EVALUATION OF CLP 2.0

The Community Leadership Project (CLP) was a collaborative effort between the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to help build the capacity of small community-based organizations serving low-income people and communities of color in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Central Coast, and the San Joaquin Valley.

Since 2009 the CLP investment unfolded in two distinct phases. The first phase was a wide-ranging strategy providing support to over 500 organizations through 27 intermediary organizations. Based on lessons learned, the second phase aimed to bolster the long-term sustainability of 57 community-based organizations (community grantees) by focusing specifically on the outcome-areas of: Resilient Leadership, Adaptive Capacity, and Financial Stability.

In partnership with five regranting intermediaries and five technical assistance intermediaries, CLP 2.0 provided integrated and intensive support to community grantees through multi-year general operating support, self-directed capacity building resources, coaching and mentoring, and a structured menu of leadership development and technical assistance options.

WHO WERE THE CLP 2.0 COMMUNITY GRANTEES?

Compared to the first phase, CLP 2.0 targeted community grantees with a narrower range of operating budgets and those with a certain level of operational stability. CLP 2.0 also targeted community grantees perceived to have a baseline readiness to engage in capacity building. Despite the narrowing of eligibility criteria based on budget size and readiness, the 57 community grantees were still quite diverse in terms of organizational characteristics.

- The majority of CLP 2.0 community grantees had been operating between five and 20 years.

- Most community grantees (70 percent) were clustered in the middle of the targeted budget range, with the average operating budget being just under $300,0000 per year.

- Human services and civic engagement made up the primary fields of focus for 60 percent of community grantees.

CLP 2.0 IN BRIEF

$8 million investment focused on increasing the sustainability of small organizations serving low-income people and communities of color

Integrated support for 57 community grantees through 5 regranting intermediaries, with each community grantee receiving:
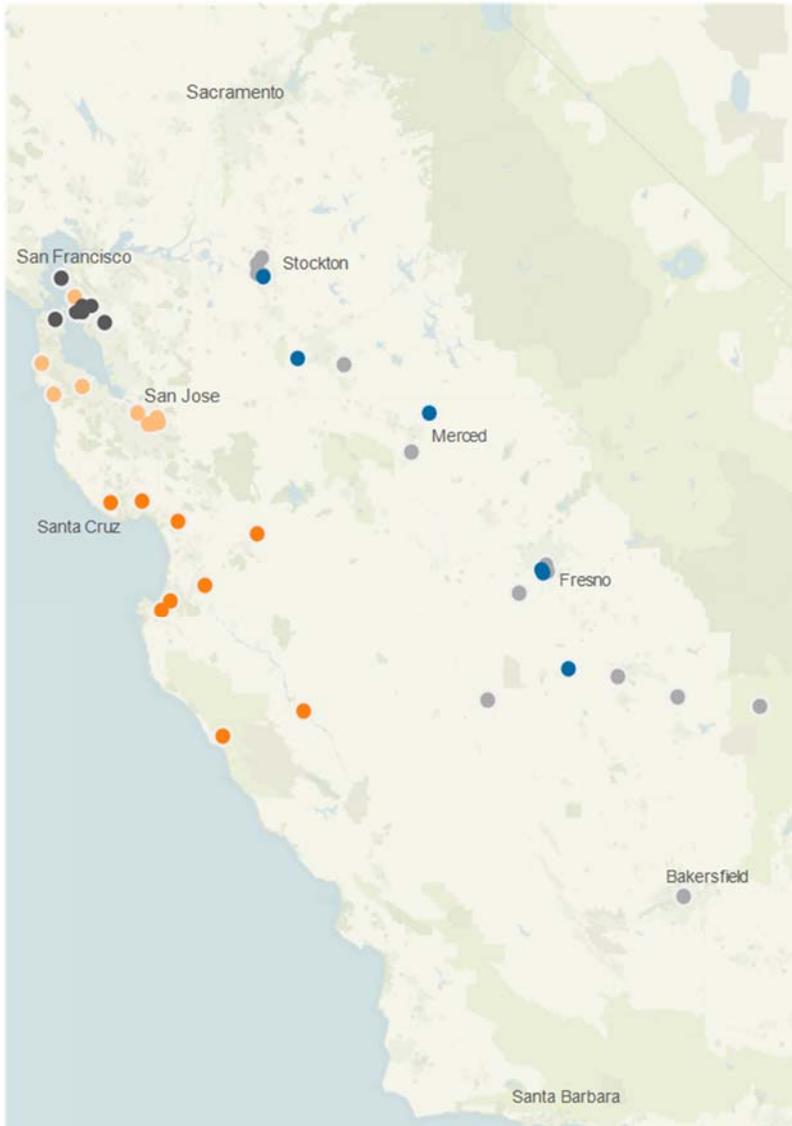
- Multi-year general operating support
- Self-directed capacity building resources
- Coaching and mentoring
- Structured menu of leadership development and technical assistance offered by five CLP funded technical assistance intermediaries
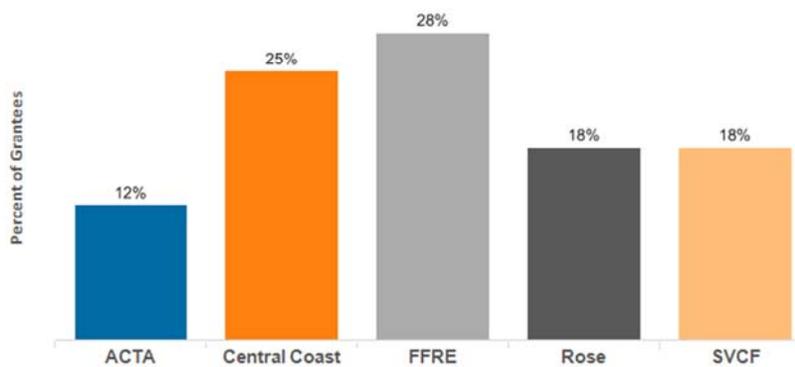
Organizations targeted for support: Small organizations that have achieved a certain level of operational stability but still have relatively small operating budgets, preferably between $50,000-$500,000

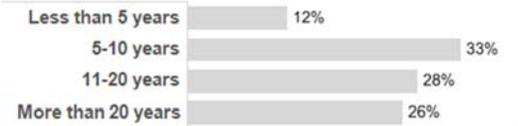Support for 3+ years (2012 to 2016), with exit grant support extending into 2017.
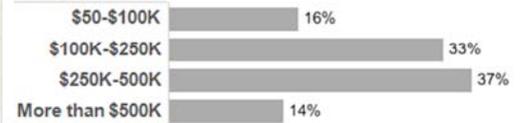
CLP 2.0 COMMUNITY GRANTEES

Age

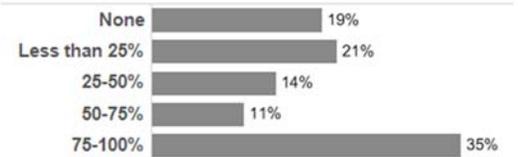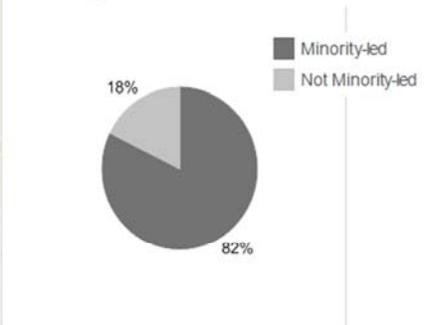|	
Less than 5 years	12%
5-10 years	33%
11-20 years	28%
More than 20 years	26%

Budget

$50-$100K	16%
$100K-$250K	33%
$250K-500K	37%
More than $500K	14%

Volunteers

None	19%
Less than 25%	21%
25-50%	14%
50-75%	11%
75-100%	35%

Minority-led

- Minority-led
- Not Minority-led

18%
82%

Ethnicity Served

Multiple ethnic groups	70%
Latino/a	16%
Asian/ Pacific Islander	7%
African American	5%
Native American	2%

Field

Human Services	32%
Civic Engagement	28%
Health	18%
Arts & Culture	14%
Ethnic & Immigrant Services	9%

Intermediary

Percent of Grantees

ACTA	Central Coast	FFRE	Rose	SVCF
12%	25%	28%	18%	18%

SPR

THE CLP 2.0 SUPPORT MODEL

To ensure that community grantees received the level of resources and support needed to maximize achievement of their capacity-building goals, CLP 2.0 used a tiered approach.

CLP Funders

CLP 2.0 Regranting Intermediaries	CLP 2.0 Technical Assitance Intermediaries

San Joaquin Valley Commuity Grantees	Central Coast Community Grantees	Bay Area Community Grantees

To extend their reach into target communities, the CLP funders identified and provided direct support to five regranting intermediaries (Alliance for California Traditional Arts, Fund for Rural Equity, Central Coast Collaborative, Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment, and Silicon Valley Community Foundation). These intermediaries represented trusted community partners with the capacity to not only fund a discrete portfolio of community grantees, but also to design a capacity-building approach aligned with community grantees' specific needs and contexts.

The approaches of CLP 2.0 regranting intermediaries shared some commonalities that were based on lessons learned from the first phase of CLP: provision of general operating grants to community grantees, front-line assistance with the assessment of capacity-building needs, development of organizational development action plans, encouragement of peer support networks, and provision of coaching and direct capacity-building support.

The CLP funders also identified five technical assistance (TA) intermediaries (CompassPoint, LeaderSpring, Nonprofit Finance Fund, Rockwood Leadership Institute, and Zero Divide). These TA intermediaries had specialized expertise in areas assumed to be of critical importance for strengthening community-based organization: strategic planning, leadership development, finances, and technology.

The five TA intermediaries were diverse in their approach, including their respective areas of focus, as well as the nature and frequency of their interaction with community grantees. The format of support ranged from a cohort-based training series, to individual site visits and assessments. TA intermediaries also varied in the degree to which they adapted pre-existing curricula or approaches to accommodate the perspectives and needs of CLP 2.0 community grantees.

CHANGES IN COMMUNITY GRANTEES

During CLP 2.0 community grantees were expected to make gains in measures of Resilient Leadership, Adaptive Capacity, and Financial Stability. To assess change in these areas, community grantees were administered an online organizational assessment at the beginning and end of their grant period. The assessment covered various aspects of organizational capacity such as fundraising, technology, and community engagement. By the close of CLP 2.0, community grantees made gains in all aspects covered by the survey, with the largest (and statistically significant) gains being in *vision and planning*, *evaluation*, and *board development*.

When the organizational assessment survey questions are mapped to Resilient Leadership, Adaptive Capacity, and Financial Stability, we can see community grantee progress in these CLP 2.0 outcome areas and their sub-measures:

- **Community grantees reported leaving CLP 2.0 with organizational capacity in almost all sub-measures of Resilient Leadership, Adaptive Capacity, and Financial Stability.** Specifically, on the CLP organizational assessment, all but one of the sub-measures (*business model*) had an average score of 3.0 or higher, indicating that—on average—CLP 2.0 organizations "agree" that they have capacity in these areas. Five sub-measures had statistically significant gains during CLP 2.0 (*unified purpose*, *strategic planning*, *network mobilization*, *evaluation*, and *financial systems*).

- **Gains were realized in all three outcome areas, but only Adaptive Capacity had a statistically significant gain.** This was largely fueled by reported gains in two specific Adaptive Capacity sub-measures: *strategic planning* and *evaluation.* While strategic planning was a frequent focus of work among CLP 2.0 community grantees, evaluation was not. Reported gains in evaluation capacity appear connected to its integration with other capacity-building goals, and to the perceived impact of CLP 2.0 on organizations' willingness to engage in self-reflection.

- **Though Financial Stability remained the lowest rated among the three outcome areas, community grantees did realize gains.** The sub-measures of *financial systems* and *data-driven decision making* showed the greatest growth. Interviews with community grantees and their regrantors suggest that even modest gains in this capacity area can be critical to organizational stability. A few grantees significantly increased and diversified their funding. CLP 2.0 impacted community grantees' ability to put in place appropriate financial systems and processes. Realized increases in financial literacy of organizational leaders also contributed to progress in this outcome area.

- **Meaningful gains were also realized in Resilient Leadership.** An overall average gain in Resilient Leadership among community grantees was driven largely by an increased rating of the *unified purpose* sub-measure of Resilient Leadership. Board development was a prime area of work and accomplishment for community grantees in this area.

Community grantees reflected on the ultimate difference that CLP 2.0 support made not only on their organizational strength, but also their prospects for sustainability. **Close to 67% of community grantee respondents to a final survey indicated that CLP 2.0 had made "a tremendous difference" on their organization's overall strength and sustainability.** Furthermore, 70.6% of respondents said their chances for long-term sustainability were "significantly better" after CLP 2.0.

Finally, **large percentages of CLP 2.0 grantees believed they gained a framework to think about their growth within an organizational development framework, as well as exposure to capacity-building tools.** While economic and political forces may erode specific capacity gains made through CLP 2.0, this shift in *capacity-building mindset* will serve community grantees well in weathering challenges and accessing necessary resources to meet the ebbs and flows of organizational development.

CHANGES IN FUNDERS AND INTERMEDIARIES

In addition to reflecting on how their community grantees had grown over CLP 2.0, funders and intermediaries also reflected on how the CLP experience shaped *them*. Key ways were:

- Application of CLP learning in organizational practice and programming;

- Sustained organizational focus on capacity building; and

- Ongoing field leadership and commitment to capacity-building work.

An under-emphasized area of learning and impact was in the area of *culturally responsive* capacity building. While multiple intermediaries and funders emphasized how their CLP 2.0 experience changed

how they think about approaches for supporting small and mid-sized organizations, few substantially discussed how they used a racial or cultural lens in capacity-building approaches. As was the case in CLP 1.0, stakeholders were more likely to discuss culture in the context of region or organizational size.

AN EMERGING CLP 2.0 NETWORK

Though not an explicitly expected outcome, the evaluation examined how CLP 2.0 might have contributed to building relationships and networks across community grantees and intermediaries.

Almost 73% of community grantee respondents to a final survey indicated that they gained new/improved relationships with other organizations in their region serving similar low-income communities and communities of color. Further, many interviewed community grantees noted that their regional cohort meetings and yearly CLP 2.0 grantee convenings were just as important and useful as the various capacity-building workshops they attended because of the opportunity to share challenges and successes with their peers.

As part of a social network analysis (SNA) we looked at how connections changed over time between CLP 2.0 organizations (community grantees, regrantors, and leadership/TA intermediaries). Whereas the pre-CLP 2.0 relationships are relatively sparse, the network is noticeably denser by the end of CLP 2.0. This reflects a greater network density calculation, and suggests that CLP 2.0 community grantees now have relationships that could be leveraged beyond the close of CLP. Looking at the same post-CLP 2.0 map by regional subgroups revealed that the networks being built are more intra-regional versus inter-regional in nature.

NETWORK CONNECTIONS, PRE- AND POST-CLP 2.0

Pre-CLP 2.0	Post-CLP 2.0
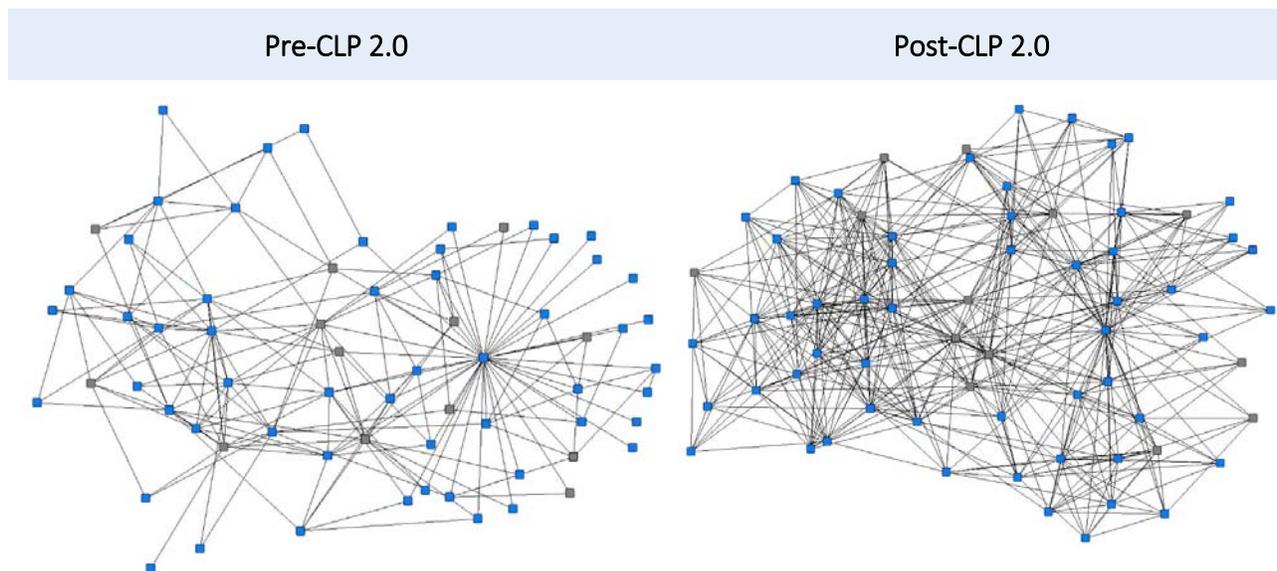
WHAT DID WE LEARN?

CLP 2.0's capacity-building approach was based on the specific needs of small to mid-sized community-based organizations operating in diverse, low-income communities. Several lessons emerged from the implementation of this approach:

- Organizational stability and self-reflection are important markers of readiness for undertaking capacity building.

- Pairing continuous general operating support with funds specifically earmarked for capacity building is critical.

- To maximize impact, capacity-building support for small to mid-size organizations must be accompanied by active mentoring and navigation.

- Flexibility and willingness to adapt offerings is core to TA provider effectiveness.

- Some technical assistance menu resources may have been better used for more individualized assessment and technical assistance.

Beyond lessons learned about capacity building approaches, at the sunset of CLP 2.0, a number of larger reflections emerged on the design and goals of the overall initiative:

- CLP 2.0's regranting model was imperative for ensuring nuanced, hands-on capacity-building support for small to mid-sized organizations.
- CLP 2.0's focus on organizational sustainability provided a useful framework for the alignment of capacity-building supports.
- A "capacity-building mindset" should have been an explicit, and perhaps the most central goal of CLP 2.0.
- While not a part of the CLP 2.0 design, peer networks were important as both a capacity-building strategy and a potential sustainable outcome.
- The impact of TA resources at the initiative-level may have been greater with more upfront and ongoing coordination.
- The CLP 2.0 initiative may have benefitted from a coordinating body and/or navigator to bridge the gap between learning and implementation.

The CLP journey has been a tremendous one—a rich and complex endeavor to strengthen small community-based organizations through partnerships between community grantees, funders, regrantors, and TA/leadership intermediaries. The Hewlett, Packard, and Irvine Foundations have provided critical initiative leadership and a striking model of inter-funder collaboration. While the intention has never been to expand or replicate this initiative, CLP 2.0 has an undeniably important story to tell—not just to those in philanthropy, but to anyone interested in sound initiative design, solid partnerships, and realistic, effective capacity-building strategies.