinator. She is a graduate of Delaware State University and for the past five years has been very active in the D.C. nonprofit community. We are lucky to have her!

Transition Announcement and Planning

As you know, our Executive Director, Spence Limbocker will be retiring, January 2008. We have been incredibly fortunate to have Spence's leadership and vision for over ten years. To ensure a smooth transition, we have an excellent team in place, comprised of people from our Board and membership, chaired by Robert Jaquay of the George Gund Foundation.

Early next year we will post an announcement of the position. We seek your help in recruiting a dynamic leader for the next phase of NFG's development.

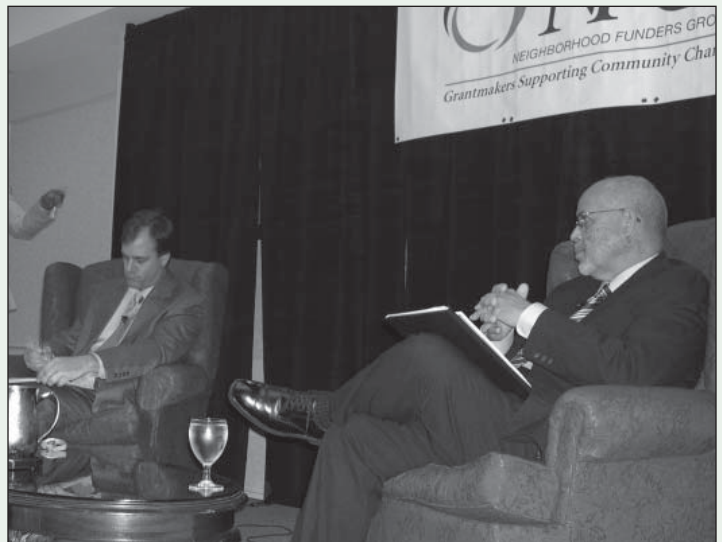
In closing the NFG staff and board would like to thank Maria Mottola, out-going board member and board co-chair, for her exceptional leadership over the past five years. Along with Maria we wish to thank board members Peter Beard, and Frank Sanchez for their service on the board and their guidance and commitment to strengthening and supporting NFG. Thank you all for a job well-done.

Much remains to be done, but we look forward to working together with you to meet the tremendous challenges we face in advancing issues of economic and social justice.

We wish all of you and your families a happy and prosperous new year! ☺

NFG Conference and Overnight Learning Tour

Durham, NC September 11 - 13, 2006





months, leading up to the November congressional elections, this “revolution” won minimum wage campaigns in 19 states, including Arkansas, California, Florida, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Minnesota. On Nov. 7, voters in six additional states—Missouri, Montana, Ohio, Nevada, Arizona and Colorado—passed ballot measures to increase the minimum wage. Each of these measures included automatic

One national community organizing network, ACORN, has played a leadership role in nearly all the states that have successfully raised their minimum wages, either through ballot initiatives or legislative action. ACORN has worked with coalitions of unions, religious organizations such as Interfaith Worker Justice and the National Council of Churches, the Economic Policy Institute and the Brennan Center for Justice. All

on the momentum in these and other states, ACORN’s National Campaign to Raise the Minimum Wage in 2006 targeted Arizona, Colorado, Ohio and Missouri.

Funders clearly have played a critical role in supporting and sustaining these minimum wage campaigns. Neighborhood Funders Group members, who support organizations like ACORN, the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) and Interfaith Worker Justice, report compelling reasons for their investments in terms of immediate and long-term benefits to the working poor. They have observed that minimum wage campaigns increase civic participation among low-income voters; augment the membership base of organizing groups; nurture new leaders; and expand the power of these organizations to effect significant improvements for low-income families.

Maria Mottola of the New York Foundation asserts, “It’s important to recognize that these campaigns build upon the success of the ‘living wage’ movement and that both the living wage and minimum wage campaigns are an integral part of a much broader set of strategies designed to support worker justice and to halt growing income inequality. These strategies include restoring the democratic right of workers to form unions, other forms of worker organizing, especially worker centers, and even independent sectoral organizing, such as the taxi drivers’ alliance in New York City.”

The New World Foundation also positions the minimum wage issue in the broad context of securing social and economic justice. Its Phoenix Fund for Workers and Communities was one of the earliest supporters of living and minimum wage campaigns. Ann Bastian of the New World Foundation believes, “There is

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increases to match the cost of living in those states. (We can only hope that the success of these campaigns, combined with a dramatic change in the political leadership of Congress starting next January, will finally lead to an increase in the minimum wage at the federal level.)

In state after state, organizing has tapped into broad public support that transcends party affiliation. In Florida, for example, 71 percent of the voters approved a ballot initiative in 2004 to raise the minimum wage to \$6.15/hour and index it to inflation. As a result, the minimum wage in Florida is now \$6.40/hour. In Massachusetts, the state legislature unanimously overrode a gubernatorial veto, preserving a minimum wage increase to \$8.00/hour over the next two years.

believe raising the minimum wage is a moral imperative. Jen Kern, Director of ACORN’s Living Wage Resource Center, asserts, “Raising the minimum wage is a key strategy in the broader movement for economic justice. It has become the civil rights issue of our day.”

ACORN utilized independent research that revealed deep public concern and sympathy for the working poor, along with a widely-held belief that people who work full-time should not live in poverty. With its partners, ACORN conducted large-scale voter registration and voter turnout activities, particularly in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods. It drew on both local and national media to tell its story. This comprehensive strategy led to victories in Florida and Nevada (where the state AFL-CIO was the major force in the campaign). Building

no anti-poverty measure more direct or universal than the minimum wage. Beyond raising the income floor, it also creates a broad umbrella for coalition building and rallies a large majority of voters to the cause of economic justice.”

Margarita Ramirez, Senior Program Officer at the Liberty Hill Foundation, frames her foundation’s grantmaking this way: “No major economic shift in history has occurred without the organized rumblings of its citizenry in collaboration with labor.” For this reason, Liberty Hill has funded a wide range of initiatives in support of minimum and living wage campaigns, including the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights, and Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice.

Ericka Taylor of the Public Welfare Foundation also believes that minimum wage campaigns need to be supported because they increase civic engagement and make real, tangible differences in the lives of those whose incomes are increased. Taylor maintains that “Public Welfare recognizes that the issue of low-wage work intersects with concerns about the diminishing stock of affordable housing, and the growing number of people living in homelessness or overcrowded conditions. The overlap shows that economic justice issues have the issue of wages at their core.”

The goal of a Tides Foundation’s program, Bridging the Economic Divide, is to address the “growing chasm between the poor and the wealthy in this country.” Under the leadership of Jane Lin, Tides has granted more than \$3 million to more than 50 economic justice organizations and coalitions, supporting minimum and living wage campaigns and accountable economic development. Ms. Lin states, “On no other issue has the progressive movement won as many victories on the local

and state level, raising the floor for working families and framing the debate on what it means to live in a fair and just society.” Its grantmaking includes support for the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the Miami Workers Center and the East Bay Alliance for Sustainable Development.

Discount Foundation takes a similar approach through its commitment to MakingWorkPay and its long-standing support of living and minimum wage campaigns, immigrant worker rights,

ACORN so it could become more effective in its overall work, including environmental justice.” Similarly, Rick McGahey of the Ford Foundation explains its support of the Economic Policy Institute, the Brennan Center for Justice and the ACORN Living Wage Resource Center as a means to ensure the development of a body of independent research, legal analysis and technical assistance to help inform and frame the minimum wage issue at the local, state and federal levels by policymakers, community groups and others.

In a period when corporate profits are growing, workers’ wages are stagnant, and poverty is rising, the Veatch program believes that philanthropy must support the efforts of working people to earn a living wage. If we are to achieve the beloved community that Reverend King spoke about, all workers should be able to support themselves and their families.

community/labor coalitions and the right of workers to organize unions. In addition to supporting ACORN chapters in Ohio and Arizona that are involved in statewide minimum wage campaigns, Discount is paying particular attention to a small but growing number of community/labor coalitions focused on empowering low-wage and working-class people, including the Front Range Economic Strategy Center (FRESC) in Denver, the Connecticut Center for a New Economy (CCNE) in New Haven, the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) and Community/Labor United in Boston.

Two other foundations have made grants that, while not directly supporting minimum wage organizing, were nevertheless important to these campaigns. The Beldon Fund, whose primary focus is on the environment, has provided operating support to Florida ACORN. Beldon’s Dick Mark describes the grants “as a way to build the capacity and strength of

Perhaps the best summation of the efforts of these funders, as well as many others, comes from Victor Quintana at the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock: “In a period when corporate profits are growing, workers’ wages are stagnant, and poverty is rising, the Veatch program believes that philanthropy must support the efforts of working people to earn a living wage. If we are to achieve the beloved community that Reverend King spoke about, all workers should be able to support themselves and their families.”

The faces and words of the farm workers I met in North Carolina certainly demand that we join in their struggle for fair and decent jobs. We can help give voice and visibility to their struggle and the struggle of millions of other workers who deserve a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work. ○

platform. They hold learning sessions at lunchtime, where leaders address “the deeper question of how money operates in public political life, and how power works. And that’s the foundation for informed voters. Deeper engagement encourages deliberation,” Pierson says.

To be effective at both issue advocacy and electoral mobilization, organizations need a base of committed activists. And building that base of informed voters, with the skills to talk to other voters, takes time. A long-term perspective is especially important when working in low-income, minority or immigrant communities. An organization’s long-term presence organizing around issues that matter to a community makes its voter education and voter

comes to the voter from a “trusted messenger.” That means building networks of community residents who can talk to their own neighbors. According to Robby Rodriguez of SouthWest Organizing Project in New Mexico, “When we find someone at the door who is a potential leader, it is a six-month to one-year process to get them to the level where they feel comfortable engaging their neighbors around issues.” That neighborhood-level infrastructure gets built through year-round service delivery, issue advocacy or organizing. It can grow tremendously in the course of an election season, and then needs to be sustained afterwards so the base of leaders remains engaged. Bob Bingaman is the director of the Sierra Club’s 501c3 program called

election season builds, rather than detracts, from their broader organizational mission. Burt Lauderdale is the Executive Director of Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, which is a member of the Pushback Network. Lauderdale sees voter participation work as a tool to build his organization, not just an end in itself. It brings in new members, provides a significant leadership development opportunity for existing leaders, and strengthens the organization overall. “Voter participation work is an integral part of building the organization and issues campaigns, rather than something else that diverts us for a little while and then we get back to our other work” Lauderdale says.

Many organizations that typically have not been involved in voter engagement work are also realizing the value of participating in the electoral process in a non-partisan way. And foundations that are accustomed to funding voter engagement work as well as issue advocacy are reaching out to their colleagues to encourage them to do the same. “If your issue is health care or education or the environment, it’s very difficult to move a policy agenda if you don’t also have voters trying to impact the policy-making arena,” says Thomasina Williams of the Ford Foundation.

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participation work more effective. Christine Neumann-Ortiz, of Voces de la Frontera in Wisconsin, has partnered with Wisconsin Citizen Action and the Center for Community Change on her voter participation work. She says, “Trust has been built up over time on the issues the community cares about, so people trust us enough to ask for help to participate in a process that they are not used to.”

Research has shown that some of the most effective voter participation work involves repeated contacts, and

Building Environmental Communities. He observes, “In the BEC program, volunteer leaders mobilize their neighbors on issue campaigns throughout the year. The more active our BEC program is in an area, the stronger our base of activist leaders will be who know how to talk to other voters.”

A growing number of organizations that already engage in voter participation work are developing better ways to integrate it with their issue organizing, so the burst of activity during

The Nonprofit Voter Engagement Network works with state associations of nonprofits to do just that, training policy advocacy and service organizations to incorporate voter participation activities into their work for the first time. Member organizations include community groups, civic associations, health and human service providers, and housing and human needs organizations. According to Bridgette Rongitsch, NVEN’s national coordinator, this work cannot just be part of an election year push. “It’s really a cultural paradigm shift that we’re trying to create in

Nonprofit organizations can play an even larger role than they already do in building an informed and engaged electorate. Foundations can encourage this by asking their grantees to develop civic engagement plans that begin now and carry over into the year following the 2008 elections, and are integrated with the organization's issue advocacy and organizing.

the way nonprofits view their roles. It takes time and trust for NVEN to be seen as a resource.”

Many of the organizations that conducted voter participation programs this fall are already integrating the new leaders they developed into their ongoing issue advocacy work. At the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), members were trained as volunteer ACORN Political Action Leaders (APALs) and contacted a list of their friends, family, and neighbors several times about the election. Organizers are now working with those leaders to invite voters they contacted to join the organization and help craft its policy agenda moving forward. Voters who were contacted during the election by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICERR) are already being contacted again and invited to visit the state capital with the organization to educate legislators on their issues.

Laura Livoti of FACT (the French American Charitable Trust) has been working with some of her foundation colleagues to encourage both foundations and grantees to think about their voter participation work in this more integrated way. She asks, “How does the issue work and leadership development of an organizing group feed into its voter education work? How does that voter education capacity feed back into building the organization, and influence the growth of the organization?”

Some grassroots organizations find that while they are able to raise money to support their voter participation work during the brief federal election season every two years, there is not the same level of foundation support to sustain the infrastructure for their year-round civic engagement work. A few foundations have tailored their grantmaking to address that issue. Dawn Smalls, of the Open Society Institute, has chosen to make a majority of her grants two-year grants, “to give grantees the ability to conduct their work year-round without constantly having to scramble for funds.”

This greater focus on integrated, year-round civic engagement calls for a new commitment from both nonprofits and foundations. According to Thomasina Williams at the Ford Foundation, “You’re really putting unrealistic expectations on these groups if you say you want long-term results and you’re only giving them short-term funding. Rather than having to spend so much time thinking about the next funding cycle, groups can direct that energy towards thinking in a more long-term, strategic way about the work.”

Nonprofit organizations can play an even larger role than they already do in building an informed and engaged electorate. Foundations can encourage this by asking their grantees to develop civic engagement plans that begin now and carry over into the year following the 2008 elections, and are integrated with the organization's issue advocacy

and organizing. Wise civic participation investments include the time necessary to build permanent, neighborhood-based structures, and the funding necessary to sustain that infrastructure after the next election. Long-term civic engagement plans will enhance the ability of organizations to mobilize voters effectively, and will build their capacity to organize successfully throughout the year on issues that matter to their communities. ○

SAVE THE DATE!

NFG 2007 Annual Conference

People, Place and Policy: Reconnecting Communities

October 1-3, 2007

Crowne Plaza
Cleveland-City
Centre

Cleveland, OH

The Time for Philanthropy: Now and the Next 10+ Years

By Sherece Y. West, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer, Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation

Charitable contributions enabled nonprofits, faith-based organizations and relief entities such as the American Red Cross to help hundreds of thousands of people in Louisiana who were displaced from their homes and communities by hurricanes.

However, more than a year after the hurricanes, many families and individuals throughout Louisiana still struggle and still need relief. Tens of thousands of displaced people currently live in FEMA trailers or other temporary arrangements. Many need assistance for rent, child care, transportation, prescriptions, mental health and much more. Many of those in need are among the most vulnerable in society, including children, the elderly and people with disabilities. It is important to support nonprofits such as the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps, which provides direct case management assistance to displaced families and individuals throughout the state, as they help displaced residents get on with their lives.

For us at the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, relief has now morphed into recovery. LDRF is the primary philanthropic entity in the state with an intense focus on racial, social and economic equity as communities rebuild. While the outpouring of financial support during the relief phase was unprecedented, even more is needed during the recovery phase if we are going to build a better Louisiana. Charity is not enough. Now is the time for philanthropy.

What Philanthropy Does That Charity Does Not Do

Before the hurricanes, Louisiana's nonprofit sector—particularly its advocacy community—was severely

under-resourced and not very strong. We must build its strength to develop and promote strategies for equitable development, fight racial inequality, and ensure equity and inclusion.

Government is not going to make the investment required. While the federal government, the State of Louisiana and local bodies may encourage or even mandate public hearings and community input, they will not provide citizens and nonprofits with the

resources to collect data, do research and develop a policy agenda. They will not give citizens the tools they need to hold government accountable and challenge policies that do not meet the needs of communities.

Instead, we must look to philanthropy. Philanthropic organizations can help ensure that public funds—which will dwarf the funding that comes from private sources—are made available and used to achieve maximum impact in meeting the needs of displaced residents and the communities that historically have had access to the fewest resources. At the same time, we need philanthropy to provide the flexible capital that will meet the needs that government cannot—or will not—address.

During the recovery phase, philanthropic organizations can fund and promote strategies that result in a

better, more equitable Louisiana—a state where all people, regardless of race, gender or economic status, have the opportunity to participate fully in its economy and society. While charity provides money for aid, philanthropic dollars build the capacity of nonprofits to provide services and support to families and individuals. Charity raises much needed monies for books, after-school programs and uniforms for displaced children. Philanthropy supports efforts toward

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education reform. Charity can pay for food and shelter. Philanthropy can support meaningful workforce development, living wage campaigns and efforts that lead to quality affordable housing and safer neighborhoods in hurricane-affected areas.

Philanthropic investment in civic capacity can help ensure that those who traditionally have had little voice, or are in danger of losing their voice, are involved in the public decision-making process. Philanthropic resources enable advocates to focus their energy on taking and supporting the stands that matter most to their constituents, without the restrictions attached to program funds.

Long-term systemic change will happen through public policy. In some cases, this will involve advocacy strategies that may be controversial.

Philanthropic investment in policy and advocacy organizations would allow them to undertake such strategies without worrying whether they fit into particular streams of programmatic funds.

Philanthropy also can help build the capacity of nonprofit housing developers to compete effectively with for-profit developers in creating quality affordable housing for all, but especially for those with low to moderate incomes. And philanthropic investment in the "Right to Return" campaign would give displaced citizens first preference for housing, employment, schools and more.

Finally, philanthropic support would allow the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation and advocates to stand independently and deliver a strong message on the tough issues of equity and inclusion. LDRF's board and staff believe that inclusive practices must be integrated into any plan that guides the state's recovery. We are dedicated to equipping displaced people with the tools to understand, organize, advocate for and be involved in such decisions. We could use other philanthropic partners in our efforts.

Philanthropy and Recovery and Betterment

My intent here is not to criticize charity, but to appeal for support from the philanthropic sector during Louisiana's recovery and betterment phases. There will be threats to equity and inclusion at every step during the rebuilding process. Recently, for example, a mostly white parish enacted an ordinance restricting the sale of homes to previous and current homeowners and their relatives. Another parish enacted an ordinance restricting the number of children in a family that can move into a home. These are blatant acts of racism.

We must fight for the rights of displaced persons to return to their homes and communities, and receive priority access to jobs and housing. We must support citizens in their efforts to create education, health, transportation and housing systems that deliver quality services. In building a better Louisiana, we must see to it that everyone's voice is heard.

To do all that, we need philanthropic partners throughout the next 10 years and more. The time for philanthropy is now. ○

THANK YOU
to all of our
colleagues who sent
goods, services and
charitable donations
in the aftermath of
Hurricanes Rita and
Katrina. Louisiana
appreciates what
you've done!

JOIN NFG TODAY!

If you are a grantmaker and not yet a member of NFG, we invite you to join us.

Benefits of membership include:

- Reduced rate on NFG conference registration
- Information and tools that help grantmakers accomplish tangible outcomes
- Networking with the most creative minds in philanthropy
- Access to model programs and accomplished practitioners through site visits and educational forums, including NFG's annual conference
- Cutting-edge, in-depth, ongoing program and policy discussions through the Rural Funders Working Group, Working Group on Labor and Community, and other activities initiated and led by NFG's membership.

Our members include community, family, private and corporate foundations as well as religious funders. All are committed to providing support to improve the economic and social conditions in urban and rural communities. For more information, visit www.nfg.org, call (202) 833-4690, or email nfg@nfg.org.

People and Resources

Resources

The Case Foundation has released *Citizens at the Center: A New Approach to Civic Engagement*. The Case Foundation is applying the strategies discussed in this paper to expand civic engagement and volunteerism, meet the needs of underserved children and families, create thriving and sustainable economic development for communities, bridge cultural and religious divides, and accelerate innovative approaches to health care. The paper was researched and written by Cynthia M. Gibson, Ph.D., of Cynthesis Consulting.

Bringing Buildings Back: Turning Abandoned Properties into Community Assets, by Allan Mallach, encompasses multiple perspectives and aspects of urban studies, architecture and planning. Combining practical suggestions with a thoughtful exploration of policy, Mallach pulls together insights from law, economics, planning and design to address all sides of the problem, from how abandonment can be prevented to the best ways of bringing abandoned properties back into productive reuse. Allan Mallach

is research director of the National Housing Institute in Montclair, N.J. To order a copy visit the Web site at <http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu>.

The Center for Housing Policy recently released *A Heavy Load: The Combined Housing and Transportation Burdens of Working Families*, by Barbara J. Lipman, research director at the Center for Housing Policy. This publication updates and extends the Center's earlier work on the impact high housing costs have on the quality of life of working families as well as the communities in which they live and work. Lipman's analysis shows that many working families end up spending more on transportation to work, errands and other stops in their daily routine than they save on their housing costs. This study demonstrates that coordinated and integrated housing and transportation policies are needed to reduce the heavy load on working families. If you would like to obtain a copy please contact the Center at 202/466-2121 or visit the Web site at www.nhc.org.

Place Matters: Metropolitcs for the Twenty-first Century, by Peter Dreier, John Mollenkopf and Todd Swanstrom,

discusses the important role place plays in the quality of our lives and our society. The book is published by the University Press of Kansas. For more details visit www.kansaspress.ku.edu.

The Art of Hiring Leaders: A Guide for Nonprofit Organizations, by Barbara J. Gilvar, is intended to be a comprehensive resource for nonprofits that provides detailed information on the steps that lead to a successful search. The book's major theme is that a search is an opportunity. Its goal is to provide the information needed to take maximum advantage of that opportunity. Ordering information can be found at www.theartofhiringleaders.net.

Killing Affirmative Action: Would ending it really result in a better, more perfect Union? is a special report by Ellis Cose for the Institute for Justice and Journalism at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication. It seeks to stimulate fruitful, reasoned public dialogue about the complexities of such questions as the one posed in the title. To receive the report visit www.justicejournalism.org/cose. ○

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