

Urban Education Study Tour

Exploring Grantmaking Strategies for Improving Urban Education in El Paso, Newark and Oakland

GFE is pleased to once again present its Urban Education Study Tour - a unique learning opportunity designed for experienced grantmakers who are currently funding education reform efforts in urban districts and seeking to learn from other cities engaged in similar initiatives and interested in sharing and exploring ideas, lessons and experiences with colleagues about grantmaking strategies and promising educational models to take their work to the next level. The Tour will provide a deeper dive into three of GFE's priority themes: closing achievement and opportunity gaps, strengthening the education pipeline, and supporting more high quality teaching and leadership.

The study tour is a learning community that will convene for a series of three 2-day gatherings in 2012—one in each of the three participating cities—that include conversations with superintendents, key education leaders and grantmakers. Through dialogue with key players involved with the work, participants will analyze each community's reform strategies and the ways that education grantmakers are engaging in the reform process, while comparing and contrasting lessons from related strategies led by grantmakers working in other cities. Study tour participants are expected to attend all three gatherings.

The study tour will include groups of up to 10 funders from each of the three host cities (El Paso, Newark and Oakland), as well as up to 15 experienced urban K-12 grantmakers from other cities across the country. To enhance discussion opportunities and provide continuity across the meetings, registration is limited to 45 participants

This project is designed to strengthen grantmakers' efforts to improve urban education by promoting the following draft learning outcomes:

- Explore methods for building effective partnerships among funders and between funders, school districts, and other local partners to improve outcomes for all learners.
- Identify specific, high-leverage strategies to support students of color and English Language Learners, pre-K through graduation, and to position these students to be college and career ready and to achieve post-secondary success.
- Understand the challenges of and approaches to system alignment, with particular focus on ensuring successful transitions between pre-K and K-12 and between K-12 and post-secondary institutions.
- Learn about successful investments in human capital, especially those that support teachers and education leaders.
- Understand the range of roles education grantmakers can play as external change agents for urban school systems, the tensions that arise in these roles, and strategies grantmakers can employ to help resolve these tensions.

We will ground our learning in the concrete work taking place in three urban communities that offer both promising models and exemplify the challenges of effective grantmaking and education improvement work. Study Tour participants will be exposed to a range of roles and models for how grantmakers can effectively impact education outcomes, capturing valuable lessons for their craft. The program offers a nuanced behind-the-scenes look at both the specific education reform strategies and the ways that grantmakers engaged with districts in the reform process.

By sharing what's worked—promising practices, successes and learning across sites—as well as exploring setbacks and challenges, your individual understanding will deepen as the group's knowledge grows. Participants will act as both teachers and learners by offering questions, feedback, and advice as well as uncovering their assumptions about their change efforts. The relationships built during the Study Tour can be tapped for learning and exchange long after the study tour ends.

To create an effective peer learning experience, we are assembling a group of participating funders that provides a rich mix of experiences and perspectives to contribute to one another's learning. The program registration form (online at <https://www.edfunders.org/programs/event2/>) will include a few brief application questions to help us learn more about your experiences and interests. If demand for the program exceeds the program's capacity, we will consider the order in which applications were received, the applicant's experiences and interests, and—for funders working outside the 3 focus cities—we will give priority to GFE members. On the registration form, applicants should provide brief responses to the following questions, grounded in the learning objectives described above:

1. Among the aforementioned draft learning outcomes, which most makes you want to join the study tour and why?
2. What are one or two challenges you are presently experiencing as a grantmaker that are related to the draft learning outcomes and that you'd like to seek counsel from your study tour colleagues?
3. What lessons or insights do you feel you might offer other study tour participants?

Please note: the program registration fee of \$450 is to be paid in full upon registering for the program. The fee is intended to help underwrite the costs for the three city convenings, and it is considered a lump sum tuition for the program (and thus will not be pro-rated for participants who cannot attend one of the three gatherings). Program registrants may cancel their registration with a \$50 processing fee before March 9; after that the registration fee is non-refundable.

Program Details

Meeting dates: El Paso, April 3-5
Newark May 23-24
Oakland, November 14-15

Cost: \$450 per individual for GFE members and for local host committee members plus travel and lodging. Other eligible non-members may participate on a space available basis; non-member registration fee is \$750.

Registration Timing: Registration opens Wednesday, January 11, and the deadline is March 2; space is limited, and we will consider the order in which applications are received. Register online at: <https://www.edfunders.org/programs/event2/>

Who should register? Experienced grantmakers who are currently supporting education improvement efforts in urban districts, and who can commit to participating in all 3 meetings. If interest exceeds program capacity, we will consider the order in which applications were received, the applicant's experience, and for funders working outside the 3 focus cities we will give priority to GFE members.