



Asset-Building Ideas for Corporate and Philanthropic Foundations

How foundations shape their guidelines for funding often determines to a significant extent how communities pursue the public good. In this way, foundations shape public consciousness about what matters. Here are some things foundations can do to help ensure that asset building becomes a top priority:

- ◆ **Revise grant-making guidelines to include a focus on positive outcomes.** Several foundations have revised their grant-making guidelines to establish development of the 40 assets as the primary criterion for giving.
- ◆ **Encourage and equip employees to build assets** in their own networks and spheres of influence.
- ◆ **Work with asset-building grantees to establish reasonable methods of evaluation** that are consistent with the asset-building approach.
- ◆ **Include youth in grant-making roles within or through the foundation.** One foundation provided a grant to a group of young people who in turn gave mini-grants to students who wrote proposals for asset-building activities. The Student Service and Philanthropy Project, a partnership between the New York City Schools and the Surdna Foundation, trained and supported youth in establishing student-run foundations. For information, go to: www.learningtogive.org/materials/sspp.
- ◆ **Examine how the foundation's practices model asset building in the community.** For example, does the process for grant seeking empower applicants, or does it make them become overly dependent upon outside funding?
- ◆ **Train board and staff members in the Developmental Assets** and the implications they have for your foundation and its work.
- ◆ **Provide impetus and leadership for asset building.** Link up with other leaders within the community, and work together to promote, educate, and lead asset-building efforts.
- ◆ **Focus on the human resources of your foundation in addition to the financial resources you provide.** How can the people within the foundation build assets and promote asset-building efforts?