
GRANTEE PERCEPTION REPORT®

PREPARED FOR

Walter and Elise Haas Fund

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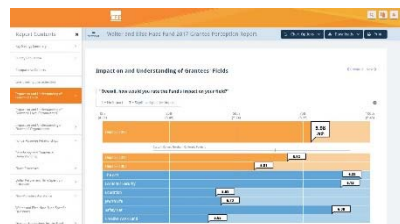
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Key Findings and Recommendations from the Walter and Elise Haas Fund 2017 Grantee Perception Report

Prepared by The Center For Effective Philanthropy

In September and October of 2017, The Center for Effective Philanthropy conducted a survey of the Walter and Elise Haas Fund’s (“Haas Sr.” or “the Fund”) grantees, achieving a 63% response rate. The memo below outlines CEP’s summary of key strengths, opportunities, and recommendations. Haas Sr.’s grantee perceptions should be interpreted in light of its goals and strategies.

This memo accompanies the comprehensive survey results found in the Fund’s interactive online report at <https://cep.surveymaterials.org> and in the downloadable online materials.



The Fund’s full report also contains more information about survey analysis and methodology.

Overview

- Walter and Elise Haas Fund grantees continue to provide higher than typical ratings for the Fund’s impact on and understanding of their fields and communities.
- The Fund receives higher than typical ratings for the overall quality of its relationships with grantees, with particular strengths related to its responsiveness and fairness. Grantees also provide higher than typical ratings on measures related to the Fund’s communications and transparency.
- Ratings for the Fund’s impact on grantees’ organizations have trended downward since its last survey in 2012, with the Fund now rated similar to the typical funder. As in 2012, grantees also report receiving grants that are smaller than typical in size.
- Haas Sr. grantees report experiencing streamlined processes, spending fewer hours on funder requirements than do grantees at the typical funder.

Strong Impact on Grantees’ Fields and Local Communities

- Overall, grantees view Haas Sr. as having a strong, positive impact on the fields in which they work. Grantees’ ratings have steadily trended upward over the last two surveys, and the fund is now rated in the top quarter of CEP’s dataset for this measure.
 - As in 2012, the Fund receives higher than typical ratings for the extent to which it has advanced the state of knowledge in grantees’ fields, and is now rated higher than eighty percent of funders in CEP’s dataset. Grantees also continue to rate the Fund higher than typical for the extent to which it has affected public policy in their fields.

- Furthermore, Haas Sr. again receives higher than typical ratings for the extent to which it understands the fields in which grantees work.
- Grantees also continue to view the Fund as having a strong positive impact on their local communities, providing higher than typical ratings for Haas Sr.’s overall impact on and understanding of their communities, as well as for its understanding of the social, cultural, and socioeconomic contexts affecting their work.



“Haas fund is making enormous and significant positive impacts in our field and our community - through training, research, counseling [and] advocacy...”



“The Fund continues to be a leader on many issues affecting the Bay Area community... They are a leader among other funders supporting these areas and help to develop collaborative strategies to combat these issues.”

Strong Relationships with Grantees

- Haas Sr. continues to receive higher than typical ratings for the overall quality of its relationships with grantees. CEP’s research finds that strong funder-grantee relationships – defined by high quality interactions and clear, consistent communications – are the single strongest predictor of grantees’ perceived impact on their organizations, and are also a driver of higher perceived impact on grantees’ fields and local communities.
 - The Fund receives typical ratings for the extent to which grantees feel comfortable approaching the Fund if a problem arises.
 - But Haas Sr. is rated particularly highly for its responsiveness and the extent to which grantees perceive they are treated fairly, receiving ratings in the top quarter of funders on both of these measures.
- Haas Sr. also continues to receive higher than typical ratings for both the clarity and consistency of its communications with grantees.
- Additionally, the Fund receives higher than typical ratings for the extent to which it is transparent with grantees, placing the Fund in the top quarter of funders and at the top of its custom comparative cohort of Northern California funders for this measure.
 - CEP’s research finds that perceptions of funder transparency are a key predictor of strong relationships.
- Compared to previous years, Haas Sr. program officers are more proactively initiating contact with grantees. Twenty-one percent of grantees indicate that their program officer initiates contact most frequently in their relationship, a notable increase from the nine percent of grantees making this indication in 2012.
- The proportion of grantees that report receiving a site visit from the Fund during the course of their grant, however, has significantly declined since 2012, with the Fund now falling lower than the typical funder for this measure.
 - Grantees that report receiving a site visit from Haas Sr. rate the Fund significantly higher for its impact on their communities, impact on their organizations, and the overall quality its relationships with grantees.



“The biggest strength of the fund by far is the staff. Our program officer is essential in our ability to successfully obtain funding from the Haas fund. She has an authentic knowledge of our org, our community and the field at large and offers us important insights.”



“Refreshingly friendly, accommodating and easy to communicate with. Quick, accurate and honest responses. Always helpful and supportive in any situation. The Fund feels like a true “angel in our corner” always there to give support, advice, suggestions or help in any way.”

Impact on and Understanding of Grantee Organizations

- While rated higher than typical for its impact on grantees’ organizations in 2012, these ratings have since trended downward, with the Fund now rated similar to the typical funder.
 - Similarly, although still higher than typical, grantees provide significantly lower ratings than in 2012 for the Fund’s impact on grantees’ ability to sustain the work funded by the grant.
- Haas Sr. grantees continue to provide higher than typical ratings, however, for the Fund’s understanding of their organizations’ goals and strategies.
- Grantmaking characteristics can be an important component of impact on organizations. CEP’s broader research indicates that grants that are multi-year, substantive in size (often six figures or more), and in the form of general operating support tend to be associated with the highest ratings of impact on organizations.
 - The Fund currently provides a higher proportion of general operating support as compared to the typical funder, doing so for roughly a third of its grantees.
 - And even with this high proportion, nine grantees provide suggestions that specifically request consideration for general operating support.
 - Those that do receive general support frequently champion its impact, stating, for example, that it provides them with “the flexibility to use the funding where it is needed most.”
 - However, when considering grant length, the majority of Haas Sr. grantees, 58 percent, continue to report receiving single-year grants.
 - Further, four grantees provide suggestions specifically relating to the requirement of having at least one “sit out” year from funding, citing the challenges that it poses for their organizations and expressing desire to change this model.
 - Haas Sr. provides grants that are, on average, smaller than those provided by both the typical funder and the majority of funders in the Fund’s custom cohort of Northern California funders.
 - As a result, Haas Sr. grants, on average, cover a lower than typical proportion of grantees’ operating budgets—just two percent.
 - Additionally, when asked to rate the extent to which various aspects of their grant help them achieve their expected results, grantees agree least strongly that the size of the grant is appropriate.
 - Haas Sr. grantees that report receiving grants that are six-figures or larger provide significantly higher ratings for the Fund’s impact on their organizations.

- And in grantees' open-ended suggestions, eleven grantees request larger grants, the second most common suggestion in the report.



“Since the amount of local, state and federal funding continues to decrease, increasing our annual funding would help to defray the budget shortfalls.”



“The “sit-out” year is hard for our organizations. Multi-year grants would be preferred.”

Streamlined Processes

- Haas Sr. grantees report spending fewer hours than typical on funder requirements, with the selection, reporting, and evaluation processes requiring a lower than typical amount of total hours to complete.
 - Despite this low time commitment, grantees rate the selection process to be a helpful one, placing it in line with the typical funder for overall helpfulness. Grantees also report a typical level of involvement by Fund staff during development of the proposal.
- Haas Sr. grantees report experiencing less pressure than do grantees of the typical funder to modify their organizational priorities in order to create a grant proposal that is likely to receive funding.
- Grantees also report receiving funding in a particularly timely manner, with 80 percent receiving their funding in three months or less – substantially more than the 62 percent of grantees that fall into this category at the typical funder.
- A lower than typical proportion of grantees – 48 percent – report exchanging ideas with the Fund during the application or grant period regarding how to assess the results of the funded work. This proportion has significantly declined from the 69 percent that reported having these discussions in 2012.
 - Grantees who have such discussions rate Haas Sr. significantly higher for its understanding of the contextual factors affecting their work, its awareness of the challenges facing their organizations, the clarity of its communications, and its overall transparency.
- Similarly, a lower than typical proportion of grantees report having had a substantive discussion with the Fund about the submitted report(s) as part of the reporting process.
 - Those that indicate having had these discussions provide significantly higher ratings for the extent to which the Fund is advancing the state of knowledge in their field, the overall quality of their relationships with the Fund, and the extent to which the reporting process is straightforward and adaptable to fit their circumstances.



“The Fund's process is easy to use and was made much easier by the support and facilitation we received from our program officer.”



“The formal process itself is very straightforward, but is certainly augmented by the terrific program officers we have been privileged to have. There has always been a very open and honest chain of communication between parties, and we find the ‘personal touch’ to be priceless.”

Response to 2016 Elections

- When asked about the impact of the changing U.S. political landscape on grantees' organizations' ability to carry out their intended missions, 83 percent of Haas Sr. grantees report that they anticipate it will have a generally negative impact.
- Of the grantees that report modifying or making plans to modify their work as a result of the changing U.S. political landscape, 77 percent report that these plans include increased emphasis on policy work, and 84 percent report that they include increased emphasis on community engagement efforts.
- More than half of grantees report that they do not currently but would like to receive communications from the Fund relating to the changing political landscape. Sixty-two percent report that they would like public communications from the Fund, and 63 percent would like communication from their program officer about the Fund's work.

CEP Recommendations

- Given the Fund's strong ratings from grantees regarding its impact on and understanding of grantees' fields and communities, consider what aspects of Haas Sr.'s practices can continue to reinforce these strengths.
- Maintain strong responsiveness and proactive outreach to grantees, and continue to support staff in these efforts.
- Discuss whether the observed decrease in grantee site visits is an intentional aspect of Haas Sr.'s strategy, and if not, explore whether and how to incorporate more site visits during engagements.
- Taking Haas Sr.'s resources and strategy into account, explore the possibility of providing more multi-year and/or larger grants to grantees whose organizational goals are best aligned with those of the Fund.
- Continue to build upon already helpful discussions with grantees during the reporting and evaluation processes, with the goal of incorporating more opportunities for helpful discussion while maintaining the processes' streamlined nature.
- Consider whether providing communications regarding the changing political landscape would be relevant and helpful to grantees, and whether such communications would serve the Fund's goals and strategy.

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