

AGF Public Policy Committee Meeting
June 13, 2011, 10:00 a.m.

In attendance: Kim VanPelt, Harold Dorenbecher, Susan Hallett, Joyce Lopez-Powell, Pat Miles, Cathy Thornton, Marissa Theisen, and Tom Torretta. Kim Van Pelt, Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

Prior Meeting Minutes Review

She first asked the committee to review the minutes from the last meeting to refresh their memories in regard to what was covered and determine if there were any changes needed. No suggested changes were offered.

Kim reviewed the three main ideas regarding AGF's role that were agreed upon during the last meeting.

1. Educating grantmakers about the need to play a role in public policy and various options available to do so.
2. Exploring the potential for funders to speak with a common voice regarding.
3. Acting as a clearinghouse and educator

Policy Guidelines

Marissa shared a draft of the Public Policy Committee guidelines. She shared with the committee that she used pieces of various regional association's public policy guidelines to craft the document. Other regional associations are further along in the public policy arena.

The committee discussed the guidelines, and touched on concerns such as AGF's leadership role, "one voice", and the difference between federal and local policy. After some discussion, it was decided that Kim VanPelt would wordsmith the guidelines to better explain AGF's role in the Public Policy arena as well as to clarify how AGF will be involved with federal, state and local policy.

Committee Member Public Policy Work

Kim VanPelt next asked the committee to share its work in the public policy arena.

Pat Miles (McMiles Foundation) is very engaged in community organizing, polling, convening, education, advocacy and public policy leadership. Pat then discussed the upcoming October Neighborhood Funders Group meeting in New Mexico. She shared that one of the conference planners has invited an Arizona delegation to do a panel presentation at the conference describing what positive activities are underway in our state, in an effort to dispel negative attitudes that have caused some national funders to refuse to fund in our state. She next discussed the matrices that will be used to start the public policy mapping process in Arizona. These matrices will help illustrate "a lay of the land" regarding activities being pursued by both funders and nonprofits in the public policy arena. It will also help the committee make a case when speaking with national funders. Pat Miles will take the lead in distributing the blank matrix to all identified organizations and may call on committee members to follow up when data is not forthcoming. It was decided that Tom Torretta would be the single point of contact for collating the data into a single document. All completed matrices should be emailed to ttorretta@azgrantmakers.org. The committee hopes to have the data gathered by September.

Susan Hallett works with the Casey Family Programs. Their primary mission is to help youth and foster care, particularly older foster children. Casey Family Programs is currently investigating ways to be more proactive as opposed to reactive. This way, kids will be spared the need to even enter foster care.

Kim VanPelt told the committee about a coalition that formed about 6-9 months ago to determine what could be done regarding advocacy in Arizona. This coalition agreed that they need to work together, that former advocacy methods are no longer working and issues will not be resolved quickly, and therefore they need a long-term plan. Kim then discussed what the coalition (or "group") has done to date. They have hired a couple of communications firms to help them better understand what "good messaging" is. The messages the group is sharing include how budget cuts are impacting people and families, as well as the need to work together. They have determined that there is a strong need for a long term plan that includes help from national experts. They believe nonprofits will be more aggressive than funders in attacking this issue. Public Policy committee members suggested that once the coalition is ready, they should present their work and findings to AGF's members.

Cathy Thornton with First Things First discussed their mission of convening and advocating for early childhood development. First Things First is currently working with national partners to determine "what works". Stories appear to be very good, so FTF is working on gathering stories from the folks who have benefited.

Joyce Lopez-Powell with Valley of the Sun United Way (VSUW) stated that they are working on a broad range of topics dealing with public policy. They are educating board members about how the current environment, public policy and economy are affecting nonprofits. They are also working with other AZ United Ways to share what is happening and what can be done. They are also working to expand advocacy work, especially in regard to nonprofit capacity building and looking for synergistic opportunities down the road. In addition, they have "upped their game" at the federal level. They are working with state legislative contacts and framing the issues in a context that they can understand. One recent success was extending the working poor tax credit for five more years.

Harold Dorenbecher with Northern Trust suggested the committee look for opportunities to work with the Greater Phoenix Leadership (GPL) group. He sees GPL as a broader based, more influential group of corporate/community leaders. He suggested the committee get on GPL's agenda when ready to discuss findings and share what we are doing and why it is in the public's best interest.

Kim VanPelt stated GPL is currently working on a 20 year plan for Arizona. They recognize that the budget cuts are creating problems. Joyce mentioned that VSUW is working with GPL to create common language around certain issues. It was suggested that the committee partner with Lisa Atkins of GPL. She would be a great person to speak to about ideas and how the public policy committee fits with GPL.

Case Statement

Kim next reviewed the outline she had created for a proposed case statement document. The committee discussed the outline and decided a new section should be added at the end of the document that will be a call to action. The committee agreed to aim for completing the case

statement prior to the October Neighborhood Funders Group conference in October. Kim VanPelt offered to develop a first draft of the case statement and will look to committee members to help with fact finding efforts. Kim will ask for volunteers at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m. The next meeting is being targeted for the end of August.