

Cream City Foundation – November, 2011 Update

Throughout 2011, Cream City Foundation (CCF) is using a change in executive leadership as an opportunity to assess the organization's current standing and future opportunities. During the autumn, CCF constituents and community stakeholders were surveyed for their input on the organization's priorities and the skills needed by the next executive. CCF donors and event attendees completed an e-survey, and key stakeholders were interviewed on the phone. Interviewees included donors, leaders from LGBT organizations, and local foundation leaders. The CCF Board of Directors and staff also responded to a separate survey designed for their input. The majority of all respondents focused their remarks in three areas: Fundraising, Visibility, and Partnerships and Collaborations.

Key Findings:

Fundraising

Stakeholders are universal in their belief that CCF needs to raise more money and become a greater source of philanthropic dollars for LGBT nonprofit organizations in the greater Milwaukee area. They consider CCF a critical resource and believe it has played an important role over the years of its operation. Stakeholders also were universal in their recommendation that the next Executive Director have a strong track record in fundraising.

Visibility

Stakeholders want more opportunities for interaction with CCF, and generally want to learn more about the activities of the organization through Town Hall meetings, etc. Board and staff noted growth in local and national awareness as a strength that was built over the past five years. The next Executive Director should build upon this base to communicate with all stakeholder segments in both the LGBT and the larger Milwaukee community.

Partnerships and Collaborations

There is lack of clarity in the community about what Cream City Foundation is trying to accomplish through structural change philanthropy. CCF understands that the foundation must be clearer about the organization's role as a convener to enable social change. With leadership from the next Executive Director, CCF should continue to strengthen and, if necessary, re-build relationships with key organizations locally, regionally, and nationally.

Vision for the Future

Based on this input, the Board of Directors is developing a vision for the next five years. It will include the following. The organization will undertake strategic planning in 2012 to expand upon this vision and will seek further input from stakeholders and the broader community.

- Financially healthy and sustainable with an increased fundraising capacity
 - Increased annual budget with larger percentage of unrestricted funds
 - Increased endowment
 - Stronger relationships with donors with an expanded donor base
- Increased grant-making
 - Significant increase in grant-making by the end of 5 years, benefiting more of the LGBT community
 - Strong outcome measures built into grants, in order to demonstrate social change impact
- Visibility
 - Excellent reputation as a funder for social change
 - Seen as a "must-have" partner by LGBT organizations and other foundations
 - Brand recognition throughout the entire LGBT and non-LGBT community, and expanded engagement beyond Milwaukee

Executive Director Search Update

The new Executive Director will play a central role in bringing the organization's vision to fruition. Cream City Foundation is currently screening and interviewing candidates, and is planning to have a new executive in place during the first quarter of 2012, the organization's 30th year of operations.

Cream City Foundation is excited to see what the organization will accomplish under this new phase of leadership, building on its solid 30 year history.