Blackbaud

Endowment for Health

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As the Endowment for Health works for a future where all people who call New Hampshire their home are happy, healthy, and thriving, the private nonprofit foundation still holds a longstanding trust in Blackbaud Grantmaking™ that dates back to 2001, when the foundation began.

Endowment invests in New Hampshire's health with trusted grant management solution

In its first two decades, the Endowment for Health has awarded more than 1,500 grants, totaling more than $60 million, for programs and projects "to improve the health and reduce the burden of illness for the people of New Hampshire—especially the vulnerable and underserved."

And, from the time it started operations in 2001, the private nonprofit foundation has relied on the grantmaking software that has evolved into the cloud-based, fully-hosted solution now offered with Blackbaud Grantmaking.

Looking back, Chief Financial Officer Sue Fulton—one of the Endowment's first employees—recalled her concerns as to whether the purchase of new grantmaking software was necessary and worth the investment. "It took me a year to recognize how important it was," she said. Yet she remains as convinced now as ever. "I do not understand how a foundation can operate without a grantmaking software system. It's just too important."

Sue Fulton
Chief Financial Officer

Andie Hession
Grants Program Associate

An Effective Tool for Transparency, Compliance, and Communication

Fulton continues to trust in Blackbaud's grantmaking solution to support transparency, visibility, and compliance for the Endowment, whether she's reporting to the Endowment's Board of Directors or she's preparing for an annual audit. "Since we started in 2001, when our auditors come in, I'm able to provide them exactly what they are looking for."

She credits Blackbaud Grantmaking for evolving effective communication and efficient workflows that allow staff and their grant partners to maximize their impact on public health.

To illustrate, she pointed to an Endowment community partner, the Southern New Hampshire Area Health Education Center, which operates NH Needs Caregivers, a program to address the licensed nursing assistant workforce shortage in the state. When the program reached out to the Endowment after an unexpected disruptive delay in other expected funding, Endowment staff completed the review and approval process, providing grant funding within 24 hours.

The efficiency in workflows allowed the NH Needs Caregivers program to operate seamlessly, and 12 individuals were licensed as licensed nursing assistants in the three-week period that may have otherwise caused the program to end.

Using the Grantee Portal To Connect in a New Way

The Endowment for Health launched a new survey of their community partners to better understand their operating environments in the field and collect demographic data. The Endowment distributed the survey through the Grantee Portal available through Blackbaud Grantmaking and will use the initial survey as a benchmark for future annual surveys.

"The data collected will help staff understand, reflect, and support the communities we serve in order to build stronger relationships," explained Grants Program Associate Andie Hession. "Community partners were told their answers and participation in completing this survey will be held confidential and will not impact funding decisions."

Questions about race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity, and operating environment were added as custom fields with Blackbaud Grantmaking's Blueprint module. Then, a new requirement was made with the custom fields and added to one grant record that the grantee received in the calendar year, with organizations that apply for multiple grants per year in mind.

"It was great to distribute this survey with Blackbaud Grantmaking because of the ability to store the data in one place, and our partners are already familiar with the portal," Hession said. "The first year was a success, with an 85% response rate and insightful feedback from our partners on ways to improve the survey for next year."

Grants Program Associate Andie Hession sees similar advantages, though she has a different vantage point. Hession joined the Endowment just after its 20th anniversary, bringing a background in public health, environmental education, and sustainable food systems.

While she hadn't used Blackbaud Grantmaking before joining the Endowment, Hession said learning and using the solution has been a positive experience. She especially appreciates that the entire staff can access the platform anytime, from anywhere, on any browser, one of the more recent adaptations to the comprehensive solution, which is now powered by Blackbaud SKY®—Blackbaud's platform for social good innovation. "Blackbaud Grantmaking is a useful tool for all staff to manage the grantmaking process," Hession said.

Fulton, meanwhile, credited Hession for implementing the more intuitive setup offered through Blackbaud SKY "flawlessly." Program staff have also shared their positive feedback about the more intuitive user experience.

Seamless Workflows for Everyone

The Endowment relies on Blackbaud Grantmaking's dashboards, which are instrumental in their review process, making it easy for reviewers to share their thoughts and comments with one another, while also keeping clear track of the grant's status and other details.

Darnisa Amante-Jackson, president of the Disruptive Equity Education Project (DEEP), addresses the Race & Equity in NH Series Symposium 2.0, an event supported by the Endowment for Health.

"I never imagined our grantmaking system and processes would look so different today than they did 20 plus years ago. In partnership with Blackbaud, we have been able to take advantage of innovative technologies to implement streamlined processes and be as efficient as possible."

—Sue Fulton,
Chief Financial Officer

"The workflows really work for us," Hession said. "We're a pretty small staff, but Blackbaud Grantmaking is something that keeps our process smooth and information accessible."

Fulton chimed in, "When someone finishes the primary review, it flows off their dashboard and pops onto the secondary reviewer's dashboard."

Fulton has shared stories with Hession about the days before the Endowment's 2007 transition to online grantmaking, when many grant seekers would rush six paper copies of 250+-page grant applications to the Endowment just before the deadline. The Endowment even made additional copies and distributed for review. "I think of the time and dollars wasted making copies, folders, and filing the paper applications," Fulton said.

Online grantmaking has improved the review process and given a wider group of organizations better, easier access to the Endowment's application and reporting tools. Fulton and Hession welcome Blackbaud's continued investments in streamlining the technology. "Equity is central to the future of our grantmaking," Hession said, "and these technology upgrades are important to ease administrative burdens for applicants."

Support for Field Building, Strategic Initiatives

Beyond functionality and efficiency, Blackbaud Grantmaking and the customization features of its Blueprint module have been a key element in supporting a shift in the Endowment's grantmaking philosophy to a field-building approach that began in 2014.

About 90% of the Endowment for Health's grant awards are strategic investments that align with work by program directors around five targeted statewide initiatives: Healthy Aging, Health Policy, Health Equity, Children's Behavioral Health, and Early Childhood.

To tackle complex social problems, the Endowment works in partnership with community members, civic leaders, organizations, advocates, and experts from many sectors to jointly reach common goals. "Sometimes strategies are identified by a coalition or working group focused on a priority area. Sometimes the innovative ideas come from grant seekers. And sometimes the Endowment identifies opportunities based on research, emerging practices, or the good work of other funders," Hession said.

In the beginning, community partners were unfamiliar with the approach and concerned about its effectiveness, Fulton and Hession explained. Now, stakeholders in each field can articulate specific examples of how their work is stronger for these investments. Partners in the field of Children's Behavioral Health, for example, convened to develop shared goals. They have been successful in advocating for inclusion of children's mental health in the state's 10-year Mental Health Plan, introducing Rapid Response mobile mental health crisis units, and the creation of a center of excellence to promote quality services and promotion of evidence-based practices.

"We are able to track investments in each domain of our Theory of Change due to the flexibility of Blackbaud Grantmaking's Blueprint," Hession said. "Blueprint also allowed us to operationalize the Measurement Framework, a tool developed to measure outcomes and impact."

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Do more for your community with a purpose-built grantmaking solution.

Learn more

TARGETED INITIATIVES

✓ Healthy Aging

✓ Health Policy

✓ Health Equity

✓ Children's Behavioral Health

✓ Early Childhood

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About Blackbaud

Blackbaud (NASDAQ: BLKB) is the world's leading cloud software company powering social good. Serving the entire social good community—nonprofits, higher education institutions, K–12 schools, healthcare organizations, faith communities, arts and cultural organizations, foundations, companies, and individual change agents—Blackbaud connects and empowers organizations to increase their impact through cloud software, services, data intelligence, and expertise. Learn more at www.blackbaud.com.