

Greater Boston EPIP Participant Survey Summary of Results

In December of 2008, the Steering Committee of the Greater Boston Chapter of Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy fielded a survey to 226 individuals who were a part of EPIP’s database (generally past participants in an EPIP event or others who had expressed interest in EPIP – many have never attended an EPIP event). Fifty-eight responses were received, a 26% response rate. Thank you to those who responded.

Summary

Overall, EPIP members find strong value in EPIP’s work exposing them to new ideas related to philanthropy and providing networking opportunities. In each of these categories, about half of respondents answered a 6 or 7 on a 1 to 7 scale of value. An impressive 97% of respondents indicate that they will likely attend an event in 2009. However, there is room for improvement. Only a third of participants or less give ratings of 6 or 7 for the value of EPIP’s ability to deepen knowledge about philanthropy generally or in subject areas participants already are working in. While participants indicated that they preferred events with panels of experts, a large proportion suggested that EPIP also have small group discussions. Finally, the survey tested ideas for new activities and services that might be offered by EPIP Boston in the future and identified a high level of interest (79%) in an email digest of upcoming events or job postings.

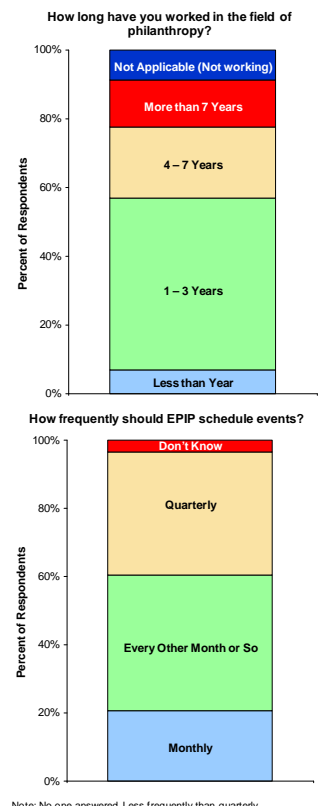
Demographics of Participants

The majority of respondents to this survey worked at Greater Boston independent, family, and community foundations or other philanthropies. Other respondents were students, consultants to funders, or researchers on philanthropy. EPIP participants represent many of the different roles at foundations and philanthropic support organizations. While the largest group of respondents was program officers/associates, many respondents held other roles including senior leadership, development, communications, and research analyst. Most respondents (50%) have worked in philanthropy for one to three years although about 30% percent had worked in philanthropy for four or more years - a strong finding that participants find value in EPIP even when they have substantial experience in the sector. The majority of respondents (59%) learned about EPIP through word of mouth – typically a colleague or a friend who had already attended an EPIP event or received EPIP emails. It is important to note that the majority of respondents are not dues paying members of EPIP’s national organization.

EPIP Events

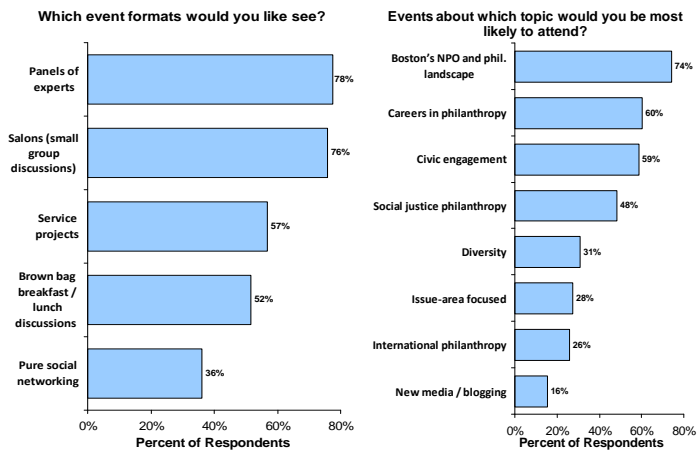
Most respondents (61%) thought EPIP should host events every other month or more frequently, even though exactly half of all respondents had only attended one or two previous events.

Fifty-one percent of respondents indicated that at past events they most valued the opportunity to learn about new content and ideas. Even EPIP participants who had been in the field of philanthropy more than three years still found significant value in this aspect of EIPs programming. Another twenty-four percent indicated they most valued the networking opportunities presented by EPIP events. Open-ended comments demonstrated the



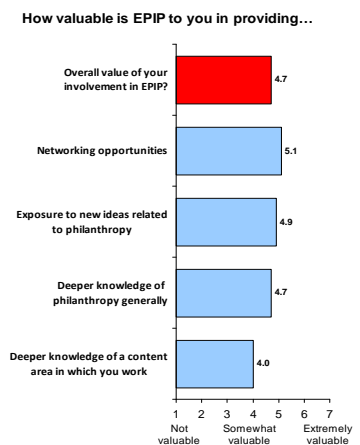
connection between networking and learning opportunities. A number of respondents highlighted learning from peers and hearing what peer funders were doing in specific areas to be of most value.

When asked about preferences for future event topics, respondents were quite interested in locally focused events – events about the nonprofit and philanthropic landscape of Boston (74%) or concerning philanthropy’s role in civic engagement (59%). Additionally, 60% of respondents expressed a desire for an event focused on careers in philanthropy. In terms of event format, over three-quarters of respondents preferred panels of experts, the approach Greater Boston EPIP has traditionally used for content-oriented events. However, nearly as many respondents also expressed an interest in events that provide an opportunity for smaller group discussions with leaders – “salons” as they were referred to on the survey. Variety was also a key theme in the respondents’ suggestions: Many recommended varying event formats and topics in order to engage a wide range of emerging practitioners. Others suggested that a regular event time and place might encourage more consistent attendance.



Value of EPIP

Respondents found value in EPIP programming – primarily in exposing them to new ideas related to philanthropy, providing good networking opportunities, and deepening knowledge of philanthropy generally. Least valuable were opportunities to deepen knowledge of a content area in which a respondent was already working. (This presents an opportunity for events tailored to higher level discussion for some participants and more introductory content for others.) Respondents who had been in the field of philanthropy four to seven years more highly valued the aspects of networking and deepening of knowledge of philanthropy generally more than did newer entrants to the philanthropic field.



Respondents also suggested that EPIP could increase its value to them by providing announcements of philanthropy related events and job postings. Half also suggested providing formal career mentoring or other members-only events and services, an interesting finding given that only about a quarter of respondents were currently dues-paying members.

Next Steps for EPIP

The steering committee of Greater Boston’s EPIP chapter will use these results to guide programming over the coming year. We have already conducted a “salon” style event with local leaders in the philanthropic sector and we have started collecting and forwarding jobs or other events when relevant to EPIP’s membership. Over the coming months, as we continue to expand our steering committee, we will strive to be responsive to the ideas and preferences raised in this survey. Thanks for your response.

EPIP Greater Boston Steering Committee: Karsten Barde – New Profit, Inc.; Kevin Bolduc – The Center for Effective Philanthropy; Faith James – Bank of New York / Mellon; Amanda Northrop – State Street Bank; Elena Sokolow-Kaufman; Elissa Spelman

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