



GRANTEE FEEDBACK SURVEY February 2024

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Introduction

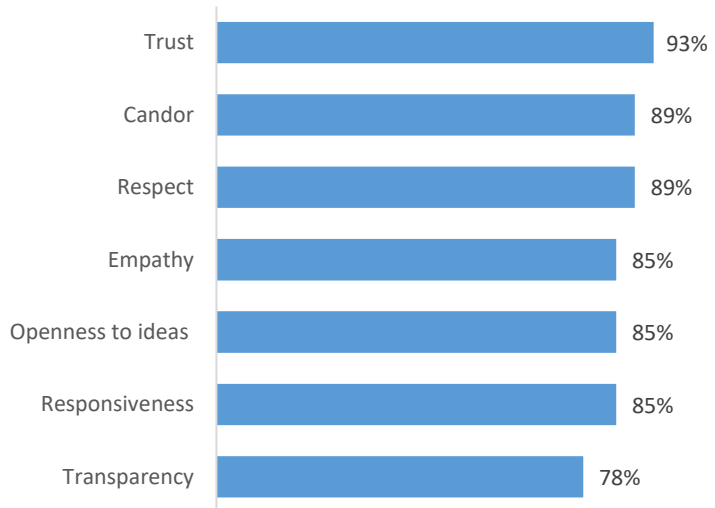
Established in 2003, the mission of the Foundation for Community Health (FCH) is to *work together with people and organizations to improve the health and well-being of residents in the community, especially those who have historically been under-resourced*. Grantee partners that participated in this survey had funding periods that ended in December 2023; a majority of grantee partners surveyed were awarded their grants in 2022, a handful received grants in 2023. Overall, a total of 31 organizations were included in survey outreach, representing \$1,125,000 in grant funds.

Collaboration with nonprofit partners is critical to meeting FCH’s mission. Research has shown that good funder–grantee relationships are those in which grantees feel positively about their interactions with foundation staff and about foundations’ communications. For FCH, attention to the quality of funder-grantee relationships fits into a broader commitment to trust-based philanthropy, an approach to addressing historical inequities in the foundation-grantee relationships that seeks to advance equity, shift power, and build mutually accountable relationships.

FCH commissions an annual survey to gather grantee feedback about its work with and support of grantee partners, with the goal of identifying what is working well and what FCH can do to improve. This is the third year FCH has conducted the survey, having also collected this feedback in 2021 and 2022.

Twenty-seven individuals whose organizations received grants from FCH in 2022-2023 responded to the on-line survey, a 73% response rate. Key findings for all survey respondents are shared below; where appropriate, differences in responses by grant size and duration of grant funding are discussed.¹ Comparisons to 2021 and 2022 survey results are discussed where appropriate, although it should be noted that survey respondents differed somewhat over these years.

Grantees overwhelmingly strongly agree that FCH staff demonstrates key characteristics supportive of positive grantee-funder relationships

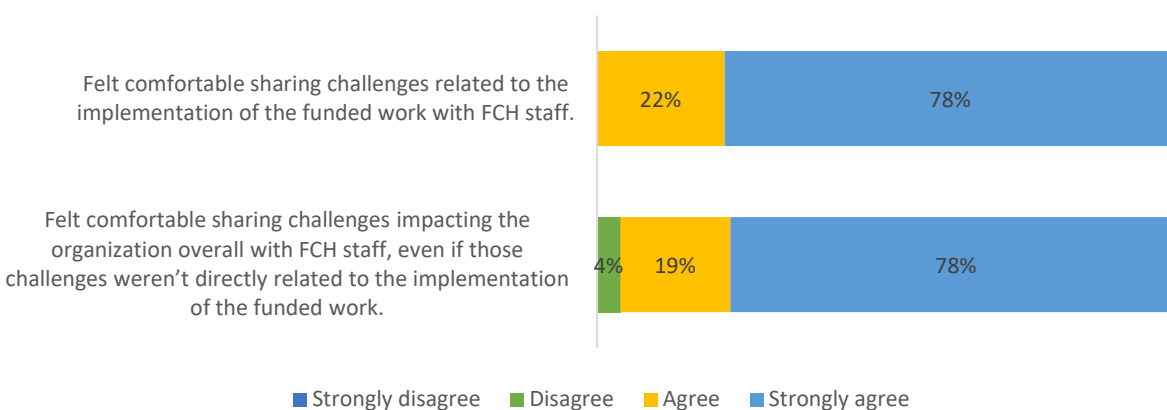


¹ Grant size: Small (\$15,000 or less) and Large (\$15,001+). Duration of FCH grant funding: Less than five years of funding and Five or more years of funding or multi-year grants.

Foundation-Grantee Relationships

Consistent with 2021 and 2022 survey results, FCH grantees have a positive view of FCH and grantee-foundation interactions, citing high levels of trust, candor, respect, empathy, openness, responsiveness, and transparency. Trust has been the most highly-rated of interaction qualities across the three years of the survey. As in past years, over three-quarters of survey respondents in 2023 indicated that they strongly agree that Foundation staff practices these values. Grantees also reported feeling very comfortable approaching FCH staff with concerns and challenges, including those that were not connected to their grants. There were no notable differences in responses by grant size or duration of FCH grant funding.

Grantees are comfortable sharing information about organizational challenges with FCH staff



Grantee's open-ended comments were overwhelmingly positive – comments reflected perceptions that FCH staff are very supportive of grantees' work and that working with FCH staff feels like a partnership. For example:

FCH has cultivated a positive environment for sharing and receiving feedback on our grant-funded work.

[The FCH team] are kind, understanding, and incredibly smart, and so our funding relationship feels more like a problem-solving, proactive partnership than a performative imbalance of power.

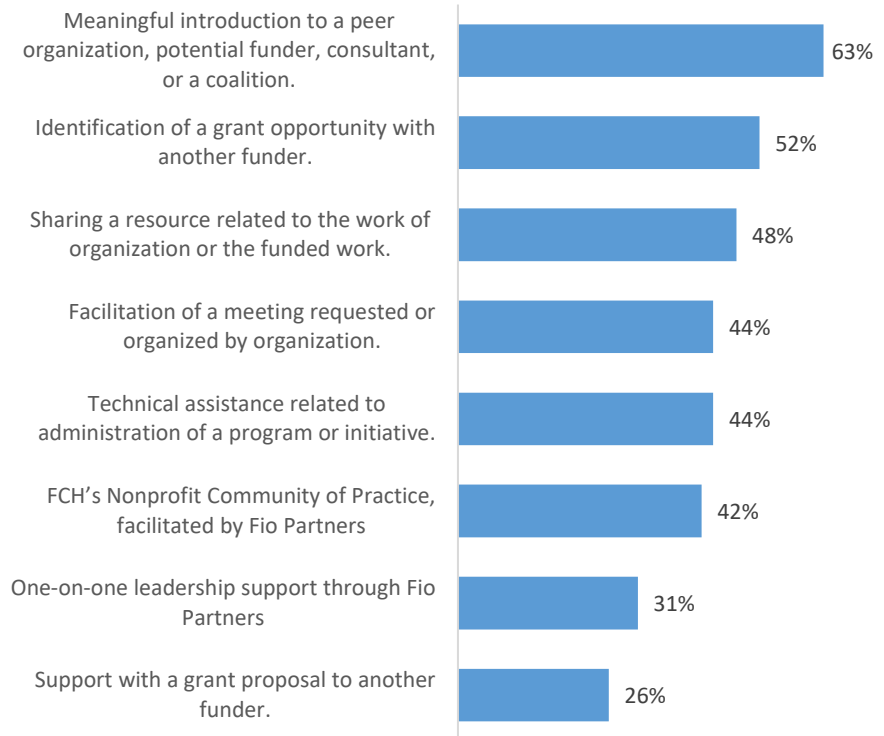
The relationship we formed with FCH has far exceeded anything I have experienced from any other funder. All of the staff were respectful, trustworthy, understanding, forthcoming with support and resources, and receptive to our organization's ideas, plans and decisions.

The non-grant support that foundations provide also contributes to positive foundation-grantee relationships. FCH grantees reported that they most often received support from FCH in the form of introduction to peer organizations, potential funders, consultants or coalitions. They were least likely to report receiving support with a grant proposal to another funder (i.e., letter of support, proof reading,

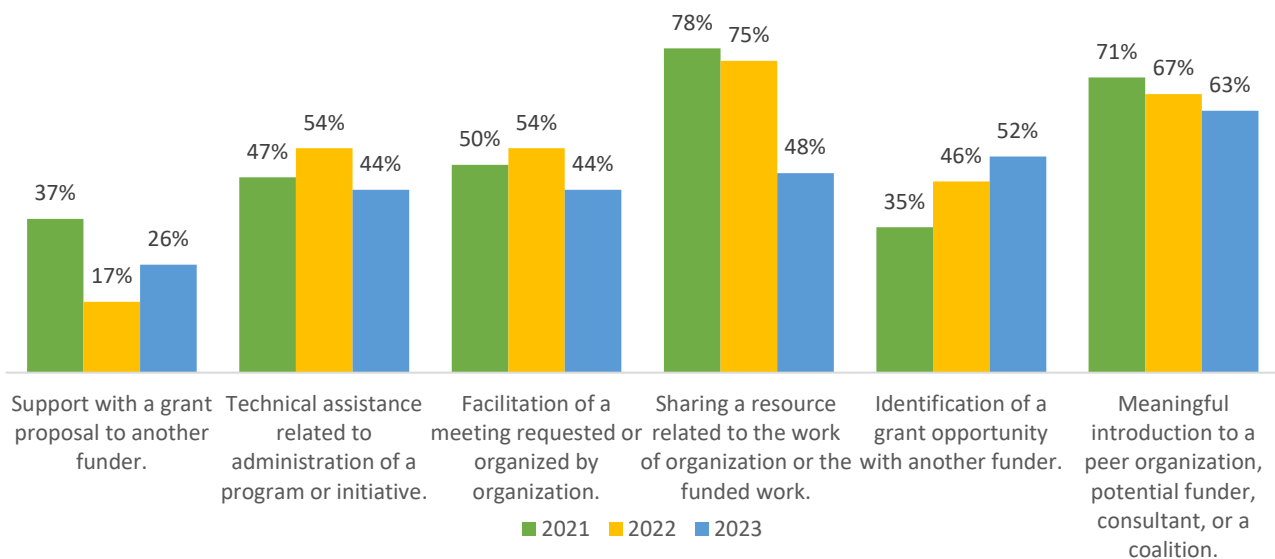
help with proposal creation, etc). FCH made two new non-grantmaking opportunities available in 2023: a community of practice and leadership support, both provided by Fio Partners. About 40% of grantee survey respondents reported that they participated in the community of practice and 31% reported that they participated in the leadership support.

A comparison of responses over the three surveys reveals that a higher proportion of grantees in 2023 than in 2022 and 2021 reported that they received support identifying a grant opportunity with another funder while a smaller proportion received informational resources from Foundation staff.

Grantees most often received informational resources and introductions from FCH staff

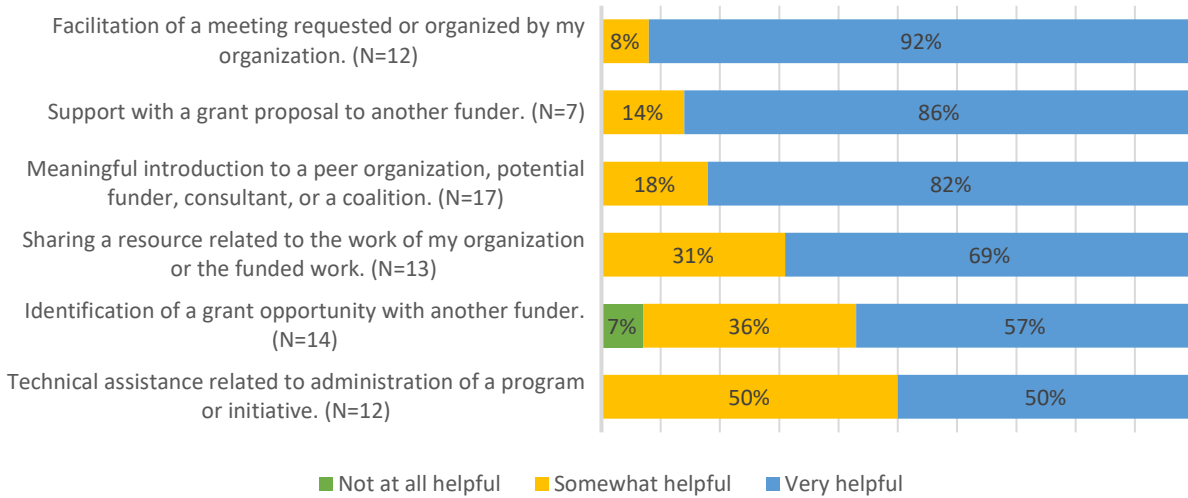


Grantees were more likely to receive assistance relative to other funding opportunities and less likely to receive informational resources from FCH in 2023 compared to 2022 and 2021



There were some patterns relative to receiving non-grant support among different types of grantees. Newer grantees were less likely to report receiving various types of non-grant support (introductions, facilitation of a meeting, technical assistance, support from Fio Partners) than long-standing grantees. Those who received small grants were less likely to report receiving most types of non-grant assistance than those who received large grants. Equal proportions of those who received smaller grants and those who received larger reported that they participated in support offered by Fio Partners. Grantees who received non-grant support rated it highly. FCH support related to facilitation of a meeting was rated most helpful by those who received it.

Grantees report that FCH non-grant support is helpful



In this year’s survey, grantees were asked to select up to three ways from seven choices they would like FCH to increase or deepen its non-grant support. Nearly three quarters of survey respondents indicated that helping grantees to pursue funding from other sources would be beneficial. A high proportion also indicated that educational opportunities—learning from experts or from each other—would be helpful.

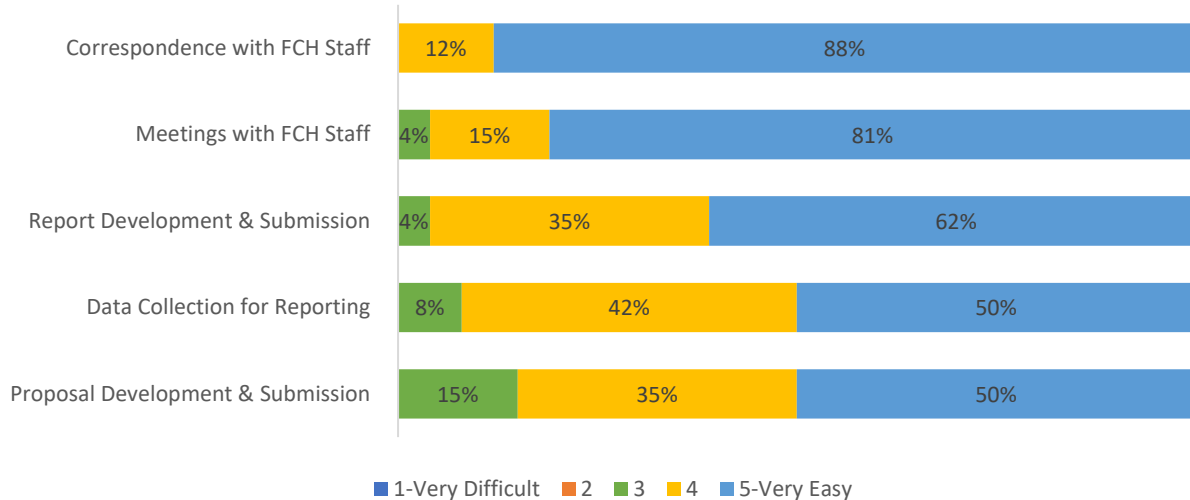
Grantees would like FCH to facilitate funding and educational opportunities for grantees



Experience with FCH's Processes and Grantee Portal

Grantees rated FCH's application, management, and reporting processes as relatively easy, with over 75% reporting that meetings and correspondence with FCH was very easy. Long-standing grantees were more likely to report that report development and submission, data collection for reporting, and meetings with FCH staff were very easy than newer grantees. Recipients of larger grants were more likely to report these same things were very easy compared to those who received smaller grants.

Grantees see FCH processes and communication as easy overall



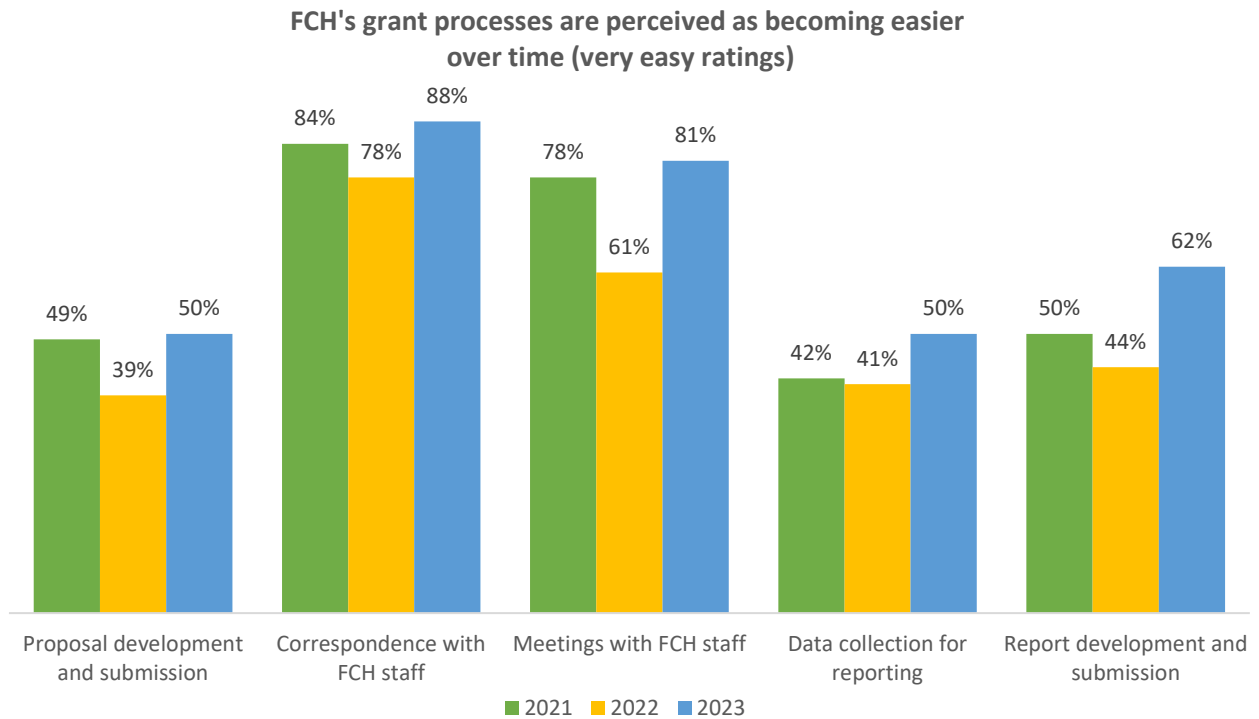
Open-ended comments about processes and requirements were overwhelmingly positive. For example:

Reporting is done largely through conversation that I think can be quite helpful for organizing my ideas.

FCH has done a wonderful job of streamlining the application and reporting processes; both are quick and easy. The administrative burden of grants from FCH has been reduced significantly in comparison with that of grants from other sources. And, more importantly, communication with FCH around questions re: grant applications and reports is quick, easy, and kind. It is clear that there are humans on the other side of the grant platform.

I greatly appreciate the ease of the application and reporting process and how willing FCH is to allow the agency to have flexibility with the funds.

A comparison of ratings across all three survey time periods reveals that FCH grant processes have become easier over time, especially relative to grant report development and submission.



One concern of FCH staff is ensuring that the information asked for during application and reporting processes is related to the funded work, rather than extraneous. Grantees' survey responses indicate that the information asked for is relevant.

	Information requested was not relevant to funded work	Information requested was relevant to the funded work	NA
Application – Program or initiative's budget	0	96%	4%
Reporting – Program or initiative's expenditures	4%	88%	8%
Application – Details that were requested about program or initiative	0	96%	4%
Reporting – Details that were shared about progress or results	4%	96%	0

Grantees rated FCH’s application and reporting processes highly. Over three-quarters of survey respondents stated that they strongly agreed that FCH provided clear and relevant information regarding its application process and requirements, that once established, FCH’s expectations regarding reporting did not change, and that FCH’s reporting supported their organizations’ cost accounting and evaluation efforts.

Grantees see FCH's application and reporting processes as supportive



Comments about FCH’s processes included:

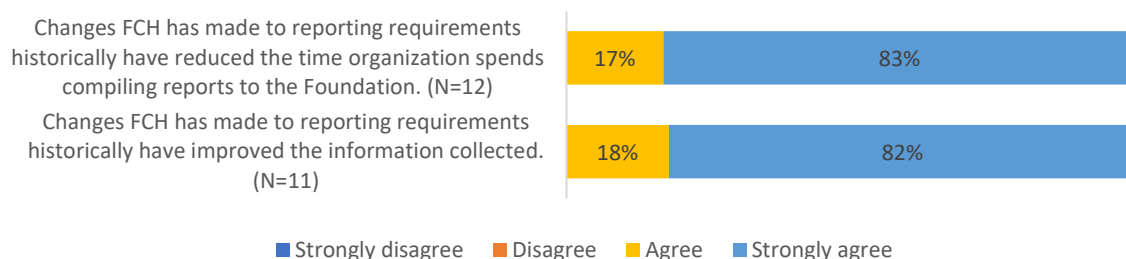
Feedback received during the proposal process could have been clearer and more straightforward.

I feel the information that FCH requires shows a very good overview of our program.

I was not aware I could have received feedback throughout the application process. It also would be helpful to get feedback on rejected grant proposals.

Grantees who were funded for five or more years or who received multi-year grants were asked about the impact of FCH’s changes to reporting requirements on their organizations over time. Overall, grantees reported that these changes have reduced time spent on completing reports to the Foundation and improved the information that is collected.

FCH processes have made things easier for grantees over time

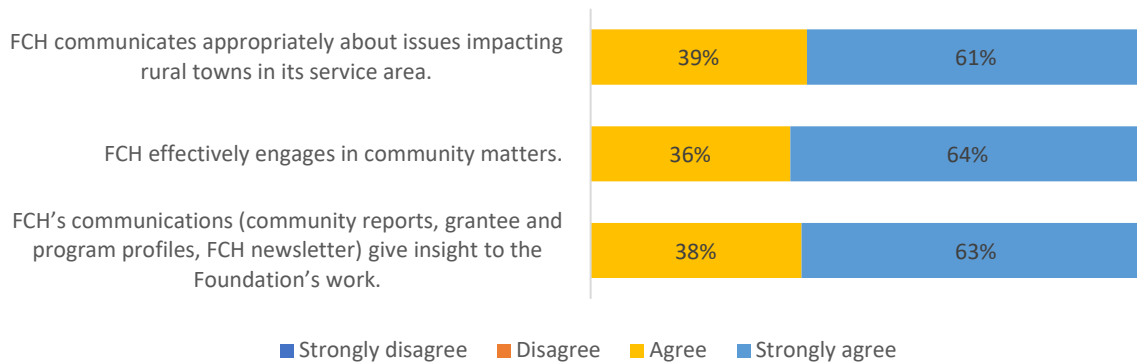


In 2023, only a small portion (15%) of grantee respondents reported that they had not used FCH’s grantee portal. Grantees who used the portal rated its use as relatively easy to use (91%).

FCH Community Leadership & Equity

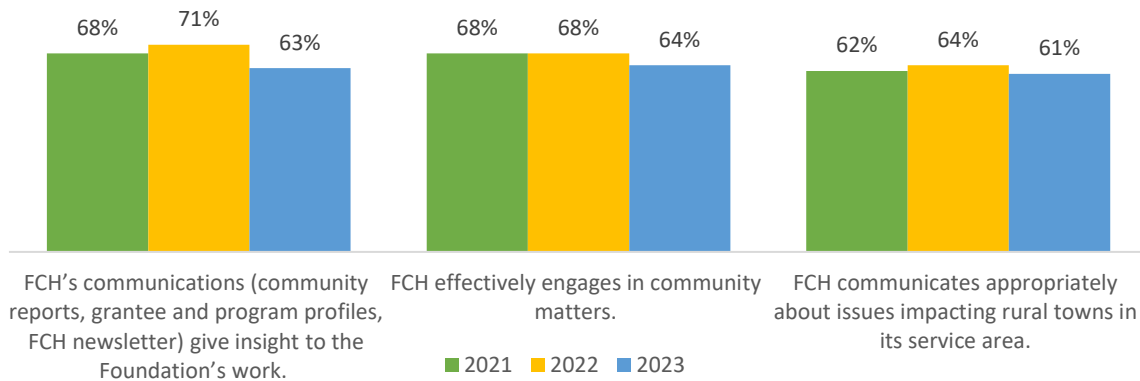
FCH’s communications are seen as effective. Nearly two thirds of grantee respondents indicated that they believe FCH communicates appropriately about issues impacting rural towns in its service area, that FCH effectively engages in community matters, and that communications give insight to FCH’s work.

Grantees rate FCH's communication highly



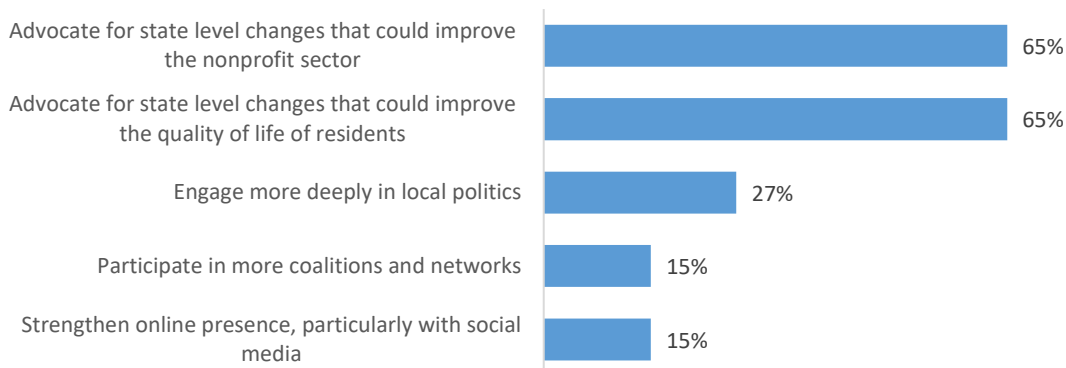
A comparison of perceptions across all three survey time periods reveals that grantees’ perceptions of FCH’s communications has remained consistently positive.

Positive perceptions of FCH communications has been steady over time (strongly agree ratings)



When asked about other ways the Foundation could deepen its community engagement, the most frequently mentioned was state-level advocacy. These responses mirror those in 2022 and 2021.

Grantees see a role for FCH in advocacy

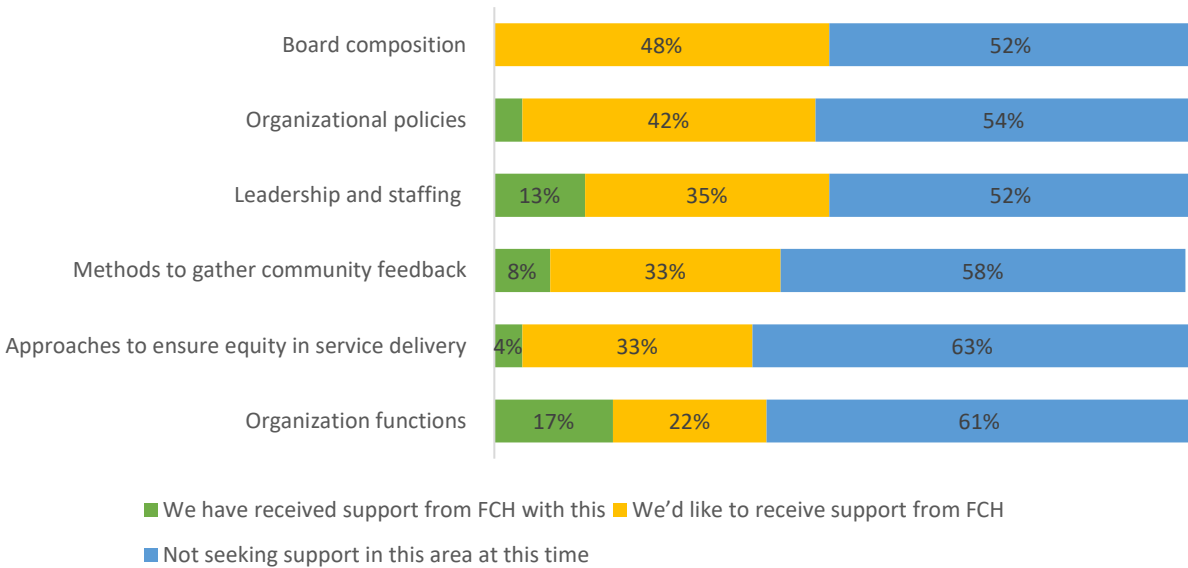


Clarity about grant making decisions is an important priority for FCH. When asked about their understanding of how FCH decides on grant awards, 80% of 2023 survey respondents reported that they were completely clear about FCH’s grant decision processes. This compares to 87% in 2022 (the question was asked differently in 2021). Several respondents reported that they were mostly clear about these processes but wanted additional information about things like long-term plans for general operating support, guidance on Foundation priorities, and the grant decision-making process and timeline. Respondents whose organizations received smaller grants and those that received grants for the first time more recently were more likely to report that FCH’s grant decision processes were completely clear to them than those who received larger grants or were long-standing grantees.

FCH launched a new strategic plan in 2021. In this plan, the organization committed to being more equitable in its grantmaking processes, especially as it relates to investing more in the historically under-resourced communities in its service area and simplifying its application and reporting processes. When asked about this in the 2023 survey, 80% of respondents reported that they felt they had a good understanding of this commitment and FCH’s efforts to change its investments to align with this commitment; 20% reported that they have a general understanding but do not know specifically how this will be implemented. In 2022, 65% of survey respondents and in 2021 46% of survey respondents reported that they had a good understanding of this commitment. In 2023, long-term grant recipients were more likely to be clear about this than newer grantees; grantees who received larger grants were more likely to be clear about this than those who received smaller grants.

When asked specifically about support to grantees with diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), consistent with responses in both 2021 and 2022, most 2023 survey respondents reported that their organizations had not received this support from the Foundation to date; those who have most often received Foundation support relative to organization functions (i.e., DEI reflected in mission/vision, strategic plan, and communications). Over half of grantee respondents reported that their organizations are not seeking support from FCH in these areas at this time. Those that are seeking some support are most interested in support relative to board composition and organizational policies.

A large proportion of grantees are not seeking FCH support with DEI initiatives



Conclusions and Recommendations

As in prior years, the results of the 2023 FCH Grantee Survey indicate that FCH is perceived as an excellent partner to grantees, with respectful and supportive processes, helpful non-grant support, and valuable communication. The Foundation should continue its current practices. There are no areas identified in the survey requiring urgent attention. Given that some survey respondents were mostly, but not completely clear, about the Foundation’s grant-making decisions, Foundation staff may wish to provide further information about the grant decision-making process and timeline as part of its grant application materials and add some clarity (or direct potential applicants to existing information) about funding priorities and the Foundation’s plans for continuing existing funding opportunities such as general operating support.

This year, grantees were asked how they would like to see FCH deepen its non-grant support and they reported that they could most benefit from additional supporting securing funding from other sources and educational opportunities including those delivered by content experts and those in which they can learn from each other. Consistent with prior year results, grantees would also like to see the Foundation play a greater role in state advocacy.

Survey results indicate that the Foundation has played a small role in supporting grantees with DEI efforts to date. There appears to be a segment of grantees who would welcome additional support in this area, particularly relative to board composition.