We'll Stand by You: Understanding Community-Based Philanthropic Giving

Established ideas of philanthropy primarily involve the gifting of money to community-based nonprofit organizations. We broaden this understanding by developing a framework for philanthropic support that includes building longer-term relationships with nonprofits and offering other resources such as time, connections, and expertise.

Bublitz et al., *The Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*[1]

Historically, philanthropy has meant the giving of money and other financial resources to nonprofit organizations. Today, more philanthropic givers aim to create impact by supporting the vision, mission, and initiatives innovated by nonprofits. Philanthropic givers have begun revamping their giving practices to offer support to nonprofits beyond monetary resources. **Our research highlights practices in two areas: 1) offering funding plus other resources (time, connections, expertise) and 2) building longer-term relationships with nonprofits.** This research expands our understanding of philanthropy by establishing a framework that documents the promising practices that offer support to nonprofits beyond a traditional funding model.

What We Did

We partnered with philanthropic givers and advisors who are adopting new ways of thinking about how philanthropy creates positive impact. The philanthropic givers are members of a collaborative community of experienced givers and the advisors are leaders at organizations counseling a wide array of donors. What began with interviews and a collaborative research process led to the development and organization of this philanthropic support framework.

> *"Philanthropic partners have to trust in the vision of organizations and leaders, and we also have to trust that people are going to mess up, like we all have, and that they will learn along the way. … That means that we are showing up for celebrations as well as moments of learning and growth. That's how you build trust."*
>
> \- Philanthropic advisor

What We Found

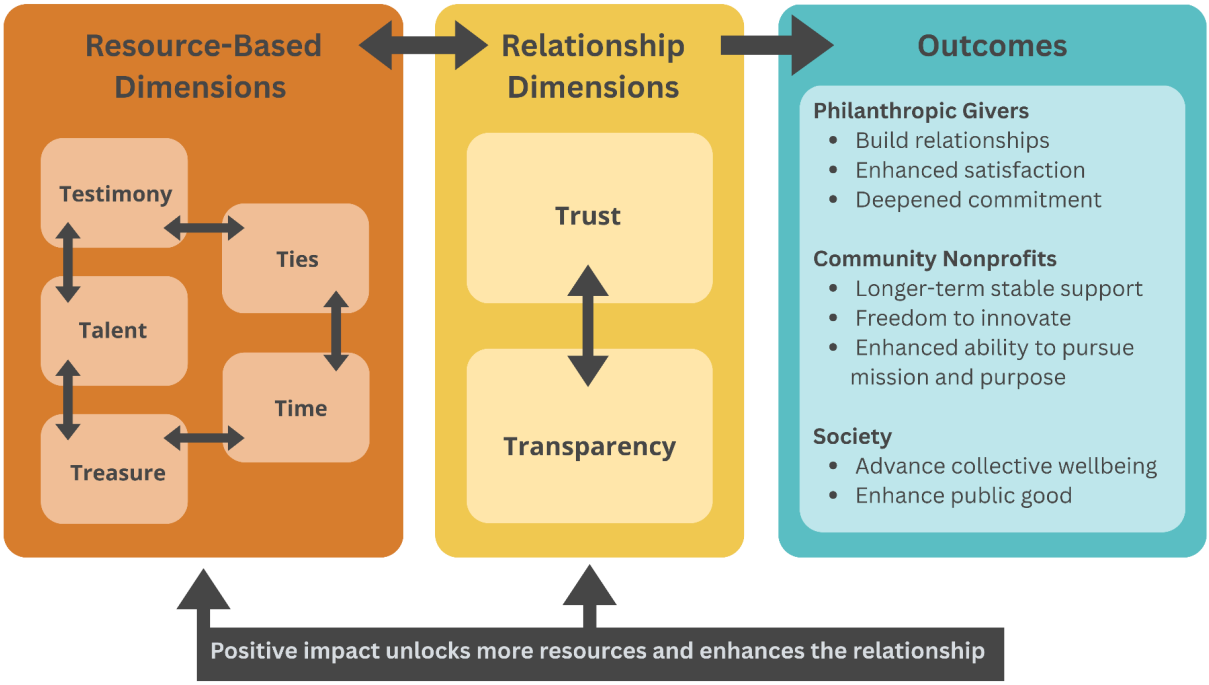
Our research resulted in a framework that identifies two types of philanthropic support to community-based nonprofits:

Resource-based philanthropic giving includes:

1. Treasure: Monetary gifts that donors provide to community-based nonprofits
2. Ties: Leveraging social and professional networks to offer support in accomplishing goals
3. Time: The personal commitment that philanthropic givers devote to working with nonprofits.
4. Talent: Putting a philanthropic giver's abilities, skills, and knowledge toward a specific problem
5. Testimony: The story behind the giver's support for a particular cause

Relationship-Based philanthropic giving includes:

1. Trust: a willingness to rely on partners one has confidence in, even when there is risk
2. Transparency: Authentic and open communication that relinquishes power and allows for setbacks



Although we have presented the dimensions of our framework individually, there is interplay among them, and the seven dimensions work together to achieve greater impact than achieved through monetary gifts alone.

What It Means

Outcomes for nonprofits include having access to greater resources, more opportunities to innovate, and freedom to focus on their work. In turn, philanthropic givers gain the personal satisfaction that their gifts impact people's lives. Seeing this impact allows givers to deepen their commitment and strengthen relationships with nonprofits they support.

Policy Implications

We have woven vital policy implications into our framework:

- Incentivizing longer-term, multiyear gifts by altering the tax code around the timing of tax deductions
- Incentivizing unrestricted donations by making them tax deductible at a higher rate than restricted gifts
- Encouraging collaboration by having policy makers sponsor convenings of nonprofit organizations
- Incentivizing and rewarding community collaborations
- Constructing a system to incentivize donors to give time via volunteering

1. Bublitz, M.G., Peracchio, L.A., Davis, B., Du, K., Escalas, J. E., Gallo, I., Gloukhovtsev, A., Hansen, J., Miller, E.G., Lindsey-Warren,T. M., Wiener, H.J.D. (2026). "We'll Stand by You: Understanding Community-Based Philanthropic Giving," *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 45(1), 50-69.

Prepared by the UW-Madison Center for Community & Nonprofit Studies, 2026
https://commnsknowledge.wisc.edu/co-create/