SPECIAL PROJECTS
Enhanced Capacity

PROGRAM GUIDES

POLK BROS FOUNDATION
a foundation for chicago families
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

Theory of Change: Sustainable organizations are better able to deliver improved programs and positive outcomes for clients. Sectors that collectively advocate, innovate and collaborate are resilient in the face of economic, political and other environmental changes and can guide solutions.

Program Goal: Build and sustain the capacity of Polk Bros. Foundation grantees, and the sectors within which they work, to thrive, meet goals and serve clients effectively.

All proposals submitted to the Foundation should adhere to one of the following strategies:

STRATEGY A
Organizational Development (Proposals by Invitation Only)

Target Population: Polk Bros. Foundation grantees that are seeking to build capacity in one of four key areas:
- Financial planning and management
- Marketing and communication
- Technology improvements
- Strategic restructuring and mergers

Components
- Defines an organizational need or issue based on internal and external research
- Partners with an outside expert to develop a plan that addresses the issue or facilitates the implementation of an existing action plan
- Identifies anticipated project outcomes and timing
- Demonstrates buy-in and sustained commitment for the project from the board and staff

Evaluation Criteria
- A written action plan to address the identified need with benchmarks for progress and a timeline for implementation or the actualization of a plan that demonstrates progress toward resolving the issue
- Demonstration of improved processes that will lead to greater reach, impact, or efficiency
- Development and application of a clear method for evaluation and use of data to inform continued improvement

STRATEGY B
Strengthening Sectors

Target Population: Polk Bros. Foundation grantees and the sectors in which they work

Components
- Organizes and coordinates the provision of technical assistance and advocacy training within a sector
- Works collaboratively with an engaged cohort of service providers to effectively define and address needs or issues that can be most effectively addressed
- Develops a clear action plan with participant input that includes benchmarks for progress, defined organization and sector goals, and anticipated outcomes and timing
- Offers opportunities for cumulative learning to promote effective systems integration and improvement
- Advocates to advance effective policies and practices

Evaluation Criteria
- Demonstrated progress toward resolving specific sector issues
- Documentation of learning that will lead to greater reach, impact, or efficiency for participating organizations and the sector
- Description, number and length of activities
- Number of staff from participating organizations, including number who attended multiple sessions (meetings to create action plans, learning opportunities, etc.), and total number of organizations
- Collection, assessment and dissemination of evaluation data that informs ongoing sector development