

# Key Findings and Recommendations from the Cambia Health Foundation 2019 Grantee Perception Report

Prepared by the Center for Effective Philanthropy

*In September and October of 2019, the Center for Effective Philanthropy conducted a survey of Cambia Health Foundation’s (referred to as “the Foundation”) grantees, achieving a 76 percent response rate. The memo below outlines CEP’s summary of key strengths, opportunities, and recommendations. Grantee perceptions should be interpreted in light of the Foundation’s unique goals, strategy, and context.*

*This memo accompanies the comprehensive survey results found in Cambia Health Foundation’s interactive online report at <https://cep.surveymaterials.org> and in the downloadable online materials.*

*The Foundation’s full report also contains more information about survey analysis and methodology.*



The Center for Effective Philanthropy is pleased to share the results of Cambia Health Foundation’s first Grantee Perception Report. The memo below and associated online report provide candid feedback and insights that can be useful in understanding philanthropic funder performance.

Overall, Cambia Health Foundation grantees have exceptionally positive perceptions of the Foundation compared to grantees of other funders in CEP’s dataset. On many key measures in the report, including perceptions of the Foundation’s impact on grantees’ fields and organizations, the strength of its relationships with grantees, and the helpfulness of its processes, Cambia Health Foundation is rated more positively than 95 percent of funders.

## Exceptional Perceptions of Impact on Grantees’ Fields

- ▶ Cambia Health Foundation grantees rate its impact on and understanding of their fields exceptionally high, placing the Foundation in the top three percent of funders in CEP’s dataset on both measures.
- ▶ Additionally, the Foundation is rated in the top two percent of funders for the extent to which it has advanced the state of knowledge in grantees’ fields.
  - In their open-ended comments, grantees consistently highlight the Foundation’s leadership in their fields, writing, for example, “We view Cambia Health Foundation as a respected leader in all facets,” and that, “The Foundation is transforming palliative care leadership nationally and having an enormous impact in promoting this field.”

- ▶ When rating Cambia Health Foundation’s impact on and understanding of their local communities, grantees provide ratings that are in line with those of the typical funder.



*“The Cambia Health Foundation has been strategic and forward-thinking in developing palliative care leaders, as part of a broader change strategy to advance the field. Through their own programming... and their grant-making, the Foundation has pursued a consistent theory of change and has funded an array of projects and organizations that are 'pulling in the same direction.'”*



*“The Foundation's focus on the social determinants of health is an important reason why it has been such a valuable partner.”*

## Outstanding Impact on Grantees’ Organizations

- ▶ Grantees view Cambia Health Foundation as having an outstanding impact on their organizations. Ratings for this measure place the Foundation in the top five percent of funders.
  - Grantees’ open-ended responses further elaborate on the Foundation’s impact, stating for example that, “The funding has allowed us to explore areas of need and be innovative in developing plans that meet community needs,” and that the Foundation, “has helped us reach out into a field of social determinants of health and other topics that are not typical to engage with for [our organization].”
- ▶ In addition, grantees provide ratings that place the Foundation at the top of CEP’s dataset for its awareness of the challenges their organizations face, and in the top ten percent of funders for how well it understands their organizations’ strategies and goals.
- ▶ CEP’s broader research finds that grantmaking characteristics such as grant size, length, and type are often related to perceptions of a funder’s impact on grantee organizations.
  - Cambia Health Foundation awards larger than typical grants to larger than typical organizations.
  - Additionally, all grantees report receiving multi-year grants, compared to 56 percent of grantees at the typical funder.
- ▶ CEP’s research also shows that intensive patterns of support beyond the grant check, in which grantees receive multiple types of non-monetary assistance, are associated with more positive perceptions of impact on grantees’ organizations.
  - Thirteen percent of Cambia Health Foundation grantees, a typical proportion, report receiving intensive patterns of non-monetary support from the Foundation.

## Exceptionally Strong Relationships with Grantees

- ▶ CEP's research finds that strong funder-grantee relationships – defined by high quality interactions and clear, consistent communications – are a key predictor of grantees' perceptions of a funder's impact. Cambia Health Foundation receives exceptionally positive ratings for the overall quality of its relationships with grantees, placing it higher than 99 percent of funders in CEP's dataset.
  - Grantees rate particularly positively for their comfort approaching the Foundation if a problem arises and the extent to which they were treated fairly. On both of these measures, Cambia Health Foundation is *the* top-rated funder in CEP's dataset.
  - Similarly, the Foundation receives exceptionally high ratings for the responsiveness of its staff, and its openness to grantees' ideas about its strategy.
  - Cambia Health Foundation also receives very strong ratings for its compassion for those affected by grantees' work, and the extent to which its interactions with grantees were respectful, with grantees rating, on average, a 7 or near a 7 on each of these measures (on a 7-point scale).
  - On measures related to the Foundation's communications, grantees also provide exceedingly positive ratings for both the clarity and consistency of Foundation communications.
- ▶ The two strongest predictors of the strength of funder-grantee relationships, according to CEP's research, are funder transparency and the extent to which grantees see their funders as understanding them and the context in which they are working. On both of these measures, Cambia Health Foundation is rated near the top of CEP's dataset.



*"It has been helpful to have... conference calls and in person meetings with the Cambia Foundation staff and board. It has enabled us to bring in our team and provided for some great exchanges. I believe all of us here felt very 'listened to' and we appreciated that."*



*"I wish more foundations were like Cambia - they listen and they want to engage in work that supports the organization while having positive impact on the community."*



*"We have been very happy with the involvement of everyone at Cambia Health Foundation with the progress of our grant. It has been positive, encouraging, understanding, and engaged. It seems that the folks at Cambia have a genuine interest in learning more about our program and supporting it through its successes and challenges."*

## Helpful Grantmaking Processes

- ▶ Grantees report spending more hours than typical on Foundation grant requirements. In particular, responses suggest that the selection process requires more hours from grantees than is typical.
  - This time investment, however, is associated with a larger than typical monetary return for grantees due to the large size of the Foundation’s grants.
- ▶ When asked how much time passed between the submission of their grant proposal and receiving a clear commitment of funding, a larger proportion of Foundation grantees report that it took four months or longer compared to grantees at the typical funder – 63 percent compared to 38 percent, respectively.
- ▶ Still, grantees provide higher than typical ratings for the extent to which participating in the Foundation’s selection process was helpful in strengthening their organizations or programs – placing the Foundation in the top five percent of funders.
- ▶ The Foundation also receives higher than typical ratings on all measures related to its reporting process, and is the highest rated funder in CEP’s dataset on three of these measures: the extent to which the process is adaptable to fit grantees’ circumstances, relevant to the funded work, and a helpful opportunity to reflect and learn.



*“Very clear and straightforward process. I particularly love how the Foundation is open to the changing needs of our community and organization.”*



*“They provide extremely valuable feedback when crafting proposals and it’s helpful that this is an iterative and open process. Very nice to have a relationship based partnership rather than a [transactional] one.”*



*“I want to commend the Foundation for being clear about its focus areas and priorities and for being mindful about the reporting process. The recent change to having a conversation rather than relying on a grant report to discuss progress, lessons learned, etc. is very much welcomed. We appreciate the Foundation finding new and equally effective ways of assessing how a project is doing.”*

## CEP Recommendations

Based on its grantee feedback, CEP recommends that Cambia Health Foundation consider the following in order to build on its strengths and address opportunities for improvement:

- ▶ Reflect on which of the Foundation’s practices have contributed to such strong perceptions of its impact on and understanding of grantees’ fields and organizations, and continue to reinforce these strengths. Similarly, identify, codify, and maintain the practices that have enabled such positive relationships with grantees to ensure continued effectiveness.
- ▶ If having an impact on grantees’ local communities is a priority, determine whether current goals and strategies are structured to maximize community impact.
- ▶ Consider ways to decrease the amount of time between the submission of proposals and clear commitment of funding. Additionally, given that grantees spend more time than is typical on the selection process, seek opportunities to streamline this process, without compromising its helpfulness.

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