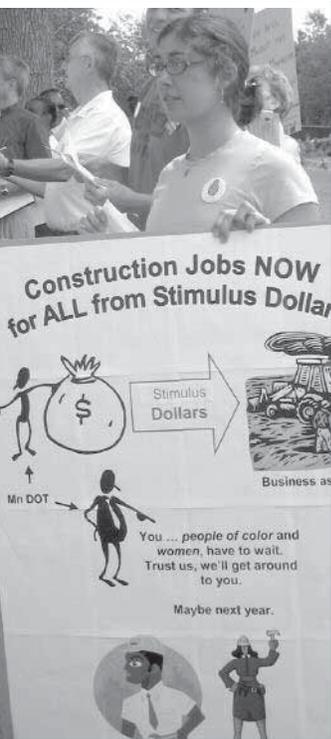


CHALLENGING GRANTMAKERS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES



# Strengthening Democracy, Increasing Opportunities

IMPACTS OF ADVOCACY, ORGANIZING, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN MINNESOTA

by Gita Gulati-Partee and Lisa Rangelhi

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# I. Executive Summary

Minnesota has large and vibrant nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. When nonprofits and foundations partner to tackle urgent issues in the state, they can achieve tremendous success – especially when they use public policy advocacy and engage affected constituencies directly in the problem-solving process. Yet, very few funders in the state use these strategies to effect long-term change. Pressing problems, including stark racial disparities, threaten the economic health of the state and its residents. For example, 61 percent of African American children live in poverty, compared to 8 percent of white children. The workforce is aging, and not enough youth are completing college to meet the employment needs of the state. These and other challenges demand bold and immediate action.

This report demonstrates the impact such action can accomplish. It found that a sample of local and state organizations and their allies leveraged millions of dollars in foundation resources to secure more than \$2 billion in benefits for Minnesotans. NCRP studied 15 organizations that worked with underrepresented constituencies<sup>1</sup> in Minnesota on a range of issues, including poverty, worker issues, education, access to health care, affordable housing, transit, immigration and civil rights. These organizations used a variety of strategies to achieve change, including working in coalitions, mobilizing affected communities, partnering with policymakers, conducting research, reaching out to the media and employing legal strategies. The report examined the groups' accomplishments over a five-year period (2004–2008):

- > For impacts that could be quantified, the aggregate monetary benefit of the groups' accomplishments was more than \$2.28 billion.

- > For every dollar invested in their advocacy and organizing work (\$16.5 million total), the groups garnered \$138 in benefits for Minnesota communities.
- > Foundations provided critical support to these successes, contributing \$11.5 million, or 70 percent of all funding for advocacy and organizing among the nonprofit sample.

These numbers and equally important non-quantifiable impacts benefit all of Minnesota, strengthening its social fabric and helping government and the private sector serve residents and their communities better. They also translate into concrete improvements in people's lives. For example:

- > Students of color and immigrants gained access to college;
- > Formerly incarcerated people improved their job opportunities, increasing individual earning potential and economic benefits to their communities;
- > People living with mental illnesses and their families received greater support and access to care, thus enabling them to lead more productive and fulfilling lives;
- > Workers secured increased wages and better working conditions; and,
- > Lower-income residents accessed affordable housing and public transit.

Nonprofit groups also brought thousands of people into the policy process and civic life, such as individuals from low-wealth communities; people living with developmental disabilities; African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, other people of color and

immigrants; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) residents; senior citizens; students and other youth; individuals and families living with mental illnesses; people living with HIV/AIDS; formerly incarcerated people; women and girls; and other historically disenfranchised populations.

Strategic foundation support for these efforts enabled their success. Funders exercised leadership in a variety of ways, both individually and collectively, to leverage their grantmaking and help nonprofits achieve demonstrable community benefit. These impacts will continue to aid Minnesota communities well into the future. Yet, the state still faces many pressing challenges. Nonprofit organizations need sustained resources and capacity to respond effectively. Minnesota grantmakers can build on the many positive philanthropic strategies already underway in the state to achieve even more powerful impact.

Funders new to this work, as well as those already on the path, can use this report to engage their peers, trustees and donors. Foundations can make a measurable difference by partnering with effective grassroots and statewide nonprofits to advocate and organize for long-term, meaningful change. Especially in times

of economic crises, grantmakers with decreased assets can do the most good for communities in need, address Minnesota's challenges and growing racial disparities, and achieve the greatest return on their investments by following these recommendations:

1. Increase the percentage of grant dollars devoted to advocacy, community organizing and civic engagement.
2. Engage board members and donors in dialogue about how advocacy and organizing can help a grantmaking institution achieve its long-term goals.
3. Strengthen peer learning and strategizing about advocacy and organizing.
4. Engage nonprofit partners in strategic planning and grantmaking process of foundations.
5. Apply a racial equity lens to grantmaking.
6. Provide general operating support and multiyear grants.

# II. Introduction

In 2008, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP) initiated a series of reports documenting the impacts of advocacy, community organizing and civic engagement as part of the Grantmaking for Community Impact Project (GCIP). The first report examined the work of 14 organizations in New Mexico and found that over five years they achieved, with limited resources, \$2.6 billion in benefits for New Mexico communities – a figure that does not include environmental victories, civil rights achievements, and other non-monetary impacts. In May 2009, NCRP released the second report, which showed 13 organizations generated \$1.8 billion in benefits for diverse North Carolinians over a five-year period.

For its third report, NCRP chose to focus on Minnesota for numerous reasons, including its diverse communities, vibrant nonprofit sector, dynamic philanthropic landscape, and commitment by stakeholders to tackle pressing challenges. The presence of strong statewide associations for both foundations and nonprofits, as well as their interest and ability to work with NCRP, paved the way for the research and outreach associated with this effort. The Minnesota Council on Foundations and Minnesota Council of Nonprofits have been valuable partners to the project.

These organizations strive to encourage nonprofit advocacy and foundation leadership on key policy issues affecting the state. Despite their efforts and the state's philanthropic wealth, a sample of 15 community organizations reported that just a small number of grantmakers in the state consistently fund advocacy, organizing and civic engagement efforts. Many nonprofits struggle to raise enough resources to staff their advocacy work adequately, to remain consistently engaged in advocacy over the long term, or to measure

and communicate the results of their efforts.

This report aims to bring the nonprofit perspective to the foundation community and demonstrate how Minnesota grantmakers can build on their successes by partnering with communities, policymakers and national funders to meet the challenges facing the state through advocacy, organizing and civic engagement. Foundations can strengthen the programmatic work they fund also by funding advocacy, which can lead to systemic changes that get to the root causes of the problems that many nonprofit programs address. In all three states, NCRP's work in the Grantmaking for the Community Impact Project demonstrates that, especially when economic resources are tight, philanthropic investments in policy engagement bring impressive financial and social benefits to residents.

## A. DEFINITION OF TERMS

**ADVOCACY:** Advocacy is the act of promoting a cause, idea or policy to influence people's opinions or actions on matters of public policy or concern. Many types of activities fall under the category of "advocacy" and are legally permissible for 501(c)(3) public charities to engage in, such as: issue identification, research and analysis; public issue education; lobbying for or against legislation; nonpartisan voter registration, education and mobilization; litigation; educating government agencies at all levels; participation in referenda and ballot initiatives; grassroots mobilization; and testifying before government bodies. There are no legal limits on how much non-lobbying advocacy a nonprofit organization can undertake.

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** In broad terms, civic engagement or civic participation encompasses any and all

activities that engage ordinary people in civic life, including through community organizing, advocacy, and voter registration, education and mobilization. It often involves building the skills, knowledge and experience that enable people to effectively participate in the democratic process.

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZING:** Community organizing is a process of building relationships, leadership and power, typically among disenfranchised communities, and bringing that power and collective voice to bear on the issues that affect those communities by engaging with relevant decision-makers. The issues raised, solutions identified and strategies developed to achieve those solutions all are defined and acted on by the leaders themselves, usually with help from professional organizers. Community organizing can be one part of an overall advocacy or public policy campaign strategy, but it is distinguished by the fact that affected constituencies are the agents of change, rather than paid advocates or lobbyists who attempt to represent the interests of such constituencies.

**IMPACT:<sup>2</sup>** Impact refers to long-term or aggregate change, a desired end result. For example: *Low-wage workers' incomes were raised as a result of a minimum wage increase.* An outcome is the short-term change or result that a program or initiative produces. Several outcomes can contribute to an impact. For example: *Minimum wage legislation was passed in the legislature.* An output is the tangible product that results from a program's activities. For example: *Twenty organizations endorsed the minimum wage proposal; the minimum wage proposal was introduced in the senate; a key legislator received 500 calls and letters from constituents favoring this proposal.*

**LOBBYING:** Lobbying generally is defined as an attempt to influence, directly or indirectly, the passage or defeat of government legislation. In Minnesota, lobbying also includes attempts to influence administrative action and the official actions of a metropolitan governmental unit.<sup>3</sup> Lobbying can be one part of an advocacy strategy, but advocacy does not necessarily have to involve lobbying. This is a critical distinction. Nonprofits can lobby legally. Federal laws determine how much lobbying a nonprofit organization can undertake, but there are no limits on how much non-lobbying advocacy (described above) a nonprofit can engage in. NCRP maintains on its web site a resource list including legal rules and definitions for

nonprofit lobbying (see [www.ncrp.org/campaigns-research-policy/communities/gcip/gcip-resources](http://www.ncrp.org/campaigns-research-policy/communities/gcip/gcip-resources)). Helpful resources also can be found at the Minnesota Council on Foundations ([http://www.mcf.org/public-trust/wegsk\\_publicpolicy.htm](http://www.mcf.org/public-trust/wegsk_publicpolicy.htm)) and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (<http://mncn.org/policy.htm>).

**“MARGINALIZED” COMMUNITIES:** The phrase “marginalized communities” refers broadly to groups that have been underrepresented or denied a voice in decisions that affect their lives, or have experienced discrimination. Groups include but are not limited to: lower-income people; racial and ethnic minorities; women; immigrants; refugees; workers; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals; people with disabilities; rural; HIV positive; prisoners and formerly incarcerated; and single-parent families.

*A note about language:* NCRP strives to reflect the language that groups prefer for themselves. Marginalized groups are not monolithic, and language continues to evolve along with notions of cultural competence and full inclusion. This publication includes the terms voiced by the groups in the sample, and uses them interchangeably – for example, both African American and black, Native American and American Indian, gay and homosexual, etc.

## B. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

NCRP used a methodology developed specifically for the Grantmaking for Community Impact Project to measure the impacts of advocacy, organizing and civic engagement among a sample of 15 organizations in Minnesota over a five-year timeframe from 2004–2008.

First, NCRP identified potential community organizations to be researched in the state by gathering suggestions from nonprofit, foundation and other community leaders. After a complete list was generated,<sup>4</sup> NCRP considered organizations that met the following criteria:

- > Have been in existence for at least five years
- > Have at least one full-time staff person or equivalent devoted to advocacy or organizing
- > Focus on a core constituency of lower-income people, people of color, or other marginalized groups, broadly defined
- > Work on a local, regional (within-state) or statewide level
- > Have the capacity to provide data for the research

While many new or short-lived groups may engage in advocacy or organizing campaigns, the five-year threshold acknowledges the long-term nature of systems change and the time horizon for being able to show measurable impacts. Likewise, many nonprofits produce heroic results with very limited staff, but cannot advance sustainable social change without adequate resources. This project aims to drive more resources to the necessary and impactful strategies of advocacy, organizing and civic engagement, rather than romanticize scarcity. Finally, a focus on marginalized groups reflects NCRP's mission to promote philanthropy that serves the public good, supports nonprofit effectiveness and responds to those in our society with the least wealth, opportunity and power.

Through this process, NCRP research staff developed a sample that reflects the diverse constituencies in the state, a broad range of issues and a mix of approaches to advocacy and organizing. The following 15 organizations participated in the project:

1. Advocating Change Together (ACT)
2. Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
3. Centro Campesino
4. Churches United in Ministry (CHUM)
5. Council on Crime and Justice
6. Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (ILCM)
7. Indigenous Peoples Task Force (IPTF)
8. ISAIAH
9. Minnesota AIDS Project (MAP)
10. Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (MMEP)
11. Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP)
12. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Minnesota
13. Range Women's Advocates
14. Somali Action Alliance
15. Three Rivers Community Action

A brief description of each organization and contact information is included in Appendix A. The majority operate out of the Twin Cities, with two located north (CHUM in Duluth and Range Women's Advocates in Virginia) and two south (Centro Campesino in Owatonna and Three Rivers Community Action in Zumbrota).

Many other organizations, working with similar or other marginalized communities, also met the research

criteria, engaging in advocacy, organizing and civic engagement throughout the state and achieving significant impacts as well. This report is intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive in its scope.

NCRP researchers collected data from all 15 organizations by interviewing senior staff from each group in person and then collecting written responses to a detailed questionnaire. Several organizations also provided supplemental materials, such as news clippings, brochures, campaign materials, budgets and grant reports. NCRP gathered data from the five-year period of 2004–2008 for the following measures:

- > **Advocacy and organizing impacts.** Where possible, groups included the dollar value of policy changes (e.g., income gained from expanded job opportunities, increased funds for transit, and affordable housing investments) and the number of constituents benefiting from the changes, as well as strategies and factors contributing to success.
- > **Civic engagement indicators.** For example, the number of leaders trained and people mobilized to communicate with policymakers.
- > **Interim progress and capacity-building indicators.** For example, changes in leaders' skills and access to the policy process.
- > **Amounts and types of funding** the groups received for advocacy, organizing and civic engagement during the five years, examples of positive funder partnerships, and obstacles they faced in seeking funding.

NCRP research staff verified the impacts to ensure that the dollar amounts and number of beneficiaries estimated by groups, as well as the groups' role in the wins, were accurate. NCRP consulted with public officials, researchers and other experts, and examined source materials such as newspaper articles and state budget documents.<sup>5</sup>

Examples of monetary impact include one-time or multiyear state appropriations for a program, the value of a programmatic budget cut that was averted, increased wages to workers through a minimum wage increase, and the savings to taxpayers from a costly proposal that was defeated. For wins that have a verifiable ongoing economic impact into the future (such as recurring appropriations or a wage increase), the value was calculated through 2011. This method gives organizations credit for impacts that extend well beyond the five-year study period. Also, impacts or wins for which the work was done in the study

time period are included, even if the impact was implemented after 2008. For example, if a coalition of groups worked on an issue through 2008 but the benefit was seen in 2009 and beyond, it is included. No work initiated after 2008 is included in the ROI analysis, although in a few cases they are mentioned in the report.

These data were aggregated to determine the total monetary benefits of all the wins that could be quantified. Financial data were aggregated to determine the total amount invested by foundations and other sources to support advocacy and organizing across the groups.

A **return on investment (ROI)** calculation was made using the following formula:

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{\text{aggregate dollar amount of all wins}}{\text{aggregate dollars invested in advocacy and organizing}}$$

The ROI shows how collective financial support by grantmakers and other funding sources for a set of organizing and advocacy groups in a location over time has contributed to the collective policy impacts of these groups. It would be almost impossible to attribute a specific policy change to a particular group or grant. The use of an *aggregate* ROI helps focus the findings on the investment that all of the organizations and their supporters together have made that contributed to success. Unless otherwise noted, every monetary figure attached to an impact and cited in the report is included in the ROI. See Appendix B for a detailed list-

ing of impacts and the calculation of monetary impact for each, as well as for the total ROI.

The ROI is not intended to be a precise figure but provides a solid basis for understanding the extent of substantial benefit for communities in Minnesota from investments in nonprofits that use advocacy and organizing to achieve long-term, systemic change. It does not capture every input that contributed to these successes. For example, there were many coalition efforts in which groups not featured in this report participated, and their financial information is not reflected in the ROI. However, for the impacts that are included, one or more of the 15 sample groups played a *significant or lead role* in achieving the victory. Often, even small, local groups working in broad coalitions can make the difference because of their strategic relationship to legislators, knowledge about and connection to those most affected by a public policy, and ability to mobilize constituents to influence decision makers.

Additionally, a large proportion of the impacts was not quantifiable, making the ROI an *underestimate* of the benefits actually achieved. For example, students that complete college earn significantly higher wages than high school graduates. NCRP could not estimate accurately the value of efforts to increase access to postsecondary education for students of color in Minnesota. In these instances of less tangible impact, the report provides supplemental evidence of likely monetary benefit where possible, even though these data are not included in the ROI.

# III. The Minnesota Context

The three states included in GCIP thus far – New Mexico, North Carolina, and Minnesota – represent very distinct demographic, cultural and philanthropic profiles. With a strong populist streak, Minnesota historically has produced progressive, independent, and conservative politicians, often holding office at the same time. The state lays claim to a diverse and robust nonprofit sector operating in a dynamic environment, a philanthropic landscape characterized by both tradition and change, and a rapidly shifting racial composition that heightens the urgency to address disparities and chart a path toward equity.

## A. DEMOGRAPHICS

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that Minnesota had a population of 5.2 million in 2008, a 6.1 percent increase from the 2000 Census. Over half (54 percent) of the state's population lives in the seven counties that make up the Twin Cities, a region that accounts for 60 percent of the state's population growth.<sup>6</sup> The state's "growth corridor" extends north to St. Cloud and south to Rochester; meanwhile, the southwestern, northwestern, and northeastern regions of the state, known as "Greater Minnesota" to residents, all have lost population since the last census.

Further, growth in the metropolitan region has taken place primarily in the suburbs. The 2005 Brookings Institution report *Mind the Gap* noted, "While population growth has stabilized in the two central cities, it has boomed in the surrounding suburbs ... [which] grew 53 percent [between 1980 and 2000] ... As jobs and people move outward, the two central cities are now home to the bulk of the region's poor and minority households. In 2000, the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul had 23 percent of the region's total population,

but 54 percent of all poor residents and 54 percent of the region's persons of color."<sup>7</sup>

Immigration has accelerated in Minnesota. The state's foreign-born population doubled in the 1990s, primarily through migration from Latin America and refugees resettling from Southeast Asia, Africa and the former Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> The foreign-born population in Minnesota continues to outpace the national average, growing another 32 percent since 2000.<sup>9</sup> Immigrants now comprise 6.7 percent of the state's population;<sup>10</sup> at 345,000 people, this nearly equals the size of Minneapolis residents. The state houses the nation's largest Somali<sup>11</sup> and Oromo<sup>12</sup> communities, one of the largest Liberian populations,<sup>13</sup> the second largest Hmong community,<sup>14</sup> and a rapidly growing Latino population. Minnesota was second only to California in total number of new refugee arrivals from 2004 to 2006, and had the third highest in 2007.<sup>15</sup>

According to the State Demographic Center at the Minnesota Department of Administration, Minnesota's population, historically white, will continue to become more racially and ethnically diverse. By 2030, the center projects about 16 percent of Minnesotans will be nonwhite and 5 percent will be Latino.<sup>16</sup> Specifically, between 2000 and 2015, projections indicate an increase of 11 percent for whites, 32 percent for American Indians, 64 percent for African Americans, 69 percent for Asians and Pacific Islanders, and 98 percent for Minnesota's Latino population.<sup>17</sup>

## B. RACIAL DISPARITIES

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2009 *KIDS COUNT Data Report* lists Minnesota among the top three states (along with New Hampshire and Utah) for child well-being. Nonetheless, the report also shows the state's

child poverty rate at 12 percent in 2007, up from 10 percent in 2003.<sup>18</sup>

As it diversifies racially, Minnesota displays the same racial disparities that plague other states, as well as an unfortunate paradox: while the state prides itself on a reputation for high quality of life, it is one of the worst for people of color across all indicators. The *Minneapolis Children's Report Card* scheduled to be released by the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board in late 2009, will show that poverty rates in the city vary widely by race. While fewer than 8 percent of white children live in poverty, nearly 61 percent of African American children do.<sup>19</sup> *Mind the Gap* noted, "Despite the Twin Cities' strengths, the region does not work for everyone." For example, while overall household income in the Twin Cities ranks among the nation's highest, average income for black households is among the lowest in the country.<sup>20</sup>

In its 2008 *Legislative Report Card on Racial Equity*, the Organizing Apprenticeship Project (OAP) exposed the racial disparities embedded in statistics across social indicators including high school graduation, income, criminal justice and others. This report, published prior to the current economic downturn, showed, for example, that black Minnesotans experience unemployment at three times the rate of whites. OAP also noted the growing political and electoral power of Minnesota's immigrant, Native American and communities of color.<sup>21</sup>

Racial disparities cut across issues and intersect with disparities affecting other marginalized groups, which exacerbate the challenges facing social change organizations. The 2008 research report *Status of Girls in Minnesota*, released by the Women's Foundation of Minnesota and the Institute for Women's Policy Research in Washington, D.C., showed, for example, that: "In Minnesota, female-headed households and those from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups are at particular risk of living below the poverty lines, and while boys and girls in the state have similar poverty rates in childhood, girls are more likely to be poor in adulthood. Poverty among female-headed families of color foretells an ominous future for girls of color in the state, in which many are likely to experience a life of low earnings, high poverty, and sole child rearing responsibilities."<sup>22</sup>

All of these examples suggest that Minnesota, which has enjoyed relative prosperity and a strong social safety net alongside racial homogeneity, must address racial disparities proactively as it diversifies. Indeed, some see the state's survival at stake. The one out of eight (or nearly 700,000) baby boomers who will contemplate retirement in the coming decade depend on an increasingly

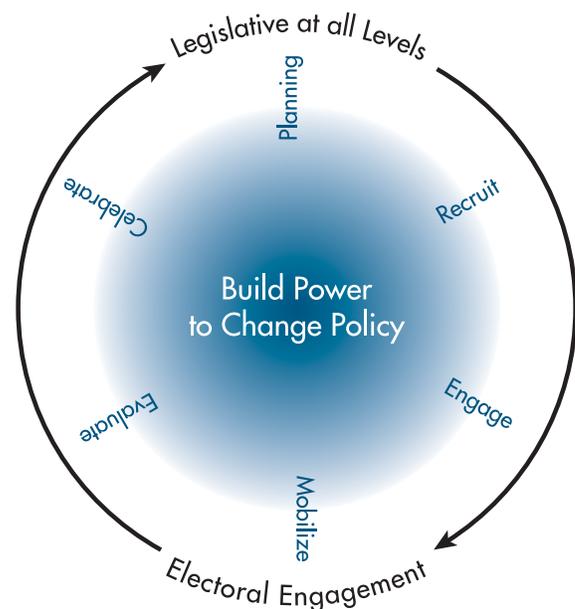
diverse workforce to grow the economy and contribute to the tax base. But research from the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (one of the nonprofits included in the sample for this project) and Minnesota Private College Council shows that currently "less than 5 percent of students of color and lower-income kids earn a bachelor's degree from a Minnesota college within 10 years of their freshman year in high school."<sup>23</sup>

### C. 2010 CENSUS

Organizations seeking to organize marginalized communities in Minnesota report a "no new taxes," small government mantra as well as a growing backlash against immigrants and other minority groups arising in the face of this rapid racial diversification – a backdrop to the upcoming 2010 Census. The census provides the basis for allocation of nearly \$400 billion in federal funding for programs including Head Start, State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Medicaid, among more than a dozen other agriculture, education, and health and human services programs. In turn, states use census figures to determine their allocations to local jurisdictions and service providers.

With a growing "hard to count" population of immigrants, minorities and lower-income groups, Minnesota leaders share a concern about an undercount of the

### ADVOCACY AND ORGANIZING CYCLE



state's population. The state would lose approximately \$12,000 per capita in federal funding for every person not counted in the 2010 Census.<sup>24</sup> Further, because the census also serves as the basis for political representation, Minnesota stands to lose a seat in Congress if even a few thousand people are undercounted.<sup>25</sup>

The Minnesota Council for Nonprofits (MCN) has joined forces with TakeAction Minnesota, League of Women Voters of Minnesota, and Common Cause Minnesota to form the Minnesota Democracy Network (MNDN). Through its Minnesota Nonprofits Count! 2010 Census campaign, MNDN aims to mobilize its network of nonprofits to ensure everyone, especially those hardest to count, gets counted.

This effort builds off of the Minnesota Council's ongoing efforts to engage nonprofits in a "Cycle of Advocacy and Organizing" that emphasizes grassroots organizing as the vehicle for ongoing engagement in both electoral and legislative advocacy. MCN Public Policy Director Marcia Avner says, "The Census provides a unique opportunity to involve everybody. It's not only the law, it's also a civil rights issue, a representation issue, and a money issue. It builds on the non-partisan electoral work of targeting those least likely to vote, but also brings in lots of people who can't participate in elections but can and should be part of community life."

#### **D. MINNESOTA'S NONPROFIT SECTOR**

Minnesota's diverse and vibrant nonprofit infrastructure plays a critical role in improving individual lives and local communities. MCN's 2006 *Minnesota Nonprofit Economy Report* indicated that 3,551 nonprofits with at least one employee operate in the state. The sector employed 257,000 people throughout the state and generated \$30.4 billion in revenues and \$28.9 billion in expenditures in 2005.<sup>26</sup>

In its June 2009 "Nonprofit Current Conditions Report," MCN showed the effects of the recession on its 2,000 member nonprofits. While demand for services has increased noticeably, 57 percent of organizations reported reduced revenues. Delayed payments from county, state and federal contracts exacerbate cash flow woes. The decline in government funding disproportionately affects organizations in Greater Minnesota, which encompasses the areas of the state beyond the Twin Cities. These communities lack access to many of the philanthropic institutions focused on the Twin Cities. As a result, MCN's member organizations reported reducing their operations by cutting staff and programs and delaying expansion plans.<sup>27</sup>

Long recognized as a leader among state associations of nonprofits around the country, MCN houses the

Minnesota Participation Project (MPP) to provide non-partisan voter engagement resources to nonprofits around the state. Minnesota tied with Washington, D.C., to boast the nation's highest voter turnout, 75 percent, in the 2008 election, surpassing the national average of 63.6 percent.<sup>28</sup> MPP also works to advance a number of election reforms in the state.

Five of the groups included in the sample for this report sit on MCN's Public Policy Cabinet, a vehicle for both professional development and leadership on sector-wide policy initiatives. Across the sample, nonprofits report that they look to MCN for training, advocacy resources and other capacity building. Other sources for capacity building include OAP, which has served as a training ground for a number of organizers interviewed. OAP provides ongoing support to its graduates, and its annual *Legislative Report Card on Racial Equity* has become a resource to both policy makers and advocates alike. Wellstone Action, a national center for training and leadership development in the progressive movement founded in 2003, also provides training and support, particularly on voter engagement, and occasionally provides support to specific campaigns.

#### **E. PHILANTHROPY IN MINNESOTA**

Minnesota has a long and storied history of philanthropic giving, particularly from the corporate community. In the mid-1970s, Kenneth Dayton of the Dayton Corporation (now Target) modeled the creation of the Five Percent Club to encourage Minneapolis-St. Paul corporations to set aside 5 percent of pretax income for philanthropic giving. The club still exists, though it now is known as the Keystone Club. A December 2007 report showed that 134 of its 214 members at the time gave at the 5 percent level; the others gave 2 percent. Some companies still tie executive bonuses to community giving and leadership.<sup>29</sup>

In its *Giving in Minnesota, 2008 edition*, the Minnesota Council on Foundations (MCF) reported that the state's 1,398 active foundations and corporate giving programs granted \$1.16 billion in 2006. Notably, 10 percent of the grantmakers accounted for 86 percent of the dollars granted. In an additional analysis of \$815 million in grants of \$2,000 and above given in 2006 by 100 of the state's largest foundations and corporate giving programs, MCF found that grantmakers focused 32 percent of their giving in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, 11 percent on Greater Minnesota, and 11 percent on statewide efforts. The remainder, 46 percent, went to regional, national and international geographic service areas.<sup>30</sup>

According to MCF's 2007 ranking of giving by funders based in the state, The McKnight Foundation was the single largest funder, giving \$93.6 million overall, followed by General Mills Foundation and Corporation at \$64.5 million, St. Paul Foundation at \$59.6 million, Minneapolis Foundation at \$49.5 million, and Medtronic Foundation and Corporation at \$47.5 million.<sup>31</sup>

The Foundation Center's "Top 50 U.S. Foundations Awarding Grants in the State of Minnesota, circa 2007," which looked at independent, community and corporate foundations, found that the top five funders to the state were based in Minnesota. As above, The McKnight Foundation was the single largest funder in the state. In 2007, 18 percent of total giving (\$74.4 million out of \$421 million total grants) in Minnesota came from McKnight, almost triple the next highest grantmaker, the Bush Foundation at \$27.4 million. Two community foundations, St. Paul Foundation and Minneapolis Foundation, hold the third and fourth spots on the list, giving \$27 million and \$25.9 million, respectively, to Minnesota grantees. The Otto Bremer Foundation rounds out the top five, granting more than \$20 million in the state in 2007.<sup>32</sup>

MCF reported in June 2009 that, due to asset declines, 52 percent of Minnesota grantmakers expected to decrease grantmaking in 2009; while significant, this number reflected less pessimism than the 62 percent of grantmakers nationwide who predicted reduced grantmaking.<sup>33</sup> In light of the economic downturn, many grantmakers reported they would increase their support for basic needs, such as food, housing and jobs.

Minnesota grantmakers have a growing interest in public policy and advocacy. Two Minnesota foundations have won the prestigious Paul Ylvisaker Award for Public Policy Engagement, given by the Council on Foundations each year since 2002. In that inaugural year, The McKnight Foundation won for its funding in the Children and Families area, including support of welfare reform efforts in the state, and in 2006, the Blandin Foundation won for integrating economic development and environmental sustainability.<sup>34</sup> Notably, a Funders Working Group on Community Organizing has been meeting in Minnesota since 2008 to discuss and learn about community organizing as a vehicle for social transformation.

As part of its current strategic plan, STRATEGY|2010, MCF is building the capacity of the state's grantmakers to engage in and support public policy

change. "MCF is undertaking additional efforts to identify members' interests in public policy and to develop programs and services to increase their effectiveness," said Bill King, MCF president. "Public policy engagement is an additional tool to create greater impact and change on the issues grantmakers care about most."

MCF's government relations committee provides an ongoing forum to discuss policy issues in the state as well as to educate members on national philanthropic policy trends and debates. The organization's web site includes rules and definitions for advocacy.<sup>35</sup> MCF also offers the state's funders resources on diversity. Its "Principles for Minnesota Grantmakers" asks members "to reflect and engage the diversity of the communities we serve in our varying roles as grantmakers, boards and employers, economic entities and civic participants." As a result of its first diversity survey in 1995, MCF developed a "Diversity Framework"<sup>36</sup> to guide grantmakers in discussing race and diversity issues. Two values guided the development of this work:

1. The quality of grantmaking is enhanced when grantmaking organizations reflect the cultural diversity of the communities they serve through their grants.
2. Every private grantmaking organization has the responsibility and the capacity to understand issues of diversity and inclusiveness and should take action in each role where opportunities exist.

MCF and MCN collaboratively support efforts to advance public policy engagement by nonprofits and foundations in the state. Representatives from these statewide leadership organizations play an active role on each other's policy cabinets. The two councils sponsor a joint statewide conference every three years. In 2009, the conference will include an extended session on ways to advance policy, focusing on how grantmakers and nonprofits can partner on funding *and* education, and on ways both can use their clout to provide legislative testimony and commission research.

This demographic, nonprofit and philanthropic backdrop provides important context for the findings presented in this report. Organizers and advocates face unique issues and challenges as they work to empower and achieve impact for disadvantaged communities in the state.

# IV. Findings

## A. RETURN ON INVESTMENT AND AGGREGATE BENEFITS

The research shows that nonprofits engaged in advocacy, organizing and civic engagement have contributed significant benefits to Minnesota communities. NCRP identified at least 65 separate impacts, of which 33 were quantifiable in terms of dollar benefit. These impacts were felt directly by tens of thousands of workers, families, public school students, senior citizens, immigrants, rural communities, LGBTQ residents and other historically underrepresented groups. Major impacts were found across numerous issues, including economic development, housing, transit, health care, education and civil rights.

Overall, the numbers show that:

- > The total amount spent on advocacy and organizing across the 15 groups from 2004 to 2008 was \$16,535,602.
- > Of that amount, \$11,549,100 was contributed by foundations, comprising 70 percent of all support for advocacy and organizing.
- > The total dollar amount of quantifiable benefits achieved during the five-year period was \$2,282,629,293.
- > The return on investment, which is total dollar value of impacts divided by total spent for advocacy and organizing, is 138.

Thus, for every dollar invested in the advocacy, organizing and civic engagement activities of 15 groups collectively, there was \$138 in benefits to Minnesota communities.

Many significant impacts simply could not be quantified, making this ROI a conservative figure. For example, it is impossible to quantify the benefit to society of

engaging constituents, particularly those previously disenfranchised, in the life of their community, or the emotional and spiritual payoff for children who fulfill their potential by gaining access to high-quality education and other opportunities. The impact of some efforts was too diffuse to pinpoint precisely; it was not possible to quantify, for example, the value to formerly incarcerated individuals from reducing barriers to employment. Yet, doing so no doubt will improve their earnings and reduce incarceration costs for taxpayers. Further, the ROI does not capture economic ripple effects of impacts. A 2006 study of the potential impacts of a minimum wage increase in Minnesota estimated a possible multiplier effect of up to \$2 for every dollar in wage increase.<sup>37</sup> Were such added benefits included in the ROI, it would be substantially higher.

NCRP conservatively estimated long-term impacts through 2011. Several of the victories will benefit communities well beyond that year. Thus, the ROI would be significantly higher if those estimates were longer term.

Also, several impacts were defensive in nature, so they resulted in no change to the status quo. Yet, if these preventive efforts had failed, constituencies would have been harmed by the resulting changes – harms that could not be quantified easily. These include, for example, several anti-immigrant proposals that were defeated in the state legislature. Finally, most of the groups are in the midst of long-term efforts still being fought. They may have had partial victories and made interim progress in measurable ways. The investments made by foundations between 2004 and 2008 will reap future rewards that cannot be quantified at present. If more foundations invest resources in policy

engagement, the benefits to Minnesota no doubt will be even greater.

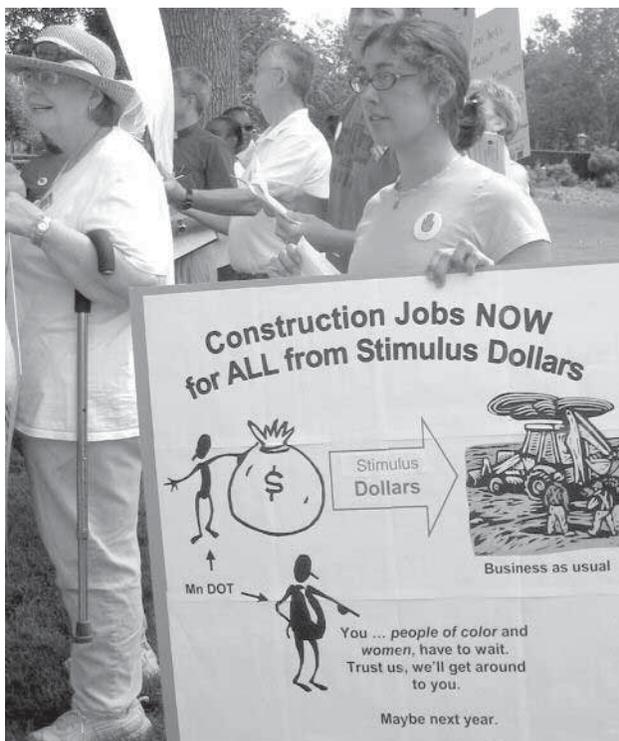
## B. IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS BY ISSUE

The NCRP team consulted with government agencies, media outlets, legislative records and other sources to verify the following impact data provided by the non-profits in the research sample.

### 1. Economic Security

#### a. Access to jobs, increased wages and worker rights

Working with more than 70 organizations through the HIRE Minnesota Coalition,<sup>38</sup> the **Alliance for Metropolitan Stability** helped secure **\$2 million** in federal funds in 2009 to train low-income individuals for green jobs using money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and **\$500,000** to do community outreach around energy efficiency. Consequently, up to **2,000 jobs** will be created; hundreds of low-income people will receive green jobs training, and thousands of Minnesotans will receive energy efficiency education through community outreach. Further, as a result of the coalition's advocacy, state agencies that administer the funds must present



A diverse crowd joined together to let the Minnesota Department of Transportation know that their failure to meet hiring goals was no longer acceptable. Photo by the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability.

racially disaggregated data every three months to ensure that the intended beneficiaries actually are accessing training and employment opportunities.

**ISAIAH's** Minneapolis Caucus worked with Hennepin County Commissioners to ensure that high workforce goals for women and minorities were established in the development agreements for the construction of the new Minnesota Twins baseball stadium. Working closely with County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin and Louis King, director of the Summit Academy OIC, the caucus testified at several hearings, met with all the commissioners individually, and built relationships with officials of the Ballpark Commission. They succeeded in getting a hiring goal of **30 percent women and minorities**, the highest goal ever set by the county. In addition, they learned that some nonprofit job training providers had been shut out of previous publicly funded construction projects. The agreement opened the door for those providers to access these funds, which total **\$103 million** thus far.

**ISAIAH's** St. Paul Caucus worked for newly formed and expanded **Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity Department (HREEO)** and an audit of the city's hiring practices. HREEO brings together civil rights enforcement; contract analysis and procurement; contract monitoring, investigation and enforcement; and capacity building and workforce development under one roof. Prior to HREEO, these services were spread among four departments with little overlap and coordination. The consolidation likely resulted in cost savings to the city.

The **Council on Crime and Justice** led the direct lobbying efforts of the Second Chance Coalition<sup>39</sup> to pass three laws that **help people with criminal records secure gainful employment**. The "Ban the Box" law, which refers to the checkoff question on job applications regarding criminal records, requires all Minnesota public employers to wait until a job applicant has been selected for an interview before asking about criminal records or conducting a criminal record check, except for positions that already require a background check. Passage of this legislation made Minnesota the first state to adopt a statewide Ban the Box law since the idea was started by All of Us or None, a grassroots group in California.

A second provision, known as a "Safe Hiring" law, provides civil liability protection to employers who hire people with criminal records and gives employers some tools to understand when criminal records are relevant and which types of records need not be con-

sidered at all. Employers will need to be trained on how this law can help them increase employment opportunities for individuals with criminal records. A third provision requires higher education institutions to notify students regarding the possible impact of a criminal record in their chosen field of study. The council now seeks funding for a web-based information system concerning which types of criminal records may restrict employment opportunities.

Studies show that even after serving their time, people with criminal records have difficulty finding jobs or earning a living wage, thus limiting the quality of life for their families and increasing the cost to society. With limited opportunities, 30 percent of people released from prison are rearrested within six months of release, 44 percent within a year, and 67.5 percent within three years, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. The Independent Committee on Reentry and Employment reports “up to 60 percent of formerly incarcerated individuals are unemployed ... Yet, if an individual has a job at the start and end of supervised release from jail or prison, federal court statistics show that the success rate is 85 percent.”<sup>40</sup> Formerly incarcerated individuals earn an average of only \$9,000 a year. Meanwhile, taxpayers spend an average of \$27,000 to incarcerate each prison inmate per year.<sup>41</sup>

In 2005, **Three Rivers Community Action** participated in the Jobs Now Coalition,<sup>42</sup> which secured an increase in the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.15 per hour. Working its local connections, Three Rivers Community Action got a Republican legislator, a small business owner in a rural district, to sign onto the bill. Making support for the bill bipartisan and engaging business owners, who typically oppose wage increases, helped pass the legislation. This increase benefits **117,000 workers**, adding approximately **\$130 million** per year to the state’s wage base beginning in 2006.

Approximately 25,000 to 35,000 migrant workers come to Minnesota each year for the agricultural season. In 2004, **Centro Campesino** began organizing approximately **750 migrant workers** at Lake Side Foods in Owatonna and Seneca Foods in Montgomery, communities in southern Minnesota. Group leaders met with workers one-on-one and created a new union structure called UTN (United Workers of the North), the **first union for seasonal workers in the Midwest**. They collected union cards, called for union elections, demonstrated for days in front of the companies’ facilities and garnered media attention. Though workers did not win the election, they received collateral ben-



HIRE Minnesota encourages community members and elected officials to see the link between equity, the economy, and the environment. Photo by the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability.

efits from their organizing. In Owatonna, the workers got the company to pay for all costs of child care facilities and providers. In Montgomery, the workers got the company to build them a community kitchen in the camp. The dollar amount of these victories cannot be verified but includes at least \$45,000 per year in child care costs previously paid by Centro Campesino, though benefits in the form of quality child care and quality of life are immeasurable.

In 2004–2005, **Centro Campesino** organized migrant workers to talk to legislators and testify in front of committees, worked with unions as well as allied state representatives and senators, and lobbied to secure passage of the Improving State Protections for Migrant Workers Act. At the time, approximately **4,000 migrant workers** resided in the south-central area of Minnesota. The new law doubled the fines for employers who violate written recruitment agreements with migrant workers and also provided that employers who do not pay wages when due can be made to pay twice the amount a worker would have earned until payment is made. These provisions are likely to recoup **thousands of dollars in wages owed** to migrant workers each year.

#### **b. Access to technology**

In 2005, the City of Minneapolis issued an open request for proposals to forge a public-private vendor contract for wireless Internet access (WiFi). The competing vendor proposals emphasized technical criteria, while downplaying community access issues. The Minneapolis Foundation recognized an opportunity to advance a community benefits agenda in the city’s RFP process, and it encouraged the **Alliance for**



Kids using the laptops at the Brian Coyle Center Wi-Fi pilot project launch event. Photo by Roxanne Johnson, courtesy of Alliance for Metropolitan Stability.

**Metropolitan Stability** to lead an advocacy campaign centered on digital access for all residents of Minneapolis. Using a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) model, the Alliance secured a binding WiFi vendor agreement that will steer millions of dollars toward addressing community technology needs and closing the digital divide in lower-income communities of color.

This agreement marked the first time in Minnesota history that language based on a CBA was passed by a local city and inserted in a vendor contract. It also was nationally unique, representing the only example anywhere in the U.S. of a community benefits approach being applied to a municipal WiFi initiative. Through this agreement, **tens of thousands** of lower-income citizens, people of color, new immigrants, school-age children, neighborhood residents, library patrons and the elderly will gain low-cost or free access to community technology services, training and computer labs. Additionally, **100 nonprofits** will receive free WiFi, benefiting the thousands of clients they serve each year. The **\$500,000** Digital Inclusion Fund likely will grow to \$11 million over the life of the 10-year vendor contract, and the fund will be housed at the Minneapolis Foundation – significantly increasing its community technology funding portfolio. To date, **8,000** people and businesses have subscribed to the

WiFi service and benefit from good quality, low-cost Internet access.

### c. Affordable housing

**Three Rivers Community Action** has developed million of dollars of affordable housing in its area since 2004, benefiting hundreds of families. The organization has documented the relationship between affordable housing and employment opportunities, school success and economic development. In 2005, advocacy by Three Rivers Community Action helped preserve **\$13 million in state housing funds** for Greater Minnesota.

**Churches United in Ministry (CHUM)** in Duluth organized a YIMBY (“YES in My Back Yard”) initiative to overcome opposition that had blocked the development of affordable housing for several years. By mobilizing members of congregations within neighborhoods where the developments took place to attend and speak at meetings, CHUM convinced the Planning Commission and City Council to back affordable housing developments for the first time in years. CHUM initiated the campaign in response to opposition to Hawk Ridge Estates, which contains **112 units of housing** with a cost of about **\$300,000 per unit**, and later at the San Marco apartments, a **\$7 million project**. In all, at least **100 new units** in three separate developments were built.

**CHUM** also mobilized congregations and community groups to support the creation of a designated fund to help nonprofit developers of affordable housing secure the required match for state and federal grants. The Housing Investment Fund has been awarded **\$1.46 million and has leveraged \$38.8 million in affordable housing funds**, benefiting **333 households** through two affordable housing developments. Ripple effects include job creation and money generated in the local economy.

Through its efforts to address housing code enforcement and property management problems, **CHUM's** advocacy has benefited up to one-third of Duluth's population, nearly **30,000 people**, who do not own their own home. The group organized tenants and launched a media campaign around its “Mayor's Bad Landlord Tours.” These efforts led the City Council to reorganize the city's building code enforcement office and establish the Tenants' Remedies Act as recourse to take control of troubled buildings.

In 2004, the **Alliance for Metropolitan Stability** organized residents in Brooklyn Park, one of the most

diverse suburbs in the Twin Cities, with 41 percent people of color, to fight the city's plan to tear down nearly 10 percent of its affordable housing stock. The coalition saved **600 homes** from demolition, preserving **\$84 million worth of housing stock** in Brooklyn Park. The coalition also persuaded the city to create a one-for-one replacement policy for demolitions, which would apply to 300 additional homes in Brooklyn Park as well as future demolitions. The city has put a temporary moratorium on all development while it determines how to implement its housing plans. The effort set a precedent for future affordable housing battles and started an open dialogue about race.

## 2. Land Use, the Environment, and Transportation

In 2002, Transit Partners was formed with the goal of passing a statewide comprehensive transportation plan. Led by Transit for Livable Communities, the coalition included **ISAIAH** and **Alliance for Metropolitan Stability**. The coalition zeroed in on a primary method to create a reliable funding source – an increase in the regional sales tax. The legislation gained momentum for several years, and narrowly missed passing via an override of the governor's veto during the 2007 session. A bill that closely resembled Transit Partners' Transportation Choices 2020 bill passed through both the House and the Senate in 2007 and 2008, but both ultimately were vetoed by the governor. In 2008, the legislature was able to override the governor's veto, resulting in a \$6.6 billion investment in roads, bridges and transit projects for the state of Minnesota. A conservative estimate is that revenue from the regional sales tax will generate approximately **\$85 million per year for public transit**<sup>43</sup> over a 10-year span, one of the largest public investments in Minnesota history.

This legislation is expected to lead to construction of **eight new dedicated transit ways** (light rail, commuter rail and bus rapid transit), double bus ridership by 2020, create better transit facilities and new park-and-ride capacity, provide revenue to local governments for bicycle and pedestrian projects, and expand transit in Greater Minnesota.

Metro Transit ridership reached nearly **82 million** in 2008. All users of the transit system will benefit over the next 10–12 years from massive new investments in transit ways and bus operations. This campaign victory finally positions the metro area to begin building a transit system that serves everyone. Providing new transportation choices creates better access to employ-

ment opportunities, creates a mobility lifeline for the elderly and people who are unable to drive, shields lower income households from gas price spikes, mitigates congestion for drivers and produces transit construction and system operations jobs.

The Central Corridor Light Rail line is the second in the region's fledgling LRT system, and will connect St. Paul and Minneapolis. Grassroots organizing along the corridor has been taking place since 2002 in an attempt to design the line with the existing community in mind, and to put policies into place that prevent gentrification and displacement. Thus far, benefits include **50 affordable homes for lower-income seniors** and a job training facility, which collectively added **\$8 million** in value to the location, **200 jobs for lower-income residents**, and **20 percent minority contracting** from big box retailers. Additionally, the final project recommendation included the underground infrastructure for **three community-desired LRT stops**, valued at **\$12 million**. About 33 percent of residents along the Central Corridor are people of color. This amounts to almost **40,000 people**.

Since 2000, The McKnight Foundation has invested about \$4.5 million in private funds to improve Twin Cities transit and transportation policies. President Kate Wolford commented, "The fundamental question is 'Who Benefits?' from this important public investment in infrastructure guiding our region's future. McKnight's investments in community organizing and advocacy around these issues are putting people and communities at the center of the conversation. This sophisticated organizing work is shaping community expectations around transportation investments and land use



Members of the Transit Partners coalition dressed up as Abe Lincoln to remind legislators that passing comprehensive transportation reform in Minnesota was the honest thing to do. Photo by Transit for Livable Communities.

that is too often based solely on technical and financial considerations.”

In 2006, **ISAIAH** worked with Transit Partners to create the State Motor Vehicle Sales Tax constitutional amendment prior to the election and then organized a number of forums in congregations to educate people about it. The amendment passed, and by 2011 it will have raised an estimated **\$560.7 million** for transit investments.<sup>44</sup>

### 3. Civil and Human Rights

#### a. Developmental disabilities

Since 1994, **Advocating Change Together (ACT)** restored or partially restored **nine state hospital cemeteries** where people with disabilities were buried and identified only by a number. Working with diverse groups in each community, such as the Ladies Auxiliary, Power Up Club, Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Arc Chapters, Disability Law Center, and People First Groups, as well as residents, family members, churches and grounds crews, ACT’s Remembering with Dignity project has replaced 5,629 numbered graves, **2,000** over the past five years, with markers bearing the deceased person’s name, date of birth, and date of death. ACT has secured legislative appropriations, most recently **\$135,000**, to cover direct costs of cemetery restorations. ACT plans to continue its efforts until all 13,000 numbered or unmarked graves are marked properly. Additionally, ACT gained **\$134,000** via a legislative appropriation and **\$100,000** via a publicly funded grant annually to distribute across six regions of Minnesota to organize people with disabilities through



Self-Advocates from Central Minnesota at state Capital rally. Courtesy of Advocating Change Together.

the Self-Advocacy Minnesota (SAM) network. ACT also led a campaign asking for a formal and public apology for the wrongful institutionalization of people with disabilities. The Minnesota legislature has yet to issue the apology.

#### b. Domestic violence

**ISAIAH’s** St. Paul Caucus secured **\$500,000** in state funds for the Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Audit, which aims to close procedural gaps, ensure victim safety and increase offender accountability. This campaign included a focused effort to reframe domestic violence from a “private” to a “public” concern. At a public meeting attended by 4,000 people, three-fourths of the crowd stood when asked if they had been affected by domestic violence. Shelly Johnson Cline, executive director of St. Paul Intervention Project, expressed appreciation for “ISAIAH’s willingness to step up to the plate and support the domestic violence issue.” Through the audit process, the group found that St. Paul could serve as a model to other state communities for sharing information and handling domestic violence cases. It secured state funding to create a blueprint, which will benefit the statewide coalition of 200 domestic violence providers.

**Range Women’s Advocates (RWA)** is the only battered women’s program serving women and children affected by domestic violence in northern St. Louis County. In 2008, RWA served 804 women, 7 men and 136 children, and calculated the fiscal cost of domestic violence in its service area at nearly \$14.5 million per year. This figure includes tangible costs such as lost



ACT board Member Peggy Mehen shreds the R word to raise awareness about hurtful labels.

wages, medical and mental health services, property damage, and law enforcement and court costs, as well as intangible quality of life costs as estimated by the Centers for Disease Control and the Institute of Justice.<sup>45</sup>

Using these figures to develop a “Cost of Domestic Violence Fact Sheet,” RWA educated legislators and the public about the effect of domestic violence, thus helping a broad coalition of domestic violence and crime victim constituencies to increase funding for crime victim services by 5 percent in 2008–09, adding **\$3.3 million** over two years. In 2009, RWA continued to advocate with the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (MCBW) and others to fend off budget cuts for domestic violence services. In 2005, RWA helped pass a new felony strangulation law, making strangulation in domestic assault cases a more serious crime. In 2008, **250 perpetrators** were charged under the law compared to 18 in 2005. Over the last several years, RWA and its coalition partners have succeeded in lengthening the term of Orders for Protection from one year to two and making sure they are enforceable across state and tribal boundaries. MCBW executive director Cyndi Cook commented, “Citizen engagement is key to the community and institutional change needed to end violence against women, and local programs [like Range Women’s Advocates] are the groups most closely connected to the barriers faced by women and children seeking safety every day.”

### c. Racial profiling

In 2004–2005, **ISAIAH’s** St. Cloud Caucus forged a written **community policing agreement with the Police Department** to combat racial profiling in this largely white city with a growing population of communities of color. The organizing process brought residents of color into real relationships with predominantly white congregations. This created a powerful partnership and has led to additional work on racial disparities in the area.

### d. Immigration

In 2004, **Centro Campesino** helped **13 families** in Montgomery that were being displaced and evicted by the city. City officials claimed they were selling the building to encourage downtown redevelopment and reduce housing density. However, the tenants and their advocates believed the city was attempting to remove immigrants from the downtown area altogether. The group organized local leaders from the affected fami-



A client of the Immigrant Law Center for Minnesota on the day he was sworn in as a new U.S. citizen.

lies to attend city council meetings and meet with city officials, coordinated public events to protest the city action, and put on a 20-mile walk to bring media attention to the issue. With the help of allies such as Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, a law suit was filed against the city for discrimination. Montgomery reached a settlement with the families that included a public apology from the city to the community, **\$17,000 from the city to each family**, cultural awareness training for all city officials and anti-discriminatory signs around the city and public buildings. Additionally, the city agreed to build affordable housing and currently is working to secure state and federal funds to finance the project.

The **Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (ILCM)** has worked over the years to secure legal rights for the state’s immigrant and refugee populations. Even before receiving any funds for advocacy, ILCM leveraged its technical expertise on the law to conduct administrative advocacy, securing Temporary Protective Status for immigrants from countries devastated by war or natural disasters. Additionally, ILCM provides training to other attorneys to expand the pool of resources available to immigrants in need of legal representation.

In 2007 and 2009, ILCM worked with Representative Keith Ellison to **extend legal status for Liberians who were facing deportation**. The organization used editori-

als from Minnesota's newspapers and personal profiles of Liberians in Minnesota, built strong allies in the Liberian community, and advocated directly in D.C. to reach President Bush and President Obama for executive orders. These wins not only benefited at least **10,000 affected Liberians nationwide**; they also proved that success could be achieved despite anti-immigrant momentum throughout the state and nation. Other beneficiaries included local health care providers and long-term care patients because of Liberians' presence in the field of personal care. The 2009 executive order held added significance because it was one of the first pro-immigrant actions taken by the Obama Administration.

In December 2006, an immigration raid by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the Swift meat packing plant in southwest Minnesota once again made immigration a very volatile topic. This contributed to a negative backdrop created by both Minnesota's governor and proposed federal legislation that characterized immigrants as problematic and costly. In 2007, ILCM worked in coalition to provide a positive forum to advise the state on immigration reform. ILCM recognized the need to create space for conversations that were deeper, fairer, and sent a message of welcome. With bipartisan support, ILCM helped the legislature create **the Working Group on Ethnic Heritage and New Americans**, which brings together legislators and advocates to increase social, political and economic participation of new Americans in Minnesota.

As the group's mandate was set to expire in 2008, ILCM's director led the successful effort to extend the working group for two more years, getting the extension passed in the last days of a very financially chal-

lenged state legislative session. According to Jeff Bauer, director of public policy and civic engagement at Family & Children's Service, "The most important function of the working group has been to provide a safe bipartisan/nonpartisan venue for immigration discussions to happen in Minnesota. Like many other states around the country, the immigration debate has been highly charged and highly divisive here, especially in the state legislature. The working group serves as a vehicle for complicated immigration issues to be discussed and analyzed in a more thorough and comprehensive fashion. This body has also gained credibility in suggesting solutions because of its bipartisan/nonpartisan nature – thus subduing some of the rhetoric of the public debate over immigration."

While the working group directly benefits the immigrant and refugee communities of Minnesota, it indirectly benefits the state as a whole, particularly businesses that serve immigrant communities. The working group holds the promise of mitigating anti-immigrant sentiment and opening space for support for national immigration reform.

ILCM also provided immediate legal services to the **237 immigrants** detained in the ICE raids at Swift, as well as to their dislocated families. Though unable to reverse the effects of the raids, ILCM not only enabled due process to **70 people**, but also used the situation to call attention to the true cost of enforcement, particularly on families and children. Since the raid, ILCM has provided legal advice to **590 residents (and their 819 children)** of Worthington. ILCM's efforts, joined with others across the country, contributed to a federal humanitarian policy to avoid separating breast-feeding detained mothers from their children.

At the same time, ILCM, through the Alliance for Fair Federal Immigration Reform of Minnesota (AFFIRM), has **stopped several state legislative proposals that would have negatively affected the immigrant and refugee communities:**

- > Implementation of the federal REAL ID act, which would have cost the state an estimated **\$64.5 million over five years.**
- > A bill that would have forced all women who wear any form of head covering, including headscarves, hijabs, and tichels, to remove those garments in order to obtain any state ID form.
- > A bill that would make English the state's official language.
- > A bill that would have held all state and municipal government employees liable if they knew of an



A march in 2006 in favor of fair and just immigration reform. Photo Courtesy of Centro Campesino.

undocumented immigrant and failed to report the immigrant to the federal authorities.

- > A bill creating redundant criminal law for cases involving forgery of federal documents, which already are covered by federal law.
- > A bill requiring the presentation of photo ID when voting, which disparately affects immigrant communities.

ILCM worked with coalition partners, business groups and key legislative leaders to obtain quiet, behind-the-scenes successes, keeping bills from being debated or targeting a second, stronger committee to stop something. In this way, ILCM helped defeat negative proposals at critical moments and moved smaller, positive legislation while building greater understanding of immigrants and the need for federal reform among Minnesota's state elected officials.

## 4. Health

### a. Mental health

The **National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota (NAMI Minnesota)** has achieved several significant victories to advance the cause of mental health in Minnesota. Recognizing that too many middle and high school students with mental illnesses were not being identified and thus were dropping out during high school at very high rates, NAMI Minnesota believed that success in this age group would lead to better outcomes in early adulthood. The group successfully advocated for legislation in 2004 allowing **children's mental health case management services** to continue to be provided even when a child turns age 18, in order to provide continuity during the transition to adulthood. A provision also called for voluntary mental health screening after a student is suspended for more than 10 days in a school year and a deeper look into districts that had high drop-out rates. These provisions benefited an estimated **100,000 young people**.

In the 2006 legislative session, NAMI Minnesota successfully advocated for some key provisions of the Mental Health Initiative, including increasing reimbursement rates to mental health services by more than 20 percent, which increased access; **\$2 million in infrastructure investments** including the development of crisis services, which meant an alternative to calling police, thus diverting people with mental illnesses from the criminal justice system; passage of the "family involvement" law that makes it easier for families to support their loved ones; and **\$800,000** for discharge

planners working with people with mental illness in prison, resulting in better discharge planning and thus reducing recidivism. Together, these provisions helped an estimated **166,000 beneficiaries of state mental health services, as well as 280 inmates, annually**.

In 2007, NAMI Minnesota worked with others to win passage of the **Mental Health Initiative**, the largest infusion of dollars into the mental health system in the state's history – \$34 million a year, totaling **\$120.6 million** through 2011. This comprehensive legislation included a host of provisions that affected foster care, respite care, victims of trauma and refugees, case management, community support services, voluntary placement agreements, jails, solitary confinement, suicide prevention efforts in the schools, employment program for people with mental illness and housing. The legislation also helped people from minority communities become mental health professionals and required more systematic collection of data. John Zakelj, budget and legislative coordinator of chemical and mental health services within the Minnesota Department of Human Services, emphasized that NAMI Minnesota's leadership was key to passage of the Mental Health Initiative.

Despite state budget shortfalls, NAMI Minnesota prevented these new program funds from being cut in 2008. In fact, the group advocated successfully for a new law creating "voluntary placement agreements" so families do not relinquish custody of their children in treatment, restricting the use of seclusion and restraints in community mental health programs for children, and creating a task force to look at what is needed in Minnesota to meet the acute care needs of children and adults with mental illnesses.

### b. Dental health

In 2009, **Three Rivers Community Action** helped win support for oral health practitioners to provide **preventive dental care** in Minnesota. The group had worked on this issue for several years, but it had stalled until a local legislator joined the higher education committee and championed it as part of a bill that enables the state university system to train oral health practitioners. Graduates from the program can work without the supervision of dentists, increasing access statewide. This provision will be especially helpful to the state's rural areas, which have minimal access to dental care for poor people because of the lack of dentists in the region who accept Medicaid.

### c. Sexual health

While it continues to fight for responsible sex education, the **Minnesota Organization for Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP)** advocated successfully for **\$400,000 per year** in county funds for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative of Hennepin County. County staffer Katherine Meerse says, “The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative would not exist without MOAPPP; they laid all of the groundwork for the initiative, helping the county board and planning staff think about what to do [with regard to creating a pregnancy prevention program] and how to do it strategically.”

MOAPPP’s clear position against abstinence-only-until-marriage programs offered support to an extensive network of state-level decision makers for opting out of receiving federal funds, prompting Minnesota to join a growing group of states refusing federal money with strings attached and ending state support for these programs. The state health department chose to invest instead in a service learning program with proven results for preventing teen pregnancy, awarding MOAPPP a one-time allocation of **\$208,000** in “leftover” state funds to promote the program. In partnership with coalition members, MOAPPP also fought successfully against an attempt to rescind young people’s ability to consent for their own sexual, mental and chemical health services. More than **600,000 Minnesotans under the age of 18** in Minnesota benefited from these two victories.

#### d. HIV/AIDS

After four years of advocacy, organizing its constituency bases and working with elected officials, **Minnesota AIDS Project (MAP)** secured a one-time allocation of **\$250,000** to the Minnesota Department of Health to launch an HIV prevention program in foreign-born communities. MAP initially had the bill introduced in 2003 and did organizing work in conjunction with partners in the local African-born communities. Though unsuccessful during several sessions, the bill was reintroduced in 2007, and it was expanded to serve not only African-born but all foreign-born residents, as epidemiological data showed increases in incidence rates in the Latino community as well as African-born communities. With the allocation, the Minnesota Department of Health made grants to community-based groups to do community-based culturally competent awareness raising and outreach work. Even though MAP did not

receive any financial gain from the effort, it did it because “it was the right thing to do, and frankly we wish we could have done more to build these dollars into an ongoing base,” said MAP staff. State Senator Scott Dibble noted, “If there is no policy, there will be no services.” A former organizer himself, Dibble believes that community organizations have a role to play in democracy and must be at the legislative table voicing their needs; otherwise, they will have to go “even further upstream” to address HIV/AIDS issues, he argues.

Organizing its base and being at the table also helped MAP prevent targeted funding cuts to its own programs in 2005. Conservative legislators who objected to materials on MAP’s web site targeting sexually-active adult gay men introduced legislation to prohibit the state from entering into any contracts with MAP. Had the legislation passed, MAP would have lost close to **\$800,000 in funding – \$150,000 in prevention and \$650,000 in client services**. Instead, MAP reached approximately **1,200 HIV-positive individuals** that year and more than 10,000 others through prevention programming.

The **Indigenous Peoples Task Force (IPTF)** reports staggering statistics facing Native Americans: adjusting for population size, Native Peoples ranked third in the rate of AIDS diagnoses, after African Americans and Hispanics,<sup>46</sup> and higher than whites since 1995. The rate of infection may be underestimated due to racial misclassification, lack of testing opportunities in rural/reservation communities, failure to access treatment, and the absence of existing prevention and treatment infrastructure. Of persons diagnosed with AIDS between 1998 and 2005, Native people had the shortest overall survival rate – only 75 percent compared to 82 percent for blacks, 87 percent for whites, 88 percent for Hispanics, and 90 percent for Asian/Pacific Islanders.<sup>47</sup>

IPTF provides culturally appropriate counseling and support, health education and risk reduction services to Native persons living with HIV and AIDS in the Twin Cities as well as Greater Minnesota, including all reservations. IPTF’s approach blends traditional and western models of treatment and care. IPTF also works to shape national policy related to Native Americans living with HIV and AIDS. Currently, IPTF is working in coalition with groups serving Native populations around the country to secure a White House meeting to address a range of health concerns. The administration already has agreed to host town hall meetings in Native com-

munities as it pushes health care reform across the country this fall.

#### e. Tobacco use

IPTF also creates alternative programs to respond holistically, in culturally and spiritually appropriate ways, to problems facing its community. In this way, IPTF not only provides direct services that are desperately needed and not provided by mainstream agencies, but also organizes its community for policy change. For example, IPTF offers programs to **reduce use of and addiction to commercial tobacco**. Addressing the population's 60 percent smoking rate, IPTF wrote a culturally appropriate curriculum addressing the needs of Native women. During the research phase, 73 of 90 women who participated completed all six sessions – far surpassing the average 25 percent participation rate of mainstream smoking cessation programs. Additionally, IPTF sponsors youth programs that address smoking, sexuality and school success. Post-program evaluations show that IPTF participants used condoms **90 percent** of the time as compared to 45 percent of the control group, never engaged in sex under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and were less likely to engage in smoking, skipping school or stealing. They also demonstrated greater assertiveness than those in the control group.

## 5. Education

#### a. School funding

The state provides the bulk of public education funding in Minnesota, which has been stagnant for years because of strict adherence to a “no new taxes” policy. **ISAIAH** forged a partnership with the education establishment, including teachers’ unions and other labor groups, superintendents, school associations and parents to create a broader grassroots campaign that led to a **\$480 million** increase in school funding over two years. These funds will benefit the state's more than **822,000 public school students**. Notably, the coalition defeated efforts to decrease the formula that gives greater aid to schools with lower-income students. It also protected other vulnerable citizens by insisting



Youth and their allies march to the state house during Student Day at the Capitol, organized annually by the Minnesota Immigrant Freedom Network. Photo by S. Lee/MIFN.

that the education increase not come at the expense of Minnesota Care and other social programs.

#### b. Bilingual education

In 2003, **Somali Action Alliance** successfully advocated to keep open Sanford Middle School in Minneapolis, the first Somali bilingual site in Minnesota. The group turned out 100 Somali parents to a school board meeting to share why the school was important to their lives, and also built relationships with white residents of the surrounding neighborhood. An 83-year-old white man living in the neighborhood testified that he was happy to have Somalis going to school in his neighborhood. By convincing the School Closing Planning Team to preserve the school, the group likely saved the school district millions of dollars that had been budgeted to build a bigger school, while also benefiting **500 families** in the surrounding neighborhoods served by the school.

Building on that success and joining forces with Latino and Hmong activists, in 2004 Somali Action Alliance convinced the Minneapolis school district not to put the English Language Learners program under special education, but to keep it a distinct program where it could get focused attention and resources. This benefits approximately **8,000 students**. In 2006, Somali Action Alliance successfully advocated for the school district to adopt a **bilingual education policy**. Recently, as part of the Education Equity Campaign, Somali Action Alliance organized in support of the 2008 Minneapolis School District referendum, which

generated **\$61 million in new annual funding for schools, benefiting 100,000 students of every background in the city's public schools.** Prior to the referendum, the Education Equity Organizing Collaborative (EEOC) Referendum Partners, comprised of MIGIZI Communications, Somali Action Alliance, Coalition of Black Churches/African American Leadership Summit and ISAIAH, commissioned a study by OAP to examine the potential impact on students of color if the referendum passed. The partners noted in an op-ed that money alone is not enough: "Without specific ongoing attention to the racial equity impact of policies and practices used to meet racial equity goals, the referendum and strategic plan will fail to anticipate unequal outcomes, and maintain or reinforce current disparities."<sup>48</sup> The significance of the groups' participation in the referendum was not so much in securing its passage but in mobilizing communities of color to ensure the funds are used to reduce racial disparities in education outcomes.

### c. College access

**Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (MMEP)** aims to increase success for students of color by working for immediate policy change and also by influencing, over time, how decision makers think about education race equity. To this end, MMEP worked with the St. Cloud community to establish a **community college access center that focuses on students of color.** MMEP's presentation of its "State of Students of Color Report" invoked a sober acknowledgment of St. Cloud's status as a very racially homogenous white community and unfriendly place to promote achievement for students of color. MMEP worked with several institutions spanning the K–16 spectrum to assist in designing a college access center, which is funded in part with support from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) system. Currently, the St. Cloud School District serves **2,300 students** of color, while the three local institutions of higher education serve 400 students of color. Local communities like St. Cloud view the ability to train students of color in higher education locally as a way to maintain viable local economies and services in the face of a diminishing white student population.

The Minnesota P-16 Education Partnership brings together education leaders, policy makers, advocates and others to develop common goals, performance benchmarks and policies for the state's entire education system. MMEP created the Minnesota College Access Network (MCAN) to influence the group to

address racial equity as well as college and workforce readiness for students of color. According to Cyndy Crist, system director for P-16 collaboration, MMEP has played a critical role on the council and helped its workgroup on access for underserved populations recommend meaningful next steps. "MMEP brings not only vision and recommendations for action, but also compelling and accurate information about the status of students of color," noted Crist. "Their data is respected as both highly credible and accessible by the legislature, higher education researchers and communities of color." Through its relationships with partners, MMEP also has influenced the MNSCU system-wide Strategic Diversity Plan to reflect a strong commitment to providing opportunities for students of color. These efforts have the potential of affecting thousands of students of color in Minnesota. Nationally, the earnings gap between high school and college graduates is \$18,533 for women and \$24,232 for men, highlighting the urgency to raise college completion rates for students of color.<sup>49</sup>

Approximately 55,000 to 80,000<sup>50</sup> undocumented immigrants reside in Minnesota. According to **Centro Campesino**, each year approximately 600 undocumented students graduate from high schools in the state. Yet, until recently, undocumented students – a large portion of them Latino – faced substantial barriers to higher education because they were charged non-resident tuition fees at state colleges and were ineligible for financial aid because they lacked a Social Security number. In 2007, after a multiyear advocacy effort led by the Minnesota Immigrant Freedom Network, Centro Campesino and other allies won passage of the Flat Rate Tuition Bill. The bill granted **\$2.4 million** to 22 out of 32 MNSCU institutions so they could give thousands of immigrant and Latino students in Minnesota **access to in-state tuition.** In 2009, the state legislature allocated \$2.4 million in the base budget of the Higher Education bill for the continuous support of this initiative. An analysis of the law's impact by the MNSCU chancellor's office found that in 2008, **3,540 students** took advantage of the flat tuition at 11 colleges, and of those, 2,840 were already Minnesota residents (and therefore were likely immigrant students).

## C. CONSTITUENT ENGAGEMENT IMPACTS

The nonprofits profiled in this report not only serve marginalized constituencies, they also engage them in advocacy and organizing on issues that matter most to them. This constituent engagement builds power to

achieve change, expands social capital, and includes people and communities otherwise left out of civic life. “Doing grassroots organizing pays off because you have an informed citizenry,” MAP’s Lorraine Teel noted. “They will not only work on your agenda, they will also go on to work on lots of other issues.”

These groups used a variety of strategies and tactics to achieve their impressive accomplishments. These include nonpartisan voter engagement, leadership development of stakeholders, working in coalitions, partnering with law makers, reaching out to the media, conducting solid research and strategically combining service delivery with advocacy.

Collectively, the groups reported engaging thousands of marginalized constituents during the five-year period 2004–2008:

Number of individual members	124,473
Number of trainings	1,257
Number of individuals trained (non-duplicate)	7,965
Number of core leaders developed (non-duplicate)	3,510
Number who attended public actions	38,937
Number who communicated with policy makers	29,881
Number educated on issues	148,740

Working for institutional and structural reform, by

definition, upsets the status quo. The groups in this sample successfully leveraged their strengths and navigated challenges with those in power in order to achieve the impacts detailed above. The following examples shine a light on the many ways that these groups engage their constituents in making lasting change to benefit their communities.

### 1. Constituents Leading Themselves

Advocating Change Together (ACT) advances “self-advocacy,” which, as its name suggests, engages people with developmental disabilities to be in charge of their own decisions and to speak for themselves. ACT describes self-advocacy as a three-legged stool: The first leg is the personal empowerment that individuals grow into, so they can speak for themselves and go for what they want. The second leg is understanding disability not as a physical problem within the person but as a discrimination problem within society. The third leg is the social change movement, whereby people with disabilities join together to get the power to change society. ACT charges members an annual fee of \$10. Members determine who sits on the board. All of ACT’s 15 board members are people with disabilities. The board sets ACT’s policies and approves all programs. Just as important, they help carry out all programs; thus, board service becomes another opportunity for leadership development. ACT co-director Mary Kay Kennedy commented, “The board participation and involvement in ACT pro-

## Innovative Student Leadership Pays Off

In 2004, the Minnesota Immigrant Freedom Network developed an inventive approach to engaging youth in the statewide campaign to increase immigrants’ access to higher education. This strategy was integral to the success of the campaign, which culminated in passage of the flat tuition law and a permanent state allocation of \$2.4 million biennially to implement it. MIFN developed a pilot high school curriculum in conjunction with labor activities, student leaders and college professors. Taught by college students, the program combines history, ethnic studies, human

rights, access to education, community organizing and civic engagement. Over time, the “Yes I Can Dream!” curriculum has expanded and now is being taught in 16 schools in the metro Twin Cities region. Every year MIFN invites high school youth from the program to attend Student Day at the Capitol. The number of students participating in the college access day has grown from a few dozen in 2004 to a thousand youth and allies in 2009. Students who don’t have access to the full curriculum can go to a one-day leadership training prior to the annual event so they also can attend,

which enables youth from groups like Centro Campesino to participate. “Students are the principal actors in this effort,” noted Alondra Kiawitl Espejel, MIFN associate director. “All different ethnicities of students participate.” Also key to the success of this youth empowerment strategy was a clear connection to the state’s changing demographics. While anti-immigrant forces misconstrued the proposed Minnesota Dream Act as a bill that would only benefit immigrants, the Flat Tuition Bill gave Minnesotans a different frame from which to analyze the impact of unequal

grams and policies is one of ACT's strongest assets."

Three Rivers Community Action's board structure brings together consumers – Head Start parents, lower-income housing representatives and those who were formerly homeless – with private and public representatives. Executive director Mike Thorsteinson asserted, "[This mix] keeps you honest and authentic, and it's also a great leadership development tool." The Three Rivers board provides a rare opportunity for elected officials to hear the reality of lower-income people as well as vice versa.

ISAIAH constituents, represented by congregation leaders, directly determine the group's advocacy agenda. At issues assemblies, member congregations come together and discern common issues. They continue working on issues of local concern, but determine through the forums what they will work on collectively.

MMEP's constituents include educational institutions as well as students of color, their families, and activists. In this way, "MMEP's table becomes a place itself to push and challenge each other," said executive director (and state Representative) Carlos Mariani. MMEP provides institutional change agents with a leg-

islative agenda that can be incorporated into their respective agendas, as well as the tools and relationships they need to leverage change.

After more than 20 years in operation, IPTF has seen its impact on its community. Executive director Sharon Day emphasized the impact on young people who participate in the peer education program. She noted that participants have gone on to be college graduates, lawyers, bankers, actors in professional theaters, and singers in the top drum groups in the country – as well as staff people at IPTF who, in turn, serve and organize the community. These youth programs "help young people feel good about themselves, their basic identity, whether gender identity, racial identity, sexual orientation – these things should all be sources of strength to us," she said.

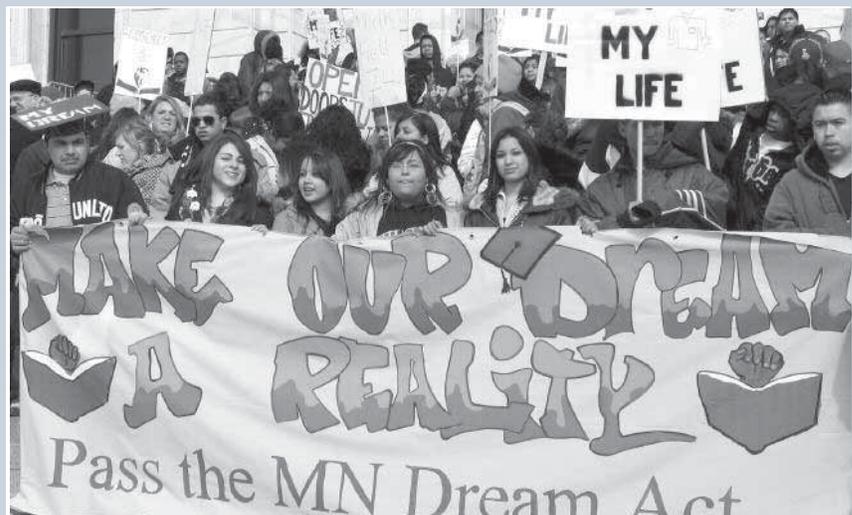
Day noted, "We are almost an endangered species," with a mortality rate for American Indians that rivals third world countries and elevated rates of death from cancer, heart disease and stroke. So IPTF's programs aim not only to educate the community on health issues, but also to re-instill a sense of pride in and knowledge about indigenous culture. "What we are

## Innovative Student Leadership Pays Off (continued)

access to higher education on the state's future and its economic viability. Whereas the Dream Act sought in-state tuition for undocumented residents who graduate from a Minnesota high school, the Flat Tuition Bill benefits students coming from other states and countries as well. Mariano Espinoza, MIFN executive director, explained that the flat tuition bill was framed to address population and workforce shortages the state would encounter in the coming years. Thus, the bill was discussed as a policy that would help all of Minnesota by creating the next generation of educated workers to replace the retiring baby boomers, thereby providing a globally competitive workforce that will drive the state's economic future. The flat tuition bill received no anti-immigrant backlash. But in order to subsidize flat tuition rates at all 32 MNSCU colleges for all the stu-

dents throughout the state who stand to benefit, MIFN estimates that \$8 million is needed – more than triple the current appropriation. MIFN continues to

expand their youth leadership development program, build community unity, and elevate the voices of immigrants in the public arena.



Students advocate for the DREAM ACT during the 2008 Student Day at the Capitol. They are members of the Centro Campesino's Youth Organizing Committee from Waseca, Owatonna and Northfield. Photo courtesy of Centro Campesino.

trying to do in our little organization is have culture at the center of all our programming – a source of strength for them, rather than shame, which along with poverty and hopelessness leads to destructive behavior,” she said. From this foundation of strength, community members can take a more active role in organizing to address issues of concern.

Centro Campesino community organizer Jesus Torres got involved in the organization’s afterschool program in 2001 when he was a sophomore in high school. He began working as a mentor for the younger Latino kids, then got involved with different campaigns and workshops. “[Founder and executive director Victor Contreras] would sit me in front of computers to write flyers for different events, little by little pushing me to speak in front of people,” Torres said. He later joined the Organizing Apprenticeship Project and stayed with Centro Campesino following the internship, working on youth and education issues. He noted that the organization has developed leadership from the community that now serves not only Centro but also other organizations.

Staff at the Council on Crime and Justice recalled, “When we brought people with criminal records to the capitol to lobby, it was very empowering for them. They had never done that before. It was more about building capacity of the community by engaging people in that kind of work. Now they can do it on other issues and for themselves, which indirectly increases our capacity.”

MOAPPP engages people who don’t typically think they have a voice at the legislature – teachers, doctors, nurses, youth program workers and young people themselves. The group builds their communication skills, teaches them how to talk to legislators and provides talking points. MOAPPP arranges legislative briefings and constituent visits, accompanying constituents if needed.

“I tell people it’s not just about you; we are really trying to build a movement,” NAMI Minnesota’s executive director Sue Abderholden emphasized. The group encourages members to act on issues whether they feel personally affected or not. For example, “If there’s a school issue, I don’t care if you don’t have anyone in the schools, you have to write on it; it’s the only way to get action. If we just waited ‘til someone has an issue they care about AND has a legislator in the right committee ...” She added that advocacy grows the feeling of empowerment for members, and it gets people to the table. NAMI Minnesota sends “per-

sonal stories” to legislators weekly to show the many faces of mental illness. People featured in the stories report feeling empowered by sharing their story and vision with decision makers.

Abderholden recounted Representative Paul Thissen from Minneapolis telling her, “Everywhere I went, someone was asking about mental health and mental illness.” NAMI Minnesota’s presence surely helped secure the big legislative win in 2007. She underscored that NAMI is the members. The group resists “click through” activism, whereby constituents simply forward template e-mails to legislators. Instead, NAMI Minnesota encourages members to personalize advocacy messages, indicating their connection to NAMI and their relationship to mental illness. Board member and chair of NAMI’s legislative committee Sue Hanson added, “We asked one legislator what changed his mind on one of our votes, and he said he received *three* phone calls. Three changed his mind. You can be one of those three.”

## 2. Nonpartisan Voter Engagement

CHUM registers voters and accompanies non-registered voters to polls for same-day registration. In 2008, the organization did house-to-house neighborhood canvassing in lower-income areas. CHUM also hosts candidate forums, and it continues to engage elected officials between election cycles. A pre-session interfaith worship event with legislators “reminded them that they were representing people whose voices they often didn’t hear. We wanted them to know people are watching them and holding them accountable to lower-income people,” said executive director Jim Soderberg.

NAMI Minnesota engages in extensive nonpartisan voter engagement. The group merges its membership list with voter registration data, then sends registration material to those who did not vote in the previous election. The group also sends all eligible voters information about the issues, as well as the right of people with mental illnesses to vote. Further, each member receives a letter listing his/her representative and senator, contact information, committees and key issues. NAMI Minnesota also sends letters to every political candidate every week between the primary and election, and letters of congratulations to the winners after the election. It, of course, takes advantage of this opportunity to remind elected officials of the different mental health issues that will be before them during the session.

Somali Action Alliance executive director Hashi

Shafi described his own transformation into a community organizer and leader: “After September 11, I was an apprentice of OAP, getting to learn about how to become a community organizer. In the first month, I learned about people and power. At first, I didn’t get it because I came from ‘power of the oppressed,’ using power to dominate your own community. No, we don’t need that power. But at the end of the session I realized this is different; this is people’s power.” In his first month as an organizer, he met one-on-one with 75 community leaders. He organized additional OAP trainings for community members, and together they worked on school issues.

In 2002, the group launched the Somali Voter Participation Project and registered more than 600 Somalis. “It was the first time in history we participated in voting in the West,” Shafi said. The group organized a candidates’ public meeting and invited Norm Coleman and Paul Wellstone. Shafi recalled the experience: “We called Coleman and Wellstone. They refused, didn’t think we had power. Finally, we called the person in charge of the Wellstone campaign. Ten leaders went to her office. We said, ‘The whole community is waiting to meet with Wellstone. If he doesn’t come, we will have an empty chair with his name on it, and say to everyone that he ignored us.’ She put us on the schedule right away. We shared that with Coleman’s group and they responded right away. 2002 was our first-time ever candidate meeting ... That night when people [saw] that kind of power, saw the media rush to politicians and us, they asked how this immigrant group that just came to this country a few years ago, how can you do this? Wellstone said, ‘if you organize, you have power.’” Out of that experience, the Somali Action Alliance was born.

### 3. Leadership Development

For ISAIAH, “leaders” are non-paid volunteers who, through extensive development, become voluntary organizers. These leaders, in turn, expand ISAIAH’s capacity to engage around a broad range of issues. As one of 60 similar organizations around the country affiliated with the Gamaliel Foundation in Chicago, ISAIAH taps the national network for training, mentorship and leadership development for its base of congregations. ISAIAH develops a core group of leaders within each member congregation to be the link between ISAIAH and the congregation, enabling more local power and ownership, which can have greater impact on local campaigns. ISAIAH staff described

leadership development as “our first mission and priority. Whatever campaign or action we undertake, we ask, how is this developing people? We want to get stuff done, too, but how do we get stuff done that’s a vehicle for developing people?”

Somali Action Alliance agreed, “All the work we do is always developing leaders.” The group sponsors trainings through OAP and Wellstone Action, with specific efforts to develop women’s leadership. Executive director Hashi Shafi added, “Leaders who go [through our training] feel more like what it feels to be American citizens. We think we are not part of the ‘public.’ [But] We are part of the public.”

NAMI Minnesota executive director Sue Abderholden admitted a bias against traditional leadership programs that “pluck people out of their communities, give them this education, then they go back and don’t have support.” Instead, NAMI Minnesota goes into communities, educates anyone who will come to the table, and allows the leaders to emerge naturally. She acknowledged that this approach takes more time, but allows leaders to develop more of a shared vision with the organization and each other.

Both the Council on Crime and Justice and the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota train other attorneys, a source of revenue as well as a way to expand the base of professionals willing and able to go to bat on issues of concern. Range Women’s Advocates educates community agencies, law enforcement and the courts about the latest laws on domestic violence.

While these groups take pride in developing leaders as part and parcel of their social change efforts, they also caution that they cannot bear sole responsibility for developing leadership from marginalized communities. ACT uses the story of the Little Red Hen as a way to help people understand the importance of everyone contributing, including mainstream groups that benefit from expanded, more diverse leadership. ACT’s Kennedy commented, “As opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to be involved in systems change work expand, the leadership base must also expand. We think that those who benefit from the leadership of self-advocates ought to invest in the leadership base. It can’t just be an ‘ACT thing’ to develop the leaders. We all need to chip in and make an investment.”

### 4. Cross-Sector Partnerships

Mike Thorsteinson of Three Rivers Community Action advised, “Sometimes if someone’s political affiliation

doesn't line up, their interest in the issue lines up. So focus on the issues." For example, noting that health care concerns small businesses, he advises groups to talk to local chambers. ILCM learned this lesson from defeat and subsequently diversified its coalition to include members of several statewide business coalitions, including the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability noted the importance of engaging the business community in the transit campaign. "[The Transit Partners coalition] had to turn the business community around on the notion of raising the sales tax. It was a pill they would have to swallow because all the other ways of raising revenue were worse for them."

The Council on Crime and Justice's director of public policy and advocacy Mark Haase described how its "Safe Hiring" law originally met opposition from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. Though the bill was meant to help business, in its original form it might have opened up the flood gates of litigation. Knowing the law would only be useful and pass with business community support, Haase worked through a council board member who had a seat on the chamber to get a meeting with a chamber attorney. Haase reported, "He helped me rewrite the civil liability legislation. It became a better law with business community input, and we were able to say the chamber helped write this; they are not opposing it this year. That really made it easier ... Rather than continuing to alienate them or work against each other, we found a way to bring them on board" and advance key issues.

Advocates often find that their efforts help them develop links with the media as well as with policy makers directly. By partnering with other organizations through the Minnesota Justice Forum, the Council on Crime and Justice forged invaluable relationships with policy makers. Legislators now contact the council, asking how they can help advance the group's agenda. Senator Ron Latz, who was invited to the forum, ended up being the chief sponsor of Ban the Box. Representative Sheldon Johnson, a county corrections officer, became the chief author in the House. Similarly, MMEP, NAMI-Minnesota and MOAPPP reported being key sources of information for legislators who care about the issues.

While being strategic about who to engage, these groups never forget that their communities are, in fact, marginalized. They remain vigilant, even with other organizing and advocacy groups. For example, Centro

Camposino noted that it had to step in to organize migrant workers because "no unions want to represent seasonal workers. They don't want to share temporary jobs."

IPTF described mainstream organizations that show up to help only when money is available. "The CDC says there are 10 organizations serving Indians, but we don't know them." When the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council received \$10,000 to do HIV testing at pow-wows, suddenly mainstream organizations appeared to "help." The Council asked IPTF to train them instead.

Executive director Sharon Day said she tried to work within the system and with mainstream groups for many years. But she has grown tired of "educating non-Indians about how to work with Indian people. I am going to work in my community, with our young people."

## D. OTHER FINDINGS

### 1. Community Organizing Takes Different Forms

On one hand, not enough funders understand or support community organizing; on the other, nonprofits in the sample reported encountering funders with too narrow a definition of what constitutes community organizing. Incredibly, a few years ago, one foundation staffer told one of the organizing groups in the sample that what it was doing was not community organizing.

## Constituent Engagement Strategies

The 15 groups in this sample produced notable impacts while engaging their constituents, often people and communities typically excluded from the policy process and marginalized in civic life. They employed myriad strategies to engage their constituents, including:

- > Self-advocacy
- > Issues assemblies for member congregations or affiliated organizations
- > Board representation reflecting communities served
- > Leadership development, including among youth
- > Sharing personal stories with lawmakers and regulators through written communications, lobby days at the capitol, legislative briefings and constituent visits
- > Nonpartisan voter engagement and candidate forums
- > Media advocacy

“Maybe they have one model and we have a different one,” a staff person acknowledged. “But it drives me wild. The funder had thought about organizing for 20 minutes, while I’ve thought about it for 20 years.”

In fact, good organizing reflects the culture and approach indigenous to the community being organized. By definition, different groups will have different methods. The connective tissue among the various forms is a commitment to engaging people, particularly those most often excluded from power systems, to determine and lead their own agenda. Somali Action Alliance’s Hashi Shafi said, “Community organizing is people going to their own destination with the right tools.”

The following examples demonstrate the range of community organizing taking place in Minnesota today.

#### a. Models of community organizing

ACT uses a method of community organizing called the “spiral model,” a popular education model influenced by the Doris Marshall Institute. In this model, an individual expresses an idea or concern and then tests it to find out if other people have the same concern. Out of that, they begin to develop a new theory and help create empowerment to address it. ACT staff said, “It’s a terrific model and it works. It works for issues as small as changing the curfew at a group home or as big as changing public policy.” Co-director Kennedy noted, “Before we used this model, it was hit-or-miss

in choosing issues. Back in the 90s we started working on health care reform and it nearly took us down. We did not spend the time on the front end to listen to our members. We learned a good lesson. All of our issues need to be rooted in the life experiences of our members. The actions can be flashy and fun, but in the long run it’s not about a few rallies. It’s about building our leaders as we work on the issues. If we are not stronger after having worked on the issue, it was not a good issue to begin with.”

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability exemplifies an intermediary, coalition model. With a mission to highlight the interdependence between people, places and issues, the Alliance looks for opportunities for organizations to work together across issue areas as well as geographic and cultural boundaries. As a coalition, the Alliance chooses issues that other organizations are involved in and then creates a table, “a space for a variety of groups to join their power and create a sense of a shared mission.” To build power, the group creates as many entry points as possible while remaining focused on justice, growth and development. With its track record and breadth of relationships, the Alliance helped members of the HIRE Minnesota coalition quickly mobilize more than 70 organizations to respond to opportunities created by the new federal administration’s stimulus package, resulting in a \$2.5 million win in May 2009.

ISAIAH uses a community organizing methodology in a faith-based context to work on issues of racial and economic justice. With 100 member congregations in the growth corridor of Minnesota, the group aims for impact at the state legislature as well as at the regional level. The methodology derives from the Alinsky family tree, but ISAIAH has evolved and innovated. For example, in the beginning ISAIAH worked at the neighborhood level on issues like stop signs and hot spots. Recognizing the limitations for change and wanting to affect the root causes of racial and economic disparities, ISAIAH began to work out of a metropolitan analysis. It expanded to the suburbs and began to work on campaigns around inclusionary housing, transportation and education. Building a larger



Some 150 ISAIAH leaders met to remind state lawmakers of their vision, and brought a ‘Boost of Courage’ to the Capitol. Their efforts included a comedic dramatization of the situation at the Capitol, featuring three blind mice and a big cheese.

constituency over the years in the first, second, and inner-ring suburbs with African Americans, white working and middle classes, and Latino immigrants, ISIAH developed organizing methodologies focused on linking people together in a common vision around a common language and values.

#### **b. Combining advocacy/organizing and direct services**

While some scholars and practitioners insist on a clear separation between social services and social change, organizations that work with marginalized communities recognize that directly serving constituent needs and advocating for systems change often go hand in hand. Several organizations codify multiple strategies in their mission statements, such as Range Women's Advocates' mission "to confront domestic violence and effect social change by addressing the needs of women who are battered, their children, and their families through advocacy, prevention, and education."

Centro Campesino provides direct services to Latino migrants because there's a need and no one else is doing it in rural Minnesota. Services become an organizing tool to get people in the door. The group provides translation services, meetings with attorneys, interpreting and help filling out applications. "It's the hook, and then we organize them," staffers asserted. "Like the work we do around income taxes. We will do your taxes for free. But it's part of the work we do for immigration reform. Most bills out there in Congress say you have to be here for five years, have good moral character and pay your taxes. So, we are trying to pave the road for that. People come to us to do their taxes and then we talk to them about immigration reform, join a campaign, attend a vigil, tell their neighbors."

NAMI Minnesota also moves constituents along a spectrum to advocacy. First, it educates people with mental illnesses and their families through nine free classes, taught peer to peer, family to family. Then it provides support groups for members around the state so members know they are not alone. Finally, the group supports members in speaking up. "You don't leap from finding out a family member has a mental illness to speaking at the legislature," board member Sue Hanson noted.

NAMI Minnesota grassroots organizer Jerad Morey added, "Affiliates always start as people who two years ago thought they were the only one. They say, 'Wait, there are other people like me.' They are empowered just by that knowledge. Affiliates all act as mini versions of the state organization. They all work to educate, support, advocate, but on the local county level,

all but one of our affiliates are volunteer led." Morey described showing a video at a training in Bemidji. One woman took the video to her husband on the reservation. He had been blaming her for their child's behavior problems. Now she wants to show the video to everyone on the reservation.

For Three Rivers Community Action, "housing allows us to do lots of organizing." Through that work, the organization has built relationships in local and state governments, partnered with "people like contractors, developers and investors all over the place," and have gotten to know people "who are now in positions of leadership." Executive director Mike Thorsteinson said, "In organizing, sometimes it's just luck of the draw. You have to be ready to seize the opportunity when it arises."

CHUM built upon its experience with affordable housing to work on taxation issues, which get to the heart of the problem of insufficient resources to meet community needs. Executive director Jim Soderberg believes this systems change advocacy is a natural evolution for a faith-based organization. "We express that this is part of your faith journey, a way of expressing your faith. We're not doing *for* other people, we're doing for our community, overcoming the barriers that separate us. It impacts issues that affect quality of life for everyone. When we think we are doing something for someone else, it becomes an act of charity, and that leads us away from recognition of the systemic stuff. That relationship is a terrible one."

He continued, "We're really talking about opposing world views and value systems. With that recognition comes an awareness of what a big task this is, to change what people see as their place in the world and how they look at these issues." While CHUM now sees itself as a systems change organization dedicated to eliminating poverty, it still maintains a portfolio of direct services. But Soderberg said, "We look at direct service programs as doorways now – just a doorway, not an end in itself, a way of building relationships and trust. And how do we work from that base to accomplish something not just with [clients] but with volunteers that interact with them and are trying to see whole community? It's always with the goal that what we are trying to do is to *not* see that person in that way again with that need."

ILCM executive director John Keller described how the negative language of the federal immigration debate pushed organizations like ILCM to stretch beyond its traditional approach. ILCM's board decided

it could envision itself as a systems change agency. “Advocacy has drawn on the way in which we lawyers need to be seen as credible and not partisan, but also we won’t shrink away from telling it like it is because we have a unique role as lawyers and technical experts to say whether what you are proposing is wrong and bad policy,” said Keller.

But he, too, feels the tension between advocacy and the core legal services of his agency. “One thing that still gnaws at me is ... the more advocacy we do, the

that a multiracial group of community leaders was at the table with the city every step of the way in the implementation of the audit’s recommendations. And with the media providing added scrutiny, ISIAAH was able to say, “We’re watching ... You can have a policy, but we’re going to evaluate you on the outcome, not just the policy.”

ILCM’s John Keller added, “We know whatever bill gets passed will be an imperfect bill. Administrative advocacy is less glamorous, but just as important.

Entire classes of people can be interpreted in or out of Congress’s intentions.” ILCM attorneys use their unique position as technical experts to be helpful in the crafting of legislation as well as regulations.

Range Women’s Advocates helped pass the felony strangulation law in 2005, and historically partici-

participates in a group that tracks the effect of such laws. It noticed that the new law presents challenges because the intent to impede breathing must be proven. Sometimes, the language of a law can create loopholes, which become apparent only once the law is implemented. So, even after winning passage of a law, groups must monitor its implementation to make sure it serves its intentions. The partners in a federal Grant to Encourage Arrest project in Minnesota are reviewing best policy drafts on strangulation, stalking and no-contact orders before considering the implementation of a statewide model.

“Legislators said we changed the tone of the capitol — they’d never seen so many people *not* wearing suits and carrying cell phones.”  
—Alliance for Metropolitan Stability Staffer

more public recognition we get; the more places I go out to speak about the need to change law, every place I go there are six people who say they need my help. So we build increased demand for a scarcity of services. The defining reason we exist is to help people, but more and more the one tangible thing we can deliver becomes harder to deliver.”

### c. Remaining vigilant through administrative advocacy

Even after a law passes, advocates must remain vigilant to ensure that administering agencies implement it as intended. Mark Haase of the Council on Crime and Justice noted, “Minnesota has some excellent laws regarding public employer hiring of individuals with criminal records, but a survey of public employers found that many of them were not even aware of the law. Just because a law is on books doesn’t mean it’s enforced or followed.”

ISIAAH’s Doran Schrantz said, “We have some of the best city ordinances in the country around minority contracting or labor, but there has been no will on the part of the city to follow or enforce them. If you don’t have public engagement to shine a big light on it, it just won’t happen.” A coalition of community organizations worked to conduct an audit in St. Paul of its minority contracting goals. ISIAAH, in partnership with a few key African American pastors in St. Paul, ensured

## 2. Strengths and Challenges of Working Across Strategies

Many groups combine various advocacy, organizing and engagement practices to create a multifaceted approach to the structural and institutional change they seek. In some cases, they have a primary strategy – e.g., legislative advocacy, with organizing and engagement becoming tactics to advance a policy agenda. Others view themselves as primarily community organizing groups but employ lobbying and other tactics as needed. Some groups started out in one tradition and expanded to include others. And other groups have become more focused over time, partnering with allies who bring a complementary focus in

another strategy. The following examples demonstrate the range of roles that organizations play in order to accomplish their missions and achieve the impacts detailed above.

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability efforts with the HIRE Minnesota coalition exemplify the value of having a core group of advocates talking to legislators, coupled with a large group of stakeholders turning out at rallies and attending town halls meetings. “Legislators said we changed the tone of the capitol – they’d never seen so many people *not* wearing suits and carrying cell phones,” reported alliance staff. The people doing the front-line lobbying felt powerful with so many people behind them, and at the same time they felt a sense of obligation to these constituents.

MAP understood that it needed advocates in every corner of its geographically large state. The group credits the statewide reach of its network with winning passage of a bill to expand Minnesota’s law allowing the legal purchase and possession of sterile syringes. “We were one vote short of what we needed,” described executive director Lorrain Teel. “We had one constituent in Greater Minnesota, a heterosexual who had been infected when he was working in an isolated area without access to sterile needles. He and his family met with his legislator, who was scheduled to vote no, and told her his story. End of story. She changed her vote. Syringes became legal in Minnesota. One person can make a difference.”

MAP partners also with others in a pragmatic effort to extend its limited staff capacity. For example, Teel knew early on that she couldn’t possibly be at the capitol around the clock, so she created the MAP LAT (legislative action team). She recruited lobbyists representing a range of issues and asked them to be MAP’s eyes and ears, contacting her if AIDS came up in any committee meeting. In return, she produced a newsletter to keep her recruits informed and thank them for their help. The LAT provided invaluable help until MAP was able to expand its team to include a full-time public policy staffer.

In 2006, the Otto Bremer Foundation gave NAMI Minnesota a grant to hire a community organizer who supports 25 affiliates across the state. Executive director Sue Abderholden said, “It does no good to have a state office if there are not people on the ground.” Because many of the policies that affect people with mental illnesses are decided by school boards and county boards, affiliates around the state enable NAMI Minnesota to deploy people locally, as

well as engage them in statewide campaigns.

Organizations with limited resources often feel forced to make strategic choices about the roles they play, fully aware of the trade-offs inherent in such decisions. ILCM executive director John Keller acknowledged the challenge of allocating time for both legislative and grassroots advocacy. “The busier I am doing advocacy, the less time I have to maintain relationships with grassroots organizations. I was able to be at each of those tables. But I have had to pull back. When there’s a raid, I need them to show up because they will be the most passionate. But as I am in demand by legislators, the inside advocacy, I have had to send a staffer to those meetings. Not being at those tables sends the message that we don’t care about them, and we lose the ability to have a more broadly defined middle of things we all agree on when we get in our own silos,” he said.

MOAPPP similarly made the decision to build its lobbying capacity because the group wanted to move things legislatively that were outside the mission of its coalition – for example, adolescent parent support. “If we could have a full-time organizer and they could be moving across the state and engaging parents, teachers, other adults and kids, we could do so much more,” said executive director Brigid Riley.

The Council on Crime and Justice’s Mark Haase suggested, “You have to find a way to separate the roles of lobbying and grassroots organizing ... either different people in the same organization doing different roles, or separate organizations doing different roles.”

ISAIAH offered a different perspective, suggesting that the field would benefit from stronger, more authentic and mutually beneficial links between advocacy and organizing groups. “Part of our job is not to be used by other groups who want us to turn out lots of people. [Mutuality] is not organizing being dragged along by advocacy, but respect for grassroots leadership and their priorities.”

### **3. Importance of a Racial Equity Lens**

While working on a range of issues and across marginalized communities, several of the organizations included in this report emphasize the importance of cultural competence and an explicit understanding of racial equity. The Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity defines a racially equitable society as “one in which the distribution of resources, opportunities and burdens was not determined or predictable by race.”<sup>51</sup>

For example, recognizing the rapid racial diversifi-

cation of the community, MOAPPP not only had some of its materials translated into different languages, but partnered with Somali, Hmong, African American, Native American and Latino community-based organizations to ensure that the materials were culturally appropriate and relevant.

Catalyzed by the work and leadership of the Organizing Apprenticeship Project around the need in the field for more coherent and powerful work on racial justice, ISAIAH, Centro Campesino, and Somali Action Alliance participate in a racial justice cohort working with the Applied Research Center. In its effort to become a truly multiracial organization committed to racial justice, ISAIAH has partnered with Professor John Powell, executive director of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University. Professor Powell brings an analysis of structural racism and poverty,<sup>52</sup> which has helped shape an agenda of a group of African American, Latino and white leadership at ISAIAH.

MAP has advocated to the public health department to disaggregate data racially and ethnically so prevention programs can be targeted – for example, to address a sudden outbreak in the African-born community, which would have been overlooked when Africans were counted with African Americans. MAP also recognized, “Groups most affected by AIDS in the U.S. are not groups that historically have played in the sandlot together – gay men, disproportionately black gay men, women of color, and non-U.S. born. How do you bring these groups together? We often face the politics of oppression, or ‘my community is worse off than yours.’”

Several organizations have organized campaigns around racial equity. For example, the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability and its campaign partners worked with the city of St. Paul to design the nation’s first Racial Equity Impact Policy measures for development. The equity criteria contained in the policy, which is being incorporated into city processes this summer, requires proposed subsidized, large-scale developments in the city to undergo an analysis of how they would affect directly communities of color based on a number of equity criteria. In its efforts to organize residents to preserve affordable housing in Brooklyn Park, the alliance helped shine a light on the disproportionate effect on people of color, helping move race and racism to the center of the community’s conversation.

In 2000, the Council on Crime and Justice launched

the Racial Disparity Initiative (RDI), a comprehensive study of the causes and consequences of the significant racial disparities in Minnesota’s criminal justice system, with the intent of advocating for policy and systems changes. The council created 17 interrelated RDI studies in 2005. In 2006, the council’s work centered around a Call to Justice, bringing the RDI findings to the attention of the public, and moving forward with an action plan based on the studies’ findings.

MMEP’s efforts aim to not only change public policies but to help people see students of color and education equity as priority concerns. MMEP staff asserted, “Advocacy includes getting others to view students of color differently and to view our common delivery of education services differently. MMEP believes that this ‘new view’ is a prerequisite for changing practices and delivery systems ... Race, racism and poverty impede our ability to understand who students of color are. We believe that only by ‘seeing’ students of color anew can our society find the creative will to do the difficult and necessary things of transforming our institutional and individual behaviors so that we run systems of education that are relevantly connected and empower students of color. Achieving equity won’t be accomplished by the opposite of this approach, expecting students of color to be successful in institutions that don’t reflect their realities.”

#### 4. Challenges of Measuring Systems Change

To be sure, while these 15 groups have achieved many quantifiable impacts benefiting their constituents and others, some of their outcomes are hard to identify, let alone measure and communicate. The Impact Highlights by Issue section of this report includes several examples of non-quantifiable impacts. The following examples convey some of the additional impacts the groups are achieving, as well as the challenges they face in trying to capture them.

##### a. Reducing need

Jim Soderberg of CHUM described the organization transformation that comes with systems change work, and also how challenging it can be to communicate results at this level, particularly when success may mean seeing fewer participants using programs and services: “One of our goals six years ago was to reduce program stats in our direct service programs because we were reducing the need through organizing. When writing grant requests, you base the

request on service stats; that's the argument for increased funding. But after doing that a couple of years we realized it's all backwards. We're acting like it's a big success to see bigger demand for our services." CHUM's board reflected on what success meant to the organization. It determined that policy change led to the outcomes it desired, such as increased affordable housing and, consequently, reduced numbers in the shelter.

MAP sought unsuccessfully to advance what executive director Lorraine Teel called "systems advocacy," an effort to fund, train and support HIV advocates who then would work in existing systems, like chemical dependency, housing, family clinics, mental health, and corrections. The Ryan White Care Act originally funded systems advocacy. When MAP sought private support for the program, the group discovered how hard it is to communicate benefits for clients when "it's not about putting food in a person's belly, it's about changing a system."

Teel added, "When we lost systems advocacy, we lost the ability to have an impact on the silos of social services here in Minnesota. Silos are huge and impenetrable, and people don't live in silos."

IPTF's Sharon Day asked, "The government always says you have to have 'evidence-based' programs. But none of those models have been tested in our community, and meanwhile our own healing and health practices have been going on since the beginning of time. Whose evidence?" The group has tried to influence the policies of Indian Health Services (IHS) so traditionalists can treat people living with HIV and work cooperatively with IHS physicians. Within the current U.S. public health system, which includes IHS as well as the Ryan White Care Act, traditionalists do not qualify to be paid for their services, presenting a barrier to alternative therapies.

NAMI Minnesota summed up the irony of limited resources for advocacy: "If we could actually change the law so there's access to mental health services, enough care providers, people not going to jail ... instead of just answering calls and saying 'sorry no one's out there.' If [funders are] only going to support things that keep us in business, that's not going to help. They need to support

the things that will put us *out* of business."

#### **b. Need for evaluation and communications capacity**

Several of the organizations pointed to the need for more sophisticated skills and systems to deal with challenging media environments and to document their impact better. Somali Action Alliance responded to the stories about the disappearance of Somali teens in Minnesota by organizing the first Somali Day at the

"If [funders are] only going to support things that keep us in business, that's not going to help. They need to support the things that will put us *out* of business."

— NAMI Minnesota

capitol in March. With good turnout and positive media coverage about Somalis participating in democracy, the group turned its attention to the mainstream media. One of biggest mosques put together an open house. Thousands of people, of all races, participated, alongside law enforcement and the media. But the local Fox News station reported the story with a headline about "suicide bombers." The group said, "We don't know how to frame our issues through the media, how to change the media's view of our community. We are not one single person. How do we stop this generalization or exaggeration, not just through fighting but through relationship building?"

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability team noted that the group tries hard not to get its name in the paper but rather to elevate the profile of its partner groups and to produce communications that can be easily adapted and used by coalition members. They added, "Communications needs to be done in a way that integrates with organizing. It can't be just a separate arm writing press releases."

Centro Campesino described a need for basic data collection methods and evaluation systems. Even when the group wins a particular battle, it does not have the systems in place to document and communicate its story in an effective way, which in turn would help secure more support for the group's efforts.



# V. Considerations and Recommendations for Funders

As this report reveals, institutional philanthropy plays a critical role in supporting nonprofits to solve pressing problems in Minnesota. Among the 15 groups in NCRP's sample, foundation support for their advocacy, community organizing and civic engagement work totaled more than \$11.5 million, representing 70 percent of their total advocacy budgets between 2004 and 2008.

## A. EFFECTIVE FUNDING STRATEGIES

Minnesota offers many examples of philanthropic best practices to support advocacy, organizing and civic engagement. Important tools include providing core support grants and multiyear funding, soliciting input from nonprofit partners and helping to enhance their capacity, exercising leadership on issues and reaching out to peers in philanthropy.

The sample groups reported that receiving flexible, consistent funding is the grantmaking practice that most allows them to be effective advocates. Several nonprofit leaders noted that improving programs and systems often takes several years to achieve, yet many funders expect outcomes to occur based on one-year grant cycles. Multiyear support allows organizations to stabilize their capacity, set long-term goals and

respond strategically to community needs and policy opportunities as they arise.

## 1. Summary of Foundation Support for Advocacy and Organizing in Minnesota

The chart below highlights the types of foundation support provided to the sample groups for advocacy, organizing and community engagement between 2004 and 2008.

Foundation support to the 15 sample groups for advocacy, organizing and civic engagement totaled \$11,549,100 from 2004 to 2008. The median amount received was \$355,000.

The cumulative levels of general operating support and multiyear funding provided to the 15 groups are commendably high. However, there was tremendous variation among the groups. For four organizations, general support was close to 100 percent of their advocacy budget, while for the other 11, it was a third or less. In the aggregate nationwide, for example, less than 20 percent of grant dollars are provided as general operating support and fewer than 16 percent of grantmakers provide more than 50 percent of their grant dollars in this way. According to NCRP's analysis of Foundation Center data for 809 large grantmakers,

**TYPE OF FOUNDATION FUNDING RECEIVED**  
by 15 Sample Groups for Advocacy, Organizing and Civic Engagement

TYPE OF FUNDING	AGGREGATE AMOUNT RECEIVED	AS PERCENT OF TOTAL FOUNDATION FUNDING	MEDIAN AMOUNT RECEIVED
General operating support	\$ 5,151,303	45	\$ 177,221
Multiyear funding	\$ 2,903,000	25	\$ 210,000
Capacity-building	\$ 226,855	2	\$ 15,800

one Minnesota Foundation, U.S. Bancorp Foundation, met this threshold.<sup>53</sup> The high levels of flexible and long-term funding provided to the groups as a whole surely bolsters their impact and effectiveness,<sup>54</sup> even while individual allocations vary greatly.

## 2. Advocacy and Organizing Funding Partners

The survey for this project asked groups to list all funders who supported their advocacy, organizing, and community engagement work. The following Minnesota funders appeared on respondents' lists:

- > Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota
- > Bush Foundation
- > Catholic Campaign for Human Development (based in Washington, D.C.)
- > F.R. Bigelow Foundation
- > First Universalist Foundation
- > Ford Foundation (based in New York)
- > B.C. Gamble and P.W. Skogmo Fund
- > Grotto Foundation
- > Headwaters Foundation for Justice
- > Jay and Rose Phillips Foundation
- > Joyce Foundation (based in Chicago)
- > The McKnight Foundation
- > Minneapolis Foundation
- > Minnesota Women's Foundation
- > Ms. Foundation for Women (based in New York)
- > Northland Foundation
- > Northern Environmental Support Trust
- > Otto Bremer Foundation
- > PFund
- > Public Welfare Foundation (based in Washington, D.C.)
- > Seward Community Cooperative Foundation
- > Soros Foundation (based in New York)
- > St. Paul Foundation
- > Travelers Foundation
- > Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock (based in New York)
- > United Way (various locations)
- > Wells Fargo Foundation

Given Minnesota's robust philanthropic environment, it comes as no surprise that many different funders support the efforts of the nonprofits included in this report. The interview stage of the project provided an opportunity to probe deeper. The foundations recognized most frequently for being *effective partners to nonprofits on their community organizing, advocacy*

*and civic engagement efforts* were the Otto Bremer Foundation, Headwaters Foundation for Justice, Minneapolis Foundation, and, nationally, the Ms. Foundation. Other funders mentioned by groups in the sample for this report were The McKnight Foundation, St. Paul Foundation and Northland Foundation.

ACT co-director Mary Kay Kennedy described the special relationship she had with the former director of the Otto Bremer Foundation, "The relationship worked because we knew each other, liked each other, trusted each other and were honest about what was happening. Financing the work can be extremely stressful. It's nice when we can work with foundation staff who let us put our guard down." ACT co-director Rick Cardenas added, "Another thing Bremer provided was a line of credit, a loan for our [leadership curriculum] product development. They were flexible enough to look at what they can provide and how they can help us. They were looking at what we need and how they can help, rather than 'here's what we provide and you fit into it.'" Over the years, ACT has experienced dozens of site visits from foundation staff. "The best site visits are conversational and focused. The worst ones are rapid-fire questions with advice for how to improve at every turn."

NAMI also praised the Bremer Foundation: "They believed in us, and were willing to be flexible with those dollars." The foundation seeded the group's grassroots organizing efforts with a three-year grant.

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability named both the Otto Bremer Foundation and Veatch as funders that provide multiyear and/or general operating support dollars. "They are the types of foundations we don't have to couch our language with. They get what this work is about."

While many of the nonprofits in this sample have outgrown eligibility for funding from Headwaters Foundation for Justice, many noted its unique and powerful role in advancing advocacy and organizing. "Headwaters really understands the community and what's going on. Their power is not only as a funder but the extent to which they can move the conversation at funder tables."

Centro Campesino described Headwaters Foundation for Justice and the Minneapolis Foundation as funders that "not only invest money but they have an interest in making sure your organization moves forward and has resources and capacity to do so – the kind of funder that you contact, but also contacts you, maintains open communication with you. It's not just about writing the grant and report, but they are engaged through the whole process. They try to find other things

for you even if they don't have them. It's cool, they send an e-mail to say, 'Jesus, did you hear about this,' even though it's not in their responsibility to do so."

Three Rivers Community Action's Mike Thorsteinson commended the St. Paul Foundation, "They are right here with us at the table with our Head Start staff. They are planning and talking with us about how together to make this better for families, what we are doing in literacy, with families where most kids don't speak English. They must be down here once a month."

The McKnight Foundation provided scholarships to send community leaders to New Orleans for the PolicyLink conference last year, making Minnesota one of the largest states represented at the conference, with more than 60 delegates.

The groups continued this peer-to-peer learning with a follow-up meeting after the conference. The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability also commended the McKnight Foundation for "working really hard to open doors for local groups with national funders. McKnight has really gone to the mat and tried to be a leader both nationally and locally."

The Alliance continued, "McKnight has been a strong partner for a number of years, a stable funder of our core work, and they have allowed us to evolve and be flexible and their support has not changed based on our evolution. They have been relatively stable in their staffing and their guidelines haven't changed. They are willing to give large, multiyear grants. They have a long-term view. They have understood this work takes longer."

The four groups located outside the Twin Cities all lamented the challenge of tapping philanthropic dollars that focus on the metro area. Northland Foundation was a noted exception in otherwise overlooked communities.

### 3. Practices of Exemplary Funding Partners

#### a. Exemplary funding partners provide flexible, multi-year funding that reflects the long time horizon for impact

Centro Campesino acknowledged that immigrant rights work is very long-term. It could be decades before the group and its constituents realize their full desired outcomes. At a recent retreat, the group real-

ized that its goals surpass immigration reform; they want constituents to become residents and citizens who can vote and exercise their power. With this clarified vision, the group recognized, "The issue is going to a 10- to 15-year goal. It's hard when you have to break it down year by year [for a grant proposal]. Our struggles are bigger than that. We need long-term commitment because things are not going to happen in one or two years."

IPTF concurred, "Change doesn't happen overnight. You can't give someone money for one year and expect social change." MMEP's Carlos Mariani added, "Multiyear funding is really important. A year for us is almost nothing. A lot of logistics are devoted to raising

"The [immigrant rights] issue is going to a 10- and 15-year goal. It's hard when you have to break it down year by year [for a grant proposal]. Our struggles are bigger than that."

— Centro Campesino

money each year." With longer-term commitments and streamlined funding applications, groups like these could devote valuable time to delivering on their campaigns and programs, rather than raising resources to do so.

General operating support grants acknowledge that advocacy and organizing groups operate in a dynamic environment. These groups must adapt to shifting realities, while their grant proposals reflect only a snapshot in time. The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability noted, "While we have objectives, we are in a fluid landscape. The \$2.5 million HIRE Minnesota got in January [for green jobs], we never could have predicted six months ago. We need to do a power analysis in a landscape where power is shifting constantly. We want funding to be stable but also allow us to respond to emerging opportunities."

While complimenting these funders, several nonprofits also commented on the turnover of foundation leadership and the resulting ambiguity about future direction. One nonprofit executive observed that, even when a funding strategy has been successful, "The new [leaders] want to make their mark."

Another added, “We understand they have their own strategic planning, but they don’t realize the damage they are creating to the work we have been doing for years. We have to suddenly stop, look for other resources ... It hurts what we are trying to create. A long-term view is very important. They should do an impact assessment before they make their decisions [to change priorities]. Just like we ask the state to do that, maybe they should do the same.”

#### **b. Exemplary funding partners value intermediate outcomes.**

Though victory on responsible sex education remains elusive, MOAPPP’s Brigid Riley noted, “Each year, we’ve gotten a little further and learned more about the process each time.” ISALAH’s Doran Schrantz added, “I think of all of [our policy wins] as intermediate outcomes.”

Rick Cardenas of ACT pointed out that the process of engaging in organizing or advocacy can be successful even if the outcome is not. “With the spiral model of community organizing, we never lose ... I don’t see any loss. The experience people gain, the development of skills. That’s what we do – we always win,” he said.

Some issues take a long time to move simply because significant barriers exist. And in the absence of having big dollars to invest in their advocacy efforts, most groups rely on the age-old nonprofit strength of building relationships – which takes time, and gets complicated by legislative turnover. The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability noted that Transit Partners was a

seven-year legislative campaign before finally resulting in a billion-dollar victory. “It kept coming up at our program meetings – ‘are we going to stick with it?’ We kept getting closer each year. But when you are in it, you never know if you’re going to get it ... We had six years of loss. We had to convince funders to stick with us over loss after loss. Most things can ultimately be a win, but that’s a struggle in a funding environment of two to three years of funding.”

The Alliance team also underscored the challenge of showing measurable outcomes in two to three years. At best, a group may be able to track numbers of meetings held or people attending, but “unless you understand transformative leadership, the fact that you have lots of people coming to a meeting isn’t necessarily seen as valuable.” They also commented that even losses sometimes have silver linings. They described an unsuccessful campaign to secure a community benefits agreement at a particular intersection. Alliance staff noted, “A number of people heard about it. A hunger for that type of arrangement really was created throughout the community, and so it’s something that people continue to work for ... We lost that battle, but the battle cry carried on – who decides and who benefits from this project?”

#### **c. Exemplary funding partners complement grantmaking by using their convening power**

Several groups want funders to see and use them as resources to advance shared interests. For example, the Minneapolis Foundation included MMEP in a series of

## Engaging in Advocacy, Organizing and Civic Engagement *Builds* Organizational Capacity<sup>55</sup>

Nonprofits use these strategies because they want to change public or institutional policies and practices, and expand opportunities and equity for marginalized constituents. But looking only at the *results* of these efforts misses other benefits for organizations: the coalitions in which they work, and the communities they serve. While nonprofits need to develop specific capacities in order to be successful in their advocacy efforts,

the *process* itself can strengthen organizations in myriad ways, including:

- > Bringing attention to the needs an organization addresses, thus advancing programmatic goals.
- > Raising an organization’s visibility with the public, thus complementing marketing, fundraising and volunteer recruitment efforts.
- > Connecting an organization as a

credible resource to the media and policy makers, thus providing another vehicle to raise an organization’s profile and build support for the organization and cause.

- > Catalyzing an organization to diversify its strategy, relationships and funding base, thus making the organization more resilient and sustainable.

discussions with other funders on education equity issues. MMEP noted, “Since they are a foundation, they can reach a whole different audience – a great social network of people with resources. If they do a function attempting to educate funders and donors on emerging issues, those people will show up. It’s tougher for us to do because we don’t know who those people are.” ILCM also appreciated the Minneapolis Foundation, which brought funded advocacy organizations together in an effort to build cross-agency and cross-issue awareness.

IPTF valued the support of the Ms. Foundation, whose support went far beyond the grant of \$10,000 for three years. As a grantee, IPTF participated in a two-day training and received a paid consultant to help with strategic planning. Even after the grant ended, IPTF still could participate in the national meetings with others working on HIV. A national network emerged from those meetings. MOAPPP enjoyed similar benefits from the Ms. Foundation, which connected reproductive rights grantees from different parts of the country to learn from each other’s experiences.

Likewise, funders reported that they learn from their grantees’ convenings. For example, Travelers Foundation commented on MMEP’s efforts to convene the After-School Intervention Collaborative, bringing together diverse after-school programs with different approaches. Michael Newman, vice president at the foundation said, “[The collaborative] surfaced some issues for our grantmaking. We were doing a pretty solid job in supporting kids in grades 1–5, but there were some holes in the transition period, in grades 6–9. This gave us the idea to shift some of our grantmaking to support middle school kids and ratchet up their academic achievement. The after-school programs were committed to students of color but focused only in the younger grades. So then we saw the need to serve older kids as well.”

While several nonprofits commended foundations for flexing their convening muscles, others cautioned funders to be aware of the power dynamics inherent in all relationships. “The very presence of a funder affects the conversation,” one admitted. “It doesn’t always allow for a truly authentic conversation. I don’t want them to stop convening, but they need to be sensitive and constantly check and evaluate their impact in the room.”

Another added, “It’s great when the foundation sees us as a partner to address issues we share ... but there’s also a line that can be crossed when foundations try to be the organizer.”

#### **d. Exemplary funding partners support culturally appropriate capacity building identified by nonprofits**

While some groups mentioned foundations that provide capacity building in the form of training or consultants for strategic planning, several groups acknowledged that offerings do not always meet their needs. They urge funders to support culturally appropriate capacity building that meets the needs groups identify for themselves, rather than imposing one-size-fits-all or mainstream templates. One group described a well-meaning funder that wanted to provide technical assistance, even as the group insisted that its greatest need was basic equipment like a copier.

Notably, several groups mentioned that their greatest need is more staff and the financial resources to pay a livable wage. While giving preference to domestic violence survivors for both board and staff positions, Range Women’s Advocates struggles to maintain enough staff given its low salaries. “We want to make sure our programs meet survivor needs. The needs of women who are battered define our program; we will always listen to their voices. They are sensitive to and aware of the issues surrounding domestic violence. That’s what directs social change.” The group had a 50 percent staff turnover in one year. Struggling to provide a livable wage to its employees, this group faces the added challenge of being located in the Iron Range, where it cannot capture funding in the metro areas.

Mary Kay Kennedy of ACT said, “To hire full-time salaried employees who have developmental disabilities would be ideal, but we have just never figured out how to make it work financially. The reality is that people with developmental disabilities need support.” Mark Haase of the Council on Crime and Justice added, “I don’t have the capacity to be at the capitol all the time. A potential lost opportunity is just not having a presence there all the time.” ILCM’s John Keller agreed, “[You] need at least a support person to whoever is paid to do advocacy.”

While several groups cataloged their capacity building needs, others expressed skepticism about a funder’s role in capacity building. One said, “[Foundations decide] to hire a consultant who’s outside to do an assessment and make a recommendation on what needs to be done to get everyone to work together. Then they create a separate organization that’s funded to convene everybody else. Why are you deciding what the problem is in the field, like we are children that need to be managed? I don’t

need my relationships with other organizations to be mediated by anyone.” General support grants maximize the flexibility of groups to meet their capacity building needs.

#### **e. Exemplary funding partners take calculated risks**

For all the reasons outlined above, funders often shy away from advocacy and organizing groups as too risky. The groups encouraged funders to seize the opportunity to be bold. Three Rivers Community Action’s Mike Thorsteinson advised, “One organization may be successful one out of ten times, but it’s a really important win. Others might be successful all the time, but they’re not setting the bar high enough. So, make room for failure, but go into the relationship as a partner; take time to get to know each other. We both will learn a lot about how to be effective next time if we stumble together and also celebrate successes together.”

Sharon Day of IPTF concurred, “Do something that’s out of the ordinary. Not every shoe fits everybody. Try something. What do you have to lose? You look at social movements and after 10 years they are co-opted. So take a risk. I think ‘radical’ is a good word.”

## Effective Funding Strategies

Funders that embrace advocacy, organizing and civic engagement as viable and necessary strategies to achieve desired structural reform do the following:

- > Provide multiyear general operating support to maximize both flexibility and stability for grantees.
- > Adapt grantmaking strategies, application processes and evaluation tools to recognize intermediate outcomes and the reality of how change happens.
- > Partner with grantees on issues, connect them with resources and convene them and others strategically, while paying attention to power dynamics.
- > Support culturally appropriate capacity building that meets nonprofits’ self-identified needs.
- > Take calculated risks and stretch outside of their comfort zones.
- > Engage grantees in open and honest communication about successes as well as struggles.
- > Include grantee-partners in developing grantmaking and community leadership strategies.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS**

As this report demonstrates, nonprofits in Minnesota reap tremendous benefits for disenfranchised communities and for the state as a whole through advocacy, organizing and civic engagement. Yet, there is so much more that needs to be done to strengthen neighborhoods, improve education and health systems, provide affordable housing, create jobs, reduce disparities and bring the voices of affected communities to bear in policy making. Local, regional and national foundations have the opportunity to achieve long-term impact in critical areas through their strategic support for advocacy and organizing in the state.

Overall, more funders can take further steps to increase their impact. These include looking at ways to streamline grant application and reporting requirements, providing general support grants and multiyear commitments, and finding out from nonprofit partners how to support their capacity-building goals best. Existing grantees also can be a great resource in identifying other organizations that are doing effective work and could be future grant recipients. In particular, funders can think about whether constituencies affected directly by key issues are being engaged in solving problems. Some key questions include:

- > Can the grantmaker nurture the leadership of under-represented communities better?
- > Are the problems that nonprofits are trying to address getting worse over time?
- > How does public policy help address the disparities affecting a funder’s constituencies?
- > How can a foundation support the advocacy capacity of constituency-based organizations both individually and collectively?

Minnesota nonprofit and foundation leaders have much to be proud of and good models on which to build. NCRP, the Minnesota Council on Foundations, and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits are available to help Minnesota funders and nonprofit leaders think through next steps to support effective nonprofits that use advocacy, organizing and civic engagement to strengthen communities. A list of resource materials is available at [www.ncrp.org](http://www.ncrp.org).

Based on the input of nonprofits and funders, and consistent with *Criteria for Philanthropy at its Best*, NCRP recommends the following next steps to foundation leaders:

## **1. Increase the percentage of grant dollars devoted to advocacy, community organizing and civic engagement work.**

NCRP's analysis of 2004–2006 data on 809 large grantmakers from the Foundation Center showed that many philanthropic leaders nationwide, and The Otto Bremer and McKnight Foundations in Minnesota, provide 25 percent or more of their grant dollars for this important work.<sup>56</sup> These funders recognize the significant benefits and long-term change advocacy and organizing bring to the constituencies and issues they care about. If other funders increase the proportion of their grant dollars devoted to these strategies, they will strengthen the capacity of underserved communities to engage in participatory democracy and contribute to solving the state's pressing problems.

Lee Roper-Batker, president and CEO of the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, commented, "As a social change philanthropy, we are focused on changing institutions and policies in order to ensure long-term solutions that advance equality and justice for all women and girls. We also know that problems and solutions are found in the same place. Therefore, we fund innovative strategies that engage the communities themselves – and in particular, underserved and underrepresented communities of color and rural communities – to design and implement the strategies that work for them, from the inside out. We can and do fund lobbying and organizing and encourage our colleagues to go upstream and change the systems that result in damages and needed fixes downstream."

## **2. Engage board members and donors in dialogue about how advocacy and organizing can help a grantmaking institution achieve its long-term goals.**

Trustees may not know very much about advocacy, organizing and civic engagement. They may believe mistakenly that foundations cannot legally fund such approaches, even though funders most certainly can and do. Likewise, community foundations can build further support by engaging fund holders and advisors about the value of these strategies for achieving social change. Share concrete examples from this report with board members and donors to demystify advocacy and organizing.

In addition to funding advocacy and organizing, foundations can advance public policy priorities through the following strategies<sup>57</sup> to achieve change on issues of concern:

- > Convening policy makers, nonprofits and others
- > Conducting/underwriting and disseminating policy research and analysis
- > Educating policy makers, media and others
- > Shaping policy implementation
- > Evaluating and communicating results

Sandra Vargas, president and CEO of The Minneapolis Foundation, noted, "Over the years, The Minneapolis Foundation has refined its approach to supporting advocacy and organizing. As a community foundation, we have the opportunity to draw on many of the varied tools in our 'toolbox.' These include grantmaking, convening, providing education on issues through forums or printed materials and funding partnerships with our donors and others in support of efforts of shared interest. In recent years, our board added the word 'advocate' to our mission and even hired a lobbyist to assist us in moving our advocacy agenda in early childhood forward. Creating true social change requires addressing an issue at various levels, in different ways, over many years."

The 2010 Census provides a unique opportunity for funders to engage more directly in advocacy. The Funders Census Initiative, a project of the Funders Committee for Civic Participation, encourages foundation leaders to help nonprofits distribute census materials, particularly to marginalized constituencies that risk being undercounted and, subsequently, underrepresented in Congress and under-resourced through federal and state dollars. Funders can convene meetings and publish articles to spread the word, and also help ensure that local officials include marginalized constituencies on their Complete Count committees. Learn more about these efforts and the critical role foundations can play at [www.funderscommittee.org/funder-censusinitiative](http://www.funderscommittee.org/funder-censusinitiative).

## **3. Strengthen peer learning and strategizing about advocacy and organizing.**

Funder collaboratives offer a great way to build knowledge about the role of advocacy in addressing specific issues. The Minnesota Council on Foundations can help guide funders to collaboratives on specific topics. Unlike the first two states of NCRP's project, Minnesota has a Funders Working Group on Community Organizing that brings together funders to learn and strategize collectively. Participating funders include The McKnight Foundation (which convenes the group), Otto Bremer Foundation, Bush Foundation,

BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota Foundation, Headwaters Foundation for Justice, Minneapolis Foundation, Initiative Foundation, PFund and Women's Foundation of Minnesota. This group has been meeting since 2008 and provided valuable input to the project.

Early on, the working group scanned the investments of their own foundations to track how much money they collectively invest in organizing, which organizations they fund and what types of support they provide. Its findings parallel those in this report.

Particularly as foundations transition to new leadership, often prompting changes to their strategic direction and priorities, nonprofits can provide critical insight about the strategies most relevant to meeting the realities of their constituents as well as opportunities for policy change and other reforms.

Namely, of the organizations funded to engage in social transformation, only 22 percent were supported specifically to organize communities; even fewer were base-building organizations. Further, while recognizing that general operating and multiyear funding provides organizations with the consistency needed to plan, collaborate and win, as well as demonstrating a trusting relationship between funders and grantees, only 33 percent of groups funded for organizing receive general operating support.

By its very existence, this group has advanced the conversation further than in other states. Rudy Guglielmo, program officer at the Bush Foundation, noted, "Participation in the working group provides me with a broad lens on community engagement efforts in the state, as well as access to information on best practices and opportunities to build partnerships." As it moves forward, it might consider partnering with some of the groups in this report to accelerate learning and to challenge norms that typically separate grantmakers and grantees.

The working group has laid important groundwork through its initial scan of grantmaking that supports organizing. Next steps for this group might include connecting directly with grantees and others to learn about the range of organizing models engaging diverse

communities, and pooling resources to reach more nonprofits across the state, particularly smaller grassroots groups that involve their constituents most directly.

Further, funders at that table can use this report as a tool to engage colleagues within their institutions as well as other funders across the state. The group can convene discussions with peer funders on topics including the nuts and bolts of how funders that have never supported organizing might get their feet wet, how to talk about organizing with trustees and donors, how to learn about organizing that relates to your mission and funding objectives, what to look for in a site visit, and how to think about evaluating organizing grantees.<sup>58</sup> Each member of the working group could engage in similar conversations with peers one on one.

Funders also can adapt their measurement tools

to evaluate outcomes of advocacy and organizing campaigns more adequately, paying attention to quantifiable and non-quantifiable returns and to intermediate or process outcomes, as well as policy changes. NCRP maintains a resource list for funding advocacy, organizing and civic engagement at [www.ncrp.org/campaigns-research-policy/communities/gcip/gcip-resources](http://www.ncrp.org/campaigns-research-policy/communities/gcip/gcip-resources). It includes links to materials developed by funders, evaluators, organizers and advocates to improve evaluation systems for this kind of work.

#### **4. Engage nonprofit partners in strategic planning and grantmaking process of foundations.**

Funders can learn a great deal about advocacy, organizing and civic engagement from their nonprofit partners, who have engaged in this work for many years. Their experience can inform grantmaking and community leadership strategies to effect change on the institutional and structural reforms most important to a foundation. Particularly as foundations transition to new leadership, often prompting changes to their strategic direction and priorities, nonprofits can provide critical insight about the strategies most relevant to meeting the realities of their constituents as well as opportunities for policy change and other reforms.

Headwaters Foundation for Justice is a collective of individual and institutional givers, of varying means, that explicitly support social change. Headwaters sits comfortably at both funder and community tables, educating each about the other. “Headwaters believes that people most impacted by community problems also have the ability to develop the best solutions,” said executive director Trista Harris. “That’s why grassroots activists lead our decision-making processes. It makes us a more connected and effective grantmaker than we would be otherwise.”

### **5. Apply a racial equity lens to grantmaking.**

Given the rapid racial transformation happening in Minnesota, and the stark disparities emerging, funders in the state must hone their understanding and commitment to racial equity. National groups like the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity and Applied Research Center, as well as Minnesota-based JustPhilanthropy.org’s “Pathways to Progress” initiative and the Organizing Apprenticeship Project can provide guidance and, in some cases, training. Funders also can learn from and with their peers at Headwaters Foundation for Justice, the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota, Minneapolis Foundation, St. Paul Foundation, and others that are on the path toward becoming anti-racist, racially equitable organizations.

### **6. Provide general operating support and multi-year grants.**

Effective funders provide maximum flexibility and stability to their grantees by providing multiyear and general operating support. According to NCRP’s analysis of Foundation Center data on 809 large grantmakers, one Minnesota Foundation, U.S. Bancorp Foundation, provided more than 50 percent of its grant dollars for general operating support.<sup>59</sup> Five funders provided at least 50 percent of grant dollars for multiyear funding: The McKnight Foundation, Bush Foundation, Minneapolis Foundation, Otto Bremer Foundation, and Blandin Foundation.<sup>60</sup> As nonprofits make stark choices among various advocacy strategies, strike the appropriate balance between service and advocacy, and build their organizational capacity so they can engage for the long haul and achieve sustainable wins, they look to their funding partners to invest in a way that enables the highest-impact returns for marginalized communities. Funders can provide not only more money but *more flexible and stable resources* to support the strategic efforts of their grantees.



# VI. Conclusion

As this report demonstrates, analyzing just a small sample of effective and diverse organizations in Minnesota revealed dramatic benefits for many Minnesota residents and their communities – benefits achieved through advocacy, organizing and civic engagement. Foundation support was critical to these achievements, and it will be integral to their future success as well. Notwithstanding these impressive accomplishments, the state continues to face many challenges in these uncertain times. Housing foreclosures, job losses and racial disparities are just some of the issues requiring attention by legislators, who need the informed perspectives of affected communities to guide them. For many of the important policy reforms documented here, groups will need to undertake further

advocacy to defend, implement and strengthen them.

Foundation leaders may be tempted to retrench amid declining foundation resources and growing needs that command attention. Yet, these challenges demand bold action. Minnesota funders have many positive models of effective grantmaking and collaboration to build on. With a strong statewide network and a robust philanthropic community, Minnesota grantmakers are poised to strengthen their voices in public policy through funding and leadership. Allied with nonprofit partners who know how to bring community voices and innovative solutions to the decision-making table, funders can make a measurable difference in the lives of Minnesotans today and for generations to come.

# Notes

1. See definition of “marginalized communities” on page 6.
2. Impact, Outcome, and Output definitions are from *Glossary: Useful Evaluation Terms, Tools & Resources*, prepared by Susie Quern Pratt, Marianne Philbin and Jenny Ellis Richards for the Association of Small Foundations, October 2007. The examples of each were provided by the author.
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4. NCRP used “snowball sampling,” a purposive sampling technique used in research. Simply described, the researchers kept asking groups and funders for names of groups until we generated a list and no new names emerged.
5. Detailed verification and quantification methodology is available upon request.
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7. Rebecca Sohmer, et al., *Mind the Gap: Reducing Disparities to Improve Regional Competitiveness in the Twin Cities* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, 2005).
8. Jocelyn Ancheta, *Expanding Immigrant and Refugee Funding in Minnesota: What Foundations and Nonprofits Can Do* (Sebastopol, CA: Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, August 2007).
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17. University of Minnesota, Office of the Vice President and Vice Provost for Equity and Diversity, “Changing Demographics: Snapshots of a New Minnesota and New America,” Lecture and discussion in commemoration of Minnesota’s Sesquicentennial, April 17, 2008.
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19. Scott Russell, “Minneapolis Children’s Report Card Coming; Can It Leverage Action?” *Twin Cities Daily Planet*, June 17, 2009, <http://www.tcdailyplanet.net/article/2009/06/16/analysis-minneapolis-children%E2%80%99s-report-card-coming-can-it-leverage-action.html>.
20. Sohmer, Op. Cit.
21. Jermaine Toney, *Minnesota Legislative Report Card on Racial Equity*, Organizing Apprenticeship Project, 2008.
22. Institute for Women’s Policy Research in partnership with the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota, *Status of Girls in Minnesota*, April 2008, <http://www.wfmn.org/StatusofGirlsResearch.shtml>.
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  54. *Ibid.*, 47–48.
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  59. Jagpal, *Op. Cit.*, 120.
  60. *Ibid.*, 121–123.

## APPENDIX A

# Organizational Profiles

Organization/Contact Information	Mission Statement/Description
<p><b>Advocating Change Together (ACT)</b></p> <p>Rick Cardenas, Co-Director cardenas@selfadvocacy.org</p> <p>1821 University Ave West, Suite 306-S St. Paul, MN 55104 651-641-0297, ext. 12 www.selfadvocacy.com</p>	<p>To help people across disabilities to see themselves as part of a larger disability rights movement and make connections to other civil and human rights struggles.</p>
<p><b>Alliance for Metropolitan Stability</b></p> <p>Russ Adams, Executive Director russ@metrostability.org</p> <p>2525 Franklin Ave E, Suite 200 Minneapolis, MN 55406 612-332-4471 www.metrostability.org</p>	<p>To advance racial, economic and environmental justice in the way growth and development happens in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.</p>
<p><b>Centro Campesino</b></p> <p>Victor Contreras, Executive Director</p> <p>216 Oak Avenue North Owatonna, MN 55060 507-446-9599 www.centrocampesino.net</p>	<p>To improve the lives of migrant workers and rural Latinas/Latinos and to create a strong southern Minnesota Latino/Latina voice.</p>
<p><b>Churches United in Ministry (CHUM)</b></p> <p>Jim Soderberg, Executive Director jsoderberg@chumduluth.org</p> <p>102 West Second Street Duluth, MN 55802 218-720-6521 www.chumduluth.org</p>	<p>People of faith working together to provide basic necessities, foster stable lives and organize for a just and compassionate community.</p>

Organization/Contact Information	Mission Statement/Description
<p><b>Council on Crime and Justice</b></p> <p>Pamela G. Alexander, President alexanderp@crimeandjustice.org</p> <p>822 S. Third St. Minneapolis, MN 55415 612-353-3000 www.crimeandjustice.org</p>	<p>To build community capacity to address the causes and consequences of crime and violence through research, demonstration and advocacy.</p>
<p><b>Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (ILCM)</b></p> <p>John Keller, Executive Director &amp; Supervising Attorney john.keller@ilcm.org</p> <p>450 North Syndicate St., Suite 175 St. Paul, MN 55104 651-641-1011 www.immigrantlawcentermn.org</p>	<p>To provide quality immigration legal services and law-related education to meet the steadily increasing needs of Minnesota’s growing immigrant and refugee communities. We work to support a fair and just immigration process that keeps the American dream alive, embodies the rule of law, and strengthens families and communities across Minnesota.</p>
<p><b>Indigenous People’s Task Force (IPTF)</b></p> <p>Sharon Day, Executive Director iptf@indigenouspeopletf.org</p> <p>3019 Minnehaha Ave South, Suite 150 Minneapolis, MN 55406 612-721-0253 www.indigenouspeopletf.org</p>	<p>A Native American provider of HIV education and direct services to the Native community in Minnesota. For over 15 years, IPTF has developed and implemented culturally appropriate programs to prevent further transmission of HIV, increase access to traditional and western medical services, and improve the quality of life for clients, families and communities.</p>
<p><b>ISAIAH</b></p> <p>Jay Schmitt, Co-Director schmitt@isaiah-mn.org</p> <p>2720 East 22nd St. Minneapolis, MN 55406 612-333-1260, ext. 213 www.gamaliel.org/ISAIAH/</p>	<p>People of faith acting powerfully in the world, casting a stirring vision of a vital faith community that has the courage to declare, commit and act upon a set of values. Those values will transform the dominant culture of despair, scarcity and fear, replacing it with a vision of community, hope and God’s abundance for all people.</p>

Organization/Contact Information	Mission Statement/Description
<p><b>Minnesota AIDS Project (MAP)</b></p> <p>Lorraine Teel, Executive Director lteel@mnaidsproject.org</p> <p>1400 Park Ave. Minneapolis, MN 612-341-2060 www.mnaidsproject.org</p>	<p>To lead Minnesota's fight to stop HIV through advocacy, education and service.</p>
<p><b>Minnesota Minority Education Project (MMEP)</b></p> <p>Carlos Mariana Rosa, Executive Director cmariani@mmep.net</p> <p>Wright Building 2233 University Ave. West, Ste. 220 St. Paul, MN 55114 651-645-7400, ext 206 www.mmep.net</p>	<p>Seeks to increase the success of Students of Color and American Indian Students in Minnesota schools, colleges, and universities.</p>
<p><b>Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention &amp; Parenting (MOAPPP)</b></p> <p>Brigid Riley, Executive Director brigid@moappp.org</p> <p>1619 Dayton Ave., Ste. 111 St. Paul, MN 55104 651-644-1447, ext. 11 www.moappp.org</p>	<p>The statewide leader in promoting adolescent sexual health, preventing adolescent pregnancy and gaining support for adolescent parents. We achieve this by developing, strengthening and advancing science-based policies and programs.</p>
<p><b>National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota (NAMI Minnesota)</b></p> <p>Sue Abderholden, Executive Director sabderholden@nami.org</p> <p>800 Transfer Rd., Ste. 31 St. Paul, MN 55114 651-645-2948 www.namihelps.org</p>	<p>Dedicated to improving the lives of adults and children with mental illness and their families, by offering education, support and advocacy. We vigorously promote the development of community mental health programs and services, improved access to services, increased opportunities for recovery, reduced stigma and discrimination, and increased public understanding of mental illness.</p>

Organization/Contact Information

Mission Statement/Description

**Range Women's Advocates (RWA)**

Barbara Boughton, Development  
Manager  
barbararwa@qwestoffice.net

301 First St S, Ste. 100  
Virginia, MN 55792  
218-749-5054  
www.rwadvocates.org

To confront domestic violence and effect social change by addressing the needs of women who are battered, their children and their families through advocacy, prevention and education.

**Somali Action Alliance**

Hashi Shafi, Executive Director  
shafi@somaliactionalliance.org

225 East Franklin St., Ste. 301  
Minneapolis, MN 55406  
612-455-2185  
www.somaliactionalliance.org

To bring together Somali individuals and organizations who share a common interest in building an understanding of public policy and expanding civic engagement among members of this immigrant community.

**Three Rivers Community Action**

Mike Thorsteinson, Executive Director  
mike.thorsteinson@threeriverscap.org

1414 N. Star Drive  
Zumbrota, MN 55992  
507-732-7391  
www.threeriverscap.org

To work with community partners to address basic human needs of people in our service area, thereby improving the quality of life of the individual, family and community.

## APPENDIX B

## Quantitative Impacts and Return on

Issue	Length of Campaign	Dollar Value	No. of Direct Beneficiaries
Economic Security	2005	\$325,000,000	117,000 workers
Economic Security	2005	\$13,000,000	lower-income residents of Greater Minnesota
Economic Security	2006-2009	\$40,600,000	180 families in affordable homes
Economic Security	2003-2008	\$40,262,493	333 households
Economic Security	2005	\$2,100,000	1,230 participants annually
Economic Security	2008	\$2,500,000	Up to 2,000 job seekers
Economic Security	2004	\$84,000,000	1200 to 1800 individuals

# Investment

Organizations*	Description of Impact**
Jobs Now Coalition, including Three Rivers Community Action, Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, Advocating Change Together, and dozens of nonprofit and labor organizations	Increased state minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.15 per hour. Added wages of \$130 million per year were estimated for 2.5 years until federal minimum wage superseded state level.
Three Rivers Community Action, Minnesota Housing Partnership, Greater Minnesota Housing Fund	Prevented affordable housing funding cuts at the state level to benefit residents of Greater Minnesota.
Churches United in Ministry (CHUM)	YIMBY (Yes in My Back Yard) initiative countered a campaign against an existing affordable housing development and leveraged additional funds for new affordable housing in Duluth, including 112 units valued at \$300,000 per unit and \$7 million in additional investments.
CHUM, Affordable Housing Coalition	Won creation of City of Duluth Housing Investment Fund of \$1.4 million that leveraged an additional \$38.8 million in affordable housing investments.
NAMI Minnesota, Minnesota Mental Health Action Group (MMHAG)	Secured \$300,000 per year increased state funds for specialized employment program for people with mental illness, projected through 2011.
Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, HIRE Minnesota	Leveraged \$2 million in federal stimulus funds to train lower-income people for green jobs and \$500,000 for community education and outreach about energy efficiency.
Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Community Stabilization Project, Housing Preservation Project, MICAH, HOMELINE	Prevented demolition of 600 Brooklyn Park affordable homes, which would have cost at least \$140,000 each to replace.

Issue	Length of Campaign	Dollar Value	No. of Direct Beneficiaries
Economic Security	2004-2005	\$500,000	8,000 households
Economic Security	2007-2009	\$103,000,000	300 women and ethnic minority contractors and workers
Land Use, Transportation and the Environment	2005-2008	\$560,700,000	95 million public transit riders
Land Use, Transportation and the Environment	2002-2008	\$340,000,000	95 million public transit riders
Land Use, Transportation and the Environment	2002-Ongoing	\$20,000,000	40,000 lower-income people of color living along the Central Corridor

Organizations\*

Description of Impact\*\*

Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Centro Campesino, ISIAAH, Somali Action Alliance, Asian Media Access, Brian Coyle CTC, C-CAN/CTEP, Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Association, CommonBond Communities, Eastside Neighborhood Services, Franklin Library, Greater Twin Cities United Way, Headwaters Foundation, Hope Community, Inc., Hosmer Library, Immigrant Freedom Network, MICAH, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Northway Community Trust NRP - Cedar Riverside, Phyllis Wheatley/Minneapolis Public Schools, Pillsbury United Communities, Project for Pride in Living, Resource Center of Americas, SeniorNet, St. Paul E-Democracy, TC Daily Planet, Teaming 4 Technology, Triangle Park Creative, Twin Cities Media Alliance, Urban Hope Ministries

Secured funds to improve Wi-Fi access for lower-income people, nonprofit organizations and Greater Minnesota, including \$500,000 in a Digital Inclusion Fund. The future aggregate savings in Wi-Fi costs for subscribers will likely exceed a million dollars a year.

ISIAAH, County Commissioner, Summit Academy OIC

Brokered community benefits agreement establishing high workforce goals through Small, Women, Minority Business Enterprise (SWMBE) Program to ensure inclusion of women and minority workers in the building of Target Field, the new stadium for the Minnesota Twins.

ISIAAH, Transit Partners Coalition

Won constitutional amendment that increased proportion of Motor Vehicle Sales Tax allocated to transportation. Based on the phase-in schedule, this revenue source is estimated to provide \$560.7 million for transit through 2011.

Transit Partners Coalition, including: Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, ISIAAH, Transit for Livable Communities, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005, Fresh Energy, League of Women Voters Minnesota, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, Minnesota Environmental Partnership, Minnesota Senior Federation, Sierra Club North Star Chapter

Won long-term commitment of state funding for road and transit infrastructure improvements, with a substantial portion dedicated to improving public transportation. The total ten-year investment in transportation is estimated to be as much as \$6.6 billion; conservative estimates of transit revenue from new quarter-cent sales tax are \$85 million per year, projected through 2011.

Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Jewish Community Action, Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation, Transit for Livable Communities, Community Stabilization Project, District Councils Collaborative, Hmong Business Association, Just Equity, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, University United, United Food & Commercial Workers

Secured Central Corridor Community Benefits Agreement to ensure development along the corridor, which included three accessible light rail transit stations valued at \$12 million total and a senior affordable housing development valued at \$8 million.

Issue	Length of Campaign	Dollar Value	No. of Direct Beneficiaries
Civil and Human Rights	1994-Ongoing	\$135,000	2,000 buried in state mental hospital cemeteries
Civil and Human Rights	2007-Ongoing	\$802,000	1,200 self-advocates statewide
Civil and Human Rights	2004-2005	\$500,000	at least 5,000 adult and children victims of domestic violence annually
Civil and Human Rights	2006-2009	\$64,500,000	All drivers benefit. State saves monetary costs
Civil and Human Rights	2004-2005	\$221,000	13 families
Health	2006-2007	\$2,000,000	268,000 young people in Hennepin County
Health	2007-2008	\$208,000	600,000 youth statewide
Health	2004-2007	\$250,000	thousands of foreign-born residents

Organizations*	Description of Impact**
Advocating Change Together (ACT), Ladies Auxiliary, Power Up Club, Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Arc Chapters, Disability Law Center	Restored state mental hospital cemeteries previously only marked with a number, giving those buried there proper markers with name, and dates of birth and death. Also secured an apology from the legislature for the state's treatment of mental health patients.
ACT	Development of statewide network, Self-Advocacy Minnesota, which works with groups to promote personal empowerment, disability awareness and systems change. State appropriation of \$134,000 per year beginning in 2009 and multiyear grant from the MN Council on Developmental Disabilities beginning in 2008 both projected through 2011.
ISIAAH, St. Paul Intervention Project, St. Paul Police Department	Use of state funding to develop a blueprint for handling of domestic violence cases as a result of an audit of the St. Paul system.
Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (ILCM), AFFIRM Coalition, legislative leaders	Prevented state from enacting proposals that would have negatively affected immigrants and refugees, including prohibiting compliance with the REAL ID act of 2005, which would force every Minnesotan to obtain a national ID card and disparately impact the immigrant community, as well as costing the state \$64.5 million to implement.
Centro Campesino	Organized Latino families in Montgomery after City purchased apartment buildings for demolition and redevelopment, forcing eviction of tenants; won reparations of \$17,000 for each of 13 families and a commitment by the City to work with private developers to promote affordable housing in the future. The City agreed to also take several steps to combat race discrimination and foster better relations and communication with the Latino community.
Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention & Planning (MOAPPP)	Creation of Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative of Hennepin County, providing comprehensive sex education and better coordination of service delivery. Secured \$400,000 per year for the initiative, and funding was projected through 2011.
MOAPPP	Secured state support for proven service-learning curriculum to prevent teen pregnancy and successfully advocated for the state to end support for abstinence-only sex education.
Minnesota AIDS Project (MAP)	Secured state funding for MAP AIDS line and HIV prevention program in foreign-born communities.

Issue	Length of Campaign	Dollar Value	No. of Direct Beneficiaries
Health	2005	\$800,000	at least 6,220 people living with HIV/AIDS statewide
Health	2002-2005	\$127,300	at least 6,220 people living with HIV/AIDS statewide
Health	2006	\$800,000	280 inmates annually
Health	2006	\$7,486,000	166,000 beneficiaries of state mental health services
Health	2006-2007	\$120,600,000	166,000 beneficiaries of state mental health services
Health	2008-2009	\$3,315,000	106,000 recipients of crime victim services
Health	2005-2009	\$7,500	100,000 young people
Health	2007	\$ 375,000	thousands of refugees and trauma victims
Health	2007	\$1,300,000	100,000 young people
Health	2007	\$2,000,000	thousands of residents with mental illness

Organizations*	Description of Impact**
MAP	Prevented targeted funding cuts that would have significantly reduced MAP's ability to conduct its prevention outreach.
MAP	Secured one-time funding for "systems advocacy" to provide coordinated HIV/AIDS care among the silos of corrections, social services, housing, etc.
NAMI Minnesota, MMHAG, Mental Health Legislative Network	Increased state funding for discharge planners to help transition formerly incarcerated with mental illness; \$200,000 per year projected through 2011.
NAMI Minnesota, MMHAG, Mental Health Legislative Network	Increased state mental health reimbursement rates for services.
NAMI Minnesota, MMHAG, Mental Health Legislative Network	Passage of State Mental Health Initiative, committing increased resources of \$34 million per year to improve the state's mental health system.
Range Women's Advocates, Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women, Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project, Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA), Minnesota Network on Abuse in Later Life (MNALL), Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition	Secured increased funding for victims' services for two years. Prevented 7 percent cut in subsequent two years.
NAMI Minnesota, MMHAG	Created a task force on mental health services in public schools, which produced a report on K-12 mental health issues.
NAMI Minnesota	Increased state mental health funding for victims of trauma and refugees.
NAMI Minnesota	Provided state funding for opt-in suicide prevention programs in schools such as TeenScreen.
NAMI Minnesota	Secured state provision of "Bridges program" housing for people with severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI) awaiting federal Section 8 housing subsidies.

Issue	Length of Campaign	Dollar Value	No. of Direct Beneficiaries
Education	2008	\$61,000,000	34,570 public school students
Education	2004-2005	\$480,000,000	822,412 public school students
	2003-2007	\$4,800,000	3,540 college students
TOTAL QUANTIFIED BENEFITS		\$2,282,889,293	
Total funding for advocacy and organizing among 15 organizations		\$16,535,602	
Return on Investment (ROI)		\$138.06	

Organizations*	Description of Impact**
Education Equity Organizing Collaborative, including MIGIZI Communications, Somali Action Alliance, Coalition of Black Churches/African American Leadership Summit, and ISAIAH; Organizing Apprenticeship Project	Worked on passage of Minneapolis School District referendum, which raised significant resources to support public schools, and injected racial equity concerns into discussions of how the funds should be spent.
ISAIAH	Secured increase in state funding for public education at a time when funds were slated to be cut.
Centro Campesino, Minnesota Immigrant Freedom Network, ISAIAH, Jewish Community Action, AFFIRM, and others	Passage of Flat Rate Tuition bill that allows undocumented immigrants to attend two-year and technical colleges and have access to in-state tuition.

\* This column is not intended to provide a complete list of every organization or individual involved in achieving an impact. Additional stakeholders may have participated.

\*\*NCRP independently verified each impact. Detailed calculation methods are available upon request.

## APPENDIX C

# Qualitative Impacts and Beneficiaries

Issue	Length of Campaign	Category and/or No. of People Directly Benefiting
Economic Security	2006	At least 480,000 residents living in poverty
Economic Security	2006-2007	Tens of thousands of people with criminal records in the Twin Cities
Economic Security	2008-2009	65,000 people with criminal records statewide
Economic Security	2008-2009	65,000 people with criminal records statewide
Economic Security	2004-2008	30,000 Duluth residents
Economic Security	Ongoing	30,000 Duluth residents

Organizations*	Description of Impact**
Three Rivers Community Action, Minnesota Community Action Partnership	Creation of Legislative Commission to End Poverty in Minnesota by 2020.
Council on Crime and Justice	Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul and Hennepin County adopted “ban the box” policies, which removed the question requiring disclosure of past criminal records on applications for employment with the Cities and County.
Council on Crime and Justice, Second Chance Coalition: 180 Degrees, Inc., AMICUS, Goodwill/Easter Seals Minnesota, Rebuild Resources, Jacob Wetterling Foundation, RS Eden, Minnesota Council of Churches, Minnesota Catholic Conference, Minnesota Fathers & Families Network, Northside Policy Action Coalition, People Escaping Poverty Project, Project for Pride in Living, Children’s Defense Fund, Peace Foundation, Minneapolis Urban League, HIRED, LIFE in Recovery, NAMI Minnesota, the Barbara Schneider Foundation, Elim Transitional Housing, Emerge Community Development, Greater Minneapolis Council on Churches, Juel Fairbanks Chemical Dependency Services	State of Minnesota adopted “ban the box” policy, which required all Minnesota public employers to wait until a job applicant has been selected for an interview before asking about criminal records, except for positions that already require a background check.
Council on Crime and Justice, Second Chance Coalition, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce	State of Minnesota adopted “Safe Hiring” civil liability law, which limits the admission of evidence of an employee’s criminal record in certain cases.
CHUM, Affordable Housing Coalition, Duluth Mayor’s Office	Campaign for tenants’ rights led to Tenants’ Remedies Act in Duluth as recourse for tenants seeking to take control of troubled buildings. “Mayor’s Bad Landlord Tours” drew media and public attention to landlord issues, leading to increased enforcement of housing codes.
CHUM, At Home Coalition, Neighborhood Housing Services, Duluth Police Department	Community Safety Initiative led to a Duluth city ordinance to address private rental property management issues.

Issue	Length of Campaign	Category and/or No. of People Directly Benefitting
Economic Security	2004-2005	750 migrant workers
Civil and Human Rights	Ongoing	1,480 people with disabilities attended
Civil and Human Rights	2007-2008	1,600 community members participated in forums
Civil and Human Rights	2000-2009 Ongoing	1.2 million youth under age 18
Civil and Human Rights	2004-2005	At least 5,000 people of color in Duluth
Civil and Human Rights	2004-2005	30,000 migrant workers
Civil and Human Rights	2007, 2009	3,600 Liberians
Civil and Human Rights	2007-2009	At least 300,000 immigrants and refugees statewide

Organizations*	Description of Impact**
Centro Campesino	Organized migrant workers in two camps in Owatonna and Montgomery into their own independent union, UTN or United Workers of the North. Although UTN was not recognized by the employers, the workers secured a community kitchen in Montgomery and coverage of child care costs in Owatonna.
ACT, Minnesota Center on Human Rights, Harvard Project on Disability, Shafalla Center on Disability (Qatar), United Nations Human Rights Workers	People with disabilities served as leaders in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and piloted human rights trainings internationally. The United States has yet to sign-on to this convention.
ACT, Self-Advocates Minnesota (SAM), Arc Greater Twin Cities, Research and Training Center on Community Living – University of Minnesota, Metro Center for Independent Living, Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, Minnesota State Council on Disability, Courage Center	Campaign to encourage respectful language for people with disabilities led to the creation of an educational DVD, which served to facilitate dialogue on language at community forums.
MOAPPP, Coalition for Responsible Sex Education	Defended the Minor Consent Statute, which gives young people the right to make decisions regarding their own sexuality, mental and chemical dependence services.
ISAIAH	Secured Community Policing Agreement with St. Cloud Police Department to promote greater cultural and ethnic awareness within the department and reduce instances of racial profiling.
Centro Campesino	Won state statute improving protections for migrant workers. The new law doubles the fines for employers who violate written recruitment agreements with migrant workers and also provides that employers who do not pay wages on time can be made to pay twice the amount a worker would have earned.
ILCM, Jewish Community Action, Office of Liberians in Minnesota, Fairview Hospital, Advocates for Human Rights	Extension of legal status to Liberians in 2007 and 2009, ensuring their ability to stay in the U.S.
ILCM, AFFIRM, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce	Creation of Minnesota’s “Working Group on Ethnic Heritage and New Americans” to help foster a more understanding environment for the state’s immigrant population. The Working Group has been a forum for bipartisan discussion and analysis of complex immigration issues.

Issue	Length of Campaign	Category and/or No. of People Directly Benefitting
Civil and Human Rights	2004-2005	250 victims of domestic violence annually
Civil and Human Rights	2008	At least 35,000 adult and children victims of domestic violence annually
Civil and Human Rights	2005	At least 35,000 adult and children victims of domestic violence annually
Civil and Human Rights	2007	All victims of domestic violence in leased housing.
Civil and Human Rights	2006-present	More than 1,000 workers and children.
Health	2004	100,000 youth
Health	2004	100,000 youth
Health	2005	73,000 mothers per year

Organizations*	Description of Impact**
RWA, Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (MCBW), Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project	Won statute categorizing strangulation as a felony in domestic violence cases.
RWA, MCBW, Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project	Won extension of standard Order for Protection from one year to two; secured provision making communication between abuse victims and advocates privileged; and won a study to examine the proposed presumption of joint physical custody of children in high-conflict or domestic violence cases. For six years, advocates have fended off proposed legislation granting joint physical custody.
RWA, MCBW, Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project	Improved victim safety by ensuring that Orders for Protection are enforceable across state, tribe and territory lines.
RWA, MCBW, Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project	Secured state law allowing a residential tenant who is a victim of domestic abuse and fears imminent abuse if the tenant or the tenant's minor children remain in the leased premises to terminate a lease agreement without penalty or liability.
ILCM, UFCW 789, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Worthington Adult Basic Education and Community Education, MIFN, American Immigration Lawyers Association	Combined legal assistance and grassroots coordination to respond to workplace raids in which federal agents rounded up hundreds of immigrant workers at the Swift plant in Worthington. Joined with others nationally to support more humane treatment of immigrant detainees, including successful humanitarian policy to minimize keeping breast-feeding mothers in detention, separated from their nursing children.
NAMI Minnesota	Provide for continuation of care for children receiving state mental health services after age 18. Also provision of voluntary mental health screening for suspended students.
NAMI Minnesota	State law providing for voluntary mental health screening if a student is suspended for more than 10 days in a school year and requiring that schools develop a response plan if the drop out rate for students with emotional behavioral disability is high.
NAMI Minnesota	State law requiring health care providers to give information on potential harmful effects of post-partum depression to pregnant women.

Issue	Length of Campaign	Category and/or No. of People Directly Benefitting
Health	2007	166,000 beneficiaries of state mental health services
Health	2008	42,000 children receiving publicly-funded mental health services
Health	2008 - 2009	Rural, lower-income residents
Health	ongoing	Hundreds of Native Americans
Education	2008-2009	30,000 students entering college each year
Education	2006	8,000 English-language learning students in the district
Education	2004	8,000 English-language learning students in the district
Education	2000-2006	27,500 students of color in MNSCU system
Education	2005-2007	200,000 students in K-12 public schools

Organizations*	Description of Impact**
NAMI Minnesota, Mental Health Legislative Network, MMHAG	Several state provisions enacted, including: requiring foster care training, assisting people from cultural communities to become mental health professionals, requiring a mental health screening in the jails and developing a protocol on solitary confinement.
NAMI Minnesota, Mental Health Legislative Network	State law restricting the use of restraints and seclusion in community mental health programs for children and allowing parents to remain in custody of their children even in treatment.
Three Rivers Community Action, Minnesota Safety Net Coalition, Minnesota Dental Hygienists' Association	Minnesota became the first state to pass legislation allowing a "mid-level" oral health provider into state statute. The new providers will focus their practice on care for underserved populations in the state and will administer educational, preventive, palliative, therapeutic and restorative services.
Indigenous People's Task Force	Organized to create holistic, culturally appropriate successful tobacco reduction programs that incorporate leadership development.
Council on Crime and Justice	The State of Minnesota enacted "Higher Education" notice, which requires all post-secondary education institutions in the state to notify students as to the types of criminal records that could affect their future employment opportunities.
Somali Action Alliance	Minneapolis school district adopted a bilingual education policy.
Somali Action Alliance	Saved the English Language Learners (ELL) department in the Minneapolis public school system, preventing a merger with the special education department, keeping English-language learners distinct from special education students.
Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (MMEP)	Influenced the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities' (MNSCU) System-wide Strategic Diversity Plan to reflect urgency for providing opportunities for students of color.
MMEP	Creation of the Minnesota College Access Network (MCAN) to influence the focus of the MN P16 Council in developing frameworks for students of color equity and for college and workforce readiness.

Issue	Length of Campaign	Category and/or No. of People Directly Benefitting
Education	2006-2008	2,700 students of color in St. Cloud
Education	2000-2007	Thousands of students of color

Organizations*	Description of Impact**
MMEP	Encouraged St. Cloud to establish a community college access center for students of color.
MMEP	Assisted St. Paul After-School Intervention Collaborative to improve coordination with the school system, enhance service delivery, and address gaps in services, especially for middle school students of color. Also helped the state's academic enrichment programs to better serve students of color.

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\*\*NCRP independently verified each impact. Detailed methods are available upon request.

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<input type="checkbox"/> \$50-\$100 mil	\$1,000
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<input type="checkbox"/> \$200-\$300 mil	\$3,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$300-\$400 mil	\$4,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$400-\$500 mil	\$5,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$500-\$600 mil	\$6,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$600-\$700 mil	\$7,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$700- \$800 mi	\$8,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$800-\$900 mil	\$9,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$900mil-\$1billion	\$10,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1-2 billion	\$15,000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$2-3 billion	\$20,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Above \$3billion	\$25,000

Join online at [www.ncrp.org](http://www.ncrp.org) or complete both sides of this form and fax or mail to the address below.  
2001 S Street, NW | Suite 620 | Washington, DC 20009 | p: 202.387.9177 | f: 202.332.5084

Please attach a business card or fill out the form below.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Name  Miss  Mrs.  Ms.  Mr.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT INFORMATION**

Check or Money Order (made out to NCRP) or  Credit Card (please check one)  VISA  MasterCard  AmEx

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**HOW I CAN HELP**

I can:

- Endorse *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best*
- Refer NCRP to like-minded colleagues and friends (list names and some contact information)

\_\_\_\_\_

- Host an NCRP event in my community
- Write a blog post for *Keeping a Close Eye...*
- Invite NCRP to contribute an article to my publication or post on my blog
- Mobilize my network around an NCRP campaign
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDITIONAL CONTACTS**

For all organizational members, each \$50 in dues entitles one contact to receive *Responsive Philanthropy* and electronic member communications. Foundations that provide grants to NCRP are foundation members, and can list up to 10 contacts to receive NCRP materials and information. Please provide names and email addresses of additional contacts.

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**PRIVACY NOTICE**

- NCRP thanks its grantmaker and organizational members on its website and in print. Please check this box if you would like your contribution to be anonymous.

**Thank you for challenging grantmakers to strengthen our communities!**  
Questions or comments? Contact Kevin Laskowski, NCRP Field Associate at klaskowski@ncrp.org or 202.387.9177 ext. 27.

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*Organization affiliation for identification purposes only.*

# STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY, INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES

## Impacts of Advocacy, Organizing and Civic Engagement in Minnesota

© September 2009, National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy

*Funding advocacy and advocates is the most direct route to supporting enduring social change for the poor, the disenfranchised and the most vulnerable among us, including the youngest and oldest in our communities.*

—Gara LaMarche, President and CEO  
The Atlantic Philanthropies\*

The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP) aims to ensure that philanthropic institutions practice Philanthropy at Its Best® – philanthropy that serves the public good, supports nonprofit effectiveness and responds to those in our society with the least wealth, opportunity and power. NCRP believes that one of the most effective ways to address the needs of the disenfranchised is by providing support for advocacy, community organizing and civic engagement.

NCRP's *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best*, published in March 2009, challenges grantmakers to promote the American values of opportunity and inclusion by contributing to a strong, participatory democracy that engages all communities. One way they can accomplish that is by providing at least 25 percent of their grant dollars for advocacy, organizing and civic engagement. This aspirational goal is one of ten benchmarks in Criteria.

Many grantmakers invest in advocacy, organizing and civic engagement as a way to advance their missions and strengthen communities. A sizable number of foundations, however, have not seriously considered investing in these strategies, partly because they have difficulty measuring impact and fully understanding how effective these strategies can be. The Grantmaking for Community Impact Project (GCIP) addresses these concerns by highlighting the positive impact that communities have seen through funder-supported nonpartisan advocacy and organizing.

To provide foundations with useful information that can help them consider supporting these strategies at higher levels, each GCIP report documents impact and demonstrates how advocacy, community organizing and civic engagement result in community-wide benefits and can advance a foundation's mission. This report on Minnesota is the third in the series.

*Additional information is available online at [www.ncrp.org](http://www.ncrp.org).*

\* The Atlantic Philanthropies (2008). *Why Supporting Advocacy Makes Sense for Foundations*. Atlantic Reports, Investing in Change.

For information or copies of this report, or to join NCRP, please contact us at:

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