Assessing the Impact of a Faith-based Grantmaking Program

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"It's never too late to be what you might have been."

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Executive Summary

Grantmaking organizations play a unique role in civil society. In addition to providing financial support for nonprofit organizations, they function to vet and monitor nonprofit activities, mobilize community resources to address specific areas of need and educate the community (Porter & Kramer, 1999). They function as an intermediary between donor and grantees, so they must demonstrate impact to compensate for additional costs. This capstone was designed to help Hope for San Diego (HFSD), a faith-based grantmaking organization in San Diego, California, measure the impact of their grantmaking program on the affiliate (grantee) organizations. Patton, et al. (2015) propose a "theory of philanthropy" as a program theory to guide philanthropic organizations' decision-making and resource allocation. Their research suggested that an effective evaluation would test HFSD's "theory of philanthropy" by measuring the impact on the affiliate organizations. Coffman and Beer's (2016) framework for designing an evaluation of a philanthropic program guided this study. The evaluation is grounded in research on the identity formation of grantmaking organizations, the impact of financial support on nonprofit organizations, the role of volunteerism in nonprofit operations, and the intersection of religion, volunteerism, and philanthropy.

A mixed-method formative evaluation produced several salient findings:

Satisfaction with Funding

- The affiliates responded unanimously that they were very satisfied with the amount of the 2018 grant.
- The affiliates expressed unanimous satisfaction with the details requested and the amount of time needed to complete the HFSD grant application.

Importance of Volunteers

- All of the affiliates identified the quality and commitment of HFSD volunteers as characteristics that set them apart from other volunteers.
- A majority of the affiliates noted that the volunteer component is what distinguishes HFSD from other funders.
- A majority of the affiliates were not aware of HFSD's volunteer recruitment or volunteer management strategies.
- A majority of the affiliates suggested better coordination and communication would improve the "Day of Service" volunteer event.

Need for additional data and further evaluation

- The project uncovered data gaps in HFSD records.
- None of the affiliates were aware of the process HFSD uses to make its grant decisions.
- Tracking volunteer referral hours is time-consuming and inaccurate.
- Some of the grant reports were missing or not complete.

Health of the Overall Relationship

- All of the affiliates described a positive relationship with HFSD and several referenced frequent contact by the HFSD Executive Director as a distinctive quality of the grantmaking program.
- All of the affiliates reported that the HFSD Executive Director was very responsive, and they would have no hesitation contacting HFSD if a problem arose.
- None of the affiliates reported any pressure to modify their program to conform to HFSD funding requirements.

Based on these findings and relevant research, implementing the following recommendations will increase the impact of the grantmaking program:

1. **Build HFSD's identity as a strategic grantmaker**
   (Patrizi & Thompson, 2011)
   a. Maintain flexibility in funding
   b. Increase support for capacity building

2. **Adopt a Volunteer Stewardship Framework**
   (Brudney et al., 201)
   a. Increase coordination and training for "Day of Service"
   b. Educate affiliates on the volunteer recruitment process
   c. Stop tracking hours for volunteers referred to affiliates

3. **Prioritize Organizational Learning**
   (Boris & Kopczynski Winkler, 2013)
   a. Launch a dashboard to monitor volunteer/donor/church partner metrics
   b. Establish a collaborative grant reporting process
   c. Continue the developmental evaluation process by gathering feedback from other key stakeholders: donors/volunteers/church partners

These recommendations build on HFSD's identity as an architect of change in the grantmaking community and align with its relational approach to the affiliates. To date, they have operated with a very lean staff and a small Board, but they plan to add two affiliates in 2021 and two more in 2023. Implementing the recommendations will strengthen their relationship with the affiliates as the organization grows. However, they depend on a commitment of resources toward training and will likely require additional staff. To move forward with current resources, I recommend introducing changes in incremental stages and have provided a calendar with implementation phases.

Introduction

Hope for San Diego (HFSD) is a faith-based grantmaking organization founded by North Coast Presbyterian Church as North Coast Christian Ministries in 2003. After North Coast Presbyterian merged with another church to become Redeemer Presbyterian Church in 2013, they established Hope for San Diego as an independent 501c3 organization to manage its ministry activity in the community. HFSD now has five other church partners committed to donate a percentage of their annual budget to HFSD and provide volunteers for HFSD projects. The HFSD staff is very small. An Executive Director supervises a Community Engagement Director. They previously employed a part-time Volunteer Coordinator but are waiting until 2021 to hire a replacement. HFSD's relationship with Redeemer Church remains strong but is not exclusive. They have also grown an individual donor base that extends beyond the church community through fundraising events and outreach.

The stated mission of Hope for San Diego is to engage the community "to care for and invest in our under-served neighbors." The vision statement that they share on their website is "to see a renewed city where even the most vulnerable thrive." To this end, HFSD currently awards annual grants between $10,000 - $15,000 to nonprofit organizations that are doing work with four vulnerable communities: the homeless, foster care children, sex-trafficking survivors, and refugees. They vet these organizations during a lengthy process that includes interviewing the organization's leadership, organizing volunteer workdays on the candidate's site, and reviewing their financial documents. The vetting process typically extends over a year or more and allows HFSD to engage extensively with the organization. After approval, HFSD refers to the organization as an "affiliate" and commits to annual funding, provided that they continue to meet the grant guidelines (Appendix A). The affiliate organizations apply for annual funding through a grant application (Appendix B), and HFSD requests that the affiliates submit a short report at the end of the grant period (Appendix C). There are currently eight affiliates and four organizations in the vetting pipeline. The Executive Director anticipates giving two of them affiliate status in 2021 and two more in 2023. HFSD also functions to connect church partners and donors to these vulnerable communities by coordinating volunteerism at the affiliate sites to foster a sense of partnership and identification with those in need. Each affiliate commits to hosting HFSD volunteers for an annual "Day of Service" in July and informing HFSD of additional volunteer opportunities throughout the year.

HFSD's staff recruits volunteers from within its partner churches and uses social media to recruit individual volunteers from the general community. Figure 1 depicts HFSD's role as an intermediary organization, using resources from church partners and the larger community to provide funding and labor for the affiliate organizations. This connection creates a bridge between more affluent San Diegans and refugees, homeless individuals, foster care families, and sex-trafficking survivors. By encouraging social interaction between donors and volunteers in the community and the affiliate's clients, HFSD facilitates the creation of trust and builds a sense of community (Chinnock & Salamon, 2002).

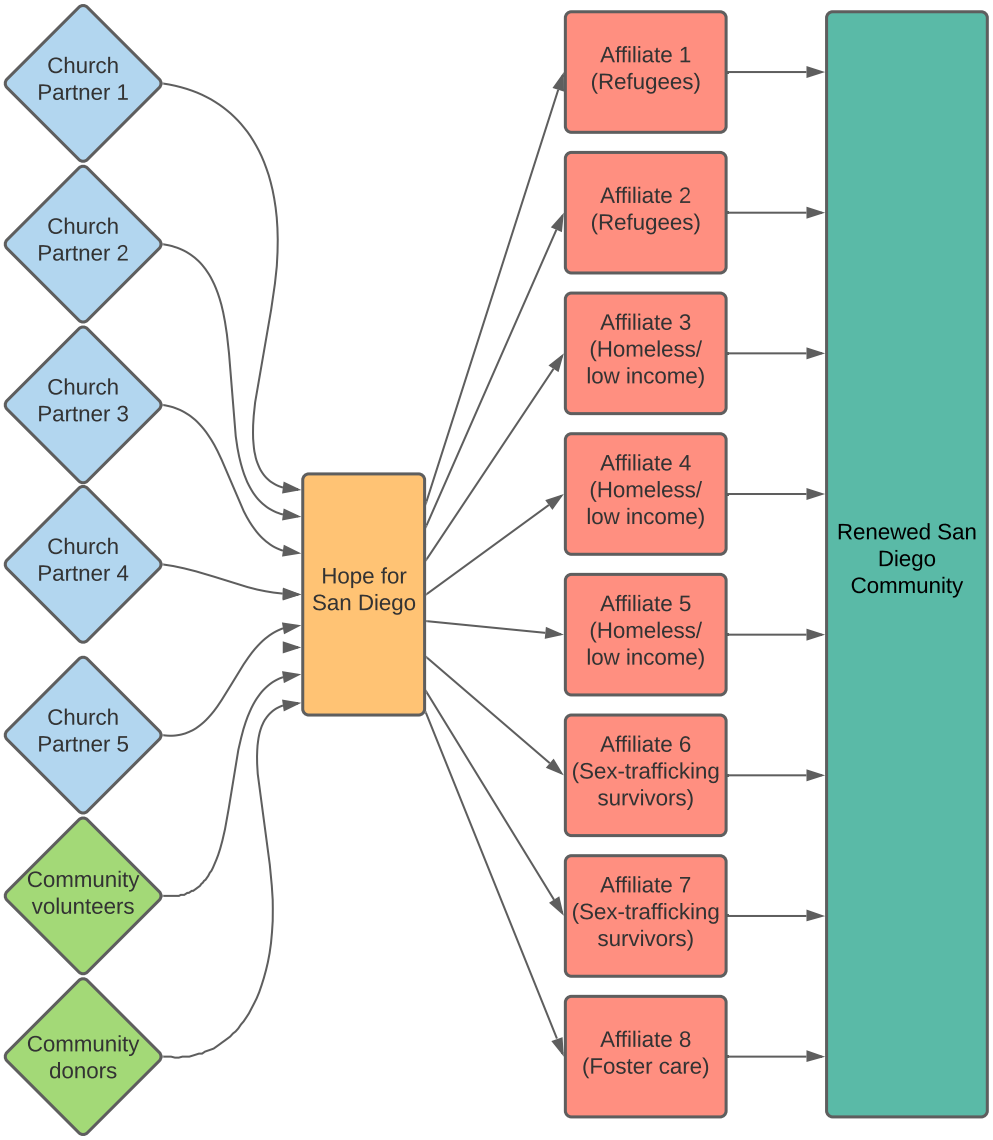

Figure 1. HFSD mediates a relationship between churches, donors, volunteers in the community and refugees, homeless individuals, foster care families, and sex-trafficking survivors.

Problem of Practice

Porter and Kramer (1999) describe how grantmaking organizations are intermediaries between individual donors and the organizations they support. Individuals and local churches can donate directly to the organizations that HFSD supports, so HFSD must demonstrate value to the donor and the affiliates to compensate for its operational costs. HFSD currently supports eight affiliates and plans to add four more affiliates in the next three years. With that plan in mind, this

capstone was designed to measure the grantmaking program's current impact and identify strategies to increase its impact in the context of organizational growth.

Program Theory

Program theory is broadly defined as how an organization will use its resources to create change (Rossi et al., 2019). More specifically, Patton et al. (2015) define a "theory of philanthropy" as a framework that guides a charitable organization to use its resources to achieve its mission and vision. A well-articulated theory of philanthropy drives alignment between the organization's mission and vision, operating procedures, grantmaking guidelines, organizational priorities and evaluation procedures, and donor intent. It guides the organization in determining effective strategies. They note that without alignment, the organization will be inefficient in using its resources and less effective overall (Patton et al., 2015).

Theory of Philanthropy

HFSD's theory of philanthropy hinges on the assumption that impact involves more than supporting the affiliate organizations' financial success. This capstone project tests HFSD's theory of philanthropy: financial grants plus volunteerism, community education, and a high-level of engagement with the affiliates will create a positive impact by connecting community members to vulnerable populations and enhancing the work of the affiliate organizations (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. HFSD's theory of philanthropy: Financial Grant + Volunteer Placement + Community Education + Affiliate Engagement = Impact

Logic Model

A logic model depicts how the HFSD theory of philanthropy links planned action to the desired impact articulated by the organization's mission (Patton et al., 2015; Casanueva, et al., 2018). It also allows for a test of this program theory by examining the assumptions made in the model (Rossi et al., 2019). HFSD's goal is to connect people in the community with resources to share and the affiliate organizations' clients. They envision multidimensional relationships developing between people in these two groups through education, investment, and personal connection. These relationships go far beyond the outcomes produced by a traditional financial grant and can be hard to measure. However, Casaneuva et al. (2018) recommend including relationships like this on the logic model (see Figure 3).

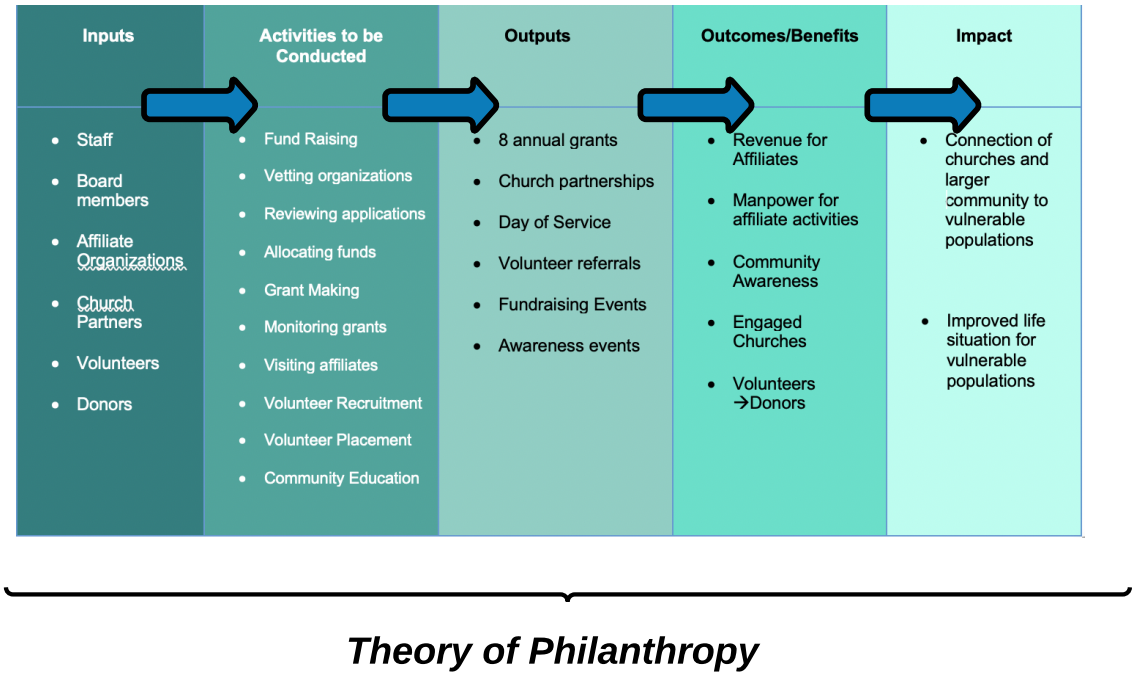

Figure 3. The logic model depicts how HFSD mediates inputs of time, talent, and revenue through its grant, volunteer, and community education programs to connect the community to vulnerable people and improve services.

Epstein and Yuthas (2019) note that an organization must connect its activities to its intended impact. The Board and staff of HFSD describe the value of their role as a combination of tangible and intangible support by providing:

For the donor:

- Vetted organizations
- Organized volunteer opportunities
- Educational events on topics affecting vulnerable communities

For affiliate organizations:

- Funding
- Organized volunteer groups
- Connections to other organizations and funders
- References for consultants and professional development opportunities
- Increased public awareness through educational events

Bryson and Patton (2012) describe stakeholders as individuals or organizations that can affect the evaluation or will be affected by its results. “Key stakeholder” is a subjective term but helps the organization order its priorities. They advise involving key stakeholders in the design of an evaluation to increase its value to the organization. The HFSD Board President and the Executive Director will be the primary users of the evaluation report and determine how to implement the recommendations. They identified the following key stakeholders and decided to narrow the focus of this evaluation project to the staff of the affiliate organizations.

HFSD Key Stakeholders

- Affiliate Clients: individuals and families served by the eight grantee organizations
- Affiliate Staff: staff members of the eight grantee organizations
- Volunteers: Individuals who volunteer directly with HFSD (HFSD events and “Day of Service”) and those who HFSD refers to the affiliates for long-term volunteer positions (e.g., tutor, host family, foster family, meal provider)
- Donors: Individuals who make a one-time or monthly commitment to HFSD
- Partner Churches: six churches in San Diego County that commit to contribute and provide volunteers to HFSD.
- HFSD Staff: Executive Director and Community Engagement Director
- HFSD Board: Eight Board members
- HFSD Grant Committee: Six committee members

Framework

Coffman and Beer (2016) detail the need to assess the fit between a foundation's approach to grantmaking and its evaluation tools. They propose three questions to guide the grantmaking organization that has guided the design of this evaluation:

(1) What does the foundation need from evaluation given “who” it is, what it does, and how it works?
(2) In response to those needs, how should the evaluation function be structured and scoped?
(3) What should the evaluation culture be? (Coffman & Beer, 2016).

(1) *What does the foundation need from evaluation given "who" it is, what it does, and how it works? (Coffman & Beer, 2016).*

In response to the first question, the Board and staff of HFSD have positioned the organization as a problem-solver by educating the community, supporting organizations that meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations in San Diego, and then connecting like-minded people in the community to these underserved neighbors. The approach of problem-solving philanthropy, in which the funder acts as an architect, is to bring together community resources to solve a problem (Brest, 2012). A problem-solving organization will require specific resources to support that identity through its grantmaking program. HFSD has made assumptions until now, but this evaluation provides valuable insight into the affiliate organizations' perspective and how they measure the impact of the HFSD grantmaking program.

(2) *In response to those needs, how should the evaluation function be structured and scoped? (Coffman & Beer, 2016).*

The second question concerns the structure and scope of evaluation (Coffman & Beer, 2016). Boris and Kopczynski Winkler (2013) describe the benefit of internal processes to measure grantmaking programs' performance, and Britt and Coffman (2012) recommend a targeted evaluation. Hope for San Diego has constructed a unique program theory. According to the Executive Director and Board President, the organization exists to transform the donors, volunteers, and clients served by the affiliate organizations. However, for this capstone, the evaluation is focused on the impact on the affiliate organizations. The executive team of HFSD defines the impact on the affiliate organization as the extent to which HFSD helps the organization realize the goal that they described in their grant application. Some affiliates measure the impact by program expansion, and for others, the desired impact will be increased organizational health and maturity. Coffman et al. (2013) caution that a grantmaker must dig much deeper than counting the grantee organizations' superficial outcomes. This evaluation considered that caution and the design provided an opportunity to excavate and identify impacts on the affiliate organizations that might not be known to Hope for San Diego.

(3) *What should the evaluation culture be? (Coffman & Beer, 2016).*

Finally, in response to the third question, by inviting the affiliates to assess the effectiveness of the grantmaking program, HFSD framed the evaluation process as a collaborative learning project that aligns with strategic philanthropy (Coffman & Beer, 2016). This research project aims to utilize a customized and "situationally appropriate" evaluation system to increase HFSD's understanding of how the affiliate organizations view the program. This study's findings will inform recommendations for strategies to maximize the impact of the grantmaking program going forward (Britt & Coffman, 2012).

Literature Review

Coffman and Beer's (2016) framework questions guided the literature review. Relevant research on the identity of a grantmaking organization, the scope of work (funding for programs and capacity building, and volunteer management) guided the process of selecting the most

appropriate interview instruments and understanding HFSD's distinctiveness in the grantmaking field. Research on the relationship between religion, volunteerism, and philanthropy provided support for HFSD's program theory and shaped recommendations to increase the impact of its grantmaking program.

Identity of the Grantmaker

Much of the literature focused on small foundations are relevant to Hope for San Diego because of its identity as a grantmaker. A grantmaking foundation is an intermediary that connects the donor through the recipient organizations to the clients (Porter & Kramer, 1999). Scherer (2017) describes how a grantmaker's organizational identity affects how it engages the community in its work. A community-building grantmaker focuses on a narrow geographic area and harnesses resources to improve the community through advocacy, support for programs, and capacity building. They create a "web of connectivity" that leverages social capital (Sander & Putnam, 2010). Grantmakers can also build unity in the community by building trust and connections (Chinnock & Salamon, 2002). Chinnock and Salamon (2002) describe how nonprofits independent of government or for-profit companies tend to be more trusted by the community. Patrizi et al. (2013) describe how grantmakers are also positioned to help the community to build and learn together because of their vantage point at the cross-section of systems, other organizations, and people. Foundations have the resources to import experience from those on the front line and expertise from research and other professionals in the field (Patrizi et al., 2013). Because of their centralized positions, foundations can create value beyond the monetary impact of the grant (Porter & Kramer, 1999).

According to Porter and Kramer (1999), foundations create value by:

- Vetting organizations
- Signaling value to other donors
- Improving performance/capacity of grantee organizations
- Setting agendas and advancing knowledge

However, Porter and Kramer (1999) note that when donations go through a foundation, rather than directly from the donor to an organization, the grantmaker and the recipient organization incur additional costs. The grantmaker needs to fund its operating costs, and the recipient incurs new costs in complying with the grant application and reporting requirements. Foundations improve the value as a vehicle for funding if they go beyond merely providing funds and become a full partner to the recipient organization and help it become a more effective organization. Capacity-building grants are the first step, but a partnership can provide expert management advice, access to professional consultants, and networking with community members.

Porter and Kramer (1999) describe how foundations are also positioned to study relevant issues and educate the community on their partner organizations and their clients' needs. They should also clearly articulate their unique contribution to addressing these challenges in the field.

Financial Grants

Financial grants are an integral part of the HFSD program and so literature on the impact that grant money makes is relevant. Research indicates a direct link between financial health and nonprofit longevity so that the grantmaker can impact both the organization's immediate and future prospects (Chikoto-Schultz & Neely, 2016). Bowman (2011) discusses the importance of balancing short-term capacity with long-term sustainability. Financial grants can help a nonprofit absorb economic turbulence in the short term, and capacity building grants can prevent the organization from depleting its resources in the long-term horizon (Bowman, 2011). HFSD makes grants to affiliates for program expenses and capacity building, and there is evidence that grantmakers play a vital role in ensuring the success of capacity-building initiatives (Knepper et al., 2015). Capacity encompasses the organization's resources (human and material) that enable it to operate on a professional level. Increasing capacity is a complex and interdependent undertaking and systemic and iterative approaches tend to produce better results (Cornforth & Mordaunt, 2011). Increasing organizational capacity may involve recruiting, training, and retaining skilled staff. Strategic philanthropy requires that a grantmaker articulate how each activity adds value and developing the competencies to execute this strategy (Patrizi & Thompson, 2011).

Volunteer Support

Volunteerism is also a feature of HFSD's relationship with its affiliates. Volunteers can impact the nonprofit organization's bottom-line when their contribution of time and effort reduces expenses (Bowman, 2009). However, both Bowman (2009) and Studer (2016) caution that organizations should not see volunteers as substitutes for paid staff but as a separate stakeholder group. Managers need to plan for recruiting, training, and supervising volunteers to increase volunteer productivity (Bowman, 2009).

An individual's confidence in an organization's fiscal responsibility heightens interest in volunteering with that organization. However, the act of volunteering also provides an opportunity for an individual to gain insight into an organization and evaluate first-hand how it is using funds (Bowman, 2009). This connection between volunteerism and charitable giving may have a direct implication for donor cultivation in HFSD. If a volunteer is allowed to observe the workings of an organization, they may be more comfortable donating to support their work (Bowman, 2004). Research also indicates that the volunteer experience also impacts the individual's trust level in civic organizations in general. According to Bowman (2004), if the volunteer experience creates a favorable impression, this generates a high-level of trust in charitable institutions overall, independent of the individual's volunteer status with other organizations.

Relationship Between Religion, Charitable Giving, and Volunteerism

The role of a faith-based grantmaker like HFSD is unique because of the interrelationships between religious identification, charitable giving, and volunteerism. Religious activity is an indicator of prosocial motivation (Perry et al., 2008). The literature also identifies compassion as a prosocial motivator that increases dedication to a cause because it builds an

emotional connection to the suffering of others (Miller et al., 2012). Further, compassion can create a prosocial identity and motivate the individual to act in accordance with that identity (Miller et al., 2012). Research into motivation for prosocial behavior in Christian communities indicates that liberal and conservative Christians alike cite Jesus' teaching and example as an influence on the prosocial behavior of helping others (Einolf, 2011). Cormode (1994) described an emerging trend in evangelical communities that combined conservative faith with spiritual motivation to care for others. This research is relevant for HFSD as its partner churches look for ways to engage with the community.

The literature also supports a correlation between religion and charitable giving. Religion provides a framework that encourages and supports benevolence (Wang & Graddy, 2008). Ranganathan and Henley (2008) define religiosity as a combination of religious beliefs, frequency of worship attendance, and self-reported importance of spiritual values. Research indicates that religiosity directly affects an individual's prosocial attitude toward helping others (De Abreu et al., 2016; Ranganathan & Henley, 2008). Religiosity also positively affected attitudes toward charitable organizations and behavioral intentions (Ranganathan & Henley, 2008). Teah et al. (2014) presented research that identified religiosity as a significant moderator of philanthropic behavior.

Research indicates that people involved in religious activities are more likely to volunteer and demonstrate higher volunteerism levels overall (Forbes & Zampelli, 2014). Besides motivating prosocial behavior, religious organizations effectively mobilize volunteers (Taniguchi & Thomas, 2011). In turn, volunteer experiences often create opportunities for people to interact with people from various cultural, religious, and economic backgrounds. They can foster a generalized trust in people who are different (Taniguchi & Thomas, 2011). This regional-level trust creates a self-fulfilling cycle in which people are more likely to volunteer, elevating their trust level (Glanville et al., 2015).

The practice of volunteering is also a reliable predictor of charitable giving (Wang & Graddy, 2008). Wang and Graddy (2008) link volunteerism to charitable giving through first-hand knowledge of the need, increased knowledge about the charitable organization's mission, and a better understanding of their work gained through volunteerism. Research indicates that an awareness of a need is the first step toward charitable giving, and awareness of need increases when individuals know the beneficiaries of a charitable organization (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). The less distant a person feels from a beneficiary, the more likely they are to make a financial donation (Bekkers, 2010). Additionally, the subjective perception of need is more significant in predicting a donation's likelihood than the objective need of the recipient organization or its clients (Wagner & Wheeler, 1969). This relationship is relevant to HFSD's role in sharing stories of the affiliate's work with potential donors. A personal connection to a victim increases the likelihood of giving to other people similarly affected (Small & Simonsohn, 2011). As with volunteerism, spiritual motivation for charitable giving starts with identifying with others' needs (Schervish, 1997). Schervish (1997) extends this notion to suggest that religion encourages the individual to link their destiny to the destiny of other members of their community.

Schervish (2005) notes that individual donors are predisposed to financial generosity because of the same prosocial mindset resulting in volunteerism. De Abreu et al. (2015) reported a positive relationship between volunteerism and charitable giving, and their study results indicated that volunteers had a higher likelihood of becoming regular donors. Their findings confirmed Schervish's (1997) research results, which indicated that the more individuals volunteer, the more they donate to religious organizations. However, later research found an inverse relationship between levels of volunteerism and donations to secular organizations. This dynamic may make the religious identity of HFSD a factor for a donor who identifies with its faith-based orientation even though some of the affiliate organizations are secular. Research suggests a close relationship between volunteerism and charitable giving for religious donors (De Abreu et al., 2015). Wang and Graddy (2008) advise that organizations provide opportunities for people to volunteer to build a sense of connection to the organization. They hypothesize that this connection will lead to a greater understanding of the organization's needs, increase their trust in the organization, and ultimately yield increased financial donations (Wang & Graddy, 2008).

Research in other faith communities is relevant. Opportunities for active participation in the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund's work produced increased donations from members and served to engage a younger generation of donors (Miller et al., 2014). Engaging members more actively built relationships with donors and volunteers and provided access to their social and professional networks for additional fundraising (Miller et al., 2014).

Research Questions

Patrizi et al. (2013) describe a required shift in thinking for foundations to become learning organizations and to improve their strategies as they grow in capacity. To evolve, Patrizi et al. (2013) propose that the Board and staff will need to change the types of questions they ask and the kind of information they value. Effective impact assessments measure what is actually taking place rather than what had been planned. Value creation considers both the financial and the non-financial dimensions of the recipient organization, and the learning organization measures both to determine the return on investment and impact (Viviani & Maurel, 2019). HFSD's theory of philanthropy elevates the non-financial components of the partnership between HFSD and the affiliate organizations. The priority of volunteer involvement demands that an evaluation of the HFSD grantmaking program's impact takes the volunteer component and overall relationship into account in addition to the financial dimension.

Research Questions:

1. How do the affiliates define the impact of the HFSD grantmaking program?
2. How, if at all, does the impact of an HFSD grant vary across affiliate organizations?
3. How, if at all, is HFSD distinctive as a grantmaker?
4. Are there organizational issues that pose obstacles to maximizing the impact of the grant program?

Methods

This study focused on the "affiliate" organizations, one of the primary stakeholder groups in the grantmaking program. With a small pool of affiliates, it was possible to design a research project that included each affiliate and allowed their feedback to guide the research process. In light of this, the study employed a mixed-method approach to gather the data and included subjective feedback from the affiliates that received grants in 2018. It included quantitative and qualitative methods to determine how the affiliates perceived HFSD's impact, how they measured it against other grantmakers, how the level of impact might vary across affiliates, and identify obstacles that decrease the impact of an HFSD grant. The findings, along with the relevant literature, dictated the final recommendations for increasing the impact of future HFSD grants.

Interviews and Surveys

I conducted confidential semi-structured interviews with the staff member responsible for grants management from five affiliates: three with annual revenue over $750,000 and two interviews with the sole staff member in organizations with annual revenue under $300K. Two of the three remaining affiliates that received grants in 2018 responded through a survey that contained identical questions to the interview but included Likert scale responses for sixteen questions to reduce the time required for response. The final grant recipient did not have a local staff member to provide feedback. The interview and survey questions were constructed to gauge the affiliate's organizational needs and the degree to which HFSD supported the affiliate with volunteers, training, and creating connections in the community.

The thirty-five interview and survey questions were divided into four thematic areas: funding, volunteers, community education and connections, and the affiliates' perception of its relationship with HFSD (Appendix D). The majority of the questions came from the Center for Effective Philanthropy's public grantee reports. To ensure that the questions were situationally appropriate, as Britt and Coffman (2012) advise, I added questions that are specific to the HFSD model. These questions came from an affiliate survey developed by Hope For New York, an organization that served as an early model for Hope for San Diego. The questions were designed to address each of the research questions and allow the affiliates to describe how they make meaning of the relationship with HFSD (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Confidentiality is an important mechanism to address the power imbalance between funders and recipients (Patrizi & Thompson, 2010). Three of the interviews took place on-site in private offices and recorded with permission from the interviewee. One of the on-site interviewees asked for input from two other staff members who have regular interaction with volunteers from Hope for San Diego. A fourth interview was held via a Zoom video call at the interviewee's request, who was not feeling well enough to be in the office but preferred to do the interview that day. The fifth interview was conducted by phone. Through the interview process, I gathered information on the degree to which HFSD met the affiliate's funding needs in 2018 and sought to identify possible obstacles in the grant application or reporting process.

Document Review

In addition to interviewing/surveying staff from seven of the eight affiliates, I reviewed HFSD and affiliates' documentation. I conducted a content analysis of organizational records to capture the financial dimensions of the grants, demographic reach of the affiliate organizations, and data on HFSD donors and volunteers:

- Grant guidelines published by Hope for San Diego (Appendix A)
- Grant applications submitted by the affiliates for the 2018 grants
- Grant reports submitted in December 2018
- 2018 Organizational budgets and 990s (available for seven of the affiliates)
- Volunteer utilization records

Findings

The evaluation was divided into four thematic areas: funding, volunteers, community education and connections, and the affiliates' perception of its relationship with HFSD.

Funding

In 2018, HFSD distributed $90,000 across eight organizations.

- 30% to affiliate organizations serving refugees
- 25% to affiliate organizations providing enrichment programs for low income or homeless youth
- 20% to organizations serving sex-trafficking survivors
- 15% to an organization providing housing for the homeless
- 10% to an organization serving foster families

The grants represented less than 1% of the total revenue for the large affiliate organizations. The proportion of budget varied more widely in small organizations. The $10,000 grant represented 5.8% of one small organization's budget and 23.8% of another.

Populations Served by 2018 Grants: 1,403 clients

- Housing & training for homeless: One (1) organization served 475 clients
- Educational support & enrichment for low income/homeless: Two (2) organizations served 423 students
- Foster care families: One (1) organization matched 210 children and 140 parents (350 overall)
- Refugees: One (1) organization served 80 refugee students. The second organization had not yet launched a local program
- Sex trafficking survivors: Two (2) organizations served 75 clients=

Satisfaction

The affiliates were unanimous that they were "very satisfied" with the 2018 grant amount, and two respondents explained that the Executive Director had given them advance notice for planning purposes.

Focus

The majority of the 2018 grants supported existing programs. Two expanded programs and one used it for capacity building.

Needs

The respondents all identified program funding and capacity building as high needs. Three affiliates identified community education, in-kind donations, and community connections as high needs.

Grant Application and Guidelines

- Feedback was unanimous and very positive regarding the grant application. They described the application as "just enough, but not cumbersome."
- Two noted that they were grateful that HFSD did not impose a waiting period to reapply for grants.
- Three affiliates noted that specific funding for ongoing operating costs and a commitment to multiple-year funding would be beneficial.
- None of the affiliates were aware of the process HFSD uses to make its grant decisions. =

Volunteers/Donors

There were gaps in HFSD's volunteer records that made it challenging to report precise volunteer activity for 2018. For this research project, the staff executed the time-consuming task of retrieving data on volunteer activity and donor gift histories from multiple sources. They were confident in the tally of "Day of Service" volunteers but explained that volunteer referrals are much more difficult to track because they do not report to HFSD once they make the referral.

Donor gift histories were complete and easily retrievable, but there was no system for categorizing a donor as a volunteer, so that had to be done manually. A cross-check of the volunteer and donor records indicated that there were 749 volunteers, and only 20% of them made a donation. On the other hand, donors were more likely to be volunteers. Of the 292 donors, 51% also volunteered (see Figure 4).

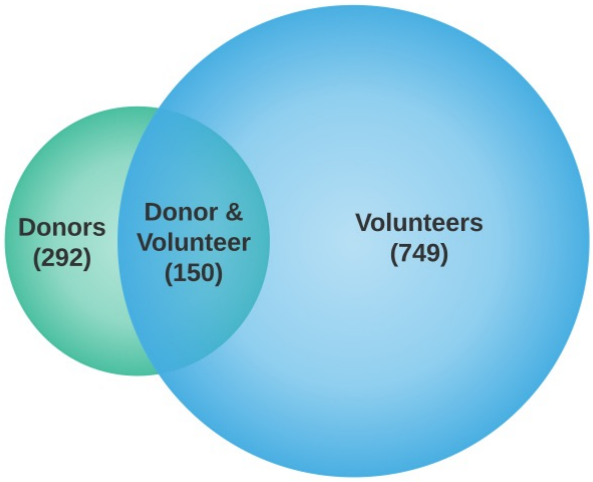

Figure 4. 2018 Volunteers and Donors

Volunteer Engagement

- "Day of Service": 413 volunteers (56% of volunteer base)
  - 50% assigned to an affiliate organization
  - 50% assigned to a community organization
- Ongoing Volunteer referrals to affiliate organizations: 179 (24% of volunteer base)
  - Volunteers referred to non-affiliates:106 (14% of volunteer base)
  - HFSD event/general volunteers: 51 (7% of volunteer base)

Organizational Need

- Three of the affiliates listed volunteers as a high organizational need
- All of the interviewees acknowledged that HFSD filled some of their volunteer needs.
- Four of the affiliates said their most significant need for volunteers was in an ongoing project.
- Two affiliates identified specific skills like event planning or bookkeeping as their primary need.
- Two affiliates selected Board membership as the primary volunteer need.

Quality of Volunteer Program

- Six of the respondents noted that the volunteer component distinguishes HFSD from other funders.
- All of the affiliates identified the quality and commitment of HFSD volunteers as characteristics that set them apart from other volunteers.
- Suggestions for improving the volunteer program centered on the need to match volunteer availability to the affiliates' needs. Some of the affiliates host events at which

they require high numbers of volunteers and two of the interviewees mentioned concentrating HFSD volunteers on events like that.

- Three respondents suggested customizing volunteer recruitment to reach potential Board members, recruit long-term volunteers, or engage young professionals.

Recruitment and Management

- Four of the affiliates said they were not aware of HFSD's volunteer recruitment or volunteer management strategies.
- Four of the affiliates shared that their perception was that the volunteer base is primarily concentrated in North County, and they assumed most volunteers come from Redeemer Presbyterian Church.
- Five of the affiliates explained that more than one HFSD volunteer had become a regular volunteer for their organization. After a while, they had trouble remembering who originally came through HFSD.
- Five of the seven respondents were unsure if there was a formal process for notifying HFSD of current volunteer needs.
- Two of the respondents thought that a recent staff change at HFSD might have made volunteer placement more challenging.

"Day of Service"

HFSD coordinates an annual "Day of Service" (DOS) to engage HFSD volunteers in large-scale volunteer projects. It places volunteers at most affiliate organizations, but it also places volunteer groups at organizations that HFSD is considering for future affiliate status.

- Feedback on this event was generally positive, and three of the affiliate organizations identified this as a recruitment and education opportunity.
- Two affiliates noted that improved communication with the HFSD Event Coordinator would help the affiliates prepare more adequately for the DOS. They noted a lack of communication with the HFSD DOS team leader until the last minute, which limited their ability to plan to utilize the volunteers fully.
- Two affiliates noted that the DOS team leaders could benefit from a more clearly defined role and more training to ensure that they represent HFSD well.
- One affiliate suggested that a creative approach to the DOS might include professional development for staff or volunteers rather than a site project.
- Overall, the affiliates noted that the DOS benefits their organizations and connects them to many more HFSD volunteers.

Community Education and Connections

- Six of the affiliates responded that HFSD had advanced community awareness of their work via forums or videos.

- All of the affiliates reported that they had been connected to another organization or donor by the Executive Director of HFSD.
- Three affiliates noted that HFSD had connected them to a consultant for a specific project.
- None of the affiliates reported a connection to another HFSD affiliate
- Six responded that they did not know who the other affiliates were.
- Two noted that the affiliate information is not on the website.

Overall Relationship

All of the affiliate organizations' representatives described their relationship with Hope for San Diego using very favorable terms. When I asked them to provide a word to describe HFSD, they offered:

Potential / Helpful / Intentional / Knowledgeable /Committed
Consistent / Empowering / Research /Authentic / Partner

- All of the affiliates noted that HFSD was unique in the frequency of site visits and described this as a positive in the relationship, explaining that this helped HFSD stay current with their organization.
- Recognizing that HFSD has a minimal staff, one respondent explained that HFSD "seems much bigger than it is."
- All of the respondents reported that the HFSD Executive Director was very responsive, and they would have no hesitation contacting HFSD if a problem arose.
- None of the respondents reported any pressure to modify their program to conform to HFSD funding requirements. In response to that question, two of the affiliates elaborated that HFSD was very flexible in its funding guidelines.
- Four of the affiliates shared that the consistency in funding is the most valued aspect of the relationship with HFSD. One noted that HFSD was not their largest donor, but their "lifetime value" was much more significant than any other donor because of the consistency.
- All of the respondents noted that HFSD demonstrated sensitivity and respect in working with their clients and some cited examples where HFSD positioned the affiliate's clients as partners by asking them to bring food to events or participate in the planning. They also described the HFSD staff interacting frequently and respectfully with their clients.

Discussion

Discussion for Research Questions 1 & 2: How do the affiliates define the impact of the HFSD grantmaking program? And, how if at all, does the impact of an HFSD grant vary across affiliate organizations?

The affiliates identified the consistency of funding, the flexibility of grant guidelines, and the Executive Director's attention as the most important dimensions of the HFSD grants. It is interesting to note that none of the affiliates identified the financial grant's size as the most critical feature of their relationship with HFSD. Five of the affiliate organizations received a $10,000 grant in 2018. Two received a $15,000 grant and one national organization received a $20,600 grant to launch a local program. For some of the affiliates, the grant represented a small proportion (<1%) of their operational budget. However, all of the affiliates said they were satisfied with the grant's amount, even though none of the affiliates knew how HFSD made its grant decisions. The high satisfaction across all affiliates suggests that the grant's financial dimension is not the main criteria for impact. Research indicates that HFSD's long-term commitment to the affiliates and the Executive Director's personalized attention is consistent with the practice of other faith-based intermediaries (Sherman, 2004).

Discussion for Research Question 3: How, if at all, is HFSD distinctive as a grantmaker?

Each of the affiliates described a close relationship with HFSD, supported by frequent site visits of staff and Board members, in very favorable terms and said that it made HFSD stand out among other grantmakers. They referenced the Executive Director's knowledge of their field and sensitivity to clients as hallmarks of the relationship. In an interim presentation to the HFSD grantmaking committee in January 2020, I noted that one of the key findings from the interviews with the affiliates was that the relationship with HFSD distinguishes them from other grantmakers. Based on this report, the HFSD Board voted to suspend the grant application for spring 2020 so that the affiliate organizations could focus on altering their models to deliver services virtually during the COVID pandemic. Patrizi and Thompson (2011) note that this type of flexibility and adaptiveness is a feature of strategic grantmaking.

The affiliates also identified the volunteer component as a distinctive contribution of HFSD. This feedback was true for large organizations with multi-million-dollar budgets and small organizations where the HFSD grant accounted for nearly 25% of the operating budget. The quantitative analysis depicts the priority that HFSD places on the volunteer component. There were several key takeaways from volunteer and donor records:

- Eighty percent (80%) of volunteers did not make a financial donation in 2018. However, it is possible that the volunteers belong to churches that support HFSD financially and may not see a need to make an individual donation. This overlap is likely, given that the volunteer recruitment strategy relies on communicating needs through local churches.
- More than half of the volunteer base (56%) participates in the DOS. This event is viewed positively by the affiliate organizations, but interview feedback included recommendations to improve communication with HFSD before the event.

- HFSD refers a large segment of the volunteer base (42%) to non-affiliate community organizations on the DOS and for long-term volunteerism. These organizations are working in the program focus areas but not receiving grant money from HFSD.
- The majority of volunteers (59%) were assigned to organizations (affiliate and community) serving refugees or providing enrichment and support for low-income students. HFSD committed 50% of its 2018 funding to these program areas.
- Affiliates working with sex-trafficking survivors received 25% of the 2018 financial support but only 3% of the volunteer referrals. This disparity may be due to more limited volunteer opportunities in those organizations and concerns for keeping locations private for clients' security and safety.

Discussion for Research Question 4: Are there organizational issues that pose obstacles to maximizing the grant's impact—both at the HFSD level and the affiliate level?

A theme emerged in the interviews concerning the coordination between HFSD volunteer coordinator and affiliates on the DOS. They also noted a lack of clarity concerning volunteer recruitment. The affiliates value the DOS but suggestions for additional training for HFSD group coordinators indicate that the preparation level of HFSD group coordinators may limit the impact of the DOS. The feedback around the need for more targeted volunteer recruitment (professional skills like bookkeeping or legal, Board members, long term volunteers) dovetailed with a lack of knowledge in the affiliate organizations on how to communicate specific volunteer needs to HFSD. The study also identified gaps in historical volunteer data and the difficulty that HFSD experiences in tracking hours of volunteer referrals. The staff spent a significant amount of time piecing together volunteer data. They cautioned that the report was incomplete due to the difficulty of tracking the hours of volunteers referred to the affiliates for long-term volunteerism. This challenge was reinforced by the affiliate feedback that described how challenging it was for them to track HFSD volunteers. They explained that it was difficult to remember which volunteers came from HFSD, indicating that they do not have a mechanism for recording that data even though it is requested on the HFSD grant report (Appendix C).

Limitations

There are limitations to this study to note. Because the evaluation's scope focused solely on HFSD affiliates, the population size is small, and the interviewees/surveys were not drawn from a random sample. While the feedback is valuable to HFSD, it is not generalizable to the broader nonprofit grantmaking community because of its size and due to context-specific elements in the interview.

The interviews and surveys were voluntary, but Patrizi and Thompson (2011) note that there is always a power imbalance between a grantmaker and a grantee organization, so they may have felt implied pressure to participate. I took several steps to ensure that the affiliates would feel safe in providing honest feedback, but the power dynamics of the relationship may have influenced their responses.

Ideally, an impact study would involve a pre-intervention and post-intervention data collection and interviews. However, since the study timeline did not extend through a full grant cycle, it focused on a retrospective analysis of the 2018 grant year, eliminating the possibility of getting feedback before the grant as a baseline.

There were data gaps in HFSD's records that limited the quantitative analysis. They track volunteer and donor data in separate systems and do not track church affiliations in either system, so it is difficult to know how much overlap existed between volunteers/donors/churches in the HFSD support base at that time. The grant reports were very brief and did not provide consistent data to compare across affiliates.

Finally, HFSD's definition of impact includes the transformation of church partners, donors and volunteers. This evaluation focuses on the affiliate organizations, but a full assessment will take other stakeholders into account through interviews/tracking volunteer engagement and conversion to donors.

Proposed Intervention

The theme of "relationship" became an evident as I progressed through this capstone project. A focus on the long-term relationship is a distinctive factor that makes Hope for San Diego much more than a grant program from the affiliates' perspective. HFSD has positioned itself as a mediator of relationships: creating a web of community that connects church partners and individuals to vulnerable populations through volunteerism and donations, educating the public on critical issues, and introducing affiliate organizations to other funders, long term volunteers, and Board members. They devote a significant amount of time getting to know each affiliate individually so that they work as partners in improving services to refugees, foster care families, sex-trafficking survivors, and the homeless population in San Diego.

To create lasting societal change, HFSD needs to capitalize on its strengths and increase its capacity to continue activities that are already working well (Epstein & Yuthas, 2019). The recommendations in Table 1 build on HFSD's identity as a strategic grantmaker and consider the financial and non-financial components of the HFSD grantmaking program (Viviani & Maurel, 2019).

Focus Area	Recommendation	Strategies
Grants	Build HFSD's identity as a strategic grantmaker (Patrizi & Thompson, 2011)	a) Continue flexible funding strategies b) Increase support for capacity-building initiatives
Volunteers	Adopt a Volunteer Stewardship Framework (Brudney et al., 2019)	a) Increase coordination and training for "Day of Service" b) Educate the affiliates on the volunteer recruitment process c) Track and report the number of volunteer referrals instead of hours
Evaluation	Prioritize Organizational Learning (Boris & Kopczynski Winkler, 2013)	a) Launch/utilize a dashboard to monitor metrics b) Establish a collaborative grant reporting process c) Conduct additional evaluation of impact on church partners, volunteers, and donors

Table 1. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Build HFSD's identity as a strategic grantmaker (Patrizi & Thompson, 2011)

a) Continue flexible funding strategies

b) Increase support for capacity-building initiatives

Recommendation 1a. Continue flexible funding strategies.

HFSD has built trust with affiliate organizations through frequent communication and regular site visits. Several interviewees noted how HFSD does not micromanage the grant-reporting process or make overwhelming demands for data. They explained that frequent contact gives HFSD current information on each affiliate. Research suggests that this high-trust partnership approach is more likely to succeed in the long-term (Patrizi & Thompson, 2011). A high-trust partnership that involves frequent contact with the grantee organizations provides an opportunity for learning and potential modification of a grant instead of waiting until the final grant report (Boris & Kopczynski Winkler, 2013).

Patrizi et al. (2013) describe how strategic philanthropy requires a shift in how grantmaking organizations work. They need to identify and frame problems in the community, be prepared to articulate strategies to address them, and demonstrate their explicit competencies in affecting change. HFSD demonstrated agility in its COVID response, suggesting a predisposition to learning that researchers note rare in the grantmaking space (Patrizi et al., 2013). They pivoted quickly away from an in-person dinner to a virtual fundraising campaign and constructed an appeal that acknowledged the unique constraints that the pandemic presented for affiliate clients**.** The appeal emphasized the unique health concern to vulnerable populations and asked donors to consider making a gift in place of attending the event.

Epstein and Yuthas (2019) note how agile organizations continually scan the horizon for threats and opportunities and maintain the ability to change strategies to address developing events. The affiliate organizations cited HFSD's agility and responsiveness in grantmaking as a very positive dimension, and the events of 2020 provided an opportunity to capitalize on this strength. HFSD's gesture, and implicit vote of confidence, engendered immediate positive feedback from the affiliates and strengthened the relationship between grantmaker and grantees. Research suggests that this ability to pivot, demonstrate responsiveness, and shore up the affiliates' organizational capability to deliver services is a strength that HFSD should continue to build (Letts et al., 1997). I recommend that HFSD build on this identity by continuing to be flexible in funding strategies and responsive to the affiliates.

Recommendation 1b. Increase support for capacity-building initiatives

An organization's capacity affects its ability to accomplish its mission, but it is not synonymous with organizational effectiveness (Eisinger, 2002). Capacity, in what Eisinger (2002) refers to as "street-level" charitable organizations that provide direct services to the needy, encompasses organizational adaptiveness, competence, sustainability. Kapucu et al.

(2011) note that economic volatility puts pressure on small charitable organizations to adapt to new circumstances to achieve their mission. Capacity-building initiatives enable them to be more adaptive and flexible in the face of uncertainty (Kapucu et al., 2011). However, as Kapucu et al. (2011) note, funders are often reluctant to support capacity building and prefer to make grants to programs, constraining organizations like the HFSD affiliates. Additionally, it can sometimes take years to gauge the effectiveness of capacity-building grants to increase staff skills (Scherer, 2016). Sherman (2004) describes a multitiered functional approach that a faith-based organization should take to increase its grantees' scope, scale, and effectiveness. HFSD is currently functioning in several of these capacities (see Table 2).

Function	HFSD role	Recommendation
Bridging	Connecting the affiliates to resources	Continue
Regranting	Providing funds through grants	Continue
Spotlighting	Telling affiliate stories	Continue
Mobilizing	Harnessing untapped resources to address critical issues facing affiliates	Continue networking
Training	Workshops (grant-writing, volunteer management, etc.)	Continue referrals/pro-bono consulting
Building Administrative Capacity	Board development and evaluation training	*Recommend building Board development initiatives and introducing program evaluation (see Evaluation section)
Knowledge Transfer	Creating forums for sharing best practices	*Recommend hosting workshops for HFSD affiliates

Table 2. Capacity-building functions of the faith-based intermediary organizations (Sherman, 2004)

HFSD is very active in bridging, regranting, and spotlighting the work of its affiliates. They routinely share stories like the email presented in Figure 6 to educate the community, engage donors, and mobilize volunteers.

Not Alone Anymore

"I was working two jobs just to make the rent at $875 a month, and then the landlord raised it to $1,400," Carmen says. "And then COVID hit." Carmen's home health care company cut her hours because of the risk to clients. If paying her rent was once a struggle, it was now an impossibility. "I couldn't do it alone."

"While I was struggling, COVID hit and it hit me right back down. That's when I became homeless," Carmen explains. "I started paying for hotel rooms—the cheapest bed bug places. It's not a safe place at these hotels with kids." But soon, she couldn't afford even the cheapest hotel rooms for herself and her three teenagers. "We started staying in our car. My depression got really bad and I was coping by drinking."

When Carmen turned to her parents for help, she and the kids ended up sleeping on the living room floor in a trailer already packed full with family. Her frustration and depression soon showed up in her kids too as the constant instability rattled them. Desperate, Carmen turned her kids over to family with emergency custody and found help at Solutions for Change.

She says it's the best decision she's ever made. And that decision prepared her for the day an even worse blow hit. "I'll never forget it was 'double scrub day' [at Solutions for Change] when I got the call from Scripps Encinitas. The doctor said, 'we have to pump her stomach.'" While Carmen's daughter was staying with her dad, he took a job out of state, leaving her alone. The 16-year-old tried to take her life.

"I felt like a failure as a mother," says Carmen. "It's so hard."

But Carmen is changing the narrative with her kids at Solutions for Change. Since becoming a single mom at age 15, she's worked hard, persevering through high school and two years of college. Now, her dream is to finish school and become a phlebotomist. And her kids are her biggest cheerleaders. "They know my program and they keep me on it. They act like my parents!"

"I feel so blessed every morning that I wake up here," says Carmen. "My daughter feels not alone anymore." And so does Carmen.

Over the next month, Hope for San Diego will highlight stories of how the pandemic is affecting our under-served neighbors. To read more stories, follow us on Instgram, and to find out more about how you can help, visit our urgent needs webpage or donate.

Figure 6. Spotlighting Affiliates

Feedback from HFSD and the affiliates documented HFSD's role in mobilizing resources for the affiliates and connecting them to consultants for training. Sherman (2004) notes that these are essential vehicles for increasing capacity in the affiliates. Letts et al. (1997) propose that philanthropies need to build up grantees' capabilities to increase sustainability, which will enable them to deliver programs more effectively. Their research indicates that HFSD affiliates would benefit from capacity-building workshops that bring similar organizations together. However, funding is the hurdle that prevents small organizations from participating in these "co-learning" opportunities. (Letts et al., 1997). A long-term philanthropic commitment, like HFSD has made to the affiliates, allows the grantmaker to see the grantee grow and achieve sustainability (Letts et al., 1997). The long-term relationship and personal connection between HFSD and the affiliate staff allow HFSD to customize its services because it knows each affiliate's needs (Sherman, 2004). HFSD is in a unique position to design workshops to meet the needs of its current and future affiliates. Since HFSD currently supports more than one organization in each focus area and plans to add two more affiliates in 2021, this would provide a valuable networking opportunity for the affiliates and increase the potential for collaboration.

Recommendation 2: Implement a Volunteer Stewardship Framework (Brudney et al., 2019)

a) ***Increase coordination and training for "Day of Service"***

b) ***Educate affiliates on the volunteer recruitment process***

c) Track and report the number of volunteer referrals instead of hours

Affiliate feedback suggests that the volunteer component is distinctive of HFSD and a measure for overall impact. Research indicates that volunteerism increases trust in charitable organizations (Bowman, 2004). HFSD has a unique opportunity to further build the community's trust in the affiliates through its annual volunteer event and its volunteer referral program.

Brudney et al. (2019) recommend using the term "stewardship" to capture a shift from a human resources approach to an emphasis on volunteer engagement. The Volunteer Stewardship Framework outlines four volunteer models. It identifies the particular need for engagement in secondary and intermediary organizations that share the management of volunteers with host organizations as HFSD does with affiliate organizations (Brudney et al., 2019).

Secondary Model Organization

During the annual "Day of Service" (DOS), Hope for San Diego conforms to a secondary model. The volunteers identify first as an HFSD volunteer and serve in groups at the host organization sites. In 2019, HFSD coordinated and sent 413 volunteers to the affiliate sites as part of a one-day HFSD workgroup. HFSD assigned a leader for each workgroup and connected them to the affiliates in advance of the DOS. In this scenario, the group leader and the affiliate organization share the responsibility for volunteers' guidance and supervision during the DOS. The Volunteer Stewardship Model indicates that HFSD should employ specific strategies to identify volunteer opportunities, raise interest in volunteering, organize, staff, and promote the

DOS (Brudney et al., 2019). Brudney et al. (2019) note that poor communication between the managers decreases the experience's value for the volunteer and both organizations. The host site might expect work that does not match the volunteers' skill set. The volunteer group may be too large and lead to underutilization, or the group may be too small and leave work left undone. Indeed, two affiliates noted that improved communication with the HFSD Event Coordinator would help the affiliates better prepare for the DOS. They noted a lack of communication with the HFSD DOS site coordinator until the last minute, which limited their ability to plan to utilize the volunteers fully. Two affiliates noted that the DOS site coordinators could benefit from a more clearly defined role and more training to ensure that they represent HFSD well. Some of the affiliates noted that their greatest need was for long-term sustained volunteerism, not for large groups on one day. Others noted that they periodically required large groups of volunteers but that the needs did not align with the scheduled DOS.

Recommendation 2a. Increase coordination and training for "Day of Service"

- ***Coordination***

  Increase communication between HFSD and the affiliate volunteer coordinator before the DOS. Together, they can develop clear expectations and definitions of the volunteer work on the DOS. Research indicates that people are more likely to volunteer when actively asked, so specific recruitment is a critical step in volunteer management (Bowman, 2004). The recruitment stage provides an opportunity for HFSD to clarify expectations and attract volunteers suited to work identified by the affiliates (Kappelides et al., 2019). A detailed description of potential volunteer projects will enable HFSD to recruit volunteers more effectively and lay the groundwork for a positive volunteer experience.

- ***Training***

  Erasmus and Morey (2016) note that faith-based organizations' culture possesses several distinctions that they must communicate to volunteers. Describing the values associated with the DOS during training for HFSD DOS coordinators will equip them to communicate the workday's connection to the mission of HFSD. Kappelides et al. (2019) note that volunteers expect clear communication and management. In the secondary model, it is up to the HFSD to manage the group and develop a clear communication channel with the affiliate organizations.

Intermediary Model Organization

During the remainder of the year, the primary elements of the intermediary model apply to HFSD. Intermediary programs connect volunteers from across the community or from various home organizations (e.g., churches) with opportunities for their service in host organizations that manage the volunteers on-site (Brudney et al., 2019). A volunteer center plays this connecting role by placing volunteers in various host organizations outside of it or working with another home organization (e.g., civic clubs, churches) to place volunteers in host organizations. To the degree that HFSD refers individuals to the affiliate organizations for an ongoing volunteer role, HFSD is functioning as an intermediary. HFSD plays an intermediary role when an individual

comes to HFSD looking for specific volunteer work (by skill or with a specific population, e.g., refugees). Then HFSD connects them to the appropriate affiliate.

According to Brudney et al. (2019), intermediaries must also raise awareness and promote volunteerism in the community. Their study indicated that there were statistically significant differences in attributions of "very important" for the unique work of the shared guidance models (secondary and intermediary) versus single-site guidance models (membership and service models):

Recommendation 2b. Clarify the volunteer recruitment process.

Feedback in the interviews and surveys indicated that the affiliates are not aware of how and where HFSD recruits its volunteers. It is important to note that San Diego County is the fifth-largest county in the United States. It encompasses 4526 square miles and is roughly the size of the state of Connecticut. Although HFSD's activities are focused on the coast, its geographic reach has grown considerably over the last five years. They moved the office from Encinitas to the North Park neighborhood in downtown San Diego and have engaged new church partners in the city (Figure 7).

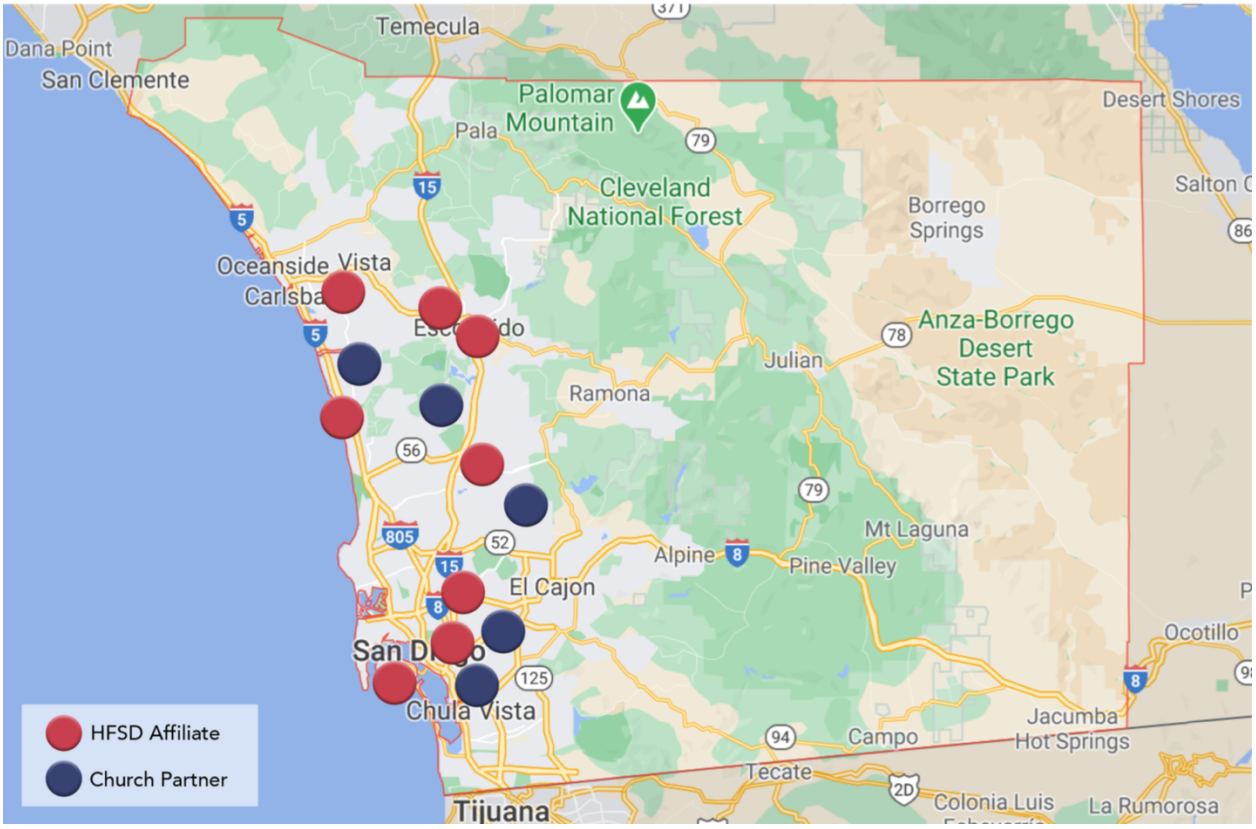

Figure 7. San Diego County Map with Affiliates and Church Partners

HFSD draws on a broader base of volunteers than in the past, but the perception persists that the volunteers are mainly coming from Redeemer Presbyterian Church in North County, San Diego. This misperception may deter affiliates in downtown San Diego from requesting volunteers. It will be advantageous for the affiliates in downtown San Diego to know that HFSD is recruiting volunteers in their local area.

To increase the value of the volunteer referrals, I recommend that HFSD describe the process for making specific volunteer needs known to HFSD. Several affiliates mentioned that they need volunteers with specific skills (e.g., bookkeeping, social media, legal). A few mentioned that HFSD had provided connections to skilled volunteers, usually after a conversation with the Executive Director. However, they were not clear if there was another process to make HFSD aware of these needs. Currently, a prospective volunteer submits basic information through the website. The form collects name, address, phone, and email. It asks the potential volunteer how they were referred to HFSD and then allows them to indicate an area of interest (homelessness, foster care, sex-trafficking, refugees/immigrants).

In addition to the contact information and referral source already requested, I recommend that HFSD use the volunteer intake form to ask for details on professional skills to match those to the needs of the affiliates. It would also be useful to request that the potential volunteer provide church/faith community affiliation (if any) to understand better the overlap between volunteer/donor/church partners and geographic location.

Recommendation 2c. HFSD should continue to track volunteer referrals but stop trying to count hours until technology is available to make this more efficient and accurate.

Throughout the data collection process, it became clear that tracking the hours of volunteers referred to the affiliates (intermediary model) is time-consuming and imprecise. Once HFSD refers the volunteer to the affiliate, HFSD steps out of the relationship and does not directly record volunteer hours. Instead, it currently relies on affiliate self-reporting the hours that HFSD-referred volunteers served on the grant reports. The affiliates use a wide variety of volunteer management tools and some mentioned that they found it difficult to track which volunteers came from HFSD. Because this puts a reporting burden on the affiliates and produces an estimate at best, I recommend that HFSD stop tracking volunteer hours of referrals and simply report the number of referrals each year. A caveat to this recommendation is that HFSD might be in the position to work with smaller affiliates to identify and launch a shared volunteer tracking system. In this case, it might be feasible for HFSD to support a capacity-building initiative that would benefit the affiliates and provide accurate volunteer data for the intermediary model.

Recommendation 3. Prioritize Organizational Learning (Boris & Kopczynski Winkler, 2013)

a) **Create a dashboard to track metrics**

b) **Establish a collaborative grant reporting process**

c) **Conduct additional evaluations to assess HFSD's impact on church partners, donors, and volunteers**

A grantmaker that prioritizes its learning is more likely to value the learning process in organizations that it supports (Boris & Kopczynski Winkler, 2013). Boris and Kopczynkski Winkler note that organizational learning, in turn, is a predictor of organizational sustainability, which is one of a grant maker's top priorities. HFSD is accountable to multiple stakeholders on different levels, and its evaluation procedures need to take each dimension into account (Christensen & Ebrahim, 2006). Recall that HFSD's program theory, a "theory of philanthropy" depicted in the logic model, proposes that financial grants plus volunteerism and community education will positively impact organizations working with vulnerable populations and connect the community to their work. This theory guided the capstone evaluation process and should also drive HFSD's evaluation strategies going forward. Patton et al. (2015) describe how the "theory of philanthropy" drives alignment between evaluation methods and strategies to increase impact. Drawing on Coffman and Beer's (2016) evaluation framework, the proposed evaluation tools take the needs of HFSD and its affiliates into account and are consistent with the culture of the partnership between HFSD and its affiliates.

An agile grantmaker like HFSD needs to assess its evaluation methods regularly and adapt to ensure that the methods they use are providing value in the grantmaking process (Coffman & Beer, 2016). Research indicates that going forward, HFSD has to actively avoid the tendency to rely on assumptions of causal relationships between programs and outcomes and using performance metrics that do not capture impact (Patrizi et al., 2013).

Coffman and Beer (2016) emphasize the importance of thinking through an organization's evaluation function to ensure that it fits the grantmaker's needs. Their research indicates that "pinch points" indicate an ill-fit between the evaluation tools and the organization's needs (Coffman & Beer, 2016). This capstone identified several pinch points in the limitation section. Given the staff's small size, a comprehensive summative evaluation of HFSD's impact on key stakeholders is not a feasible undertaking. Instead, Britt and Coffman (2012) recommend a developmental evaluation approach for agile and context-specific programs, as is the case of HFSD. In light of this, HFSD will benefit from embedding internal evaluation tools that will allow them to make small, iterative adjustments to ensure that the grantmaking program produces a positive impact and aligns with the mission and vision.

Recommendation 3a. Create a dashboard to track metrics

HFSD needs objective data to measure its results (Easterling, 2000). HFSD must embed data gathering on key stakeholders into its operations. While increased embedded evaluation tools will benefit the organizational learning process, limited staff resources will dictate how much of the evaluation strategy is feasible (Bryson & Patton, 2012). HFSD has recently invested in a donor database that will allow it to track and categorize donors and interface with their volunteer tracking platform.

The new platform will provide a dashboard and I recommend they use it to track data on key stakeholders:

<u>Metrics</u>

- Volunteers
  - Referral status
  - Areas of Interest (refugees, homeless, trafficking survivors, foster families)
  - Participation in "Day of Service"
  - Church/faith community affiliation
  - Professional skills
  - Donation history

- Donors
  - Donation history
  - Areas of Interest (refugees, homeless, trafficking survivors, foster families)
  - Church/faith community affiliation
  - Professional Skills
  - Volunteer activity
  - Volunteer to donor conversion ratio

- Church partners
  - Affiliation of volunteers/donors
  - Prospects for new church partnerships based on volunteer and donor activity

Coffman et al. (2013) caution that while metrics can be useful, the grantmaker needs more information. They need to know the "why," "how," and "with whom" behind whether the grant made an impact. This information is difficult to capture in a dashboard or the current grant report. A follow-up to this evaluation should include interviews/surveys of donors, volunteers, and church partners to test HFSD's "theory of philanthropy" and measure impact.

Coffman and Beer (2016) include structure, position, focus, resources, and practices for consideration in evaluation design. Patton et al. (2015) propose that the evaluation design reflects the organizations' approach to grantmaking. They contrast responsive and strategic grantmaking and suggest that the grantmaker ask different questions in light of these differences. HFSD has positioned itself as a strategic grantmaker, with an articulated goal of transforming the community through the affiliates' programs. In contrast to a responsive grantmaker that would

measure impact by grantee reports, HFSD needs to evaluate whether their strategies achieve results. They need to include appropriate and up to date performance measures (Patrizi et al., 2013).

The current grant report is very brief but prioritizes the importance of volunteerism and HFSD's story-telling function (Appendix C). Scherer (2016) proposes that a "one-size fits all" grant reporting methodology will constrain the grantmaker. Some of the affiliates work with multiple grantmakers and have staff assigned to write grant reports. Other affiliates have a single staff member who is also running programs. Writing grant reports can be burdensome and distract the affiliate from work that will advance its mission (Christensen & Ebrahim, 2006). HFSD is sensitive to this dynamic and has kept the report short to facilitate timely reporting, but the affiliates should not neglect this report. According to Cornforth and Mordaunt (2011), a final grant report draws the project to a close and signals the end of formal review. Research indicates that grantee organizations internalize accountability and view grant reports positively when deemed useful to the organization's mission-related work (Christensen & Ebrahim, 2006). For instance, an HFSD grant report that can help secure other funding will be a productive use of time for the affiliate.

Recommendation 3b. Establish a collaborative grant reporting process.

Increased evaluation should not come at the expense of maintaining frequent contact with the affiliate organizations since the engagement level was identified as a positive factor by all of the affiliates. Instead, evaluation tools should focus on the criteria that matter most to HFSD and be automated, when possible, to minimize additional staff time. A collaborative grant report, created by an affiliate staff member and an HFSD Board or staff member, is consistent with the relational approach that HFSD has established with the affiliates. All of the affiliates expressed appreciation for the Executive Director's personal attention. However, continued growth necessitates that HFSD expand its engagement strategy to include visits by Board members and Grant Committee members. A broader base for frequent contact with the affiliates will preserve established relationships as they add new affiliates. A collaborative grant reporting process will align form and function and position the affiliate as a partner in the evaluation process (Patrizi & Thompson, 2011). A community-building grantmaker can use a collaborative grant report to provide accountability while engaging HFSD's stakeholders (Scherer, 2017). Using this approach, HFSD and the affiliate will revise the grant report to include specific data based on details of the grant application. The evaluation should also consider the type of grant and interested stakeholders (Scherer, 2016). Instead of focusing solely on metrics, a community-building grant report will ask questions on what the affiliate may have learned and how it might approach the project differently in the future (Scherer, 2017).

According to Boris and Kopczynski Winkler (2013), learning partnerships reduce the gap between performance management and evaluation. A collaborative evaluation process is more valuable to the grantmaker because they can adapt their approach throughout the grant cycle if necessary instead of waiting on retrospective reporting that regular grant reports provide (Boris & Kopczynski Winkler, 2013). Boris and Kopczyski Winkler (2013) recommend that a grantmaker engage with their grantee organizations as partners in evaluation to create a learning environment. This type of collaborative learning through the grantmaking process requires intentionality and should be an integral part of the strategy (Coffman & Beer, 2016). Hope for

San Diego has created a partnership approach via its affiliate vetting process and long-term commitment to the organizations. Enabling the affiliates to provide feedback in a continuous evaluation will be critical to a collaborative process.

Recommendation 3c. Conduct additional evaluation

Church partners, donors, and volunteers are key stakeholders, and their feedback will be critical in determining the full impact of the Hope for San Diego grantmaking program. Feedback from church partners, volunteers, and donors will help HFSD understand their motivations and perceptions of HFSD's impact. The literature supports a positive relationship between volunteerism and charitable giving, so volunteer management is also a potential mechanism for donor cultivation (Wang & Graddy, 2008). There is overlap between the stakeholder communities, and so it will be essential to determine the size of each to gauge how implementing a Volunteer Stewardship Framework affects donations.

Implementation and Evaluation Plan

Boris and Kopczynski Winkler (2013) note that undertaking program evaluation often requires cultivating the grantmaker's staff capacity. The grantmaker needs to have some control over knowledge production to take advantage of feedback about what is working and what is not (Boris & Kopczynski Winkler, 2013). The HFSD staff is currently very lean and so implementing these recommendations will likely entail increasing HFSD's capacity so that they can capitalize on organizational learning. In the meantime, HFSD can begin a broader engagement of the Board, volunteers, church partners, donors, and affiliates. HFSD can phase these recommendations in through 2021 and 2022 with input from these stakeholder groups (see Figure 9). An iterative process will allow HFSD to adjust strategies as needed during implementation (Cornforth & Mordaunt, 2011).

January 2021-April 2021

- Implement Volunteer Stewardship Framework
- Increase support for capacity-building grants
- Set medium/long term goals for volunteers/donors
- Revise volunteer intake form
- Create volunteer/donor dashboard
- Volunteer/donor/church partner feedback

May 2021-December 2021

- Revise and execute Day of Service (DOS) training
- Survey DOS volunteers and affiliates
- Revise DOS & training based on feedback
- Introduce collaborative grant reporting process with two affiliates /monitor capacity-building outcomes
- Revise grant report for affiliate-specific data

January 2022-April 2022

- Continue support for capacity-building grants
- Monitor volunteer recruitment and volunteer/donor conversion
- Administer affiliate/donor/volunteer surveys
- Host best-practices workshop

May 2022-December 2022

- Execute Day of Service (DOS) training
- Survey DOS volunteers and affiliates
- Revise DOS based on feedback
- Expand collaborative grant reporting process
- Continue to revise grant reports for affiliate-specific data

Figure 9. Stakeholder Implementation Plan

Conclusion

Hope for San Diego's identity as a community-building foundation prompted the Board President and the Executive Director to ask the initial questions which launched this research project. They were curious to know if their assumptions were accurate and wondered what strategies might increase the grantmaking program's impact. The capstone was guided by an evaluation framework that addressed the organization's needs, identity, and evaluation culture (Coffman & Beer, 2016). We identified several key stakeholders, including volunteers, donors, affiliates, church partners, Board members, and community organizations. I narrowed the evaluation's scope to test the effectiveness of HFSD's "theory of philanthropy," which proposes that financial grants plus volunteerism, community education, and a high engagement with the affiliates will connect community members to vulnerable populations and renew the community.

The evaluation project assessed HFSD's funding, volunteerism, community education, and overall relationship with the affiliates. The most unexpected finding was that all of the affiliates, regardless of organization size, were satisfied with the amount of the grant. According to the affiliates, HFSD's volunteer program and its high-level of engagement with the affiliates set them apart as a grantmaker. The value of the relationship was a recurring theme in the interviews. The findings identified gaps in HFSD recordkeeping and highlighted communication issues regarding volunteer referrals and grantmaking decisions.

HFSD's identity as a strategic grantmaker and the strong relationship with the affiliates framed my recommendations in three categories: funding, volunteers, and organizational learning. I recommended that HFSD continue to be flexible in grantmaking and expand support for capacity-building. Adopting Brudney et al.'s (2019) Volunteer Stewardship Framework (VSF) will allow HFSD to differentiate between HFSD as a secondary model and an intermediary model. The VSF will improve the volunteer and affiliate experience during their annual DOS volunteer event and streamline their volunteer referral system. In light of several data gaps that I discovered during the study, I recommended that HFSD embed tools into their operations to track progress and measure volunteerism, fundraising, donor behavior, and the overlap between donors and volunteers. Embedded evaluation tools will allow them to continue to learn as an organization and adapt their grantmaking strategy as they did during the COVID crisis. A collaborative grant report will engage the affiliate as a partner and help the Board and grant committee members maintain the high engagement level that has been established by the Executive Director. Finally, to fully understand the grantmaking program's impact, I recommended that HFSD follow up this project with future studies that include volunteers, donors, and church partners.

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Appendix A: HFSD Grant Guidelines

Each affiliate organization applied for funding under the following guidelines provided by HFSD:

HFSD looks to support affiliate programs that can achieve one or more of the following results for the underserved, including:

- Enrolling individuals in ongoing and consistent program or service to continue addressing need (e.g. recovery program, job training program, year-round youth mentoring program)
- Working to build new skills and capacities to move forward with individuals' life transformation process (e.g. resume writing workshop, transitional or long-term housing, tutoring programs)
- Connecting individuals to new economic, social, physical, or spiritual supports (i.e., employment, stable housing, accessing eligible benefits, attending church or bible study regularly)

Grant Results and Reporting
To maximize return on investment for donors, HFSD seeks measurable results from the grants, including:

- Participant Results: Increases in number served, number of participants that achieve results, or decreased time to achieve results.
- Changed lives: Increases in the quantitative and/or qualitative number of changed lives among those whom our affiliates are seeking to serve and empower.

Factors considered in evaluation of grant proposals include:

- Financial stability
- Clarity of Grant Purpose
- Program Effectiveness
- Plans for Engagement of HFSD volunteers
- Overall Organizational Effectiveness
- Measurement Quality – The quality of the measurement tools and methods the organization employs to demonstrate its effectiveness.
- Compelling Story – How effectively the outcomes described will resonate with Hope for San Diego donors and volunteers.

In order to document the results achieved, affiliates must submit an interim grant report halfway through the grant period and a final report. Grant reporting will include:

- Number of unique Hope for San Diego volunteers engaged in the organization.
- Program outputs, such as total number of unique clients served by the program, successful program completions, progress in achieving outcome targets, etc.
- Personal story from a client that demonstrates how your program makes a significant difference and transforms lives.
- Update on program budget.

Grant Restrictions

- Funding loan payments
- Funding deficit payments
- Endowment funds
- Fundraising events/activities
- Direct funding of individuals (i.e., camp, day camp, school fees, etc.)

Appendix B: Affiliate Grant Application

2018 Grant Application

Organization:	
Executive Director:	
Grant Contact Person:	
Grant Contact Email:	
Organization Address:	
Telephone:	
Website:	
Social media handles: (if applicable)	
Purpose of Grant: (one sentence)	
Grant Request ($):	
Total Organization Budget: (fiscal year)	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Please state your organization's mission and vision.
2. Please summarize why your agency is requesting this grant, and how you will spend the funds if a grant is made. (3-5 sentences)

NARRATIVE – ORGANIZATION

Describe the work of your organization, addressing each of the following: (If additional space is needed attach a separate sheet.)

1. Brief description of your organization's history.

2. The need or problem that your organization works to address, and the population that it serves, including geographic location, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, age, and language.

3. Overview of major programs at your organization and how these programs address the holistic (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual) needs of those served.

4. Please estimate the number of unique clients to be served in the organization this year.
5. Number of paid full-time staff; part-time staff in the organization.

FUNDING REQUEST

(If additional space is needed attach a separate sheet.)

1. Please state the primary purpose of the program for which you are requesting funds. List the specific need or problem you are seeking to address and the target group you are seeking to serve.

2. Are you applying for a matching grant for this project through another foundation or organization? How will you provide other funds needed for this project?

3. Describe the specific activities of your program in detail. Please include the frequency and duration of the program. If it is a new program, when is the anticipated start date? (ie. Program occurs every day at 3pm, 5 times a week, throughout the year OR program takes place during the summer months, three times a week).

4. What are the key output measures (i.e., measurable and quantifiable results) you will track to ensure the program is on course? (e.g., number of meals served to program participants.)

Appendix C: Grant Report

Final Report – 2018 Grant Cycle

Affiliate Name

Grant Project Name

Unique Clients Served		Expenses	
July-June 2017/18	July-June 2018/19	Budget 2018/19	Actual 2018/19

Tracking our volunteers is an important aspect of Hope for San Diego's support of your mission. Please help us to document how our financial support of your organization is supplemented by additional support by project-based or ongoing volunteers. Please describe Hope for San Diego's volunteer engagement over the past year, including projects and volunteer names and dates.

Please provide a story that demonstrates the success of the program/project, emphasizing individual and social impact. Please include pictures.

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Conduct confidential semi-structured interviews with staff members from four affiliates (two large organizations (budget >$750K) and two small organizations (budget <$300K) The interviews will take place on-site in a private office and will be recorded with permission from the interviewee. I will use a format suggested by Castillo-Montoya (2016) which includes four types of questions: opening, transitional, key and closing questions. The opening questions are designed to build rapport and the transitional questions will confirm details that have been provided in the grant report. Through the key questions, I intend to gather information on the degree to which HFSD met the affiliate's funding needs in 2018 and identify possible obstacles in the grant application or reporting process. The key questions will also be constructed to gauge the affiliate's organizational needs and the degree to which HFSD supported the affiliate with volunteers, training and creating connections in the community. The closing questions are designed to provide the opportunity for the affiliate to share new information regarding the practices of other funders that may help HFSD improve the impact of its grants. My report to Hope for San Diego will not contain identifiable information to connect specific feedback to an organization.

1. Survey
   I will send the same questions in a survey of all of the affiliate organizations that received grants in 2018 to assess the level to which HFSD met their funding needs and the degree to which HFSD supported the affiliate with volunteers, training, and creating connections in the community. The survey will include a Likert scale reponse for 16 of the questions in order to reduce time required to respond.

   <u>HFSD Affiliate Interview Script</u>

   Good afternoon—Thank you for your willingness to provide feedback on the grant you received from Hope for San Diego in 2018 and on your relationship with the organization. With your permission, I am going to record this interview for my use only.

   If yes: Thanks. Please sign this consent form and please let me know if at any point you want me to stop recording or keep something you said off the record.
   If no: Thank you for letting me know. I will take notes of our conversation and may need to call you for clarification after this interview.

   Your individual feedback will not be reported to Hope for San Diego but will be used to identify themes and patterns across organizations. Do you have any questions before we begin?

   Opening Questions:

1. Can you please state your name, the name of your organization and your position?
2. How long have you been managing grants for your organization?
3. Are you the primary grant writer in your organization?
4. Are you the primary point of contact for Hope for San Diego in your organization?

I am going to ask you a series of questions regarding the 2018 grant that your organization received from Hope for San Diego and then questions regarding your overall relationship with Hope for San Diego. Please feel free to give me as much information as you like in response to each question.

Transitional Question:

5. Which of the following statements best describes the primary effect the grant had on your organization? [1]
    - Enhanced capacity
    - Expanded existing program
    - Maintaining existing program
    - New program work

Key Questions:

- Questions 6-11 address the specific areas of needs, satisfaction with the grant and the process, and overall relationship with HFSD.[1]
- Questions 7-18 address the volunteer component of the HFSD grantmaking program.[2]
- Question 19 address community connections.[1]
- Questions 20-23, 25-27address HFSD's knowledge base.[1]
- Questions 24, 28-30 address communication and networking[2]
- Questions 31-33 address the overall relationship between the affiliate and HFSD[1]

Closing questions

- Question 34-35 invite feedback on best practices and changes[2]

Thank you so much for your time. If at any point during this study, you have questions or concerns you are welcome to contact me. (Provide phone and email)

[1] *Interview questions are based on the questions included in the Center for Effective Philanthropy's public grantee reports.*
[2] *Interview questions based on the Affiliate Survey developed by Hope For New York* https://hfny.formstack.com/forms/affiliate_survey__key_feedback_items