

# Applying Policy Tools to Achieve Long-Term Change



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## Guiding Principles for Policy

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- Policy work supports the achievement of our programmatic goals.
- Effective policy reforms grounded in the experiences and knowledge of our community partners.
- Community voices should be prevalent in the policy debates, particularly those without past access to the policy process.
- Use of W.K. Kellogg Foundation resources to influence public policy efforts must comply with federal regulations.

## Applying Policy Tools to Achieve Long-Term Change

Addressing the ways policies shape, hamper, or encourage social progress is integral to the Kellogg Foundation's work in each program and geographic area. The Kellogg Foundation has long supported the efforts of grantees to realign public and private systems to benefit the quality of community life. An effective tool in achieving community goals and sustaining systems change, policy can facilitate the work of grantees to affirm the capacity of community-based leaders, sustain successful activities, and support communities and change agents' work to align institutions and practices with community needs. It provides a platform for inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives working together for systemic change to improve the quality of life for youth, families, and their communities.

Policy education is often thought of only in terms of legislation; but as practiced at the Kellogg Foundation, it is much more multifaceted. "Policy" also refers to that body of information that is developed and applied in regulatory actions; budgetary decisions and public agency practices; court decisions and rules; private institutional governance; and the

formal policy positions of educational, religious, civic, or professional organizations. Policy programming activities may focus on shaping new policy, strengthening or implementing practices, reshaping programs, or assuring accountability through monitoring for policy effectiveness and improvement. Policy reform and public policy decisions happen at every level of government.

While not all our grants require an intentional strategy to inform policy, we know that activities that positively affect policymakers are essential to strengthening the impact of our work and sustaining systemic reforms over the longer term.

This brochure is designed to describe how the Kellogg Foundation applies policy principles and tools to accomplish our programming goals and objectives. Examples from each of our programming units and strategic initiatives highlight ways grantees have successfully used policy work to achieve community goals and produce sustainable systems change. Following the Guiding Principles for Policy Work, policy activities highlighted include:

- Connecting Community to Policies (pg. 6);
- Developing Models to Demonstrate Ideas (pg. 8);
- Partnering with Government to Catalyze Action (pg. 9);
- Building Relationships and Opportunity through Networking (pg. 11);
- Developing Traditional and Non-Traditional Leaders (pg. 12);
- Convening Stakeholders to Find Common Ground (pg. 13); and
- Educating Policymakers and Policy Influentials (pg. 14).



## Guiding Principles for Policy Work

The Kellogg Foundation's policy work has been grounded in a set of guiding principles that are carried out in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and southern Africa programming regions.

These principles are:

- Foundation-supported policy work always support the achievement of our programmatic goals.
- The most effective actions for policy reforms are grounded in the experiences and knowledge of our community partners.
- Whenever possible, community voices should be prevalent in the policy debates, particularly the voices of those who have not had access to the policy process in the past.
- The use of the Kellogg Foundation's resources related to public policy efforts must comply with federal regulations.

Policy change is a means to a desired end. Engagement in policy requires clarity of program purpose, careful planning, intentional choices, and continual attention by the Kellogg Foundation program staff and grantees. While specific actions to achieve the Kellogg Foundation's policy objectives may be opportunistic, dependent upon changing political and environmental contexts, those actions always link back to our program goals. This requires Program Directors and grantees to work together to identify and develop the policy skills needed to achieve the program outcomes, as well as flexibility in implementing policy plans to be responsive to new policy opportunities as they arise.



## Policy Activities Support Program Strategies

**Policy Activities** reflect the options and tools the Foundation's program staff, grantees and their partners chooses to address the program policy change objectives. Fundamental to our approach is the inclusion of diverse voices and consideration of multiple perspectives on an issue. Activities may reflect a wide range of opportunities for action, including advancing new concepts, reforming existing standards and practices, maintaining and strengthening effective policies and practices, public education, supporting the dissemination of objective information to strategic audiences and enhancing the policy capacity of community members and leaders. Activities must comply with IRS and Treasury Department regulations for nonprofits as well as internal Foundation policies. (See brochure: *Guidelines for Informing Public Policy*).







Examples from selected programming that illustrate some of the more successful and prevalent policy activities supported by the Foundation include:

### *Connecting Community to Policies*

The Foundation's commitment to fully connect with a community's vision and values is fundamental to how the Kellogg Foundation does its work. Rather than unilaterally developing policy plans for grantees to follow, Foundation staff work with grantees and their communities to develop specific change objectives. Plans are made with a degree of flexibility since grantees need to be able to address emerging issues and meet changing dynamics within their own communities. Beginning with the community, a variety of policy types and approaches may be implemented.

For example, the Devolution Initiative was a multi-year partnership of researchers, analysts, and state and national advocacy organizations to develop and disseminate information that increased local, state, and national capacity to

inform policy discussions and decisions. One state grantee partner, the Mississippi Devolution Partnership enlisted and trained current and former Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients to conduct the largest statewide survey of low-income families in the country (another example of the use of evaluation methods and techniques). At the conclusion of the survey, the interviewers had a high level of investment, understanding, and ownership of the information. Subsequently, armed with their own information and new confidence and enthusiasm, they became key actors in communicating the results to state and local policymakers and shaping emerging policy implementation.

Sometimes grantees focused on administrative or institutional policy change objectives. The Comprehensive Community Health Models of Michigan work in Calhoun, St. Clair, and Muskegon counties was designed to assist communities in building more efficient and effective health care systems through community member involvement. In St. Clair, the grantee partnership was successful in getting the county Intermediate School District board and local K-12 districts to reverse existing policies and to financially support school health.



ENLACE (Engaging Latino Communities for Education), a multiyear initiative to strengthen the educational pipeline and increase opportunities for Latinos to enter and complete college, uses multiple policy types to achieve the desired outcomes. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, ENLACE partnerships with parents and community activists facilitated the Albuquerque Public School district to provide space and assist with resources for two Family Centers, largely staffed by parent volunteers to address the need for Hispanic parents to become involved in all aspects of the education of their children.

### *Developing Models to Demonstrate Ideas*

The Kellogg Foundation has provided the risk capital that permits communities to redesign the delivery of public and private services in a way that meets their own needs, vision, and expectations. Our policy programming often includes mechanisms to design and test alternative ways to deliver health and social services, shape educational outcomes, promote economic and community development, and strengthen philanthropy and the nonprofit sector.



Information about new and better methods to achieve positive community change is documented and disseminated to policymakers.

The objective of sharing information may be replication through public funding or the inclusion of new values and strategies in existing public programs. Middle Start, a comprehensive middle-grades improvement initiative, has resulted in new state and local policies to increase the preparation and performance of middle grades teachers. For example, several Michigan public school districts have allocated funds for common planning time for middle-school teachers. At a different level, the Michigan Department of Education has approved a middle-grades teaching endorsement.

Another grantee, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, working in four Michigan counties, has become a model for new policies by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority for funding community residential services for adults who are vulnerable due to physical, emotional, or intellectual challenges, age, homelessness, and/or low income.

### *Partnering with Government to Catalyze Action*

Investment by the Foundation in areas that have not received priority attention can bring new impetus and attention to important public issues. This is the case in the work of dental and mental health service providers who are participating in Community Voices. Community Voices, building from the community level, gives the underserved a voice to help make health care access and quality part of the national debate.

By communicating the success achieved by the grantees to key national policymakers, the Foundation and the Community Voices partnerships have been able to partner with the

U.S. Surgeon General to advance important action agendas for oral and mental health services based on community experience. In addition, the work of Devolution grantees in facilitating discussions between state and tribal officials regarding human service programs and other common issues have resulted in more equitable policies for tribal members in several states. In Montana, Washington and Wisconsin, these discussions have also resulted in establishing new procedures for a formal government-to-government relationship between the state and the sovereign tribes.

Administrative policy changes also result from grantees partnering with state and local government. In Pennsylvania, the Institute for Service Learning worked with the Philadelphia School District to pass a policy integrating service learning projects into three grade spans



and requiring all schools to designate one teacher in every school building to serve as a service learning coordinator.

### *Building Relationships and Opportunity Through Networking*

Bringing people together to build relationships among grantees and policy stakeholders has been key to accomplishing policy change objectives in several initiatives. One example is Food and Society (FAS), designed to support the creation and expansion of community-based food systems that are locally owned and controlled, environmentally sound, and health-promoting. National networks of FAS grantees and fellows have been formed to inform a future federal food policy that reflects environmental and conservation values. The Mid South Delta Initiative is strengthening Delta communities by connecting them with regional economic systems and support structures to create positive social and economic impact. They have created networks connecting the grantees which has facilitated a sharing of best practices that helps communities put into place policies that are already having an impact on the region's access to capital and workforce.







### *Developing Traditional and Non-Traditional Leaders*

By helping communities learn about public policy and how they can actively participate in shaping their own change agenda, the Foundation is helping assure that those who previously may not have felt welcome in the policy arena are taking a place at the table. The long-term goal is to help create an emerging generation of leaders that reflects the cultural diversity and richness of our nation.

In terms of traditional leaders, the Kellogg Foundation has invested in their development through the Flemming Fellows Program. This program provides an opportunity for new state-level legislators to hone their decision making and problem solving skills, as well as to think through the values they hope to apply as policymakers. Most recently funded through the Devolution Initiative, more than 300 state legislators – representing the full spectrum of political perspectives – have benefited from this experience. The Latin America Caribbean team has supported a similar leadership programming for newly elected municipal councilors in Brazil.

Another example is the Michigan Community Foundations' Youth Project. Designed to raise community foundation endowment dollars and involve young people in philanthropy, a project that promoted a policy change that enabled young people (16-18 years old) to serve as full voting members of nonprofit boards. Now, more than 6,000 youth have served on Youth Advisory Councils of Community Foundation boards – successfully demonstrating that youth are effective fundraisers, grantmakers, and community change agents.

### *Convening Stakeholders to Find Common Ground*

Convening parties with shared interests but competing agendas so they may examine and discover common ground and creative solutions is a function of policy education. In Michigan, the Foundation's People and Land project leaders regularly convene public and private community decision makers with diverse views so they may examine information and ideas to change business and public practices for the most effective use of land resources.





### *Educating Policymakers and Policy Influentials*

Disseminating lessons learned to those who shape policy is complex and demanding work. It requires planning, clear messages, time, resources, and relationships. Yet, it is clearly an investment worth making. For example, the National Commission on Service-Learning, a prestigious nonpartisan group of public and private leaders, has provided leadership in the area of service-learning by widely sharing information and results of Foundation grantee activities. Students and their parents from ENLACE-New Mexico organized a day long information session for policymakers in the state capitol in Santa Fe to discuss both educational challenges of Hispanic youth and state level policy opportunities. The ENLACE delegation included a number of educational leaders including the president of the University of New Mexico.



## Evaluation of Policy Efforts as a Tool for Non-Profit Research

Capturing the lessons learned as well as assessing the effectiveness in achieving the goals and objectives of grantmaking is an important part of the Kellogg Foundation programming approach. The policy aspects of programming are sometimes difficult to evaluate. How do we best measure the value of the Foundation's policy education efforts? Examples of some general evaluation questions for the policy aspect of programming are:

- Are the grantees able to sustain change efforts though funding streams other than the Foundation's investments?
- At the system level, has the knowledge and experience generated by community grantees been institutionalized through incorporation into public or private policies and programs?
- Have project participants gained a voice in decision making that affects the quality of their communities and their lives?

Kellogg Foundation programming supports grantees as they seek positive social change through appropriate policy and systems change. How lasting these changes are and how far the impact extends is the true test of our success. Reforming and strengthening policy as it is applied to the problems and concerns of communities is an important test of tools that the Foundation will use to help grantees achieve and sustain community goals and replicate successful experiences in other communities.

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## More Information

**F**or additional information on W.K. Kellogg Foundation programming, write to:

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