

# Staff Development

Grant Type: Dollar

Grant Amount: \$5,000

Organization: John Gogian Family Foundation



## What was the objective of your grant or initiative?

We award organizations general operating support (GOS), but heard from many executive directors that it is difficult for them to carve out funds from our grant for staff development. So, in addition to the GOS grant, we added a small grant specifically designated for staff development.

## What was your approach?

Listening to grantees and learning of their need for staff development, we were able to meet that need with a few adjustments to our grantmaking program. We needed to issue two checks (one restricted), but only required our grantees to provide a two- to three-paragraph report on how the funds were used.

## What were the outsized results?

After receiving this grant, Rainbow Services decided on a theme for their 2013-2014 staff development: "Finding Our Individual Strength." They provided each staff member with a copy of the book *StrengthsFinder 2.0* by Tom Rath. Each book had a personal key to an online assessment tool; once the assessment was completed, the system generated a report that included insight

into each individual's top five strengths and an action-planning guide to prompt further development of skills related to each strength.

Rainbow held a staff retreat in October 2013. They mapped out their strengths and discussed how those strengths impacted their day-to-day work together. Then, in a team project, they spent part of the day doing activities that encouraged the use of specific skills to illustrate how specific skill areas can be applied to a variety of tasks. They also provided time for personal reflection and offered fun physical activities.

This grant allowed the organization to go beyond a "recognition" lunch for its staff and actually assist with personal staff development and team building.

Foundations can make a great impact with small amounts of money if you listen, ask, and act!

