

Philanthropy as a Strategic Tool for Donor-Activists to Effect Social Change

As the U.S. population shifts, with racial and ethnic groups growing faster than the overall American population, and with more women controlling more wealth in the U.S. than ever before, the face of philanthropy is also rapidly changing to become as diverse as the country's population. More than ever before, women and people of color are using their wealth deliberately and systematically, and taking on greater leadership roles, to effect social change. But...giving to the greater good does not require millions. *Anyone can become a philanthropist.*

“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.” -Theodore Roosevelt

When each of us discovers our values and motivations – and we do what we can, with what we have, where we are – we will see social change as we've never seen before.

“How can I become a philanthropist?”

1. Do a self-assessment. What are your values and motivations? What outcomes do you want to see?
 - Do you want to address injustices? Strengthen particular programs? Advance a cause? Better your community?
 - Do you feel it's your moral imperative to donate?
 - Do you think of giving to nonprofit organizations as an investment wherein you'd receive both personal and financial/tax rewards?
 - Do you want to support highly regarded nonprofit organizations that have compelling missions and that offer opportunities to serve on committees, buy tables, attend functions, and socialize?
 - Do you want to give out of compassion and to advance humanity without any personal benefits?
 - Did you personally benefit from an institution or service – and now feel a special responsibility to “pay it forward,” to fund a solution/cure, or preserve something you believe is valuable?
 - Do you want to give because you grew up in a family that taught you the importance of giving – so much so that giving is now a part of your self-identity, family, and values? Do you want to set an example for – or pass these values onto – your children and create a legacy?
2. Figure Out Your Philanthropy Roadmap.
 - **Create Value.** Some people have more time than money, and some can contribute both. Volunteering your time, knowledge, and skills for a cause that is important to you can help you learn more about that organization's work and increase your impact.
 - **Maximize the Impact of Your Gift.** You can set up monthly recurring donations to ensure that your favorite organizations receive ongoing support or donate gifts of stock, or create a donor-advised fund. In addition, many employers sponsor matching gift programs and will match charitable contributions made by their employees.
 - **Join a Board.** Did you know that people of color hold only 1 in 7 nonprofit board seats, women hold only 17% of Fortune 500 board seats, and women of color hold only 3% of board seats? Diverse staff and board members all bring fresh perspectives, stimulate dialogue and innovation, expand the networks of dedicated talent, and elevate the voices and values of the populations they serve. **Are there any organizations that you would like the opportunity to support as a board member?** The Council of Urban Professionals' (CUP's) [“A Seat At The Table” Initiative](#) secures strategic board and career placements for our highly motivated and qualified members and trains these emerging leaders to make a difference once they are at decision-making tables. For more information, [contact Justin Reyes](#).
 - **Start Now.** Philanthropy is not a daunting concept. It *literally* means “the love of mankind.” Regardless of your personal budget, it is easy to be philanthropic. All you have to do is *lean in* to the issues that motivate you and you'll discover what you can do to effect change. The sooner you start, the sooner you will see results.

Are you already effecting change in your community? CUP would love to celebrate your accomplishments! Our annual lists, **CUP Catalysts: Change Agents 2013** – in [Finance](#), [Law](#), and [Media](#) – are now open. We welcome nominations of successful professionals of color and women who have achieved extraordinary success in business while simultaneously making a significant impact on their community. Professionals of color and women starting in their careers need more examples of the heroes among us – and CUP Catalysts are the leaders who demonstrate that doing well and doing good need not be incompatible. To see to see our *inaugural* lists of CUP Catalysts: Change Agents 2012, [click here](#).

What are *your* thoughts on leadership, philanthropy, and social change? Share them with us!

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Founded in 2007, The Council of Urban Professionals (CUP) works to *connect, empower* and *mobilize* the next generation of diverse business and civic leaders. But we cannot do this work without you. While you are thinking about your philanthropic giving, please consider making a [tax-deductible donation](#) to CUP. Your generosity will increase CUP's capacity to support a pipeline of leadership for women and professionals of color.