



A Brief History 1985 - 2015

The Pittsburgh region is rightly associated with the emergence of American philanthropy, as Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick and other successful 19th century industrialists promoted using their wealth to benefit the community. In southwestern Pennsylvania, as in the rest of the nation, the field of philanthropy grew in the 20th century and professional staff increasingly facilitated the work of donors and trustees. Starting in the 1960s and 1970s, membership associations and grantmakers' interest groups began forming as philanthropic leaders recognized the advantages of connecting with colleagues to exchange information, share lessons learned and identify best practices.

When **Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania (GWP)** was established in 1985, it became the eighteenth regional association of grantmakers created in the nation. Like other regional associations (RAs), GWP's initial goals were to create learning opportunities for members, support grantmaking as a profession and thereby contribute to the overall effectiveness of philanthropy.

GWP's Origins While the organization was formally incorporated in 1985, organizing for the purpose of learning and exchange was an already established practice. In the 1960s, Pittsburgh's senior corporate leaders met regularly to discuss their philanthropic interests; private foundation leaders held a similar discussion group. After meeting separately for some years, the two groups merged to form the Pittsburgh Contributions Group, GWP's predecessor.

In June 1983, the Contributions Group began to explore whether to incorporate more formally. Although a number of grantmakers participated, William Lafe (The Pittsburgh Foundation/Howard Heinz Endowment) and Phillip Hallen (Maurice Falk Medical Fund) are most closely linked with advancing this discussion. Ultimately, the group approved a proposal to incorporate a new nonprofit organization named Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania for a three-year pilot period, with 35 charter members.

The newly created association's mission read, "To promote effective philanthropic practice by facilitating information exchange among grantmakers, providing professional development through workshops and services, and raising issues related to community problems and philanthropy." Membership was open to all members of the Contributions Group and similar foundations in the 26 counties of western Pennsylvania. Doreen Boyce of The Buhl Foundation was elected the new association's founding president.

Evolution and Growth Among the key decisions of the founding board of directors were its bylaws, dues structure, program offerings and engaging the organization's founding executive director, Kate Dewey. Initial plans included informational programs, development of resources for grants management, a membership directory, a resource center, a capital campaign survey and a recruitment campaign to engage additional members. By 1987, when the pilot organization was assessed by a members' survey, there was unanimous support for continuing its operation.

GWP Programs and Services From inception, GWP consistently offered issues briefings and professional education programs as core services, as well as hosting affinity groups and networking events. These gatherings typically focus on a specific grantmaking interest such as supporting cultural organizations or serving women and girls; others are internal networks of similarly structured members (such as the Corporate Roundtable). By 2010, GWP's core programs facilitation of internal funder networks, regular issue-based programs, legislative monitoring/policy engagement, and networking opportunities. Information services included a growing, searchable national KnowledgeBase of online resources, regular e-newsletters, custom research and benchmarking, and other on-call assistance.

GWP's members were, and remain, essential to the association as committee chairs and board members and periodically refined its strategic plans. With leadership from Renny Clark (Westinghouse Electric Foundation), a 1992 plan focused on identifying community issues, building collaboration among funders, information sharing and providing assistance to grantseekers. The 1997 strategic plan, led by Kathleen Buechel (Alcoa Foundation), enabled GWP to take a critical step forward by designing and implementing a revenue model to stabilize the association. Boards led by Charles (Chip) Burke, Jr. (The Grable Foundation) and Hank Beukema (McCune Foundation) were responsible for a 2001 plan that took GWP to an expanded portfolio of service including conducting research, generating knowledge and taking a role in communicating about philanthropy. Starting in 2009, policy engagement also became an increasing focus. In recent years, a desire for GWP to become more nimble has led to annually adopted strategic plans focused on activities that address three priorities: 1) building a community of grantmakers who are informed, effective and engaged; 2) championing philanthropy, the nonprofit sector and their contributions to healthy communities; and 3) ensuring the continued vitality of the association.

In 1991, Kate Dewey, GWP's founding executive director, moved on to found a highly successful nonprofit consulting firm with partner Robin Kaye. She was followed by the late Joyce O'Conner, who provided leadership for GWP from 1992–1997. Judie Donaldson, who brought long professional experience in the fields of adult learning and higher education, joined GWP in 1998 and retired in 2007. She was followed by current executive director Barbara Sieck Taylor, whose background included serving as a program officer for

two foundations as well as a development officer and nonprofit manager.

In 2003, the field of philanthropy experienced the most serious legislative threat in over three decades when a number of policy changes affecting foundations were eventually rolled into a bill known as HR 7. Although HR 7 did not ultimately become law, then Senate Finance Committee chair Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) energetically pursued other efforts to increase foundation accountability, including establishment of the Panel on the Nonprofit Sector, development of an expanded Form 990 for public charities, and the Pension Protection Act of 2006.

In response to these events, in 2005 GWP formed a Public Policy Committee that crafted a declaration of ethical standards, which was adopted by the association. GWP extended its policy work by producing a *State of Philanthropy* report to educate policymakers, lawmakers and the community. A statewide *Commonwealth Giving* report, co-produced with GWP's sister association Delaware Valley Grantmakers, followed in 2008. As of 2014, GWP's policy engagement had further formalized: it began paying annual visits to federal lawmakers; created a state and federal legislative agenda; and its board adopted explicit policy positions ranging from tax treatment for donor-advised funds to preservation of the charitable deduction.

GWP Founding Board of Directors

Doreen Boyce, <i>President</i>	The Buhl Foundation
Paul Jenkins, <i>Vice President</i>	Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation
Karyll Davis, <i>Secretary</i>	H. J. Heinz Company Foundation
Sylvia Clark, <i>Treasurer</i>	Mellon Bank
Elizabeth Atkinson	H. J. Heinz Company Foundation
Henry Beukema, <i>Secretary</i>	The Pittsburgh Foundation/Howard Heinz Endowment
Earland Carlson	McCune Foundation
David Green	PPG Industries Foundation
Phillip Hallen	Maurice Falk Medical Fund
Cecile Springer	Westinghouse Electric Foundation

In addition to serving its member philanthropies, GWP has historically supported the wider nonprofit community. In 1992, with Phil Hallen’s leadership, GWP members spearheaded the formation of The Foundation Center collection at The Carnegie Library – an essential resource for nonprofits. GWP collaborates with the library and other partners to offer regular “Meet the Grantmakers” programs which remain popular to this day. Like most other RAs, GWP and its members developed Common Grant Application and Report Forms, also still in use. Drawing upon the vision of Judie Donaldson, grant support from members, and working with partner organizations, GWP created and co-sponsored an annual Nonprofit Summit from 1999 through 2010 – the region’s premiere professional education and networking opportunity for nonprofit leaders, now hosted by Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership.

Membership Then and Now	1985	2015
Corporate foundations/ contributions programs	18	19
Independent/ family foundations	15	47
Community foundations	2	10
Federations	n/a	1
Grantmaking public charities	n/a	6
Individual associate members	n/a	5
Social Venture Partners/ other	n/a	1
Total	35	89

As southwestern Pennsylvania changed, the philanthropic community and GWP have changed with it. Following the collapse of the steel industry in the early 1980s, the subsequent evolution from an industrial and manufacturing center to a regional economy driven by education, health care and technology was due in considerable part to foresighted investments made by the philanthropic community. By helping to build on the region’s cultural, educational and medical institutions, philanthropy played a primary role in its transformation.

Philanthropy in Southwest PA Today. Over the past 30 years, several key trends have significantly affected the practice of philanthropy in our region and therefore affected how GWP does its work:

Changes for Corporate Philanthropy During the 1980s and 1990s, the region witnessed significant shifts in corporate philanthropy as Fortune 500 companies merged, downsized and relocated. At the same time, practices in corporate philanthropy increasingly shifted from “good corporate citizenship” to strategic giving programs that align tightly with a business’s corporate goals. As its corporate members increasingly refined their individual approaches, GWP responded by hosting presenters from leading experts from TCC Group, Changing Our World, VeraWorks and Business for Social Responsibility. In 2014 and 2015 GWP also began to partner with Philanthropy West Virginia to offer programming to corporate members on a more regional basis.

Philanthropy Becomes a Profession As the field has matured, grantmakers began looking more closely at the outcomes and effectiveness of their grants: grant monitoring, evaluation and assessment became standard practices. This contributed to an increase in the number of local grantmaking staff and GWP’s membership has accordingly shifted from a small group of CEOs to a larger network of individuals with wide-ranging professional roles. Accordingly, GWP supports internal networks not only of CEOs and program officers but grants management and administrative staff.

Information Technology Comes of Age. When GWP incorporated, grantmaking was a process nearly unrecognizable today: printed guidelines were requested by phone, sent out by mail, and staff received proposals typed laboriously on electric typewriters. With the widespread adoption of email and the Internet, philanthropic operations and the expectations for associations like GWP were both transformed. GWP created its first bare-bones website in 2001, but joined seven other regional associations in 2006 to develop a shared data management system, knowledge management (KM) system and website platform. By 2014, GWP had upgraded that web system two additional times: it now operates with a fully integrated system that makes possible a real-time online member directory as well as a growing, searchable Knowledgebase of resources representing best practice in the field. The original KM partnership now serves 24 regional associations and is considered a national model for shared technology, with other national philanthropy networks clamoring to participate. By 2015, improved IT capacity enabled GWP’s external communications to blossom with a regularly updated home page including member spotlights and philanthropy news well as a Facebook page and an active Twitter presence.

“The Most Livable City” The recession that began in mid-2008 shocked local philanthropy and nonprofits, as asset levels sank and grants budgets tightened. After 2010, when the recession had eased, the greater Pittsburgh region increasingly saw the fruit of decades of patient investment in community assets such as universities, medical systems, cultural organizations and new-business accelerators. A number of GWP members turned to place-based funding strategies focused on communities still in long-term economic distress; GWP responded by hosting site visits to communities such as Homewood and the North Side and establishing a community development roundtable to help members share strategies.

Proliferating Ways To Give The charitable sector, like every other, has seen an explosion of innovations in the past decade. For donors, new options include giving via text and donor-advised funds offered by financial-services firms; for nonprofits, conventional fundraising may be supplemented with crowdfunding and social media campaigns like #GivingTuesday. Foundations nationwide increasingly look to strategies such as mission investing, low- or no-interest loans and PRIs to increase their impact. In 2015, with the Philanthropy Forum at GSPIA and The Forbes Funds, GWP co-hosted initial programs on impact investing; doubtless there will be continuing interest in these topics as foundations work to use their assets most productively.

GWP at 30 Today, GWP is one of 33 regional associations linking over 4,400 grantmaking organizations from Alaska to Florida. These 33 associations form a robust network that combines broad national reach with deep regional roots, connected by the Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers. Like GWP, all the RAs maintain their original commitment to member service, but are expanding and refocusing in response to the changes in the philanthropic landscape. With the economic challenges faced by states, the nation and the world, the demands on the field of philanthropy and the importance of demonstrating its effectiveness have never been greater.

While specific programs and activities have evolved, GWP’s mission remains the same: to promote excellence in philanthropy. With the leadership and engagement of its current members, GWP is well positioned to assist them to make the most effective use of philanthropic resources to meet the challenges of the region in the twenty-first century.

GWP Founding Organizations

Alcoa Foundation	Mary Hillman Jennings Foundation
Allegheny International Foundation	The Ideal Foundation
Bell of Pennsylvania	Edith C. Justus Trust
Buncher Family Foundation	Koppers Company, Inc.
Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation	Laurel Foundation
CNG Gas Company	McCune Foundation
Copperweld Corporation	Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation
Cyclops Foundation	Mellon Bank
Dollar Bank	Mellon Charitable Trust
Dravo Corporation	Richard King Mellon Foundation
Duquesne Light	The Peoples Natural Gas Company
Erie Community Foundation	Pittsburgh Bridge & Iron Works Charitable Trust
Maurice Falk Medical Fund	Pittsburgh National Foundation
Henry C. Frick Education Commission	PPG Industries Foundation
The Grable Foundation	The Pittsburgh Foundation
Gulf Oil Corporation	The Buhl Foundation
H. J. Heinz Company Foundation	POISE Foundation
The Hillman Foundation	Rockwell International Corporation
Howard Heinz Endowment	Stackpole-Hall Foundation
The Hunt Foundation	Westinghouse Electric Fund
Roy A. Hunt Foundation	

Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania

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