

Summary: Post-Sandy Funder Briefing--Series I

Funder Briefing: #4

Date: November 26, 2012

Topic: Strategies to support long-term Planning Efforts - Baton Rouge Foundation

Speaker: John Davies, President - Baton Rouge Area Foundation

HIGHLIGHTS

Announcements

- NJ funders will receive an assessment of impact survey that CNJG is helping disseminate in partnership with FEMA and the Administration. Information garnered from members' grantees would be most helpful.
- Upcoming Webinar: CNJG, working in partnership with [Philanthropy NY](#) and the [Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers](#) has developed a webinar for funders through the regional association of grantmakers network. Wednesday, November 29, 2012, 3pm-4pm.
- CNJG Sandy Listserv announcement: Home Depot is offering discounts & rebates for Nonprofits

Lessons from the Rebuilding Phase - John Davies - [Baton Rouge Area Foundation](#) (BRAAF)

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation, a community foundation with \$548 million in assets, has been at the forefront of coordinating funding efforts, capacity building, civic improvement, and redevelopment after Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Rita, the Gulf of Mexico Oil Leak, among other initiatives. John Davies has served as president and CEO since June 1988. During his tenure, the Foundation has grown from \$3 million to \$608 million in assets.

- We didn't want to rebuild New Orleans the way it was before from an equity standard; Hurricane Katrina provided an opportunity to rectify a legacy of social challenges. FEMA will only repair back to previous status and sometimes that isn't sufficient. Funders had to be advocates for creating a more equitable, functional community especially in urban areas.
 - The negative images and press about Katrina, and the fact that the people waiting on rooftops to be rescued were virtually all black, and all poor, enabled leverage to advocate for rebuilding in more socially equitable ways.
 - Trying to encourage to consider long term viability of place is tough - but if you wait then communities forget some of the dangers.
 - BRAF conducted two surveys (20K responses) asking, "What takes precedent - the community or individual rights?" Pre-Katrina - majority of respondents said individual rights. Post-Katrina 55% said the welfare of the community trumps individual rights. Capitalizing on the latter sentiment quickly can be very beneficial.
- FEMA has tight restrictions for funding planning efforts, with rigid guidelines that do not always allow for new planning strategies. BRAF and partner funders created a fund to help rethink planning for long term sustainability and hired the planners to work with the communities. Discrete plans for neighborhoods and communities were developed along with a regional plan titled [Louisiana Speaks](#).

- BRAF had developed their capacity at the foundation for planning with their program, “Plan Baton Rouge.” That program was then ramped up and became a separate entity called the [Center for Planning Excellence](#), for which BRAF raised \$12M-\$14M for planning efforts.
- Building of mixed income housing - planning processes started 6 months after Katrina
- Regional plan took 9 months; local planning efforts were based off of community charettes
- BRAF hired outside planning firms for their credibility and expertise when tackling the issue of relocating whole communities to safer geographies, as funders can’t really say that to community members. The planning firms also worked closely with local planners.
- Need to have a voice about strategic, sustainable planning very early in order to gain traction
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - BRAF hired the psychologist who worked on the 9/11 mental health plan, April Naturale. She developed “[InCourage](#)” - a PTSD plan for New Orleans. Symptoms showed up in a more delayed way than anticipated, however.
 - PTSD programs were started too quickly (started 3-4 months after storm). Most issues started manifesting 12-18 months after the storm, which meant we burned up our resources too early.
 - Major hospitals were underwater. The majority of patients - be they suffering from mental health issues or general health issues - then came to Baton Rouge or were sent to Houston.

NGO Relationships and Networks

- Funds for faith-based organizations: Faith-based organizations were phenomenal - many were depleted financially and needed help from foundations to operate.
- There weren’t strong relationships with NGOs in south Louisiana - NJ doesn’t have that issue, but it caused problems for Louisiana. National foundations were calling other national foundations to find out what the needs were, rather than NGOs on the ground.
- Some NGOs weren’t responsive and had to be pulled into the process. That gave some large funding organizations pause because they didn’t know who to trust with funds.
- NGOs have longer view than government (who work on election cycles), so their participation is essential.

FOLLOW UP

- Elizabeth Murphy will send out the Long Term Recovery Group contact lists and the [NJVOAD](#) list as soon as she receives them from Cathy McCann. Currently NJ’s LTRGs are county-based.
- Denise Gilliam - **FEMA: [Community Planning and Capacity Building program](#)**. A Recovery Support Strategy is developed by FEMA for select communities, which are then approved and appointed by State. FEMA assessment isn’t ready yet, but FEMA will work with American Planning Association, Urban Land Institute, etc., once it is to provide support in planning processes. **Cost-share requirements may prevent some communities from executing some of the plans, which is an opportunity for funders to step in to help fill the gap.**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [Ocean County LTRG](#): second meeting is scheduled - contact Kathy Durante for more info
- Members are encouraged to use the Listserv to share requests, projects, ideas that members are hearing

Beginning on the first Monday after Hurricane Sandy struck New Jersey, The Council of New Jersey Grantmakers began hosting weekly conference calls for grantmakers in-state and nationwide, facilitated by CNJG President Nina Stack, to discuss their response to Sandy and strategies facing NJ as a result of the storm. Each conference call briefing offered expert guest speakers who represented government agencies (FEMA, HUD, HHS, etc.), national philanthropic leaders, expert psychologists with experience in PTSD, planners and community redevelopment leaders, and representatives from NJ’s Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, among others. The twenty-five audio files and written summaries are available at:

<http://cnjg.org/hurricane-sandy>