

**EVALUATION OF THE FLINTRIDGE CENTER
COMMUNITY SUPPORT/CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM**

Final Report

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Evaluation Goal

The goal of this evaluation study is to provide input to the Flintridge Center about both the process and outcomes of its Community Services/Capacity Building (CS/CB) Program, focused on its 2009 activities. Study results can be used both internally by the Center for performance improvement and justifying the investment made in these activities; and externally for communicating with funding partners and the nonprofit sector they serve. The evaluation was conducted by the nonprofit Human Interaction Research Institute (through its Valley Nonprofit Resources program).

Evaluation Activities

The main activities carried out as part of this evaluation project were:

1 - Flintridge identified CS/CB activities to be included in the evaluation: the library (there were 382 visitors in 2009), workshops (59 were conducted in 2009 with a total of 533 participants), and curbside consultations (175 were conducted in 2009).

2 - Flintridge provided evaluative data and descriptive information already available: results from satisfaction surveys conducted for selected 2009 workshops, records for 2009 workshops and Curbside Consultations, and sample handouts packages from three workshops and notes from three consultations. Total revenues generated by CS/CB activities in 2009 were \$18,000.

3 - A SurveyMonkey survey instrument was created, asking participants to rate the quality, timeliness and completeness of information and/or services they received from Flintridge's CS/CB Program, including examples of impact on their nonprofits if available. Flintridge sent the survey to 711 individuals on its e-mail list. A total of 86 usable responses were received (response rate of 12.1%).

4 - From a roster provided by Flintridge, 20 CS/CB Curbside Consulting recipients were selected at random, and brief telephone interviews were conducted with 16 of them, using a simple protocol asking about nature and impact of the consultation, efficiency of its process, and suggestions for improvement in the Curbside Consulting process.

5 - All evaluation data were analyzed and a draft report on the 2009 CS/CB evaluation prepared (including comparison with results from a recent study of a national sample of foundation capacity-building work, and a one-page synopsis that could be used as part of a case statement), and refined based on input from Flintridge.

The final report can be used by Flintridge staff (with further input from HIRI/VNR if desired) to address (a) implications for program improvement, (b) implications for approaching funders of future Flintridge programming, (c) plans for future evaluations (both of CS/CB and other Flintridge programs, and possibly to include further work by HIRI/VNR), and (d) relationship to Mustangs evaluation activities being conducted by another evaluator.

The final report will be placed on the Flintridge website, so that participants in the evaluation and all other interested parties can review its findings.

Evaluation Results

Results from the evaluation are presented in three sections - library, training workshops and Curbside Consultations, followed by recommendations and a summary in the form of a case statement.

Overall, the users of Flintridge's CS/CB services gave very high marks to all three service components, and to the Center for providing these services to nonprofits in Northwest Pasadena, Altadena and surrounding areas. Almost all of the workshop participants and Curbside Consulting recipients would recommend the services they received to other nonprofits, and found them to be valuable for their own organization.

They characterized the Flintridge CS/CB services as well-known and highly valued in the region Flintridge serves. And they expressed gratitude to the Center for continuing to offer these services either free or at a very reasonable cost - of particular importance given the recession and the stress it has placed on nonprofits small and large.

Two CS/CB user reactions were of particular interest. First, several service users went out of their way to identify themselves as being highly critical ("I'd be the first one to complain"). By their judgment, not finding anything they could complain about regarding Flintridge's services was a high compliment to their quality, over and above positive comments they'd made about impact.

Second, CS/CB service recipients repeatedly emphasized that no other organization provides similar services in their geographic area. While the Southern California Center for Nonprofit Management, the Executive Service Corps of Southern California, and several other capacity-building service organizations were mentioned when recipients were asked if they had received service from other entities during 2009, Flintridge was truly judged to be "in a class by itself." Also, the convenient location of Flintridge's offices and conference center in Pasadena was judged to be a significant plus.

Nonetheless, there were some suggestions for improvement. Most of these were focused on the three individual service components and will be presented below. One that ranged over all Flintridge services was a request that the organization find a way to maintain its voicemail system better. A number of recipients complained that on calling in they would be directed to a particular voicemail, only to find that the mailbox was full and would take no further messages. Especially for busy people trying to get a question answered or schedule a service, this was at times quite frustrating (on the other hand, several respondents went out of their way to compliment the Flintridge staffer handling incoming calls).

A. Library

Generally the library was well-regarded; survey results are presented below. Overall, more than 3/4 of respondents found helpful information when they visited the library. An additional 13% found at least some of what they were looking for. Said one interviewee: "The library is intelligently put together. The hours are such that you can sit down and read, so you don't have to buy some of the expensive books." On the other hand, several respondents did mention that more weekend and evening hours would be good for busy nonprofit professionals who may not be able to visit the library during working hours - though respondents recognized that this may not be possible due to budgetary concerns. Also, Flintridge did earlier experiment with having evening library hours, and found that almost no one took advantage of them.

Survey respondents' use of library:

35.7% - had visited the library in 2009

17.9% - had visited more than once in 2009

46.4% - had not visited the library in 2009

77.8% - found helpful information in the library

13.0% - found information that was helpful but not completely

1.9% - did not find information that was helpful

7.4% - not sure whether information was found that was helpful

B. Workshops

There are five types of CS/CB Workshops - *Brown Bag Lunches* are events that last less than three hours (7 conducted in 2009); *Training Workshops* are three hours or more (14 in 2009). Flintridge also convenes *Conversation with the Funder* events (5 in 2009), which offer a chance for nonprofit leaders and their staffs to interact with staff of area foundations. These funder events, along with workshops on *Grantseeking Basics* (21 in 2009) and *Grantseeking Technology* (12 in 2009), are offered as core programs on a regular basis. Other workshops are offered as topics are identified.

Results from the survey showed that a substantial number (about 1/3) of all respondents had participated in more than two workshops in 2009 - in itself a substantial endorsement of the value people find in these events.

Survey respondents' participation in workshops:

23.5% - attended no workshops in 2009

23.5% - attended 1 workshop in 2009

27.1% - attended 2 workshops in 2009

25.9% - attended more than 2 workshops in 2009

Overall, survey respondents and interviewees spoke very favorably of the workshops, frequently commenting on the specific learnings they took away from them and the resulting impact on their nonprofits. For instance:

* "All the workshops taken up to now have been rejuvenating and empowering. Rejuvenating to our organization as the information presented helps us focus our efforts and expand our knowledge to resources that are available and how to put them to work effectively and efficiently. We already use so much of the information given in the workshops as we reorganize our material and accumulated information. The information given has already helped us get clear about what is more important and where to focus our efforts."

* "Our skills in fund-raising, management, marketing, foundation contacts have all been upgraded substantially."

* "I have learned HUGE amounts of practical knowledge from the Flintridge programs and will be able to help our group strengthen even more struggling families by introducing additional planning and structure to its 100% unpaid, purely volunteer efforts."

* "I attended some of the Meet the Funder programs, which were very beneficial, if for no other reason than to hear what funders consider to be their priorities. They all gave insights I could take

back to my job and use for a wide range of proposals and planning. Example: one donor stressed the role of the board. Another led to a meeting with the speaker and an eventual grant.”

* “The Survive and Thrive series was invaluable. We received tools for a one-person development office to include volunteers in the fund raising effort. Thank you so much for helping us involve our donors as volunteers.”

In addition to specific learnings, and practical outcomes such as getting a grant, workshop participants also lauded these events for the overall confirmation they provided of a nonprofit’s basic approach to development, board governance, use of technology, etc. As one respondent said, the workshops helped “to think outside the box, to take different approaches to problem solving - and not to give up.” And they offered opportunities for informal networking with other nonprofits in the region, a significant bonus given the lack of other mechanisms for bringing the nonprofit sector together.

Composite findings from selected evaluation surveys for the five types of 2009 events, gathered by Flintridge at the conclusion of a workshop, are presented below.

Conversation with the Funder Workshop Survey (1-4 with 4 being highest - mean scores)

- 3.36 - I will be able to apply to one of these funders
- 3.72 - the session met my expectations
- 3.60 - I will be able to use what I learned
- 3.58 - I would recommend this workshop to others

In write-in responses, participants mentioned that they were particularly pleased to find out through the workshop about smaller grants, and learn about the wisdom of applying for small grants as a first step in developing a relationship with a foundation. Overall, they found this workshop to be significantly informative, including the discussion provided of the larger economic scene, and how it will impact future foundation funding.

Brown Bag Lunch Survey (1-4 with 4 being highest - mean scores)

- 3.48 - the session met my expectations
- 3.80 - the goals of the course were clear
- 3.76 - the instructor was helpful and responsive to questions and input
- 3.68 - I will be able to use what I learned
- 3.60 - I would recommend this workshop to others
- 3.64 - overall satisfaction with trainer
- 3.80 - overall satisfaction with workshop

Participants found of particular value in this workshop the component that taught about strategies for building an effective website, and cited specific programs and tools to use for this purpose.

Training Workshop (1-4 with 4 being highest - mean scores)

- 3.88 - the workshop met my expectations
- 3.80 - the goals of the course were clear
- 3.92 - I learned new information
- 3.92 - I will be able to use what I learned
- 3.96 - I would recommend this workshop to others
- 3.96 - the handout materials were useful
- 3.96 - the instructors were helpful and responsive to questions and input

This workshop was said by participants to have particular value because it taught participants how to put together an annual fundraising plan, and how to implement it in an orderly fashion, rather than only in crisis mode.

Grantseeking Technology Workshop (1-5 with 5 being highest - mean scores)

- 4.75 - the workshop met my expectations
- 4.67 - the goals of the course were clear
- 5.00 - I learned new information
- 5.00 - I will be able to use what I learned
- 4.92 - I would recommend this workshop to others
- 4.83 - the handout materials were useful
- 5.00 - the instructors were helpful and responsive to questions and input

Ratings by participants for this workshop were extremely high. This workshop was regarded as having particular value because it taught participants how to use the Flintridge library's online resources more effectively, and identified other online resources that can help nonprofits identify potential funders and get background information on them.

Grantseeking Basics Workshop (1-5 with 5 being highest - mean scores)

- 4.75 - the workshop met my expectations
- 4.67 - the goals of the course were clear
- 4.58 - I learned new information
- 4.67 - I will be able to use what I learned
- 4.83 - I would recommend this workshop to others
- 4.92 - the handout materials were useful
- 4.92 - the instructors were helpful and responsive to questions and input

This workshop also was rated very highly by participants. They said it helped them because it outlined the specifics about how to approach a funder. It also covered other important issues such as how to re-contact a foundation after a grant proposal or letter of inquiry has been turned down.

Flintridge provided materials for three sample sessions for the evaluator's review, to give a flavor of the presentational style used. At least for these sample workshops, there was well-organized content and practical handouts that participants might want to read and use after the event.

There were only a very few negative comments about the workshops. For example, one respondent said: "The workshop I attended was lacking in information and wasted a lot of time. Also the person running the workshop was brand new out of college and didn't seem to know the little bit of material he was covering."

One participant also complained about the different pricing structure for lunch workshops, since "we are all nonprofits."

Finally, one participant said "I seem to take away the least from the webinars. I think the content and presenter are great, however, I often get a feeling that the group (and myself) are not connecting with the material/presenter." No separate evaluative data were gathered about Flintridge webinars; it might be useful to explore this comment further, to see if other participants share this "feeling," and also there is a growing literature about how to structure webinars for maximum participant involvement - this body of knowledge might be examined in order to identify possible improvements.

C. Curbside Consultations

Generally CS/CB users are highly satisfied with the Curbside Consultations they've received. They regard the Curbside program as one of the most distinctive and useful offered by the Center. The brief consulting sessions focus on a range of issues, but in 2009 most often concentrated on fundraising (particularly on how to do good grant writing and how to approach individual donors) and on board development.

As indicated in the survey responses below, that 1 in 5 respondents had received more than one consultation in 2009 is in itself a reflection of the value nonprofit leaders place on these services. As one recipient put it, "Lee Draper and I talked a whole range of things - board development, fundraising strategies - it seemed to be different every time but there was a good sense of follow-up" (Lee Draper was the consultant for many of these sessions).

Survey respondents' receipt of Curbside Consultations:

70.4% - no Curbside Consultations received in 2009

8.6% - 1 Consultation received

3.7% - 2 Consultations received

17.3% - more than 2 Consultations received

The consultations tend to be action-oriented - each session dealing with a particular problem or opportunity the nonprofit faces at the point in time when the consultation was scheduled. A few examples of impact follow:

* "I have had multiple Curbside Consultations. Globally the Curbside provides a kind of mentoring to help me become a better development professional, by talking to a fundraiser at a higher level than myself. Talking clarifies issues and also gives access to significant knowledge greater than what I would have in various areas."

* "Lee Draper was very helpful in pointing us in the right direction on some things we were looking at for funding. She reviewed the steps we'd taken and validated that we were on the right path."

* "We already had an idea, but we needed to know from an expert if we were going in the right direction and were there any ideas we might have overlooked. We mapped out our program design and took it to a Curbside session, to ask does this make sense in terms of any missing pieces."

* "We'd had some negative feedback from a funder on our balance sheet, so we went to Flintridge. The Curbside gave me the capacity to look at financials in different ways so I could see things that may be a red flag, and how to read and interpret them from a funder's point of view. It helped me find areas in which there could be modifications, including how we book certain items, and how to document expenses and income. Over a period of time we were able to make quite a few adjustments and could also explain it better if there were questions. Also, we created a management plan internally, and talked to our accountant so they could provide some additional documentation. Now our funder is happy and they've given us further support."

* "We engaged in some strategic planning, and we now have a rolling three-year plan - that was something the consultant helped us implement. She also helped us to identify places to go to for grants - at least one grant came about as a result. Now we always go through our grant applications with the consultant before submitting them."

* “My organization was experiencing staff turnover and got gun-shy after we hired three people who weren’t a good fit. The consultant helped us look at our recruitment and interview process. The two folks hired as a result have stayed with us, and we’ve also used the process with interns, to get at character matters that are hard to detect.”

* “We learned we needed to have an annual fund-raising plan. That opened the door to many basic business practices that we had not developed, and led us into the gradual transforming of our board of directors from one that functions as a volunteer staff to one where the board members are being recruited not only for their belief in the mission but for their professional and business skills.”

Some of the interview and survey responses don’t mention specific impacts, but offer glowing endorsements. For instance, one recipient said: “It is such a blessing to have an expert in organizational management.”

Recipients of these consultations made a particular point of praising the consultants who provided the services, often mentioning them by name. It mattered to the recipients that these consultants are well-known in the nonprofit community and have extensive experience. They also complimented the consultants for taking copious notes, which were helpful in reviewing a previous session before proceeding with the next one.

On the other hand, recipients did suggest some ways in which this process could be improved:

1 - The most common suggestion made was to lengthen the consultation session. A number of participants said that the 45 minute sessions were just too short to deal with complex issues, particularly since some of the session time needed to be used to either set the stage for the issue to be addressed, or to report on what the nonprofit had done since the last consultation. Moreover, if the consultant arrived late or another session ran over, the time problem was even more enhanced. Several participants said flatly that it would be better to have fewer consultation sessions and make them longer, because the chances for impact from a one-hour or even 90-minute session are simply greater.

2 - Several participants suggested that in addition to “generalist” consultants like the ones currently offering these services, it would be helpful to have available for Curbside Consulting some experts in specific topical areas like finance or fundraising. As helpful as most participants felt the sessions were, they could at times raise questions that required a high level of technical knowledge that generalists were not likely to have. An example of a modification to address this concern might be to bring in a consultant from Nonprofit Finance Fund. This consultant could handle more highly technical issues about financial sustainability and financial management strategies.

3 - Several participants also suggested that Curbside be re-framed to provide at least some of their services on-site, though they recognized the difficulty of doing this given logistical and financial issues. A limited amount of on-site consultation has been provided in the past, and Flintridge could start by analyzing that experience to determine whether some expansion would be desirable, and if so, how that could best happen.

4 - On a related point, one participant suggested on-site services as a possible solution to a structural weakness observed in the way the Curbside program is set up:

“Follow-through is often the challenge. Curbside Consulting is a wonderful resource, yet because the Curbside Consultant can only work with the limited information brought in by the exact

individuals sitting at a meeting (and they may have blind spots in bringing issues to the table), the possibility for discovering underlying problems (and solutions) are limited. I believe that assigning a consultant to observe the holistic working dynamics of a nonprofit group onsite would yield valuable insights about how to manage the nonprofit's desired transformation.”

5 - A couple of participants also said that they felt there might be a need for a certain “attitude adjustment” by the consultants. While these were uncommon comments and most respondents had only favorable things to say about their consulting results, these comments were quite thoughtfully expressed, and might be useful for the Center to consider. This response frames the problem:

* “There’s a passion in the room that is very easy to buy into - all things seem possible when you’re in the room but when you go back into the real world there’s a reality check that happens. I often felt that we were getting excited about somebody else’s vision - it was easy because there was so much enthusiasm. We would all get drunk with the possibilities, but they didn’t seem so real when we stepped out in the sun.”

Comparisons with National Research

In 2010, the Human Interaction Research Institute (HIRI) undertook a national study of lessons learned from evaluations of philanthropic capacity-building programs. The study drew from two data sources: (1) HIRI’s Philanthropic Capacity Building Resources, a national database of programs to award grants and/or provide direct services for capacity building that are operated by American foundations and intermediary organizations (a total of 473 programs were in the system at the time the study was conducted; and (2) a survey and telephone interviews with 87 funders with profiles in that system (respondents were 82 foundations or foundation collaboratives, and five foundation-supported intermediaries). The purpose of the study was to answer two questions:

(1) How do foundations that support nonprofit capacity building evaluate their grantmaking and direct service activities?

(2) What lessons can be learned from evaluation, both to improve these programs and justify the investments made in them?

A full report on the study is in Backer, Bleeg & Groves (2010). A brief summary of results is provided here, along with some comments in parentheses about how study findings relate to the Flintridge CS/CB program and this evaluation.

Overall findings from the study include the following:

* 2/3 of the foundations studied evaluate their capacity-building grantmaking or direct service programs; more than 3/4 of intermediaries evaluate their activities. *(Flintridge’s decision to commission an external evaluation of their long-standing program is in keeping with national philanthropic practice).*

* Nearly 3/5 of these foundations make results from evaluation available publically. *(Flintridge, as mentioned, will post this evaluation report on its website, meeting the same standard of transparency).*

* 2/5 of these foundations evaluate on an ongoing basis, another 1/5 do it annually. (*Flintridge might consider continuing this evaluation process on a periodic basis*).

* Foundations studied most often use surveys and interviews to gather evaluation data, but they use a number of other methods as well. (*Flintridge used a survey and telephone interviews as its two major data sources for this evaluation, again in keeping with national philanthropic practice*).

* Investments in evaluation efforts by 87 funders ranged from \$500 to \$1,250,000, with a mean of about \$69,500 and a median of \$15,000 (*Flintridge's modestly-funded study fell at the median of national funding commitments to evaluation, again indicating the Center is aligned with national practice*).

* In reporting lessons learned from their evaluations, the 87 funders identified five **key conditions for effective capacity building**:

- 1 - Well-structured, ongoing communications with grantees.
- 2 - Readiness for change by grantees.
- 3 - Strong buy-in to capacity building by nonprofit boards and CEOs.
- 4 - Flexibility both by the funder and the recipient in implementing capacity building.
- 5 - Adequate time for enduring change to occur as a result of capacity building.

(Flintridge has regular communications with recipients through e-mails, and maintains an updated database of its service recipients. The Center might consider some sort of needs and/or readiness assessment prior to initiating services, especially if the Curbside Consulting program is intensified. A simple form filled out by applicants for service could help with future program planning and evaluation, as well as provide input directly to consultants. The Center also might consider increasing its outreach to Boards of Directors, as an audience for its workshops and technical assistance).

* The funders also reported ten **good practices for effective capacity building**:

- 6 - Structured needs assessment to clarify what capacity building nonprofits most urgently need.
- 7 - Assessment-based work plans for capacity-building activities.
- 8 - Use of evaluation results to improve capacity building and share findings with others.
- 9 - Matching technical assistance providers to recipients, and training for providers to improve their effectiveness.
- 10 - Connecting nonprofits with community resources and with their own internal resources.
- 11 - Diverse, participatory learning activities, tailored to each nonprofit's needs and circumstances.
- 12 - Peer-to-peer learning, to stimulate professional development, problem-solving and collaboration.

13 - Leadership development for nonprofit staff and volunteers, including coaching.

14 - Organizing recipients of capacity-building grants into cohorts.

15 - Use of data from research conducted specifically to shape capacity-building activities.

(Flintridge might consider a brainstorming meeting with its staff and the Curbside Consulting program consultants to explore future improvements of the program - starting with a review of findings from both the PCBR study and the CS/CB evaluation. One element of the brainstorming might be looking at how to expand Flintridge's capacity to connect service recipients with the full array of resources for nonprofit capacity building in the region).

* The funders surveyed observed eight **barriers to effective capacity building**:

16 - Staff turnover both for funders and nonprofit recipients of capacity building.

17 - Inability to get needed support from other funders for a capacity-building program.

18 - Diverse needs and interests of recipients.

19 - Inadequate staffing or other resources of both funders and recipients.

20 - Cumbersome requirements for recipients to participate in capacity building.

21 - Capacity-building goals set too high for any reasonable expectation of success.

22 - Limits on impact of workshops and other one-time capacity-building activities.

23 - Scarcity of evaluators with needed skill sets and knowledge of appropriate evaluation methods.

(Flintridge currently is exploring options for securing funding partners for expanding some of its activities, as well as for non-funding partners to joint venture on selected initiatives - the partnership to put on a Glendale Nonprofit Day in September 2010 with Valley Nonprofit Resources is an example of the latter. The brainstorming suggested above could include attention to these barriers and how they are presently being examined.

* These funders also noted four **financial strategies for effective capacity building**:

24 - A mix of financial support.

25 - A balance of financial support - not too much or too little.

26 - Strong accountability measures when operating support is provided.

27 - Use of financial incentives like challenge grants.

(As mentioned, Flintridge already is exploring funding partnerships for future expansion of its capacity-building activities. Such a move can enhance present CS/CB work and also open the door for considering new programs and initiatives.)

Some, but not all, of the 87 funders reporting evaluation lessons learned also cited specific examples of impact - 510 of them in all. These focused on individual, organizational, community and system impacts of capacity building. (*The Flintridge evaluation study also has numerous examples of actual impact for CS/CB activities*).

Reference:

Backer, T.E., Bleeg, J.E. & Groves, K. (2010). *Evaluating foundation-supported capacity building: Lessons learned*. Encino, CA: Human Interaction Research Institute.

Recommendations

Eleven recommendations are offered to Flintridge by the evaluator, for further consideration as the CS/CB program is reviewed for possible future refinements:

1 - Flintridge might consider some changes in the way staff handle their voicemail system, for example requiring all mailboxes to be cleared each working day so that they won't fill up. Sometimes voicemail systems are used by staff to warehouse incoming messages, and an alternate system for doing so might be devised. Flintridge CS/CB user frustration with the current situation was significant, even though only a minority mentioned it.

2 - Flintridge might consider some revisions in the schedule of its library - for example, extending evening or weekend hours (replacing one day's operation in compensation if resources are too tight to just increase the number of hours - in these tight-budget times many service nonprofits have found this to be a successful strategy).

3 - Topics that might be considered for future CS/CB workshops including some traditional topics like board leadership development and fundraising - topics on which participants seemed to say they "couldn't get enough." A few specific topics also were mentioned, such as the Cultural Data Project and how to interact with it, how to create an annual budget, funding for faith organization based activities, different nonprofit databases available and how organizations are using them, how to get past the barrier of "you're too small to get a donation from us." (This participant asked: "Should we stand outside Walmart and hold out a can?"). A roster of topics might be devised by Flintridge staff and then shared with users through a "virtual focus group" - sending the topic list out via e-mail to a pre-selected small group of users and asking for input.

Participants also suggested offering web or DVD versions of seminars along with the accompanying print handouts for a modest fee, for those who cannot attend a particular event in person. Also they would like to see takeaways like a database of local foundations or documents with tips on fundraising (VNR's 2010 publication, *Resource Directory for Nonprofit Capacity Building in Los Angeles County*, could be one such resource).

4 - For Curbside Consulting, the most important suggestion is to consider longer sessions (one hour, 90 minutes or even two hours was suggested), providing opportunities for on-site work if financially feasible, and including content experts in the consulting roster. Participants also wanted the ability to, schedule multiple appointments at one time. And they wanted someone looking over grant applications before submitting them (this was done in some Curbsides).

5 - Several new services or activities might be considered by the Center suggested:

a. Nonprofits come to Flintridge at widely differing stages in their own development. It is suggested that Flintridge set up a system which provides a little more hand-holding for those at early stage. In addition, some help could be targeted to helping new nonprofits started by people from the corporate world (who usually know little of the culture and history of the nonprofit sector) learn more about the sector in which they're now working. Also, it might make sense to set up some sort of "tier system" for service, with different types of workshops and other service offerings for each.

Tier 1 would be new organizations (in addition to the types of service already offered, there might be some sort of networking group to bring them together on a regular basis to help in building organizational infrastructure and finding peer networking opportunities). Tier 2 would be more experienced organizations that have basic infrastructure in place, but need help in "getting to the next level." They also could benefit from a networking group. Both Tier 1 and 2 networking groups would be designed to serve as feeders into the Curbside Consulting and workshop components.

b. Flintridge might consider adapting a group process developed by the UCLA Anderson School's Center for Nonprofit Innovation, in which Executive Directors from all types of nonprofits are brought together in the business school for four-hour sessions in which each leader presents a problem and others in the group suggest solutions. Executive Director roundtables have become fairly common in the nonprofit capacity building world, and this is another model for such a group that might be considered. It should be noted that there are some advantages to homogeneous membership in such a group (such as ability to zero in on specific challenges faced by all the members), as well as some disadvantages (e.g., greater possibility of limiting open conversation if there are only "competitors" for funding or clients in the room).

c. Flintridge might provide nonprofit leaders with one-on-one personal coaching on a number of topics, such as writing personal mission statements, time management, managing upwards when boards or CEOs exhibit dysfunctional behaviors, service-based leadership of staff and setting healthy boundaries and expectations with staff.

d. Flintridge might host an annual seminar/workshop with program officers from major funders and program directors from major nonprofit service groups. The Flintridge-VNR Nonprofit Day in Glendale (September 22, 2010) might be a model for such an undertaking.

6 - Further evaluation activity could be considered by Flintridge, perhaps integrating routine datagathering done internally by the Center (which could include enhanced surveys for workshop and Curbside Consulting participants) and external evaluation activities that might focus in on a particular CS/CB component each year. For example, one of the problems in the evaluation of 2009 Curbside recipients is that some participants had incomplete recollections of both the process and outcomes of an intervention that may have happened months earlier. A timed followup at, for example, three months after a Curbside session occurred, might be more likely to obtain specific examples of impact.

7 - Flintridge might consider developing or adapting a simple instrument that would measure readiness for change in a nonprofit organization seeking assistance through a particular workshop or a Curbside Consultation. Items related to needs assessment might be included on the same form. Then, the data provided could be aligned with evaluation data collected after the intervention to acquire a broader picture of how CS/CB services actually function.

8 - Additional events might be created that are specifically intended for nonprofit Board members (or Board members combined with Executive Directors) - Flintridge already offers programs for Board members and could build on that experience.

9 - A brainstorming session with Flintridge staff and the consultants who have been offering the Curbside Consulting interventions could help to identify ways in which the Curbside program could be improved, and the entire CS/CB effort re-shaped. Such a session might lead to some proposed revisions in the operation of the CS/CB program, which could then be shared with the Flintridge constituency through an e-mail, asking for input. If revisions are made on that basis, the final program is likelier to have real acceptance by the local nonprofit sector.

10 - Flintridge can explore funder and intermediary organization partnerships, using this evaluation study as one basis on which to start the conversation. These could range from sharing information or joint venturing on individual events, to funding partners that help to support Flintridge's efforts (perhaps on behalf of a particular cohort of nonprofits in the region that are of interest to a particular funder), to intermediary organizations that could help to provide services to local nonprofits (e.g., the Nonprofit Finance Fund).

11 - Finally, Flintridge could consider expanding its pro-active leadership role in helping to shape the region's nonprofit sector. For example, the Center might take a leadership role in Northwest Pasadena and Altadena to help local nonprofits avoid duplication of services, and to help low-performing and struggling nonprofits consider as options some moves to consolidate or even to close down. The participant who made this suggestion noted that there are too many nonprofits now with essentially the same mission, and there will never be enough funding to support all of them. Formation of new nonprofits in some cases should be discouraged, unless a clearly distinctive mission is proposed, and Flintridge can take a leadership role there too. These are delicate issues which require broad community input, so Flintridge's role might primarily be that of convener, providing a platform for discussion and debate.

Summary - August 2010 Report
**EVALUATION OF THE FLINTRIDGE CENTER
COMMUNITY SUPPORT/CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM**

For more than 20 years, the Flintridge Center Community Service/Capacity Building (CS/CB) program has been working to strengthen nonprofits in Northwest Pasadena, Altadena and surrounding areas of Southern California. Its services include a comprehensive nonprofit and philanthropy library open to all users, training workshops on a variety of topics relevant to the nonprofit community, and a Curbside Consultation program that offers brief problem-focused interventions to local nonprofits.

The Center has long evaluated its services internally, but recently decided to commission a small external evaluation of its CS/CB activities, conducted by the nonprofit Human Interaction Research Institute through its Valley Nonprofit Resources program. The evaluation included a survey, telephone interviews, and analysis of data from several Center sources.

Overall, 86 survey respondents and 16 interviewees evaluated the CS/CB program very favorably (sampled from among well over 500 service recipients in 2009, representing several hundred area nonprofits). Almost all of the workshop participants and Curbside Consulting recipients would recommend the services they received to other nonprofits, and found them to be valuable for their own organization. CS/CB service recipients also repeatedly emphasized that no other organization provides similar services in their geographic area.

They characterized the Flintridge CS/CB services as well-known and highly valued in the region Flintridge serves. And they expressed gratitude to the Center for continuing to offer these services either free or at a very reasonable cost - of particular importance given the recession and the stress it has placed on nonprofits small and large. More than 3/4 of respondents found helpful information when they visited the library, and users of other services typically expressed favorable judgments such as following:

* "I have learned HUGE amounts of practical knowledge from the Flintridge programs and will be able to help our group strengthen even more struggling families by introducing additional planning and structure to its 100% unpaid, purely volunteer efforts."

* "I have had multiple Curbside Consultations. Globally the Curbside provides a kind of mentoring to help me become a better development professional, by talking to a fundraiser at a higher level than myself. Talking clarifies issues and also gives access to significant knowledge greater than what I would have in various areas."

Service recipients were able to cite a number of concrete outcomes from the workshops and consultations - grants their nonprofit had received, improvements in financial management that resolved concerns of a funder, improvements in hiring practices with resulting successful recruitments, etc. Evaluation respondents also had a number of concrete suggestions for improving the CS/CB program, from lengthening the Curbside sessions to an hour or more, to expanding the hours of the library to include more weekend and evening times.

A full report on the evaluation study is posted on Flintridge's website. The Center is exploring ways to improve its program through use of the evaluation findings, and to brainstorm with its Curbside Consultants and others on how to move CS/CB to the next level.