

CONFERENCE

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tions, which make up more than a quarter of its 1,300 members, nationwide (see story on page 6).

- The use of public forums and other outreach efforts to give citizens more of a voice in programs supported by foundations.

- Growing concern about how to train the next generation of philanthropic leaders who will be the stewards of trillions of dollars worth of new foundation giving.

In a workshop called "Grantmaking that Changes the Rules," Mary Mountcastle, a trustee of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation in Winston-Salem, described a recent initiative in which the foundation made challenge grants to county governments to improve services to poor families in North Carolina.

The project, now in its third year, has led to some small but vital changes in attitudes among social service providers and government leaders.

"If you're a foundation that's concerned about seeing some impact, you have to be engaged in public policy," Mountcastle said. "What we did was use big grants as the carrot to bring people together at the local level."

Another example of innovation came from Boston, where the Boston Foundation has been sponsoring media call-in shows and focus group discussions in poor neighborhoods.

"We're beginning to look at the foundation as a resource, an information link between programs," said Anna Faith Jones, president and CEO of the community foundation.

"Just convening people to listen to them is very simple but it's something we [foundations] don't do very much. We think we have to have all the answers."

Despite examples of collaboration between government agencies and foundations, government leaders were criticized for viewing foundations mainly as a source of capital rather than as a source of ideas for ways to improve community life.

Jonathan Silver, a Commerce Department official who is heading President Clinton's new nonprofit liaison network, urged foundation leaders to get involved in efforts to forge new links between government and philanthropy.

"We don't know what you want unless you tell us," he said. "We really mean it when we say we're trying to build collaborative relationships."

In addition to external challenges, foundations are facing pressures from within.

Among the issues raised by conference participants were the need for stronger conflict-of-interest policies and strategies for making foundation boards more representative of the communities their institutions were set up to serve.

While increased media attention makes many foundation leaders uncomfortable, others see the exposure as a necessary fact of life for institutions operating in the public trust.

"We're in a period of greater public speaking and accountability," said Joyce Bove, vice president of programs and projects for The New York Community Trust. "We have to get ready for that and respond. And we have to be more rigorous about the outcomes of our grantmaking."

For information about the foundation conference, contact the Council on Foundations, (202) 466-6512.

FAMILY

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up with other suggestions, including:

- Offering a program on how to continue the intent of original foundation donors.

- Sponsoring seminars on investing.

- Studying the possibility of offering group benefits to the staff of family foundations through the Council or regional grantmaking associations.

- Organizing regional meetings for representatives of family foundations.

- Establishing a youth council to train new family foundation members.

James Joseph, president of the Council on Foundations, has recommended that the Advisory Committee become a permanent committee of the council's board.

"Family foundations not only reflect fundamental American values, but the values of this council," he says. "They bring family values and family assets together."

For information on the council's initiative on family philanthropy, contact Lambeth at (910) 725-7541.

POVERTY

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designed to encourage county governments to change the way social services are provided to poor families.

The report urges policymakers to make social service reforms a top priority for the future:

"Unless North Carolina acts soon

to change the way it provides assistance to its large number of poor, the next generation will inherit a problem of staggering social, economic, fiscal and psychological dimensions."

For copies of the reports, contact The N.C. Institute of Minority Economic Development, (919) 682-1894, and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, (910) 725-7541.

Barbara Solow

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