Excerpt Report

Grantee Perception Report®

prepared for

The McKnight Foundation

February 2013

THE CENTER FOR
EFFECTIVE PHILANTHROPY

Executive Summary – Key Findings

The McKnight Foundation ("McKnight") receives positive feedback in most areas in this report, and ratings have risen in several key areas, including the quality of its relationships with grantees. One grantee writes, echoing others, "The McKnight Foundation is a leader in the philanthropic sector in MN, has always taken great leadership on pressing issues, and has not been afraid to take risks to creatively address problems." The biggest jump in the Foundation's ratings is for the clarity of its communications of its goals and strategies. In the words of one grantee, "McKnight is a model of managing change within an organization…they work through the change and then communicate the rationale behind the changes very well."

As in past years, the McKnight Foundation receives unusually positive ratings for its impact on grantees' fields, communities, and organizations. The Foundation is described by grantees as "a key partner," "a critical player," and an "expert and leader." The Foundation is rated higher than typical for its impact on grantees' organizations and fields. Several grantees recognize McKnight as "organization-friendly," saying that "they don't try to force their own Best Practices on their grantees." The one area of impact where McKnight's ratings have declined significantly since 2009 is the Foundation's impact on grantees' local communities, though the Foundation is still rated higher than typical in this area.

McKnight is rated significantly higher than in 2009 for its relationships with grantees, and especially for the clarity of its communications. One grantee reports that "the McKnight Foundation is very clear about its focus and direction." McKnight's interactions with grantees are also rated significantly higher than in 2009. One grantee describes Foundation staff as "exceptionally responsive, compassionate, and insightful." Nonetheless, in their suggestions grantees continue to request more interactions, including site visits. One grantee suggests that the Foundation "check in on me in an informal manner – see how we're doing, see if we're aware of looming deadlines and opportunities."

Grantees' perceptions of the helpfulness of the selection and reporting/evaluation processes in strengthening their organizations or funded programs have shifted – grantees rate the selection process higher than in 2009, and they rate the reporting/evaluation process lower. McKnight grantees that had a discussion with staff about their completed report/evaluation give significantly higher ratings on the helpfulness of the reporting/evaluation process. The amount of time grantees spend on these processes has remained consistent and is similar to typical.

In 2012, a larger proportion of grantees report receiving non-monetary assistance than in the past – more than 60 percent now report receiving some sort of assistance beyond the grant. The pattern of how this assistance is provided makes a difference; grantees receiving assistance in more intensive field-focused or comprehensive patterns rate the Foundation significantly higher on measures related to field impact, funder-grantee relationships, and the helpfulness of the Foundation's processes. Those receiving just a few forms of assistance, on the other hand, do not rate differently on these measures than grantees that received no assistance at all. Many grantee suggestions pertain to non-monetary assistance, particularly around opportunities for the Foundation to convene grantees. "Bring grantees together for strategic discussions on best practices and pooling resources," says one grantee.

I. Executive Summary

2

Background

- ◆ Since 2003, the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) has conducted surveys of grantees on their perceptions of their philanthropic funders both on behalf of individual funders and independently. The purpose of these surveys is two-fold: to gather data that is useful to individual funders and to form the basis for broadly applicable research reports.[1]

- ◆ **The Grantee Perception Report® (GPR) shows an individual philanthropic funder its grantee perceptions relative to a set of perceptions of other funders whose grantees were surveyed by CEP.**
  - Assessing funder performance is challenging and a range of data sources is required. The GPR provides <u>one</u> set of perspectives that can be useful in understanding philanthropic funder performance.
  - It is important to note that, on most questions, grantee ratings cluster toward the high end of an absolute scale. Grantee perceptions must be interpreted in light of the particular strategy of the funder.
    - The survey covers many areas in which grantees' perceptions might be useful to a philanthropic funder. Each funder should place emphasis on the areas covered according to the funder's specific priorities.
    - Low ratings in an area that is not core to a philanthropic funder's strategy may not be concerning. For example, a funder that does not focus efforts on public policy would likely receive lower than average ratings in this area if it is adhering to its strategy.
  - Finally, across most measures in this report, structural characteristics – such as funder type, asset size, focus, and age – are not strong predictors of grantee perceptions, suggesting that it is possible for all funders to attain high ratings from grantees.

1: For a full list of research publications refer to Appendix C.

Methodology – The Foundation's Grantee Survey

- The Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) surveyed the grantees of The McKnight Foundation ("McKnight") during September and October 2012. CEP has surveyed McKnight's grantees in the past. Where possible, ratings from these surveys are also shown in the report. The details of McKnight's surveys are as follows:

Survey	Survey Period	Fiscal Year of Surveyed Grantees	Number of Grantees Surveyed	Number of Responses Received	Survey Response Rate[1]
McKnight 2012	September and October 2012	2011	374	251	67%
McKnight 2009	September and October 2009	2008	612	448	73%
McKnight 2006	September and October 2006	2005	451	336	75%
McKnight 2003[2]	September and October 2003	2002	367	272	74%

- In addition to showing McKnight's overall ratings, this report also shows McKnight's ratings segmented by the grantees' Program Areas. The number of respondents in each group is as follows:

Program Areas[3]	Respondents
Arts	99
Environment	67
Region and Communities	63
Education and Learning	5
Other	13

- Selected grantee comments are also shown throughout this report. This selection of comments highlights major themes and reflects trends in the data. These selected comments over-represent negative comments about the Foundation in order to offer a wide range of perspectives.

- The grantee feedback in this report was collected through CEP's proprietary GPR survey. All individual grantee responses have been kept confidential: CEP does not report or share individual responses or identifying characteristics of survey respondents with funders. All comments are redacted to protect grantee confidentiality.

1: The median response rate for individual funders over the last nine years of surveys is 69 percent.

2: Results for McKnight 2003 are not shown in this report.

3: Three grantees' responses are not shown in the segmentation because they indicated they do not know their program area. These responses are included in the Foundation's overall average rating. Three grantees that identified themselves as Rural program area grantees were included in the "Other" category. CONFIDENTIAL │ © The Center for Effective Philanthropy │ 2/21/2013

Methodology – Comparative Data

- ◆ McKnight's average and/or median grantee ratings are compared to the average and/or median ratings from grantees in CEP's dataset, which contains data collected over the last nine years. Please see Appendix B for a list of all funders whose grantees CEP has surveyed.

Full Comparative Set	
Grantee Responses	41,697 grantees
Philanthropic Funders	290 funders

- ◆ McKnight is also compared to a cohort of 19 regionally-focused funders. The group of 19 funders comprises the following funders:

Regionally-Focused Funders	
Ahmanson Foundation	Heinz Endowments
Annenberg Foundation	Houston Endowment
Barr Foundation	James Irvine Foundation
Blandin Foundation	John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Bush Foundation	Kresge Foundation
California Endowment	McKnight Foundation
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation	Rasmuson Foundation
Duke Endowment	Surdna Foundation
Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund	William Penn Foundation
Hall Family Foundation	

- ◆ Within this report, CEP describes the comparison between McKnight grantee ratings and grantee ratings of other funders based on the percentile rank of McKnight. On measures with a 1-7 scale, grantee ratings for McKnight are described as "above typical" or "above the median funder" when they fall above the 65th percentile, and "below typical" or "below the median funder" when they fall below the 35th percentile. Proportions of McKnight grantees are described as "larger than typical" or "smaller than typical" when the proportion being referenced falls above or below the 65th or 35th percentile.

II. Introduction

Grantmaking Characteristics

- This table is intended to provide context to the Foundation in thinking about its GPR results relative to its grantmaking practices. The information is based on self-reported data from grantees about the size, duration, and types of grants that they received.

- Compared to the typical funder, McKnight awards larger and longer grants, and awards a larger than typical proportion of its grantees with operating support.

Survey Item	McKnight 2012	McKnight 2009	McKnight 2006	Full Dataset Median	Regionally-Focused Funder Median
Grant Size					
Median grant size	$103K	$100K	$100K	$60K	$125K
Grant Length					
Average grant length	2.3 years	2.8 years	2.7 years	2.1 years	2.3 years
Percent of grantees receiving multi-year grants	90%	88%	85%	49%	64%
Type of Support					
Percent of grantees receiving operating support	53%	42%	38%	20%	21%
Percent of grantees receiving program/project support	43%	53%	56%	65%	64%
Percent of grantees receiving other types of support	4%	5%	6%	15%	15%

II. Introduction

Note: CEP research indicates that grant size, type, or length alone are not key predictors of impact on grantees' organizations. For the full range of data on these survey items refer to Appendix B.
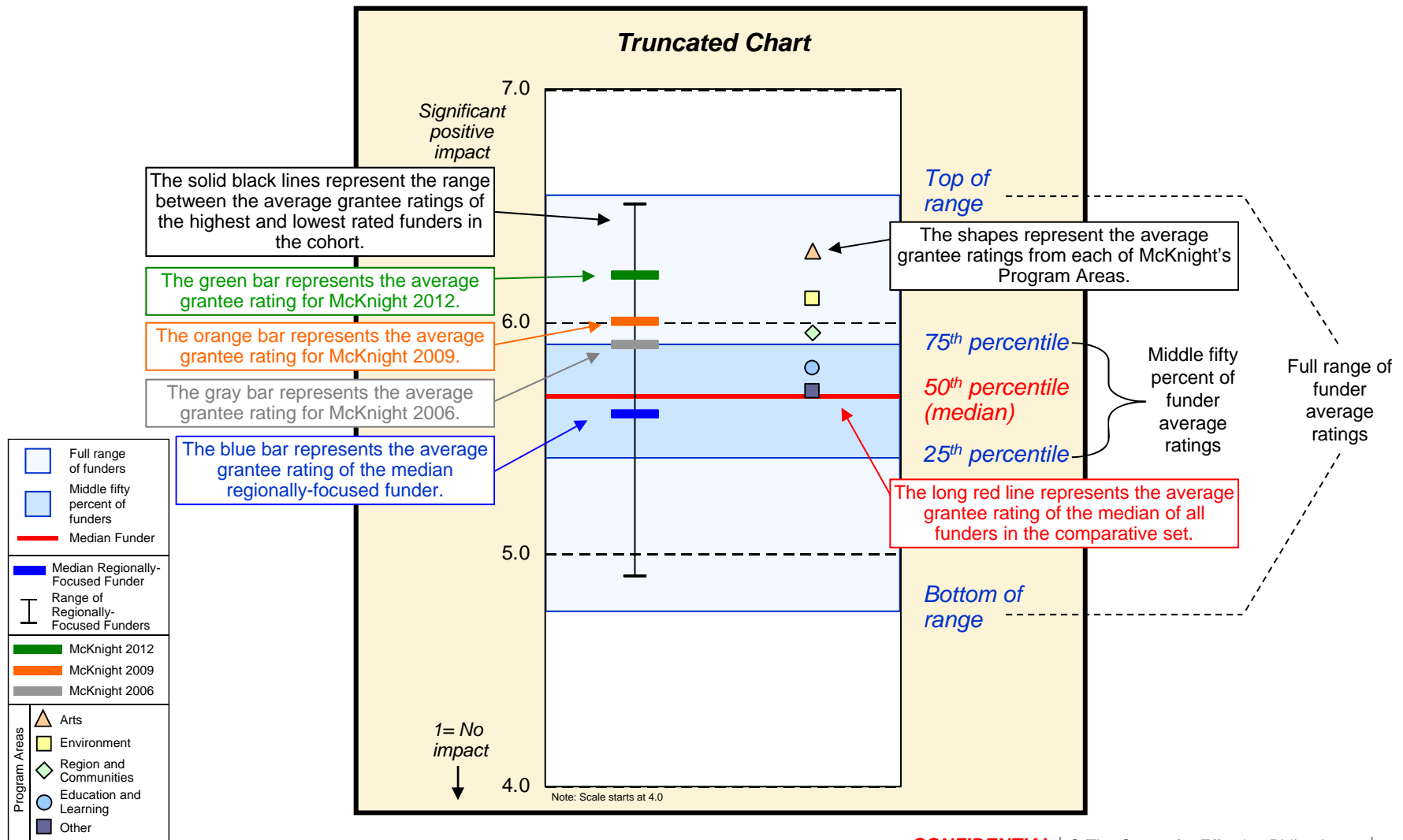
Structural Characteristics of Funders

- ◆ This table is intended to provide context to the Foundation in thinking about its GPR results relative to its grantmaking and staffing. This information is based on IRS filings and data supplied by philanthropic funders that have subscribed to the GPR.

- ◆ The number of active grants managed per program staff full-time employee at McKnight is larger than that of the typical funder.

Survey Item	McKnight 2012	McKnight 2009	McKnight 2006	Full Dataset Median	Regionally-Focused Funder Median
Program Staff Load					
Dollars awarded per program staff full-time employee	$4.8MM	$3.8MM	$4.0MM	$2.5MM	$4.2MM
Applications per program full-time employee	18 applications	15 applications	20 applications	27 applications	22 applications
Grants awarded per program full-time employee	26 grants	20 grants	23 grants	19 grants	21 grants
Active grants per program full-time employee	55 grants	34 grants	36 grants	32 grants	37 grants

Note: Funders of different sizes and focuses choose to structure their organizations differently – so, as with all the information contained in this report, the Foundation should interpret data in this section in light of its distinctive goals and strategy.
For additional information on funder characteristics related to these survey items refer to Appendix B.

II. Introduction

9

Reading GPR Charts

Much of the grantee perception data in the GPR is presented in the format below. These graphs show the average of grantee responses for McKnight, over a background that shows percentiles for the average ratings for the full comparative set of 290 philanthropic funders. ***Throughout the report, many charts in this format are truncated from the full scale because funder averages fall within the top half of the absolute range.***

Truncated Chart

7.0

Significant positive impact

The solid black lines represent the range between the average grantee ratings of the highest and lowest rated funders in the cohort.

Top of range

The shapes represent the average grantee ratings from each of McKnight's Program Areas.

The green bar represents the average grantee rating for McKnight 2012.

The orange bar represents the average grantee rating for McKnight 2009.

6.0

The gray bar represents the average grantee rating for McKnight 2006.

75th percentile

Middle fifty percent of funder average ratings

Full range of funder average ratings

The blue bar represents the average grantee rating of the median regionally-focused funder.

50th percentile (median)

25th percentile

The long red line represents the average grantee rating of the median of all funders in the comparative set.

5.0

Bottom of range

Legend:
- Full range of funders
- Middle fifty percent of funders
- Median Funder
- Median Regionally-Focused Funder
- Range of Regionally-Focused Funders
- McKnight 2012
- McKnight 2009
- McKnight 2006

Program Areas:
- Arts
- Environment
- Region and Communities
- Education and Learning
- Other

1= No impact

4.0

Note: Scale starts at 4.0

II. Introduction

10

"At this point in time, what is one word that best describes the Foundation?"

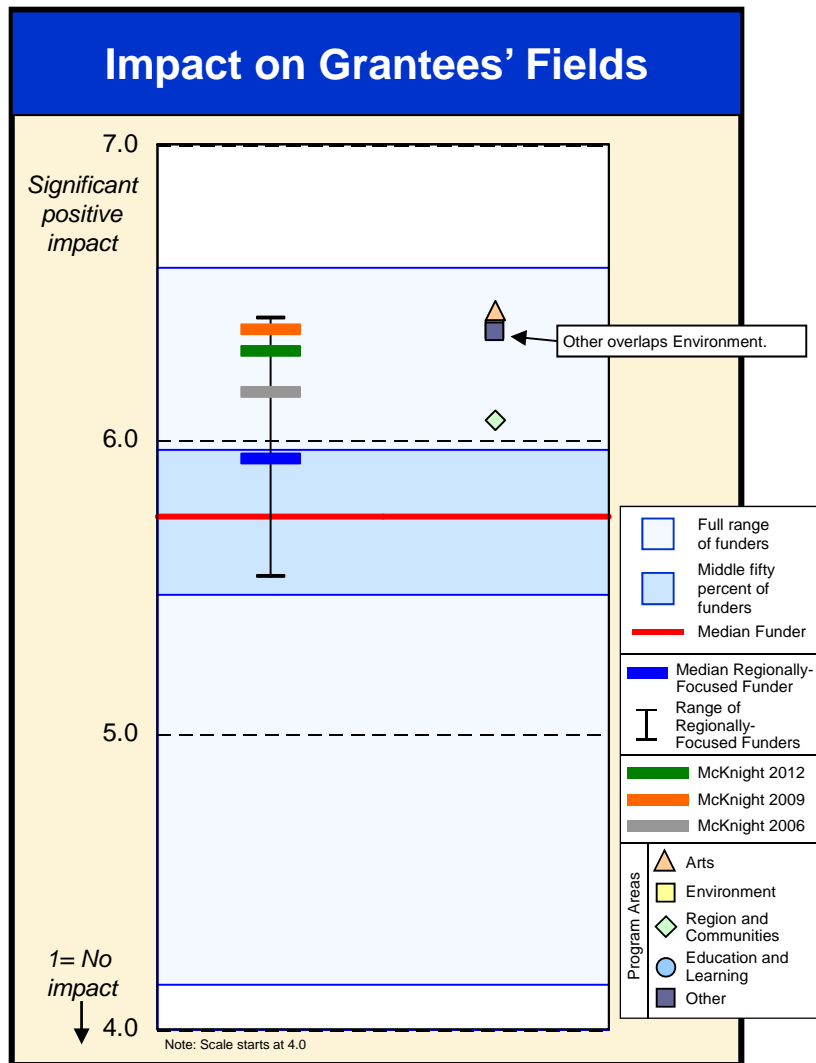

III. Impact on Grantee Fields and Local Communities

Note: The size of each word indicates the frequency with which it was written by grantees. 21 grantees mentioned the word "supportive." Only the 24 most common words are displayed.

Note: The above "word cloud" was produced using a free tool available at www.wordle.net. Images created by the Wordle.net web application are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 United States License.

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Impact on Grantees' Fields

On impact on grantees' fields, McKnight is rated:
- above 96 percent of funders
- above 89 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

Impact on Grantees' Fields

III. Impact on Grantee Fields and Local Communities

7.0
Significant positive impact

6.0

5.0

1= No impact

4.0

Note: Scale starts at 4.0

Other overlaps Environment.

Legend:
- Full range of funders
- Middle fifty percent of funders
- Median Funder
- Median Regionally-Focused Funder
- Range of Regionally-Focused Funders
- McKnight 2012
- McKnight 2009
- McKnight 2006

Program Areas:
- Arts
- Environment
- Region and Communities
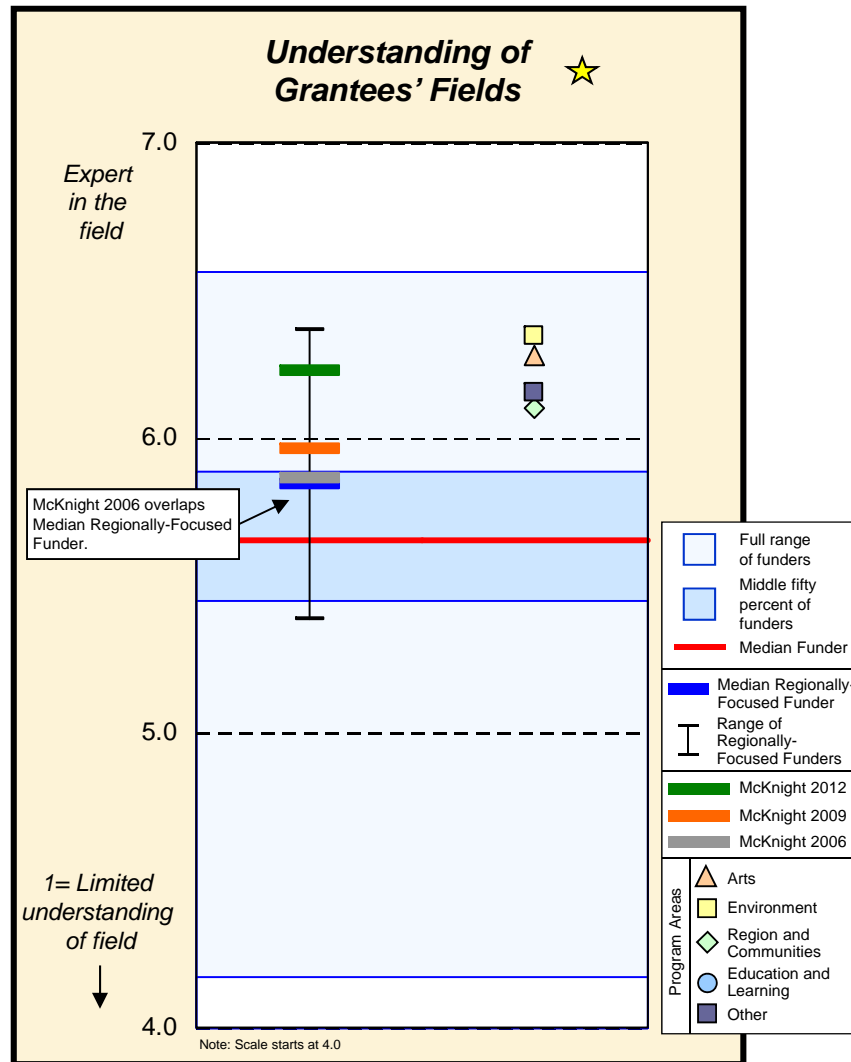- Education and Learning
- Other

Selected Grantee Comments

- *"While some important foundations have stepped away from this work, McKnight has stayed the course and been a critical player supporting many, many effective organizations. Without their support, this work simply would not get done, at least not at the level it is today."*

- *"McKnight remains dedicated to strengthening the presence and impact of the arts in the Twin Cities by continuing to fund ongoing, experimental, and collaborative organizations."*

- *"McKnight's program staff and its board understand people and policy and how they intersect. That makes a huge difference to organizations working on policy because McKnight 'gets' the framework under which they work."*

- *"It is beginning to feel like the Regions and Communities program has crafted a theory of change for themselves and are asking their grantees to get in line with their theory."*

Note: This question includes a "don't know" response option; 3 percent of McKnight 2012 respondents answered "don't know", compared to 8 percent at the median funder, 2 percent of McKnight 2009 respondents, 6 percent of McKnight 2006 respondents, and 4 percent of respondents at the median regionally-focused funder. Education and Learning data not shown because fewer than five responses to the question were received.

Understanding of Grantees' Fields

On understanding of grantees' fields, McKnight is rated:
- above 97 percent of funders
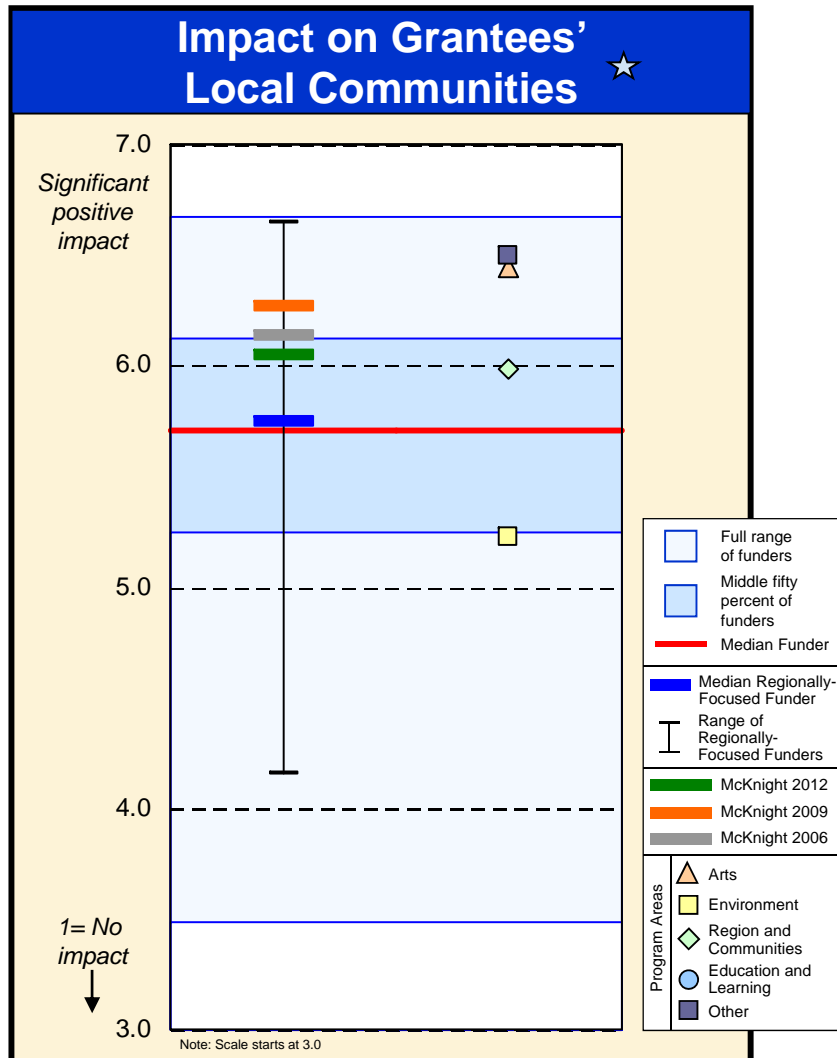- above 89 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

Understanding of Grantees' Fields ⭐

Expert in the field — 7.0

McKnight 2006 overlaps Median Regionally-Focused Funder.

6.0

5.0

1= Limited understanding of field

4.0

Note: Scale starts at 4.0

Legend:
- Full range of funders
- Middle fifty percent of funders
- Median Funder
- Median Regionally-Focused Funder
- Range of Regionally-Focused Funders
- McKnight 2012
- McKnight 2009
- McKnight 2006

Program Areas:
- Arts
- Environment
- Region and Communities
- Education and Learning
- Other

⭐ = McKnight 2012 rating is significantly higher than McKnight 2009 rating at a 90 percent confidence interval.

III. Impact on Grantee Fields and Local Communities

Note: This question includes a "don't know" response option; 3 percent of McKnight 2012 respondents answered "don't know", compared to 6 percent at the median funder, 3 percent of McKnight 2009 respondents, 3 percent of McKnight 2006 respondents, and 3 percent of respondents at the median regionally-focused funder. Education and Learning data not shown because fewer than five responses to the question were received.

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Impact on Grantees' Local Communities

On impact on grantees' local communities, McKnight is rated:
- above 67 percent of funders
- above 67 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

**Impact on Grantees'
Local Communities** ☆

Significant
positive
impact

1= No
impact

Note: Scale starts at 3.0

Legend:
- Full range of funders
- Middle fifty percent of funders
- Median Funder
- Median Regionally-Focused Funder
- Range of Regionally-Focused Funders
- McKnight 2012
- McKnight 2009
- McKnight 2006

Program Areas
- △ Arts
- ☐ Environment
- ◇ Region and Communities
- ○ Education and Learning
- ☐ Other

Selected Grantee Comments

- *"McKnight is thoughtful and includes a wide range of community input into their decision-making processes. They are focused on helping their fundees provide optimal programs to serve our communities."*

- *"There have been subtle messages that the Twin Cities region is the most favored region, which raises a question about whether the Foundation is considering shifting resources further away from greater Minnesota."*

- *"Financial support from the McKnight Foundation has had a direct impact on the sustainability of our organization, which in turn has had a positive impact on our local community ... We feature the work of local professional artists and are becoming an arts tourism draw."*

- *"Often it can seem like the Foundation has strategic answers for issues in communities of color without broad engagement, learning from those communities (and recognizing those lessons learned in guidelines and other communications)."*
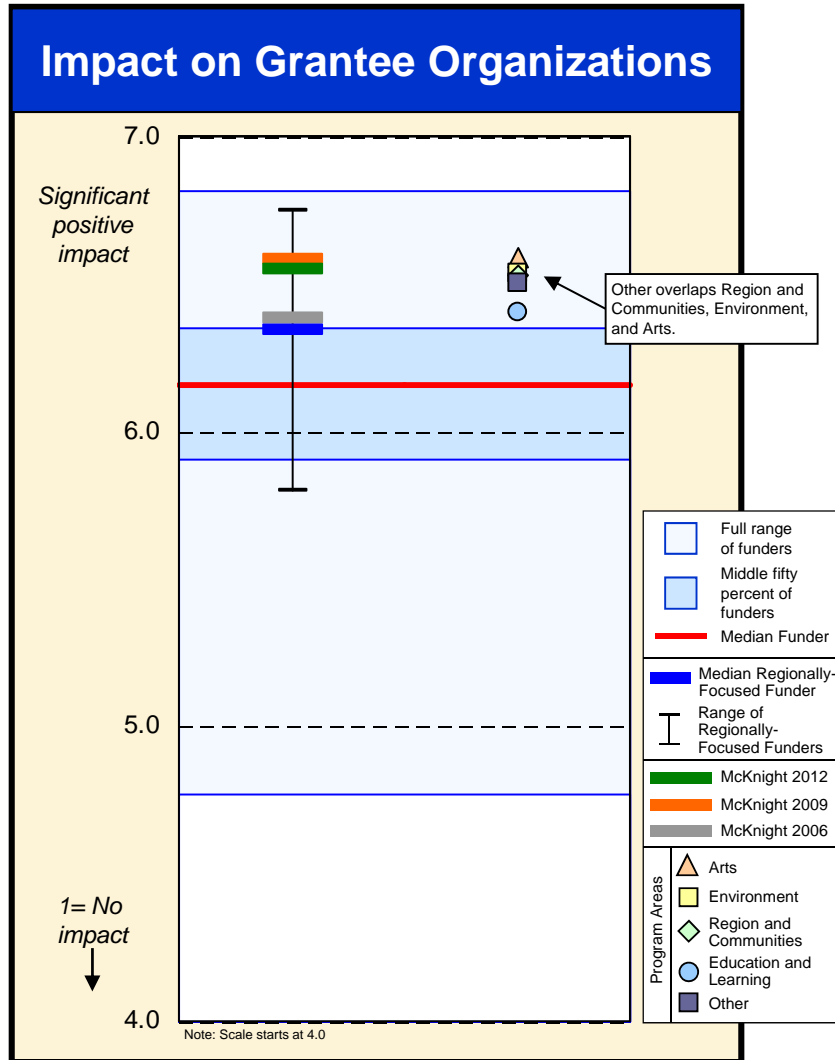
☆ = McKnight 2012 rating is significantly lower than McKnight 2009 rating at a 90 percent confidence interval.

III. Impact on Grantee Fields and Local Communities

Note: This question includes a "don't know" response option; 10 percent of McKnight 2012 respondents answered "don't know", compared to 10 percent at the median funder, 4 percent of McKnight 2009 respondents, 6 percent of McKnight 2006 respondents, and 10 percent of respondents at the median regionally-focused funder. Chart does not show data from two funders whose community impact rating is less than 3.0. Education and Learning data not shown because fewer than five responses to the question were received.

Impact on Grantee Organizations

On impact on grantee organizations, McKnight is rated:
- above 93 percent of funders
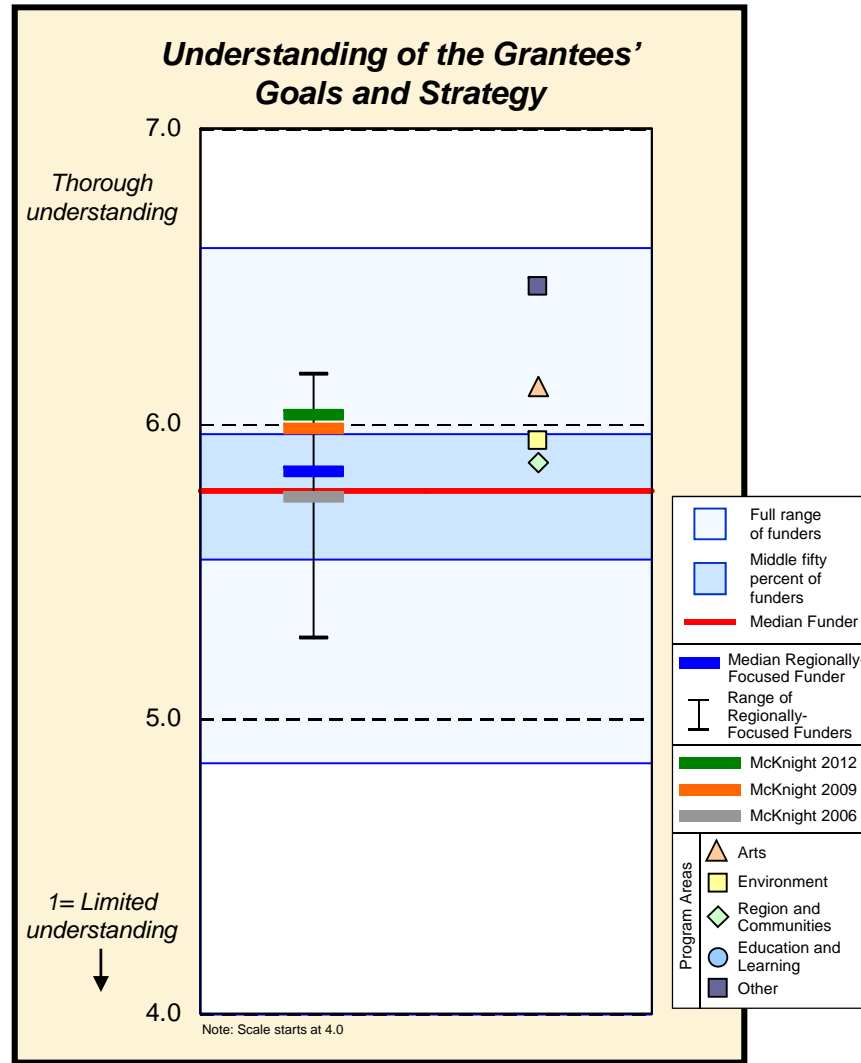- above 89 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

Impact on Grantee Organizations

IV. Impact on Grantee Organizations

Significant positive impact

1= No impact

Note: Scale starts at 4.0

Legend:
- Full range of funders
- Middle fifty percent of funders
- Median Funder
- Median Regionally-Focused Funder
- Range of Regionally-Focused Funders
- McKnight 2012
- McKnight 2009
- McKnight 2006

Program Areas:
- Arts
- Environment
- Region and Communities
- Education and Learning
- Other

Other overlaps Region and Communities, Environment, and Arts.

Selected Grantee Comments

- *"McKnight has provided us with consistent, long term, critical support."*

- *"They don't try to force their own Best Practices on their grantees … They tell me what they fund and what they're trying to achieve in broad strokes, I tell them how I propose to use their money to do that, and then they trust me to know how to do that."*

- *"McKnight has its act together. They have an idea of what they want to invest in, and are willing to help organizations develop into partners who can work with that investment."*

- *"Providing general operating support has become a rare and radical notion, and we appreciate the flexibility the Foundation offers through such grants. I feel that the Foundation trusts us, and so we feel okay moving the money around and allocating it where it needs to go."*

Understanding of Grantees' Goals and Strategy

On understanding of grantees' goals and strategy, McKnight is rated:
- above 82 percent of funders
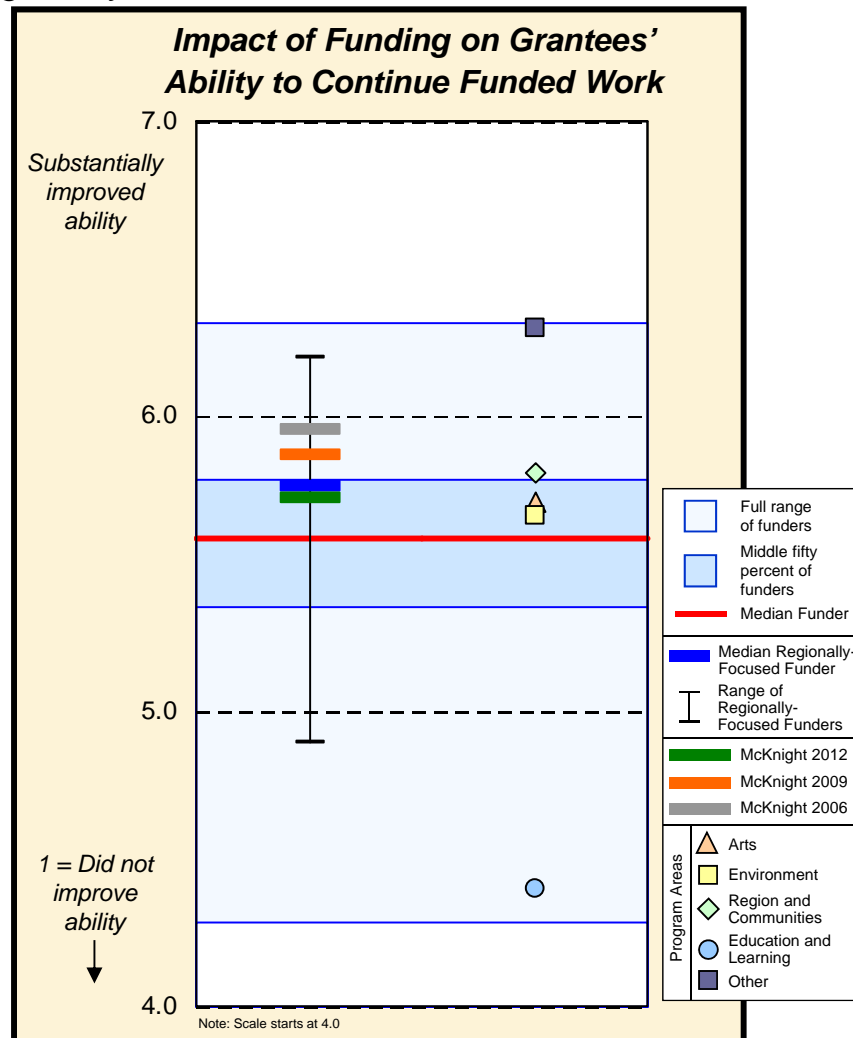- above 83 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

Understanding of the Grantees' Goals and Strategy

Thorough understanding

1= Limited understanding

Note: Scale starts at 4.0

Legend:
- Full range of funders
- Middle fifty percent of funders
- Median Funder
- Median Regionally-Focused Funder
- Range of Regionally-Focused Funders
- McKnight 2012
- McKnight 2009
- McKnight 2006

Program Areas:
- Arts
- Environment
- Region and Communities
- Education and Learning
- Other

IV. Impact on Grantee Organizations

21

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Impact on Sustainability of Funded Work

On the effect of the Foundation's funding on grantees' ability to sustain the work funded by the grant in the future, McKnight is rated:
- above 67 percent of funders
- below 60 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

Impact of Funding on Grantees' Ability to Continue Funded Work
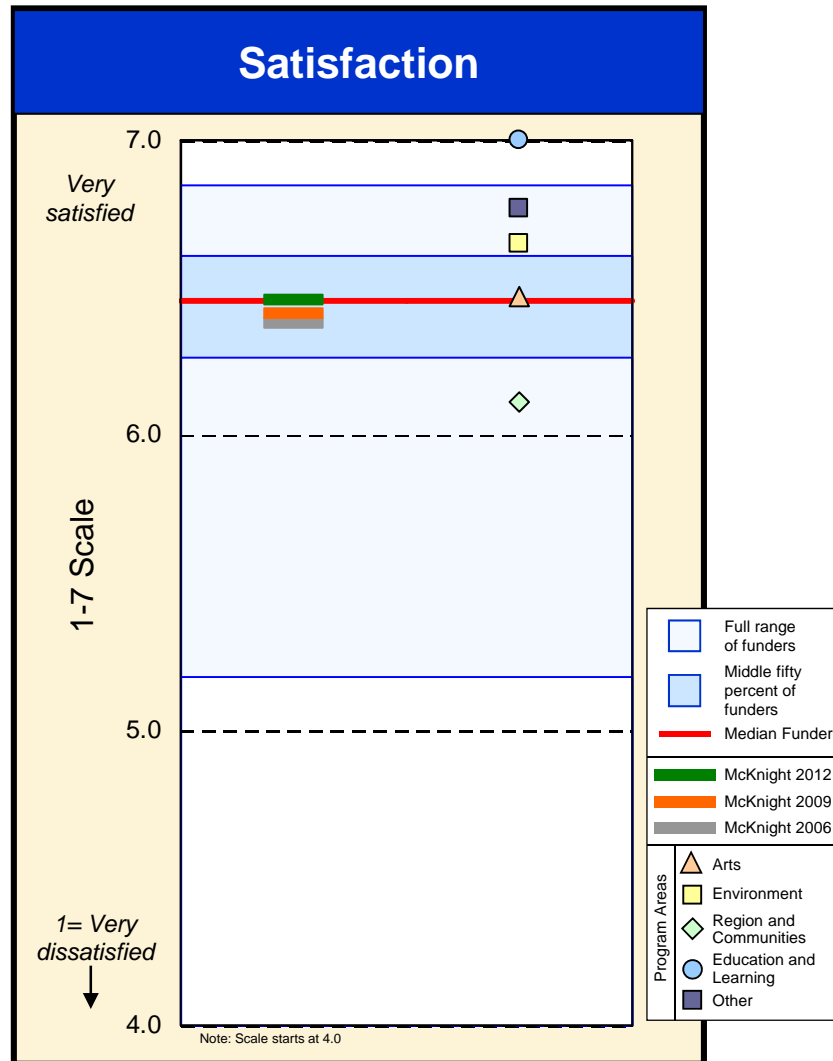
Note: Scale starts at 4.0

Note: This question includes a "don't know/not applicable" response option; 7 percent of McKnight 2012 respondents answered "don't know/not applicable", compared to 8 percent at the median funder, 5 percent of McKnight 2009 respondents, and 10 percent of respondents at the median regionally-focused funder.

Satisfaction

On overall satisfaction, McKnight is rated:
- similarly to the median funder
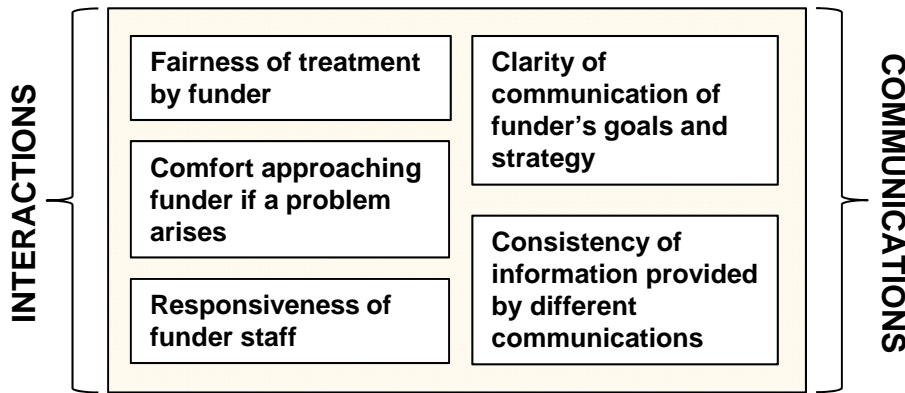
V. Aspects of the Grantee Experience

Note: Regionally-Focused Funder data not available due to changes to the survey instrument. Chart represents comparative data through 2010.

Funder-Grantee Relationships Summary

On this summary of key components of funder-grantee relationships, McKnight is rated:

- above 77 percent of funders
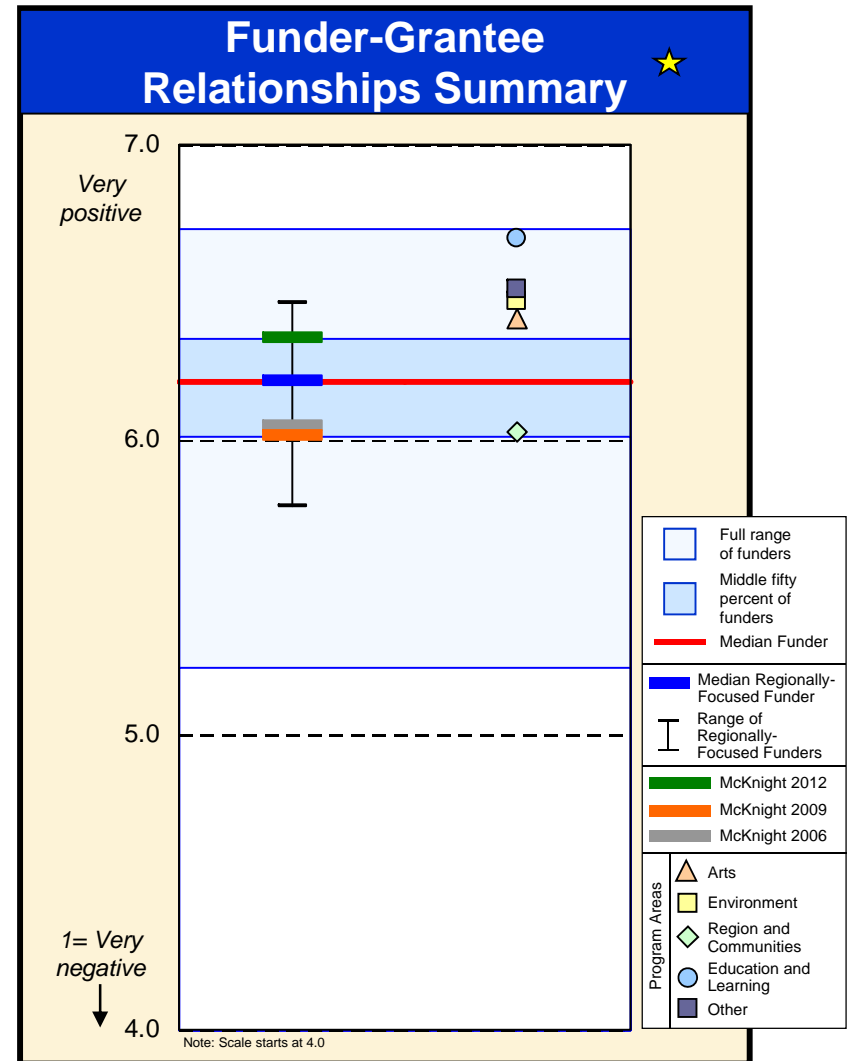- above 80 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

***Key Components of
Funder-Grantee Relationships Measure***

INTERACTIONS

COMMUNICATIONS

Fairness of treatment by funder	**Clarity of communication of funder's goals and strategy**
Comfort approaching funder if a problem arises	**Consistency of information provided by different communications**
Responsiveness of funder staff	

Survey-Wide Analysis Fact: What best predicts grantee ratings on the *Funder-Grantee Relationships Summary? 1) Understanding:* Understanding of funded organizations' goals and strategies; *2) Selection:* Helpfulness of selection process and mitigation of pressure to modify priorities; *3) Expertise:* Understanding of fields and communities; *4) Contact:* Initiation of contact and with appropriate frequency. For more on these findings and resulting management implications, please see CEP's report, *Working with Grantees: The Keys to Success and Five Program Officers Who Exemplify Them.*

⭐ = McKnight 2012 rating is significantly higher than McKnight 2009 rating at a 90 percent confidence interval.

Note: Index created by averaging grantee ratings of comfort approaching the Foundation if a problem arises, responsiveness of the Foundation staff, fairness of the Foundation's treatment of grantees, clarity of communication of the Foundation's goals and strategy, and the consistency of information provided by different communication resources. The data above reflects only the responses of grantees who answered all five of these questions.

29

Funder-Grantee Relationships Summary ⭐

Chart legend:
- Full range of funders
- Middle fifty percent of funders
- Median Funder
- Median Regionally-Focused Funder
- Range of Regionally-Focused Funders
- McKnight 2012
- McKnight 2009
- McKnight 2006

Program Areas:
- △ Arts
- ▢ Environment
- ◇ Region and Communities
- ◯ Education and Learning
- ▢ Other

Scale: 7.0 Very positive ... 5.0 ... 1= Very negative 4.0

Note: Scale starts at 4.0

Interactions Measures

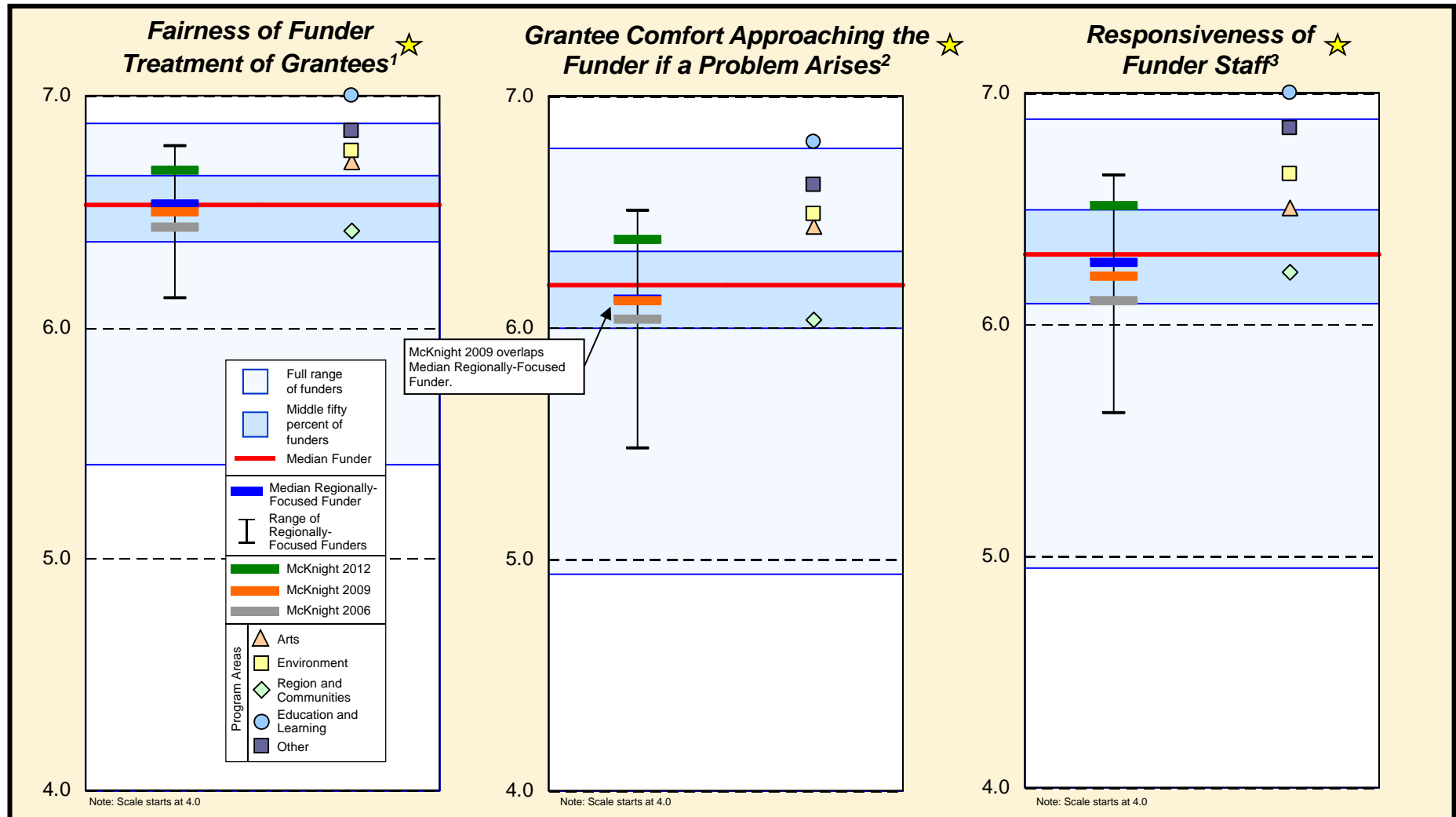On fairness of treatment of grantees, McKnight is rated:
- above 80 percent of funders
- above 78 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

On grantees' comfort in approaching the Foundation if a problem arises, McKnight is rated:
- above 83 percent of funders
- above 89 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

On responsiveness of Foundation staff to grantees, McKnight is rated:
- above 79 percent of funders
- above 78 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

V. Funder-Grantee Relationships

Fairness of Funder Treatment of Grantees[1] ⭐

Grantee Comfort Approaching the Funder if a Problem Arises[2] ⭐

Responsiveness of Funder Staff[3] ⭐

McKnight 2009 overlaps Median Regionally-Focused Funder.

Legend:
- Full range of funders
- Middle fifty percent of funders
- Median Funder
- Median Regionally-Focused Funder
- Range of Regionally-Focused Funders
- McKnight 2012
- McKnight 2009
- McKnight 2006

Program Areas:
- △ Arts
- □ Environment
- ◇ Region and Communities
- ○ Education and Learning
- ■ Other

Note: Scale starts at 4.0

1: Scale goes from 1 = Not at all fairly to 7 = Extremely fairly.
2: Scale goes from 1 = Not at all comfortable to 7 = Extremely comfortable.
3: Scale goes from 1 = Not at all responsive to 7 = Extremely responsive.

⭐ = McKnight 2012 rating is significantly higher than McKnight 2009 rating at a 90 percent confidence interval.
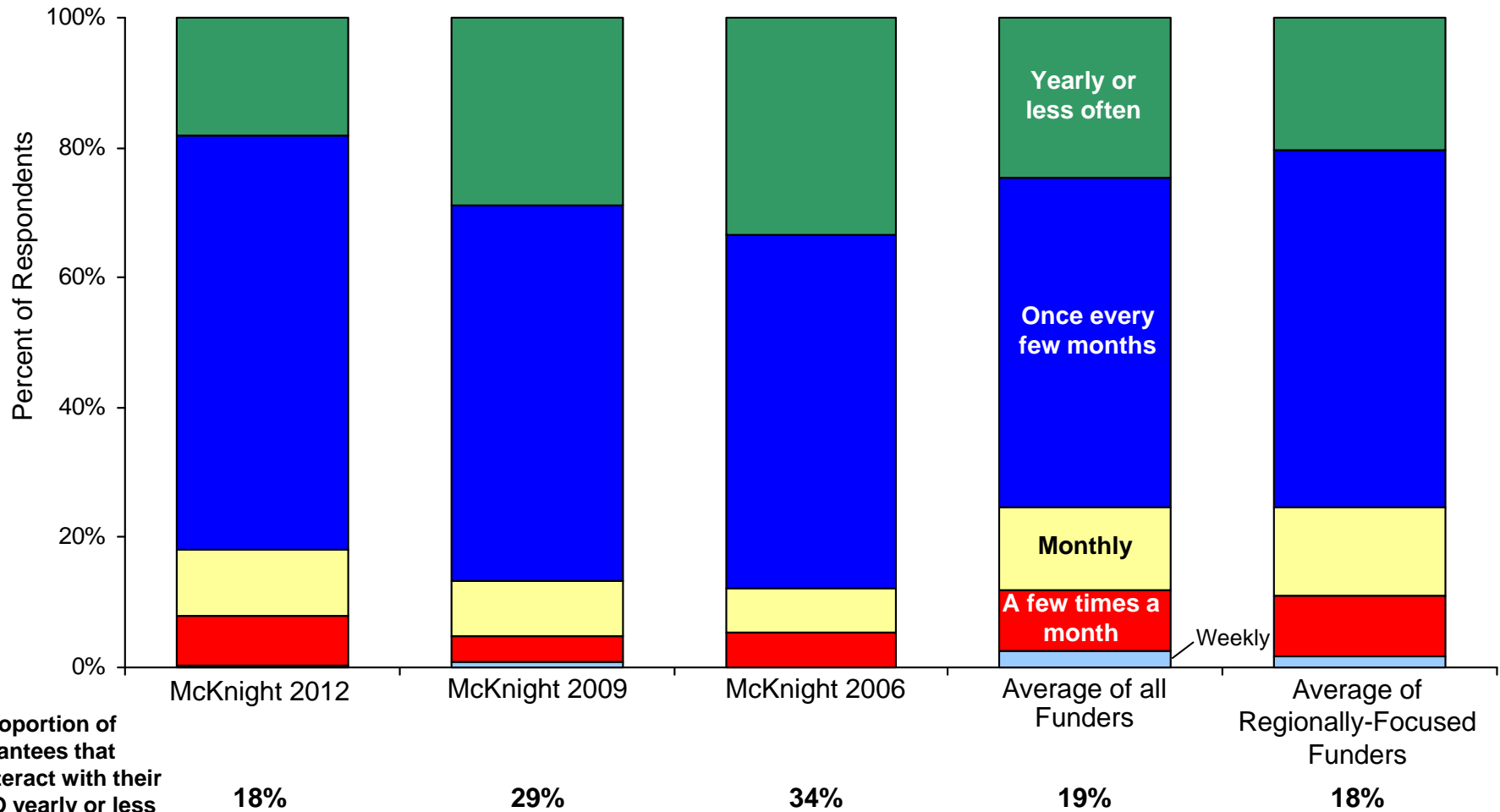
30

Frequency of Interactions (1)

The proportion of McKnight grantees that report interacting with their program officer yearly or less often is:

- smaller than that of 55 percent of funders
- smaller than that of 56 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

Behind the Numbers
Grantees that interact with the Foundation yearly or less often rate lower on overall funder-grantee relationships, the Foundation's impact on and understanding of their fields, and its understanding of their organizations.

Frequency of Grantee Contact with Program Officer During Grant

V. Funder-Grantee Relationships

	McKnight 2012	McKnight 2009	McKnight 2006	Average of all Funders	Average of Regionally-Focused Funders
Proportion of grantees that interact with their PO yearly or less often[1]	**18%**	**29%**	**34%**	**19%**	**18%**

32

1: The proportion shown for "Average of all Funders" and "Average of Regionally-Focused Funders" is a median.
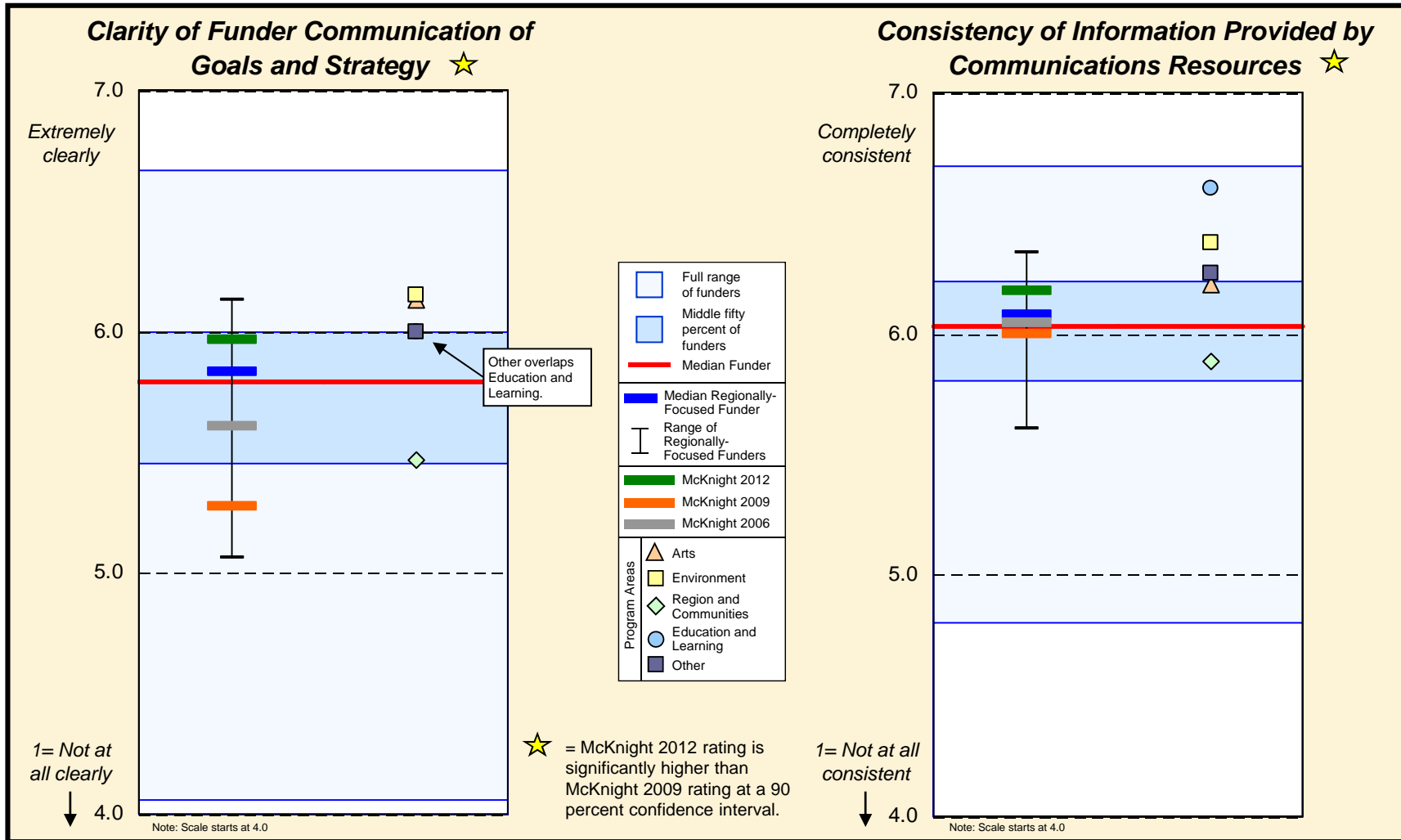
Communications Measures

On clarity of the Foundation's communication of its goals and strategy, McKnight is rated:
- above 70 percent of funders
- above 78 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

On consistency of the Foundation's communications resources, both personal and written, McKnight is rated:
- above 70 percent of funders
- above 73 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

V. Funder-Grantee Relationships

Clarity of Funder Communication of Goals and Strategy ☆

- 7.0 — *Extremely clearly*
- 6.0
- 5.0
- 4.0 — *1= Not at all clearly*

Note: Scale starts at 4.0

Other overlaps Education and Learning.

Consistency of Information Provided by Communications Resources ☆

- 7.0 — *Completely consistent*
- 6.0
- 5.0
- 4.0 — *1= Not at all consistent*

Note: Scale starts at 4.0

Legend:
- Full range of funders
- Middle fifty percent of funders
- Median Funder
- Median Regionally-Focused Funder
- Range of Regionally-Focused Funders
- McKnight 2012
- McKnight 2009
- McKnight 2006

Program Areas:
- Arts
- Environment
- Region and Communities
- Education and Learning
- Other

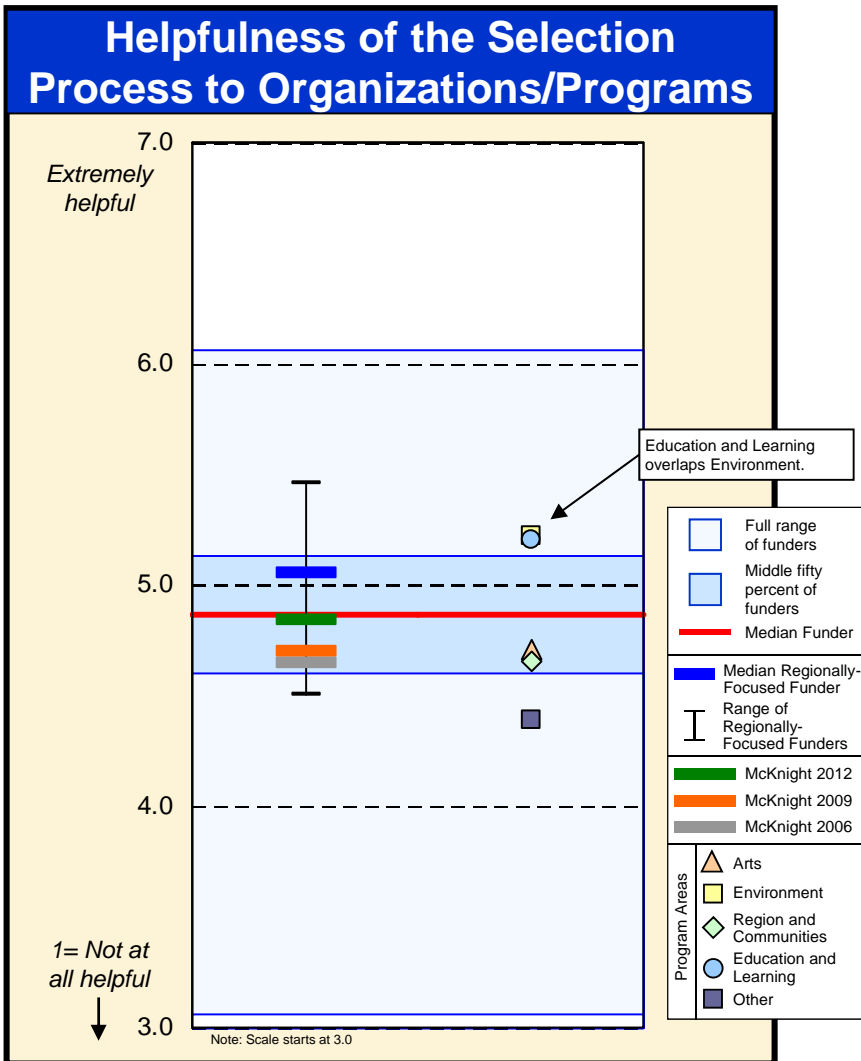☆ = McKnight 2012 rating is significantly higher than McKnight 2009 rating at a 90 percent confidence interval.

Note: In the right-hand chart, this question includes a "used one or no resources" response option; 3 percent of McKnight 2012 respondents indicated they had used one or no resources, compared to 4 percent at the median funder, 2 percent of McKnight 2009 respondents, 4 percent of McKnight 2006 respondents, and 3 percent of respondents at the median regionally-focused funder.

Helpfulness of Selection Process

On helpfulness of the Foundation's selection process in strengthening funded organizations/programs, McKnight is rated:
- below 54 percent of funders
- below 75 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

Helpfulness of the Selection Process to Organizations/Programs

- 7.0 — *Extremely helpful*
- 6.0
- 5.0
- 4.0
- 3.0 — *1= Not at all helpful*

Note: Scale starts at 3.0

Education and Learning overlaps Environment.

Legend:
- Full range of funders
- Middle fifty percent of funders
- Median Funder
- Median Regionally-Focused Funder
- Range of Regionally-Focused Funders
- McKnight 2012
- McKnight 2009
- McKnight 2006

Program Areas:
- △ Arts
- ▢ Environment
- ◇ Region and Communities
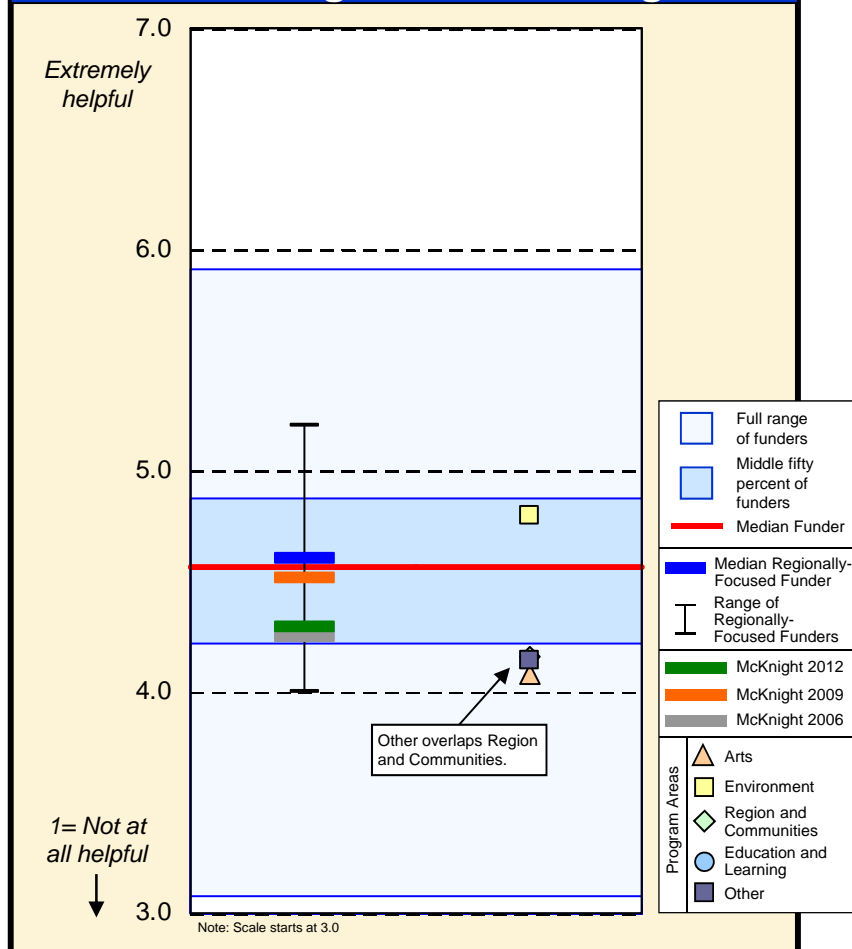- ○ Education and Learning
- ▢ Other

Selected Grantee Comments

- *"We find the processes of applying to the Foundation to be relatively transparent in the grant application process. They have established a very clear and fairly streamlined process that we appreciate."*

- *"I appreciated being able to submit the LOI and proposal on-line during this most recent grant application process. This makes the process a little less cumbersome for us as a grantee."*

- *"My only small complaint has to do with the on-line application process, which on balance is a nice and efficient way to receive and process grants, but the word limits sometimes feel as if they do not always match the breadth of the question being asked."*

- *"For someone that generates many proposal applications, the Foundation's process, questions and requirements are reasonable and straight-forward, and do not push our organization to re-shape ourselves for funding consideration."*

- *"The electronic process forces the proposal into more of a box which I do not think permits telling the more nuanced story of our work."*

VI. Grant Processes and Administration

Helpfulness of Reporting and Evaluation Processes

On helpfulness of the Foundation's reporting/evaluation process in strengthening funded organizations/programs, McKnight is rated:

- below 70 percent of funders
- below 80 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

Helpfulness of Reporting/Evaluation Process to Organizations/Programs

Extremely helpful (7.0)

1= Not at all helpful (3.0)

Note: Scale starts at 3.0

Legend:
- Full range of funders
- Middle fifty percent of funders
- Median Funder
- Median Regionally-Focused Funder
- Range of Regionally-Focused Funders
- McKnight 2012
- McKnight 2009
- McKnight 2006

Program Areas:
- Arts
- Environment
- Region and Communities
- Education and Learning
- Other

Other overlaps Region and Communities.

Selected Grantee Comments

- *"Reporting seeks important results and information, but is not overly burdensome."*

- *"The evaluation process for proposals and feedback on proposals can sometimes seem a bit technical and academic."*

- *"What I like appreciate is that McKnight provides a specific part of the project that they would like direct feedback on in the final evaluation."*

- *"I did submit a report to the Foundation and received very helpful feedback from [our program officer]. I think the Foundation's goals are very clear and they are interested and involved with their grantees."*

Note: This question was only asked of those grantees that had participated in a reporting or evaluation process by the time they took the survey. For McKnight 2012, 56 percent of grantees indicated that they had participated in a reporting or evaluation process by the time they took the survey, compared to 61 percent at the median funder, 60 percent of McKnight 2009 respondents, 63 percent of McKnight 2006 respondents, and 58 percent of respondents at the median regionally-focused funder. Education and Learning data not shown because fewer than five responses to the question were received.
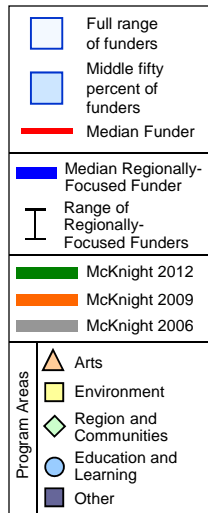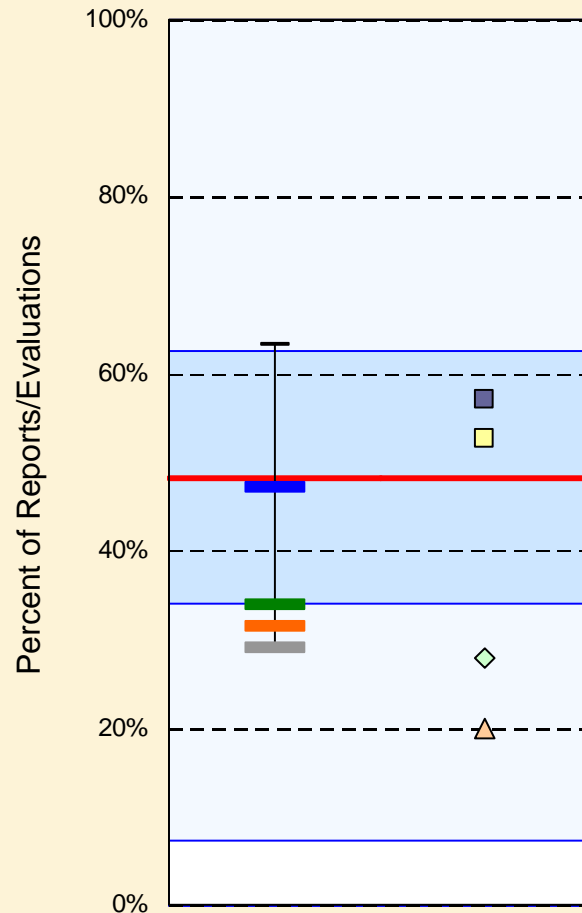
Discussion of Report or Evaluation

The proportion of McKnight grantees that reported discussing their completed reports or evaluations with Foundation staff is:
- smaller than that of 75 percent of funders
- smaller than that of 89 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

Behind the Numbers

Grantees that report discussing completed reports or evaluations with staff rate higher on the Foundation's understanding of their fields, communities, and organizations, overall funder-grantee relationships, and the helpfulness of the selection and reporting processes.

Percentage of Grantees That Report Discussing Completed Reports or Evaluations With Staff

Legend:
- Full range of funders
- Middle fifty percent of funders
- Median Funder
- Median Regionally-Focused Funder
- Range of Regionally-Focused Funders
- McKnight 2012
- McKnight 2009
- McKnight 2006

Program Areas:
- Arts
- Environment
- Region and Communities
- Education and Learning
- Other

Y-axis: Percent of Reports/Evaluations (0% – 100%)

Survey-Wide Analysis Fact: The helpfulness of the reporting or evaluation process is the lowest rated measure by grantees in CEP's dataset. However, grantees who have a discussion about their reports or evaluations with their funder tend to find the reporting or evaluation process to be significantly more helpful in strengthening their organizations. For more on these findings and resulting management implications, please see CEP's report, *Grantees Report Back: Helpful Reporting and Evaluation Processes.*

Note: This question was only asked of those grantees that had participated in a reporting or evaluation process by the time they took the survey. For McKnight 2012, 56 percent of grantees indicated that they had participated in a reporting or evaluation process by the time they took the survey, compared to 61 percent at the median funder, 60 percent of McKnight 2009 respondents, 63 percent of McKnight 2006 respondents, and 58 percent of respondents at the median regionally-focused funder. Education and Learning data not shown because fewer than five responses to the question were received.

Grantee Perception Report®

EXCERPT

The following section reflects the results of seven questions focused on grantees reporting the results achieved with this grant. These questions are meant to specifically address three distinct topics:
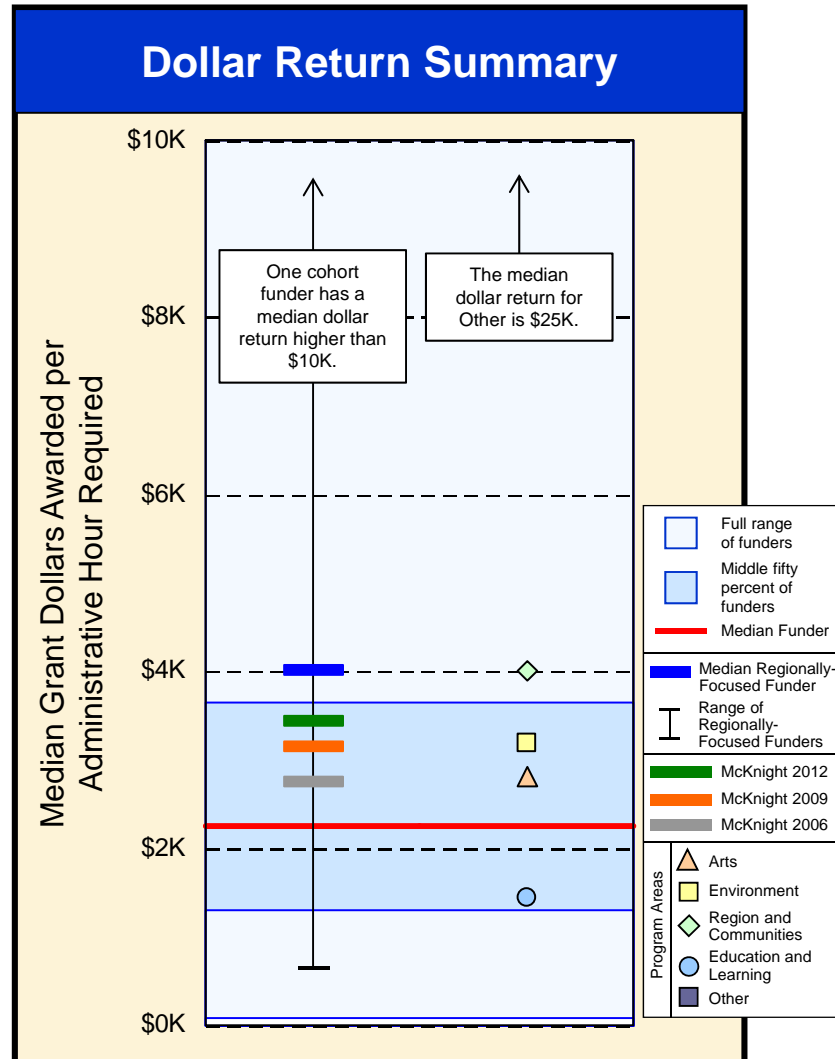
- Communicating and aligning expectations about desired results

- The appropriateness of the grant to achieve the expected results

- Collecting and using results-related information

♦ For McKnight, 78 percent of grantees indicated they had communicated with the Foundation about results to be achieved by the grant, compared to 79 percent at the typical funder.

Measure	McKnight 2012	McKnight 2009	Full Dataset Median
Clarity of Understanding of Expectations			
Clarity of grantee understanding of the specific results the Foundation expected to achieve *(1="Not at all clearly" and 7="Extremely clearly")*	5.9	5.9	5.9
Appropriateness of Grant Characteristics to Achieve the Specific Results the Foundation Expects			
Appropriateness of the size of the grant *(1="Strongly disagree", 4="Neither agree nor disagree", and 7="Strongly agree")*	5.1	5.1	5.3
Appropriateness of the length of the grant commitment *(1="Strongly disagree", 4="Neither agree nor disagree", and 7="Strongly agree")*	5.6	5.5	5.5
Appropriateness of the type of grant (e.g., program, operating, etc.) *(1="Strongly disagree", 4="Neither agree nor disagree", and 7="Strongly agree")*	6.4	6.2	6.2
Collecting and Using Results-Oriented Information			
Proportion of grantees collecting information to measure specific results of the work funded by this grant	92%	94%	92%
Usefulness of the information grantees collect in understanding whether they are achieving the specific results of the work funded by this grant *(1="Not at all useful" and 7="Extremely useful")*	5.6	5.9	6.1

A. Additional GPR Results

Note: This table includes comparative data through 2009. McKnight 2006 and regionally-focused funder data not available due to changes in the survey instrument.

Dollar Return Summary

This summary measure includes the total grant dollars awarded and the total time necessary to fulfill the administrative requirements over the lifetime of the grant. At the median, the number of dollars awarded per hour of administrative time spent by McKnight grantees is:

- greater than that of 73 percent of funders
- less than that of 56 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

Dollar Return Summary

One cohort funder has a median dollar return higher than $10K.

The median dollar return for Other is $25K.

Median Grant Dollars Awarded per Administrative Hour Required

Legend:
- Full range of funders
- Middle fifty percent of funders
- Median Funder
- Median Regionally-Focused Funder
- Range of Regionally-Focused Funders
- McKnight 2012
- McKnight 2009
- McKnight 2006

Program Areas:
- Arts
- Environment
- Region and Communities
- Education and Learning
- Other

Note: Dollar Return on Grantee Administrative Hours is calculated for each grantee and aggregated by philanthropic funder for the Dollar Return Summary. Chart does not show data from eleven funders whose Dollar Return on Grantee Administrative Hours exceeds $10K.
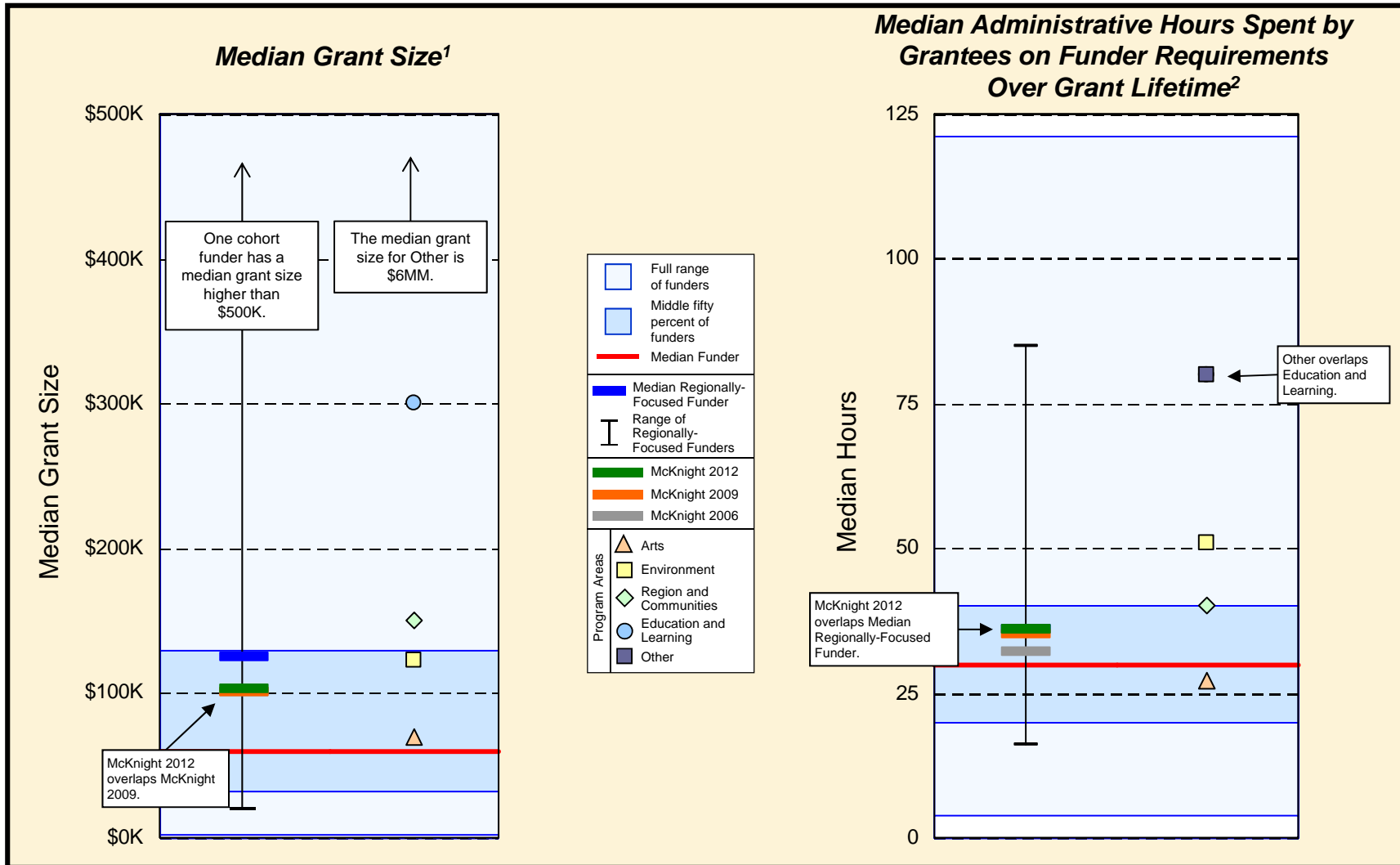
Grant Size and Administrative Time

At the median, the grant size reported by McKnight grantees is:
- larger than that of 70 percent of funders
- smaller than that of 72 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

At the median, the number of hours of administrative time spent by McKnight grantees during the course of the grant is:
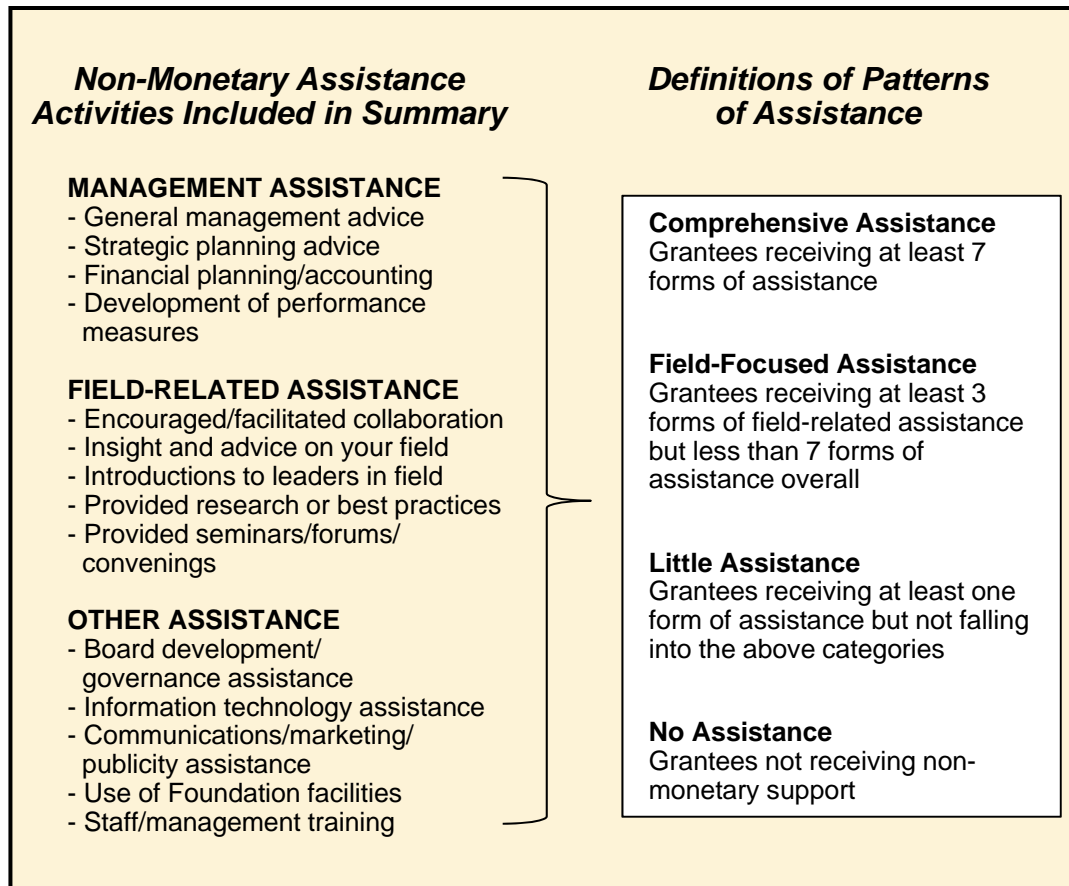- greater than the time spent by grantees of 65 percent of funders
- at the median of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

<div style="writing-mode: vertical-lr">VI. Grant Processes and Administration</div>

Median Grant Size[1]

Median Grant Size

- $500K
- $400K
- $300K
- $200K
- $100K
- $0K

One cohort funder has a median grant size higher than $500K.

The median grant size for Other is $6MM.

McKnight 2012 overlaps McKnight 2009.

Legend:
- Full range of funders
- Middle fifty percent of funders
- Median Funder
- Median Regionally-Focused Funder
- Range of Regionally-Focused Funders
- McKnight 2012
- McKnight 2009
- McKnight 2006

Program Areas:
- Arts
- Environment
- Region and Communities
- Education and Learning
- Other

Median Administrative Hours Spent by Grantees on Funder Requirements Over Grant Lifetime[2]

Median Hours

- 125
- 100
- 75
- 50
- 25
- 0

Other overlaps Education and Learning.

McKnight 2012 overlaps Median Regionally-Focused Funder.

1: Chart does not show data from 12 funders whose median grant size exceeds $500K.

2: Chart displays total grant proposal creation, evaluation, and monitoring hours spent over the life of the grant; each of these events did not necessarily occur for each individual grantee. Chart does not show data from four funders whose median administrative hours exceed 125 hours.

Non-Monetary Assistance Summary (1)

The non-monetary assistance summary includes the fourteen activities listed below. Provision of assistance patterns fall into the four categories: comprehensive assistance, field-focused assistance, little assistance, and no assistance.

VII. Assistance Beyond the Grant Check

Non-Monetary Assistance Activities Included in Summary

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE
- General management advice
- Strategic planning advice
- Financial planning/accounting
- Development of performance measures

FIELD-RELATED ASSISTANCE
- Encouraged/facilitated collaboration
- Insight and advice on your field
- Introductions to leaders in field
- Provided research or best practices
- Provided seminars/forums/ convenings

OTHER ASSISTANCE
- Board development/ governance assistance
- Information technology assistance
- Communications/marketing/ publicity assistance
- Use of Foundation facilities
- Staff/management training

Definitions of Patterns of Assistance

Comprehensive Assistance
Grantees receiving at least 7 forms of assistance

Field-Focused Assistance
Grantees receiving at least 3 forms of field-related assistance but less than 7 forms of assistance overall

Little Assistance
Grantees receiving at least one form of assistance but not falling into the above categories

No Assistance
Grantees not receiving non-monetary support

Selected Grantee Comments

- *"One of the things I like the best about the Foundation and its staff is the way they help to connect the dots to support their programs as well as their grantees and their work. For instance, funding other organizations to offer training programs to grantee organizations or to further grantees' capacity and work."*

- *"Foundation staff officers are technically well informed and contribute to the knowledge base. They are accessible. Among the greatest values provided by McKnight staff are their networking skills and experience. They connected our organization with other organizations doing related work and many of these relationships have persisted and grown, multiplying the impact of our work."*

- *"I greatly appreciate the opportunities that the Foundation offers its grantees to learn more about their field, interact with other organizations and professionals doing similar work, and to participate in Foundation convenings that frame and impact my organization's work."*
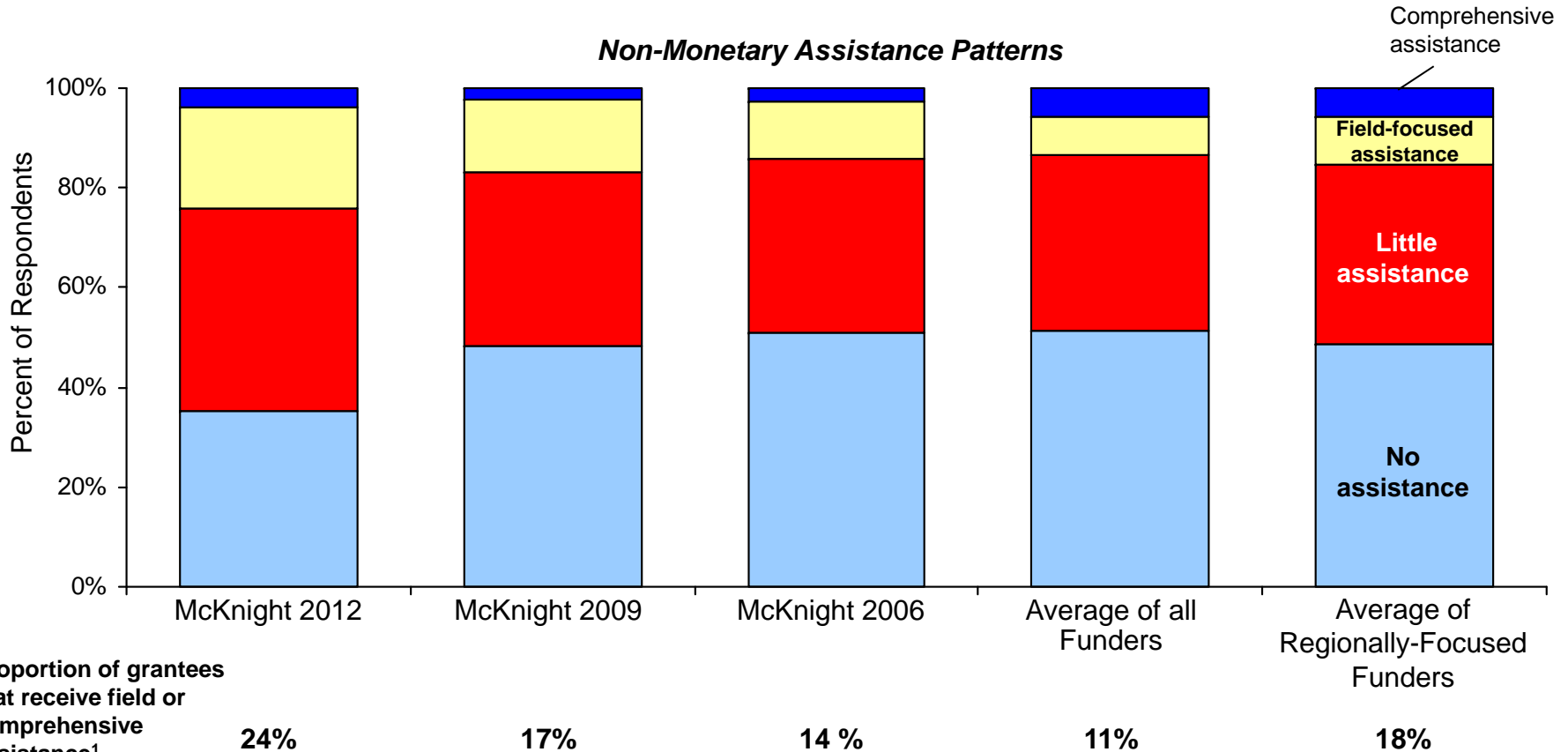
Non-Monetary Assistance Summary (2)

The proportion of McKnight grantees that report receiving comprehensive or field-focused assistance is:

- larger than that of 82 percent of funders
- larger than that of 89 percent of regionally-focused funders in the cohort

Behind the Numbers

Grantees that received field-focused or comprehensive assistance rate higher on the Foundation's impact on their fields and organizations, overall funder-grantee relationships, and the helpfulness of the selection and evaluation processes.

Non-Monetary Assistance Patterns

Comprehensive assistance

Field-focused assistance

Little assistance

No assistance

	McKnight 2012	McKnight 2009	McKnight 2006	Average of all Funders	Average of Regionally-Focused Funders
Proportion of grantees that receive field or comprehensive assistance[1]	24%	17%	14 %	11%	18%

Survey-Wide Analysis Fact: Providing just two or three types of assistance appears to be ineffective; it is only when grantees receive either a comprehensive set of assistance activities or a set of mainly field-focused types of assistance that they have a substantially more positive and productive experience with their foundation funders than grantees receiving no assistance. For more information on these findings, please see CEP's report, *More than Money: Making a Difference with Assistance Beyond the Grant Check.*

VII. Assistance Beyond the Grant Check

1: The proportion shown for "Average of all Funders" and "Average of Regionally-Focused Funders" is a median.   *CONFIDENTIAL* │ © The Center for Effective Philanthropy │ 2/21/2013
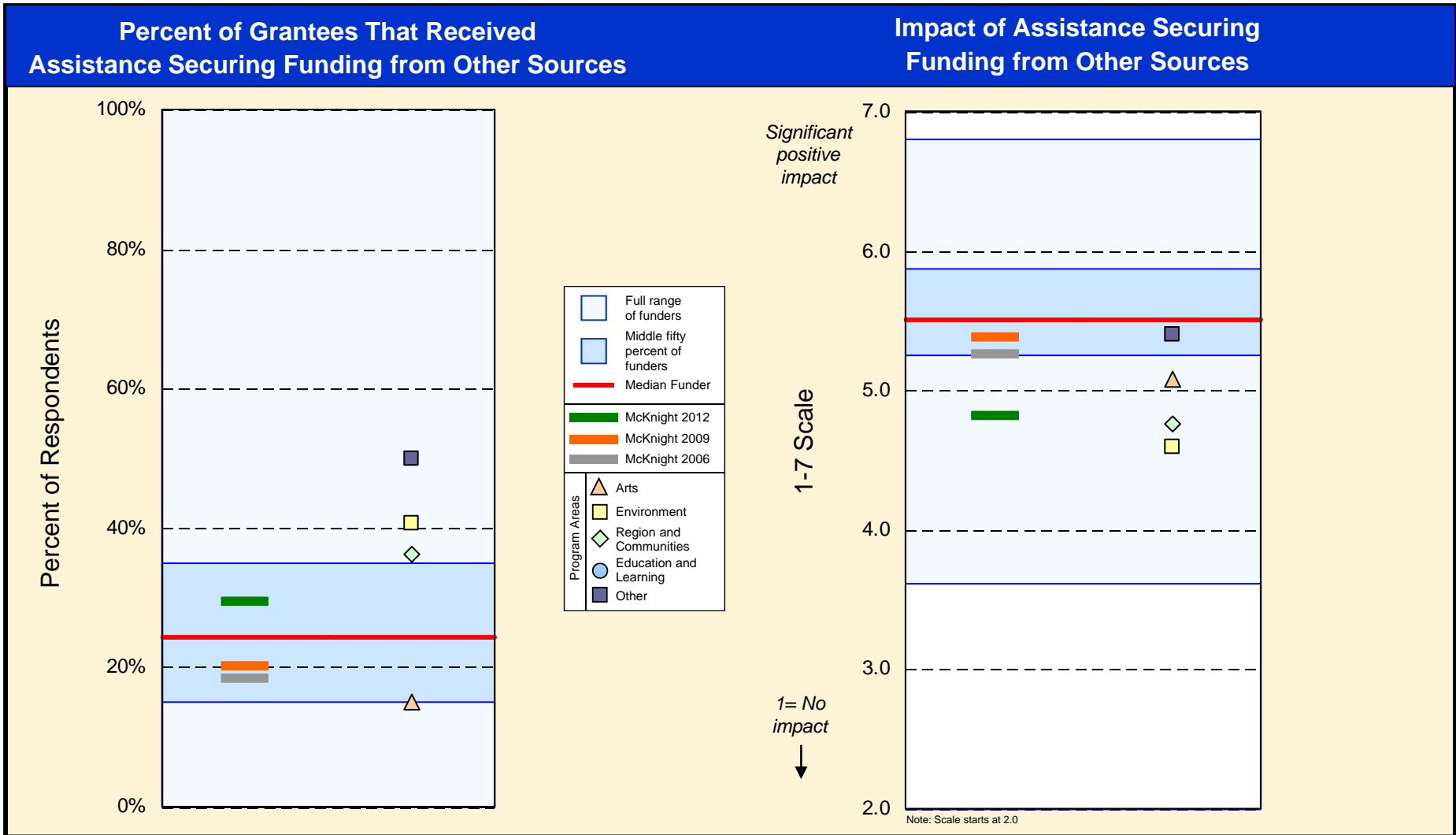
Impact of Assistance Securing Funding from Other Sources

The proportion of McKnight grantees receiving active assistance from the Foundation in securing funding from other sources is:

- similar to that of the median funder

On impact of the Foundation's assistance in securing funding from other sources, McKnight is rated:
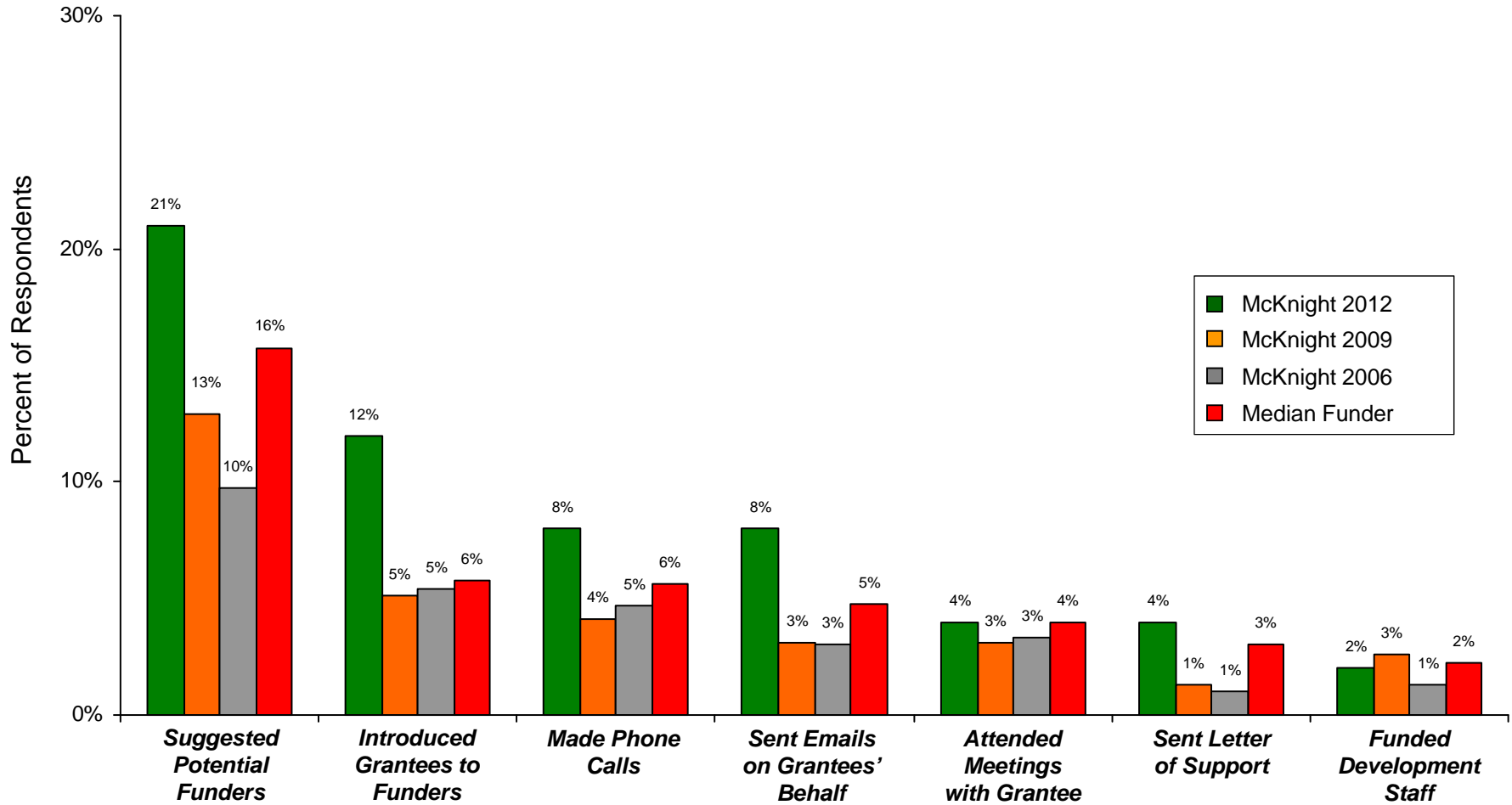
- lower than the median funder

Note: Regionally-Focused Funder data not available due to changes to the survey instrument. Chart represents comparative data through 2010. Education and Learning data not shown because fewer than five responses were received.

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Frequency of Assistance Securing Funding from Other Sources (1)

McKnight grantees report receiving a larger than typical amount of assistance securing funding from other sources from the Foundation.

VII. Assistance Beyond the Grant Check

Scale ends at 30%.

**Activities Provided by the Funder
to Assist in Obtaining Funding From Other Sources**

Percent of Respondents

- ■ McKnight 2012
- ■ McKnight 2009
- ■ McKnight 2006
- ■ Median Funder

Activity	McKnight 2012	McKnight 2009	McKnight 2006	Median Funder
Suggested Potential Funders	21%	13%	10%	16%
Introduced Grantees to Funders	12%	5%	5%	6%
Made Phone Calls	8%	4%	5%	6%
Sent Emails on Grantees' Behalf	8%	3%	3%	5%
Attended Meetings with Grantee	4%	3%	3%	4%
Sent Letter of Support	4%	1%	1%	3%
Funded Development Staff	2%	3%	1%	2%

Note: Regionally-Focused Funder data not available due to changes to the survey instrument. Chart represents comparative data through 2010.

Grantee Suggestions for the Foundation (1)

Grantees were asked to provide any suggestions for how the Foundation could improve. The most frequently mentioned suggestions for improvement concern grantmaking characteristics.

Topics of Grantee Suggestions

Community Impact and Understanding

Percent of Suggestions

Other

Clarity of Communications

Field Impact and Understanding

Selection Process

Non-Monetary Assistance

Quality and Quantity of Interactions

Grantmaking Characteristics

McKnight

Note: Proportions may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.
There were a total of 122 grantee suggestions for McKnight.

Grantee Suggestions for the Foundation (2)

% Grantee Suggestions		McKnight Grantee Suggestions
Topic of Grantee Suggestion	**McKnight**	**Sub-Themes and Sample of Comments**
Grantmaking Characteristics	23%	**Grant Length (N=8)** "Longer-term commitments to those organizations that have promise to extend the Foundation's mission." "Provide three to five year funding commitments to effectively prove out the impact to the community and the clients we serve." "Three year grants instead of two, would lend a great deal more stability to our work." "It would be great if organizations with proven track records could receive funding packages that lasted for a significant period of time (6-10 years maybe)."
		Grant Size (N=6) "As a starving neighborhood ... organization, we would appreciate even a higher level of funding." "Acknowledge organizational growth with increased funding that somewhat reflects increased revenues." "Just wish they had more grant money. Because of budget constraints our renewal was less than our previous grant."
		Grant Type (N=5) "It would be much more helpful if the Foundation awarded general operating grants in our field rather that grants that restricted for specific programs." "A willingness to make capacity-building grants, even to organizations already receiving project grants." "I'd love to see 'initiative grants' - let us propose a start-up idea, give us $10-15,000 to try something out with specific defined goals, and if both parties agree on its success, maybe next year's gen op grant gets increased."
		Other (N=8) "More flexibility in the funding guidelines would be extremely helpful." "Avoid the tendency to shift funding priorities and/or funding protocols too easily." "Support entrepreneurial efforts to solve problems and move away from funding organizations that are long on rhetorical pronouncements and short on substantive outcomes." "I would like to see the Foundation explore opportunities to make capital investments outside of the Twin Cities Metro area on a very selective basis when there is a transformational scale opportunity."
Quality and Quantity of Interactions	18%	**More Interactions (N=7)** "Increased engagement with the Foundation is always welcome, in part because of our general respect for the Foundation as a strong leader in the community and a valuable advisor." "More contact initiated by Foundation staff in between funding cycles." "More routine and proactive interaction with grantees to get a sense of challenges they face or opportunities before them."
		More Site Visits (N=6) "More routine and proactive interaction with grantees to get a sense of challenges they face or opportunities before them." "I would suggest that Foundation staff spend more time meeting with nonprofits in the community." "While I realize staff are swamped with work, I think it would be good for them to actually come to our programs."
		Other (N=9) "Provide access to Foundation directors." "Do a better job treating people who have years of experience and success in the field as people who are capable." "I'd like our program officer to ask more open-ended questions in one-to-one conversation about where we are going, what our greatest needs are overall, and how the McKnight Foundation could help us meet those needs." "The Foundation used to allow staff to serve on advisory boards and committees…allowing staff to serve in this capacity again could deepen the partnership between McKnight and organizations."

VIII. Grantee Suggestions for the Foundation

Note: There were a total of 122 grantee suggestions for McKnight. A sample of the suggestions are shown here. The full set of suggestions, redacted to protect grantee anonymity, will be provided with the GPR.

% Grantee Suggestions		McKnight Grantee Suggestions
Topic of Grantee Suggestion	**McKnight**	**Sub-Themes and Sample of Comments**
Non-monetary Assistance	18%	**Convenings/Introductions (N=8)** "It would be interesting if the Foundation considered opening up its offices on a yearly basis to grantees in each of the specific funding areas to network." "Convene some sessions between some of the organizations they fund and ask them to talk to each other about world views around theory of change and logic models." "Provide us with additional convening capacity that helps us to better connect with our colleagues at the state, regional and local levels." "Bring grantees together for strategic discussions on best practices and pooling resources."
		Assistance Securing Funding from Other Sources (N=3) "Play a more active role in helping its grantees cultivate relationships with other funders; and finding ways to otherwise strengthen grantees in non-monetary ways." "One thing that may make it better would be to provide assistance locating other funding sources." "Provide a conduit partner or resources that may provide necessary support to organizations that depend heavily on the support of the Foundation."
		Other (N=12) "We would welcome formal or informal opportunities to build capacity or staff expertise." "Assisting an organization with its strategic planning, board development, etc. would be very beneficial." "Provide a brief best practices model available online for others to emulate." "Share more of the learnings that it has through its grantees."
Selection Process	14%	**Guidelines/Communication (N=7)** "The process of how to apply for a grant … timeline was not clear to me...." "The Foundation should work toward greater clarity in what, exactly, they expect from grantees in rural Minnesota." "Maybe more specific guidelines so I can have a better idea of how to target my grant without always having to call the staff." "It would be helpful if the Foundation would more clearly define the focus of its arts funding."
		Online Application (N=7) "The online application would benefit from a significant overhaul, and from greater differentiation among applicant categories." "The online application system is a challenge for collaborative proposals as it doesn't provide enough space to tell the full story." "While I love online grant applications, I find that the process McKnight used two years ago erased my ability to tell our story in a way that differentiated my organization from grantees in other fields." "Review and keep improving the web-based grant applications tool."

Note: There were a total of 122 grantee suggestions for McKnight. A sample of the suggestions are shown here. The full set of suggestions, redacted to protect grantee anonymity, will be provided with the GPR.

Review of Findings

☐ Full range of funders	☐ Middle fifty percent of funders	❚ Median Funder	◆ Median Regionally-Focused Funder	◆ McKnight 2012	◆ McKnight 2009	◆ McKnight 2006	

Measure	Rating
	1= Strongly negative ... 7= Strongly positive
Impact on the Field	
Impact on the Community[1]	
Impact on the Grantee Organization	
Strength of Relationships — A summary including funder fairness, responsiveness, grantee comfort approaching the funder if a problem arises, clarity of funder communication of its goals and strategy, and consistency of information provided by its communications resources.	
Helpfulness of Selection Process	
Helpfulness of Reporting and Evaluation Processes	
Dollar Return on Grantee Administrative Hours — This summary is the calculation of number of dollars received divided by the time required of grantees to fulfill the funder's administrative requirements.	
Percent of Grantees Receiving Field or Comprehensive Non-Monetary Assistance — The proportion of grantees receiving higher impact field-focused or comprehensive assistance.	

IX. Review of Findings and Intra-Foundation Differences

80

1: Chart does not show data from two funders whose community impact rating is less than 3.0.

Sustained Positive Perceptions of Impact

Similarly to past years, the McKnight Foundation receives unusually positive ratings for its impact on grantees' fields, local communities, and organizations. The Foundation is described by grantees as "a key partner," "a critical player," and an "expert and leader." Grantees perceive the Foundation to be particularly influential in their fields; McKnight's ratings are higher than 95 percent of other funders for its impact on grantees' fields, and ratings for the Foundation's understanding of grantees' fields have improved significantly since 2009, reinforcing the Foundation's already significant reputation for expertise.

The Foundation is also rated higher than typical for its impact on grantees' organizations and its understanding of grantees' goals and strategies. Several grantees recognize McKnight as "organization-friendly," saying that "they don't try to force their own Best Practices on their grantees" and that "we feel okay moving the money around and allocating it where it needs to go." McKnight focuses much of its grantmaking in patterns that are rare across funders but that CEP has found to have the most impact on grantees' organizations – large (often six-figure), multi-year grants for operating support. This pattern of grantmaking is appreciated by McKnight Foundation grantees, who frequently express gratitude for such support. Even so, when asked to provide suggestions for how the Foundation could improve, the largest theme in suggestions is for longer, larger grants for operating support where possible.

Though the Foundation is still rated higher than the typical funder, the one area of impact where McKnight's ratings have declined significantly since 2009 is the Foundation's impact on grantees' local communities. There is significant variation on this measure by program; environment program grantees give the lowest ratings.

- *What changes in practice or philosophy have helped the Foundation increase or maintain positive ratings for its impact on and expertise in grantees' fields and impact on organizations?*

- *What might explain the decline in grantees' ratings of impact on local communities? To what extent is this a concern for the Foundation?*

Analysis and Discussion (2)

Significant Improvements in Communications and Interactions

After McKnight's 2009 GPR, clarity of communications was identified by the Foundation as a key area for improvement. In 2009 the Foundation was rated lower than 75 percent of other funders for the clarity of its communication of its goals and strategies. In 2012 ratings have dramatically increased, placing McKnight higher than 70 percent of funders in 2012. One grantee reports that "the McKnight Foundation is very clear about its focus and direction." Another says that "McKnight's priorities are very clear and stable over time, which does not leave grantees guessing or wondering whether or not their program is in line with their priorities."

Ratings in 2012 also show improvements in McKnight's interactions with grantees. On all measures that comprise interactions – fairness, comfort approaching the foundation when a problem arises, and responsiveness – grantees rate McKnight significantly more positively than in 2009 and in the top quartile in CEP's comparative dataset. Grantees' comments give voice to these very positive ratings. One grantee describes Foundation staff as "exceptionally responsive, compassionate, and insightful." Another finds staff to be "consistently available, enthusiastic, and interested in helping us and answering questions."

The pattern with which McKnight interacts with grantees is related to the current quality of its relationships. Grantees report interacting with the Foundation more frequently than did grantees in 2009. While almost a third of grantees in 2009 reported yearly or less frequent contact with the Foundation, this number has dropped to less than 20 percent. Grantees that interact with McKnight yearly or less generally have a less positive experience with the Foundation – they rate significantly lower on their interactions and communications with the Foundation, and also have less positive perceptions of the Foundation's impact on their fields.

In their suggestions, grantees continue to request more interactions, as well as site visits. One grantee suggests that the Foundation "check in on me in an informal manner – see how we're doing, see if we're aware of looming deadlines and opportunities." Another says that "being able to have a more nuanced relationship with Foundation staff would be helpful but I understand that their time is stretched pretty thin."

- *How can the Foundation reinforce the changes it has made to improve the clarity of its communication and the quality of its interactions with grantees since 2009?*

- *What is the Foundation's end goal for the ratings it has for its relationships with grantees? Are there opportunities to respond to grantees' request for even more engagement with Foundation staff? If the Foundation is satisfied with its current relationships, how can it effectively communicate appropriate expectations for future level of engagement to its grantees and applicants?*

X. Analysis and Discussion

85

Analysis and Discussion (3)

Mixed Perceptions of the Helpfulness of McKnight's Processes

The amount of time grantees spend on McKnight's selection and reporting/evaluation processes has remained consistent over the past several years, and is similar to the typical funder. Perceptions of the helpfulness of these processes in strengthening grantees organizations or funded programs, however, have shifted. Grantees find the selection process more helpful than in 2009 but find the reporting/evaluation process less helpful in strengthening their organizations or funded programs.

Ratings of the helpfulness of the selection process have risen to a level typical of other funders. Some key differences in ratings of this measure exist between certain groups of grantees; first-time grantees and grantees that had an external evaluation find the selection process more helpful than do other grantees.

There may be room for further improvement in the selection process, though. In their suggestions for improvement, several grantees take issue with the online application system, and point out that the system "doesn't provide enough space to tell the full story." Others request better guidelines and communication about the selection process: one grantee asks for "more specific guidelines so I can have a better idea of how to target my grant," while another says that "the process of how to apply for a grant…was not clear to me."

The helpfulness ratings of the reporting/evaluation have fallen since 2009, though, and McKnight is now rated lower than the typical funder. CEP's field-wide research has found that one of the strongest predictors of ratings on this measure is whether grantees had a discussion about their completed report/evaluation with Foundation staff. This holds true at McKnight – grantees that had such a discussion give significantly higher ratings on the helpfulness of the reporting/evaluation process, and on other measures, such as the Foundation's understanding of grantees' goals and strategies.

If the Foundation is interested in further increasing the ways in which the reporting process strengthens grantees and programs, early discussions about how the work will be assessed could be a key focus. The 66 percent of McKnight grantees that had an exchange of ideas with Foundation staff about with grantees about how the results of the funded work will be assessed give higher ratings on the helpfulness of both the selection and reporting/evaluation processes. These discussions could also focus on potential utility of the information to the grantee: when asked to rate the usefulness of the information they currently collect to assess the results of their funded work, McKnight grantees rate lower than in 2009, and lower than the typical funder.

- *Can the Foundation respond to grantees' suggestions to improve the online application system?*

- *How much emphasis does the Foundation want to put on the reporting/evaluation process in terms of its potential benefit to grantees?*

- *Can McKnight staff discuss completed reports with a larger proportion of grantees? Are there opportunities for more discussions with grantees about how their funded work will be assessed, and how they might best collect useful information for this purpose?*

Analysis and Discussion (4)

Non-monetary Assistance

In 2012, a larger proportion of grantees report receiving non-monetary assistance than in the past – more than 60 percent now report receiving some sort of assistance. McKnight provides assistance to a greater proportion of grantees than in 2009 – both in intensive field-focused or comprehensive patterns for some grantees, and with just a few forms of assistance for others. There's a big difference in these patterns, though. Only the intensive patterns of assistance are related to a substantial difference in grantees' experience: grantees receiving field-focused or comprehensive assistance rate the Foundation significantly higher for its impact on their fields and organizations, its interactions and communications with grantees, and the helpfulness of the selection and reporting/evaluation processes. Those receiving just a few forms of assistance, on the other hand, do not rate differently on these measures than grantees that received no assistance at all.

Grantees that received assistance from McKnight in securing funding from other sources also have a more positive experience with the Foundation, giving higher ratings of field impact, relationships, and the helpfulness of processes.

A large share of grantees' suggestions for the Foundation involves non-monetary assistance, particularly around opportunities for the Foundation to convene grantees. "Bring grantees together for strategic discussions on best practices and pooling resources," says one grantee. Another grantee suggests, "Provide us with additional convening capacity that helps us to better connect with our colleagues at the state, regional and local levels."

* *Has the Foundation intentionally increased its provision of non-monetary assistance?*

* *Considering that grantees who receive only a few forms of assistance do not have a more positive experience with the Foundation, can the Foundation consider focusing its resources on specific grantees to which the Foundation can provide intensive assistance?*

X. Analysis and Discussion

Contact Information

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