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## **LEADERSHIP RECOGNITION PROGRAMS: *A SCAN OF THE FIELD***

**Prepared for the James Irvine Foundation  
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## I. INTRODUCTION

Philanthropic foundations are increasingly interested in supporting the nonprofit sector through leadership recognition and leadership development. The James Irvine Foundation, based in San Francisco, California, recently engaged Putnam Community Investment Consulting (PCIC) to conduct a scan of the leadership recognition field and advise management on the possible creation of a statewide leadership recognition program. This report presents the findings from that scan.

The authors' key findings are that:

- Well-developed leadership recognition programs can be a win-win for recipients and sponsoring organizations;
- Recognition programs do support the nonprofit sector and appear to raise the visibility of key issues; however, they are less likely to lead people to *action* on their own;
- There is a choice of where to position the award on the continuum between leadership “recognition” and “development;” and
- There are no clear models of leadership recognition programs – but there are distinct building blocks with which to design a program.

## II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The specific research objectives of this scan were to:

- Identify foundation and nonprofit leadership recognition models that lead people to issues and support the non-profit sector;
- Assess the administration, recruitment, selection, communications, and evaluation issues related to leadership recognition programs; and
- Identify potential strategies, target participants, outcomes, impact, and niche of a new leadership recognition program, and how that program would advance the Foundation's mission.

In order to answer the questions outlined in the research objectives above, PCIC first developed criteria for identifying programs for further research. Since there are hundreds, if not thousands, of leadership programs across the United States, only those that met the following criteria were included:

- Recognition of leadership is primary goal of the program (not a by-product of a fellowship, for example);

- The program addresses criteria of importance to the Irvine Foundation: it “leads people to issues” and/or “supports the nonprofit sector” via enhancing organizational or individual capacity.

In addition, the authors sought to select a diverse portfolio of programs representing various issues and fields, geographical reach (local, national, global), and various program models. Efforts were also made to select several programs covering a variety of interest areas (e.g., arts, youth, and the environment).

Using these criteria, a high-level review was conducted to identify a preliminary list of organizations for interviews. This included reviewing relevant literature (including other scans in the field), searching the Internet using multiple key terms, sending email requests to two industry intermediaries’ listserves (the Leadership Learning Community and the International Leadership Association), and emailing 35 leadership experts. From an initial list of 30 leadership recognition programs, primary data were collected through phone interviews with 15 of these organizations: ten were sponsored by foundations and five by nonprofits. Every effort was made to speak with the program manager. Finally, data were analyzed from the interviews and other sources, and findings were compiled into this report and a detailed database on leadership recognition and awards programs. All work was conducted in a five-week period in July and August, 2004. A complete list of those interviewed is located in the Appendix A.

It is important to note that this scan was focused on the needs of The James Irvine Foundation, and is not an exhaustive survey of all recognition programs.

### III. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. Well-developed recognition programs can be a win-win for recipients and sponsoring organizations.

The experts we interviewed highlighted many examples of how their recognition programs benefited nonprofit leaders. Some examples include:

- Grassroots violence prevention leaders being called upon by public officials to serve on state-wide commissions;
- Community health leaders being invited to partner with local hospitals for the first time;
- Organizations leveraging additional funding;
- A youth environmental activist being invited to join the board of directors of a major national environmental organization; and
- An AIDS activist having an opportunity to meet with top global AIDS leaders.

This research identified the following value of recognition programs to various stakeholders:

Honoree	Organization	Field	Foundation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Creates recognition</li> <li>✓ Provides funding, legitimacy, credibility, access, training, knowledge</li> <li>✓ Builds network</li> <li>✓ Creates peer cohort</li> <li>✓ Allows time off</li> <li>✓ Increases commitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Creates recognition</li> <li>✓ Provides funding, reputation, credibility</li> <li>✓ Builds capacity</li> <li>✓ Expands network</li> <li>✓ Enables collaboration with similar organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Builds the field</li> <li>✓ Raises awareness of issue</li> <li>✓ Energizes practitioners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Builds brand awareness</li> <li>✓ Achieves foundation's goals</li> <li>✓ Leverages mechanism for fund allocation</li> <li>✓ Builds relationships in field</li> <li>✓ Identifies expertise for future planning</li> <li>✓ Exposes foundation to people &amp; organizations outside of program areas</li> </ul>

#### 2. Recognition programs do support the nonprofit sector and appear to raise the visibility of key issues; however, they are less likely to lead people to *action* on their own.

According to our research, recognition programs are effective in supporting the nonprofit sector in seven critical ways:

- Encouraging emerging and seasoned nonprofit leaders to stay in the field
- Advancing leaders' success in moving their agenda and creating change
- Training leaders to be better at what they do
- Motivating leaders and organizations to achieve more

- Generating new thinking and ideas for the field
- Disseminating new models or best practices
- Providing direct funding to nonprofit organizations

Many recognition programs have an explicit goal to increase the visibility of an issue or field, but it appears more difficult for a recognition program to invoke action on the part of others. Some interviewees expressed concern over whether an awards program can really lead people to issues—the impact is not direct. There is some evidence, however, that recognition programs can be effective components of larger foundation strategies to engage people or raise their awareness of particular issues.

We found several recognition programs that aim to raise awareness about their target issue:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Goal for raising visibility</b>
Americans for the Arts	Increase awareness of the arts.
Ashoka Fellows	Increase visibility of social entrepreneurship; build the field and profession.
Champions of Health Professions Diversity Award (TCWF)	Raise the issue of health diversity among opinion leaders and policy makers.
Goldman Environmental Prize	Draw attention to international environmental issues.
Hilton Humanitarian Prize	Call attention to humanitarian efforts.
Peace Prize (TCWF)	Raise awareness of violence prevention as a public health issue, and build the field.
Public Policy Leadership Award (TCWF)	Increase policymakers' awareness of the need for improved health in California.
Quest for Quality Award (AHA)	Raise issue of the quality of patient care among hospital administrators.
Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurs	Increase awareness about social entrepreneurship.

*Note: TCWF refers to The California Wellness Foundation, which sponsors multiple leadership programs mentioned here. AHA refers to the American Hospital Association.*

When asked about specific strategies to increase an award program's ability to raise visibility of an issue, interviewees offered the following strategies:

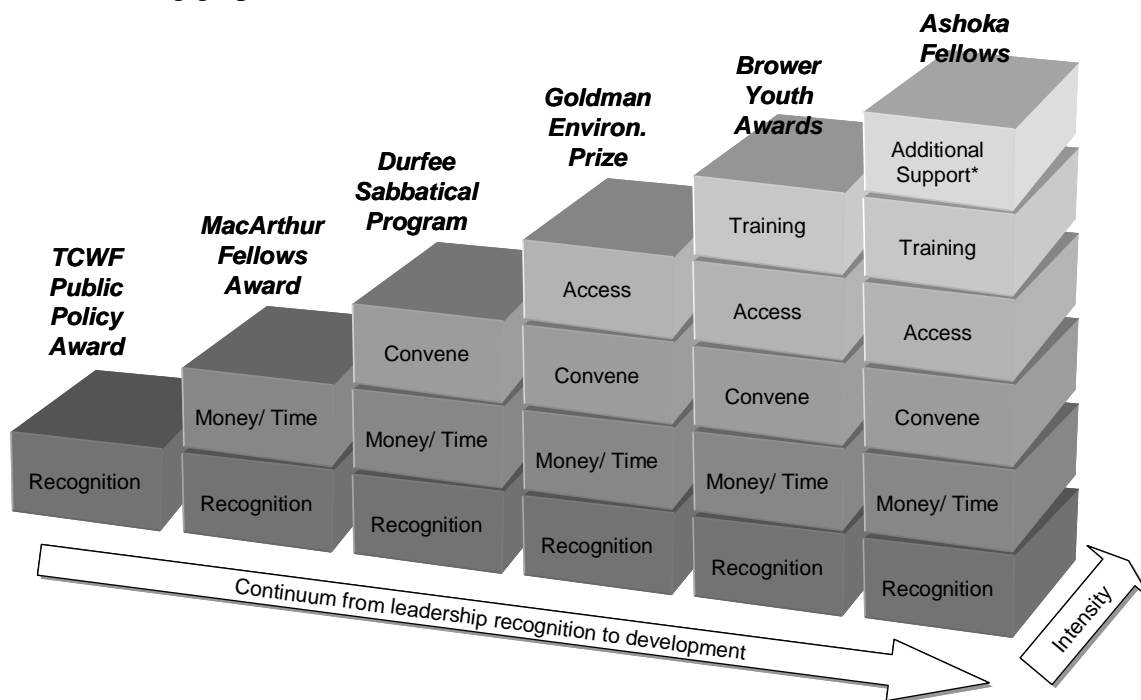
- *Link the award ceremony to a conference or gathering.* For example, the Hilton Foundation organizes an invitation-only conference for international decision-makers working on humanitarian issues. This one-day “think tank” is held in Geneva, New York or Washington D.C. to facilitate attendance of invited participants. The California Wellness Foundation's (TCWF) Champions of Health Professions Diversity Award also organizes a one-day session following the award. The gathering allows grantees working in the health field to network and share best practices, and TCWF pays for participants' travel expenses.
- *Coordinate the award program with other foundation efforts,* in order to expand program reach and awardee benefit. For example, the TCWF's Peace Prize was originally developed as part of a 10-year Violence Prevention Initiative, which included grants to community based organizations, policy advocacy, media advocacy, and two other leadership programs.

- *Conduct targeted media and communications campaigns.* This includes being very clear about who your target audience is and isn't. It is reasonable to hope that all California legislators know about the award, but unrealistic to aim for general public awareness.

**3. There is a choice of where to position an award on the continuum between leadership “recognition” and “development”.**

Many recognition programs, in addition to offering recognition and a monetary award, provide additional programming to enhance leadership success. It is helpful to think about a *continuum* of leadership recognition and development, along the lines of the building blocks illustrated below, and also the *depth* of developmental supports offered to the honoree. For example, a recognition program could arrange for honorees to meet with their legislators and provide a half-day training on policy advocacy, whereas a development program might design a year-long agenda around building the advocacy skills of leaders of color.

The following graphic illustrates this continuum:



\* Includes mentoring, peer networks, additional sabbaticals, educational opportunities, etc.

This model is explained in more detail on the following page.

One expert in the evaluation of leadership programs had this to say about the distinction between leadership recognition and development programs:

*Award programs in their purest form seem to be programs that recognize people for their accomplishments, accompanied by money that has no strings or requirements attached to it...Leadership development programs are more explicit about increasing self-awareness about oneself as a leader, increasing personal mastery, or it may be more explicitly competency-based, such as increasing advocacy skills...Having said all this, I would also say that one of the most powerful aspects of any leadership development program is the recognition the leader receives from being selected to participate.*

#### **4. There are no clear models of leadership recognition programs – but there are distinct building blocks with which to design a program.**

Though there is no distinct “typology” among leadership recognition programs, there are fairly consistent design *elements* that comprise most of these programs—as illustrated in the graphic on the previous page:

- **Recognition**—the act of selecting and publicly recognizing the award recipient, such as through an awards ceremony or media outreach. It often includes a physical “award” such as a medal or a plaque.
- **Money and/or Time**—funding provided to the award recipient and/or time off for a sabbatical. Funding varies from having no strings attached (such as the MacArthur Fellows Awards) to requiring that recipients provide great detail on how they will use the funds (Skoll Awards for Social Entrepreneurship). Monetary awards range from several thousand to over a million dollars. Time off allocated for a sabbatical is generally between one to three months, and often funds are provided to the recipient’s organization to cover the leader’s absence.
- **Convening**—bringing together the award recipients, possibly with foundation grantees working on the same issue, or key decision-makers in the field. Some foundation’s recognition programs sponsor a one-day conference to coincide with the awards ceremony (e.g., the Hilton Humanitarian Prize). Others, such as the Durfee Sabbatical Program, organize retreats for current and former award recipients. Such gatherings include opportunities for networking and structured learning.
- **Access and Exposure**—opportunities to open doors for award recipients to key decision-makers, and to position them to assume greater leadership responsibility. Recognition programs can make key introductions, set up meetings with legislators, and organize site visits to other organizations. Access and exposure to people outside the recipients’ existing network—such as business leaders, politicians, and others doing similar work in other geographic areas—can help break down barriers and facilitate the recipients’



development.<sup>1</sup> The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Community Health Leadership Program brings award recipients to Washington D.C., arranges for them to meet with their Representatives and Senators, and coaches them on how to prepare for the meetings.

- **Training**—providing skills-building workshops. Training can vary widely, and many leadership program administrators stress the importance of flexibility in training, and being responsive to leaders’ needs. Training sessions mentioned by interviewees included: how to communicate with the media, policy advocacy, nonprofit management, and even a wilderness expedition for young environmental leaders. Some programs, such as the Ford Foundation’s Leadership for a Changing World, provide stipends for leaders to purchase their own training and professional development.
- **Additional Support**—includes a range of programmatic “add-ons” to support the leaders. It can include mentoring (Brower Youth Awards), the facilitation of peer networks or cohorts among award recipients who meet regularly (Ashoka Fellows), and opportunities for sabbaticals following completion of the original award (Community Health Leadership Program). There is a real opportunity for creativity with these additional supports, depending on the needs of the awardees and the resources available.

Leadership recognition experts interviewed were quick to point out that just because a leader is being recognized by an organization, they are not necessarily interested in or have the time for additional programming, such as being part of a peer network, training, or creating a work plan of how the funds will be used. This varies depending on whether the honoree applied for the award or was nominated in secret by others. One interviewee commented, *“It is great when the awardee can do whatever they want with the money, with no strings attached. If you get recognized and then have another ‘job’ to do, then it can become a burden.”*

The following table illustrates the program elements of the awards programs interviewed.

	Recognition	Money	Convene	Access	Training	Other Support
Brower Youth Awards	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Mentoring Peer Network
RWJ Community Health Leaders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Sabbatical
Ashoka Fellows	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Peer Network
Hilton Humanitarian Prize	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Goldman Environmental Prize	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Skoll Awards for Social Entrepreneurs	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Champions of Health Professions (TCWF)	✓	✓	✓			
Durfee Sabbatical	✓	✓	✓			

<sup>1</sup> For additional information on the importance of access, positioning and exposure for leaders of color, see Marsh, DS, Hawk, M, and Putnam, K (2003). *Leadership for Policy Change: Strengthening Communities of Color Through Leadership Development*. Available at <http://www.policylink.org>.

Program						
Leadership for Changing World (Ford)	✓	✓	✓			
Americans for the Arts Awards	✓	✓	✓			
CA Peace Prize (TCWF)	✓	✓				
MacArthur Fellows	✓	✓				
Quest for Quality (AHA)	✓	✓				
Public Policy Leadership Award (TCWF)	✓					

Note: RWJ refers to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

## V. PROGRAM DESIGN

### The Key Question: Leadership Recognition for What?

Any foundation interested in creating a new leadership recognition program, should ask itself *leadership for what?* What is the sponsoring organization trying to accomplish, and is leadership *recognition* the best way to get there—as opposed to leadership development, providing grants, or administering other kinds of programs?

There are many different goals of leadership recognition programs. In her report, *Awards Programs as a Philanthropic Strategy*, Caroline Tower outlines the following purposes<sup>2</sup>:

- Honor / memorialize someone special to or connected with the sponsoring organization;
- Draw attention to or lift up the visibility of specific issues or a set of values;
- Recognize individuals working on specific issues or exemplifying a particular set of values;
- Enhance the career of promising individuals who could make a difference in their field;
- Enhance the visibility and capacity of promising organizations that can serve as models;
- Produce a body of knowledge or stimulate specific actions; and/or
- Enhance the visibility/credibility of the sponsoring organization.

Once a foundation has determined its goals and objectives for a recognition program, creating a “theory of change” can help clarify the assumptions, resources, activities, and outcomes it expects to achieve. Such a process can also help determine whether a recognition program is the best way to reach those goals as opposed to grants, an initiative, or some other programmatic intervention.

<sup>2</sup> Tower, C. (2002). *Award Programs As Philanthropic Strategy: Options, Benefits And Drawbacks*. Available at <http://www.chcf.org/documents/other/AwardProgramsReport.pdf>

## Target Market

The majority of awards programs recognize individuals, including most of those studied in this scan. Only two programs interviewed recognize organizations. A third program primarily recognizes individuals but has given the award to organizations, and another award honors both individuals and groups of individuals. Within the subset of individuals, there are different ways to hone the target market for an award:

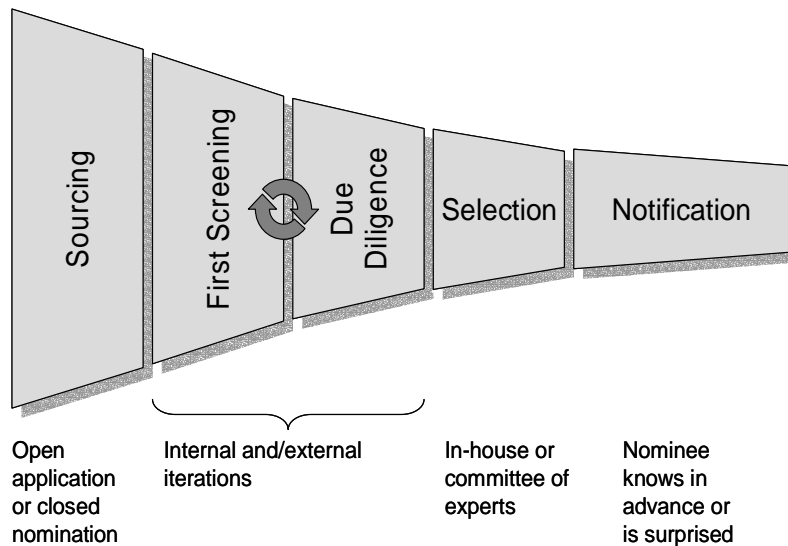
- **Age and Stage**—Awards programs are offered for youth, emerging leaders (newer to the field), mid-career professionals (those who have worked in the field for 7-15 years, and/or between mid 30s to late 40s), and seasoned professionals (those whose entire careers have been devoted to the issue). People in different stages of development have different needs, and program design should be crafted accordingly. Experts in leadership *development* programs advise not mixing people at different stages because their needs are so diverse—it creates too much complexity in program development. But less intensive *recognition* programs could do this more easily.
- **Ethnicity and Culture**—Depending on the program goal, recognition programs might seek to focus on certain ethnic communities, underserved groups such as people of color, or be open to all leaders.
- **Gender and Sexual Orientation**—Again, depending on the program goal, a recognition program might be focused on highlighting women leaders or the GLBT community, or it could include all leaders.
- **Issue Area**—A recognition program may choose to focus entirely on one issue area (such as the arts), very specific issues areas (such as quality of care in hospitals), or no issue at all (the broader nonprofit field). Recognition programs can focus on different issues each year, or different themes within an issue each year.
- **Sector**—A nonprofit recognition program could stay focused on the sector by recognizing only nonprofit leaders (Durfee Sabbatical Program), it could recognize people outside the sector whose work supports nonprofits (Public Policy Awards Program), or it could highlight different leaders across sectors who are all making contributions to the field (e.g. low-income housing activists, housing developers, and policy makers whose legislation increases funding for supportive housing).

The target market should become clear once the program goals and theory of change are clarified. It is worth noting that, while there is ample opportunity to be creative in identifying the award recipients, too much variety can be confusing to everyone involved—nominators, potential recipients, the media, and the public—and risks undermining success of the program.

## Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment process is one of the most important aspects of the program, since the candidates identified will comprise the pool from which the foundation selects its award recipients. Almost everyone interviewed emphasized the importance of tying the recruitment and selection process to program goals, and having clearly defined and communicated criteria. They also advised being very clear about the process and maintaining confidence that, if properly designed, it will bring you the right candidates. As one interviewee commented, “*Trust that if you pick the right people the rest will happen organically.*”

The following graphic illustrates the recruitment and selection pipeline:



The first critical decision is whether the foundation prefers an open or closed nomination process. Ruth Norris, in her report to the Skoll Foundation, provides a succinct overview of the pros and cons of each option (content in this table has been edited for space)<sup>3</sup>:

<sup>3</sup> Norris, R. (2004). Awards and Prizes Honoring Social Entrepreneurs, Innovators and Leaders: A Comparative Study. Available from <http://www.skollfoundation.org>.

Open Applications	Closed Nominations
<p><b>Advantages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brings more quality people to light</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greater transparency</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> May provide useful insight to foundation about how applicants self-identify</li> </ul>	<p><b>Advantages :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quality of nominators add credibility to award</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can manage number of nominations</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficient</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disadvantages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Usually does not bring in balanced portfolio of applicants</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Potential negative repercussions from rejected applicants</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High administrative load – resource intensive</li> </ul>	<p><b>Disadvantages :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of transparency</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nominators interpretation of criteria may diverge from intent</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Worthy people may be missed</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tendency to nominate “usual suspects”</li> </ul>

The process of screening, reviewing, and selecting potential candidates can be conducted entirely in-house, outsourced, or in combination, such as by involving external experts and reviewers (grantees, previous awardees, or content experts). This process can be as simple or as complex as needed, depending on the foundation’s goals, the program, and the number of applicants.

To take one example of a straightforward sourcing and selection process, the Public Policy Leadership Program (TCWF) identified four state legislators who were being “termed-out” and who it thought had made significant improvements in health policy. After confirming their choices with key health advocates, the foundation affirmed its selection. By contrast, much larger and well known programs, such as the Goldman Environmental Prize and the MacArthur Fellows program experience extremely time intensive efforts: *“We’re a small staff. It’s a huge thing, this prize. As soon as we announce the award we start researching for next year. It’s ongoing.”*

### **Award Amount**

There are several different considerations to make when deciding upon the award amount:

- ***Appropriate for the goal of the program***—If the goal is to be “the Nobel Prize for California’s nonprofit leaders” then a very large award is expected. But if the goal is to support youth leaders, then a very large award might seem misaligned. *“It doesn’t have to be a huge amount of money like the MacArthur ‘Genius’ Awards. An award of \$30,000 to \$50,000 can have a huge impact.”*

- ***Significance to the award recipient***—The award should be significant to and appropriate for the recipients. It is important to recognize that larger award amounts are not necessarily better. Low-income leaders who feel their efforts are part of a larger struggle might be uncomfortable with large awards going to them for personal use.<sup>4</sup>
- ***Whether strings are attached***—Awardees who are asked to take time away from their family and jobs to participate in training sessions, gatherings, and media events should be provided with sufficient funding so that it is more than worth their time. It is also worth noting that the more strings are attached, the more the “award” starts to resemble a grant.
- ***Desire for visibility***—Award programs with large monetary amounts get more visibility and attention than smaller awards. There are a few exceptions to this: The Baldrige National Quality Award offers no money, but is highly prestigious in industry.
- ***Opportunities for multiple financial awards***—Depending on program goals, it might be appropriate to give multiple awards. The Ford Foundation’s Leadership for a Changing World program provides \$100,000 over two years to the leader’s organization, and \$15,000 to further the leader’s own development. The Durfee Sabbatical Program provides \$30,000 to cover the organization’s expenses while the director is gone, while remaining funds can be used to support personal expenses of the leader while on sabbatical.

## Media and Communications

Almost all program administrators interviewed emphasized the difficulty of getting media coverage. Many media outlets have policies against covering awards, and it is rumored that at least one major newspaper is considering no longer covering the MacArthur Fellows because the nominations process is so secretive. Other foundations have battled competing news stories. For example, the Goldman Environmental Awards program award conducts most of its media work in late April, which in the past years coincided with the Waco raid, the Oklahoma City bombing, an earthquake in Southern California, the Rodney King riots, and the Columbine shootings.<sup>5</sup>

Many programs emphasized the importance of pitching the stories of awardees over stories of the awards program, the sponsoring organization, or the concept of leadership. They also encouraged recognition programs to know their audiences and to tailor media and communications strategies to their audiences. They emphasized that it is more important that the target audience knows about the awardees than the general public.

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<sup>4</sup> Organizers of grassroots environmental justice efforts expressed such sentiments in Putnam, K and Leslie, J. (2002). *Evidence and Recommendations for a Leadership Recognition Program in Work and Health*. Internal report to The California Wellness Foundation.

<sup>5</sup> Norris (2004).

Strategies for increasing media coverage used by those interviewed include:

Award Program	Media Tactic
Various (TCWF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invited the entire state legislature to attend the award ceremony.</li> <li>- Focused media coverage in Sacramento, for a statewide program with policy implications.</li> <li>- Took out full page ads in key newspapers to announce the award and highlight awardees (e.g., the <i>California Journal</i>).</li> <li>- Created poster of all awardees over 10 years, which was sent to policymakers, and was seen hanging in several offices.</li> </ul>
Goldman Environmental Prize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Used celebrities such as Robert Redford to narrate documentaries created about the awardees.</li> <li>- Created five-minute documentaries on each awardee.</li> <li>- Hired public relations specialists for the award events.</li> </ul>
Leadership for a Changing World (Ford)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focused on radio interviewees with awardees; featured on NPR, talk radio, and both commercial and public local radio.</li> </ul>
Hilton Humanitarian Prize and Leadership for a Changing World (Ford)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tailored the media and communications strategies to the needs of the awardees, which vary and change from year to year (e.g., awardees who are elected officials will have different needs than grassroots activists).</li> </ul>
Quest for Quality (American Hospital Association)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Created and disseminated a booklet about the honoree that highlights “best practices”.</li> </ul>
Brower Youth Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positioned youth to present at conferences, and conducted national speaking tour with awardees.</li> </ul>

## Evaluation

Evaluation of leadership recognition programs is difficult. It is hard to track the impact of an award program on leaders who were already on a strong trajectory, and it is difficult to know what influence the award program has on broader audiences. Few programs embark on an evaluation, and most appear satisfied with anecdotal evidence of success. Some programs, such as the MacArthur Fellows, have concluded that awards programs such as theirs can’t be evaluated and that evaluations divert valuable resources. Only one report has been identified that specifically addresses the evaluation of leadership programs, but it focuses entirely on leadership *development* programs.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Reinelt, C. (2002). *Evaluating Outcomes and Impacts: A Scan of 55 Leadership Development Programs*. Available from <http://www.wkkf.org>

Of the 15 programs reviewed in this scan, only four were found to be formally conducting evaluation. While this scan was unable to conduct an in-depth review of their evaluation efforts, a brief overview is provided below.

Example	Evaluation focus
Ford LCW	Theory of Change to determine outcomes Focus is on impact of program on awardee Summative evaluation to determine how reached goals Formative evaluation to understand how program is designed Each year the evaluation focuses on a different aspect Evaluation conducted by OMG Center for Collaborative Learning
Community Health Leader (RWJ)	Evaluation conducted by RWJF evaluation staff
Goldman Environmental Prize	Conduct surveys of recipients every several years. Assess how the prize has helped them and quantify the impact of their work on the world
Ashoka Fellows	Fellows conduct bi-annual reporting of impact measures, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of people served, external impact, internal management, etc.</li> <li>• Conduct an annual “Measure Effectiveness Survey” of people who were awarded fellowships five and ten years prior.</li> <li>• Found that at five-year mark 80 percent of fellows still leading their organization, and at 10 year mark most are still working in their field.</li> </ul>

Of these programs, Ford’s Leadership for a Changing World is the only one known to have a theory of change, which outlines short-term impacts such as “increased support locally and regionally for the work of the awardees and their communities,” intermediate outcomes including “increased scale of influence among awardees,” and long-term outcomes such as “increased investment in social change work and leaders by the public and private sector.”

Preliminary evaluation findings of that program included recipients reporting: overall satisfaction with the program, that they were beginning to experience the kinds of impacts hoped for, and high regard for the Independent Learning Account. Honorees also reported evidence that the award had helped their work, leveraged funding, and created a desire for more opportunities to connect with other social change leaders.<sup>7</sup>

### Administration

Foundations can operate the awards program themselves, outsource it to an intermediary organization, or do a combination of both. Only two programs interviewed, the Community Health Leadership Program (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) and Leadership for a Changing World (Ford Foundation), outsource their program to intermediary organizations. However,

<sup>7</sup> Internal memo prepared for the Ford Foundation by OMG Center for Collaborative Learning (February 2004).



even some programs that are administered in-house do outsource some aspects to outside consultants, and many involve external reviewing teams. This includes specific communications/media functions and logistical coordination of award events. Anna-Nanine Pond, in her review of leadership programs for The California Endowment, provides an overview of the pros and cons of each (some content in this table was edited for space):<sup>8</sup>

Using an Intermediary	Keeping a Program In-House
<p><b>Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intermediary has expertise, credibility, ability to get word out</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can outsource if Foundation does not have internal skills or capacity to run program</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Using an intermediary demonstrates foundations commitment to working in partnership with other organizations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A foundation can learn more from running program in-house</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Allows foundation to make changes and adapt as program develops</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keeping a program in-house helps build foundation's relationships, and leverages foundation's assets</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foundation can maintain more control and take more credit for success</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Helps build Foundation's brand</li> </ul>
<p><b>Risks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> It is often more expensive to outsource</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foundation loses control of program</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intermediary's objectives may not be aligned with Foundation's goals</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Success depends on staff at intermediary, turnover can be problem</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intermediaries may struggle to balance core competency with fundraising needs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Risks :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the program is managed internally, foundation needs to have clarity of scope and focus</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Requires time and expertise that the foundation may not have</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limited internal capacity/ expertise can undermine credibility</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Can be difficult to spin off</li> </ul>

Ruth Norris, in her scan of recognition programs for the Skoll Foundation, highlights a key reason why some foundations choose to outsource: *“The most obvious advantage to partnering with other institutions for the nomination and selection process is that the funder can make a grant for this part of the work, rather than absorbing it as an operating expense.”*<sup>9</sup>

Questions to ask when deciding whether to administer the program in house, include:<sup>10</sup>

- Does the sponsor have a sufficient network of readily identifiable and credible nominators to generate the kinds of nominations it needs, or does it need to expand that network?
- Does the sponsor have the capacity itself to do the necessary staff work and outreach to disseminate the messages that the awards can generate?
- Is there an objective partner that could provide benefit to the sponsor by providing credibility, an appropriate audience, network, or a financial umbrella?
- Is the sponsor's board willing to leave the decision to others?

<sup>8</sup> Pond, A (2001). *Briefing Paper: The Potential for Leadership Programming*. Available at <http://www.calendow.org>.

<sup>9</sup> Norris (2004).

<sup>10</sup> Tower (2002).

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Any foundation interested in creating a leadership recognition program should:

1. **Clarify program goals and expectations**—All aspects of program design will be determined by the goals of the program and theory of change; hence a foundation should focus its attention first on clarifying in greater detail the objectives for such a program.
2. **Align program with Foundation mission and organizational strategy**—Any leadership recognition program should advance the foundation’s efforts and strategy, not become an additional, separate program area. An effort should be made to think about integrating this program into other work of the foundation, and leveraging foundation assets such as its brand, relationships, and knowledge of particular issue areas.
3. **Develop high level program design, and determine budget and staffing needs**—The foundation should next decide broadly what the program will look like, and determine corresponding budget and organizational implications. This includes outlining specific program elements—such as the recruitment and selection process, award amount, and additional supports—and deciding on the target market, administration, communications, and evaluation components.
4. **Test ideas with potential participants**—Before recommending the program to the Board, the foundation should test its program goals and high level design with potential participants, and make necessary changes based on their input and feedback. This can be done through focus groups or one-on-one discussions.
5. **Seek board approval and buy-in**—It is important that foundation board members are engaged in, and supportive of the leadership recognition program, as they will be key proponents of its success.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Putnam Community Investment Consulting** is a leading philanthropy and nonprofit consulting firm based in Oakland, California. Established in 1999, PCIC specializes in helping foundations assess need, develop effective programs, align organizational strategies, and evaluate impact. Additional information about PCIC is available at <http://www.putnamcic.com>.

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## Appendix A: Experts Interviewed

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