

YOUTH IN PHILANTHROPY:

Orientation Sessions for New Youth Advisory Councils

The orientation session should have 3 goals:

- To introduce participants to one another in non-threatening, interactive ways.
- To provide information about the community foundation, and the Youth in Philanthropy program.
- To ensure a common understanding of the program, and obtain a level of commitment from those present to proceed further.

The session should be held in a comfortable, easy to get to facility with a relaxed atmosphere, and should last no more than 3 hours. Distribute a brief agenda for the session, along with printed background material that participants can take home for later review and clarification.

Remember that trying to cover too much information in one session may overload individuals and lead to confusion. Instead, focus on activities and discussions that get the participants learning about each other, talking and asking questions. Start with icebreakers, and use other interactive activities throughout the session. Ideas for activities are available in the Youth Power Facilitators' Handbook, as well as numerous other resource and library books. Keep the format as participatory as possible, ensuring that the young people present have ample opportunity to speak and be heard. Having refreshments available throughout, and scheduling a break is very important for every meeting.

Several community foundation board members should be present to provide information about the foundation, as well as to help give the foundation a human face. It is also important for board members to have some first-hand involvement with their foundation's Youth Advisory Committee and to meet the youth participants.

At the initial orientation, the number of youth participants will vary, depending on the extent of the foundation's preliminary recruitment. Some foundations will pre-determine and implement a recruitment plan, so that the initial orientation is for a largely complete Youth Advisory Committee. This can be done through requests to schools, advertising in local newspapers and youth publications or through a local youth organization. In this situation, however, it is important to provide clear information about the program, and the nature of the commitment that it will require, prior to the larger group orientation session. A pre-established group such as this will still be interested in discussing recruitment, as the youth themselves should be very much involved in deciding how, who and how many to recruit, and how they will phase in the recruitment policy that they develop.

It is important to keep in mind that the first year of the program will be a very flexible period of both planning and doing, and that it may take some time to develop the policies that will guide the Youth Advisory Committee over the long term. Thus, the initial Youth Advisor Committee may be selected by the community foundation, but recruitment policy and procedures may change as new members are required due to attrition, the need to bring in younger members, and/or the desire to have a larger or more diverse committee.

The following is a good basic agenda for all orientation sessions:

- 1) Welcome, introductions, review of agenda.
- 2) Introduce your community foundation.
- 3) Discuss concepts and definitions of terms such as philanthropy, community foundation and grants
- 4) Introduce Youth in Philanthropy program.
- 5) Break
- 6) Discuss community issues, needs and strengths, particularly as related to youth.
- 7) Discuss Youth Advisory Committee recruitment
- 8) Set date for next meeting and/or training session.
- 9) Adjournment