

Shared Gifting Shifts the Power Dynamics in Philanthropy

RSF Social Finance's participatory grantmaking program, Shared Gifting, gives full decision-making authority and allocation of funds to community leaders. Since 2011 we have held 14 circles that have engaged over 100 participants, and supported several funders adopt Shared Gifting into their own work.

Transformation

The Shared Gifting program transforms the field of philanthropy by bringing collaboration, trust, transparency, and community wisdom into the grantmaking process to foster the relationships needed to build a compassionate and regenerative economy.



Photo courtesy of Daniel Ségun.

Collaboration

Shared Gifting is an effective and engaging way of disbursing grant funding. By having no pre-determined outcomes or objectives for how the recipients use the money, the group uses its collective wisdom to determine the best use of the funds, which frees the recipients to create mutually beneficial collaborations that are not frequently found in typical grantmaking models.



Community

This program's overarching intention is to let the community decide how its community wealth is distributed. The group is accountable to one another and the work they are all collectively doing in the field, rather than being beholden to funders, grant contracts, and measurement tools.

Philanthropic Services – Shared Gifting

What People are Saying



Ethan Schaffer
VIVA FARMS,
PARTICIPANT

For me, the community aspect was really powerful—having the opportunity to see all of these programs within our region, and to think about how we can spread the resources that we have amongst our peers. It was a very different way of thinking about our organizations, how they relate to each other, and how we are all funded. It made us think more about what our priorities are as a community.



Diane Hosey
EMBREY FAMILY
FOUNDATION, FUNDER

What we take from this experience is that we can develop a learning community with grant partners. Moving forward, we are going to look for more opportunities where we can have a similar impact and create more of a community experience rather than just granting out to organizations individually.



Noelle Hardin
UNIVERSITY OF
MINNESOTA,
PRACTITIONER

At the University of Minnesota Extension, we have found that participatory grantmaking can help restore trust between marginalized communities and large institutions through its decentralized, democratic processes. At the University we often talk about the value of community engagement and public participation; shared gifting is a unique and powerful tool to practice what we preach.

We have worked with groups to provide anything from a few hours of advisory services, to running a full Shared Gifting Circle from beginning to end. To learn more contact the Philanthropic Services team at PSteam@rsfsocialfinance.org.

About RSF Social Finance

RSF Social Finance creates financial relationships that are direct, transparent, and personal, focused on long-term social, economic, and environmental benefit. We innovate, learn, and push into new frontiers of what it means to serve the highest intentions of the human spirit and contribute to an economy based on generosity and interconnectedness.

Our team has a long-term commitment to catalyze the flow of money to support regenerative economies.

Since 1984, RSF has made over \$700 million in loans, grants, and investments in social enterprises in the areas of food and agriculture, education and the arts, and climate and environment. Learn more at rsfsocialfinance.org.

LEARN MORE ABOUT SHARED GIFTING

rsfsocialfinance.org/gifting-power