

How Philanthropy Can Engage the Next Generation of Donors: Strategies for Community Foundations

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Abstract

Utilizing the skills and interests of the tech-savvy younger generation is critical to the future of community foundations. Community foundations have begun to make hesitant steps to engage younger generation participation. Such engagement is essential for foundations, yet presents new challenges. In her research, Tasha Tucker addresses the following questions: how do community foundations fit in with digitally connected individuals capable of creating their own networks? How does the next generation perceive community engagement and their philanthropic role? What type of cultivation methods should community foundations utilize to engage these potential donors? What do philanthropic leaders need to do to be effective in capturing the next generation of donors to engage with community foundations?

In this paper, Tucker reviews tendencies of the Millennial generation, those born between 1981 and the early 2000s, highlighting how technology and social networking shape youth choices. Tucker lists online charitable platforms, as well as online watchdog organizations which utilize the Millennials' ability to network information through technology. Examples of next generation engagement initiatives are highlighted to provide examples from community foundations, philanthropic groups, and diaspora funds that are successful in drawing the participation of the next generation. From case studies, Tucker draws a series of general proposals that foundations should implement in order to recruit Millennials.

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