

Washington Women's Foundation

Strategic Plan "Refresh" 2014 – 2017

Overview

The 2010-2013 Strategic Plan has been a bold plan that called for major new initiatives and activities for the Foundation, while staying true to our core mission, vision and values. Listening to members as part of the Strategic Plan "Refresh" via focus groups, listening sessions, member surveys and task forces, we learned that these new programs have been enthusiastically embraced by members, board, staff, and the community. The process to "refresh" this Strategic Plan has allowed us to affirm the successful elements that WWF will institutionalize into its core work, and to modify or refashion other elements going forward.

What is Continuing

Because the Strategic Plan has proven to be an effective, dynamic blueprint for our work, the primary goals of this "Refresh" process have been to carefully review all elements of the initiatives launched during the last planning process, seek member feedback and make adjustments that incorporate the learnings of the last three years. The following initiatives from the previous Strategic Plan -- elements and programs that were designed to deepen the learning opportunities for members by offering more educational programs, more grant making opportunities and more connections across the community -- will now formally become part of the permanent platform of WWF. They are summarized here:

- Financial Strength and Stability
WWF members expressed their overwhelming support of our focus on the Foundation's financial strength. The annual membership contribution will be maintained at \$2,500 per member, with periodic reviews to assess whether contribution increases are necessary. We will continue to assure our long-term viability by:
 - Continuing to manage our business infrastructure in a cost-effective and efficient manner
 - Broadening the base of fundraising support for the Annual Fund
 - Continuing to grow the Endowment and building a Planned Giving program
 - Compensating our professional staff in a fair and competitive manner
- Partner Grants: Advanced Philanthropy and Learning
These accelerated grant making opportunities echo the best practices of our Pooled Fund Grant Committee, and enable an accelerated, nimble response.
 - International Partner Grants: honoring our members strong interest in global philanthropy, and learning about the work of local nonprofits in countries around the world
 - Diversity Partner Grants: making our commitment to diversity and inclusiveness actionable, and learning more deeply about the needs of specific communities
 - Emerging Issues Partner Grant: recognizing special interest topics and emerging needs, and learning about innovative solutions (shifting from the previous Innovation Partner Grant)Based on learning from the last 3 years of pilot experiences, several enhancements will be incorporated such as broadening our definition of 'partner', adjusting the timing of the committees, and introducing additional flexibility into the process.
- Robust Education Programs
Offering an array of compelling and relevant educational programs to members – more than 40 each year.
- The WWF Merit Award
Awarding \$2,000 and broadly recognize the high merit of the 5 organizations on our ballot not awarded the Pooled Fund Grants each year.
- Special Response Grants
Empowering the WWF President to make one-time grants up to \$10,000 annually to collaborate with other funders on local philanthropic initiatives, often in response to a community need or natural disaster.
- Enhanced Community Connections
Building bridges with others at the vanguard of philanthropy to access a broader base of knowledge, we will pursue new avenues of collaboration, and augment our portfolio of learning opportunities for members.

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- Membership Growth and Retention

Washington Women's Foundation is a growing community of dynamic women that includes diversity in age, profession, ethnicity, race, religion, physical ability, sexual orientation, neighborhood and philosophy. We are dedicated to expanding our membership to include a wide range of perspectives, opinions and experiences as we fulfill our mission to become effective leaders and philanthropists. Growth is essential for our organization and inclusiveness is a fundamental operating principle. We continually renew our membership ranks by attracting new women to join in our work. By increasing the number of women involved in WWF, we expand the financial support to our community and extend the impact of the Foundation. Our goal is to retain 90% of our members each year while attracting 10-15% new members every year. We welcome all women to consider membership.

What's New

Our recent Strategic Plan Refresh process reinforced that WWF is a vibrant community of women philanthropists, and the Foundation is in great shape. Our grant making programs, our diverse educational offerings and the robust infrastructure we've established are serving us well. But there is always more to do! Several top themes have emerged through member feedback channels that reflect the educational and philanthropic interests of our members. During 2014 and beyond, WWF will study these ideas and actively incorporate them into our practice.

- Continuing our focus on **membership growth**, with added emphasis on attracting younger members and diverse members
- Enabling new opportunities for members to **network** and learn together, with added **social** elements to selected programs, and program offerings at varied times of day
- Offering more programs focused on themes of **effective leadership and strategic governance**
- Introducing educational programs focused on **advocacy** as a strategic philanthropy skill

What has Endured: our Core Values

Now in its 18th year, WWF is a vibrant educational and grant making organization with 500+ members and \$13 million in cumulative grants. While we've grown and evolved over the years, the core principles that have guided our work have remained constant. The strategic "Refresh" work has affirmed and reinforced our commitment to the original culture and traditions of WWF, including:

- Our mission, vision & values
- Our 'flagship' Pooled Fund Grant Curriculum
- A rich array of educational opportunities for members on philanthropy and community needs
- A growing, dynamic membership – welcoming to all
- One Woman, One Vote – every member makes an equal annual contribution, commits to 5 years of membership, and has an equal vote in the final Pooled Fund outcome
- Individual Grants of \$1000 per member
- Member engagement flexibility: do a little, do a lot
- Impact on the community through large grants, and impact on our members through their personal experiences at WWF
- Endorsement of the network of women's philanthropy organizations across the country, inspired by WWF's model of collective giving

Concluding Thoughts

Thanks to the enthusiasm and participation of our members, Washington Women's Foundation is a major force in philanthropy in our region. Our model of large scale collective giving and member engagement inspires hundreds of women to be active leaders in philanthropy. WWF is uniquely positioned to continue to build on our solid platform and move forward in our model of giving, learning, and leading together!