



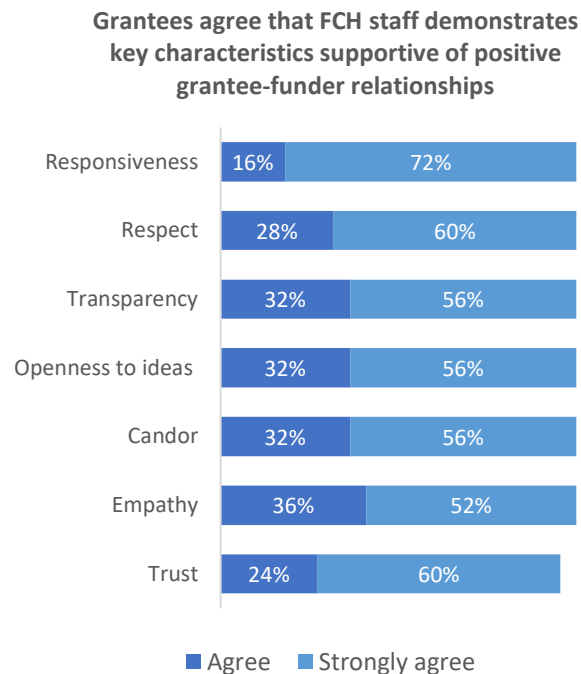
GRANTEE FEEDBACK SURVEY March 2026

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Introduction

Established in 2003, the Foundation for Community Health (FCH) *works 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.* Collaboration with nonprofit partners is critical to meeting FCH’s mission. Research suggests that strong funder-grantee relationships are characterized by grantees’ positive experiences with foundation staff and clear communication from funders. For FCH, prioritizing relationship quality aligns with its broader commitment to trust-based philanthropy, an approach to addressing historical inequities in foundation-grantee relationships by advancing equity, shifting power, and building mutual accountability.

FCH regularly commissions a 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. In 2026, FCH conducted its fourth such survey.¹ Survey recipients were selected based on the end of their funded grant period; nearly all participating grantee partners held grants with funded periods between 2023 and 2025, with the exception of one grant that began in 2022. Overall, a total of 34 organizations were included in survey outreach, representing \$2.3 million in grant funds.



Twenty-five individuals whose organizations received grants from FCH in 2023-2025 responded to the on-line survey, a 69% response rate. Findings from the survey are shared below; where appropriate, differences in responses by grant size and duration of funding support from FCH are discussed where appropriate,² although it should be noted that survey respondents differed over the different survey rounds.

Foundation-Grantee Relationships

As in past years, survey results in 2026 show positive perceptions of FCH. Over 85% of grantee survey respondents expressed positive views of

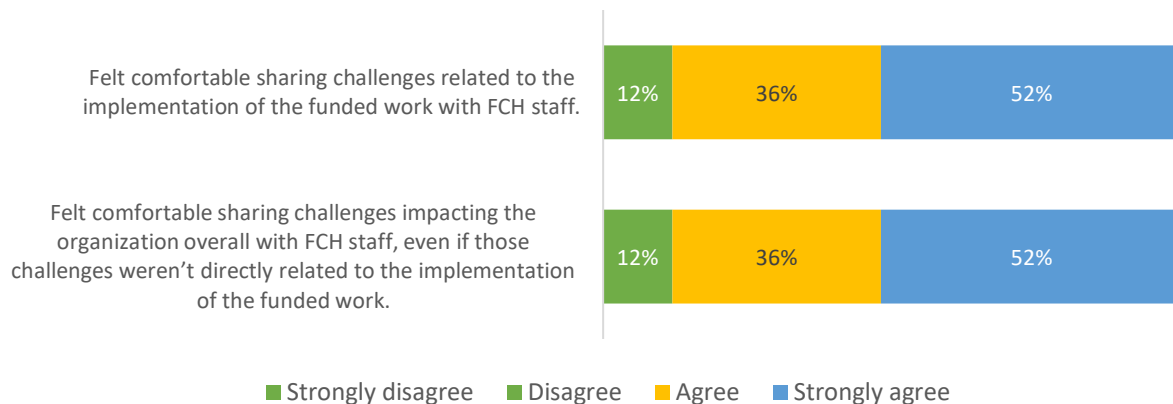
¹ Earlier surveys were conducted in 2021, 2022 and 2024.

² Grant size: Small (\$15,000 or less) (11 grantee respondents) and Large (\$15,001+) (14 grantee respondents). Duration of FCH grant funding: Have been receiving funding from FCH for less than five years (8 grantee respondents) and have been receiving funding from FCH more five or more or have received multi-year grants (17 grantee respondents).

these relationships in each domain, with the highest proportion indicating that they “strongly agreed” that FCH staff are responsive. Overall, compared to past survey results, a smaller proportion of 2026 survey respondents indicated that they “strongly agreed” that FCH staff demonstrated these characteristics. While there were no notable differences in responses relative to the size of grants received, grantee respondents who had been grantees for a longer period of time or who received longer-term grants were more likely to report that they “strongly agreed” that FCH staff demonstrated trust, candor, respect, and responsiveness compared to those who received short-term grants.

About 88% of survey respondents reported that they felt comfortable approaching FCH staff with concerns and challenges, with about half noting that they “strongly agreed” they felt comfortable doing so. Three respondents (12%) shared that they did not feel comfortable doing so. There were no notable differences across grantee respondents whose organizations received grants of different sizes or duration of their funding relationship with FCH.

Most grantees feel comfortable sharing information about organizational challenges with FCH staff



Grantee’s open-ended comments were overwhelmingly positive. Three respondents consistently expressed dissatisfaction with the foundation-grantee relationship when responding to survey questions but did not share comments that would provide insight about their experiences. Examples of comments include:

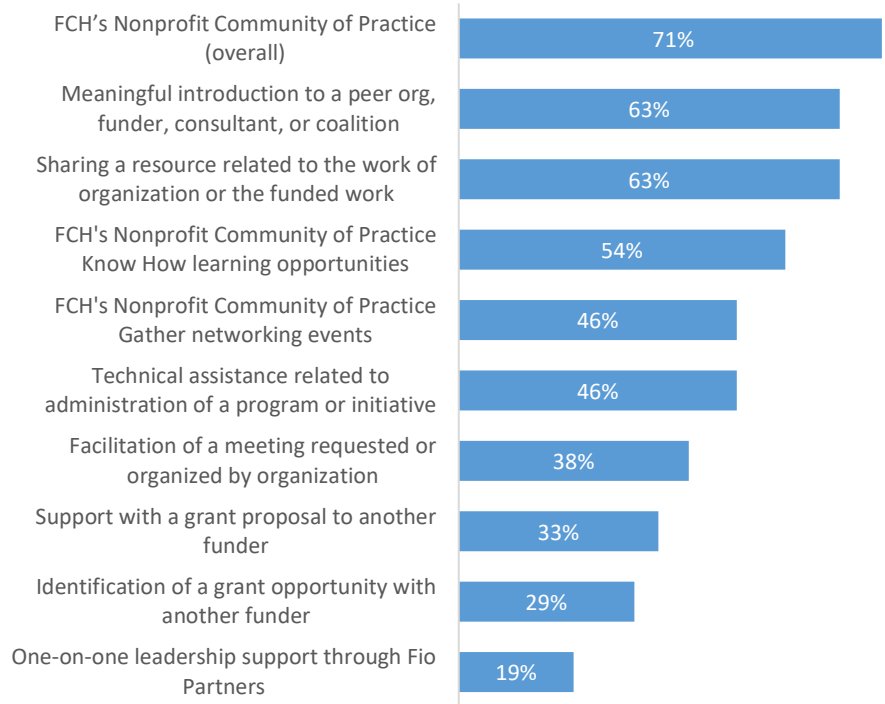
The FCH staff has been extremely responsive to our financial needs with our program and has found creative ways to partner with other funders to get us additional funding for much needed equipment.

I really appreciate the collaborative feeling associated with our FCH grant.

Our agency has the strongest relationship with FCH beyond all of our other funding partners, and it has so much to do with all of the above. FCH's ethos and trust-based model are what we consider to be the gold-standard in philanthropy.

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 meaningful introductions to peer organizations, potential funders, consultants or coalitions and resources related to their work. Additionally, 71% of survey respondents indicated that they participate in FCH’s Nonprofit Community of Practice. About half of respondents shared that they participated in the *Know How* learning opportunities and Gather networking events that FCH recently began offering as part of the Community of Practice. Respondents were least likely to report participating in leadership support provided by Fio Partners or receiving help from FCH in identifying other grant opportunities or support with a grant proposal to another funder (i.e., letter of support, proof reading, help with proposal creation, etc.).

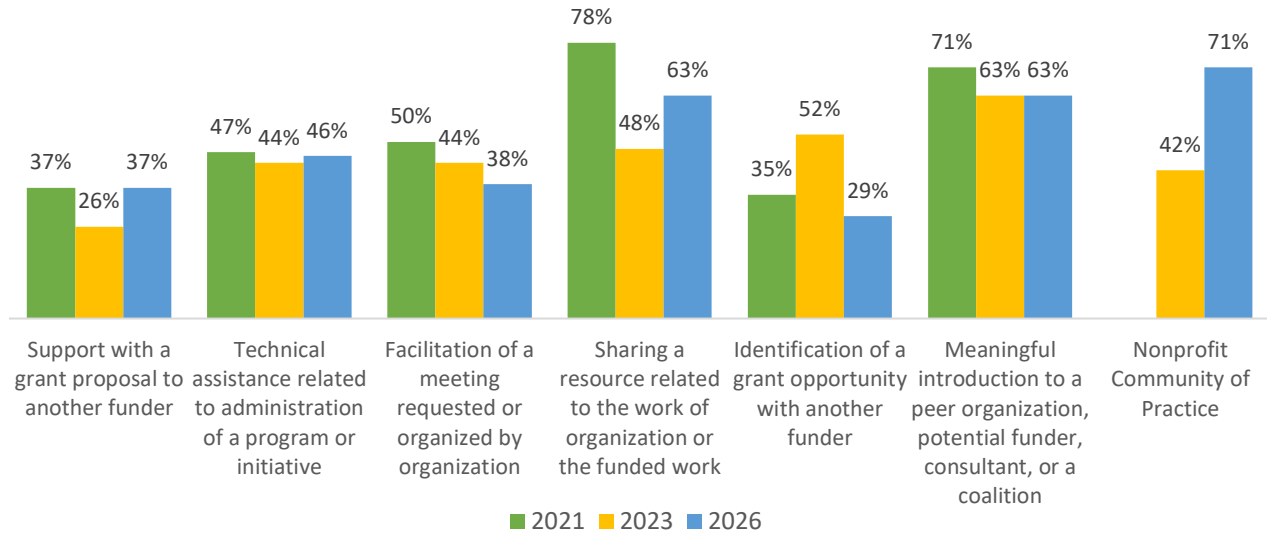
Grantees most often participated in the Nonprofit Community of Practice and received informational resources and introductions from FCH staff



There were few differences in experiences receiving non-grant support among different types of grantees. However, newer grantees and/or grantees who received larger grants were more likely to report receiving support from FCH staff relative to grant opportunities from another funder than long-term grantees and those receiving smaller FCH grants.

A comparison of responses over three surveys reveals that a similar proportion of grantee survey respondents reported receiving FCH staff support with a grant proposal, technical assistance with a program or initiative, and meaningful introductions. A larger proportion of grantees responding to the 2026 survey participated in the Nonprofit Community of Practice and received a resource from FCH staff compared to 2023.

Grantee survey respondents accessed most aspects of FCH support in similar proportions over the three different survey periods



Grantees who received non-grant support from FCH rated it highly. Support related to introductions and sharing of resources were rated most highly.

Grantees report that FCH non-grant support is helpful



Grantees were asked to select up to three ways from six 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 similar proportion indicated this in the 2023 survey. A high proportion also indicated that educational opportunities to learn from experts would be helpful.

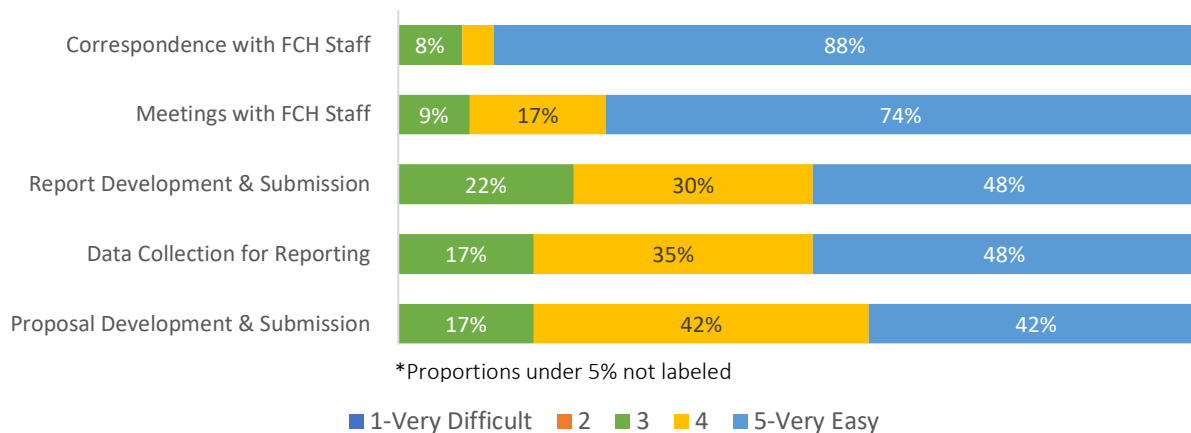
Grantees would like FCH to facilitate funding and educational opportunities for grantees



Experience with FCH’s Processes

As in past years, when asked about the ease of FCH grant processes, survey respondents rated them as relatively easy, with 75% or more respondents reporting that meetings and correspondence with FCH was very easy.

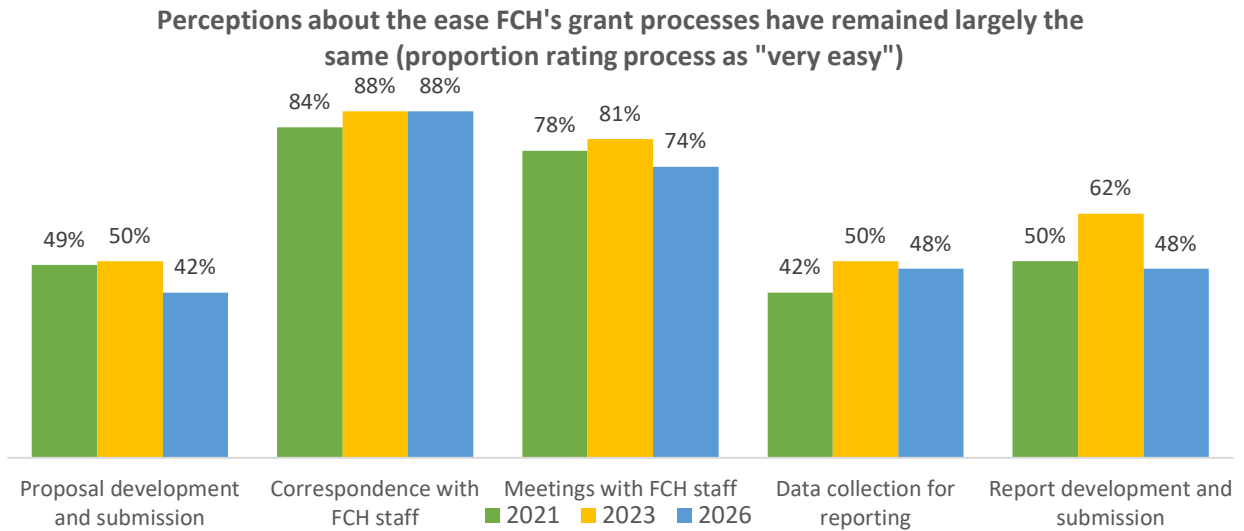
Grantees see FCH grant processes as easy overall



Long-standing grantees were more likely to report that correspondence with FCH staff and data collection for reporting were “very easy” compared to newer grantees. Recipients of larger grants were more likely

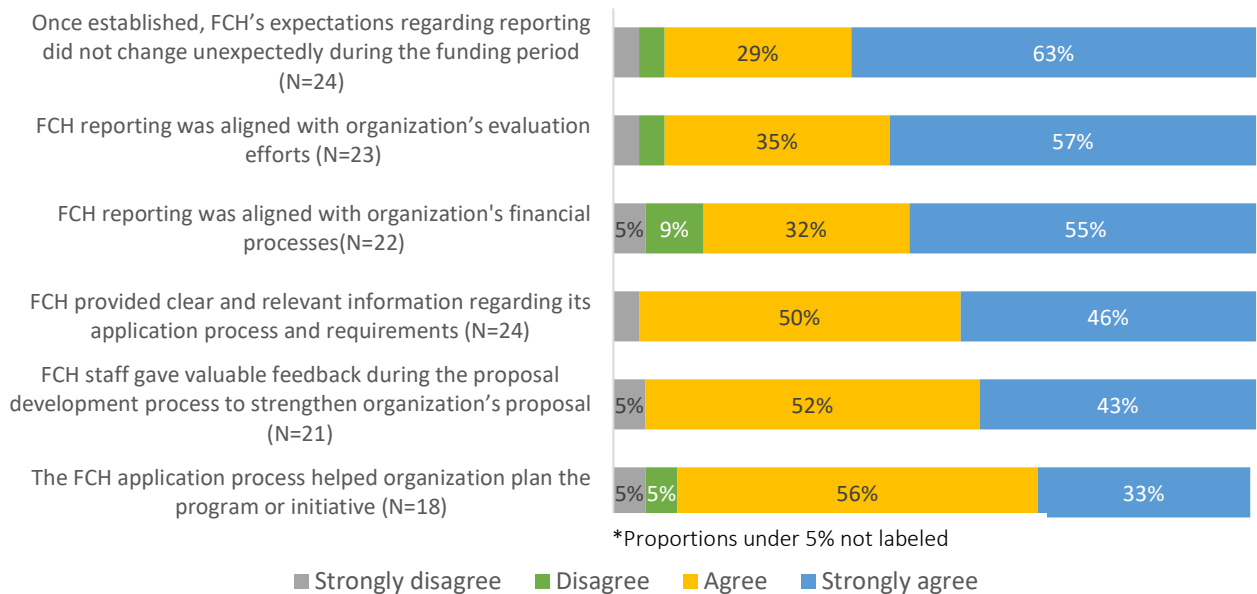
to report correspondence with FCH staff and proposal development were “very easy” compared to those who received smaller grants.

A comparison of ratings across three survey time periods reveals that grantees’ perceptions about the ease of FCH’s grant processes has largely stayed the same over time. Perceptions about the ease of report development and submission was the same in 2021 and 2026, but higher in 2023.



Grantees rated FCH’s application and reporting processes highly. Over half of survey respondents stated that they strongly agreed that once established, FCH’s expectations regarding reporting did not change, and that FCH’s reporting supported their organizations’ cost accounting and evaluation efforts. A higher proportion of long-standing grantees than newer grantees reported that they “strongly agreed” that FCH provided clear and relevant information regarding its application process and that reporting supported their organizations’ cost accounting and evaluation efforts.

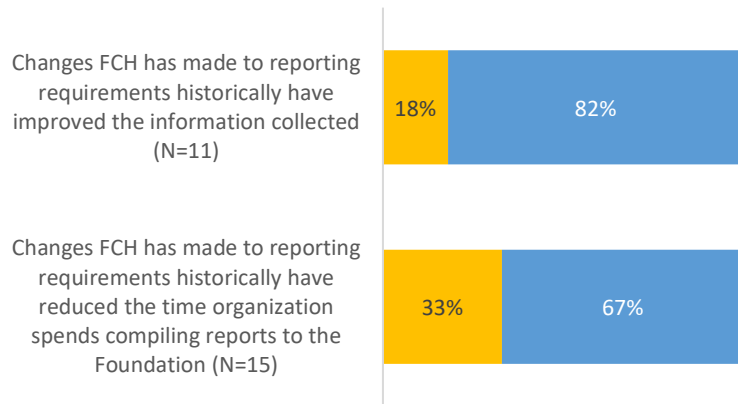
Grantees see FCH's application and reporting processes as supportive



Grantees funded for five or more years 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 and improved the information collected.

Only six survey respondents provided comments on their experiences with FCH’s grant processes and these comments were positive. Examples include:

FCH processes have made things easier for grantees over time



■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree

FCH has consolidated the information required in a way that takes less time and seems far more efficient.

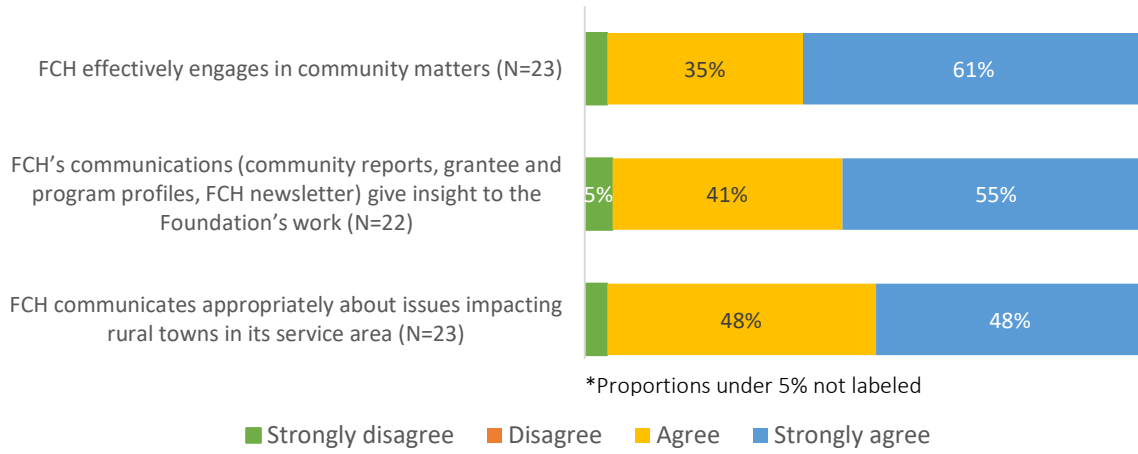
Proposal development has been time intensive but also very generative and I think that is helpful! Receiving constructive feedback on our proposal has really supported the efficacy of the resulting work. The reporting has also required time and attention but supported meaningful reflection and required important follow through. I really appreciate this type of reporting.

The post-award survey format is sometimes a little confusing/cumbersome and doesn't always align with the actual grant outcomes. But it can also occasionally provide an interesting framework for how to view the grants as opposed to other funders' more traditional methods of reporting.

FCH Community Leadership & Equity

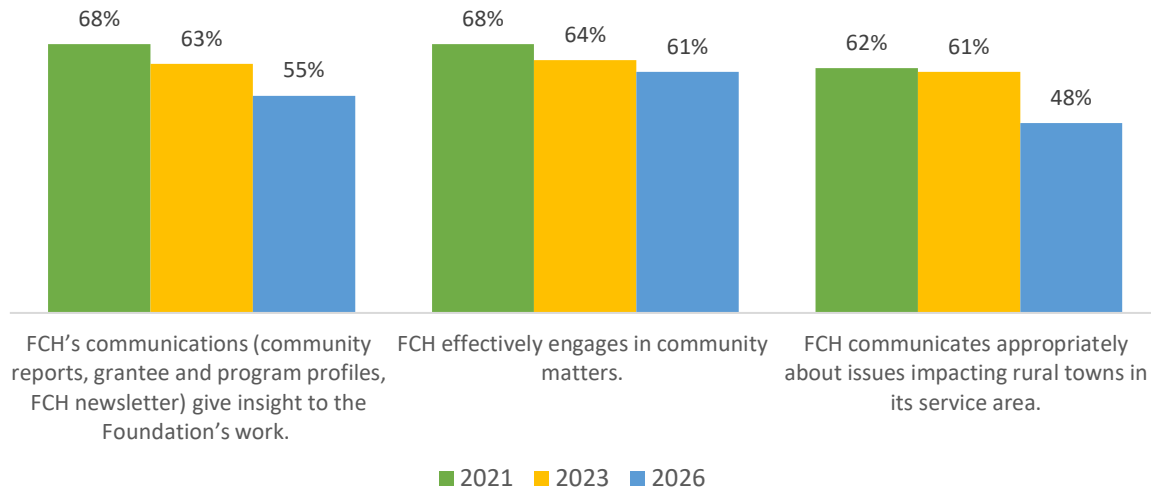
FCH’s communications are seen as effective. Almost all grantee respondents indicated that they believe that FCH effectively engages in community matters, that FCH communications give insight to FCH’s work, and that FCH communicates appropriately about issues impacting rural towns in its service area. Grantee survey respondents whose organizations received smaller grants were more likely to “strongly agree” that FCH’s communications give insight into the Foundation’s work than those who had received larger grants. Survey respondents whose organizations have received funding from FCH over many years or who received multi-year funding were more likely to report that FCH communicates appropriately about issues impacting rural towns in its service area than survey respondents whose organizations had a shorter-term relationship with FCH.

Grantees rate FCH's communication highly



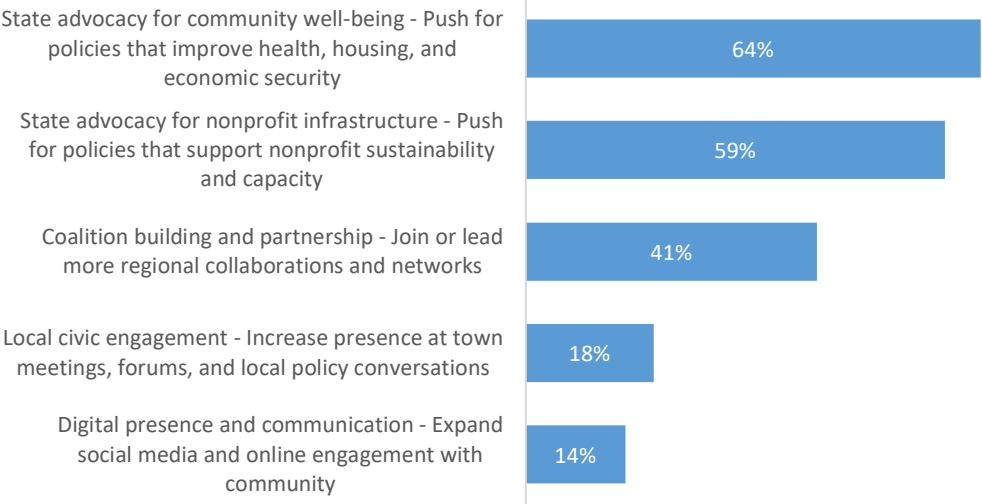
A comparison of perceptions across the three survey time periods reveals that the proportion of grantee survey respondents rating FCH's communications most highly ("strongly agree") has declined slightly over time but overall grantees are very positive about these communications.

Positive perceptions of FCH communications has been steady over time (proportion who "strongly agree")



When asked for their ideas about the top two ways FCH should focus its community engagement, survey respondents most frequently mentioned was state-level advocacy.

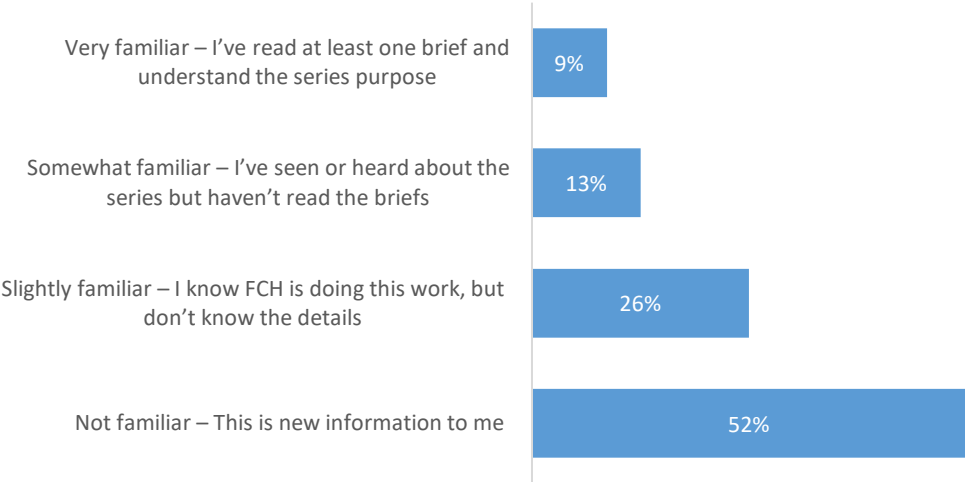
Grantees see a role for FCH in advocacy



In September 2025, FCH launched its *From Here* series—a collection of brief reports that show how policy changes at the local, state, and federal level directly impact our region. These reports combine stories from community members and organizations with data to illustrate both challenges and solutions. FCH publishes these briefs to help policymakers understand rural realities and to provide nonprofit partners with resources for their own advocacy work.

When asked about their level of familiarity with the *From Here* series, only half of survey respondents indicated familiarity and fewer than 10% (N=2) indicated that they were “very familiar” with the series. This is likely in part due to the newness of the series. Few respondents who indicated some level of familiarity with the series answered follow up questions and thus, results are not analyzed here.

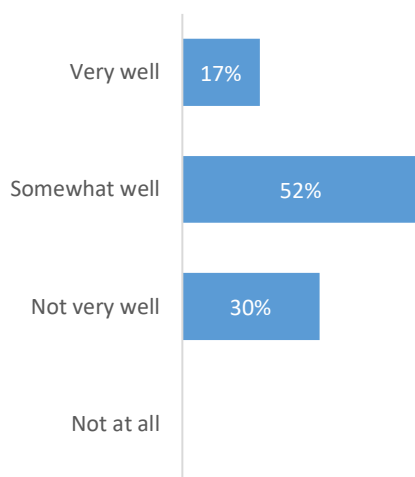
Most survey respondents are not very familiar with FCH's new *From Here* series



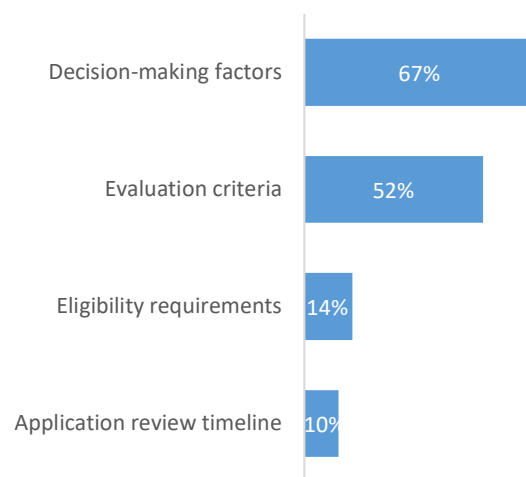
Clarity about grant making decisions is an important priority for FCH. When asked about their understanding of FCH’s funding criteria and decision-making process, grantees expressed differing levels of understanding, with 17% indicating they understand this “very well” and half indicating they understand this “somewhat well.” A higher proportion of survey respondents whose organizations had received several years of FCH funding reported that they understood these processes than respondents whose organizations had not been partnering with FCH as long.

Grant survey respondents indicated they would most like additional information about what FCH prioritizes or weighs most heavily when choosing which proposals to fund (decision-making factors) and the specific standards and benchmarks FCH uses to assess applications (evaluation criteria).

Grantees' understanding of FCH's grant processes varies

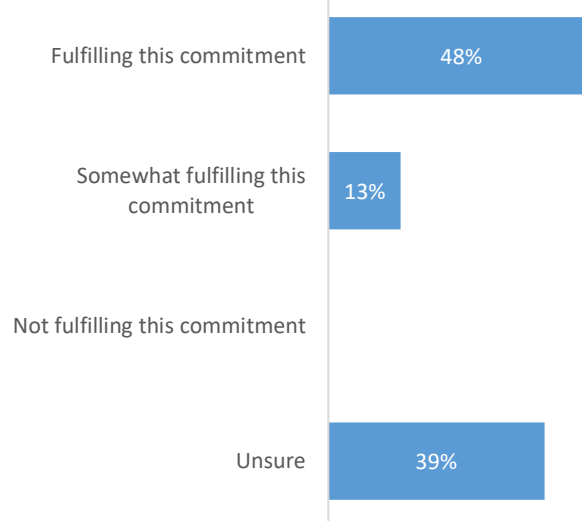


Grantees would like additional information about grant processes



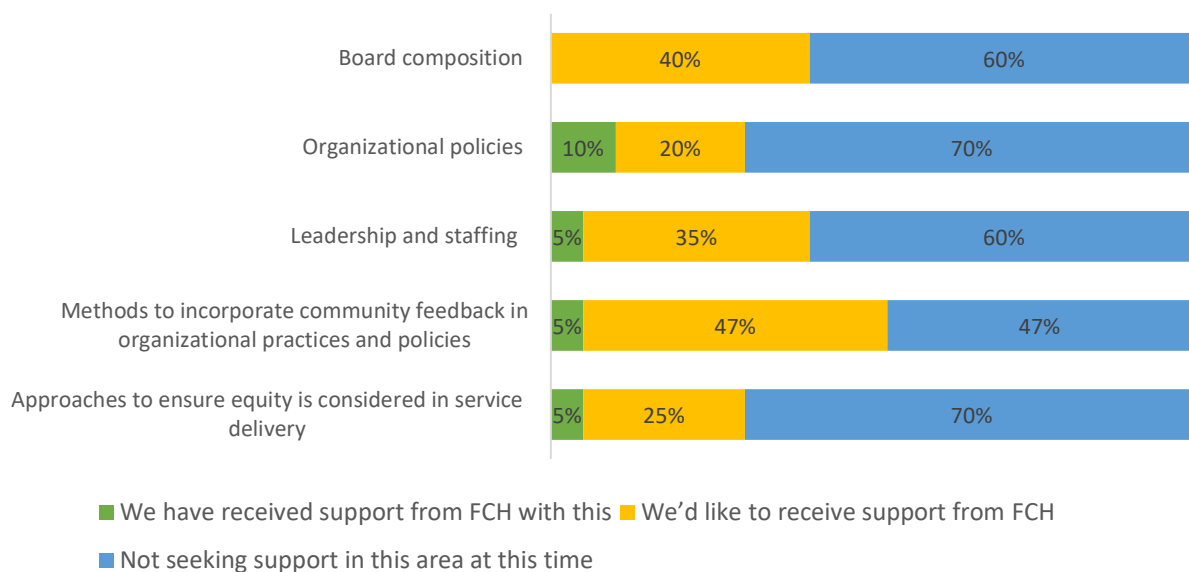
FCH launched a new strategic plan in 2021. In this plan, the organization committed to being more equitable in its grantmaking processes, especially as it relates to investing more in the historically under-resourced communities in its service area and simplifying its application and reporting processes. When asked to what extent they feel FCH is fulfilling its commitment to equity in grantmaking, about half (48%) reported that they feel the foundation is fulfilling this commitment. A number of respondents, however, indicated that they were unsure. Newer grantees and those who received smaller grants were more likely to report being unsure than were grantees who received larger grants or had longer relationships with FCH.

Half of grantees feel FCH is fulfilling its commitment to greater equity in grantmaking processes



When asked specifically about support to grantees with diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), consistent with responses in past surveys, few respondents reported that their organizations had received this support from the Foundation to date. Most 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 methods to incorporate community feedback in organizational practices and policies and support with board composition.

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



Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of the 2026 FCH Grantee Survey indicate that FCH continues to be perceived as an excellent partner to most grantees, with respectful and supportive processes and helpful non-grant support. Grantees receive a variety of non-grant support from FCH, most often in the form meaningful introductions to peer organizations, potential funders, consultants or coalitions and resources related to their work, and the opportunity to participate in FCH's Nonprofit Community of Practice. Survey responses show that FCH's communications are generally well received, with most grantees feeling informed about FCH's work and community impact. Grantees with longer relationships or who have received larger grants tend to report higher clarity and satisfaction with FCH's processes. Additionally, while FCH has committed to equity in grantmaking, about half of grantees believe this commitment is being fulfilled, with others unsure. Support for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is limited, and most grantee survey respondents indicated that their organizations are not currently seeking this support.

The Foundation should continue its current practices. There are no areas identified in the survey requiring urgent attention. However, the following could be considered as FCH continues to implement its trust-based philanthropy approach:

- Continue to adapt and enhance communication strategies to further increase understanding about FCH's processes and decision-making, particularly among newer grantees and those receiving smaller grants. Building on recent improvements in grant processes such as an interview guide for applicants seeking capacity building grants, continue to seek out ways to

clarify funding priorities, processes, and decision-making criteria to current and potential grantees.

- Examine whether some aspects of non-grant support should be expanded or strengthened. Given large-scale funding shifts affecting many nonprofit organizations, one clear area of need for nonprofits is securing additional funding. Grantees also indicated a desire for more educational opportunities delivered by content experts.
- Strengthen efforts in state-level advocacy, as this is consistently identified by grantees as a top area for community engagement.
- After some time has passed, examine familiarity and engagement with the *From Here* series. This could be done in part through web analytics and through interactions with grantees such as in meetings or through grant reporting. More formal, anonymous assessment processes could be incorporated into future grantee surveys.