

Tips for philanthropy

As noted in a 2009 article¹, catalytic philanthropists should, "gather knowledge about the problem they are tackling and use this knowledge to inform their own actions and motivate the actions of others. Making knowledge actionable requires more than just gathering and reporting data. The information must also carry emotional appeal to capture people's attention and practical recommendations that can inspire them to action."

Philanthropy can be a catalyst for transformative and strategic investment and partnership to advance "upstream" prevention through systems change, research, pilot projects and system-level capacity building. Philanthropy also has the convening power to bring local government, nonprofit service providers and the private sector for meaningful collaboration and participation.

- ▶ Allocate general operating support, service/program and capacity-building grants to organizations working to deepen impact around "upstream" prevention.
- ▶ Work with the CoC to understand how well the homeless crisis response system is currently functioning on key performance measures. Review current diversion assistance practices to be sure that it is widely available for those who at greatest risk of imminent homelessness.
- ▶ Support an external system review.
- ▶ Research promising best practices and evidenced-based tools and share this information with the CoC and policymakers.
- ▶ Identify local, regional and national experts whose work may help inform the CoC of opportunities.
- ▶ Commit senior staff time to work with the CoC leadership and to participate in the project planning and implementation phases. Be an active and supportive partner and thought leader.
- ▶ Mobilize key community leaders who will be necessary for success. Prevention requires partnerships beyond the existent CoC partners and philanthropy can open the door to new partnerships.
- ▶ Offer to convene cross-sector key leaders on behalf of the CoC to participate.
- ▶ Engage public sector leaders, especially those that the CoC has not been able to cultivate and engage.
- ▶ Convene other funders to engage the community dialogue about the need for homelessness prevention and solutions. These can be both informal, social gatherings to more highly structured events with formal presentations.
- ▶ Philanthropy can hold the line on the need to be responsible for "results" not just "feel-good" work. Prevention requires a data disciplined approach to be ensure effectiveness and efficiency.
- ▶ Invest in and support HMI\$ and community data reviews and the dissemination of findings to determine greatest needs and potential for impact.
- ▶ Encourage public-sector participation in administrative data matching to use data from multiple systems of care to identify where people who become homeless come from, what services they use, what types of households they are.
- ▶ Invest in and require an outcome driven evaluation for pilot project(s).
- ▶ Create actionable knowledge.
- ▶ Host community conversations and forums to explore findings and gather input. Engage public leaders in these events. Offer practical ways that all can participate.
- ▶ Issue matching grant challenges.
- ▶ Create a funders collaborative.
- ▶ Invest in and encourage other philanthropic partners to invest in housing stabilization supports, rental assistance, and legal services and support the costs of the pilot evaluation.
- ▶ Offer public testimony about the needs and solutions.

This report was made possible through support from HealthSpark Foundation. The author is solely responsible for the content and information contained in this report. Findings, opinions and conclusions are solely those of the author of this report.



¹ Kramer, 2009, https://ssir.org/articles/entry/catalytic_philanthropy