
**LEVERAGING FAMILY VALUES OF DIVERSITY
AND PHILANTHROPY TO BENEFIT LATINOS IN
SILICON VALLEY**



**CASTELLANO
FAMILY
FOUNDATION**

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Latino community-based nonprofits lack resources and capacity to meet their operational needs, let alone gain traction on the complex social problems they're trying to address. Yet the proportion of funding going to these organizations has stagnated at one percent of total foundation funding, even as Latinos have become the second fastest-growing population in the U.S.

The founders of the Castellano Family Foundation became the "brown face" of philanthropy by advocating for these organizations and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion long before it was in vogue. Their unique approach to philanthropy is known as place-based or "embedded" philanthropy described as "*...immersing yourself in the community. You get the best information you can based on what people tell you and what you see. You stay and humble yourself every day and you listen.*" CFF is calling on mainstream foundations to listen intentionally and begin viewing Latino community-based organizations through a social equity lens – one that promotes cultural competency rather than perpetuating disparity and inequity fueled by power and privilege.

Background

In 2018, the Castellano Family Foundation (CFF) board made a strategic decision to move beyond grantmaking to leverage its values, influence, and philanthropy in support of Latino community-based organizations and the communities they serve. The process began with board members hosting *1:1 listening conversations* with leaders of color followed by a series of convenings with these organizations in order to document their most pressing needs. During that time, board members worked to establish goodwill with potential allies in mainstream philanthropy in order to engage them in future efforts to address those needs.

From August to November 2018, more than 50 current and former CFF grantee organizations (joined by CFF board members and staff) participated in a series of discussions facilitated by professional consultants. The goal was to "listen and learn" by creating a safe space for grantees to vent their frustrations about the challenges they face in this new era of instability and uncertainty. We were counting on them to inform our next steps. Armed with new data and insights, we could encourage our philanthropic allies to join with us in forging strategic collaborations to support and invest in Latino community-based nonprofits.

Key Findings – *The participants prioritized their needs and challenges in terms of feasibility, urgency, and applicability to the sector:*

- **Customized Capacity-Building Resources** is an *urgent unmet need* of some organizations.

THE ISSUE: Smaller, grassroots and volunteer-based nonprofits could benefit from project-based, hands-on technical assistance and flexible, short-term grants to help them address urgent or unmet needs.

OUR RESPONSE: Establish a one-stop shop where groups can access these services for free. Create a networking hub where they can share know how and tools that might lead to strategic collaborations. Offer gap funding in the form of immediate, short-term grants.

- **Innovation and Impact** is the *most urgent* challenge for larger organizations.

THE ISSUE: More established nonprofits are under constant pressure to innovate and improve their programs in time to meet the next grant deadline. Yet, they have little time or resources to devote to this when they are focused on funding and implementing day-to-day operations.

OUR RESPONSE: Give nonprofits access to the same opportunities to experiment and succeed that helped the tech sector become a model of innovation. Create an innovation fund to award grants for this purpose.

- **Access to Funders and Funding** is the *most feasible* challenge for philanthropy to address.

THE ISSUE: Community-based organizations lack access to funders and opportunities to engage with them in a dialogue that fosters mutual respect and understanding.

OUR RESPONSE: Host strategic convenings to bring nonprofits and funders together for shared learning and relationship building. One creative idea generated by participants was to engage funders with organizations in a fun, interactive “speed dating” format.

THE ISSUE: Organizations need access to less restrictive, non-program specific funding to improve their ability to plan and carry out their programs. Streamlined application and reporting processes would also allow them to focus their limited time on programs vs. administration.

OUR RESPONSE: Help funders understand the vital role that small non-profits play in our community; demonstrate how a small investment can have a large impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of these organizations.

- **Equity and Leadership Diversity** *is the most applicable* to the entire sector.

THE ISSUE: Self-care, work/life balance, pay and gender equity are very real day-to-day challenges. Line-staff have virtually no opportunities for reflection and self-care to promote retention and prevent burn-out.

OUR RESPONSE: Offer wellness grants that can be used to fund retreats, convening, and other self-care, burn-out prevention strategies.

THE ISSUE: There is an urgent need to train people of color for leadership positions, not only to replace legacy leaders that are retiring but also to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

OUR RESPONSE: Influence funders to collaborate with CFF in addressing this gap; examine why traditional leadership programs have been largely ineffective for getting people of color into the pipeline. Staff diversity is not an issue in Silicon Valley, yet leadership diversity is.