

Pikes Peak Volunteer Engagement Initiative

Grant Type: Dollar and nondollar

Grant Amount: \$10,000 per year in expenses; \$40,000 in volunteer impact grants

Organization: The Leighty Foundation



What was the objective of your grant or initiative?

The Pikes Peak Volunteer Engagement Initiative seeks to build the capacity of local organizations to expand their impact through the effective engagement of volunteers. Led by lead convener, The Leighty Foundation, it is now in its third year of working to increase the impact of volunteer resources in 25 participating organizations.

What was your approach?

Key elements of the Pikes Peak Volunteer Engagement Initiative include:

- **Convening**—Focus groups of nonprofit executive directors convened by the foundation identified organizational needs and issues related to volunteer engagement.
- **Partnerships**—To expand support and leverage organizational expertise, the foundation partnered with other community organizations, including Pikes Peak United Way's Volunteer Center and the Center for Nonprofit Excellence.
- **Training**—A symposium and peer learning sessions were offered; they included education, assessment, and action planning to expand, enhance, and institutionalize their volunteer engagement strategies and practices.
- **Return on investment**—Following the symposium, participating nonprofits were invited to apply for a Volunteer Impact Grant of \$1,000–\$5,000 to assist them in

further developing a healthy organizational culture and enhanced infrastructure to support high-impact volunteering.

- **Evaluation**—The foundation will continue to follow, support, and develop criteria to evaluate the community impact of this initiative in partnership with their grantees.

What were the outsized results?

Foundation leaders believe this work has produced an outsized return on their annual investment of \$50,000 and would like it to serve as a model for funders who want to play a role in increasing the impact of their community's most valuable renewable resource: volunteer energy.

After 2 years, the foundation is still working closely with 20 of the original 25 organizations, which have seen measurable results in increased organizational understanding of the value of and commitment to the empowerment of volunteer resources; expansion of their grantees' current work; and the addition of critical programs created and managed by volunteers.

