
**The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven
Communities of Color Initiative
Executive Summary
October 2002**

Objectives

The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven through its *Communities of Color Initiative*, assumed a leadership role to reach out to promote philanthropy in diverse ethnic communities. Rosario & Associates, on behalf of the foundation, facilitated *focus conversations* within the African American and Latino communities, to explore issues that might have impact on future key strategies of the initiative.

Methodology

Rosario & Associates utilized two consultants to facilitate the *focus conversations*: Rosaida Morales Rosario, President of Rosario & Associates, and Dr. Norm Davis, professor at Albertus Magnus. Rosaida Morales Rosario is Puerto Rican and fluently bilingual (Spanish/English) and Dr. Davis is African American.

There were eight 2-hour conversations with groups from the African American community as well as the Latino community. Each community had no more than five focus groups with strategic representation from business leaders, community leaders, political leaders, young professionals and the faith community, respectively. Thirty-six participants attended the *focus conversations*, twenty-seven African American/Blacks and nine Latinos. The participants were identified by the Foundation staff and board members. Invitations and follow-up before the *focus conversations* was conducted by the Foundation staff. A list of participants is included as Addendum #1.

Both facilitators used a similar *focus conversation* format, which had key questions to guide the discussion. The format and key questions were decided on during a planning meeting with Foundation staff prior to the start of the project. Key questions were:

1. What is the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven's image in the African American/Black /Latino community?
2. What are the Top Priority Issues facing the African American/Black/Latino community?
3. What is the appropriate role for the Foundation in addressing these Top Priority Issues?

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4. How can we increase the charitable giving in the African American/Black/Latino community?

The following additional question was asked of the Community/Non Profit Leaders:

5. What technical assistance do you think the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven should provide to the nonprofit community?

The following additional question was asked only of the African American/Black Clergy because the Latino Clergy focus group has not convened:

6. What is the best way to engage the faith community?

Facilitators noted key comments on flipchart paper as the group deliberated and taped all *focus conversations*. These *focus conversations* were held in the conference room of the Greater The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven during the month of September 2002.

These notes and tapes were analyzed, and the following report includes:

1. Overall Findings: Recurrent themes between the African American and Latino Community Conversations
2. Key Differences & Similarities among the African American/Black subgroups
3. Key Differences & Similarities among the Latino subgroups

Overall Findings: Recurrent Themes between the African American and Latino Community Conversations

It is clear from the results of all the African American/Black and Latino Community Conversations that such dialogue with the communities of color is needed and wanted on an on-going basis. The foundation world in general seems to be little known and poorly understood in the communities of color. What is known or perceived is not positive. Perceptions on the image of the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven specifically which are broadly held are that:

- (1) *The foundation is non-responsive to "Communities of Color";*
- (2) *Some said the image is that the foundation is elitist, giving to traditional or "more white" organizations;*
- (3) *The foundation is overly bureaucratic and difficult to navigate;*

The good news is that all focus groups felt that the community conversations were a step in the right direction and every participant without exception wanted to continue participating and improving upon the relationship.

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Lack of quality education and lack of economic development and opportunities emerged as top priorities for all focus groups across both communities. Additionally, these issues were seen as systemic issues and racism was seen as a root cause.

Funding of initiatives was an obvious and appropriate role for the foundation. However, both communities spoke of wanting to see collaboratives formed in their specific communities, which would help, identify issues and solutions as well as assist in the implementation of those solutions. They felt that the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven could play a convening role initially and then should fund the on-going research and facilitation for the collaboratives as well as any projects for implementation that emerged from the planning. In addition, the Foundation could play a valuable role in convening other funding sources to look at how and what they fund in the communities of color and to contribute to funding projects emerging from the collaboratives.

With respect to capacity building both communities agreed that it was necessary but the Latino focus groups were more specific in their needs. They identified:

- *Fund administrative infrastructure particularly financial management;*
- *Fund fund development, research and planning-build capacity for agencies to be able to successfully apply and receive money from foundation, individual donors and other sources;*
- *Fund capacity building in the area of evaluation and outcome measurements;*
- *Fund technology: increasing and updating computer systems, software and staff training;*
- *Fund leadership development within Latino community-Help recruit and train a new generation of Latino leadership (corporate and non-profit) for boards and staff;*
- *Board development; and*
- *Staff Development*

When responding to “*How can we increase the charitable giving in the African American/Black and Latino communities*” there was general agreement to the following:

- *Foundation must gain trust and credibility by:*
 - (1) *Becoming more visible in the communities of color;*
 - (2) *Marketing NHF and showing concretely how NHF is investing/giving in the African American/Black and Latino communities;*
- *Provide more support for African American/Black and Latino community programs;*
- *Provide assistance to help establish African American/Black and Latino separate funds; provide match/challenge grant and manage funds.*

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