

# *The David and Lucile Packard Foundation*

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**Phase Two Evaluation**

## **Community Foundations Initiative on Management Assistance**

Submitted by: Renee A. Berger  
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**Teamworks**

9 Van Buren Street, San Francisco, California 94131  
415 469-0300 tel 415 469-0304 fax  
raberger@earthlink.net



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**“When we first got a grant from Packard, I thought, okay that’s good. Our line of thinking now is that we can’t imagine living without the management assistance center.”**

## **i | Executive Summary**

The following is the second report documenting the implementation experiences of eight Northern California community foundations participating in the David and Lucile Packard Foundation Community Foundations Initiative on Management Assistance (referred to as CFI-MAP). The first report, produced in September 1999, explored the participating foundations’ development and the initial impacts of their programs. This report examines the growing maturity of the programs and participating foundations’ preparations for institutionalizing them when the Foundation’s support ends.

The CFI-MAP was launched in 1994, with a clear and simple assumption: community foundations are in routine conversation with local nonprofits and are well-positioned to facilitate or deliver services to strengthen the nonprofit sector in their local areas. CFI-MAP began with needs assessments that were completed by the community foundations between 1994 and 1996. Information from these assessments set the stage for the development and implementation of an array of projects. The CFI-MAP provided up to five years of implementation support. Between 1994 and 2000 the Packard Foundation provided nearly \$2.5 million to the CFI-MAP grantees.

The eight participant foundations are: Community Foundation of Monterey County, Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County, East Bay Community Foundation, Fresno Regional Foundation, Humboldt Area Foundation, Sacramento Regional Foundation, Sonoma County Community Foundation, and Sonora Area Foundation.

CFI-MAP is best appreciated as a journey, with some roads familiar to the traveler and others not. The Foundation's funding was exploratory. In that vein, the evaluation is focused on discovering how the various programs are evolving and how they are affecting the various participant groups. The evaluation seeks to surface processes that further a goal of exploring the potential roles for community foundations in strengthening the delivery of management assistance. The overarching questions guiding the evaluation are: What activities are underway? How are various parties (e.g., the community foundations, the participating organizations, the trainers) affected? What challenges are encountered? Are there particularly promising practices? Are the community foundations undertaking activities to sustain CFI-MAP benefits? During the past year, the CFI-MAP program staff from the community foundations have been participated in a learning community, a strategic effort to support their knowledge and skill development. The evaluation inquires into this experience as well, how it is evolving and what it means to the participants.

The considerable diversity of the eight foundations, their locations, and different stages of development make it challenging to draw generalizations. Also CFI-MAP itself takes different structural forms in different community foundations. Five of the foundations directly administer the management assistance program, and the remaining three partner with external management assistance providers to operate the program. While the differences present challenges, they provide an unusually broad range of contexts and strategies to explore.

The first evaluation report explained that CFI-MAP was playing a critical role in raising the foundations' visibility and their credibility, increasing their knowledge of local nonprofit organizations, and sparking recognition of the need for better outreach to previously uninvolved parts of their service areas. Impressively, too, despite the fact that CFI-MAP reduces the usual distance between grantmakers and the nonprofit community, the evaluation found that the potential for "ethical violations" and inhibiting participants from being candid had not been realized.

The first report also explained that the scope of the management assistance programs included workshops, information and referral, and the provision of online library resources. Finally, for the nonprofit participants, the first report notes that CFI-MAP programs were giving them greatly increased access to training and to management assistance consultants and that CFI-MAP was fostering a climate where it was safe to discuss organizational matters. Vitally important, four community foundations complemented CFI-MAP by establishing or supplementing their own funding for management assistance grants. These grants give nonprofit organizations the opportunity to purchase consulting expertise.



This second report builds on prior findings. It does not attempt to reintroduce all of them and hold them up for reassessment. In its first few years, for many of the foundations, CFI-MAP was a laboratory for developing, testing, and refining approaches to capacity-building. In this maturing phase, the activities associated with creating programs were replaced with building reliable and efficient product-delivery systems. It is a phase of greater confidence in the product but also a nervous one regarding the future of the product.

The community foundations, especially those that directly administer CFI-MAP, continue to report that CFI-MAP is contributing to raising their credibility and visibility. They attribute an increase in number and quality of grant applications to the program. In response to growing demand, partly attributable to CFI-MAP, five foundations have either created or supplemented programs to provide management assistance grants. These grants allow nonprofits to acquire consulting expertise to tackle issues and opportunities that may have surfaced as a result of knowledge gained in CFI-MAP sponsored training.

The community foundations' CFI-MAP work is broadening their roles. It is helping them to become information hubs for local nonprofit organizations on management assistance, build understandings and expectations about organizational capacity and skill development, and better serve as a bridge between the needs of nonprofits and the providers of management assistance. Formerly many of these foundations' relationships with their communities were remote and reactive. Now, two have established satellite operations to better serve outlying areas, and another included in its criteria for its new office location adequate space for training meetings, easy road access, and ample free parking. In the locations where the CFI-MAP is directly administered by the community foundation, interviewees seem to increasingly assume that sponsoring training is a conventional foundation function.

CFI-MAP program directors are frequently called by local nonprofit organization staff and occasionally by board members for assistance with a range of information and referral requests. Three of the foundations report responding to as many as 200 calls in a month. With this heightened interaction, it would seem that the potential for abuse of confidences might escalate. Foundation staff have been careful to honor the information shared with them and respect the boundaries between and among the foundation, grantees or training participants, and consultants.

Nonprofit staff stated that they are now availing themselves of training because of the accessibility, relevance, and quality of programs. People said that the increased availability and modest costs of the programs have contributed to their participating in more training, and gives directors an option

for staff development that might otherwise be deferred because of high cost and inconvenience. In the past couple of years, several of the CFI-MAP sites have supplemented their basic workshops with more intensive training programs. One site is pioneering a leadership development program, and two others have forged relationships with universities to offer certificate programs in nonprofit leadership and management.

This second report surfaced a number of challenges, several of which carry over from the earlier exploration. For example, while CFI-MAP has helped to surface local consulting talent, there remain few bilingual consultants in these communities. Another challenge was that the people hired to manage the CFI-MAP programs were experiencing considerable isolation and anxieties that they might not be sufficiently current or skilled to meet the training needs of their communities. The first evaluation report recommended that the Packard Foundation invite the CFI-MAP's program directors to propose an approach to foster their knowledge development. The Foundation saw investing in a learning community to foster both group and individual development as a logical means of advancing CFI-MAP's goals. The directors proposed and have implemented an effort that exposes them to cutting-edge training practices and is fostering higher levels of contact with each other. They are currently pursuing their individual learning plans, which include attending training to build skills as facilitators, coaches, and even completing a master's-level degree in organizational development.

The most salient and increasingly pressing challenge is that the Packard Foundation's funding is due to sunset, and few of the foundations, despite their expressed enthusiasm, have done much so far to plan for their program's sustainability. This situation is notably worrisome given that the Foundation's support for three of the foundations will end in 2001, with the others due to end in 2002.

While all of the foundations have embraced CFI-MAP, only one foundation has prepared a detailed plan for its sustainability. A couple of others have sketched figures for their respective CFI-MAP budgets, and the board of one has affirmed its commitment to continue the program beyond the period of Packard Foundation support. Many of the foundations charge fees for courses, often using sliding scales so that smaller and resource-scarce organizations can take advantage of training opportunities. Thus, while being entrepreneurial, the foundations are facing a persistent shortfall that needs to be addressed. On an integrally related matter, the participating foundations generally do not have systems for calculating the true costs of the programs, making it quite difficult for them to develop a sound financial plan.

Overall, nonprofit organizations in the eight participating communities are richer as a result of CFI-MAP. Nonprofit staff are gaining access to quality training and technical assistance, and their own day-to-day struggles to foster sound organizational practice are seemingly better understood by themselves, by foundation staff, and by foundation board members. Staff of nonprofit organizations in several of the communities, particularly those that directly administer CFI-MAP, look to their community foundation as an information hub where they can get reliable assistance to identify organizational needs and to find the resources to address them. These are essential ingredients to building a more effective nonprofit sector. CFI-MAP is clearly having important impacts upon the participating community foundations and their nonprofit organizations.



**“The program has definitely contributed to our visibility. It’s a great way for us to learn about the organizations in our community . . . it has caused us to relate to larger numbers of organizations, and we have seen an increase in the quality of applications and nature of board discussion about those applications. The need for management assistance is increasingly integrated into our thinking.”<sup>1</sup>**

## I | Introduction

This is the second report that is part of a multiyear evaluation and provides observations on the implementation of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation’s Community Foundations Initiative on Management Assistance (referred to as CFI-MAP). The first report covered the planning phase and the early years of the program’s implementation; this report examines the later stages of development. This evaluation emphasizes sharing learning between and among CFI-MAP participants.

CFI-MAP was launched in 1994 with a clear and simple assumption: community foundations are in routine conversation with local nonprofits and are well positioned to facilitate or deliver services to strengthen those nonprofits. CFI-MAP is an outgrowth of more than a decade of Packard Foundation interest in building organizationally sound nonprofits and in strengthening community foundations. The Foundation’s earlier work identified uneven capacities in many locations to respond to growing leadership and management needs within the nonprofit sector. The CFI-MAP is funded through the Foundation’s Organizational Effectiveness and Philanthropy Program and specifically supports the goal of building the field of nonprofit management.

Though the CFI-MAP is called an “initiative,” it should not be confused with recent efforts in the broader foundation community that typically consist of an elaborately designed template for testing specific hypotheses about certain communities, institutions, and so forth. CFI-MAP is best appreciated as a cluster of grants that share a common theme and offer grantees considerable flexibility so they can tailor what works best for their respective communities. There were two steps to the CFI-MAP design: (1) invite community foundations to conduct a needs assessment that included community input and (2) mount an implementation based on the assessment’s findings.

Ten community foundations in Northern California were invited to submit responses to a request for proposals. Eight foundations elected to respond and are now participating in the CFI-MAP: Community Foundation of Monterey County, Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County, East Bay Community Foundation, Fresno Regional Foundation, Humboldt Area Foundation, Sacramento Regional Foundation, Sonoma County Community Foundation, and Sonoma Area Foundation.

Three of the foundations launched their needs assessments in 1994 with the remaining ones completed in 1995 and 1996. Some participants are as much as two years further along in their implementation than are others. (An overview of each foundation's program can be found starting on page 3 of this report.) CFI-MAP provides up to five years of implementation support; three of the foundations are now in their final year of support. Between 1994 and 2000, the Packard Foundation provided nearly \$2.5M to the CFI-MAP grantees. In the simplest of characterizations, the Foundation's approach has been to trust the grantees to make thoughtful decisions and endeavor to respond smartly to local needs. Over time, its role in the initiative has grown from solely that of a funder to a more active participant, convening community foundation representatives and actively facilitating efforts for them to share learning.

## 1.1 The Evaluation Approach

CFI-MAP is best appreciated as a journey, with some roads familiar to the traveler and others not. The Foundation's funding was exploratory. In that vein, the evaluation is focused on discovering how the various programs are evolving and how they are affecting the various participant groups. It explores the potential roles for community foundations for offering or strengthening the delivery of management assistance. The overarching questions guiding the evaluation are: What activities are underway? How are various parties (e.g., the community foundations, the participating organizations, the trainers) affected? What challenges are encountered? And are there particularly promising practices? And are the community foundations undertaking activities to sustain CFI-MAP benefits? Lastly, during the past year, the staff hired to administer the various CFI-MAP programs have been participating in a strategic effort to support their knowledge and skill development, referred to as a learning community. The evaluation inquires into this experience as well, how it is evolving and what it means to the participants.

Between October 2000 and March 2001, the evaluator visited the eight community foundations, interviewing nearly 80 people. Interviewees

included board members of the community foundations, the chief executive of each foundation, each program's lead staff person, technical assistance providers, and representatives from participating nonprofit organizations. The purpose of these site visits and interviews was to obtain a thorough understanding of how each community foundation's program was evolving, whether the effects reported in the first evaluation were sustained, and what new developments were emerging. The first evaluation's findings are summarized in the beginning of the findings chapter of this report.

Whereas the evaluation's first phase was designed to "get the evaluator smart and sensitized" to each foundation's work and to their needs, the purpose of the second phase was to drill deeper into the initial set of findings, identify program refinements, and to determine how the foundations were readying themselves for the imminent sunset of the Foundation's CFI-MAP support. In all cases, a summary of impressions was provided at the end of the site visit. Typically, this took place with the chief executive and the program director. In several cases, because of scheduling conflicts, the debriefing was solely with the program director.

The considerable diversity of the participant foundations and the communities they serve, and the substantial differences in how programs are structured, present certain challenges for generalizing results. The foundations range from highly rural locations to urban ones. All cover service areas that have a mix of urban and rural features. Also, the foundations vary greatly in their own stages of development.

The structure of the program varies considerably. Some programs are housed within the community foundation and directly administered by community foundation staff, while others are supported by the community foundation but housed and managed by another organizations, such as a volunteer center. Programs housed within the community foundations share some commonalities, and those administered by nonprofit management assistance providers have their shared experiences, too. For example, the impact on the community foundations' visibility is far greater for those who directly administer the CFI-MAP. The programs operated by third-party organizations, however, tend to offer deeper training experiences than the foundations traditionally offer.

## 1.2 Overview of CFI-MAP Programs

As previously noted, there are eight community foundations participating in the CFI-MAP. On average, the CFI-MAP funded programs have been operating for four to five years. They have made a rapid transition from their early research and development of various training and management

assistance strategies, into mature programs with an operating plan, a set of goals, services and products, and well-identified customers. Below is a brief profile of each of the community foundation programs.

- The *Community Foundation for Monterey County* Management Assistance Program (MAP) offers a wide range of well-attended courses from fundraising to personnel law and insurance for non-profits. It also offers reference materials, coaching, and grants for technical assistance. MAP's implementation support began in 1997, and over the past 18 months, it has been redefining its identity from that of a project into what staff refers to as the "nucleus of a learning center." Physical and programmatic steps are being taken to foster that identity. MAP entered into an agreement with Chapman University, which has a campus located in the same complex as the foundation, that allows it to use seven of the university's classrooms and its computer lab. MAP programming, while still providing a wealth of introductory courses, now offers two formal certificate opportunities: a distance-learning program sponsored by the Learning Institute for Nonprofit Programs in partnership with the University of Wisconsin on nonprofit leadership and management and a fundraising program conducted in partnership with Indiana University. Monterey's board confirmed its commitment to continue MAP beyond five-year Packard Foundation support through allocating funds from its general endowment, grants from donor-advised funds, and grants from private foundations.
- The *Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County* Management Assistance Program (MAP) offers a broad spectrum of workshops, information and referral services, operates a library at its office, and has funded the acquisition of the Foundation Center's core database at the Santa Cruz and Watsonville public libraries. In response to demand, both libraries have purchased the Foundation Center's "FC Search," which provides advanced search capacities. Santa Cruz sponsored the first comprehensive survey of nonprofits, which among its many findings affirmed that the "typical organization" in Santa Cruz County has an annual operating budget of \$108,000 and employs a staff of two full-time equivalents. Many of MAP's workshops successfully attract these small organizations. There are three training periods on MAP's annual calendar, each offering 15 to 20 workshops on such topics as board excellence, recruiting board members, "rookie" grantwriting, and budgeting for small nonprofits. In addition to MAP's services, but directly tied to its goals, the foundation's board earmarked \$30,000 from its own unrestricted monies to provide support for small management assistance grants. Santa Cruz reports that it routinely exceeds this figure with its board's support and is increas-



ingly considering management assistance grants above its \$2,000 ceiling. One of Santa Cruz's board-approved strategic priorities is "to be a leader in strengthening the nonprofit sector." Management assistance has long been a foundation priority, and strong commitment has been voiced to sustain the MAP so that it is a fully integrated part of its ongoing functions.

- The *East Bay Community Foundation* is building an infrastructure for management assistance in the East Bay known as the East Bay Management Assistance Partnership Project (East Bay MAPP). The East Bay's initial vision was to develop a regional infrastructure of four nonprofit organizations, referred to as strategic local partners (SLPs), whose charge was to house demographic information about their subregion and to eventually offer a menu of services including needs assessment tools, publications, opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, and referrals. During 2000, the East Bay began reassessing this program. Its original plan called for a "hands-off" role, using a local intermediary to manage MAPP. Its review resulted in East Bay assuming a more direct leadership role, convening agencies in Alameda County and Contra Costa County that share the goal of strengthening nonprofits. A consultant was commissioned to carry out the tasks associated with building relationships in these counties. Among the early outcomes are: (1) Alameda County has engaged East Bay to oversee and coordinate needs assessments of upwards of 60 organizations in the Tri-Valley area and (2) Contra Costa County has asked East Bay to facilitate a collaborative to develop a plan for providing management assistance to area nonprofit organizations.
- The *Fresno Regional Foundation* Nonprofit Advancement Center's (NAC) mission is to provide the "best training opportunities, management concepts, and reference materials to nonprofits in the Central Valley." The NAC offers a diverse training program including courses in governance, strategic planning, collaboration, fundraising, and financial management. Within the Central Valley there are approximately 1,500 nonprofit organizations. NAC sponsors about 35 workshops and fields about 2,400 calls annually. It continues to be a magnet for nascent and smaller organizations, providing them with critical training on governance and management issues that is often unavailable to resource-strapped groups. A recent survey done by independent consultants found that 71 percent of the respondents viewed NAC positively or very positively, with the others mainly reporting being uninformed (25 percent) and only a few negative responses (4 percent). In Spring 1999, NAC launched a certificate program with California State University, Fresno, in nonprofit leadership and management. The foundation's move to a new location took into considera-

tion the growing popularity of NAC's services by providing space for workshops that can accommodate 50 people and a multistation computer area for online library access. NAC now has its own sign on the door signaling its identity. Fresno commissioned an analysis of its progress toward achieving goals and the findings are being applied toward its long-range plan to sustain the NAC.

- The *Humboldt Area Foundation* has greatly expand the services of its Rooney Resource Center, a program of the Humboldt Area Foundation and the North Coast's information clearinghouse and support center for nonprofit organizations. Center services include a resource library, workshops (an average of 60 are included each year), a newsletter, and information and referral. Nearly 600 people attended workshops in the past year, staff field an average of 200 calls a month, and over 1,100 people have visited the Center's three grant libraries located in Humboldt's key population nodes. Similar to the experience of their CFI-MAP colleagues, Humboldt's programming is expanding beyond one-time interventions to more intensive training. A good example is the Cascadia Center for Leadership, a leadership development program that requires a commitment to attend five two-day sessions over a five month period.

At the start of CFI-MAP, Humboldt did not offer management assistance grants. It now sets aside \$35,000 for nonprofits that want to address specific governance and management assistance needs, such as increasing board member involvement. This past year, 55 organizations received assistance with grants ranging from \$250 to \$1,000. Center staff engages in extensive networking to strengthen the local nonprofit community. For example, staff provides facilitation and administrative assistance to the Northern California Association of Nonprofits, a local trade association. Humboldt staff has voiced enthusiasm about sustaining the benefits of the CFI-MAP program.

- The *Sacramento Regional Foundation* partners with the Nonprofit Resource Center to provide a unique 10-month customized training program for chief executives of Sacramento area nonprofit organizations. The program, "Nonprofit Leadership: Raising the Standard," offers over 60 hours of hands-on training, mentoring, and on-site management assistance designed to produce specific products (e.g., a marketing plan). Despite often-heard protestations from nonprofit chief executives about how their busy schedules prevent participation in such time-consuming programs, each year the enrollment target (15 executives) has been met and attendance was excellent. Forty-five executive directors have already completed the program.

In addition to reports of sharpened skills, participants found themselves developing new support systems and even fostering new collaborations. Notably, alumni are now volunteering to participate in the mentoring component of the program.

- The *Sonoma County Community Foundation* works in partnership with the Resource Center for Nonprofits (RCN) of the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County to provide an in-depth training program for board members. Board members, similar to chief executives, have limited availability and are often reluctant to commit the time needed for training. Despite this hurdle, the RCN mounted a program that has stiff requirements. For example: (1) 80 percent of a board must be present or the session will be cancelled and (2) board members must be present for the full workshop, which lasts seven hours. The training is part of a comprehensive package of services that includes a needs assessment, follow-up “check-ups” with the trainers, and management assistance. Over 75 organizations have completed the board training, roughly 10 percent of the nonprofits in Sonoma County. The program enjoys consistent enrollment, despite an increase in its fee. There’s even an emerging group among prior graduates who have applied to participate again, concluding that with changes in board members it is essential to plan for ongoing training. To guide programming for the future, the RCN has commissioned a comprehensive evaluation of its program and is also undertaking a needs assessment. The foundation believes that the goal of building the area’s nonprofit organizational effectiveness would best be achieved by support for the work of an independent institution as exemplified by the Volunteer Center and the RCN program.
- The *Sonora Area Foundation* Nonprofit Support Center (NSC) offers workshops, information and referral, a Foundation Center library, and a newsletter. Workshops are offered on board development, marketing, fundraising, and grantwriting, among other subjects. NSC grew quickly into a focal point for training services in this somewhat isolated area, attracting people from the outer reaches of Sonora, Calaveras, and Tuolumne Counties. Its work has helped surface a cadre of local consultants that had previously spent their time driving hours or flying elsewhere for their clientele. From November 1997 to December 2000, the NSC has sponsored 74 programs involving 1,339 participants from 5 counties. Despite the challenges of being located in a mountainous area, nearly 40 people per month visit its library, which is located at the foundation. During this past year, two retired corporate executives have been assisting with the creation of a database of volunteers. Now in its last year of Packard Foundation

support, Sonora embarked on a comprehensive planning process to spin-off the NSC into an independent full-service management assistance center.

The following sections of the report discuss the findings of the impacts of the CFI-MAP, share the experiences of the learning community formed by the CFI-MAP program directors, and provide a set of recommendations for the participating foundations' consideration.

**“ I was told ‘you ought to charge more for that class’ . . . it was exciting for them to be with other board members and learn they have similar problems.”**

## 2 | Findings

The introduction explains that CFI-MAP was not designed as an initiative with an explicitly articulated hypothesis and set of strategies for implementation. Rather, its development has been organic, from the selection of eight foundations serving diverse regions that range from rural to urban and from coastal to mountainous, to those foundations’ decisions to directly operate the program or to coordinate it with an existing management service organization.

CFI-MAP timing has been propitious, giving the foundations’ opportunities to grow their knowledge of their area’s nonprofit community. The first evaluation report explained that CFI-MAP was playing a critical role in raising the foundations’ visibility and their credibility, increasing their knowledge of local nonprofit organizations, and sparking recognition of the need for better outreach to previously uninvolved parts of their service areas. Impressively, too, despite the fact that CFI-MAP reduces the usual distance between grantmakers and the nonprofit community, the evaluation found that the potential for “ethical violations” and inhibiting participants from being candid had not been realized.

The first report also explained that the scope of the management assistance programs included workshops, information and referral, and the provision of Foundation Center library facilities. Vitaly important, four community foundations complemented CFI-MAP by establishing or supplementing their own funding for management assistance grants. These grants give nonprofit organizations the opportunity to purchase consulting expertise. The report also pointed out that such seemingly static services as the provision of a library resulted in a multitude of unexpected, yet fortunate, impacts. For the foundations that sited the CFI-MAP program in their own facility, it meant becoming the destination point for many visitors that had no prior contact with them. This contact allows opportunities to provide information and referrals, and to market upcoming training. Finally, for the nonprofit participants, the first report notes that CFI-MAP programs provided greatly increased

access to training and to management assistance consultants and that CFI-MAP fostered a safe climate to discuss organizational matters.

The 1999 report concluded with a set of challenges and opportunities. Among the key ones were (1) determining how to address organizational and training needs that range from the simple to the complex; (2) developing strategies to better serve outlying areas; (3) deepening the competencies and expanding the size of their local consultants' community, particularly of bilingual consultants; and (4) addressing the isolation being experienced by CFI-MAP program directors. The biggest CFI-MAP challenge for the foundations was for them to chart their future course of action and sustain employee morale, knowing that Packard Foundation support would be ending.

This second report builds on prior findings. It does not attempt to reintroduce all of them and hold them up for reassessment. Rather, it focuses on the most salient and discusses the status of activities. And it describes interesting new developments. In its first few years, for many of the foundations, CFI-MAP was a laboratory for developing, testing, and refining approaches to capacity-building. In this maturing phase, the activity of invention was replaced with building reliable and efficient product delivery systems. It is a phase of greater confidence in the product, but also a nervous one regarding the future of the product.

The following findings are organized in three areas. They are (1) the impacts on the community foundations, (2) the management assistance programs, and (3) the usefulness of the training for participants.

## 2.1 Impacts on the Community Foundations

**The management assistance programs of the participating community foundations continue to play a vital role in raising foundation visibility and credibility. The foundations' boards and staff credit the CFI-MAP program with increasing the number and quality of grant applications, raising recognition of the need for having funds dedicated to quickly respond to management assistance needs, and improving how their foundations are viewed by the nonprofit community.**

Initially reported in the first phase of this evaluation, the CFI-MAP continues to be a valuable resource for increasing community foundation visibility and furthering credibility. This is particularly evident in those foundations that directly administer the CFI-MAP program. The programs cause what several referred to as "buzz," i.e., they cultivate curiosity and a sense of excitement. The buzz results from abundant publicity through the use of mailings, radio, and television and is reinforced by the provision of customer-sensitive services.

The CFI-MAP program offerings include workshops, management assistance, and online library resources as well as print information. Among the most popular offerings is “information and referral,” i.e., program directors answer diverse inquiries from board and staff of their area’s nonprofit organizations and occasionally from government and donors, too. Humboldt, Fresno, and Monterey each report receiving upward of 200 inquiries a month from local organizations asking, for example, for help identifying prospective management assistance consultants, locating information resources (on legal matters for example) or for peer support and coaching on difficult organizational issues.

In a sense, CFI-MAP is evolving into an ideal marketing vehicle. It raises the visibility of community foundations, creates opportunities for them to develop new relationships, deepens existing ones, increases customer awareness and sophistication and, because of the quality of the product(s), is engendering respect.

- Sonora can identify at least five new donors whose interest in planned giving was stimulated by their contact with the Nonprofit Support Center. The CFI-MAP-sponsored center covers Tuolumne, Calaveras, Mariposa, Amador, and the western Alpine Counties. Staff report that contacts fostered in the outlying counties led to starting a new community foundation (affinity fund) in Calaveras County. Donors also came forward to establish funds for the Sierra Nevada Logging Museum and to support For Love of Children, which fills a funding gap for uninsured children’s health costs. Sonora, seeing both need and opportunity, changed its bylaws from limiting the foundation to exclusively serving Tuolumne to allow it to also serve the Central Sierra Region.
- Three foundations that did not have especially high visibility in their communities prior to CFI-MAP (Fresno, Santa Cruz, and Sonora), attribute the CFI-MAP program with increasing the number of grant applications. In Sonora’s case it was one of several factors that led to the foundation changing its application to more directly elicit information about organizational capacity as well as potential program impacts.
- The CFI-MAP program has also raised recognition of the need for management assistance funding to support specific interventions such as strategic planning, information systems development, and executive director transition. Such requests are a logical outgrowth of workshops and other training. Santa Cruz and East Bay report changes in their grant review process to expedite funding for management assistance needs. Others describe a renewed appreciation of the need for this type of support and the importance of making the process simple

and maximally responsive. Monterey asks that applicants submit a brief letter for technical assistance grants; there is no form. The CFI-MAP program director is responsible for reviewing the letter, doing further follow-up if necessary, and making the recommendation to the board.

**2.1.1 The programs are expanding the foundations' reach to previously underserved nonprofit organizations, populations, and geographic areas. The programs are particularly successful in drawing out nascent and small organizations that do not have the resources for training or technical assistance.**

One of the challenges cited in the initial report was the geographic size of the service areas covered by the community foundations. Sonora is in a mountainous region nested near Yosemite. Negotiating through Fresno, Sacramento, and Monterey's areas could easily require three hours from end-to-end. Humboldt, Sonoma, the East Bay, and Santa Cruz all have similar challenges. Short distances in Humboldt and Sonoma seem longer because of the hilly topography and country roads, factors that contribute to heighten feelings of isolation within these areas. Often it is in the more outlying areas that the organizations are nascent, resources (financial and technical) scarce, and the populations are poorest and in greatest need of the types of services that nonprofits provide. These areas, particularly the agricultural ones, are magnets for new immigrants. Few localities have many viable organizations that support or serve immigrants, and lack of experience with the nonprofit arena and poor English-speaking capability leave many people at a notable disadvantage.

The Monterey program director is bilingual and has made a concerted effort to address the needs of the area's monolingual Spanish-speaking population. She does board training, has been involved with the translation of training documents, and is actively working on building a bilingual practitioner community. Santa Cruz has offered workshops in Spanish, and some of their workshop advertising is also in Spanish.

- Some foundations have opened offices in satellite locations, intentionally placed library resources in underserved areas, and sponsored training in cities far from their home base. For example, Monterey opened an office in Salinas. Humboldt has placed library resources in Garberville and Crescent City. Santa Cruz established library facilities in the Santa Cruz and Watsonville public libraries. Program directors help with marketing the library and their CFI-MAP program by offering workshops at these locations. Fresno and Sonoma combined forces to jointly offer a National Center for Nonprofit Boards consultant training program in Modesto. And, as a result of Sacramento's strong marketing, nearly half of the enrollees this year come from the edges of their service area, including Yolo and El Dorado Counties.



- The East Bay has continued its commitment to reach underserved areas of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties as well as the Tri-Valley. Though all seem within reasonable proximity of San Francisco, which is relatively richly endowed with management assistance resources, growing traffic has lengthened the drive to San Francisco from these places to over two hours. Several East Bay program participants underscored that in addition to the travails of travel, their local context is quite different from San Francisco's, noting that their organizations tend to be smaller and newer and that they perceive themselves to be far less experienced than their counterparts. For them the value added from convenience and context-sensitivity means the difference between people choosing to take advantage of training opportunities and their not doing so.

**2.1.2 The community foundations' CFI-MAP work is broadening their roles. It is helping them to become information hubs for local nonprofit organizations on management assistance, build understandings and expectations about organizational capacity and skill development, and better serve as a bridge between the needs of nonprofits and the providers of management assistance.**

The eight participating foundations are best characterized as small- to mid-sized. Only one has assets that exceed \$100 million, four have assets below \$20 million. Since CFI-MAP's inception, the assets of nearly every one of the eight participant foundations doubled. Humboldt's grew 400 percent, Sonoma over 300 percent, and the East Bay's grew about 120 percent. The assets, however, remain modest, with East Bay the largest at \$110 million followed by Sonoma at \$85 million. Fresno and Sonora are the smallest, with assets of \$12.4 million, and \$7.9 respectively. The foundations' unrestricted funds also doubled, with most now hovering around \$500,000. In other words, while growth has been stellar, the total levels of truly flexible money remain modest.

Several foundation executives describe the period immediately preceding CFI-MAP as one of relatively low visibility and limited interaction with their local nonprofit community. Energy was channeled toward the management of existing donor-advised funds and efforts to promote asset development. During the CFI-MAP years, these foundations have undergone remarkable change. The ability to achieve the goals of CFI-MAP was enhanced by the heated economy and by several other foundations launching complementary programs; yet CFI-MAP has clearly played a vital role changing how each of the community foundations responds to nonprofit management assistance needs.

In addition to the Packard Foundation, other foundations, such as the California Endowment and the James Irvine Foundation, initiated special grant programs for community foundations that nicely complement CFI-MAP. Worth noting, too, CFI-MAP began at a time when three of the community foundations had just hired directors who were explicitly charged with revitalizing their organizations. Together, these factors contributed to a transformation, evident not only in traditional measures such as asset growth, but directly manifested in the core of their mission, i.e., growing a healthy nonprofit sector.

To successfully operate CFI-MAP, each participating foundation had to assess the needs of their nonprofit sector, design quality products, and smartly market them. Humboldt and Santa Cruz commissioned further studies of the nonprofit sector helping them get a clearer sense of its scope and nuances. The provision of library facilities and the rollout of workshops led to more telephone calls, e-mails, visits to the foundations, and applications for support. Staff's unrelenting networking is resulting in the creation of a multitude of advisory committees and roundtables for local nonprofit executive directors and other staff. New partnerships with universities both expand networks and have set the stage for deeper and more systemic change. Staff of four foundations report they have developed databases of consultants, making it far more efficient for organizations to find the type of help they seek.

Formerly, many of these foundations' relationships with their communities were remote and reactive. Three aggressively sought out more conveniently located and larger spaces to accommodate training sessions. Fresno, once in a small downtown office, intentionally chose its new office location because of its easy access by car, good parking, and spacious room for training programs. As noted earlier, Monterey has forged an alliance with Chapman University to have access to its classrooms and opened an office in Salinas. East Bay will be moving to a new office and part of its strategy is to be co-located with one of its SLO organizations, the East Bay Resource Center.

CFI-MA is only one of several factors inducing these changes, but it is assuredly among the most significant. Fresno has done an analysis of its requests for funding and learned that in 1996, before CFI-MAP, it had 87 applications for support; in 1999, it had 161 and most of the new ones were from applicants who had direct contact with its Nonprofit Advancement Center. The foundations have grown into information hubs. When faced with questions about good candidates to meet a management need, how to ascertain board insurance coverage needs, learn about bylaws and matters such as conflict of interest, or how to diversify their revenue base, nonprofit leaders increasingly call the management assistance staff at the foundation for guidance. This is evidence of their recognition of the importance of

heeding organizational needs, comfort calling the foundation, and their growing expectations they will receive assistance. As one participant stated, “I have the foundation on speed dial . . . their program director is one of the most valuable resources in the county.”

**2.1.3 New collaborations have emerged between the community foundations and universities, government, and each other. This is playing an important role broadening relationships and promises to make management assistance for nonprofits more systemic within the foundations’ communities.**

During the first couple of years of CFI–MAP’s development, the program directors were mostly consumed with internal matters, e.g., program design, product development, and launching their programs. Now, new relationships are being crafted with local universities, ranging from Monterey’s use of Chapman University’s classrooms, to the certificate program Fresno developed with the local campus of California State University. Sonora has offered a mediation program that is eligible for continuing education units through an affiliation with Chapman University. Early discussions are underway in Monterey that might lead to the development of an undergraduate program in nonprofit management. Highlights of these affiliations are provided in this report’s discussion of the impacts of the management assistance programs (see section 2.2).

Several of the community foundations have also cultivated relationships with local government. Notable examples include:

- East Bay has developed a partnership with Alameda County and is in promising conversations with Contra Costa County to strengthen their nonprofit organizations. Counties routinely look to nonprofit organizations to deliver services but have been disappointed with the performance of a number of these groups. Alameda, as part of its welfare-to-work program, established a “partnership grant program” that provides support for needs assessments and management assistance. East Bay was awarded a \$100,000 contract to oversee assessments of 60 agencies in the Tri-Valley area. Contra Costa’s approach has been to work with East Bay and its SLPs, along with the United Way and Los Medanos College, in the formation of a collaborative that will develop a plan for management assistance. East Bay has received a \$50,000 contract to assist the collaborative.
- Santa Cruz, using its CFI–MAP course design capacities, knowledge of proposal writing needs, and marketing skills developed a special training series to assist Santa Cruz County with the implementation of California’s Proposition 10 (cigarette tax). This proposition is generating millions of dollars annually to provide support for education,

health, and child care programs that promote early childhood development. Santa Cruz began offering workshops in January 2001 to provide nonprofits with information to help complete applications for Proposition 10 funding. These free workshops explain the application form and teach attendees how to prepare proposals with clear outcome objectives, a requirement of the application. Santa Cruz's plans called for all sessions to have Spanish translation available and one exclusively in Spanish.

Other collaborations, particularly those between the participating foundations, are defined by their geographic proximity. The motivation for collaboration ranges from sharing potential cost-savings to a common interest in increasing the number of consultants in the region.

- Santa Cruz MAP and Monterey MAP collaborate on several fronts, including organizing a grantmakers event for area nonprofits in both counties to learn about how funders make decisions. They have also cosponsored conferences on nonprofits and the law, alternating locations between the two counties. This past year they cosponsored a full-day media symposium that was convened in Watsonville, a midpoint between the two counties. These two foundations also collaborate by bringing trainers from outside the area and sharing the costs. For example, the trainer may offer a session in Santa Cruz one day and another in Monterey the following day. Other ideas are being explored including publishing a joint catalog.
- Sonora and Fresno joined forces to coordinate a National Center for Nonprofit Boards (NCNB) training program to both deepen the knowledge base and broaden the pool of consultants in their respective communities. They arranged for a three-day session, the first day of which was for people who had never participated in an NCNB consultants training program, with the next two days dedicated to advanced training. NCNB was able to deeply discount the cost of the program with funds it receives from the James Irvine Foundation. Fifteen people completed the program, which was conveniently held in Modesto, a midpoint for Sonora and Fresno. Both Sonora and Fresno have called upon Sacramento and Sonoma for insight into board development and executive director training.

**2.1.4 Board members of the participating foundations continue to show increasing appreciation of the need for management assistance and roles a community foundation can play to address that need.**

The phase one evaluation reported that CFI-MAP was a factor in increasing the participating community foundation board members' understanding of the organizational needs of nonprofits. The primary work experience of

many board members is in the for-profit sector and, though civic-minded, they are not especially familiar with the breadth, depth, and operational complexities of the nonprofit sector. With unrestricted monies being relatively modest and grantmaking recommendations sometimes deferred to a distribution committee, board agendas typically do not have much time dedicated to subjects that would lend themselves to discussing capacity-building.

At a majority of the foundations, particularly those that administer the CFI-MAP program internally, board members report more of their conversation is directed to capacity-building and related facets of organizational effectiveness. A board member stated, “As a result of the program, I have learned how to better read applications, have gone on site visits, and know I am asking better questions.” The program directors are often present at board meetings to supply information on the status of CFI-MAP activities, and they are looked to for insight into how to best assist applicant organizations. Whereas past grant applications might have been wholly or largely focused on programmatic matters, reportedly applications now show an interest in such capacity-building areas as board development, strategic planning, executive director training needs, and conflict management. Several board members explained that though they are occasionally anxious about their ability to measure the impact of this kind of support, they are increasingly appreciative of the need for it.

In an interesting convergence of circumstances, a majority of the foundations have done strategic plans during the past couple of years. Some of the interviewees volunteered that the freshness of this experience seemed to further sensitize board members to the kinds of issues nonprofits face, including the importance of strategic planning, the need for top-notch consulting assistance, and the costs (financial and time) to complete a strategic plan. In at least three cases, the program directors were sought out for assistance on how to do strategic planning and CFI-MAP-sponsored libraries became the source of reading materials.

- Notably, in the course of its strategic planning, the board members of the Community Foundation of Monterey County added new language to its mission and vision statement that it “will also serve as a catalyst for increased charitable giving for the benefit of not-for-profit organizations in Monterey County, and provide management assistance to strengthen the governance and administration of local charitable agencies.”
- Humboldt and the East Bay community foundations have long histories of board support for capacity-building, and Monterey and Santa Cruz each have a program predating CFI-MAP that sets aside funds for technical assistance. Sonoma and Sacramento have stand-alone

institutions dedicated to meeting nonprofit management assistance needs. Of the eight grantees, Fresno and Sonora had the least experience with management assistance. Sonora recently retained one of the consultants who had done several highly-regarded workshops for its Nonprofit Support Center and commissioned an analysis of the foundation's grantmaking. The findings ascertained that the impacts were hard to measure and probably quite modest because the grants were very small, spread about, and were largely derived from reacting to applications rather than from a strategy. This information, plus deliberations conducted during its recent strategic planning, led to the board approving new guidelines that will result in fewer but larger grants and more attention to organizational needs and potential impact.

**2.1.5 The community foundations have voiced strong support for the purpose of CFI-MAP and their desire to sustain the program. Despite this avowal, specific actions to plan for the future have been mixed. This is eroding the morale of program directors.**

Similar to many community foundation programs, the funding for the CFI-MAP is limited to a particular period of time. The foundations initially received funding for a planning phase, which was followed by up-to-five years of implementation support. All of the foundations were encouraged, if they concluded that the program's benefits were sufficiently important, to begin planning early for sustaining the program. Packard Foundation staff conveyed consistent messages that the Foundation was developing new grantmaking guidelines for the Organizational Effectiveness and Philanthropy Program. In November 2000, CFI-MAP participants were invited to a meeting to discuss the new goals and guidelines that were under development for the philanthropy program. During this meeting, Foundation staff reiterated that CFI-MAP would be ending.

All of the foundations that directly operate the CFI-MAP have enthusiastically stated their desire and intent to sustain their programs. The two that use external organizations also underscore that vital needs are being filled in their communities by the CFI-MAP sponsored programs. These two, Sonoma and Sacramento, are less involved in the ongoing operation of the management assistance programs. While supportive of the third-party organizations that are charged with implementing the CFI-MAP, to date, these community foundations have deferred to the implementing organizations themselves to develop their action plan regarding sustaining CFI-MAP.

Only one foundation, Sonora, has a detailed written plan of action for how it plans to pursue continued support. To some degree, the task of developing a sustainability plan has fallen to the program directors. The chief exec-

utives typically express confidence that they can raise the money. Thus far, evidence of follow-through ranges from little to modest. In some cases, in addition to developing the plan, the program director is assuming the responsibility for fundraising. For program directors the message they are receiving is conflicting: on the one hand, they enjoy enthusiastic verbal support for their contributions; on the other hand, seeking continued financial support for management assistance does not appear to be a high priority.

Three of the foundations (Humboldt, Sonoma, and Sonora) are in their final year of funding. Support for the other four is due to sunset in 2002. The Fresno and Sonoma community foundations, and Sonoma's Resource Center for Nonprofits, have all launched sustainability planning efforts that have several notable features, including making an investment in hiring a consultant(s) to review program progress, assess needs, and provide written recommendations for action. At both Fresno and Sonoma, while the projects have been coordinated by the program directors, the overall effort has had the attention of the foundations' boards and chief executives. Monterey has a vision for its future and proposals for funding are already being generated, though there is not a formal planning document.

Fresno commissioned an evaluation to examine perceptions of its Nonprofit Advancement Center (NAC) and usage patterns, elicit suggestions for improving and expanding services, gather reactions to a proposed "nonprofit incubator," and generate priorities. Nearly 30 interviews were conducted, producing robust findings for Fresno's future planning. Each one of the nine critical areas identified in Fresno's 1994 *Blueprint for Action* was placed under a magnifying lens. The review found that the library was particularly well appreciated, the workshops helpful, and staff are seen as dedicated and supportive. However, NAC was not especially well known and that the needs of older and larger nonprofit organizations were not sufficiently addressed. The assessment also explored community reactions to the idea of Fresno creating an incubator for nonprofits (the prevailing view was that there were already a lot of nonprofit organizations). This analysis produced a rich set of recommendations that promise to give Fresno excellent direction for its management assistance program.

The Sonoma County Community Foundation has voiced a preference to have the program continue to run independent of the foundation. As previously described, Sonoma's program is housed at the Resource Center for Nonprofits of the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County. It feels strongly that its signature product, Board Excellence Training, is high quality and that there is ongoing demand that needs to be serviced. The Resource Center's staff developed a three-part strategy to sustain the CFI-MAP program. It consists of identifying prospective donors and fee-generating opportunities, conducting an evaluation, and doing a needs assessment. The

strategy is one of cultivating contacts, building a case for the program, and reassessing the landscape. The evaluation design is comprehensive. The Resource Center sought someone with established credentials, hoping that the combination of independence, thoroughness, and credibility would be a winning one for prospective donors. The foundation stays informed of both the process and the progress of the Center's planning activities.

The chief executives of the East Bay, Humboldt, and Santa Cruz community foundations are among the most vocal and enthusiastic supporters of the CFI-MAP. Examples of actions taken include transitioning program directors into full-time program officers and raising additional funds for technical assistance. Their plans regarding sustainability have not yet taken explicit form, for example, with strategies specified, target funding levels articulated, or prospective donors and approaches identified.

For the program directors, this has been a challenging period. They still have their daily program responsibilities but also, increasingly, the task of sustainability planning. Knowing that the enthusiasm for the program is genuine and reaching the highest levels within the foundations is comforting, but uneven follow-through threatens to diminish their spirit. Given

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**Sustainability  
Planning  
in Action**

Sonora's board made a recommendation to spin-off its management assistance program into a new, freestanding nonprofit organization, newly named the Sierra Nonprofit Resource Center. Board members concluded that they did not want the foundation, which is small, directly responsible for running programs. But they wanted to assure that there would be an institutional means to address ongoing capacity-building needs. A special planning committee was formed over a year before Packard Foundation funding is due to sunset with the goal of developing the strategy for sustaining Sonora's CFI-MAP-sponsored efforts. Members of the committee included two of Sonora's board members plus representatives from area nonprofit organizations. The foundation further demonstrated its commitment to the planning by paying for a consultant to write the business plan, drawing on extensive input from the committee. The Packard Foundation approved \$10,000 for the planning effort to match Sonora's commitment.

In October 2000 Sonora's board approved the plan and has agreed to provide operating support to the new organization. The sum under discussion would make it the foundation's single largest commitment of operating support. Legal papers are presently being assembled to apply for nonprofit status.



that the quality and stability of the program directors has been central to CFI-MAP's success, this situation is worrisome.

## 2.2 The Management Assistance Programs

- 2.2.1 The CFI-MAP programs maintained much of the formula that was reported in the evaluation of the first phase. One area of further exploration is how to provide for more intensive learning opportunities.** The CFI-MAP programs that are directed by the community foundations developed a winning formula that was detailed in the first report. The central components are a resource library, workshops, and information and referral services. Several of the foundations, as reported earlier, used existing management assistance grant programs to support the CFI-MAP, or in the case of Humboldt, create a new grants program. Additional value has been added by energetic program directors who, in varying ways, use CFI-MAP as a tool to foster networking, for example, through establishing executive director roundtables and by facilitating and providing administrative support to local area nonprofit coalitions. Many have used workshops as an opportunity to foster partnerships with universities, local government, and occasionally with businesses. Both Monterey and Fresno have looked to develop strong institutional alliances with local universities.

The vast majority of the nonprofits in these foundations' service areas tend to be small and poorly resourced. The few larger ones are reportedly social service providers that are principally funded by government agencies. The CFI-MAP program formula has been particularly successful in drawing participants from smaller and less managerially sophisticated organizations. For them, the free or nominally priced programs are a godsend. One attendee who completed Monterey's fundraising program explained that had he not received a scholarship, his organization would not have had the resources for him to participate. The potential to obtain a technical assistance grant, to conduct a strategic planning process—perhaps for the first time—adds even greater value.

The foundation-directed programs, however, have reportedly been less effective meeting the needs of larger nonprofits or more experienced staff. It has been the widely held viewpoint among these foundations' program directors that one-time training is simply not sufficient for deepening skills and promoting real change. The experience for Sonoma and Sacramento is different because the express purpose of their CFI-MAP programs has been to offer intensive advanced and hopefully transformative training. (However, both Sonoma and Sacramento, through their Volunteer Center and Nonprofit Resource Center, respectively, offer one-time programs suited for smaller organizations and others who cannot commit the time or

resources for deeper training.)

- *Advanced Training/Certification Programs.* Fresno, Humboldt, Monterey, and Sonora inaugurated programs that share an emphasis on deeper skill development than program directors feel can be achieved in their core offerings of one-time and relatively short (e.g., two-hour or half-day) workshops. Several of the programs provide recognition of achievement by awarding a university-type certificate or by granting continuing education units. These foundations would describe their efforts as works-in-progress, with each endeavoring to get the formula right so that it is responsive to local needs.

Humboldt launched the Cascadia Center for Leadership, a program to develop leadership skills with an express focus on collaborative leadership. The design of this program involved several foundation staff plus a number of local consultants who worked together for nearly six months. They devised a model that focuses on self-awareness and the progressive steps of change, i.e., starting from personal, to organizational, and then to community level. It is five sessions, each of which is two days long (the first is overnight).

Given its emphasis on collaboration, the program was marketed to organizations that would send groups and to some of the area's collaboratives such as its Workforce Investment Board. Pricing was tiered, starting with \$1,000 for the first person, but discounted for groups. Four members of Humboldt's staff registered for the program to build their own team and leadership capacities. The first session had 35 participants, about three-quarters of whom were part of groups; Individuals comprised the remaining quarter. Humboldt reports that the feedback was generally good but that it was difficult to satisfactorily meet the differing needs of groups and individuals. Also, based on experiences with the CFI-MAP learning community, Humboldt staff wanted the sessions to be more participatory, less pedagogical, and provide more time for reflection. In the second session, one of the fundamental aspects of the program—its focus on groups and building their collaborative functioning—was changed to accommodate the interests of individuals. Cascadia has its rough edges, but it has clearly tapped a market and has had generally good feedback. Cascadia's designers are humbled, however, about the program's most ambitious goal of participants successfully applying newly-gained skills into their work environments.

Fresno has also introduced an advanced training initiative. Fresno's CFI-MAP director researched a number of certificate programs and tailored one for its area, which has many smaller organizations with limited resources and modestly experienced board and staff. Fresno

launched a certificate program with California State University at Fresno consisting of eight core courses, including the history of non-profits, governance, marketing and public relations, human resource management, financial management, and ethical and legal issues. The program takes about nine months to complete. Fresno identifies and provides the trainers and gathers the material for the courses. The university prints the materials and they jointly do the marketing. The university receives 25 percent of the revenues and Fresno 75 percent. Similar to Monterey and Humboldt, Fresno aggressively sought feedback and is in the midst of making a number of changes. Among the challenges they are experiencing: (1) classes have been open to students both seeking certificates and those who are not, so there is little group identity; (2) there's a mix of highly seasoned people and ones with far less experience, resulting in the seasoned people becoming teachers when their goal was to meet even more seasoned people; (3) and the facilities at the university have not always been ideally suited for the training, leaving some participants feeling like they are second-class citizens.

- *Customized Management Assistance.* The demand for management assistance support continues to outstrip the resources of the foundations. These requests are often for strategic planning and board development but occasionally are for interventions to resolve conflicts or for an executive director's transition.

The foundations consistently report receiving more requests than they can handle. In the course of CFI-MAP, two of the foundations have established programs expressly to provide management assistance grants. Three of the foundations previously had designated funds to support technical assistance needs and have received board support to increase the level of the set aside. Humboldt reports that its budget for management assistance grants has grown from zero to \$35,000; Sonoma's support grew from zero to \$50,000; and Monterey has doubled its support in the course of CFI-MAP from \$12,000 to \$24,000. Santa Cruz has long set aside \$30,000, but its annual totals have been exceeding that level reaching as high as \$37,000. East Bay is in the midst of reorganizing and anticipates establishing a designated pool of about \$100,000. These foundations have made a concerted and seemingly successful effort to make the application process easy and to make award decisions speedily so that needs are met in a timely manner.

Several of the training programs are designed to include management assistance as an integral component. For example, Sonoma's Board Excellence Training (BET) provides for four hours of consulting assistance in addition to the training sessions. At the conclusion of the one-day board retreat, the participants develop a priority action list. The

consultant follows up, serving as a “conscience,” both encouraging and giving the board the tools to formally complete the BET program. Similarly, the Sacramento executive director training program includes up to six hours of management assistance. Though in both cases it is left to the organization to pursue the assistance, directors report that most have taken advantage of the opportunity. In fact, one byproduct for several consultants has been an increase in requests for their services beyond the scope of the training program.

- *Information and Referral/Coaching.* The initial set of interviews found that program directors felt that one of their most important and least recognized functions is information and referral. Directors from three of the foundations report that they receive upwards of 200 calls a month. These calls include inquiries about the training courses, requests for help identifying prospective consultants, and needs information on legal matters such as how to incorporate or whether board meetings must be open to the public. Increasingly, program directors are being called upon for help with organizational problem solving, taking their interaction a step beyond basic information and referral to “lite” coaching.

Nonprofit staff, particularly executive directors, spoke about how important it was to them to have someone they could trust with even the most sensitive types of information, such as personality conflicts with board members and matters dealing with personnel. Program directors have done a good job of bounding their involvement to helping people better define the issues. If needed, the directors will provide a list of prospective consultants who might best work with the organization. Occasionally these contacts will lead to applications being submitted for management assistance grants.

There are many delicate boundaries that need to be negotiated in this relationship but, thus far, none of the staff of the nonprofit organizations interviewed for this evaluation reported that trespasses have transpired. The program directors are notably clear and consistent about how they handle information. Some of the “rules” they use are (1) making it explicit that anyone sharing their organizational difficulties would not be penalized when they are looking for support, (2) agreeing that information will not be shared (e.g., with the foundation staff or board) unless specifically requested by the grantee organization, and (3) treating relationships between consultants and organizations as the property of the organization.

Sacramento’s Nonprofit Leadership: Raising the Standard training program for executive directors has had a mentoring component from the outset. Sacramento had planned, based on expressed interest, to create

mentor relationships between business people and nonprofit executives. During the first couple of years this component of the program did not jell. The director gathered feedback and redesigned the mentoring so that it is perceived as peer coaching. The effort is kept simple and flexible, but clearly key is the director's selection of the right "peer" for the coaching. While several people credited good intuition, key characteristics of peers include excellent listening skills, an interest in learning, trustworthiness, hands-on experience, and maturity. The peers understand that their job are to be good questioners, be nonjudgmental, and to foster reflection. Occasionally they assist with technical matters, but technical proficiency is not the basis for the relationship.

The peers include a senior vice president of Union Bank of California and the executive director of the Community Services Council, one of the area's most prominent nonprofit organizations. Alumni of the training program have also been volunteering to become peers. Some of the key aspects of the peer coaching relationship are: (1) to diminish anxiety the program director is present for the first meeting between the coach and training participant and (2) to ensure shared understandings there is a short formal agreement that makes clear the goals and expectations (i.e., being available for up to two hours a month). Readings on non-profits, philanthropy, and coaching are made available. One of the unexpected byproducts of this relationship is that the banker has introduced a coaching program in its Silicon Valley branch to ensure that they retain highly-skilled computer specialists. This is an example of non-profit management knowledge being transferred to the for-profit sector.

**2.2.1 The CFI-MAP programs are growing the pool of local consultants. The numbers of people, ranges of skills provided, and racial/ethnic diversity remains limited.**

CFI-MAP, through the recruitment and exposure of local trainers and as a result of making available management assistance grants, has helped to surface a cadre of consultants for the nonprofit sector in their own vicinity.

Consultants in Santa Cruz, whose business might have previously been solely in San Francisco, now report local opportunities. Sonoma, which had been fearful that they would face a serious scarcity of trainers, has been stunned to find highly seasoned people, who, like those in Santa Cruz, are thrilled to have local opportunities. Sonoma has had a deep vein of trainers, in part because Sonoma State University has a graduate degree program in organizational development. The Resource Center's training program has successfully attracted Sonoma State graduates, many of whom have grown businesses providing training to corporate clients, to share their training and consulting expertise with nonprofits.

The consultants report significant increases in requests for assistance, many of which result from exposure in training programs. While many had vibrant practices, others have been able to grow them as a result of their CFI-MAP involvement. Consultants report that their involvement has provided important validation for their work. Several of the CFI-MAP program directors have developed databases of local consultants, in essence, doing marketing that the consultants would otherwise have to do.

Two of the problems mentioned in the first report were (1) the need to identify and develop more bilingual consultants and consultants of color and (2) the need to broaden the range of competencies of consultants. Fresno, Monterey, and Santa Cruz have evident and growing needs for Spanish-speaking consultants. But this is also the case for the East Bay, where there are also unmet needs for black and for Asian consultants. Monterey and Santa Cruz have bilingual Spanish/English speaking program directors. These programs have held some classes in Spanish.

The CFI-MAP program directors report that their core community of consultants might number as few as 15 people, with most of the expertise being in strategic planning or in board development. For legal and financial matters, the directors have been able to recruit local lawyers and accountants. But fewer experts are reportedly available in fundraising and in the newer fields of technology planning and information management. Several of the CFI-MAP programs are meeting needs for fundraising training by either conducting an Association of Fundraising Executives training program or by sponsoring people to attend one. Courses on grantwriting tend to be among the most popular, and many nonprofits using the libraries come to take advantage of Foundation Center information. Deeper training on how to establish an organizational infrastructure to promote ongoing development or how to do individual donor development tends to be unavailable.

## 2.3 Usefulness of the Training for Participants

### 2.3.1 **The management assistance programs continue to be well received with participants often specifying gains in knowledge and skills or new networks they have developed.**

Participants credit the CFI-MAP program with increasing their knowledge, sharpening skills, expanding their networks, giving them access to consulting expertise, and elevating their credibility. This report has already underscored its particular importance to small and less sophisticated organizations. For them, it is an oasis for learning. An interviewee who was the only staff person of an organization said, “The training let me pull my head out of the weeds. It was very professional, a high standard, the pool of peo-

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**Advanced Training** In January 1999, Monterey's MAP launched the Certificate Program in Nonprofit  
**Making Long** Leadership and Management, a distance learning program offered by the  
**Distance into** Learning Institute in partnership with the University of Wisconsin. The program  
**Short Distance** consists of eight three-hour sessions that are spread over an eight-month period. It covers the major facets of an executive director's responsibilities, from providing organizational leadership to overseeing financial management to making sure that obligations regarding personnel policies and legal papers are fulfilled. Monterey secured a facility on a local university campus where the live video broadcasts from the University of Wisconsin were received.

Thirty people registered for the program, with their organizations paying fees on a sliding scale of between \$300 and \$400. Fifteen completed the full-course. While the program was given high marks by those who completed it, they cited several frustrations, most dealing with the program's limited flexibility. For example, the timing of the broadcast's video requirements limited how long people could spend doing small group work. Also, participants felt that they did not receive adequate feedback on their assignments. MAP staff moved rapidly to make adjustments so that the program would better fit local requirements. The biggest decision was to eliminate the distance learning aspect by purchasing the program videos and related material. Though the program is now managed by Monterey, students who complete the program will still receive certificates from the University of Wisconsin. Nineteen people enrolled in the second cycle; the third cycle is planned for September 2001 in Salinas, which will be limited to a smaller group so that MAP can provide more support. Monterey received a \$5,000 grant from the Harden Foundation to subsidize training for small nonprofits that register for the certificate program in 2001-2002.

MAP's program director is also working with the local California State University campus to develop a program for nonprofits. This is in the exploratory stages and may evolve into a certificate program (possibly replacing the University of Wisconsin). MAP's long-range goal is to work with the university toward the development of an undergraduate degree program and perhaps a graduate program in the future.

Monterey also worked with Indiana University to customize a fundraising program to meet local needs. Recognizing that it is extremely difficult for people to go to training for five consecutive days, the program director capitalized upon having a well-known local Association of Fundraising Professionals-certified trainer who was willing to do the five eight-hour days over a five-week period. The normal fee for the program is \$800 a person. Monterey partially subsidized the program, bringing the fees down to \$400 to \$500. It also provided a full scholarship for one attendee who is also a participant in its neighborhood leadership program. This individual is an immigrant, former field worker, and founder of a nonprofit organization serving Latino youth. There were 25 registrants and the evaluation was figuratively glowing. Monterey will be offering another module on Developing Leadership for Major Gifts in Spring 2002.

ple at the training were great. The network is helping us get out of provincial thinking, and the planning I learned will help us get beyond the crisis mode.”

Comments from workshop evaluations gathered by CFI–MAP program directors and echoed in interviews for this evaluation with program participants are invariably favorable and often glowing. The attendees are thrilled to have access to learning opportunities nearby, say the “price is right” (programs are often free or have just a nominal charge), and enjoy the chance for exchange with other attendees. Several staff noted that attending programs is giving them added credibility in their interactions with their boards. They describe using handouts from workshop session to add weight to suggestions that they make to their boards.

Interviewees, though not requested, occasionally brought materials gathered during training and pointed to various readings and tools, such as checklists for board practices and effective budgeting, that they had already integrated into their work. One executive director who had attended Monterey’s nonprofit management certificate program brought the task list and timeline that she developed in the course to illustrate one of several tools from the program she was using. Another who had attended the fundraising school said, “I hadn’t had any formal training before I was hired . . . the program taught me what systems needed to be set up internally, and I use the binder from the program as a bible.”

A board member who completed Sonoma’s Board Excellence Training stated that implementing their trainer’s recommendation to use a “consent calendar” is providing for far greater meeting efficiency and is allowing for more time to discuss community needs. Another board member who also attended Sonoma’s program talked about the program getting them “focused.” She further explained that they “did not know the liability aspects . . . had never had board insurance and did not know their financial responsibilities.” The training gave insights on these matters, and the consultants helped make the connections for them to address their specific needs.

Because program directors have made a practice of gathering and quickly addressing feedback, training topics that have been poor draws are reevaluated to determine whether the topic was not relevant or the marketing inadequate. They have been especially attentive to making training opportunities convenient and attractive, offering them at lunchtimes, linking them to networking opportunities, and making adjustments to customize to local needs.



Program directors have also done a good job with recruiting trainers. The participants frequently express appreciation about the trainers' "hands-on experience." The program directors work closely with many of the trainers, helping to ensure programs are well attuned to adult learning styles, for example, emphasizing small group work and high levels of interaction. Participants often point out that one of the major benefits has been the opportunity to network with their peers and even occasionally build collaborations as a result of contacts they have made. Humboldt and Sonora's program directors have been instrumental in creating convening opportunities for executive directors and other staff.

Finally, participants report that while training occasionally reveals weaknesses, it is also affirming. As one interviewee pointedly conveyed, "We found out that we weren't as screwed up as we thought . . . we were taking care of the basics." Executive directors find the training a place where they can openly talk about supervision problems and about difficulties they are having with their boards. Board members learn that problems they are encountering, for example, managing conflict and lack of role clarity, are common ones regardless of the sophistication of the organization. The East Bay's Oakland SLP is especially attractive to staff from nascent and small organizations, who report being particularly comfortable because the training focuses on fundamentals.

An earlier finding explains that many of the attendees work for small and underresourced organizations. They are also often relatively inexperienced. For them, the CFI-MAP has been the only exposure they have had to learning about nonprofit governance and legal responsibilities, grantwriting, launching donor campaigns, marketing, and measuring outcomes. The CFI-MAP programs appear to be less successful at drawing more seasoned executives into training, though Sacramento's executive director program and Monterey and Fresno's certificate programs have attracted more senior people from some of the larger organizations. While more seasoned people often report favorably about the training, they are occasionally frustrated by class composition that includes less experienced people. This has been a continuing conundrum for CFI-MAP program directors. They report thinking about tailoring courses to the size of organizations or more expressly to the varying degrees of experience. Thus far, they have found that it has been more productive to offer graduated levels of training, leaving it to the applicants to sort out what is best for them and view that the benefits of the relationship building outweigh the negatives.

## 2.4 Challenges

The single greatest challenge faced by the community foundations is translating their expressed interests in sustaining their programs into action. This challenge provides the basis for the recommendations offered in the following chapter. Here we will assume that the programs will continue and focus on some of their design and operating challenges.

### 2.4.1 Improving the quality of program evaluation.

The program directors have generally maintained good records of attendance at workshops, usage levels of libraries, and information and referral contacts. They developed short forms to assess satisfaction with workshops. The directors have shown themselves to be good listeners, as evidenced by their program refinements and continued high levels of enrollment and satisfaction. The quality of the evaluation information and analysis of data is quite uneven, however. Forms are not always collected, and when they are, they are not subjected to thorough analysis. Feedback on program elements other than the workshops generally is not systematically gathered.

### 2.4.2 Calculating the costs of programs.

There has been a remarkable entrepreneurial spirit fueling these programs. Despite their entrepreneurial flair, they have mixed track records regarding the ability to soundly determine their program's actual costs. Most of the foundations charge fees, which are typically nominal. Monterey reports that about 35 percent of its program costs are offset by fees; others report between 7 percent to 15 percent. Several acknowledge, however, that their data is imprecise. One of the programs, Sonoma, has retained a business executive to assist them with analyzing their costs.

### 2.4.3 Balancing the mix of programming.

The program directors are continuously improving their program offerings. Over the past couple of years, many endeavored to offer more intensive training opportunities. It is timely for the directors to reflect on the mix they are seeking to achieve. While it might be desirable to make available a wide array of types of training, the foundations should examine how to best do this strategically. This challenge also relates to the relative balance among serving smaller, less sophisticated organizations, mid-range, and mature, complex ones.

### 2.4.4 Increasing the funding levels and flexibility of support for customized management assistance needs.

The foundations' commitment to supporting specific management needs by making available support for technical assistance grants has been admirable.

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**Key Factors Contributing to the CFI-MAP Program's Successes** It is growing increasingly clear, now with the benefit of a second cycle of interviews, that there are several factors that are contributing to the successes reported here. Among the most salient ones are:

**Alignment of Purpose**

There is a close alignment of purpose between the CFI-MAP program and the foundations' own desires to improve the organizational effectiveness of nonprofits in their communities. The foundations volunteered to participate and were not asked by the Packard Foundation to stretch themselves into activities they didn't want to engage in just to accommodate the funder and program's intent. In several cases, it built on existing interests in management assistance, and in others, the foundations were receptive to experimenting with whether or not it was an appropriate role. Monterey's MAP program director is also working with the local California State University campus to develop a program for nonprofits. This is in the exploratory stages and may evolve into a certificate program (possibly replacing the University of Wisconsin). MAP's long-range goal is to work with the university toward the development of an undergraduate degree program, and perhaps a graduate program in the future.

**Motivation and Stability at the Topmost Level**

At the time of the program's start-up, more than half of the foundations had relatively new directors, eager to re-energize their boards and staff. Notably, there has been turnover at the chief executive level in only one foundation. Thus, the eagerness combined with the subsequent stability provided both motivation and consistency in direction.

**Quality and Stability of the Program Staff**

The program is benefiting greatly from a well-selected group of program directors. The directors came from extraordinarily diverse backgrounds, ranging from survey research to advocacy work in nonprofits. Although no one had run a training program, all have proved to be remarkably suited for their jobs, combining excitement about learning, good listening skills, and creativity. They have demonstrated a keen sense of how to handle delicate information, engendering the confidence of the highly diverse and often demanding customer base that they serve.

**Role Modeling Grantmaking and Convening**

The Packard Foundation's approach, which is based on trusting the grantee and providing maximum flexibility within program guidelines, made community foundation staff feel that they could take risks, develop and refine products, and otherwise take charge of determining how to tailor programs to their local environments. The Foundation's willingness to play roles beyond that of the funder, such as convening, also provides for helpful modeling to the community foundations that are increasingly undertaking such functions. And lastly, the Foundation's willingness to come forward and support the program directors own learning demonstrates the power of affirmation and the profound potential of small grants.

These programs are critical for both less “sophisticated” and highly-experienced organizations. The foundations should continue their efforts to simplify access to this support and, where feasible, to grow their levels of funding. Many of the foundations have caps on the amount of support that can be provided and should examine whether the one-size-fits-all approach is the best for addressing needs.

**2.4.5 Clarifying the roles and expectations of CFI-MAP program directors.**

Over the course of the CFI-MAP, the program director positions evolved from half time to full time. Some have had their responsibilities expand from solely managing the CFI-MAP program to also overseeing their respective foundation’s management assistance grants. And some have been given additional responsibilities for coordinating special projects. In a couple of cases, the program director has become a program officer, with a percentage of work time dedicated to running the program and the balance for handling other foundation business. The decisions to expand responsibilities, increase work time, and integrate the job with other tasks are affirmation of the quality of the staffing. One looming challenge is for the foundations to ensure that there is sufficient time set aside for the program to be well led. While integration with other foundation responsibilities has many pluses, it should not distract from or diminish the attention that has so greatly benefited the programs and the local nonprofit community.

**“This is almost as good as a vacation. It is where I can do some of my most important and productive thinking for the program.”**

### 3 | Learning Community

#### **Background of the Learning Community**

One of the areas identified in the first phase evaluation of CFI-MAP's for potential exploration was the possibility of developing a “learning community” among the program directors. This recommendation was advanced in response to listening to the CFI-MAP directors' concerns about their isolation and how that limited their learning and ability to satisfactorily perform their jobs.

The community foundations are geographically dispersed, with the closest two being about a one hour drive apart; to see each other, most would face a three-hour drive (one way) or an airplane flight. These factors were sufficiently daunting that the directors had deferred meeting together. The alternatives of e-mail or telephone were not being used because little prior relationship building had been done among the program directors, so they tended not to look to each other for information or support. Their isolation was compounded by the program directors own proclivities to concentrate on the daily demands they countenanced, a behavior that affords no time for reflection. For them, it seemed that taking any time away from actual programming would be akin to stealing from their customers.

Given that the message of CFI-MAP is promoting learning and that the program directors provide the voice, the Packard Foundation saw investing in a learning community to foster both group and individual development as a logical means of advancing the program's goals. The only prescription for the effort was that the sculpting of the learning community was to be done by the program directors themselves, with the Foundation's role limited to the provision of financial resources, “lite” facilitation, and basic administrative support.

### 3.1 The Experience of the Learning Community

**The learning community has provided a singularly valuable experience for the CFI–MAP program directors. The community is fostering productive information exchange, promoting collaborative efforts, providing vital professional support, and teaching participants how to incorporate reflection into their work. It is also modeling how to advance learning-based relationships between grantors and grantees.**

The Packard Foundation convened the program directors and asked them to outline what they wanted to accomplish. Members brainstormed for a full day, deciding they wanted to participate in training that would involve them as a group.\* The directors developed a proposal to build their understanding of learning communities, recruited a trainer, and organized a two-day retreat plus a follow-up session. The Packard Foundation fully supported this effort, following up with funding for each of the program directors “to further their individual professional development aligned with their roles as leaders of management assistance programs in their respective communities.” The program directors are enthusiastically embracing this investment in their own knowledge advancement. Fresno’s program director is using the support (totaling about \$6,500) to take courses toward a master’s degree in organizational management; the directors from Monterey, Sacramento, Sonoma, and Sonora are attending programs to build coaching skills; Santa Cruz’s director will attend the Interaction Institute for Social Change to deepen learning about managing change processes; Humboldt staff is participating in a series of training programs in facilitation, leadership development, and team building.

For the participants these opportunities:

- *Build confidence.* For several of the program directors, participation in the learning group is notably building their confidence. This is manifested in meetings sponsored by the Packard Foundation that had formerly been dominated by the chief executives. Program directors, whose experience is from the front lines, are increasingly forthright in these sessions.
- *Affirmation, both personal and professional.* The program directors hired for these positions came from quite disparate backgrounds, for example, in survey research to program development and advocacy in nonprofit organizations. They were not schooled in a formal sense or even experientially as management assistance providers. One explained, “I am taking a course in facilitation . . . the foundation does a lot, it’s my role, we are generalists without training in group dynamics, mediation, facilitation . . . as though it is taken for granted.” They have used their own

eagerness about learning, sharp interpersonal skills, and entrepreneurial wits to craft and launch the management assistance programs. Yet lacking the formal schooling and collegial support, they were uncertain whether they were choosing the right course. The learning group affirmed their identity and gave them a common language to discuss their strategies.

- *Establish trust and mutual respect, which has led to greater contact with each other.* The Packard Foundation had convened all of the community foundations annually for information sharing. These sessions were attended by the chief executive, the program director, and occasionally by a community foundation board member. They evolved into forums for chief executives to talk about their foundations' activities and funding needs. They were, in the vernacular, face-time with the funder. It was not a productive setting for discussing program details or for building relationships. The learning group changed the calculus by opening it exclusively to the program directors and by inviting them to design their own agenda.
- *Learn to structure reflection as a core component of learning.* Program directors routinely cite that one of the most powerful aspects of the group was being reminded that reflection was a necessary ingredient to learning and that it is essential to practice and make this a habit. In the group's retreat, the trainer introduced the importance of reflection and demonstrated how it can be integrated into one's daily rituals by playing quiet music, dimming lights, or similar techniques to create time for thinking. In these quiet moments that might be for just five minutes, thoughts are purposively trained on a set of questions expressly for the purpose of reflection. This is nicely captured by one participant's observation: "I think about the retreat, the exercises, where it took me in my thinking, it broke down walls." Several of the program directors report that they are incorporating this into their training programs.

For the Packard Foundation it is demonstrating:

- *Small grants can make a difference.* This is a modest investment, totaling \$64,000. The largest single expenditure, \$20,000, was for the learning group's initial retreat and follow-up session. CFI-MAP program directors did an extensive search for trainers and chose wisely, retaining a highly experienced person who brought knowledge from working with the corporate, nonprofit, and public sectors. The Foundation followed its first grant to the group with one intended to primarily support individual learning, at the level of about \$5,500 per organization.

- *This is a promising vehicle for modeling grantor/grantee relationships.* Many of the community foundations in the program have modest unrestricted funds and their grants have been quite small, often under \$5,000. The relationships between them and grantees before CFI-MAP were characterized as business-like or polite and perfunctory. Several foundations even mentioned that applicants would not knock on the door, preferring to slip applications underneath or through a discreet slot rather than direct contact. While unrestricted funds have grown, they remain modest and grantmaking levels are still small. Where room for change has been the most ample is in their creating other resources, such as the CFI-MAP sponsored libraries, databases of consultants, studies of the nonprofit sector, and serving as a convener. The process of how the Packard Foundation has conducted its relationship with the learning group is an invaluable model for the community foundations to strengthen their own relationships with their grantee and prospective grantee community.
- *Excellent facilitation and administrative support are important for success.* The program officer who supervises the CFI-MAP grants was available to provide facilitation if the group requested it. Facilitation enables each program director to be a full participant in the discussion. The facilitation is “lite,” designed to be invisible and to keep discussion moving, shared, and on topic. Key to making this work is that the facilitator is keenly aware that she is a representative of the foundation and not a group member, though people occasionally think of her as such. This was manifested in the decision not to attend the group’s initial retreat, seeing this as an opportunity for the directors to share and form a group identity. Administrative support, though modest in its scale, has also been important.
- *The Packard Foundation staff’s principle that “thoughtful choices will evolve if you trust participants” has been affirmed.* Foundation staff believed it was best to let participants choose their goals and how they wanted to accomplish them. Put simply, staff felt that the participants would come motivated to learn. The participants’ response was a collective “wow” that they would have these resources, the flexibility that was offered, and that the Foundation was their cheerleader encouraging them to think of what was possible instead of their limits. The group made a series of significant decisions that included first, pooling most of the initial grant to do something together (leaving a small set-aside for each individual to use toward a personal learning plan) and second, deciding to have a retreat focused on learning. The Foundation required that the group submit a proposal, was clear about the level of resource available, and was intentionally unbureaucratic by keeping the application simple, straightforward, and by acting upon it rapidly.



**“ We as an organization believe that a strong nonprofit sector will make where we live a better place. Our dream is to be a leader in that. It does not take care of the tension should support go to dental care for children versus strengthening an organization. We believe in both, knowing that together they will get us to the goal”**

## 4 | Recommendations

There is a great deal that the eight CFI-MAP community foundations have to celebrate. Both this evaluation report and the preceding one detail a number of impressive findings. The programs are having significant impacts on the foundations and on the communities they serve. In less than a handful of years, the foundations have launched training programs, vigorously involved themselves in continuously refining those programs, built and expanded library resources, re-engineered their own guidelines, increased their own commitments to management assistance, deepened their awareness of the local nonprofit sector, and fostered new relationships with universities and local government.

The CFI-MAP program is, however, at a critical juncture. The single overarching challenge facing the CFI-MAP foundation participants is successfully following through on their own expressed interest in institutionalizing the management assistance program. The findings presented in this report explain that all of the foundations that directly administer their respected management assistance programs have expressed their desire that the program continue to flourish. Those that work with third parties, though only indirectly involved, have similarly voiced support for their respective programs.

Thus far, the foundations' planning activities range from systematic and pragmatic to inchoate. Without concerted action, the foundations risk losing the momentum that has been carefully nurtured. Their list of accomplishments is substantial: products have been developed; markets cultivated; practices for managing relationships between the foundation, trainees, and consultants honed; and collaborations built with government and universities. The seeds for fostering learning have clearly been planted and their own communities' expectations are rising.

The following recommendations are made in the spirit of advancing the goals of CFI-MAP.

#### 4.1 The Packard Foundation

- *Match support to produce sustainability plans.* The Packard Foundation should give strong consideration to ensuring that the foundations are supported to generate sustainability plans. Its support should be contingent on a foundation making a financial commitment toward producing a plan, e.g., one that might be used toward hiring consulting expertise. The foundations should be urged to expeditiously complete their sustainability plans so that they have the requisite lead time for successful implementation. The Foundation has been clear in its intent to end its support for this program. During the past year, the Foundation sponsored two sessions to discuss sustainability; both reiterated the imminence of the program's sunset. It is notable that the only foundation that developed a plan, Sonora, recognized that it needed both technical and financial assistance. Sonora was clear that it wanted to create an independent organization, an uncharted course for the foundation. The other foundations that directly administer the program want to grow it from within and seem to be relying on already busy staff to carry out the tasks that would assure sustainability. Early evidence indicates that this strategy is stretching thin already overstretched staff. Also, it is leading to a rather haphazard and grant-opportunity driven approach rather than one that is strategic.
- *Continue support for the learning community.* The Packard Foundation should give strong consideration to continuing its support for the program directors' learning community. In keeping with the approach that has thus far been used, program directors should be solicited for their views of how to best sustain their own development. The Foundation's facilitating role should continue, and it should encourage the directors to actively discuss their progress within their individual learning plans. Special attention might be given to coaching, given that several directors are attending coaches training and others have expressed interest in this subject. Also, given the foundations' growing emphasis on convening and facilitating, it might well be worth devoting time to sharing learning on this subject.

## 4.2 The Community Foundations

For the community foundations, steps that can expedite effective sustainability planning are:

- *Giving priority to sustainability planning.* This has been an exciting period for these community foundations. It has been one in which they have witnessed unprecedented asset growth, rising visibility, and a significant expansion in how they relate to their community and its various stakeholders. With considerable competing opportunities for how precious time can be used, it is incumbent upon the foundations—if they truly want to sustain CFI-MAP—to make its future a priority. The foundation chief executives should give strong consideration to dedicating a portion of their time to guide their sustainability planning effort.
- *Consider making a financial commitment to sustain program staff.* One of the strongest statements of priority would be for the foundations to commit to providing support to retain program staff. The foundations have already made a significant investment in their management assistance program staff. Evidence of this is that all directors have transitioned from part-time to full-time positions. Several of the directors have become program officers whose jobs include management assistance responsibilities as well as a set of new ones. In most cases, however, funding is cobbled together from the Packard Foundation and other sources to support the staff. They increasingly have the look and feel of stable positions; however, the sources of the funding belie this. The foundations should give strong consideration, if they want to sustain the program, to using more stable sources of support for the management assistance positions.
- *Using a strategic planning model.* The foundations should borrow upon the lessons from their own strategic planning to generate a sustainability plan. For example, they should consider articulating a vision, core values/principles, and goals for their management assistance program. Planning is best informed by excellent data. Some overarching questions that would benefit from hardheaded analysis include: What evaluation data is currently available and what does it say about the program's strengths and weaknesses? Is the evaluation data sufficient to make decisions? What is the real cost of the program? What is the best way to manage the program?
- *Actively fostering board involvement.* Foundations should invite board members into the planning process. Specific actions might include establishing a special board committee, introducing a resolution that would invite the board to formally express interest in sustaining the program, and asking the board to designate funds to support the program's operating costs.

- *Giving strong consideration to retaining independent technical assistance.* Foundations should consider hiring a consultant(s) who can design and facilitate the process that would result in a plan. Program directors who already have considerable responsibilities are finding themselves also assuming the tasks associated with sustaining programs. It is extremely difficult to do both jobs well. As time grows closer to the sunset of Packard Foundation support, it will become increasingly difficult to expect people to commit their full energies to managing a program, while trying to raise the funds to continue it.
- *Establish a timeline.* Foundation executives are well aware that sufficient lead time is needed to raise funds. Given there is little more than a year of Packard Foundation support remaining (and less time in some cases), chief executives need to commit to a schedule for plan production and for fundraising. If any of the CFI-MAP participating foundations decide to not sustain support, it is advised that they make that determination expeditiously and begin an orderly winding down of the program.

This second evaluation report continues the exciting story that was introduced in the first report. CFI-MAP is testament to these foundations, to their boards and executives who have embraced the program, and to their creative and entrepreneurial staffs. They have stellar track records of being able fundraisers and are admirably positioned to bring their management assistance efforts an essential step closer to stability and fulfilling a promise of continuing to serve their communities.

- Footnotes**
- <sup>1</sup> A ground rule of this evaluation is that there would be no individual attribution of comments made in the interviews.
  - <sup>2</sup> The first evaluation report was completed September 1999. The Packard Foundation broadly disseminated the report throughout 2000 and continues to respond to requests for copies.
  - <sup>3</sup> To enhance readability, the foundations may be referred to in the text either by their location or by their formal names.
  - <sup>4</sup> Foundations that directly administer CFI-MAP are the Community Foundation of Monterey County, Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County, Fresno Regional Foundation, Humboldt Area Foundation, Sonora Area Foundation. The Sacramento Regional Foundation and Sonoma County Community Foundation have engaged third parties to administer the program, where the third party is a management resource center that provides training. At the time of the interviews for this evaluation report, the East Bay Community Foundation, which had once used a third party to administer its CFI-MAP, was reassessing how it was going operate the program.
  - <sup>5</sup> Both Monterey and Santa Cruz have been participants in the Packard Foundation's Communities 2000 program, an effort that promoted outreach to build the capacities of nascent nonprofits. In more sparsely populated and agricultural areas, the groups were often Spanish speaking only. For the CFI-MAP directors it surfaced a demand for new training products.
  - <sup>6</sup> The Sacramento Regional Foundation experienced a changeover in its leadership. After a nearly yearlong search, the foundation hired a new executive director who began in early 2001. The foundation is in a priority-setting phase. There are early indications of interest in support for management assistance, but asset-building and other matters associated with executive transition are likely to take precedence in the near term.
  - <sup>\*</sup> An invitation was extended by the Packard Foundation and accepted by the Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) to participate in the learning community. HCF's new organizational effectiveness program closely aligns with the goals of CFI-MAP. The chief staff person responsible for directing the program has become an active participant, helping both to diminish some of the isolation that HCF experiences and provide timely access to other members' experiences with their programs.