

# Key Findings and Recommendations from REACH Healthcare Foundation's 2025 Grantee Perception Report

Prepared by the Center for Effective Philanthropy

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*In March and April of 2025, the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) surveyed REACH Healthcare Foundation ("REACH", "the Foundation")'s grantees. The memo below outlines the key findings and recommendations from the Foundation's Grantee Perception Report (GPR). REACH's grantees' perceptions should be interpreted in light of its goals, strategies, and context.*

*This memo accompanies the comprehensive survey results from 66 grantees (a 61 percent response rate) found in REACH's interactive online report at <https://cep.surveymethods.org> and in the downloadable materials, which includes grantees' written comments. The Foundation's online report also contains more information about the survey methodology and analysis.<sup>1</sup>*

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## Overview

This summary depicts results from the REACH's fourth Grantee Perception Report. Prior to the Foundation's 2025 survey, CEP most recently surveyed the Foundation's grantees in 2022.

- ▶ As in 2022, grantees hold very positive perceptions of the Foundation, often rating REACH above the typical funder in CEP's comparative dataset.
  - In the words of one grantee, "....Everything from the application process to ongoing communication feels clear, thoughtful, and rooted in trust.... Grantees feel seen, valued, and supported. It never feels transactional. The communication is always timely and respectful, and the interactions are real - grounded in relationship, not just funding. I've always felt like REACH is walking with us, not just watching from the sidelines. That kind of partnership makes a huge difference."
- ▶ Of note, across several report themes, including aspects of the Foundation's racial and/or health equity focus, external impact, administrative processes, and communications, grantees' ratings are higher than in 2022, and in some cases, by a statistically significant margin.
- ▶ Grantees' feedback indicates a few potential opportunities to build on these perceptions, including considering REACH's capacity to expand its non-monetary supports, further demonstrating its understanding of grantees' organizations contexts, and reflecting on its grantmaking characteristics.

## Exceptional Perceptions of REACH's Commitment to Racial and Health Equity and the Foundation's Field Leadership

- ▶ Across their feedback, grantees highlight REACH's unwavering commitment to racial and health equity as a critical strength. In comments, they describe REACH as "[a] recognized leader in health equity" who has "done a great deal to promote understanding of the social determinants of health, which impact so many areas of [the] community."

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this summary, ratings are defined as "higher than typical" when average ratings are above the 65<sup>th</sup> percentile in CEP's overall dataset, "lower than typical" when average ratings are below the 35<sup>th</sup> percentile, and "typical" when ratings fall between those thresholds. Ratings described as "significantly" higher or lower reflect statistically significant differences at a p-value less than or equal to 0.1.

- ▶ The Foundation is now rated in the top one percent of funders in CEP's comparative dataset for grantees' agreement that it has clearly communicated what racial and/or health equity means for its work. Grantees also now place REACH higher than over 90 percent of funders for their agreement that REACH demonstrates an explicit commitment to racial and/or health equity.
  - Grantees' ratings on both these measures have significantly increased since 2022.
- ▶ On a custom series of statements about REACH's racial and health equity focus, grantees indicate that they feel extremely comfortable, with an average rating of 6.7 on a seven-point scale, a significant increase since 2022 results, discussing REACH's approach to racial equity.
- ▶ Relatedly, when reflecting on REACH's influence within their broader fields of work, in a similar finding to 2022, grantees indicate that REACH holds an extremely important role impacting public policy, with ratings in the top five percent of CEP's dataset.
- ▶ Notably, grantees now perceive REACH to have an enhanced external impact. Their 2025 ratings place REACH in the top third of funders for its impact on their fields, and in the top 15 percent of funders for its impact on their local communities, both of which represent historical highs and show steady growth since 2016.
- ▶ Grantees also continue to provide strong ratings - in the top quarter of CEP's dataset - for all report measures related to REACH's understanding of their external work environments, including the Foundation's understanding of their fields of work, the needs of those they serve, and their socio-cultural contexts.



*"...The Foundation has played a major role in shaping how we think about equity, community voice, and systems change. In many ways, REACH sets the tone for how philanthropy should show up - by investing in relationships, listening deeply, and staying committed to long-term impact. Their influence has helped elevate conversations around racial equity and community health, not just within our organization, but across the region...."*



*"REACH is a valued and trusted partner.... They provide evidence-based research to strengthen the case for the public policies we promote, amplify our communications, nurture strategic relationships, and serve as thought partners in developing new approaches to successful implementation of policy goals in our field."*

## Extremely Valuable and Highly Streamlined Application & Reporting Processes

- ▶ As in 2022, grantees report a very positive experience with REACH's application process. The Foundation continues to receive stronger than typical ratings for the extent to which grantees find it to be helpful in strengthening the funded work and to be an appropriate level of effort given the amount of funding received.
- ▶ Grantees also continue to highlight the Foundation's exceptional communications during the process, with ratings that continue to place REACH higher than over 90 percent of funders for the clarity and transparency of its funding decision criteria.
  - REACH now also receives ratings in the top 10 percent of CEP's dataset (a historical high) for the clarity and transparency of the application process's requirements and timelines.

- ▶ Grantees continue to hold extremely strong perceptions of the Foundation’s reporting process, rating REACH in the top quintile of CEP’s dataset for the extents to which the process was straightforward, adaptable to their circumstances, and relevant to the grant-funded work.
- ▶ On a custom question about REACH’s recent changes in grantmaking practices and characteristics, grantees indicate that the Foundation’s updated practices continue to be extremely beneficial for their work, rating REACH a 6.77 or higher on a seven-point scale for the helpfulness of its: timely grant approvals, greater flexibility around grant requirements, the elimination of interim narrative reports, and simplified application and reporting forms.
- ▶ Relatedly, grantees now report spending fewer hours on REACH’s processes than grantees of almost all other funders in CEP’s dataset and all its past grantee surveys. At the median, REACH grantees now report spending a total of eight hours (compared to 25 hours at the typical funder and 14 hours at REACH in 2022) on its requirements over the grant lifetime.



*“The grant process is easy, smooth, and timely. I appreciate the check-in opportunities to share updates as well as to learn more about REACH’s work and priorities.”*



*“We have applied twice for Rapid REACH..... Each time, the process was quite easy to manage, and funding was almost immediate, so very appreciated for a small non-profit. We raise all of our own funds (no government funding), so when we have such a wonderful opportunity we are grateful! It was relatively easy to get our questions answered via email, prior to submitting.”*

## **Enhanced Perceptions of Organizational Impact, with Suggestions to Build on Grantmaking Characteristics and Assistance Beyond the Grant**

- ▶ REACH receives its highest-ever rating for grantees’ perceptions of its impact on their organizations, which now places the Foundation higher than the typical funder in CEP’s dataset, representing continuous growth over time.
- ▶ At the same time, though, grantees rate a few aspects of REACH’s understanding of their organizational contexts slightly less positively than in the recent past. Grantees’ ratings for REACH’s awareness of their organizational challenges trend lower than in 2022 - though they remain in the top quarter of CEP’s dataset.
  - Further, in 2022, REACH was rated in the top 10 percent of CEP’s dataset for its understanding of grantees’ organizational strategies in goals. In 2025, the Foundation is rated alongside the typical funder for this measure.

### **Grantmaking Characteristics**

- ▶ CEP’s broad research finds that grantmaking characteristics are often related to perceptions of organizational impact, with relatively large, multi-year, and/or unrestricted grants associated with more positive perceptions of impact.
- ▶ As in 2022, REACH is distinct in CEP’s dataset for its provision of unrestricted support, with just over half of grantees (a larger than typical proportion) reporting receiving unrestricted grants.
- ▶ The median REACH grantee receives a grant of \$45K, which is in line with its most recent results, and continues to be smaller than that of the typical funder in CEP’s dataset (\$125K).

- ▶ Nearly 45 percent of grantees, a proportion in line with that of the typical funder and REACH's 2022 results, indicate receiving a multi-year grant. These grantees provide significantly higher ratings on a few report measures, including REACH's impact on their fields and organizations, and its understanding of their organizational strategy and goals, when compared to those receiving single-year grants.
- ▶ When asked how the Foundation could improve, about a fifth of grantees' suggestions relate to its grantmaking characteristics, with grantees most often requesting larger or longer grants.

### Assistance Beyond the Grant

- ▶ CEP's broad research also finds that a funder's provision of assistance beyond the grant check can be related to grantees' perceptions of organizational impact.
- ▶ Two-thirds of grantees, a typical proportion, indicate receiving at least one form of assistance beyond the grant from the Foundation. Their feedback indicates that this support is very beneficial.
  - Grantees receiving at least one type of non-monetary assistance provide significantly higher ratings on several measures throughout the report, including aspects of REACH's contextual understanding, commitment to racial and health equity, and funder-grantee relationships.
  - These grantees also rate REACH in the top 30 percent of CEP's dataset for all measures related to this assistance, including the extent to which it met an important organizational/programmatic need, and was a worthwhile use of the time required.
- ▶ About a fifth of grantees' suggestions request expanding on the Foundation's valuable non-monetary support, with these grantees most often asking for more opportunities for REACH to facilitate connection and collaboration among grantees.



*"REACH brings many organizations and people together to learn, to build, and to act. They support multiple levels and areas that impact health and healthcare access, not just funding direct medical providers, which is very important for having a larger impact on our community."*



*"I think that we have challenging times ahead for nonprofits and other agencies supported by REACH. Funding needs will be higher, and our context will be shifting and uncertain...."*

### Stellar Communication Amid Opportunity to Further Build on Positive Funder-Grantee Interactions

- ▶ In their comments, grantees share that "concise and clear communication is a hallmark of the REACH Foundation," and describe REACH's mission as "well-articulated throughout the process."
- ▶ Reflecting these sentiments, grantees continue to provide exemplary ratings, which place REACH higher than over 90 percent of all funders in CEP's dataset, for most report measures related to its communications, including the Foundation's overall transparency and their understanding of how their funded work fits into REACH's broader efforts.
- ▶ Of note, grantees' ratings for the clarity of REACH's communications about its goals and strategy have significantly increased compared to 2022 results, now placing the Foundation in the top five percent of CEP's dataset.

## Funder-Grantee Interactions

- ▶ Many grantees praise their relationships with REACH in their open-ended feedback, often using words like “helpful,” “responsive,” and “accessible” to describe the Foundation’s staff. Grantees also continue to provide stronger than typical ratings for the extent to which REACH exhibits trust in their organizations’ staff as well as its openness to their ideas.
- ▶ At the same time, though, other aspects of grantees’ perceptions of their interactions with staff are comparatively less positive than in 2022.
  - One of the few measures wherein REACH’s ratings have significantly decreased since 2022 is the extent to which grantees feel the Foundation exhibited compassion for those affected by their work, with ratings now in line with the typical funder.
  - Similarly, REACH now receives typically positive ratings for both grantees’ comfort approaching the Foundation when issues arise, and the extent to which it exhibits candor about its perspectives on grantees’ work. These ratings are slightly lower than REACH’s 2022 results, which were in the top quarter of CEP’s dataset.
- ▶ Of note, as in the Foundation’s past results, certain patterns of interaction are associated with more positive perceptions.
  - One-third of grantees, a much larger proportion than at the typical funder and in 2022, report having contact with their REACH program officer at the least frequent interval - yearly or less often. These grantees provide significantly *less positive* ratings on many measures, including REACH’s impact on their fields and organizations, its approachability and responsiveness, and most measures related to REACH’s contextual understanding, when compared to those who have contact at least a few times per year.
  - Nearly 70 percent of grantees (which continues to be a greater than typical proportion) report having a REACH in-person/virtual site visit. They provide significantly *more positive* ratings on many measures, including the Foundation’s impact on and advancement of knowledge in their fields, and most items related to its contextual understanding and funder-grantee relationships, when compared to those who did not receive a site visit.



*“Every member of REACH’s staff are very friendly, helpful and want you to succeed. They have very timely responses and are respectful of our organization.”*

## Grantees’ Perceptions of the Current Political Climate and REACH’s Strategic Considerations and Future Directions

- ▶ When providing insights into the Foundation’s potential future directions in a series of custom questions, grantees indicate that the Foundation could even further deepen its focus on field leadership, including in its focus on public policy and in bringing together various stakeholders.
- ▶ As in 2022, when asked about potential approaches REACH could take to best advance health and/or racial equity in grantees’ fields or communities of focus, the largest proportion of grantees (roughly two-thirds) request that REACH advocate for public policies that advance health and/or racial equity.

- ▶ When choosing the most important roles (beyond grantmaking) for REACH to play in the future, the largest proportion of grantees (45 percent) select creating collaboration with stakeholders across the nonprofit, public, and private sectors.
- ▶ Relatedly, many grantees indicate that the current political climate will impact their organization's ability to carry out their work, with nearly 80 percent indicating it will negatively impact their work.
- ▶ When asked their most pressing concern for their organization/work at this time, nearly half of grantees (the largest proportions) select the decrease in funding levels and uncertain related to future funding levels.
- ▶ On a custom question, when asked about the key trends and systemic changes that the Foundation should be aware of as it begins its strategic planning process, many grantees express deep concern about the impacts of the current federal administration on funding, attacks on DEI, and healthcare systems and access.



*"It is important for REACH to serve as a connector of grantee organizations. We can no longer operate on an island. With the current political climate, it is more important -- than ever before -- for nonprofits and CBOs to collaborate. We will need to lean on each other's strengths to fill the gaps when it comes to decreased state and federal funding access. REACH is well-positioned to help support collaboration and collective impact among its grantees."*

## CEP Recommendations

Based on its grantee feedback, CEP recommends that the REACH Healthcare Foundation consider the following to build on its strengths and address potential opportunities.

- ▶ Recognize and celebrate grantees' maintained – and in some cases improved – strong ratings across several themes since 2022, including REACH's impact on and thought leadership in their fields, commitment to racial and/or health equity, communications of its goals and strategy, and application and reporting processes.
  - Seek opportunities to identify and reinforce the practices, policies, and elements of REACH's culture that have contributed to these results and ensure the most important factors are codified and carried forward.
- ▶ Similarly to CEP suggested in 2022, reflect on the Foundation's capacity to provide assistance beyond the grant to a larger proportion of grantees.
  - In this, reflect on grantees' desire for the Foundation to take on an even larger role in fostering collaboration and convening.
- ▶ While carefully considering REACH's staff capacity, explore opportunities to further bolster perceptions of understanding of grantees' organizational contexts and aspects of funder-grantee interactions, including by:
  - Reflecting on how the Foundation and its staff develop and demonstrate its understanding of grantees' organizational strategies and goals, and express compassion for those affected by their work. In this, consider how the Foundation's current individual touchpoints and clear communication can be used to demonstrate and reinforce this understanding and compassion with grantees.

- Considering if the Foundation’s capacity allows for more frequent touchpoints – including biannual or quarterly contact, with a larger group of grantees.
- ▶ Given grantees’ concerns about the current political climate’s impact on their current and future funding, as well as their suggestions for the Foundation, reflect on REACH’s capacity to provide larger and/or longer grants to those most aligned with its strategy and goals.

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