



## PNY Strategic Plan 2017-2021

### **Executive Summary**

Philanthropy New York stands upon an impressive 37-year history and solid financial footing. Our stable membership of 280+ organizations and now more than 3,500 individual philanthropic professionals and trustees highly values our core offerings, especially our wide array of networking opportunities, information services and educational programs. Those services will remain the centerpiece of all we do, and we will build upon our progress by focusing on these areas:

***A. Distilling and highlighting innovative sectoral practices that build a stronger philanthropic ecosystem through:***

1. Recognizing and analyzing emerging trends
2. Collaborating with colleague organizations around promising practices
3. Engaging members to provide lessons learned around implementing new practices
4. Investing in the development of enriched communications platforms

***B. Enhancing our successful network and cohort based professional development opportunities that develop individual leadership skills through:***

1. Developing new professional networks for program staff
2. Exploring opportunities to build rich leadership trainings
3. Enhancing our unique skills-based intensive training for grantmakers
4. Investing resources in a diverse next-generation of philanthropic practitioners

***C. Cultivating and catalyzing institutional leadership around public policy, advocacy and collaboration in the sector through:***

1. Strengthening PNY's role as an advocate for policies that affect the entire nonprofit field
2. Developing new training for our members in policy and advocacy
3. Bringing together members that wish to advocate on critical issues
4. Identifying trends and serve as a hub for collaboration

***D. Supporting long-term sustainability with a focus on enhancing member value, by:***

1. Diversifying revenue sources
2. Analyzing and evaluating fee-based services and incorporating new strategies, as appropriate
3. Examining new categories of membership while ensuring quality of service to existing members
4. Pursuing opportunities to offer paid premium services to non-members

## Introduction

Philanthropy has an extraordinary place in the United States – our history and laws reflect a remarkable independent sector that strives to achieve social good in countless ways that government might not. The philanthropic sector is not monolithic and every funder has its own unique take on how to make the world better, but given the social, economic and political polarization of our era, philanthropy must work together to strategically and thoughtfully support the changes needed to develop a more equitable, sustainable and democratic society.

What does that mean for Philanthropy New York – a 37-year-old institution firmly ensconced as part of the traditional infrastructure of our sector? We are preparing to launch our next five-year plan. Thanks to the support and engagement of our members, we do so from a place of organizational strength and competence. Our primary mission is to support our members' work to serve the public good. We thus embark on the first half of the next decade with an unwavering and unchanged core goal:

***Philanthropy New York will continue to be the go-to source for convening and supporting our members, building networks and communities both within and across sectors and nurturing individual members' skills and knowledge to ensure effective and meaningful philanthropic practice. Our goal, like that of our membership, is to support the changes needed to develop a more equitable, sustainable and democratic society.***

## Context for plan

Philanthropy New York (PNY), established in 1979, is the principal professional community of approximately 280+ private, corporate, family and public grantmaking organizations based in the New York City region. PNY provides a broad range of services to over 3,500 individual philanthropic professionals and trustees of those organizations. Taken together, our members provide support totaling over \$6 billion each year to thousands of nonprofit organizations and NGOs located in New York and around the world, which in turn focus on an almost endless range of issues and concerns. With a staff of 14 and a core organizational budget of just over \$2 million, PNY fulfills a unique niche for grantmakers in the New York metro area – a forward-thinking, high-quality, NYC-based resource providing learning and networking opportunities for funders regardless of whether their focus is local, national or global.

PNY currently:

- Presents 150 to 180 events each year ranging from short panel discussions to full conferences, such as a half-day conference on communications evaluation and a four-part series on impact investing. And our regular programming covers a vast range of subjects from the intricacies of interpreting nonprofit 990s to increasing board diversity; from New York City workforce development to international collaboration. Eighty-five percent of our member organizations had staff or trustees participating in programming over the last year.
- Nurtures professional interest groups for grantmaking organizations' administrators, executive assistants, COOs, CFO's and CEOs as well as issue-based working groups focused on education, health, women and girls, international grantmaking and many others. Currently, 734 individuals are involved in these groups.

- Develops skills and knowledge for those newer to the field through programs like the Young Leaders Breakfast Club, a 9-month peer and mentoring program and Essential Skills and Strategies, an intensive 3-day program for newer program officers. In the last year, more than 100 people gained critical skills and developed new relationships as a result of this work.
- Strengthens the cross-sectoral relationships and voice of our members by:
  - Taking official policy positions on key issues affecting the sector and communicating those positions publicly and to key government officials. Over the last few years, PNY has taken five official positions on issues such as the America Gives More Act and the flattening of the foundation excise tax.
  - Increasing the number and quality of interactions with government leaders with influence over policy on issues of greatest concern to our members. Over the last three years, more than 40 city, state and federal leaders have connected with PNY members by speaking at our programs on issues ranging from educational policy, housing, disaster recovery, and work force development.
  - Convening leaders across all sectors to establish common goals and potential solutions. In this last year alone, PNY has convened multiple sectors to come together to discuss criminal justice reform, child welfare reform, and segregation in our educational system. Our Annual Meetings continue to feature a deep dive on a policy subject important to our membership, featuring high-profile panelists including the now-Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, Nobel Peace Prize recipient Leymah Gbowee, NYT's columnist Nicholas Kristof, and in 2016, author and academic, Michelle Alexander.
  - Informing government leaders, nonprofits, media and the philanthropic sector of the work of our members using the New York PhilanthroPost as a platform.

The work described above is what our members consider to be our “core” work and the primary value that we deliver to them. We will continue to prioritize this work.

Additionally, this last year has seen a big change for us and our members: A new home. The Philanthropy Center at 1500 Broadway is, appropriately, at the Crossroads of the World. In two years leading up to our 2015 move, PNY reached out to our membership to support a campaign, the Fund for 2025, now generally referred to as “the Vision for 2025.” Over 90 of our members, more than a third, made special grants in addition to their membership to support the Vision for 2025, which was created not just to enable our move to Times Square, but just as importantly, to invest over the next decade in improved technology, increased programming, the development of the Public Policy Fellowship and investments in organizational stability.

Our Vision for 2025 had two immediate objectives, both of which were accomplished by the end of 2015. We moved to our new home in Times Square and upgraded many aspects of our technology to improve our conference facilities, build our capacity to present information through live-streaming and grow our on-line information dissemination options. The other overarching areas of work -- increased in-depth programming, development of a Public Policy Fellowship and the development of a plan for our long term sustainability-- are all areas we are addressing in our current operations and through this Strategic Plan.

As we have developed this plan, we have strived to remain cognizant of and incorporate both the external sectoral changes we see occurring in the field and the internal reflections and feedback of our membership. We believe that both are critical to our work in the next five years.

### **The Shifting Landscape of the Philanthropic Sector**

The philanthropic, nonprofit, government and business sectors are grappling with broad trends that will shape our sector for many decades to come, including, but certainly not limited to: Government budget cuts and increasing wage mandates, concerns about philanthropic endowments and nonprofit tax exemptions in local municipalities, aligning endowments with mission and new ideas about the blurring of lines between for-profit, nonprofit and other social-purpose entities. And, the country as a whole is confronting our history of systemic inequity. As a result of these trends, it is critically important that PNY, as a regional association of grant makers, re-double our focus on the development of the individual, institutional and collaborative leadership necessary to create meaningful societal change.

The philanthropic ecosystem is also undergoing important changes. Over the last several years, one of the networks that has experienced growth is the Regional Association community (there are 33 RAs across the United States, of which PNY is one), which is emerging as a significant force for the philanthropic sector, and in their own communities. The Forum of Regional Associations, with new leadership, has capitalized on this movement by outlining a new vision to serve as a hub for both the RA community and other Philanthropy-Serving Organizations (PSOs - national issue/identity/practice-focused affinity groups). As a long-time partner with both local and national affinity groups, as well as the regional community, PNY is in an excellent position to contribute to and take advantage of the Forum's new vision as it is implemented. And, given our proximity to many national funders on the East Coast, PNY will be prepared to lead some of those new opportunities as they develop.

A final important trend involves the multiple new ways that wealthy individuals are pursuing their philanthropic goals such as through the use of LLC's and donor advised funds. We believe that the success of philanthropy is tied to our collective strategic efforts, so PNY will continue to keep our fingers on the pulse of these changes. We are committed to remaining attuned to the needs of our members and open to opportunities for engaging and supporting new philanthropists.

### **What our Members Have Told Us:**

As a result of Fund for 2025 support, in 2016 PNY was able to undertake one of the first comprehensive evaluations of a core part of our work. We partnered with the Center for Effective Philanthropy to undertake a survey of our membership to better understand their perceptions of our services and the impact of our networks and programs. Respondents to this member engagement survey hold very positive perceptions of PNY. In particular, respondents praise PNY's high-quality, relevant programs and network-building opportunities as well as its responsive, approachable staff—who are viewed as experts in the New York philanthropic sector. Nearly all respondents reported making changes in response to their engagement with PNY; the substantial majority made at least one new connection with another funder or made a change in their own work as a result of PNY's programming.

In the words of one respondent, "The strength of PNY is in its people and networking opportunities. Because grantmakers vary widely in the issues that they address, the one consistent feature is the ability to connect people and build skills in functional roles." Looking toward the future, respondents suggest opportunities to target programming to a broader range of roles and levels, particularly more programs

and networking opportunities designed specifically for program staff and staff at specific stages in their careers.

Importantly, many respondents also stress the importance of PNY's current work and urge PNY to continue it. Respondents recommend, "The programming is great -- just keep doing what you're doing!" and "Continue what you're doing, but constantly strive to include more groups, opinions, audiences in events and work."

### **The Next Five Years:**

Given the changes in our ecosystem, and the strong feedback we've received from our constituency, PNY is committed to a plan that will continue to build on the strength and engagement of our membership and at the same time leverage our unique place in the philanthropic ecosystem and our well-developed relationships with colleague philanthropic serving organizations to strengthen the individual and collective leadership of the philanthropic sector. Our core work will remain the centerpiece of all we do. Over the next five years, as we face the challenges in both our sector and our larger community, we will enhance this core work, strengthening our sector and our members, with a focus on the goals and strategies set forth below:

### **A. Distill and highlight innovative sectoral practices that build a stronger philanthropic ecosystem**

Diversity, equity and inclusion. Transparency. Impact investing. Grantee-driven strategy. Streamlining grant processes. Our sector is experiencing changing norms and a collective sense of urgency around the need to hone strong and impactful practices. New trends and practice models are bubbling up every day, which has led to a significant increase in the number of conversations members and others in the field are having about how to distinguish between what, exactly, *are* best practices and how individual philanthropic organizations can implement them in ways that make sense. PNY has historically curated a robust calendar of programs highlighting different practices for our membership, and we will continue to provide the most current and provocative information available to our membership. In addition, we will use our curatorial role, both as a regional association with one of the most innovative and forward-thinking memberships in the nation, and as a trusted partner to our members, to continue to delve deeply into trends and craft guidance for our membership.

#### **Strategies:**

1. Build on our strong base of skills-building, issue-based and strategy-focused programs to recognize and analyze emerging trends in philanthropy and interpret them for our membership in a way that is relevant, useful and actionable.
2. Collaborate with the Forum of Regional Associations and our colleague philanthropic service organizations to share information and build programming and tools around promising practices.
3. Engage members in smaller cohorts or collaborations around important trends and issues such as impact investing, equity and inclusion, and transparency in an effort to more fully discuss and interpret these issues and develop ways to implement them.
4. Invest in the development of enriched communications platforms that help members connect on timely issues, best practices and illuminate important trends.

**B. Enhance our successful network and cohort based professional development opportunities that develop new individual leadership skills.**

Our members rate PNY highly for the overall quality of its programs, including program content, organization, and the quality of speakers and session leaders. Respondents to the CEP survey strongly agree that PNY's programs are relevant to the latest trends in the field. However, perceptions of career development programming vary by respondents' length of involvement with PNY and by their function at their organization.

In response to open-ended questions about opportunities for PNY in the next year and the next five years, several themes arose in a minority of respondents' comments, as distilled below by CEP:

- *Target content and focus on connections. In the next year, respondents request programs targeted to a wider range of specific roles and levels, and more opportunities for funders to network and connect with each other.*
- *The role of philanthropy. Over the next five years, respondents suggest that PNY could focus on the role and impact of the philanthropic ecosystem more broadly.*

We understand both what our members value and what they hope to see going forward.

**Strategies:**

1. Develop new professional networks for program staff around the skills of grantmaking, and the leadership skills needed to direct grantmaking programs.
2. Explore collaborative opportunities to build rich leadership trainings for diverse mid-level philanthropic leaders to prepare the sector's future leadership.
3. Continue to enhance our unique skills-based intensive training for new grantmakers and seek to expand and develop new training for experienced grantmakers.
4. Invest monetary and human resources in the development of a diverse next generation of philanthropic practitioners through our Public Policy Fellowship for emerging young graduate students.

**C. Cultivate and catalyze institutional leadership around public policy, advocacy and collaboration in the sector**

PNY members are increasingly seeing public policy as a way to leverage their impact and view PNY as a partner in this work. At the institution level, funders are being asked to engage with their communities/constituencies more directly and use their influence, networks and resources to help advance the issues about which those communities/constituencies care. There is greater public awareness that funders have more to provide than just dollars; they can leverage their power by convening diverse groups, tapping into influential networks, providing information and research about important issues and taking stands on or promoting issues through various communication channels. In addition, PNY is often seen as a resource – whether serving as a fiscal sponsor to a funders' collaborative, bringing together funders to embark on a shared piece of research or advocacy, or providing a communications platform to highlight and illuminate our members' work.

Our members have explicitly said that there is an opportunity to do more of this work. Although more than three-quarters of respondents to the CEP survey have connected with another funder as a result of PNY's programs and services, a smaller proportion indicated that these connections lead to deeper action. Less than half of respondents indicate that they have collaborated with their peers on a program or project. In their suggestions, many respondents request that PNY "facilitate connections between grant-makers in particular thematic sectors."

In the next five years, PNY will continue to advocate for issues that impact the philanthropic sector; and provide targeted support and services to help our members amplify their message, advocate for the policy changes they are seeking to create, and collaborate with others to leverage their work.

**Strategies:**

1. Strengthen PNY's role in developing and advocating for public policies that widely affect the philanthropy and the nonprofit community. At the same time, PNY will clearly communicate its expanded policy mandate to its membership and the nonprofit community as well as the updated process by which it will consider official positions. The expanded purview will include issues related to the broader nonprofit community if such issues have a material connection to grantmaking.
2. Develop new training for our members in policy and advocacy to support organizational leadership in tackling the specific issues of greatest concern to our members.
3. Serve as a conduit for bringing together members that wish to advocate on critical issues of importance together.
4. Identify trends that a number of members are interested in tackling and serve as a hub on those issues by developing new issue-based working groups, curating programs and conferences devoted to these topics and serving as a home for collaborative grantmaking, research or policy work.

**D. Support long-term sustainability with a focus on enhancing member value**

PNY is cognizant of the need to continue to build our long-term sustainability while maintaining the value of membership in this unique community of funders. Our sustainability is rooted in our ability to provide our members with high quality, relevant programs curated by a professional, knowledgeable staff. Some of our biggest accomplishments in the past six years have been around our sustainability. In addition to building our reserves by setting and meeting a conservative budget, we were also able to consistently build general operating support through our fiscal sponsorship program. And, we restructured our staffing to meet the changing dynamics of our work with our membership.

Our move to a new Philanthropic Hub in the center of Times Square was one of our biggest risks and best sustainability accomplishments. The move has positioned us, both geographically and architecturally to better serve our members. It will pose an increasing financial burden as the expense of the lease and real estate taxes increase over the next decade, but it also creates new opportunities for the organization to diversify our revenue generation. Therefore, over the next five years, PNY will implement new strategies for increasing institutional sustainability. These revenue-generating strategies will be put in place after they have been thoroughly vetted by our Sustainability, Finance and Membership Committees and approved by the PNY board.

**Strategies:**

1. Diversify PNY's revenue sources, while maintaining quality value for membership
2. Analyze and evaluate fee-based services with a goal to create a suite of opportunities that draw on staff's expertise, expand the organization's leadership training, and monetize PNY's new space
3. Examine new categories of membership while ensuring quality of service to existing members
4. Pursue opportunities to offer paid premium services to non-members who contribute broadly to the philanthropic space

Each opportunity will be developed with member input and feedback and will undergo a rigorous analysis to ensure that we are maintaining a consistent level of quality and relevance to our current membership.

**CONCLUSION**

The heart of PNY's work is the existence of a strong, vibrant and well connected community of funders in New York City. With the support and engagement of our members, we will continue, as outlined in this plan, to support and advance the work of the New York-based philanthropic community. Our goal, like that of our membership, is to support the changes needed to develop a more equitable, sustainable, and democratic society.