

**PERSPECTIVES ON PHILANTHROPY**

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**PROGRAM STAFF: GETTING THE JOB DONE**



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## PROGRAM STAFF: GETTING THE JOB DONE

### I. THE FRONT LINE OF PHILANTHROPY

Ultimately, a foundation pursues its mission through the support of non-profit organizations which, in its view, have the potential to contribute the most to achieving its programmatic goals. Accordingly, at the end of the day, a foundation's success is dependent on the effectiveness of the processes through which it: (i) selects the organizations it funds; (ii) deploys its resources to support those organizations; (iii) monitors and assesses their work; and (iv) relates to them as partners in addressing compelling social challenges.

While the board establishes overall directions and policies, and the chief executive oversees their implementation, the front line in organized philanthropy is a foundation's program staff. It is they who design and carry out grantmaking programs authorized by the board, and who constitute the foundation's principal face, voice, and agency in the communities in which it works. And it is the foundation's administrative and support staffs who carry out the internal functions that must be effective and efficient if the foundation's programs are to be productive. A separate paper deals with the alignment and integration of foundations' organizational units in which the critical grants management, communications, human resources, financial, and legal, functions are carried out. This paper concerns itself with *program staff* and how their effectiveness can be maximized.

Staff represent a core *human* resource which, to a large extent, determines the degree to which a foundation is successful in deploying its core *financial* resources. As such, *staff should be seen as an asset to be maximized, rather than a cost to be minimized.* Just as a foundation manages its financial assets for maximum growth and return, so should it manage its human resources in such a way that they are maximally nurtured, developed, and employed effectively. Yet, to a surprising degree, organized philanthropy has devoted relatively little time and energy to refining and optimizing the processes through which foundation program staff are selected, developed, nurtured, evaluated, and rewarded. A critical element in efforts to strengthen philanthropy's role in solving significant social problems must be the development of improved strategies for:

- Defining the personal and professional attributes of individuals that make them effective program staff;
- Attracting, recruiting, and selecting people who exhibit those attributes;
- Orienting new program staff to the field of philanthropy and the nature of their work in that field;
- Documenting factors that contribute to the performance of particularly effective program staff;
- Keeping program staff committed, engaged, in tune with reality, and effective;
- Defining and rewarding what constitutes high performance among program staff; and

- Recognizing when the time is right for program staff to move on, and helping them do so.

## II. PROGRAM STAFF: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### A. ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Foundation staff, like staff of any organization, are responsible for implementing the activities through which the foundation achieves its desired ends, and for operating the organizational units through which it carries out its managerial, financial, human resource, legal, and other administrative and support functions. Foundation program staff are accountable to their chief executive officer for implementation of decisions by the foundation's board concerning program directions and policies. This means:

- Translating the rhetoric concerning *where* the foundation intends to go – as articulated in its mission and goals – into the reality of programs;
- Implementing board decisions concerning *what* the foundation intends to do programmatically, including program priorities, strategies, and style of operation;
- Implementing board policies governing *how* the foundation goes about achieving its goals;
- Assuring that the foundation's resources are allocated responsibly and prudently, and expended appropriately; and
- Providing the chief executive with the information she or he needs to: (i) be on top of what is going on; (ii) anticipate problems (no surprises, please!); (iii) make informed decisions; and (iv) keep the board informed.

### B. MAKING IT HAPPEN

Within this general organizational context, foundation program staff are responsible, specifically, for all aspects of the grantmaking and other activities through which the foundation pursues its programmatic aspirations. In the end, it is the program staff who make it happen. This means:

*Learning* – Gaining as much knowledge as possible about: (i) the problems on which the foundation has decided to focus its attention and resources; (ii) the larger social, economic, political, and cultural contexts in which the problems exist; (iii) the people whose well-being the foundation hopes to enhance through its programs; (iv) the community(ies) in which foundation programs are to be implemented; (v) the most accessible and potentially productive “levers of change” the foundation might push to achieve its goals; (vi) the individuals and organizations with which the foundation might partner; and (vii) the climate for success, including receptivity and readiness.

*Program Design* – On the basis of the knowledge gained during the learning process: (i) articulating clear program goals, expected outcomes, and milestones; (ii) specifying the parameters within which the program must operate, such as grantmaking dollars, time, and staff input; (iii) identifying alternative strategies through which the program can achieve its goals, consistent with those parameters; (iv) selecting those program strategies judged to have the greatest potential for success; and (v) incorporating those strategies into a coherent, systematic effort by the foundation to deploy all the resources at its command to advance the causes to which it is committed.

*Grantee Selection* – Identifying potential organizations with whom the foundation might partner in pursuit of its program goals, and selecting those judged to have the greatest potential for success. This involves solicitation, review, and decision-making processes that are not only effective and efficient from the foundation’s point of view, but fair, equitable, timely, and minimally burdensome and intrusive from the perspective of applicant organizations.

*Due Diligence* – Implementing those review, selection, and oversight mechanisms and processes required to assure, to the degree possible, that: (i) grants are awarded to organizations capable of achieving their stated goals, and of administering them in a responsible manner; and (ii) grant funds are expended in accordance with the terms of the agreement through which they were awarded. This “due diligence” is the responsibility of the staff. For, while foundation boards ultimately decide what to fund and what not to, they must rely on the judgment of the staff concerning applicants’ programmatic and administrative capacities, and grantees’ program performance and financial responsibility.

*Program Management* – Undertaking those actions necessary to increase a program’s potential for success: (i) coordinating and integrating the various elements of a program to assure that “all the moving parts” are aligned and complementary; (ii) facilitating the work of grantees, as feasible and appropriate, through the support of technical assistance, advice, and capacity building; (iii) using the foundation’s convening power, communications expertise and resources, contacts with other funders, and other assets and capacities to advance, leverage, and extend the work of grantees, individually and collectively; and (iv) linking and networking grantees so that, to the degree possible, their collective work is greater than the sum of their individual efforts.

*Improving* – Closing the loop: (i) maintaining knowledge and awareness of the context in which foundation programs are operating, and of any changes that may influence how those programs progress and succeed; (ii) monitoring the work of grantees through written reports, regular contact, and visits; (iii) assessing the degree to which foundation grants and grantmaking programs are achieving their goals; (iv) extracting lessons from this information; and (v) using those lessons to strengthen the work of grantees and improve all aspects of the foundation’s programmatic performance.

## **C. CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR**

These roles and responsibilities constitute a significant challenge for foundation staff. Fulfilling them in a way that maximizes the effectiveness of the foundation’s programs and operations means that they must:

- Understand the obligations they have to the foundation's governing board, partners, and constituents to keep their individual and collective eyes on *The Prize* as articulated in the foundation's mission, and to operate *always* in ways that are fair, equitable, and transparent;
- Treat *all* individuals and organizations with whom the foundation comes in contact with respect and dignity, recognizing that it is through them that the foundation achieves its ends; and avoiding the arrogance, elitism, and isolation that comes to characterize so many of us who have power and money that others lack;
- Balance personal beliefs and agendas with the foundation's mission, and with their responsibility to protect the integrity of the foundation's operational processes;
- Understand that, while they bring to the foundation their perspectives on particular racial or ethnic minorities, social or economic classes, age cohorts, or geographic areas, they do not *represent* those groups as though they were their constituents;
- Operate in a trusting, cohesive, and collegial manner, so that the whole of the foundation's programs and operations is greater than the sum of its individual organizational units;
- Respect the roles, responsibilities, and prerogatives of the board, striving toward a relationship characterized by mutual trust, respect, and collegiality, and communicating with directors primarily through the chief staff officer;
- Adhere to a policy of strict confidentiality concerning *all* foundation discussions, actions, decisions, and materials; and
- Recognize and deal with actual, potential, or apparent conflicts of interest promptly and openly. (See the *Tools* section of the web site for a model conflict of interest policy and disclosure form.)

### III. ATTRIBUTES OF EFFECTIVE PROGRAM STAFF

Despite the critical importance of program staff to the work of foundations, there is little collective wisdom in the field of philanthropy about what makes for an effective program staff member, how to identify individuals who are likely to be successful in that role, and how to assess their performance, once they are hired. Accordingly, recruitment and selection of program staff are often hit and miss, with many individuals who look good on paper and interview well not living up to expectations, and with others who appear unsuited for the job performing admirably. And, performance review, incentive, and reward systems in philanthropy are often so poorly thought out and implemented that they may actually encourage behaviors opposite to those desired. That said, there are some things we have learned about what to look for in recruiting people to become program staff, and what criteria to apply in assessing their performance. These include:

*Commitment To The Foundation's Mission.* Program staff should demonstrate a genuine interest in the work of the foundation, and view working there as an opportunity to contribute to the

fulfillment of its mission. While altruism isn't sufficient for success, it represents a core value that goes a long way in helping program staff succeed in a world where rewards are ephemeral and vicarious. Too often, individuals are drawn to philanthropy because they perceive it to be a respite from the hectic demands of the "real world," a secure place to do highly prestigious work without working too hard. After all, giving away money is easy, isn't it?

*Personal Maturity and Security.* Successful program staff are secure in who they are, professionally and personally, obviating the need for them to build themselves up at the expense of others. *Internally*, it is important for program staff to remember, always, that they are not independent agents, but staff to a board whose members set directions and make final decisions concerning allocation of the foundation's resources, and part of an organization in which all parts are equal and must work together in harmony if its mission is to be attained. *Externally*, there is always the danger in philanthropy for abuse of the intrinsic imbalance of power between foundations who have money, and applicants who want some of it, or grantees who want more of it. There is nothing that undermines the integrity, effectiveness, and nature of the relationship between foundations and their constituencies than the arrogance of program staff who fall prey to the self-delusions that often characterize those with power.

*Breadth of Interests.* There is a tension in any foundation between hiring program staff with specialized expertise and talent and those with broader interests and capacities. The tendency among most foundations is toward the latter, for several reasons. First, the kinds of problems addressed by foundations don't lend themselves to narrow, single dimensional approaches. Second, foundations increasingly recognize the degree to which societal problems are interconnected, often linked to many of the same underlying causes. Third, there is growing exploration within philanthropy of new organizational models designed to facilitate collaboration among staff, and between staff and grantees, in addressing complex challenges. And, fourth, foundations may change their programmatic directions in response to the need to stay focused on what is perceived to be the most important problems in the communities they serve. All these reasons lead many in the field to conclude that effective program staff are those who have broad interests and knowledge, intellectual curiosity, ability to learn quickly, and a flexible nature.

*Problem-Solving Orientation.* At its core, foundation program work involves deploying philanthropic dollars to contribute to the solution of societal problems. Accordingly, effective program staff are those who: (i) are animated by that challenge; (ii) recognize the magnitude and complexity of those problems; and (iii) have the vision, capacity, and persistence to systematically analyze their roots, identify potentially productive points of intervention, and develop programs designed to exploit those points of intervention in the most effective way. Philanthropy, at its best, is characterized by individuals who have literally changed the world through their focused, systematic, intensive (some would say "single-minded"), and strategic efforts to solve a problem affecting the health or well-being of large numbers of people.

*Comfort With Vicarious Rewards.* Philanthropy, by its very nature, involves providing the resources *others* need to achieve *their* work. It is those others who will be directly involved in addressing the problem, delivering the services, and helping people. And, it is those others who will – and should – get the credit for what is accomplished. Foundation program staff support, enable, and facilitate the work leading to those accomplishments, but they do so invisibly and behind the

scenes. The most effective foundation program staff are those who understand and embrace this role, who get their kicks out of helping make it possible for others to do good work, and who always give credit where credit is due.

*Comfort With Ambiguity.* Trying to change the world in which we live is not work for the faint of heart. Because of the imbalance between the resources of even the largest foundations and the magnitude of the social problems they exist to address, foundations focus their attention on problems that, in their judgment, are especially critical for the populations they serve, and relatively neglected by others. That means that those problems are likely to be particularly complex, difficult to tackle, and, perhaps, even controversial or unattractive. Consequently, progress in addressing them is slow, hard work, difficult to measure, and virtually impossible to attribute to the foundation's efforts.

If assessing the impact of foundation programs is elusive, imagine the challenge of assessing the contributions of an individual program staff member. In fact, the field of philanthropy has yet to address systematically the problem of how to evaluate the performance of program staff. Lacking criteria related to program effectiveness, supervisors often resort to mundane, bureaucratic measures of performance, such as the quality of written documents, the timeliness of responding to inquiries or proposals, and the degree to which files are kept up to date. As a result, the system actually rewards staff who spend their time at their desk moving paper, rather than out in the field where the action is. The lack of clear indicators of performance and resulting perversity of the reward system make it difficult for program staff to know how they're doing in the eyes of their supervisors, and create a level of ambiguity that undermines staff effectiveness and morale.

*Listening Ear.* There is no single or simple solution to the kinds of problems foundations face. Progress in addressing them depends on a systematic analysis of their roots, exploration of the many alternative strategies for achieving the desired change, and implementation of those judged to be the most likely to be effective. It follows, then, that no single person has the answer. Each step of this process requires identification of people who understand the problem and its consequences, know about its roots, have experience with other efforts to solve the problem, and have ideas about how to do it better. Effective program staff are constantly listening and learning, identifying key informants, building confidence that their opinions matter, maintaining a listening ear and an open mind, and incorporating what they hear into their thinking, their program designs, their implementation strategies, and their style of operation. Close-minded individuals who tend to think they have all the answers are antithetical to effective philanthropy.

*Collaborative Style.* Effective philanthropy is increasingly a collaborative venture. Making a difference in the kinds of social arenas in which foundations work requires the involvement of, and interaction among, a range of partners, including: grantee organizations; community leaders; other foundations; policy makers; government agencies; and colleagues within the same foundation. Accordingly, program staff need to embrace this collective style of operation and to have a personality that is consistent with the kind of collaboration that benefits all involved, equally.

## IV. ENHANCING AND SUSTAINING STAFF EFFECTIVENESS

### A. THE CHALLENGE

These characteristics and practices don't just happen, and, once they are achieved, don't automatically endure. In fact, the independence and self-sufficiency that create the opportunity for foundation staff to apply their talents to solving important social problems may produce an organizational environment in which those capacities are difficult to sustain. That environment can generally be characterized by:

*Comfort* – Pleasant surroundings, relatively generous compensation and benefits, adequate support staff and services, job security, and the satisfaction that derives from being involved in socially beneficial causes; and

*Insulation* – Freedom from the need to raise money, be accountable to shareholders, politicians, or political constituencies; distance from the day-to-day exigencies and immediacy of directly dealing with the consequences of the social problems the foundation is trying to solve; and protection from the truth, seldom receiving honest feedback from individuals or organizations, many of whom are grantees or wish to be.

Within such an environment, there is the constant danger that program staff will become complacent, out of touch with reality, and stale, and that the programs for which they are responsible will become pedestrian, safe, and reactive. Accordingly, a major challenge facing foundations is to create and institutionalize policies, processes, and mechanisms designed to keep its program staff productive, vital, and fresh.

### B. THE NEED FOR EXPLICIT POLICIES

The ultimate success of a foundation's effort to enhance and sustain its staff's effectiveness depends upon the formulation and implementation of explicit policies that are:

- *Comprehensive* – Encompassing the full spectrum of interactions between the foundation and its program staff, from recruitment to out-placement;
- *Coherent* – Constituting a consistent, integrated organizational commitment;
- *Feasible* – Fostering activities that are consonant with the realities of the foundation's structure, operating style, and administrative budgets, and of the staff's obligations and duties; and
- *Appropriate* – Designed to meet the particular needs of individual program staff members.

Such policies can only be effective if they are supported by board members, managers, and staff. Accordingly, it is critical that a consensus be developed among those groups that: (i) staff represent a major foundation asset; (ii) the foundation's ultimate impact depends upon nurturing and sustaining

staff vitality; and (iii) there is need and support for explicit policies and practices aimed at advancing that goal. Ultimately, policies on staff productivity and vitality must become explicit, integral elements of the policy framework within which the foundation operates, and of the style which characterizes that operation, influencing a broad spectrum of judgments, decisions, and actions.

## C. OPPORTUNITIES FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of a foundation's staff development policies is "cradle to grave;" i.e., it occurs along the entire course of an individual's engagement with the foundation, from recruitment to exit.

**Recruitment.** It starts at the beginning: everything is easier if a foundation is able to recruit individuals who are most likely to become and remain good program staff. This means carefully developing its own list of the attributes it thinks are most critical to the success of program staff, and applying those criteria consistently in assessing the suitability of job candidates. In addition to the kinds of attributes described above, such criteria should include, to the degree possible, indicators of the capacity of potential staff members to remain vital and fresh. These might include measures of the degree to which they: (i) are driven by the desire to improve the human condition and impatient with the status quo; (ii) see foundations as critical instruments of change, rather than comfortable places to work in, or retire to; and (iii) are open to, and actively seeking, personal and professional learning and growth opportunities.

**Orientation.** Few come prepared for foundation work. There are no proven training programs, no logical career paths, no comparable work settings, and relatively little movement of staff among foundations. New staff generally come from outside the field and are hired for their substantive expertise, not for their knowledge of philanthropy or their experience in grantmaking. Somehow, it is assumed that they will learn on the job, so we throw them into the deep end of foundation work and let them sink or swim on their own.

Having recruited individuals judged to have the capacity to contribute to achievement of a foundation's programmatic goals, it only makes sense to increase the probability of their success by providing access to an orientation program designed to accelerate the rate at which they learn what they need to know to do their jobs most effectively. The content of an orientation agenda for new program staff might include:

*Philanthropy 101* – The essence of philanthropic philosophy and behavior; its role in, and contributions to, our society; its relation to other major societal sectors and institutions; its strengths, weaknesses, and pitfalls;

*Foundations as Organized Instruments of Philanthropy* – The evolution of philanthropy from individual giving to organized institution; foundations as legal entities; the legal, regulatory, and tax frameworks within which they operate, their resources and assets; their distinctive opportunities and obligations; the nature of their accountabilities; how they operate;

*Grantmaking* – The nature of grants and their core role in achieving philanthropic goals; the system through which grants are developed, processed, awarded, and monitored; the role of program staff in each step; best practices; worst practices, traps, and pitfalls;

*This Foundation* – The history of the foundation in which the new staff are working; the origins of its financial assets; its mission, interest areas, and substantive boundaries; its organizational structure, modus operandi, and style; what distinguishes it from other foundations;

*Program Staff* – How the program staff are organized and operate; expectations concerning the relationship between program staff and various external constituencies; expectations concerning the relationship between program staff and other internal organizational units and the board; and

*Human Resource Issues* – How the foundation perceives its staff and their roles in the organization; goal setting and performance review philosophy and process; opportunities and processes for advancement and promotions; opportunities for growth and development; the foundation's expectations concerning how long one should work there.

The strategy for conveying information about these topics might include the following elements:

*Staff Manual* – A compendium of information concerning the foundation and its programs, policies, structure, and modus operandi;

*Readings* – Books, chapters, and articles about philanthropy and the issues faced by grantmakers;

*Seminars* – Discussions with foundation staff and guests about issues, challenges, and controversies in philanthropy, and organized grantmaking; and

*Mentoring* – Pairing new staff with more senior colleagues who can help ease their entry into foundation work, accelerate their learning process, and help them avoid the usual mistakes of newcomers to the field.

**Staff Development.** Once new staff have been exposed to an orientation program designed to ease the process of assimilation, there need to be in place ongoing opportunities for continued staff growth, development, and intellectual stimulation, provided within or outside the walls of the foundation.

*The Staff Development Plan* – Each staff member should participate in the preparation of a personalized plan for his or her ongoing growth and development. Such plans should be long term, anticipating a staff member's needs over at least the next five years, and updated each year as part of the annual performance review process. Topics covered in staff development plans might include: (i) identification of a staff member's specific interests, needs, and weaknesses to be addressed; (ii) goals; (iii) strategies for achieving them; (iv) time frame; and (v) estimated costs (time and money). Plans constitute strategic blueprints devised by staff and their managers to keep staff members stimulated and vital, and *both* should be held accountable for their implementation. Too often, staff

development plans represent good intentions that are forgotten, neglected, or pushed aside by the exigencies of everyday work and budget limitations.

*Internal Staff Development Opportunities* – There are many internal mechanisms through which a foundation can provide ongoing opportunities for staff to be challenged. These include:

- *Continuing Education* – A program of educational programs carried out by and within the foundation to expose program staff to philosophical, political, substantive, strategic, and procedural issues in philanthropy and grantmaking;
- *Exposure to Ideas and People* – Regular opportunities to expose staff to new ideas and concepts by assuring a steady flow of intellectually exciting people through the foundation's doors. This can involve taking advantage of the many visitors to a foundation each year, imposing on them to participate in staff seminars and to meet with interested staff. In addition, foundations can institute visiting scholars programs intended to bring in, for longer periods of time, individuals capable of contributing to the organization's thinking and work on particular topics or issues.
- *Position Enrichment or Change* – At some point, all program staff will reach a point at which their learning curve is flat, their creativity blunted, their objectivity compromised, and/or their productivity reduced. Among the strategies for preventing and combating such staleness are job enrichment, promotion, and job rotation:

**JOB ENRICHMENT.** Enriching one's existing job may, in some cases, be the most effective and least disruptive strategy, for both an individual and the organization, to provide the new opportunities and challenges needed to renew a program staff member's excitement and vitality. Options include: (i) changing the substantive focus of the programs in which the individual is involved; (ii) enlarging the substantive scope of work for which the individual is responsible; (iii) assigning the individual responsibility for exploring new programmatic directions and strategies, or other special projects; and (iv) increasing the financial and human resources over which the individual has control.

**PROMOTION.** Since upward movement within an organization is a way to stimulate growth and advancement within a foundation, it is a key strategy for keeping staff challenged. Accordingly, as part of their staff development policies and practices, foundations should seek to provide opportunities for staff to move into positions of greater responsibility and reach, if and when such moves are judged to be beneficial for both the staff member and the organization. The potential for such advancement is an inducement and a reward for excellent performance; helps retain and stimulate top staff; and opens positions for others moving into or up the organization.

**JOB ROTATION.** A change of job assignment – even a horizontal one – may be just the ticket for someone not interested in vertical movement within the organization, but in need of change. Job rotation represents the kind of change in purview, shake up, reduction in comfort level, and

introduction of new substantive and administrative challenges that forces one to form new ideas, explore new strategies, and deal with a whole new set of ideas, people, and organizations.

*External Staff Development Opportunities* – Complementing these internal mechanisms for keeping staff fresh are opportunities for involvement in extra-curricular activities such as: active participation in the oversight or operation of organizations of the kind the foundation supports; sabbaticals; and educational opportunities. Examples include:

- *Involvement With Non-Profit Organizations* – Involvement with organizations actively engaged with problems such as those to which the foundation is committed: (i) brings the individual face-to-face with those problems and their consequences; (ii) puts the individual in a position where being from the foundation carries no weight; (iii) injects a mild dose of humility; (iv) provides a view of what struggling non-profits go through on a day-to-day basis; and (v) sustains a “*sense of the real.*” Examples include: service on boards of non-profit organizations; membership on advisory panels, review groups, and steering committees; volunteer work; and fundraising. Within the constraints of conflict of interest concerns and the availability of time, foundations should encourage their staffs to engage in such activities and facilitate them by paying any expenses involved, and permitting necessary and reasonable time off.
- *Brief Sabbaticals* – An extension of the concept of exposing staff to external challenges and realities is to encourage them to pursue opportunities to spend more extensive periods of time away from the foundation. Such brief sabbaticals (3 months or so) would be designed to achieve specific purposes, including working for a non-profit organization full time, spending time in another foundation, working with a policy maker or government agency, studying a new area of potential foundation interest, or learning a new technique or skill. These opportunities would not be automatic, frequent, or granted lightly, but, rather, sought after and competitive.
- *Educational Opportunities* – Other external opportunities for growth involve the pursuit of additional formal education and advanced degrees. Recognizing the value to the individual and the organization of further education, in terms of knowledge, expertise, credibility, and self-esteem, many foundations have extremely generous educational benefits, including time off and tuition reimbursement plans.

**Performance Evaluation.** Although effective staff development requires constant attention, the annual performance evaluation process represents a time and a mechanism for reflecting on staff members’ productivity and vigor, assessing their need for revitalization, and for considering alternative opportunities for growth. In a sense, this annual process represents the principal *formal* vehicle through which the foundation’s staff development policies become expressed and implemented. Accordingly, staff development should be an explicit element of that process, providing a framework within which agreement can be reached on development goals, appropriate growth opportunities, and reasonable benchmarks.

**Exit Strategy.** In instances where a staff member’s interest, contributions, or freshness wanes, and efforts to create appropriate growth opportunities fail, outplacement may represent the most constructive staff development strategy for both the individual and the foundation. In such cases, the foundation should be prepared actively to assist the staff member in finding a more suitable

situation, providing the requisite time, resources, and professional help. In fact, it may prove beneficial for the two parties to work together on the development of an exit strategy, well before it becomes necessary. There is a great deal of discussion within philanthropy about the degree to which it represents a career rather than a career step. This reflects a concern about the impacts, on both the individual and the organization, of working in an environment that can be so protected, insular, and comparatively “cushy.” The best thing for an individual, the foundation in which he or she works, and for the field may be for program staff not to spend extended periods of time in any one foundation, but to move in and out of the field, mixing philanthropy with experiences closer to ground zero of the social problems of interest and concern.