

Strengthening donors, Strengthening Community: Community Foundations and Donor Advised Grantmaking

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Abstract

Donor Advised Funds have become the most popular charitable giving vehicle in the United States. All Donor Advised Funds share the criterion of involvement by the donor in recommending where donated money is directed for charitable purposes. Such an approach offers the chance for direct community involvement, yet raises challenges about measuring efficacy. How can community foundations best assess the effectiveness of Donor Advised Funds at strengthening communities?

In this paper, Jennifer Litchfield reviews the laws and practices governing Donor Advised Funds in the United States and several other countries, including Canada and the United Kingdom. She recommends that Donor Advised Funds adopt a learning culture approach, pooling information and constant analysis in order to better evaluate how such funds are spent. The Greater Milwaukee Foundation is used as a case study of an organization that has revamped its evaluative system toward measuring service impact, a model that Litchfield recommends that other organizations investigate. Litchfield also analyzes the positive benefits of technology and community member leadership in measuring the impact of Donor Advised Funds.

To request the full version of the paper, please click [here](#)

