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PRACTICAL WISDOM FOR GRANTMAKERS

Scanning and Networking: Routines for Discovering the Unexpected

A Closer Look

Grant makers frequently ask us for more on various issues that come up in our guides. Our response is a web-only series, ***A Closer Look***.

For each edition, we invite several experienced grant makers to explore a specific topic in the context of their foundation, and to answer questions about how it shapes and impacts their work. This virtual roundtable supplements the guide that inspired it, and offers a range of perspectives, approaches, and tools to help you in your own practice.

Linda Lehrer is the author of this edition of ***A Closer Look***, which supplements our guide, *Scanning the Landscape: Finding Out What's Going on in Your Field*. Both are available at www.grantcraft.org.

Scanning is something grant makers typically do when planning a new program or contemplating a shift in strategy, yet some foundations also conduct a continuous form of scanning by developing networks. Several grant makers talked about how networks help them look beyond their usual sources for new work, fresh ideas, and innovative organizations:

- **Joy Vermillion Heinsohn, program officer at the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.** The foundation strives to improve the quality of life of the people of North Carolina by supporting projects in community economic development, environment, democracy and civic engagement, pre-collegiate education, and social justice and equity. In 2005 the foundation awarded \$15 million in grants.
- **Susan Jenkins, executive director of the Cherokee Preservation Foundation.** The foundation works to improve the quality of life of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and to strengthen the western North Carolina region. It has awarded more than \$27.1 million in grants since 2002.
- **Marion Kane, executive director, Pat Brandes, senior advisor, and Roberto Cremonini, chief knowledge and learning officer of the Barr Foundation.** Based in Boston, the foundation focuses primarily on education and the environment, while also providing support for arts and cultural activities. Its annual grant making totals approximately \$40 million.
- **Mary Kaplan, vice president of program at the Endowment for Health in Concord, New Hampshire.** A private foundation created in 1999 in anticipation of the sale of Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Hampshire to the Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc., the endowment is dedicated to improving the health of the citizens of New Hampshire. Since October 2000 it has distributed nearly \$15 million.
- **Anne Vally, special initiatives officer at The James Irvine Foundation.** The foundation seeks to advance the educational and economic prospects of low-income Californians; engage people in the civic and cultural life of their communities and state; enhance understanding and communication among diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups; and enrich the state's intellectual and creative environment. With assets of more than \$1.5 billion, the foundation awarded \$69 million in grants in 2006.