

Building Economic Development Philanthropy Capacity

About a month ago, I participated in Philanthropy West Virginia's *Building Economic Development Philanthropy Capacity* workshop. It was supposed to be about how philanthropy can help build stronger and more prosperous communities. It ended up be much more than the scripted "lets' figure it out." The 'much more' part of what and how to do it or the question that philanthropy seems to struggle with most is, what assets can fill which gaps?

The 12-hour workshop or program occupied the nucleus of two days from Monday through Tuesday. The workshop's structural tenet was the idea of a staff person from a foundation in a region of the state would attend the training/ workshop with a board member from their respective foundation; team and consensus building with a purpose and mission, if you will.

For the 12 hours, Deb Markley with the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship and Janet Topolsy from the Aspen Institute were our fearless leaders. Little did they know they were taking yours truly by the hand and leading me directly into the chasm of A New domain for Place-Rooted Foundations: Economic Development Philanthropy. This just happened to be our reading assignment, which by the way, was authored by *Markley and Topolsky* -from "The Foundation Review" (Volume 8, Issue 3 Special Issue –The Future of Community Article 10).

Philanthropy is more than filling gaps. We learned that it is necessary for a foundation to take strategic and specific steps with partners and resources while thinking very deliberately about results, measurements and impacts.

I can't wait for part two...



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