



October 31, 2003

To: David Campbell, Chair, and Members of the Board of Trustees

From: David Egner, Tri-chair, Public Policy Committee
Rob Collier & Vicki Rosenberg
Brian Flahaven, Public Policy Fellow

Re: Public Policy Activities

The purpose of this report is to summarize the work of the Public Policy Committee, the Land Use Leadership Council and Foundation Liaison.

I. Public Policy Committee

The pace and scope of Public Policy Committee activities increased this summer with the arrival of Brian Flahaven, holder of the first CMF Fellowship in Public Policy & Philanthropy. We are grateful to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for its support of the Fellowship - the only one of its kind within a regional association of grantmakers. The Committee has continued its focus on the six issues of land use, early childhood, K-12 school reform, access to health care, welfare reform, and the safety net.

Goal One – to educate grantmakers about the practice of public policy engagement

In support of this goal, CMF:

- Developed and delivered an introduction to public policy for its new Institute for New Grantmakers held in September 2003 and made the introduction available on the “Working with Government” section of the CMF website;
- Is developing a handbook on public policy for foundations and nonprofits in partnership with MNA. The handbook will provide the what, why and how of public policy engagement; relevant rules and regulations; examples of strategies and outcomes from CMF and MNA members; and an in-depth interview with Pat Babcock. CMF and MNA will distribute the handbook to their members and make it available for free on their websites.
- Is offering 19 sessions on the Committee’s six focus issues at the 31st Annual Conference and providing all Conference attendees with a handout introducing them to public policy engagement, publication of the Handbook and resources available on the Working with Government section of the CMF website.
- Is developing content for the *Working with Government* section of the CMF website in order to: (1) provide member and nonmember foundations with basic information about the Committee’s six issues, current grants and public-private partnerships focused on these issues, resources, glossaries of terms and links; and (2) attract legislators, legislative staff, department directors, and the media to this area to inform them about CMF members’

perspectives on and activities in these six areas. The new section will be available for preview at the Annual Conference.

- Is planning two Briefings for 2004: a March briefing with Sharon Gire, Office of Services for the Aging, and a late spring briefing on Corrections.
- Is working with the Family Foundations' *Be Ready by Five* group, and the Foundation Liaison on an April 2004 Forum for Grantmakers and Policymakers on Early Childhood in order to: (1) raise awareness, educate, and motivate participants to learn more about and support early childhood; and (2) foster relationships between grantmakers and state officials to support information sharing and cooperation.
- Has published public policy articles in each issue of *Memo to Members*, *The Michigan Grantmaking Scene*, and *E-News*. Spring and Summer 2003 issues included articles on the new Foundation Liaison, workforce development, land use, community health, children and families.

Goal Two – to help members build relationships with State Officials & Policy Makers

Recent activities in this area include:

- With support from The Skillman Foundation, Public Sector Consultants is conducting interviews with ten new legislators in order to obtain information that can help us improve our communications and relationship-building strategies for this important audience.

II. Land Use Leadership Council

The Michigan Land Use Leadership Council, for which CMF has served as fiscal agent, completed its work in August and issued its report to the Governor, Senate Majority Leader Sykema, and Speaker of the House Johnson. The Report includes more than 150 recommendations, and the Governor is expected to announce her initial eight executive orders on November 3. She will likely talk about the Council in her remarks at the Annual Conference on November 12. The Legislature is still determining their legislative priorities from the Council Report.

An additional \$46,810 has been obtained from the six members that funded the Council (Mott, Kellogg, Frey, Dow, Americana and Wege) for a short-term communications plan through January 2004 with Pace & Partners, a Lansing public relations firm that will insure the Highlights piece – note back pocket – is well distributed to key stakeholders statewide. These activities will focus on informing the public and policy makers on the work of the Council but not advance any particular recommendation.

III. Foundation Liaison Office

We are pleased to include the initial progress report - starting with Overview - for the period April 1 through September 30 prepared by Karen Aldridge-Eason, Foundation Liaison for the Governor. This report has been provided to the initial funders of this office - the Hudson-Webber Foundation, the McGregor Fund, the Mott Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, and the Skillman Foundation.

Rob talks with Karen at least weekly. The first meeting of the Advisory Committee followed the June Board Meeting at the McGregor Center on the campus of Wayne State. The second meeting of the Committee – made up of the funders plus Chuck Wilbur, Director of Policy for the Governor, will occur in November by conference call.

OVERVIEW

The Office of the Foundation Liaison was established in April, 2003, through a joint effort between the Governor and several foundation leaders as an opportunity to increase strategic partnerships that focus on the common interest of foundations and state government. A special emphasis was placed on identifying partnerships in the areas of improving early childhood and land use management – two of Governor Granholm's top priorities and areas of significant interest to the philanthropic community.

Since starting on April 28, 2003, activity has focused on the four programmatic objectives (and one administrative objective) specified in the original proposal, as well as the Foundation Liaison Work Plan, which was approved by the Foundation Liaison Advisory Committee on June 6, 2003. Highlights of activities and developments in the defined objectives for the period ending September 30, 2003, are as follows:

Program Objective #1: To increase state officials' understanding of philanthropy and to identify opportunities for partnering with state government.

- Presented the objectives of the office to the Governor's Cabinet, which includes all gubernatorial appointed department directors;
- Presented the objectives of the office to representatives of the Executive Office divisions;
- Meets weekly with the Executive Office Policy Division staff; biweekly with the director of the Policy Division and the deputy chief of staff for policy and planning to discuss and identify ways to create linkages between state policy and foundation interests, as well as manage expectations;
- Works with the Governor's Education Advisor and staff of the Michigan Department of Education to develop appropriate materials and strategies for requesting funding for the Governor's early childhood initiatives. This has entailed developing potential funding ideas for *R.E.A.D.Y.* Kits and creating a *Great Start* Fund;
- Worked with the Governor's Health Advisor and staff of the Michigan Department of Community Health in developing a funding proposal for the proposed mental health commission;
- Redirected Executive and departmental staff to non-foundation resources, when appropriate and provided clarification on appropriate requests;
- Presented to Grand Valley State University, Dorothy A. Johnson School of Philanthropy Advisory Committee on the establishment and initial work of this office;
- Presented at the annual Michigan Nonprofit Association Public Policy Day on the work of the office and participated in a question and answer session on working with foundations and state government in these times of limited resources; and
- Met with House and Senate leadership, along with Rob Collier, Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF) President, to discuss the Land Use Leadership Council Report and foundation interest, and to facilitate relationship building.

Objective #2: To support models that improve efficiency and/or effectiveness of state government.

- Distributed materials to state department directors on the role of the Foundation Liaison – and efforts to prioritize requests to foundations related to initiatives of the Children’s Action Network;
- Identified grant support from the Skillman Foundation (\$20,000) for the development of an Arab American early childhood development *R.E.A.D.Y.* kit;
- Identified grant funding from the Flinn Family Foundation (\$220,000) to support the establishment and initial work of a mental health commission to look at the funding and service delivery system for how Michigan treats adults with serious mental illness and children with severe emotional disturbances;
- Initiated planning with CMF staff, representatives of the CMF Public Policy Committee, family foundations and corporate funders for one or more statewide gatherings in Lansing (to begin in early 2004) to connect funders interested in early childhood with the various state department managers and staff engaged in working with children and families to jointly develop initiatives to improve developmental, educational and health outcomes for young children;
- Working with the Michigan Children’s Ombudsman and the Judicial Training Institute to develop a proposal for a series of training for judges, prosecutors, advocates, attorneys, etc. who make decisions on the growth, development, and attachment of young children;
- Provide ongoing non-financial support – such as information, referrals, research and advice to state agencies, nonprofit staff and foundations; and
- Meet, talk, and participate in conferences with foundation leadership and staff to broaden knowledge of philanthropic resources, expertise and interest that may improve state government.

Objective #3: To respond to opportunities for new local and regional public/private partnerships to serve populations in the implementation of government programs.

- Monitored Land Use Leadership Council meetings and maintained contact with several foundations interested in strategic growth management, land-use reform and regional cooperation;
- Participated in meetings of the Michigan Ready to Succeed Partnership, Michigan Community Service Commission, Mentor Michigan, Children Action’s Network, Project Great Start, Michigan Public Health Institute, Benton Harbor Task Force, Benton Harbor Funders Consortium, Detroit/Wayne Health Authority and local governments to offer advice, make connections and share information related to potential collaborations between foundations, state agencies and nonprofits.

Objective #4: To attract new national grants and federal funds to Michigan.

- Recommended Sue Carnell, education advisor to the Governor, to participate on the opening panel for the Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families annual conference;

- Plan to attend the annual national conference of Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families in Detroit October 1-3, 2003 to meet staff and trustees from foundations outside of Michigan.

Administrative Objectives: To establish the state Office of the Foundation Liaison.

- Worked with Executive staff to set up the physical office within the Policy Division, set-up files, developed relationships with key Executive office and CMF staff, and attend appropriate administrative meetings; and
- Hired Maura Dewan, effective September 2, 2003, as a program associate to assist me in meeting the objectives of the Foundation Liaison Work Plan.

CLOSING

During this first six months, considerably more time than expected has been spent fielding general inquiries about the purpose of the office, clarifying assumptions regarding the type and amount of support that is potentially available from the philanthropic community, and offering advice and contact information to assist state agencies and nonprofits in responding to the fiscal crisis that exists as a result of the severe cuts in state funding. We are beginning to work with state officials (Treasury and Management & Budget) to develop a safety net that will allow us to refer state agencies and nonprofit staff to outside expertise for grant-writing training, strategic planning, including review of missions, goals and objectives, fund development, and consideration of mergers, and/or collaborations as state revenues continue to decline.