



**For Immediate Release:**  
December 19, 2006

**Contact:** Jillaine Smith, Manager of Programs  
202.898.1843 | [smith@geofunders.org](mailto:smith@geofunders.org)

## **Solutions to Nonprofit Challenges Exist – Are Grantmakers Listening?**

Nonprofit organizations play a pivotal role in advancing far-reaching social change. And they depend on foundation dollars to do this critical work. Grantmakers can go a long way toward maximizing their support through a variety of practices, as reported in a recent publication from **Grantmakers for Effective Organizations**.

Reporting on findings from conversations with hundreds of grantmakers and nonprofits across the country, *Listen, Learn, Lead* tells the story of several grantmakers who, faced with the same constraints as other grantmakers, have found ways to provide more effective support of nonprofits. “Solutions already exist within the sector,” said Enright. “The task is to identify grantmakers already engaged or interested in new practices and to tap their talents and discoveries.”

Key to such support is making more of an effort to listen to grantees and to use what grantmakers learn to improve their practices. “Any grantmaker, no matter his or her specific context or constraints, will benefit from putting listening and learning first and foremost,” said Kathleen P. Enright, GEO executive director and publisher of the report. Examples include:

- The Endowment for Health in New Hampshire stages a once-a-year series of listening sessions throughout the state where nonprofit leaders and others can provide input on key health challenges in their communities – and how the foundation can help.
- Seeking to retool its antipoverty work, the Boston Foundation convened a series of community hearings in which several hundred Boston residents – primarily poor and low-income adults and youth – could share their experiences and their suggestions.
- The UPS Foundation recently changed its whole grantmaking approach to emphasize capacity building for its nonprofits.

These are just a few illustrations of areas for potential change. Among these, many focus on investing in the capacity of nonprofits to do their job. “It’s a matter of trusting nonprofits to do their work and equipping them with the support they need to get the job done,” said Enright. “Open, honest partnerships between grantmakers and grantees contribute greatly to nonprofits’ ability to achieve results – more effective and longer lasting social change.”

Information about the project as well as free PDF versions of the report are available at [www.geofunders.org](http://www.geofunders.org). Print copies are available for \$10 each by contacting Jason Twiss at [twiss@geofunders.org](mailto:twiss@geofunders.org) or 202.898.1841.

GEO’s work on this project and the publication of *Listen, Learn, Lead* is supported by the following foundations: Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, UPS Foundation, Bruner Foundation, the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, Deaconess Foundation, S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Peninsula Community Foundation and the Chasdrew Fund.

**Background:** Grantmakers for Effective Organizations is a community of grantmakers dedicated to building strong and effective organizations. GEO’s mission is to maximize philanthropy’s impact by advancing the effectiveness of grantmakers and their grantees. GEO provides resources to philanthropy’s change agents as they strive to build a stronger nonprofit sector. More information about GEO and grantmaker practices that improve nonprofit results is available at [www.geofunders.org](http://www.geofunders.org).