

Complete Set of Grantee Comments and Suggestions

PREPARED FOR
Kenneth Rainin Foundation

SEPTEMBER 2015



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**Kenneth Rainin Foundation
Grantee Comments from May 2015 Grantee Perception Report
Conducted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy**

Please note that comments have been edited or deleted to protect the confidentiality of respondents.

| Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation. |
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| Grantee Comment |
| ...we received [funds] to further develop our proposal. This limited experience informs our responses for this survey. |
| All of my interactions have been timely in their response and helpful - I have no complaints |
| As an Impact grantee, the Foundation's support has been crucial to the success of the organization. Our interactions with Shelley, Katie and Adriana have been extremely pleasant and helpful. |
| As part of their multi-year capacity building program, there's a certain understanding the the program is new and the foundation and organizations are learning and adapting as we go. Whenever a question arises, the staff is always been available for answers. While the program's process may itself be in-process , there's a strong individualized approach that keeps things clear and on track. |
| Communcations and interactions thus far have been profession, cordial and helpful. Processes including internet submission of grant proposals have been relatively smooth. Overall highly recommended. |
| Communications - Clear, kind, and professional. / Staff Interactions: Readily accessible and helpful - supportive tone, encouraging. Appreciated the site visit to experience the granted programming! / Processes - LOI - appropriate and not difficult to complete. The on-line grant submission- had some difficulty with the software. But the on-line application - appropriate and not difficult to complete. Reporting was a very positive experience. |
| Direct communication with the program officer was the most helpful. The communication was clear, direct and encouraging. |
| Due to the nature of our partnership (personal and collaborative) all communicatons has been nothing but positive. |
| Foundation staff are approachable and communicate transparently about their goals, priorities, and strategy. |
| Foundation staff is very responsive to all communication we initiate, though they rarely if ever initiate communication with us. |
| Good. |
| High quality processes, interactions and communications - most important is the shared recognition that the Foundation's goals and [our] mission/programs are in alignment. Support followed seamlessly. Note that some of the answers are future looking - we are in the early stages of the first major grant we've received from the foundation. |
| I appreciate that Rainin is a lean and agile organization that really works closely with their recipients. They are responsive, helpful, and collaborative. They thought partner and strategize with their grantees to make their proposals more impactful. |
| I feel like the support and communication I got from Katie helped me feel more confident in my application, she was very personable and as a new person in my position and working at an organization going through a significant transition it was definitely calming to have her approach me with questions that could help me clarify not only our application but also our organizations position in the community. |
| I found the foundation to be consistent, clear and open in communication. |
| I found working with K. Rainin foundation a very positive experience overall. We like the new direction with the programs and the staff has been always very responsive and easy to work with. |
| I found working with KRF to be a fluid, clear process and their overall mission and execution of it to be clear. Email exchanges with staff were always friendly and helpful. |
| I have only had positive interactions with the Foundation. They have always clearly communicated their expectations, and I have felt comfortable approaching the program officers and staff with questions. |

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Grantee Comment

I like the personal communication with Shelley Trott.

I only wish the [other funding streams] could learn from the Rainin Foundation and how easy their online process is. It is a pleasure to submit this lean application compared to the laborious [applications we usually undertake]. / / I am not certain about my time estimations. Also, I know Shelley Trott tried to make it to our show which would have definitely counted as a site visit. So I wasn't sure whether to count that...

I think KRF needs to take a less conservative approach namely when grant money is used to support the arts. I also feel as if there was no closure to the groups that did not get the grant; it would have been nice to have a feedback session where we understand what the decisions were with the deciding team so that we (the groups) can learn and put forth a better proposal next time.

I think that the principles of organization of review and funding by KRF are superb. There is little nonsense associated with the process as opposed to [other types of grant] procedures. The applications are short and to the point, review is fast and to the point either. I like the simplified process of communications, open and with formalities reduced to almost none. I think that it a great model for both private and federal funding agencies. To see how efficient it is, it would be important to collect data on publications coming from the supported laboratories within 3 years after the receipt of [philanthropic vs. government grants].

I wish an officer of the foundation had initiated contact with me to discuss the grant during the application process and the creation of the project. I had no idea that the foundation had an interest in doing this. The process was completely impersonal and I would have benefited from more feedback. As it was, I presented the project I really wanted to do and received funding; however i wish I had been contacted to discuss the progress. I would appreciate an open dialogue about the goals of my organization, how Rainin funding has helped us and how and if they might continue involvement. I would like to know the priorities of the Rainin Foundation so that I know whether my projects and the trajectory of my organization are consistent with their interests. Although the staff was friendly when I called, they did not solicit any contact beyond the question I asked.

It is a real pleasure to work with the Foundation.

It is always a swift decision making process which I greatly appreciate. All interactions with staff at all levels is always informative and supportive.

KRF is playing a major leadership role in the Bay Area arts scene. The quality of the programs, and the community-building activities are a major asset to the Arts in SF/Bay Area. The IMPACT program is one of the most highly effective programs being offered by any foundation in the region, and the staff at KRF is a pleasure to work with.

our communicaiton and interactions are very positive and effective.

Our experience with Rainin Foundation has been excellent. We applied several times in the past without success, at which point I felt somewhat confused about the foundation's goals. [After that,] we had a meeting with Shelley Trott and Katie Fahey, which was extremely helpful.... I feel we should have more contact with our officers, but also acknowledge that this is our fault for not being more communicative this year.

Our organization has benefitted greatly from support provided by the Foundation for a variety of our performance projects. We have found it difficult to ascertain why some projects have been funded and others have not. It would be helpful to have a more transparent feedback mechanism with the Foundation so that we could better understand which of our projects are "good matches" with the Kenneth Rainin Foundation and which ones are not.

Our Program Officer has been super helpful. She is quick to reply to questions and has helped guide us through the process. We felt supported all long the way. We felt that she was very honest and transparent. Overall felt like our mission was very much in line with the Foundation.

Our program officer is very hands-on. We want to be good partners, so need specific guidelines in writing in order to return the best outcomes to the funder.

Rainin Foundation staff are personable, friendly and knowledgable about both the priorities of the foundation and the work of my organization.

Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.

Grantee Comment

Rainin Foundation staff are true partners in the work. They spend time in the community seeking to understand the issues and the challenges so they can understand what is involved in advancing better outcomes for young children. They are always open for discussing how to adjust the work given the changing conditions under which we work. They are respectful, compassionate and passionate about the work. It is truly a pleasure to work with the Rainin Foundation.

Rainin's communication with us has been mindfully timely and with an incredible willingness and understanding towards the flexibility needed to lead a small arts organization. They are devoted to the real issues at hand and mission and vision. We enlisted them several times with tough conflicts which they were responsive to. They are partners in our success and our challenges and have always been accessible and impactful in all of our transparent communications back and forth.

Several of the survey questions were ambiguous or unclear. We had trouble answering the question. For example - what is the total annual operating budget of your organization? How do we get this information (we are at a University)? Regarding the KRF Foundation, we have had a positive experience. The expectations of received grants were clear. Staff was helpful. We ran into some problems [and almost had to decline the grant.] Shelley tailored this grant to our organization and that is rare to find

Shelley Trott was very hands on with us, and assisted us to create the most effective proposal, while encouraging broad latitude to explore the creativity nascent in the project. We felt well supported without being interfered with.

Susan True is amazing!

Susan True was personable, caring, and truly listened. She was clear in messaging around the Foundation's vision and beliefs. I felt comfortable reaching out to her. She also valued our relationship.... She makes it really feel like a partnership.

The communication and access we have as grantees with this Foundation is unparalleled. From our very first interaction with foundation program officers (a site visit) through various stages of granting (first project support and then capacity building), representatives of the foundation have listened closely to the needs of our individual organization, but also to the needs of the field in general. We truly feel like they are "on our team" and seek to support the field in very real, practical measures. This does not mean they aren't forward thinking. Quite the opposite. Their innovation challenges us to look beyond our daily grind and envision a future of possibility.

The engagement is deep, thoughtful, engaged, passionate, decisive in providing counsel and support.... [Our organization] has been and continues to be the fortunate beneficiary in a extraordinary partnership with The Rainin Foundation.

The Foundation communicates in a very professional yet accessible manner and they are clear and consistent in their messaging. They are thorough and helpful and totally engaged with the larger community and knows where our organization fits within the arts community. They recognize the potential of organizations and with their help, they allow organizations to reach their goals.

The Foundation has been consistently generous and responsive to [our organization]'s questions and/or observations about it's funding policies....

The foundation has been very clear and communicative with us. We've never had any problem with communications. We had an issue with our project...which delayed the project significantly. We communicated the problem with the program officers, who responded promptly and made the change very easy to deal with.

The Foundation is very clear on its priorities, and gives at a level to make a meaningful impact on the work. The proposal is a bit more involved than our usual grant applications, but given the levels at which KRF is willing to give, it's well worth it. The amount of time required for the funding level seems to be in line with other similar foundations' proposals. I personally appreciate the staff's commitment to and passion for our local community. I really feel like KRF, more so than most foundations, truly is looking to be a partner in helping us to build a better community. Staff is friendly, accessible, and knowledgeable. I loved working with Katie, and I'm very excited for future opportunities to work with Apryl Rinehart (who joined the staff after our process was completed).

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Grantee Comment

The foundation provides support beyond that of funding. It creates a community of researchers dedicated to IBD that is extremely helpful with networking

The Foundation staff members are extremely personable. We not only worked with Katie Fahey but also with Shelley Trott and Jen Rainin. Both Shelley and Jen are great listeners and very forthcoming about how they and the Foundation approach programming and evaluation. This is the first grant working with Katie and she is very eager to provide us with the info and direction we need, but is still learning the ropes a bit.

The Foundation Team, have been stellar partners. Susan, Paula and thier support team are unsurpassed in all my years of work. They are professional communicators, respectful and get the job done. They are clear about expectations and very accountable to the project goals. It has been an amazing opportunity to serve Oakland Teachers, and children and be supported by this team.

The Foundation's application and reporting processes were streamlined and easy to follow. We had the opportunity to meet with Foundation staff following the completion of our most recent grant, and found the discussion to be extremely helpful. We were able to better understand recent changes to the Foundation's arts grant guidelines, share organizational developments, and receive guidance on submitting an LOI later this year.

The initial evaluation criteria could be more openly explained and an evaluation report would be useful after each annual review process

The invitation, application and award notification process and all interactions with the foundation were clear, direct and timely.

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation is a wonderful resource for small theater and dance organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area. All of our interactions with them have been clear and positive. Their focus on site-specific work, and their willingness to fund small to midsize organizations, is very much welcomed and appreciated.

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation was a positive experience. They provided many hands on learning experiences for the teachers along with monthly training and participation. The Kenneth Rainin Foundation provided many coaching opportunity to the teachers on early literacy.... The teachers brought back information from the training into their classrooms and provided more teachable experiences to the children in early literacy. We later observed improvement in the area of early literacy such as, children wanting to listen and read stories , oral language , alphabets recognition, printing of words. The Kenneth Rainin Foundation helped [our staff and beneficiaries] grow and develop and to become more motivated in the area of early literacy for children. Children will be better prepared when entering Kindergarten.

The process is very open-minded, not bound by historical or procedural constraints, and encouraging of new thinking towards achievable goals.

The Rainin Foundation staff and board are a phenomenal group of people, who are deeply committed to transformation and change for Oakland and its children and families. We value their deep knowledge of the service provider network, early childhood industry, Oakland, and their appraoch to seeking greatest impact by leveraging knowledge of practitioners to change the social fabric that supports our community. I have personally used our Program Officers, Susan True and Paula Ambrose, as thought partners, resources, and ambassadors for our collective work. And, of course, while we value the tremendous investment that KRF has made in our organization, their level of engagement and support is priceless. I say this, as a grantee that has a multitude of interactions with many, many philanthropic organizations and individuals.

The staff at Rainin were incredibly helpful and most importantly flexible. They understood the fluid nature of our program and were able to adapt with us and help it grow.

There is a high level of conscientiousness that is appreciated, even when we are not receiving funding. They clearly explain why - and I can't argue with their reasons! They seem deeply and honestly interested in the local field, and are backing that up in a real way.

They are doing an excellent job.

They are very approachable. I really appreciated their looking over our draft early on, and giving us feedback to refine as we went into the first round. To me this is the sign of a very supportive culture for applicants.

Please comment on the quality of the Foundation's processes, interactions and communications. Your answer will help us better understand what it is like to work with the Foundation.

Grantee Comment

Very fair process and clear communications

Very good

Very good overall. Minimal micromangement and full support when necessary

We appreciate the focused and personal interactions we have had with staff. They are strong thought-partners in our work and both understanding the investment landscape and community needs- and in some cases being closer to the education leaders inside the district. With their added perspective, we have been able to think about improvements to our approach. / In this survey I've reported on our general program operating grant. We have also been [a part of the Foundation's Oakland Education initiatives], which increased both communications, processes, and interaction opportunities for us. In that process, we sometimes experiences a lag in the timing of critical information making its way to use, which resulted in some communication and implementation challenges.

We had no issues with the processes of the Foundation. We are not a local organization so our knowledge of how the Foundation works is somewhat limited.

We have found the Foundation to be extremely responsive and willing to engage in discussions around the grant process and on programming issues. We also admire the high level of community engagement - the Foundation is very active in the local education/nonprofit community and is a driving force behind the creation of several large scale high-impact community initiatives.

We have worked with both Susan True and Paula Ambrose, and have also had a conversation with Jen Rainin. Susan is engaging, proactive and collaborative; just an outstanding partner in our work. She and Paula worked with us to develop a joint scope of work; provided input on the proposal; and have been excellent communicators and colleagues since our award....

Working with the Kenneth Rainin Foundation is great. I work with dozens of foundations and they are one of the best. The foundation staff are always very responsive to our questions and supportive of our program. They seem genuinely interested in learning more about the program and in finding out what we need to perform at a higher level. They always loop us in to Oakland literacy initiatives and offer us resources.... I appreciate that they are always so positive in tone, rather than assuming negatives. All of us enjoy working with such a supportive funder, and I really think that it makes a greater positive impact on the community to have a funder be so open and positive in communications with grantees.

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| Grantee Comment |
| [Our organization thrives] when we can get support to create new and experimental work and can work with new partners. |
| [We find the SEEDS work in our field and community fantastic!] |
| As previously mentioned, KRF's IMPACT program is currently unrivaled in its impact on the field. |
| By funding a variety of projects, they are giving visibility to artists, and that is vital to the growth of the field. |
| Clearly the Rainin foundation is a leader in supporting innovative work in dance/theater |
| Clearly the Rainin foundation is a leader in supporting innovative work in dance/theater |
| I believe that the Kenneth Rainin Foundation is one of the main drivers in creating a thriving performing arts community in the Bay Area. I hope that they will turn their focus more towards Oakland, not only on San Francisco. |
| I have never seen an organization study a scene as thoroughly as Rainin, nor make as strategic an impact. They feel like environmental restoration scientists reviving a septic watershed. |
| I have no data but my observation is that they have raised the bar for artistic quality and for artists ability to make work |
| I have seen the impact of the Foundation through its support of innovative new programs in the arts. Several of the most cutting edge and interesting performances I have witness or been a part of in the past year received funding through the Foundation. |
| I know that the Rainin Foundation has been involved in looking at stabilization models and helping to develop the central Market Street corridor as a more prolific arts environment. I'm not sure what the results of these efforts have been thus far. |
| I understand that KRF has supported many unique projects in the Bay Area, and that as an organization they have the respect of the artists who apply to them for support. |
| Impact at two levels (i) bringing new players into the field, attracted by the opportunity given by the Foundation; and (ii) networking and developing leaders within the field. |
| Impact on programming the support of local organizations in the community and field has been great On our organization - each grant from KRF has made a significant impact: supporting our vision of improving and expanding programming, leveraging funding, and providing more visibility for artists. |
| In Oakland the Rainin Foundation is viewed as the stand out organization helping effect better outcomes for young learners in the 0-5 age group, by advocating for and supporting programs that will have the greatest impact in communities of greatest need. |
| Investing in art and artists is creating a healthier more productive dance field. |
| It is having a positive effect by providing research funding for outside the box and innovative projects which might not be funded through standard federal funding streams |
| It is helping to shift the emphasis to language acquisition in the earliest years as well as support for Transitional Kindergarten. This has the potential to have a major impact on improving reading proficiency - and everything that results from being ready to learn in Kindergarten and reading at grade level by 3rd grade - for Oakland children. |
| Jen Rainin's vision for the foundation has been all about building capacity for a myriad of exciting arts organizations. She and her skilled staff have brought their significant and long term understanding and commitment to performing arts in the Bay Area along with their hunger to stay abreast of our very tangible day to day challenges to every opportunity they are providing. They have a holistic approach to community as they help reshape the field. |

Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.

Grantee Comment

KRF has good intentions in the field of the arts but I think they geared towards a mid-upper class of people in SF. I wish KRF would think more about the general public and fund projects that can include a broader demographic.

KRF seems to have a very good understanding of the arts' role in revitalizing communities. It's very exciting to partner with them. I do sometimes feel like the arts themselves matter less than the revitalization, but I also feel as though the arts in the Bay Area aren't always as invested in their communities as they ought to be. I think KRF's funding priorities encourage us all to think more deeply about these issues. I do think that there are significant industry-wide challenges that threaten the sustainability of the arts and artists, and I feel that those issues are overlooked by KRF in its enthusiasm for what the arts can do for communities. We're at a critical point, where the arts may not remain vital to do the amazing things we do for our communities, if there isn't more investment in the health and well-being of artists and arts administrators, and in the infrastructure of our theater organizations. We're surviving, but we're not thriving.

Money helps a few artists continue and that's great. K Rainin Foundation funds a few excellent projects every year in the dance field/communities in which I participate. This is helpful/healthful to the general ecology of the field. thanks.

My field...overlaps only slightly with the funding area of Education; while I don't think the Foundation has impacted [my field] significantly, I do feel they are impacting Education within Oakland, between providers of various fields, significantly.

My sense is that KRF wants to take the lead, and some programs do seem to be field-leading. However from the grantee side I see a lack of clarity around the big-picture vision, and believe KRF could be more succinct in stating their desired impact, particularly around which fields they wish to impact.... [Given my field is not fully in line with KR's focus] I never know if they care about my field.

Our programmatic focus is very specific and few foundations have taken on a leadership role in this area.

Rainin is having an important impact primarily through driving innovation. Other private foundations exist for this field but they are more closely aligned with patient activism.

Rainin is known for granting programs that are anticipatory of the needs of the field. Rainin has their ear to the ground, sees what is coming, and models granting programs to support growth of the field at large.

Rainin's innovative grantmaking programs allow the field to think about where it is going next instead of where it's currently at. Most grantmakers are slow moving but Rainin has been quick and agile in creating new grantmaking programs and establishing itself as a major player in the Bay Area arts ecosystem.

Simply by supporting the new dance works that they do, the foundation is raising the quality of Bay Area performance work by giving much needed resources to create the work and the financial leverage to seek additional funding.

Specific to early childhood education, Rainin is the leader citywide on impacting the quality of providers, the growth of quality programs, and the advancement of early childhood as a priority at the citywide leadership level.

Susan and Paula, are real hands on advocates for early childhood, school readiness and healthy teacher, parent child development. They have established relationships with those that serve the children in need of support. The work as a partner to understand the need and stay focus on Foundation Goals that support program needs. I have never worked with a Foundation that is aware of needs, is supportive and encouraging, and has clear expectations about action, that allows programs to build internal decision making and capacity.

The Foundation has become a regional, state-level, and national leader in the field of early learning. I believe, the greatest impact, however, has been the Foundation's willingness to shine a bright light on early learning and literacy within the city of Oakland. Its approach to support, collaboration, and determined change, has enabled the foundation to be a force to be reckoned with in the field.

The foundation has become a significant resource for local performing arts organizations, joining the Hewlett Foundation as one of the few foundations providing dedicated support for local artists working to develop their practices and create new work.

Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.

Grantee Comment

The foundation has committed support to our field that greatly enhances the number of new ideas and projects begun

The Foundation in my mind is leading the field locally. They are unafraid to experiment and try initiatives. They seem to listen to the field and are able to award substantial grants that have been diminishing over the years for project related work.

The foundation is engaged in convening a variety of resources around high-impact initiatives.

The Foundation is having a huge impact on our organization. We strive to have a great impact on families giving them the tools to be agents of change and with the support of the Foundation we would not be able to provide one of our high impact programs. The Foundation is also connecting us to others in the field to help support our work and have greater impact.

The Foundation is just beginning it's investments in early childhood care and education (ECE) in Oakland [and] nationally. We are excited to partner with the Foundation [in this work.]

The foundation is strengthening our TK program throughout the last two years and continuing this year. They are innovative, and they are always looking to see how the program can grow. Our academics have improved based on the work with our younger students. Our teachers feel more supported with curriculum, coaching, and professional development. The foundation has connected our school with other community partnerships. I see it as an ongoing relationship and we've only just begun!

The Foundation is very forward thinking. They have a deep understanding of the arts community in the San Francisco Bay Area and they are offering new and innovative strategies to address the on-going issues that we face. Their work with the City and other funders concerning the Central Market transformation is admirable. Their strategy around 'lease to own' facility for Counterpulse is fantastic. They didn't straddle Counterpulse with a facility for which they needed to launch a large and crippling capital campaign. Their solution allows the organization to come up to speed over several years to get to where they need to be to fundraise at the appropriate level. In the meantime, their programming continues and evolves. For us, they are providing the time and focus to flesh out our strategic direction over the course of the next few years. Their support is pivotal. It allows us to rise above the weeds yet tend to our daily operating needs. Shelley and Jen are finding ways to stay ahead and in front of the field -- it inspires confidence and trust.

The foundation really connects people working on education issues, including their grantees as well as other community members and groups. Their umbrella campaigns like Oakland Reads 2020 and Talking is Teaching help bring people together to collaborate more effectively.

The Foundation serves as a partner...and supports our ability to provide high quality services. The Foundation is very responsive to our needs as an organization. Our partner is very communicative and encourages us to strive for more. We are appreciative of the partnership.

The Foundation's commitment to providing general operating support is rare and wonderful. This is the type of support that arts organizations need in order to succeed, and yet it is remarkably rare in the performing arts field, where nearly all the funding is project specific. The high overhead of working and creating art in the Bay Area, in particular, makes this critical. I commend the Foundation on this, and hope that they will continue to expand this facet of their work. We have not (yet) received general operating support, and hope to in the future. Whether we do or not, that is the most impactful kind of funding available. It also feels as if the foundation is truly looking at significant problems in the arts ecosystem in the Bay Area - such as the decreasing availability of affordable space - and taking action to help. Ultimately the growth of the Rainin Foundation has been the most heartening development in the Bay Area funding world for theaters of our size in many years.

The Foundation's commitment to supporting non-traditional art forms and emerging artists is crucial for the sustainability and development of the field, and is hopefully a model that other funders are taking note of and adopting.

Please comment on the most important impact the Foundation is having on your field, community, or organization. Your answer will help us to better understand the nature of the Foundation's impact.

Grantee Comment

The importance of Early Literacy in Early Childhood and importance for children to hear as many words as possible and to encourage children to develop reading skills habits early in life . The Kenneth Rainin Foudation gave [our organization a large grant that will help us make an] impact in this area of learning and will influence continue[d] growth and develop[ment]. The teacher are highly motived to continue the program.

The infusion of Rainin funds are having a direct impact on student achievement.

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation has had a fundamental impact on [our organization], our ability to plan and support programming goals over time (particularly with multi-year funding) and our direct support of local artists and creation of new work. The Foundation is one of the most significant funders of new works and new voices for the stage in our community and has contributed to the Bay Area's growing role as a national center for new plays.

The KRF innovators and breakthrough awards have been supporting multiple but very diverse research programmes in inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). In our view this is a bold statement from KRF. Improving diagnosis, management and treatment of IBD can only be achieved by multidisciplinary basic and clinical research. KRF has clearly understood and followed this route, providing funding for the most innovative projects irrespectively of their basic or applied character.

The KRF emphasizes innovation and discovery. It takes on potentially risky projects that can have high return.

The Rainin Foundation has had a significant impact on the arts field in the Bay Area. Through a comprehensive support process that includes staff professional development, increasing marketing and visibility for projects and encouraging inter-field networking and peer resource sharing, the Foundation uses an effective hands-on approach. Recognizing the minimal amount of general operating support options for arts organizations the bay area, the Foundation smartly implemented the Impact program, which we hope they will increase and expand. There being a wealth of project grants in the area, but not much operational support, this will increase the stability of the sector overall.

The Rainin Foundation is demonstrating what it takes, over time, to make change in a local community around educational opportunities for our youngest children. They are helping community stakeholders work together to use data and insights about what works locally to create a locally owned comprehensive approach that is informed by a broader array of knowledge from outside Oakland and is also supported by other foundations.

The Rainin Foundation: its board of directors and Shelley Trott are quite simply extraordinary. They are great listeners, thoughtful, decisively and extraordinarily generous as they select ways in which to improve the world. In the arts, they listen and discern what is needed; focuses on the best way(s) in which the Foundation can profoundly address an issue; and do so in such a smart, quick and respectful way. They do not flinch from new or unusual ideas - in fact, they seek innovative ways to tackle a problem.... The leadership is brilliant and humble. In a very short time, its imprint - its ideals, values, and work to date - has been acclaimed regionally and nationally....

Their support in the local arts community is both noticeable and extremely positive. They have a very deep and broad view of the entire dance/film communities and can see how your organization can play a role in creating and sustaining the larger artistic eco-system. Our organization or the specific program that we produce is a part of this larger whole and you feel that you are contributing to a dynamic community. The Foundation's impact is significant - not just for the recipients of their grants - the creators of artistic content - but for the growing number of consumers as well.

They are doing an excellent job. Coomincating the IBD challenges. Really outstanding.

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| What specific improvements would you suggest that would make the Foundation a better funder? |
|---|
| Grantee Comment |
| Might help to better understand the array of grants that the Rainin Foundation is making in Oakland and how these fit together so we can think more clearly about how our work as an individual grantee might leverage and support these other investments. |
| ...we would be delighted if the foundation supported new music projects as well as dance/theater projects in its arts program |
| 1. Consider holding regular convenings with its grantees to create more specific bridge-building and collaboration opportunities. / 2. Share more broadly and consistently the interactions/outcomes with other funders and policy shapers in the field and in the region. That discourse is invaluable to practitioners who tend to have heads down focused on implementation. |
| All the grants are short-term, which helps kick start more projects but there is a need for sustained funding beyond 1-2 years because of the difficulties in acquiring [additional] support. This leads to promising projects/results being abandoned and not followed up. |
| At the moment, they are one of the best funders out there. |
| Be more clear about which types of art or artists are eligible. More clarity around words like "public" and "community" with respect to impacted participants, locations and sites, and neighborhoods. |
| Can not think of any |
| Continuing to focus on general operating support, and helping solve the space crisis seem the most important. |
| Continuity in the funding.... I think that since only 4% of all arts funding in the country goes to arts and social justice issues, perhaps K.Rainin should make their support to [arts and social justice organizations] more visible to show its commitment to this responsible philanthropy. |
| Creating a more direct interface with the artists they are funding through attending the funded projects.... we believe [if funding decision-makers would attend grantees' events, it] would enhance our own relationship with the Foundation and create a stronger groundwork for mutual understanding. |
| Facilitating forums with other grantees as well as with other funders around sustaining and developing the field; helping to make connections and foster partnerships within the arts and arts-funder community for our organization and our programs; having a broader perspective around our ambitions and need for funding despite our financial health. |
| Find more money under a pillow somewhere? :) Honestly, I think they are doing a tremendous amount with the resources they have on hand. |
| Get more in writing up front around expectations and reporting/return on investments. It is difficult to tell if an investment is having an impact in one year. Commit to multi-year plans and evaluate them from afar. There is a point when funders need to let go.... |
| I actually think they are doing a great job. I have not always been funded by them but when I have been it has had great impact on the project. |
| I don't have a suggestion |
| I know that time resources are limited, but ensuring that people from the arts program come and see the work that they're supporting feels very important to understanding the goals of those organizations and the state of the field overall. |
| I really can't think of anything at this time. |
| I think the Foundation is already one of the best funding organisations and I have no specific suggestions to propose. |

What specific improvements would you suggest that would make the Foundation a better funder?

Grantee Comment

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| I think the staff should initiate conversations with the funded organizations about that organization's goals and future projects for a more thorough knowledge of who they are funding and the impact the funding is having. And also to provide insight from the Rainin Foundation's perspective. |
| I think they could study carefully the use of outside consultants to provide support to small organizations which often do not have the bandwidth to support the introduction and demands of a consultant who highlights challenges but doesn't stay long enough to be a part of the remedy . |
| I would love to have a little more infrastructure support, or access to expertise, to go along with the project grant. / / I love the way KRF encourages collaboration and partnerships. I think it'd be great to encourage more sharing of resources/skills between larger grantee organizations and smaller grantee organizations. |
| I would love to see the Rainin Foundation focus more on Oakland, where their offices are based. |
| If the Foundation's resources increase, it would be incredibly helpful to consider a category for those mid-sized organizations who's budgets are over a few hundred thousand dollars, but still and consistently need support for new work. |
| It is challenging to not be eligible to receive program support while receiving impact/capacity building support. Capacity building is an ongoing project, and growing programs feeds directly into growing capacity for our organization. The growth of our programs (and the funding base for those programs) is what sustains that growth we can achieve through time-base impact funding. |
| It would be great to have community meetings about shifts in KRF funding foci or intent. We do receive written notification but the language is not always clear to all. And although staff is available for questions - community members/grantees could learn from each other and the foundation could learn more about our needs/impacts in a community gathering format. |
| It's getting more and more prohibitive to make art here in SF. We need more financial resources to make the work and pay artists a decent living wage. I would like to see more and larger multi year grants for both projects and overhead if we are to survive this cities escalating costs we need help from Foundations such as Rainin who understand and get it. |
| Long term support tailored to organizations |
| Make site visit to grantees labs. |
| More money for [our organization], of course. |
| More national recognition for their awesomeness. Doris Duke is the only other org I know that is putting their stake deeply in the sand to raise the bar for dance. |
| More support for projects deemed important by the...organization and less focus on "capacity building." |
| no improvement is needed at this time but to continue positive experience and motivations in the directions that the Foundation is leading and the children, teachers, families and the community will continue to grow.... |
| None. Keep doing what you are doing, and keep rolling the programs out! Consistent operating support...after the initial grant period would be a nice thing to develop. |
| nothing specific, although the CDP forms were not relevant to our organization |
| Our organization receives funding from a great many sources and foundations, and many require arduous application processes and lengthy final reports without showing much interest in the actual program funded. It can feel very bureaucratic sometimes and its difficult to know if the foundation actually cares about the community we are trying to serve. With Rainin it was the exact opposite. They were very involved and helpful throughout the program as it was designed and executed and it was very clear to us that they were deeply vested in the outcomes and cared deeply about our work. |
| Really none; the summer symposium is a great way to showcase projects and to encourage collaboration amongst investigators |
| refer to last two text sections |
| Sometimes we have felt that we were on the fringes of the effort rather than being included in some of the more critical conversations. Greater transparency would have helped us be a better partner. |
| Support with evaluation tools and best practices in the field |
| The breakthrough award would benefit from an extended grant period that could effectively warrant full-term funding of the project |
| They could be more consistent about responding to inquiries and other communications. |

What specific improvements would you suggest that would make the Foundation a better funder?

Grantee Comment

They had a reception for grantees to which I was invited during the grant period of the first grant my organization received. If they've had subsequent gatherings, I haven't been invited to them. I know they make some multi-year funding and have made project grants to organizations more than once...but it would be nice to be included in the social convenings for more than just the specific grant cycle.

They'd been a pleasure to work with. I love their collaborative approach.

This isn't an improvement, just an acknowledgement. So much of the value of Rainin's work is that they aren't distanced from the artists and communities that they are supporting. Relationships with organizations are personal and specific. Programs address identified needs in neighborhoods and the field, with Rainin staff actually on the ground. I think the key to continuing as an impactful funder is to maintain this more intimate connection to the work, embracing the difference that makes the foundation unique.

To not make assumptions about the timing of an artist's project with respect to funding, to trust the artists' intentions about funding and planning.

We appreciate the foundation's transparency, through its blog and website, particularly as it continues to develop its funding priorities and rework its funding guidelines in the arts.

We would like to see, as mentioned before, an increase in the amount of Impact grant funds given and an increase in the number of organizations funded.