

Report to the Foundation Liaison Advisory Committee March 2006 – September 2006

Overview

During this reporting period the Office of Foundation Liaison (OFL) has worked on activities related to all four office objectives as well as several tasks associated with the administrative objective as outlined below. The five issue areas of focus for OFL – **early childhood development, education, health care, land use and workforce development** have all been addressed during this reporting period.

With the decision of the Advisory Committee members to continue support for the office beyond the original commitment, a very significant portion of staff time has been dedicated to obtaining additional financial support for the office through September 30, 2008 and to garner this from other types of foundations. Six community foundations and one out-of-state foundation have made grants to the Council of Michigan Foundations for OFL. Proposals are also pending with a corporate and a family foundation. The Phase II Assessment Report on the office has been printed and Phase III Assessment has been initiated with Grand Valley State University and sample database materials for Phase III are attached to this report. However, the clerical support position for the office is again open, after an unsuccessful hire. This position will most likely remain open until after the November Election.

As much of the time and energy of the executive branch and the legislature has been consumed by the impending election and partisan politics; we have dedicated less time to specific proposals for funding and concentrated our efforts during this interval on office administrative concerns, developing new relationships, research and learning, including site visits and briefings. This was done with the counsel of Dave Egner (Committee Chair) and Rob Collier and with the understanding of our Executive Office contact, Teresa Bingman, Deputy Chief of Staff for Cabinet Affairs and Management.

Nonetheless, we have continued to facilitate and help coordinate four briefings and one site visit as well as increased the total amount of financial support from foundations to the state to \$28 million. Our challenge, as well as opportunity as we move forward into 2007 is to make a successful position for this office and for the foundation community to be a strategic force post-election 2006. This will require a discussion at the Advisory Committee level that supports CMF's Public Policy Committee strategy and utilizes the staff and office as a critical tool for assisting the state in developing a strategic economic recovery plan and accompanying public policy initiatives.

The following work was accomplished by the Office of Foundation Liaison during this period:

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

Activities

- Completing and disseminating an assessment of the Office of Foundation Liaison.
 - Office assessment distributed separately.
- Developing bipartisan relationships with legislators and staff to increase the potential for more effective, strategic partnerships with state government that push system reform.
 - On hold pending election outcomes.
 - Meet with Majority staff members to discuss role of OFL and priorities of the legislature.
- Increasing the number and quality of interactions between foundations and state government. (i.e. joint site visits, listening/learning sessions and convenings)
 - Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative (MPRI) site visit to Mound and Ryan Correctional facilities. (workforce development)
 - Worked with CMF on the MEDC briefing. (workforce development)
 - Held two meetings with DNR to better understand departmental issues and to discuss potential opportunities for philanthropic support – follow up pending with land use funders. (land use)
 - Hosted and facilitated health briefing with state officials and foundations. (health)
 - Assisted with the planning of the Grantmakers for Women and Girls annual meeting.
- Continuing to support appointments of foundation staff to state boards, commissions, advisory councils and work groups where their expertise and knowledge can provide added value to program and policy development.

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

Activities

- Continuing to respond to opportunistic initiatives that have the potential to lead to real systemic change. (i.e. high school reform and correction policy changes)
 - Small High Schools briefing on health sciences themed curriculum (education)
 - Assisted with K-12 funders initial meetings with state education officials. (education)
 - Facilitated Goodwill Big Idea stakeholders meeting. (workforce development)
 - Work with CMF and Early Matters Funders in support of WKKF grant of \$6.5 million for the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC). (early childhood)

- Increasing outreach to Michigan foundations, in particular corporate, community and family foundations. (i.e. presentations and conferences)
 - Attend Detroit Area Grantmakers luncheon, Detroit program officers roundtable luncheons, CMF annual conference planning committee meetings, and CMF diversity workgroup.
- Encouraging more state/foundation partnerships at the research and planning phase and the assessment phase, not just for program implementation;
 - Briefed new Early Childhood Investment Corporation CEO on history of project and foundation involvement in early childhood. (early childhood)
 - Attended ECIC program and planning committee meetings and made staff recommendations. (early childhood)
 - Facilitated two research grants from W. K. Kellogg Foundation in support of recommendations of the Cherry Commission on Higher Education (\$400,000). (education/workforce development)
 - Facilitated discussions between W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Lumina and executive office staff regarding Michigan’s participation in Achieve the Dream. (workforce development/education)
- Increasing the number of contacts with state and national foundations to learn more about their priorities, demonstrations, successful initiatives and lessons learned to support the development of more strategic partnerships and more innovative programming and policy work in Michigan.
 - Attended Council of Foundations annual meeting.
 - Attended Foundations on the Hill.
 - Attended COF national workforce symposium.
 - Attended CMF’s meeting with COF president.
- Provide information and technical assistance regarding the creation of the Michigan Office of Foundation Liaison to other states/cities.
 - Talked with Louisiana Office of the Governor.
 - Talked with the Newark New Jersey’s Mayor’s Office.
 - Preparing for meeting with Communication Vice Presidents for the nations largest foundations (Oct 4 presentation).

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

Activities

- Working to link and layer change initiatives (workforce development, land management, community & economic development, education and health care to increase the impacts on quality of life in selected communities – Detroit, Benton Harbor, Grand Rapids and Flint.
 - Attended Hudson-Webber briefing on Wayne County gap analysis study. (workforce development)
 - Planning conversation between state officials and Detroit area grantmakers around placed-based grantmaking scheduled for October 6 (hosted by Skillman Foundation).

- Continuing collaborations with foundations, state agencies, universities and nonprofits to improve systems (i.e. workforce development, education, health care) through improved programming and policy changes.
 - Supporting community foundations participating in JEHT Challenge Grant - \$205,000 awarded to Grand Rapids Community Foundation to date. (workforce development)
 - Facilitating conversations and meetings between MDOC, foundations, and Public Policy Associates. (workforce development)
 - Engaged Mott Middle College/Early College High School (CS Mott Foundation supported) Principal with State education officials around best practices in early college high school reform. (education)
 - Engaged foundations and state agencies and nonprofits to support the ongoing program and policy needs of Hurricane Katrina evacuees in Michigan.
 - Assisting community foundations in ways to meet the JEHT Challenge and providing communications support to foundations in pilot communities through a consulting contract. (workforce development)
 - Met with the Michigan Food Policy Council staff and Governor's environmental policy advisor to help craft strategies for moving forward with Council recommendations. (land use)
 - Attending land use funders meeting, CMF public policy committee meetings, Early Matters meeting, and K-12 funders.

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

Activities

- Identifying and engaging more national foundations whose funding interest align with the five OFL priorities and may be interested in pursuing system reform at the state level.
 - Meet with the Joyce Funded Michigan Early Learning Project advisory committee. (early childhood)
 - New initiative with Joyce Foundation –Michigan Department of Corrections Ready 4 Work project funded at (\$600,000). workforce development)
 - Participated in briefings and planning sessions regarding Joyce Foundation new initiative Shifting Gears (Michigan proposal not funded). (workforce development)
- Working more closely with the state's Washington D. C. office to attract federal/national grants for priority areas.
 - Establish monthly meeting with Department of Human Services' team to identify opportunities to leverage foundation resources with federal grant awards and providing technical assistance to the team.

Administrative Objective: To maintain the state Office of the Foundation Liaison.

Activities

- Improving office research capacity to enhance partnership opportunities.
 - Reevaluating staff roles and job responsibilities.
- Developing a communications and technology strategy for the office.
 - Communications Plan distributed separately for FLAC approval.
 - Updating OFL Fact Sheet and developing story vignettes describing the role of OFL.
- Adding a part-time clerical position (supported by the state) to provide day-to-day office management support and improve response time to constituencies.
 - Second recruitment in progress for office support.
- Implementing an ongoing tracking system that compiles office data on the task/functions of OFL for ongoing performance improvement, evaluation and dissemination to interested parties.
 - Phase III evaluation underway (tracking system attached).
 - Worked with Community Research Institute on the test of new office database – demonstrated Aug 2006.
- Increasing and diversifying OFL funding base.
 - Worked with CMF staff to submit proposals for office support to 6 community foundations, one national foundation, one family foundation, one corporate foundation. (Budget report distributed separately)