



NEW HAMPSHIRE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

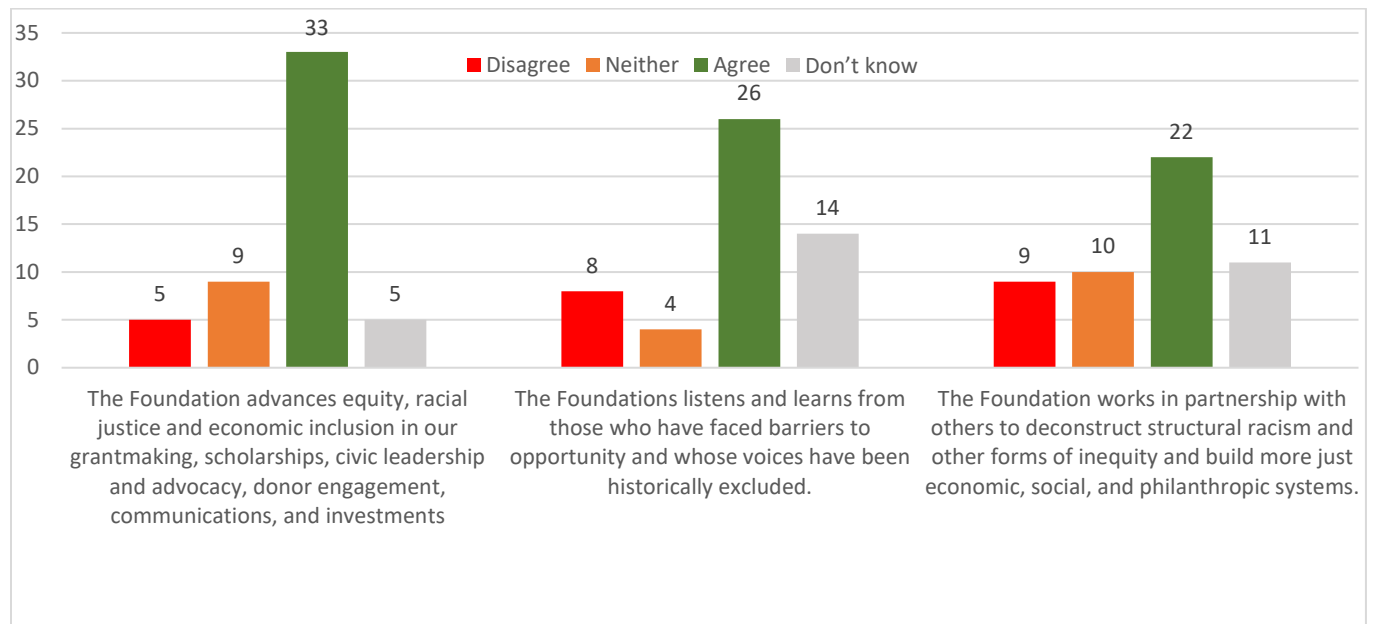
Nonprofit Survey — Input for Strategic Planning

In 2021, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation staff and the board of directors engaged in deep learning and long-term planning, committing to do our part to advance equity and racial justice. To help inform the strategic plan, staff surveyed a group of 90 nonprofits who have been familiar with the Foundation and its work over an extended period of time. Recipients were encouraged to share the survey with others at the organization who may also be positioned to respond. We received 52 responses.

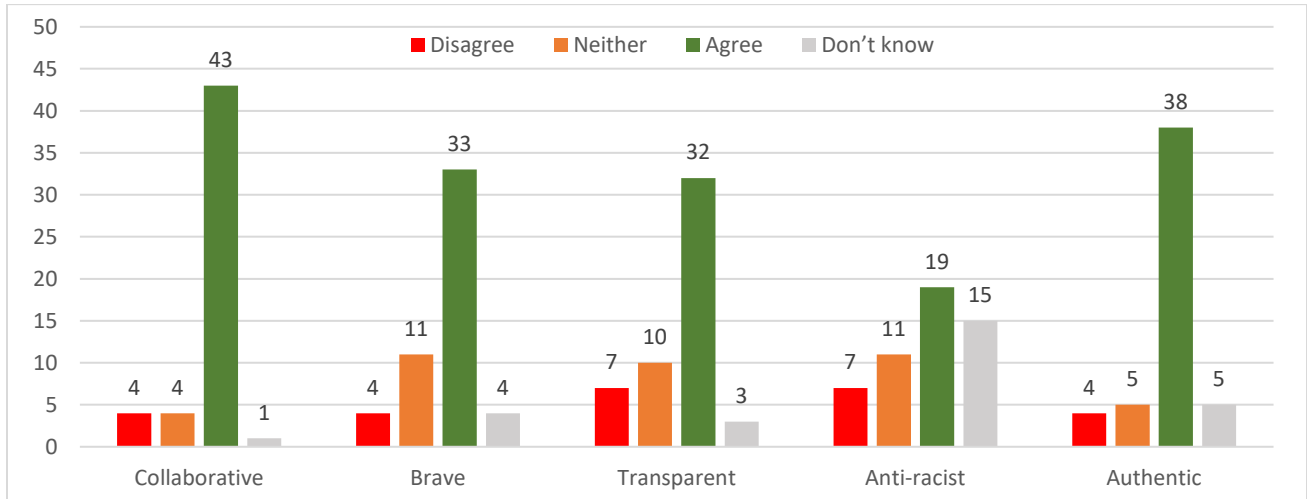
What follows is a summary of the survey responses.

SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE SURVEY DATA:

1. Reflecting on your experience and knowledge of the Foundation, how would you rate our performance to date in meeting these three commitments?



2. Reflecting on your experience and knowledge of the Foundation, how would you rate our current performance in the following "ways of being": Collaborative, Brave, Transparent, Anti-racist, and Authentic?



SUMMARY OF QUALITATIVE SURVEY DATA:

The survey asked three qualitative questions:

- What steps or actions should the Foundation take to advance [the three commitments listed in Question 1 on page 1]? How can we do better?
- In your experience, how have we NOT been collaborative, brave, transparent, anti-racist or authentic?
- Do you have any thoughts about how we can better live up to [the three commitments and "ways of being" listed in Questions 1 and 2 above]?

For the purposes of this summary, this document is organized into themes that rose to the top and are supported by survey responses that illustrate each theme. The comments provide enough clarity of understanding they need not be organized as direct responses to each of the three questions. Comments included are taken directly from the survey and have generally not been edited except for some limited editing for brevity, or broken apart when one comment included components related to more than one theme.

The qualitative questions were designed to get at *improvements or changes* we could make as relates to the three commitments and "ways of being" included in the questions on page 2, so the bulk of the responses reflect this.

The most significant feedback was in the area of relationships: Engage more directly with community and people with lived experience. Share or give up power. Be accountable.

Listen!

- Meet with, and listen to people with lived experience in the areas you are considering funding.
- Continue to have open and brave conversations with those in communities who have experiences as a part of their life community (work, school, even home).
- Engage in tougher conversations.
- Possibly doing outreach to find smaller or nontraditional nonprofits led by and serving BIPOC communities.
- Encouragement of people with lived experience to weigh in more on what is needed in their community to be supported — focus groups, advisory board, etc.
- Engage directly with underserved communities to get their suggestions for how the Foundation can improve.
- Create more stakeholder input opportunities from people of color and those who face other forms of inequity; educate your donor community on these issues.
- I am not aware of the foundation engaging low-income/BIPOC people...in a formal or informal way.
- I think it's more an issue of consulting with different people and organizations than you have historically.
- Listening to those with lived experience to guide the steps and build trusted and authentic partnerships.

Share Power!

- More horizontal grant-making process like New England Grassroots Environmental Fund (NEGEF/Grassroots Fund).
- Work together with the community to come up with solutions to keep the conversation going and find ways of funding efforts that help deconstruct the very systems that support inequity, racial injustice and pain associated with these systems.
- Get people with lived experience at the table so that their input is considered in important grant making selections.
- Re-evaluate the role and composition of the regional advisory boards — could they be composed of partner organizations and people with lived experience who could advise grantmaking to align with these goals at the regional level. It was a great start to offer the community research participatory research positions to help get input for the strategic plan. Would be great if you could continue along that path by incorporating this into the regular structure and decision-making of the organization.
- The Foundation needs to be the people's foundation and not a small group of decision makers in an ivory tower dictating social improvements in targeted areas.

- The Foundation is transparent in what their goals are, but how they got there and who was consulted is not at the forefront.

Find ways to be more inclusive!

- The Foundation could pay low-income individuals to serve as advisors (they would otherwise not be able to participate as a volunteer).
- I would suggest that paying low-income people a stipend both to collect information and share their opinions would be a helpful way to get their participation. Donating their time is likely not often possible.

Accountability!

- You should appoint a separate board or committee, made up of non-traditional members to review all aspects of the Foundation's efforts on an ongoing basis. Develop an internal report card and report directly to the Board.
- I do not believe the Foundation is held accountable by those effected by their decisions.
- It's the being accountable to those most affected by your decisions. This is easier said than done. I would ask you how do you measure this, and who measures it?

Diversify Staff and Board

- Start within to create the culture that embodies these words and then from there start to include a more diverse set of voices in leadership positions. Be the change.
- Diversify board and staff...and make more efforts at diversifying events like annual celebration (ex. be mindful of communities of color ending up being mostly represented as the evening's entertainment).
- Continue to make steps to diversify your board and staff.
- I think that the Foundation has recently made efforts to reach people that can provide more authentic feedback and to take down some of the barriers to funding specifically during COVID. I commend these efforts and have seen the impact first hand. However I don't feel that the Foundation has performed at the same level when being transparent, anti-racist or authentic. I think this is reflected in lack of diversity of staff and leadership and that up until now being anti-racist hasn't been a priority. It can appear performative. I think steps are being taken but you have to take real action to prove this is truly a priority and not simply a timely reaction. I am hopeful but if the Foundation is truly brave it will not simply state these values but act on them on every level — internal and external. Is the Foundation ready to be uncomfortable — I hope so.
- Quickly looking at the Foundation staff, there appears to be very little diversity and yet the salaries, as detailed on the 990 appear to be competitive. At the very least, more attention could be spent on recruitment.
- It would be interesting to learn how many of your existing donors are people of color or of other ethnic groups. What percentage is represented on your board and committees?
- Cultural diversity within staff and regional advisory boards is pretty low. Engagement with Indigenous groups and issues is low.

Organizational Culture

- Perhaps the organizational structure/culture limits real engagement and understanding of the work being done in the state? Are you trying to please the donors by checking off what they want to fund as opposed to what is needed?
- Focused internally, not externally. Bureaucratic.
- Get outside support, make it part of yearly training for staff, create a culture of feedback (internal and external) that will allow for true discussion on hard issues, leadership (board and staff) need to take on training, center the work around these values and do not bend to outside pressure. BE a leader in this work because so much is at stake and the Foundation can make a big impact for SO many.
- Hiring practices and creating an environment where all feel welcome.

Stronger public voice, stronger stance on policy and systems change

- In terms of bravery: the nonprofit sector needs you and your donors in the policy advocacy space — in terms of dollars and in terms of unabashed, public support for the issues that matter to BIPOC communities and people with low income. Political reality can change with the intervention of powerful stakeholders...too few nonprofits are stuck carrying the water on controversial policy proposals.
- Thank you for your early public statement on HB 544/divisive concepts.
- I have noticed a lot of voices regarding the "divisive language" debate in state politics, but have not noticed the NHCF getting out front and center regarding it. Maybe being high profile on that type of thing?

Funding

- Create funds dedicated for equity, race and inclusion initiatives or projects in the state.
- Set aside funds for organizations who are trying to advance health equity and racial disparities in their work, but are finding monetary challenges exist for authentic engagement, would be an innovative move by the Foundation.

Finally, there was significant feedback about the Foundation's role as a leader in doing this work, modeling and supporting change elsewhere

- Small institutions need more help educating our communities about the needs and changes that should be made.
- Offer consistent training to grantees that reflect the values you adopted at the NHCF. Through messaging raise awareness of your DEI efforts.
- Help grantees to take action to advance [these three commitments]. We want to do more and be more of a partner in the work. I don't always know how to and it can be intimidating to know what to do
- Be more explicit about these commitments in all your funding programs and opportunities, and demand the same from those applying for funding.

- The Foundation should share with partners/grantees how they are modeling these values internally — what changes have you made to organizational practices? How did you evaluate what needed to be changed and why? There are learning opportunities for grantees in seeing what you are doing to dismantle white supremacy culture within your organization. It could be as simple as reassessing a hiring process to account for bias, opening up the process for recruiting new board members, assessing vendor selection for events (are you purposeful in working with and supporting small businesses owned by people of color?). These are all examples of internal practice change that the Foundation might be taking on, which would be a tremendous resource for grantees trying to also figure out a path to do better with regard to equity.
- My perception is that NHCF is acting in good faith around these ways of being...you also have the responsibility to be a role model for other organizations and it seems like you are doing that pretty well.
- Provide training and guidance so we can better address these issues ourselves and emulate the work of the NHCF.
- The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation is one of the leading nonprofits in the state. Through its grant guidelines, opportunities to educate both its grantees and donors, and through internal operations, the Foundation could set a tone for the industry and the state more broadly.
- Be a model to grantees and share how the Foundation has moved along the continuum to be more anti-racist.

Issue Specific Feedback

- Too many nonprofits achieve financial sustainability and the appearance of being "lean" by exploiting workers' commitment to mission — through substandard wages and benefits (most especially inadequate health insurance and meager retirement contributions) and overly long hours. This creates obstacles to nonprofit employment for BIPOC and people from disadvantaged financial backgrounds. Encourage nonprofits to compensate their workers fairly — and support them in doing so.
- One area where I've been thinking about how to improve equity is the court system. Landlord/tenant, child welfare, parenting, divorce, juvenile justice, misdemeanor crimes are all areas where judges and the court system play a huge role in people's lives. The Family Division was originally devised to be one judge/one family. It's moved away from that model because of resources and time. There are some niche courts (Drug Court/Mental Health Court — but those courts require a significant investment of time and money). How can this work be meaningfully sustained? How can the NHCF improve access to legal representation and improve judges' ability to engage with their communities with a problem solving/system changing lens (as had been the model that was designed).
- One of the largest social justice issues we face in NH is the number of women who work in low-paying positions while trying to raise families. This goes beyond racial lines and is an issue for women statewide, especially since so many women were displaced from the work force during the pandemic. I would like to see the Foundation prioritize this issue as part of their focus on underserved populations.

- Continue to make grants to a broad array of organizations, maintain a particular focus on organizations addressing race, diversity, inclusion, and equity (including school funding!). And climate change, whose impacts are so regressive.
- There are several systems (mental health) that need transformation and it would be a great opportunity for NHCF to step out in front to invest.

The Foundation also received a number of “kudos” for its work. Most of those were non-specific, in some form of “you do great work!” However, a summary of those that are more specific include:

- I really like the thoughtfulness reflected in the statement regarding these commitments.
- I think the Foundation does a wonderful job meeting these objectives through its current grant funding of human service organizations.
- I think that the foundation has recently made efforts to reach people that can provide more authentic feedback and to take down some of the barriers to funding specifically during COVID.
- I have observed the Foundation becoming more vocal and more brave in the past year, and it appears to be taking positive steps in all of these directions.
- My perception is that NHCF is acting in good faith around these ways of being. With candor, I do feel the level of resources — and privilege — might make this easier for the organization.
- You are very invested in respectful relationships on all levels.
- I have always experienced collaboration and transparency.
- I know I feel the Foundation holds the bar high to their guiding principles and often is at the forefront of reexamining how they orchestrate their work.
- I love the guiding language. It will not be easy to live up to this and it will take time.