

Anti-Human Trafficking Donor Working Group

Grant Type: **Dollar and nondollar support**

Dollar Amount: **\$30,000 seed funding for a donor education program**

Foundation Name: **Greater Houston Community Foundation**

What was your objective with the grant or initiative?

The original grant objective, funded by a major donor of the Greater Houston Community Foundation (GHCF), was to host an education event to inform the Houston donor community about human trafficking and its prevalence in that community. The goal was to see if the event could generate interest and synergy in forming a community of Houston philanthropists dedicated to discovering and investing in innovative solutions to this issue.

What were the results of this grant or initiative?

As a result of the donor education effort and because of the donor community's interest, GHCF played a crucial convening role for donors, enabling them to begin meeting regularly to tackle human trafficking and its impact on the city. This was the first-ever donor working group for GHCF and the first time a group of donors intentionally coalesced around anti-human trafficking efforts in Houston.

Now, approximately 40 donors and private foundations keep each other informed on the issue through bi-annual meetings, an e-mail circulation group, and attending or hosting related events. The donor group also continues to grow as new donor partners are identified. The donor working group does not pool funding; rather, it cocreates a strategy and aligns its actions and individual grantmaking around shared goals and tactics. Group members have taken a systems-change view and approach: They seek upstream solutions and continue to fund or scale direct service needs. They also identify gaps and strategic opportunities for investment or innovation.

The donor working group formed the first-ever public-private partnership with the City of Houston's mayoral office. The partnership called for and influenced the design of a special advisor post that has allowed Houston to create what could be the first citywide coordinated response to anti-human trafficking in the United States.

Why would you say this grant or initiative had outsized impact?

Through the aligned funding model, the donor working group has collectively deployed more than \$1.6 million to date. Funding for this issue has increased as a result of the group's efforts to influence larger grantmaking by foundations that already provide grants in this area and to engage new funders that have not provided grants related to the human trafficking issue.

This group illustrates the power of convening and collaboration: The group has been able to accomplish more than any one individual could have done alone. In addition, the group has found that creativity and openness—with little restriction of or prescriptiveness in group structure, action, grantmaking, and learning opportunities—have been a significant benefit, allowing participants to play to their strengths. Moreover, because the group members and their interests—and even participation levels—are diverse, they are better able to address blind spots or gaps in the issue. It has been amazing to watch group members encourage each other to catalyze change in their own unique way.



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