



CNJG 2016 SPRING COLLOQUIUM

THE CHANGING PUBLIC CONTRACT = CHANGING EXPECTATIONS

A Conversation for the Social Sector

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2016 • 10:00 A.M. TO 1:30 P.M.
GEORGE STREET PLAYHOUSE • NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

Overview

On May 24, 2016 for the fifth time in ten years, the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers hosted its biennial Spring Colloquium. Approximately 200 members of New Jersey's social sector grantmakers and charities - converged on the George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick for a conversation featuring four national thought leaders on the topic of "The Changing Public Contract - Changing Expectations." The wide-ranging discussion was simulcast to the Council's peer organizations in New England and the Midwest, members of the Forum Network, the regional association of U.S. grantmakers and the largest group of its kind serving our nation's philanthropic sector.

The program's panelists were Moderator **Rob Collier**, president of the Michigan Council on Foundations, and the country's first regional association of grantmakers; **Emily Tow Jackson**, president of the Tow Foundation, a family foundation based in Connecticut and New York that creates breakthrough collaborations to address system reform with the goal of benefitting underserved populations; **Michael McAfee**, vice president at PolicyLink, the nation's leading research and action institute advancing economic and social equity and **Elizabeth Boris**, founding director of the Urban Institute's Center for Non Profits and Philanthropy, a seminal research center focused on the impact of our field and the policy issues that affect it.



Program Focus

The focus of the Colloquium's conversation - how privatization and de-funding of many services once provided by the public sector have led to the expectation that grantmakers and their non-profit partners will increasingly assume responsibility for these services - grew out of CNJG member interest in hearing more about philanthropy's innovative solutions to solving societal problems. Such solutions as Detroit's "Grand Bargain," the rising use of social impact bonds, and private citizens pooling donations to pay for public utilities like street lights, are just a few of the approaches that have received attention. No matter the solution, the roles of funders, both private and public, and the expectations for each, have been changing dramatically. No longer can it be assumed that the traditional "pact" that underlies the public contract between society and our institutions is intact. Instead, philanthropy is increasingly stepping in to ensure that despite diminishing resources, the urgent needs of society continue to be met.

Educate policymakers about what philanthropy can and can't do.

As the social sector's relationship with the public sector continues to rapidly change, it is incumbent upon grantmakers to help policymakers think about the sector in realistic terms. "We complement, supplement, and fill in the gaps in many ways, but non-profits represent 10% of the country's labor force and government is responsible for a third of the resources of our sector, maintaining \$137 billion in contracts," said Elizabeth Boris. It therefore isn't possible for philanthropy to directly relieve the burden of government and so the sector must effectively communicate about its ability to collaborate and leverage the resources that go into non-profits.



Use data strategically to protect social sector interests.

In Michigan, the social sector assumed that charitable tax credits would exist in perpetuity, but unfortunately, the state legislature revoked them in 2011. "We learned a tough lesson - we didn't have the data to prove the positive impact of the tax credits and only commissioned them after the fact," according to Rob Collier. Now in 2016, Michigan's lawmakers are considering reinstatement, due in no small part to the work of the Michigan Council on Foundations and others to quantify how non-profits were disadvantaged. "It's critical to get the information to the right people, through the right channels and to be sure they pay attention. When a neutral party presents the data, people listen," counseled Boris.

Partnering with government takes patience and humility.

To improve the juvenile justice system in Connecticut, the Tow Foundation endeavored to establish a collaborative relationship with representatives of state government. "In the beginning, they wondered about our motivations and things were somewhat adversarial. But we kept at it, conveying our interest in adding value where there might be gaps and that while we didn't know the answers we could offer the resources of a small foundation to help leverage their efforts," stated Emily Tow. Over 20 years, through the positive working relationship the Tow Foundation developed with its state's juvenile justice system, Connecticut evolved from being the state with the highest incarceration rate for juveniles in the country to the lowest.



Advocacy is a critical tool for philanthropy to employ in achieving change.

As public resources continue to dwindle, the need to engage in advocacy, particularly at the state level, is a necessity to make sure that policymakers are informed about the impact of their decisions on the nonprofit community. Board Source, in fact, has included advocacy on its top ten list of the basic responsibilities of board members.

In California, Michael McAfee's Policy Link worked with philanthropy to form the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color to improve the life chances of this segment of the population. An example of a successful outcome of the Alliance's advocacy was the passage of a ground breaking law eliminating suspensions for children in grades K-3 due to willful defiance, the suspension offense category with the most significant racial disparities. "We can't educate kids if they are being kicked out of school," stated McAfee. He also provided an example of how the social sector can be negatively impacted in the absence of advocacy. As the state of Illinois increasingly failed to pay its non-profit agency contracts in a timely manner, a private sector company stepped in to bridge the gap. In exchange for paying non-profits on time, they retained the interest payments formerly paid to non-profits for the state's late payments. "In the absence of advocacy, new economies are growing up to triage the issue. When we don't advocate, we're going to lose," he commented.

Harness the value of social media and technology to promote philanthropy's efforts.

The impact of social media and technology on how grant-makers and non-profits communicate about their efforts is outsized. With Giving Tuesday now the second most popular day of donating to social causes and the rise of crowd funding, smart use of this medium cannot be ignored. Policy Link's McAfee noted, "Social media pressures us to be more accountable and relevant. We should be using it to convey the same information in all its forms including infographics, tweets, and video." With this approach, a Policy Link staffer created all the police mapping for the Black Lives Matter campaign, which was provided to and ultimately used by *The New York Times*. At the Tow Foundation, Emily Tow urged being intentional about promoting grantees on social media by retweeting grantees' tweets. The Urban Institute's Boris underscored the importance of learning how to help people consume our data. "We have to tweet and blog in the way that people want to receive their information, not just by publishing a 100-page paper."



Leading up to the Conversation, attendees took time to network with their peers over breakfast, and then took their seats to be entertained at one of CNJG's signature arts experiences, a rousing performance by gospel singer Ruby Annette Evans, courtesy of the Newark Arts Council. Following the Conversation, all were invited to continue the discussion with one another over boxed lunches in George Street Playhouse's salons. Each attendee received a copy of John Casey's book, *The Non-Profit World: Civil Society and the Rise of the Nonprofit Sector* as a parting gift and remembrance of the day's meaningful discussion.

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Carlos M. Rodriguez
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Collier Shares, external advocacy be on top 10 list of good governance for trustees. [#publiccontract](#)
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The Fund for NJ
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Creative New Jersey
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“Data will open the door but we need to keep talking about aligning goals” - Elizabeth Boris [@urbaninstitute](#) [@CNJG](#) [#publiccontract](#)
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Michael McAfee- there is a crisis of institutional quality; we should act boldly to build capacity. [#publiccontract](#)
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Sharnita C. Johnson
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“We must liberate the creative genius of millennials!” [@CNJG](#) [@policylink](#) [#publiccontract](#)
 11:47 AM - 24 May 2016 New Brunswick, NJ, United States



Grantmakers of WPA
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Emily Tow Jackson: “One of the things about data is, it forces you to say “We have to change.” [#publiccontract](#) [@CNJG](#) Colloquium
 11:23 AM - 24 May 2016



Adam Perle
 @adamperle

Positive societal change doesn't happen in a single grant cycle. You have to be in it for the long haul. [#PublicContract](#) [@CNJG](#)
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Michael Unger
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Emily Tow Jackson: “The people closest to the problem are also closest to the solution” [#PUBLICCONTRACT](#)
 12:15 PM - 24 May 2016

About CNJG

The Council of New Jersey Grantmakers works to strengthen and promote effective philanthropy throughout New Jersey. The leading resource for networking and information for our state's philanthropic community, CNJG provides representatives of all types of grantmaking organizations access to valuable services and meaningful activities to advance their work. To see more, visit www.cnjg.org for more information.