



## Principles for Grantmakers

### PREAMBLE

The desire to give is a defining human characteristic. As members of the Minnesota Council on Foundations, we honor diverse charitable expressions across the wide economic, racial, ethnic and social spectrum. We celebrate new and traditional forms of giving that respond to human needs, build community, increase knowledge and promote creative expression. We acknowledge the fundamental roles and responsibilities of engaged individuals and the public, private and nonprofit sectors in a just and equitable society.

As a community of grantmakers, we embrace philanthropy's role in a civil society. We are leading advocates for public policy to sustain robust philanthropy. We work strategically through grantmaking and other means to improve the vitality and health of our communities, to educate our members and the field, and to achieve our collective mission of strengthening and expanding philanthropy. We express a shared commitment to excellence by formally subscribing to the Principles for Grantmakers.

### PRINCIPLES

#### 1. **Ethics and Law Principle**

To sustain public trust by adhering to the highest ethical principles and practices and abiding by all state and federal laws that govern philanthropy.

#### 2. **Effective Governance Principle**

To achieve effective governance by ensuring performance in the areas of stewardship of assets, donor intent, fiduciary responsibility and sound decision-making.

#### 3. **Mission and Goals Principle**

To be purposeful in our philanthropy by having a clearly stated mission and explicit goals.

#### 4. **Engaged Learning Principle**

To foster continuous learning and reflection by engaging board members, staff, grantees and donors in thoughtful dialogue and education.

#### 5. **Respectful Relationships Principle**

To build constructive relationships with applicants, grantees and donors by ensuring mutual respect, candor, confidentiality and understanding.

#### 6. **Transparency Principle**

To achieve transparency in our relationships with the public, applicants, grantees and donors by being clear, consistent and timely in our communications with them.

#### 7. **Diversity Principle**

To reflect and engage the diversity of the communities we serve in our varying roles as grantmakers, boards and employers, economic entities and civic participants.

#### 8. **Self-Assessment and Commitment Principle**

To uphold the highest standards by regularly assessing ourselves against these principles and committing to implement them.

*Adopted by the MCF Board of Directors in 2006;  
developed from the original 1996 version.*