

Formative Evaluation Results

Prepared for

The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts

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Table of Contents

	Page(s)
Executive Summary	I-IV
Background/Context for the Report	1
Brief Overview of THFCM's Grantmaking System	2
Goals for the Formative Evaluation	3
Methods for the Formative Evaluation	3-4
Evaluation Results	5-20
Table 1: Response Rates for Survey Data	5
Table 2: Variables Assessing the First Evaluation Question	10
Table 3: Perception of THFCM's Recognition/Board Designated Awards	12
Tables 4 & 5: Perception of THFCM's Board of Directors	13-14
Summary of Results for the First Evaluation Question	14-15
Table 6: Variables Assessing the Second Evaluation Question	15
Table 7: THFCM as an Effective Partner	17
Summary of Results for the Second Evaluation Question	20
Suggested Recommendations for THFCM	21-23
Appendix A: Copy of Survey	
Appendix B: Results for Project Directors	A-G
Appendix C: Results for Declined Applicants	H-O
Appendix D: Results for Recognition/Board Designated Awards	P-W
Appendix E: Results for Funders	X-DD
Appendix F: Results for the Broad Base of Community Stakeholders	EE-LL

Executive Summary

Background

In early March 2001, the Board of Directors of The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts (THFCM) commissioned an independent formative evaluation to determine if community stakeholders perceive THFCM to be effectively fulfilling its mission.

Goal and Evaluation Methodology for the Formative Evaluation

The goal of this formative evaluation was to assess the perceived level of effectiveness of the grantmaking system within the community in order determine what improvements might be made to further refine the process. To achieve this goal, the formative evaluation was designed to answer two major evaluation questions:

1. How appropriate is THFCM's grantmaking agenda (e.g., The Health Care and Health Promotion Synergy Initiative and the Activation Fund) in positioning THFCM to fulfill its mission of improving the health of those who live and work in Central Massachusetts?
2. How effective has THFCM been in introducing its grantmaking agenda to potential applicants and implementing its grantmaking system and guidelines?

The formative evaluation utilized two major data collection methods: a comprehensive self-report survey and follow-up focus groups with key stakeholders. The survey was distributed to 258 members of community agencies/organization who had some knowledge of or interaction with THFCM. Of those 258 people mailed a survey, 89 (34%) returned the survey (a 30% response rate was anticipated for this mail survey). Sixty respondents were invited to participate in one of three focus groups designed to provide valuable qualitative information. Approximately one third attended a focus group. The surveys were distributed in mid-May 2001, and the focus groups were conducted in mid-June 2001. The following stakeholder groups were contacted to participate in the formative evaluation.

1. Project directors and key participants who obtained a planning grant under the Synergy Initiative or Activation Fund (N=12)
2. Applicants whose proposals for a Synergy or Activation award were declined (N=24)
3. Applicants and recipients of Recognition and Board Designated Awards (N=41)
4. Funders and funding partners in Central Massachusetts (N=16)
5. Broad base of community stakeholders who have knowledge of THFCM's grantmaking system through attendance at community meetings and/or direct contact with THFCM staff (N=165).

Evaluation Results

Quantitative and qualitative data reveal similar patterns of results. The following are general highlights of the results for each of the two evaluation questions.

Evaluation Question I: How appropriate is THFCM's grantmaking in positioning THFCM to fulfill its mission of improving the health of those who live and work in Central Massachusetts?

Level of Agreement with THFCM's Grantmaking Mission and Agenda

- The respondents were very positive about THFCM's grantmaking and reported that THFCM's initial grants seem appropriate to its mission, not a duplication of programs that currently exist, and are likely to lead to positive results. Respondents were also impressed that THFCM obtained community input into their funding priorities and were encouraged at the link between formalized health care groups and grassroots/community organizations.
- All stakeholder groups encouraged THFCM to remain broad in their definition of health but cautioned THFCM not to exclude unmet medical needs in Central Massachusetts. Respondents also wanted further clarity on the types of programs THFCM would fund, and reminded the foundation about the need to fund programs in the outlying areas (e.g., rural north and south) of Central Massachusetts.

Perception of THFCM's Recognition and Board Designated Awards

- While most stakeholder groups agreed that the nominating processes for these awards are clear, many questioned why the amounts of money awarded were different for the Staff, Leadership, and Youth Public Service Awards. There was a general consensus that these amounts should be similar across categories.

Perception of THFCM's Funding Exclusions

- Respondents were asked to determine if the current funding exclusions are appropriate for THFCM. The majority in each stakeholder group reported that the funding exclusions for endowments, fund drives, and retiring operating deficits are appropriate. The pattern of results for capital campaigns and scholarships is different. The majority of project directors (67%) and declined applicants (57%) indicated that capital campaigns should NOT be excluded. The percentages for the remaining stakeholder groups indicating that capital campaigns should NOT be excluded are: Recognition/Board Designated Awards (37.5%), Funders (33%), and Community Stakeholders (18%). The funding exclusion for scholarships also has less support than for the endowments, fund drives, and retired operating deficits. THFCM should consider reexamining their rationale behind the funding exclusions for capital campaigns and scholarships.

Perception of the Final Decision-Makers, THFCM's Board of Directors

- These results suggest that most respondents believe that THFCM's Board of Directors has an appropriate skill set and is inclusive in its representation.
- Data indicate that THFCM may want to consider ways to increase the community's awareness of the Board of Directors, its role, and its inclusivity. Specific suggestions for this included publishing the geographic location where the board members live and reside, having them participate in site visits, and ensuring that all board members receive ongoing training to increase the likelihood of sustainability of THFCM's structure and processes over time.

Evaluation Question 2: How effective has THFCM been in introducing its grantmaking agenda to potential applicants and in implementing its grantmaking system and guidelines?

Staff Competence/Availability

- The results on this section of the survey were very positive with average scores higher in this area (across all stakeholder groups) than any other area. Staff is perceived as competent, committed, and approachable. Other positive comments include the staff's level of professionalism, their willingness to attend meetings, and the manner in which strategic decisions are made.
- Respondents reiterated the need for all staff to communicate similar messages across all settings and for there to be clear communication lines between the community members (e.g., potential applicants) and THFCM staff. There was some concern that the workload may become too much for the small size of the staff.

THFCM as an Effective Partner

- Data indicate that most stakeholder groups agree or strongly agree that THFCM is an effective partner in helping to implement grants. The issue of staff's attendance and level of involvement in planning meetings was brought up in all three focus groups. In each focus group, the consensus was that it probably is a good idea to have THFCM present, but there should be an understanding that THFCM could be "disinvited" if necessary. THFCM should clarify the roles of THFCM staff members when they attend planning meetings.

Application Materials and Processes

- Quantitative data indicate that most believe that the application procedures are well developed and communicated effectively to potential applicants. In addition, most agreed that the small technical assistance grants provided by THFCM are valuable in completing the application materials. There were many comments about the application materials on the surveys and in the focus groups.
- Respondents reported that the formalized application process adds accountability to THFCM's grantmaking and noted that many potential applicants in Central Massachusetts are not used to this systems level approach to grantmaking.
- Respondents encouraged THFCM to periodically assess their application materials to ensure that they are straightforward and user-friendly for the

applicants. There was community interest in full electronic submission and the use of electronic communication for reports.

- Participants in three of the stakeholder groups reported that they had contacted THFCM to determine why their submission to THFCM was denied. While a handful reported positive experiences in this feedback with THFCM staff, most did not. Specifically, respondents indicated that they felt the feedback (e.g., letter, conversation) had been confusing, patronizing, not helpful, or unfair. These more negative comments were most likely to come from the declined applicants and the larger community stakeholder group.

Awareness of THFCM and its Grantmaking Guidelines

- Most of the respondents became familiar with THFCM through the community meeting held in March 2000 to announce THFCM's grantmaking system, by meeting with THFCM staff in person, and reading the THFCM brochure. About 68% of the total sample reported that they had done each of these.
- About 50% of the respondents reported that they had talked on the phone with a THFCM staff member, read the Annual Report, read about THFCM through the newspaper, or heard about THFCM and its grantmaking through a colleague.
- The least common ways that the total sample became familiar with THFCM was through its website (25%) and by attending one of the nine workshops presented in Spring 2000 (33%).
- Participants were also asked to rate how helpful they perceive the grantmaking steps to be. Although the number of respondents varied widely, all stakeholder groups reported that conversing by telephone and conversing in person with THFCM about its grantmaking was very helpful. The timeliness of decisions made by THFCM was viewed as less positive.

Summary of Evaluation Results

Data obtained in this formative evaluation suggest that the majority of respondents perceive THFCM to be effective in developing a comprehensive grantmaking agenda, grantmaking materials, and implementing its grantmaking system. There were many positive comments about the professionalism of THFCM and the benefits of having a foundation that is planful in its approach, responsive to applicants, and willing to be involved at all levels of grantmaking. Staff competence and availability received the highest quantitative scores across all stakeholder groups.

Specific policy and administrative recommendations are included in the full report in order to offer suggestions for continued improvement of THFCM and its grantmaking system. Detailed analyses of every question for each stakeholder groups are included in Appendices B-H of the full report.

Background/Context for this Report

The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, Inc. (THFCM) is a conversion foundation formally created in 1999 with assets of approximately \$60 million resulting from the sale of an HMO, Central Massachusetts Health Care, Inc. THFCM's mission is to use its resources to improve the health of those who live or work in the Central Massachusetts region with particular emphasis on vulnerable populations and unmet needs.

In March 2001, THFCM contracted with Drs. Pam Imm and Abe Wandersman to conduct an independent formative evaluation of the grantmaking programs and system developed and first introduced by THFCM to the region in March 2000. This formative evaluation was commissioned by the Board of Directors at the recommendation of its Community Outreach Committee. The purpose of the Community Outreach Committee is to identify and recommend to the Board various methods for gathering input and feedback from THFCM's stakeholders regarding its effectiveness in fulfilling its mission.

The rationale for commissioning a formal evaluation by independent evaluators of THFCM's initial grantmaking programs and procedures one year after their implementation arose from THFCM's philosophical approach to program evaluation. With the goal of maximizing the effectiveness of its grant funded programs, THFCM developed a Results-Oriented Grantmaking /Grant Implementation (ROGG) system. This system is based on ten accountability questions and includes an emphasis on continuous quality improvement. The ROGG accountability system is designed to guide applicants during their program planning, and grantees during program implementation, to achieve results. Since THFCM emphasizes accountability to its grantees, THFCM decided to demonstrate accountability and evaluate its own grantmaking system through a comprehensive formative evaluation.

The formative evaluation utilized two major data collection methods: a comprehensive self-report survey and follow-up focus groups with key stakeholders. The survey was distributed to 258 members of community agencies/organization who had some knowledge of or interaction with THFCM. Of those 258 members, 60 were invited to participate in one of three focus groups designed to provide valuable qualitative information. The surveys were distributed in mid-May 2001, and the focus groups were conducted in mid-June 2001.

The following key contextual factors were relevant at the time of the formative evaluation:

- The awarding of 4 planning grants (totaling \$276,831) in December 2000 to address broad health issues including dental and oral health, support for family caregivers for the elderly, the protection of children from sexual and physical abuse, and 2 project grants (totaling \$183,831) to provide access to dental prosthetics and to prescription medications.

- The awarding of 4 recognition awards (totaling \$50,000) in February 2001 to encourage and commend outstanding service to health-related, charitable organizations.
- The awarding of one pilot grant (\$968,896) in May 2001 to begin implementation of a community initiative designed to increase the access to dental treatment and prevention of dental decay and disease.
- The intensive involvement of THFCM staff in the planning and implementation of a highly visible public education effort about the benefits of fluoridation in the city's water system where the foundation office is located. This involvement included a series of planning meetings over the prior six-month period with local dental and healthcare providers as well as state and local officials, the selection and hiring of a public relations firm, and a heightened level of press coverage of THFCM and its staff in late May and early June 2001.

Brief Overview of THFCM's Grantmaking System

To achieve its goal to improve the health of those who live or work in Central Massachusetts, THFCM focuses its grantmaking and other activities by targeting disparities in health status and access to care, with particular attention given to caregivers, the working poor, and underserved children, youth, and elders. The grantmaking target is to annually distribute approximately \$2.5 million primarily through two funds: the Health Care and Health Promotion Synergy Initiative and the Activation Fund.

The Central Massachusetts community was initially introduced to THFCM's grantmaking system in March 2000 at a community-wide meeting attended by over 500 representatives of 301 nonprofit organizations. This announcement was followed by nine workshops held at various locations throughout the region, attracting 284 attendees from 194 organizations. These workshops were designed to facilitate understanding of THFCM's grantmaking system, its funding programs and priorities, and application procedures. Materials about THFCM's grantmaking system, including funding exclusions, were also disseminated to community residents through its website, print media, and brochures mailed to 210 organizations which were not represented at the special announcement meeting or subsequent workshops.

Potential applicants are encouraged to contact THFCM staff before submitting a brief letter of intent in order to ensure that the proposed idea is consistent with the funding parameters and priorities of either the Synergy Initiative or the Activation Fund. After the letter of intent is reviewed by the staff and the Distribution Committee, a recommendation is made to the Board who then determines whether an application will be invited. If an application to the Synergy Initiative is invited, a full proposal is prepared and submitted to THFCM for full review by the Distribution Committee and a funding recommendation is then made to the Board by the staff. In the case of an invited application to the Activation Fund, the full proposal is forwarded with a staff recommendation directly to the Board for their funding consideration, rather than first routed through the Distribution Committee. Application forms and a guidebook are available to applicants in hard copy as well as on diskettes. THFCM staff is also

available to assist organizations in developing their proposal, and small technical assistance grants for more intensive assistance are also available.

Those contacted to participate in this formative evaluation included potential applicants of all grant-related applications received beginning in May 2000 through April 2001. More specifically, it encompassed the following: 15 letters of intent to the Synergy Initiative; 7 planning grant applications to the Synergy Initiative; 1 pilot grant application to the Synergy Initiative; 25 letters of intent and 4 project applications to the Activation Fund; and 48 letters of nomination for the recognition awards.

Goals of the Formative Evaluation

The major goal of this formative evaluation is to assess the perceived level of effectiveness of the grantmaking system within the community in order determine what improvements might be made to further refine the process. In order to achieve this goal, the formative evaluation was designed to answer two major evaluation questions:

1. How appropriate is THFCM's grantmaking agenda (i.e., The Health Care and Health Promotion Synergy Initiative, Activation Fund) in positioning THFCM to fulfill its mission of improving the health of those who live and work in Central Massachusetts?
2. How effective has THFCM been in introducing its grantmaking agenda to potential applicants and implementing its grantmaking system and guidelines?

Specific questions on the survey and in the focus groups were designed to answer the questions above. Detailed analyses of every question are included in Appendices B-H of this report.

Methods for the Formative Evaluation

This section describes the two major data collection processes for the formative evaluation: self-report survey and focus groups.

Self-Report Survey

The evaluators developed a comprehensive *self-report survey* that was mailed to approximately 50% (N=258) of those community agencies/stakeholder groups who had been informed about THFCM's grantmaking system. These potential participants were identified by THFCM staff. The stakeholder groups and the number of surveys (N) mailed to members of each group are provided below:

1. Project directors and key participants who obtained a planning grant under the Synergy Initiative or Activation Fund (N= 12)
2. Applicants whose proposals for a Synergy or Activation award were declined (N=24)
3. Applicants and recipients of Recognition and Board Designated Awards (N=41)
4. Funders and funding partners in Central Massachusetts (N= 16)
5. Broad base of community stakeholders who have knowledge of THFCM's grantmaking system through attendance at community meetings and/or direct contact with THFCM staff (N=165).

The participants were given approximately two weeks to complete the survey and were asked to return it in the preaddressed, stamped envelope directly to a member of the evaluation team in New York. Respondents were told that their surveys would be confidential but not anonymous. As a result, each survey had a “numerical code” written on the survey so that the responses could be analyzed by stakeholder group and any follow-up information could be gathered.

The majority of the survey questions were presented in a Likert format asking the participant to circle one number to indicate the chosen response. In every case, the scale was presented in the following manner with higher numbers indicating a more favorable response.

Response Scale

- 4 – “Strongly Agree”
- 3 – “Agree”
- 2 – “Disagree”
- 1 – “Strongly Disagree”
- 0 – “No information/experience”

The format for the remaining questions asked the respondents to provide a response indicating “Yes,” “No,” or “No information/experience.” The survey is included in Appendix A of this document.

Focus Groups

Structured focus group questions were developed based on the initial survey responses of those who returned their survey. These questions were designed to obtain further clarification of survey responses and to allow an opportunity for additional input including comments and recommendations for changes/improvement. In order to streamline the process, potential participants were contacted through the mail asking them to participate in a focus group at a scheduled date and time. Of the sixty participants contacted to participate in the focus group, approximately one third (N= 19) attended one of the three sessions. Scheduling conflicts appeared to be the biggest reason as to why attendance was not higher.

The three focus groups were held “off site,” with no THFCM staff member present. Participants in two of the three focus groups were identified as “project directors” or “key participants.” The remaining focus group was reserved for funding partners and other funders in Central Massachusetts. The focus groups were scheduled to be two hours in length and were led by one of the evaluation consultants. Members of each focus group gave their consent for the session to be audiotaped.

Evaluation Results

Response Rates for Survey Data

Table 1 below highlights the overall response rate and the specific response rates for each stakeholder group. While the response rates vary according to the stakeholder group, the average response rate (34%) is within the “typical” rate of approximately 1/3 returned for a one-time mailed survey.

Table 1.

Group	# Surveys Mailed	# Surveys Returned	Response Rate
Project Directors/Synergy	6	5	83%
Project Directors/Activation	6	3	50%
Total Project Directors	12	8	67%
Applicants Declined/Synergy	10	2	20%
Applicants Declined/Activation	14	6	43%
Total Applicants Declined	24	9	37%
Recognition Award Approved	3	2	67%
Recognition Award Declined	29	5	17%
Board Designated Approved	9	3	33%
Total Recognition/Board Awards	41	10	24%
Total Funders/Funding Partners	16	10	62%
Total Broad Base of Community Stakeholders	165	53	32%
Total Response Rate	258	89	34%

Data Analyses Issues

While it may be natural to want to compare results across stakeholder groups, several cautions to this type of analyses exist. For example, the number who returned the surveys from each stakeholder group varies tremendously (e.g., 8 for Project Directors vs. 53 for community stakeholders) and the knowledge of THFCM’s grantmaking system is also different (e.g., Project Directors have a great deal of experience using the system vs. community stakeholders who may have very little knowledge). Given the vast differences among the stakeholder groups, it is recommended that the groups’ results be interpreted separately.

General trends in the data indicate that the response rates are consistently higher for those groups where an application had been approved for funding rather than declined. In addition, for the majority of questions, the lowest average scores on the survey came from the stakeholder group whose applications were declined. These patterns suggest

that respondents to this formative evaluation were more likely to be positive about THFCM if they had received funding and more likely to be negative if they had not.

In some cases, the number of individuals providing evaluable data (i.e., gave an opinion) to certain questions is low. This occurred for two main reasons. First, in some stakeholder groups, there were only several individuals who were eligible to receive the survey; and in some cases, the response rates of those groups are low. Second, when respondents indicated, “No information/experience” to a particular question, they were not included in the data analyses since they were indicating that they did not have an opinion. For example, when asked to give an opinion about the small technical assistance grants offered by THFCM, many reported “No information/experience” since very few technical assistance grants were awarded. As a result, the average response to this question was calculated using the data from only those who had an opinion about the technical assistance grants (i.e., very few people). With this and other questions, the small sample size significantly affects the results. Appendices B – F in this report give the sample size for each question for each stakeholder group.

Demographic Characteristics of the Stakeholder Groups

Group 1: Project Directors: Surveys were mailed to 12 individuals who are either project directors or key participants working on a grant (Synergy or Activation) funded by THFCM. Of these 12 individuals, 8 of them (67%) returned the survey. When asked to describe their job position/status, the majority (N=6) reported that they are staff members of a nonprofit agency. The remaining respondents (N=2) described their primary status as a Board Member of a nonprofit agency. Four of the individuals reported that they had been the Project Director on at least 11 grants, four stated that they had been a Board Member involved in 1-5 grants, and all but one respondent indicated that they had written grants in the past. This group appears to have had extensive experience in working with grants including writing, reviewing, and directing grant funded programs.

Group 2: Declined Applicants: Surveys were mailed to 24 individuals who applied for and were denied funding for either the Synergy or Activation Grant. Of these 24 individuals, 9 of them (37%) returned the survey. When asked to describe their job position/status, the majority (77%) reported that they are staff members of a nonprofit agency. The remaining respondents described their primary status as a board member of a nonprofit agency (N=1) or as an interested resident (N=1). When asked about their previous experience with grants, 44% (N=4) of the respondents indicated that they had been an executive director on at least 11 grants. Further, several respondents in this stakeholder group reported that they had worked on at least 11 grants as a grant writer (N=2) or a grant project director (N=2). This stakeholder group has significantly less experience than the project director group with the majority of declined applicants having no experience as a board member of a grant project, a grant project director, a grant writer, a grant reviewer, or a staff member on a grant.

Group 3: Recognition/Board Designated Awards: Surveys were mailed to 41 individuals who either nominated someone for a Recognition or Board Designated Award or who were recipients of a Recognition or Board Designated Award. Of these 41 individuals, 10 of them (24%) returned the survey. When asked to describe their job position/status, the majority (N=9) reported that they are staff members of a nonprofit agency. The remaining respondents (N=1) described their primary status as a board member of a nonprofit agency. The most common grant experience this group had was working as an executive director (N=6) with half of those directing at least 11 grants. Forty percent (N=4) of the respondents indicated that they were grant writers with half of those writing at least 11 grants. Forty percent (N=4) also reported that they had been project director on 6-10 grants. The least reported categories of grant experience were staff members (N=2), board members on a grant project (N=2), and grant reviewers (N=2).

Group 4: Funders/Funding Partners: Surveys were mailed to 16 individuals who work for foundations or organizations/agencies that fund programs in the Central Massachusetts area. Of these 16 individuals, 10 of them (62%) returned the survey. When asked to describe their job position/status, the majority (N=6) reported that their primary role is that of funder of a grantmaking organization. Twenty percent (N=2) reported that funder is a secondary role for them. The remaining respondents indicated that their primary role is board member of a nonprofit agency (N=2) staff of nonprofit agency (N=1) and elected official (N=1). Six of the individuals reported that they had been the project director on at least 6-10 grants, four stated that they had been a grant writer involved in at least 11 grants, and all but three respondents indicated that they had written grants in the past.

Group 5: Broad Base of Community Stakeholders: Surveys were mailed to 165 individuals who were identified as having knowledge of THFCM's grantmaking system through attendance at community meetings and/or direct contact with THFCM staff. Of these 165 individuals, 53 of them (32%) returned the survey. When asked to describe their job position/status, the majority (N= 38) reported that they are staff members of a nonprofit agency. Board member of a nonprofit agency (N=11) was the next most popular category for primary job role. The remaining respondents described their primary status as an interested resident or appointed/elected official. Twenty-three percent (N=12) of the respondents indicated a secondary role as interested resident and 2 reported that board member of a nonprofit agency is their secondary role. This stakeholder group has a variety of grant experience; however, 6 of the 51 valid respondents (11%) reported no experience with grants.

The most popular category was that of grant writer with 54% (N=29) indicating they had experience writing grants. About a third of these respondents (N=10) had written 1-5 grants, another third (N=9) 6-10 grants, and the remaining third (N=10) over 11 grants. The next popular category was grant project director with 24 individuals reporting experience in this role. The majority indicated that they had worked as a grant project direct on 6-10 grants. Grant reviewer and board member of a grant project were experiences of 41% (N=22) of the sample with most serving in these roles for 1-5 grants.

Twenty (37%) of the respondents indicated that they had been an executive director on a grant project with the majority having this role on 1-5 grants.

General Reactions to the Survey/Formative Evaluation

Of the 258 surveys mailed to the participants, 89 surveys (34%) were returned. Two of the respondents were unwilling to be “identified” by the numerical code on the survey and either blackened out the number or actually tore the number off of the survey. Since these surveys could not be categorized into a particular stakeholder group, their quantitative responses were not included in the analyses.

Highlights of some of the general responses of the overall sample (N=89) are as follows:

- The majority of respondents included written comments to the two open-ended, qualitative questions on the survey. Many of these comments are included in the text of this report.
- Seven of the respondents mentioned in the written comments that they were impressed that THFCM was undergoing such an extensive evaluation process in their first year.
- Five of the respondents mentioned that the survey was very comprehensive.
- Two of the respondents indicated that they had difficulty answering some of the questions due to unclear wording in the survey questions.

Value Added of the Focus Groups

The focus groups provided a rich opportunity for participants to share their thoughts and feelings about THFCM, its grantmaking system, and various ideas for improvement. In all three focus groups, the participants were very candid in their comments and seemed genuinely interested in providing input to assist THFCM in refining its grantmaking system.

As expected, certain issues emerged in the focus groups that were not readily apparent in the quantitative data on the surveys. This is likely to have occurred for several reasons including people’s tendency to be brief when writing answers to open-ended questions and a natural hesitancy toward documenting certain impressions on paper. Key issues that emerged in the focus groups that were not present in the surveys included:

- The uncertainty about what initiatives THFCM will fund. It appeared that the participants in the focus groups really wanted more direction about what types of initiatives would be appropriate for the Synergy and Activation Funds.
- The notion that THFCM appears to be distributing smaller amounts of money than what was anticipated. However, there was a great deal of enthusiasm for the strategic approach to the planning grants.
- The level of professionalism that THFCM has brought to grantmaking in Central Massachusetts.

- Concern about the gap in knowledge and mixed messages from the “two levels” of staff.
- An appreciation of the need to sustain THFCM’s grantmaking structures over time despite the inevitable changes in the Board, in THFCM staff, and potentially the grantmaking agenda.

Presentation of Evaluation Results

The text of this report will include the key evaluation findings including general results for the five stakeholder groups. Detailed data analyses results can be found in Appendices B – F of this document. In order to present the survey data in the most meaningful way, quantitative and qualitative information will be presented together.

The text includes several data tables in order to immediately highlight general findings of particular questions. In these cases, the percentages of respondents who agreed/disagreed are presented. These percentages may not always equal 100 due to rounding error. In addition, the average responses scores will also be presented with higher numbers indicating more positive results on the 1-4 scale.

Specific comments from the open-ended questions and the focus groups are included to help clarify results from the quantitative data, to offer specific suggestions for improvements, and to offer additional comments from the participants. The comments included are representative statements from the total sample. That is, the themes of the comments provided were present on several surveys or emerged in the focus groups. In many cases, the comments presented in the text are a combination of comments from several different participants. Each comment also contains a code indicating from what stakeholder group(s) the comment emerged and what level of grant experience that commenter had.

Coded stakeholder groups are: PD (Project Directors), DA (Declined Applicants), RA (Recognition/Board Awards), F (Funders), and CS (Community Stakeholders). If the topic was also discussed in the focus group, FG is also indicated.

Respondents were also categorized as having minimal grant experience (1), moderate grant experience (2), or a significant amount of grant experience (3). This was determined by their responses to several questions on the survey. The implication of this coding system is that comments from those with more grant experience may carry more credibility in determining how much “weight” to give the particular comment/suggestion.

EVALUATION QUESTION #1: HOW APPROPRIATE IS THFCM’S GRANTMAKING IN POSITIONING THFCM TO FULFILL ITS MISSION OF IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF THOSE WHO LIVE AND WORK IN CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS?

Table 2 provides information on the four variables that were developed to assess the first evaluation question. The table also describes how many questions were developed to assess the variable and what particular survey questions were used.

Table 2.

Variable	Number of Questions	Survey Questions
Level of Agreement with THFCM’s Grantmaking Mission and Agenda	11 Questions	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15
Perception of THFCM’s Recognition and Board Designated Awards	7 Questions	10, 11, 11A, 12, 12A, 13, 13A
Perception of THFCM’s Funding Exclusions	5 Questions	20 A-E
Perception of the Final Decision-Makers, THFCM’s Board of Directors	2 Questions	27, 28

Level of Agreement with THFCM’s Grantmaking Mission and Agenda

Responses to the eleven questions assessing this variable are generally positive with the majority in each stakeholder group either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the survey questions. Specifically, most respondents reported that THFCM’s initial grants seem appropriate to its mission, are not a duplication of grant programs that currently exist, and are likely to lead to positive results. In questions where respondents answered “disagree” or “strongly disagree”, it almost always came from a stakeholder group who was declined funding.

There were some comments in the focus groups about the role of THFCM in the campaign for fluoridated city water. This topic was most relevant during the first focus group that occurred right after the million dollar pilot grant was announced. The discussion was evenly split among the group. On the one hand, there were those who had some reservations about the role of THFCM as being such a strong advocate mainly because of the personal and professional “attacks” that could occur against THFCM and its leadership. Others perceived that THFCM was “stirring things up” in a positive way and welcomed the leadership, the progressiveness, and the willingness to take risks.

Qualitative comments either written on the surveys or expressed in the focus groups relevant to THFCM’s grantmaking agenda and its mission include:

- 1) Concern about “missing” unmet medical needs/treatment needs of individuals in Central Massachusetts (e.g., those with disabilities, reproductive rights, nursing homes). (PD 3, CS 1, CS 2, F 3, DA 2, FG)
- 2) Confusion as to what types of programs/initiatives THFCM will fund and the level of funding. Focus group members mentioned THFCM’s intent to provide substantial funding for multi-year projects yet provided only modest funds for planning grants. (PD 2, DA 1, DA 2, DA 3, CS 2, CS 3, F, FG)
- 3) There seems to be an emphasis on starting new coalitions to tackle the same problems. It is OK to give to support efforts that are already in place and are working well. (DA 2, CS 1, CS 1, CS 2, F, FG)
- 4) Little nonprofits don’t seem to have a chance. Perhaps they could develop a Discretionary Fund for smaller agencies so they could be more competitive. (DA 2, DA 3, CS 2, F)
- 5) It would be nice to increase communication so that the potential applicants could be more aware of what THFCM sees as the current major concerns in health care in Central Massachusetts—put out a newsletter or the like. (DA 2, CS 3, CS 3, FG)
- 6) THFCM needs to make sure they fund projects throughout Worcester particularly in underserved rural north and south portions of the county. (PD 2, CS 3, F)
- 7) My organization was really impressed that THFCM took the time to obtain community input into their grantmaking. They traveled to all parts of the area and really listened to what the community was saying. I hope they continue to do that. (PD 3, DA 2, RA 2, CS 1, CS 2, CS 2, CS 3, CS 3, F, FG)
- 8) I am glad to see the link between formalized health care and grassroots organizations. There really is an opportunity to nurture these partnerships. Perhaps THFCM could offer a funding category for grassroots organizations to promote these partnerships. (CS 3, CS 3, F, FG)

Perception of THFCM’s Recognition and Board Designated Awards

These questions asked respondents to provide information about the Leadership Recognition Award, the Staff Service Recognition Award, and the Youth Public Service Recognition Award. Many of the respondents provided an opinion to these questions designed to determine two aspects of the recognition awards:

Is the amount of money given for the Recognition Awards appropriate and are the nominating processes clear?

Respondents varied widely in their perception as to the amounts of the awards. While three community stakeholders thought that the amounts should be higher (e.g., \$50,000, \$250,000), three funders believed that the amounts for the Staff Service and the Leadership Recognition Awards seemed too high. Approximately five respondents questioned the need for Recognition Awards suggesting that there are many opportunities

in Central Massachusetts to be recognized for outstanding service, leadership, etc. Several of the funders reported that the money would be better utilized in grant programs. The specific data for the general question below is provided in Table 3.

10. THFCM’s Recognition Awards provide a meaningful way to acknowledge and encourage outstanding volunteer and professional service.

Table 3.

Stakeholder Group (N)	Average Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Project Directors (7)	3.5	57%	43%	0%	0%
Declined Applicants (7)	1.7	29%	14%	57%	0%
Recognition Awards (9)	3.4	44%	55%	0%	0%
Funders/Funding Partners (9)	3.3	44%	44%	12%	0%
Community Stakeholders (41)	3.2	27%	68%	5%	0%

When asked to provide specific input into the amount and criteria for each award, quantitative and qualitative data are consistent. Respondents believe that the Youth Public Service Recognition Award should be for the same amount of money as the other two awards. One respondent suggested that the youth receive the money over four years to be used for college.

In general, respondents reported that the nominating processes for the awards are clear. Additional qualitative comments either written on the surveys or expressed in the focus groups relevant to this variable include:

- 1) While it is appropriate for the money to go the agency, I think the individual should also get some of it to put toward additional educational opportunities. (CS 2, CS 3)
- 2) Who determines who wins the awards? I have never received any information on this. (CS 1, CS 2, CS 3, FG)
- 3) We weren’t aware that THFCM gave out Recognition Awards. (CS 2, FG)

Perception of THFCM’s Funding Exclusions

Respondents were asked to determine whether the following funding exclusions seem appropriate for THFCM.

- a) Endowments
- b) Capital Campaigns
- c) Fund Drives
- d) Scholarships
- e) Retiring Operating Deficits

The majority in each stakeholder group believes that the funding exclusions for endowments, fund drives, and retiring operating deficits is appropriate. The pattern for capital campaigns and scholarships is different. The majority of Project Directors (67%) and Declined Applicants (55%) believe that capital campaigns should NOT be excluded. The percentages for the remaining stakeholder groups indicating that capital campaigns should NOT be excluded are: Recognition/Board Awards (33%), Funders (33%), and Community Stakeholders (18%).

The funding exclusion for scholarships also has less support than for endowments, fund drives, and retired operating deficits. The percentage of stakeholder groups reporting that scholarships should NOT be excluded are: Project Directors (29%) and Declined Applicants (55%) Recognition/Board Awards (22%), Funders (22%), and Community Stakeholders (25%).

Perception of the Final Decision-Makers, THFCM’s Board of Directors

Two of the questions on the survey asked respondents to give their perceptions of the Board of Directors, the governing body who has the final say in the operation and distribution of THFCM’s grants. Results of the two questions are provided below:

27. THFCM’s Board of Directors represents a broad and appropriate skill set.

Table 4.

Stakeholder Group (N)	Average Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Project Directors (6)	3.1	33%	50%	17%	0%
Declined Applicants (5)	2.8	20%	40%	40%	0%
Recognition/Board Awards (6)	3.1	17%	83%	0%	0%
Funders/Funding Partners (6)	3.1	17%	83%	0%	0%
Community Stakeholders (28)	3.0	25%	54%	18%	3%

28. THFCM’s Board of Directors is inclusive (e.g., geographic, ethnic, gender) in its representation of Central Massachusetts.

Table 5.

Stakeholder Group (N)	Average Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Project Directors (6)	3.1	33%	50%	17%	0%
Declined Applicants (5)	2.6	0%	60%	40%	0%
Recognition/Board Awards (7)	3.0	0%	100%	0%	0%
Funders/Funding Partners (6)	2.8	16%	50%	33%	0%
Community Stakeholders (27)	2.9	22%	56%	18%	3%

These results suggest that most respondents agree that the Board of Directors has an appropriate skill set and is inclusive in its representation. Several comments written on the surveys offer concrete suggestions to increase the community’s awareness of the Board, its role, and its geographic representation.

- 1) In your Annual Report 2000, when you list the Board of Directors, it would be helpful if you could list the community where they work or reside. (CS 2, CS 3)
- 2) Program ideas and specific letters of intent have been rejected because the Board doesn’t see them within the stated mission. I think the Board of Directors needs ongoing training about the broad definition of health. (DA 1, DA 2, CS 2)
- 3) I would like to know more about the THFCM Board. It would be nice to see a board member in addition to staff site visit various organizations and all grant applicants. (CS 1, CS 2, RA 2)
- 4) THFCM has done so much so quickly. I worry about the ability to sustain this over time. How knowledgeable is the Board in these systems? I hope they are well grounded in these issues. I wonder if Jan wasn’t here, could the Board carry on with the same level of effort. (PD 3, DA 1, RA 2, CS 2, CS 3, F, FG)

Summary of Results for Evaluation Question #1: Quantitative and qualitative data indicate that, in general, members in each stakeholder group are pleased with how THFCM has structured its grantmaking programs and funding priorities to accomplish its mission to improve the health of those who live and work in Central Massachusetts. In addition, there are many positive comments about THFCM’s willingness to gain

community input into their grantmaking system and to travel to various locations to ensure a wide variety of opinions. There are clear suggestions from respondents that the Board may want to consider as it strives to improve THFCM over subsequent years. Some of these include increasing the amount of money for the Youth Public Service Award, examining the rationale behind the funding exclusions for capital campaigns and scholarships, and improving the community’s awareness of THFCM’s Board of Directors.

As many respondents indicated, the progress on the grantmaking system and the level of community involvement that THFCM has maintained is impressive. Developing and instituting new grantmaking policies and procedures that emphasizes results and accountability is likely to be a significant change for potential applicants. In fact, some of the comments on the surveys and/or in the focus groups indicate that not all respondents truly understand the goals of THFCM, its grantmaking system, and its operating procedures. While this is not uncommon or unexpected, it does suggest that additional education and awareness about THFCM may be helpful.

EVALUATION QUESTION #2: HOW EFFECTIVE HAS THFCM BEEN IN INTRODUCING ITS GRANTMAKING AGENDA TO POTENTIAL APPLICANTS AND IN IMPLEMENTING ITS GRANTMAKING SYSTEM AND GUIDELINES?

Table 6 provides information on the four variables that were developed to assess the second evaluation question. The table also describes how many questions were developed to assess the variable and what particular survey questions were used.

Table 6.

Variable	Number of Questions	Survey Questions
Staff Competence/Availability	4 Questions	16, 21, 25, 26
THFCM as an Effective Partner	1 Question	24
Application Materials and Processes	14 Questions	17, 18, 19, 22, 23 30A-G
Awareness of THFCM and its Grantmaking Guidelines	9 Questions	31A-I

Staff Competence/Availability

To assess this variable, questions were developed to evaluate the competence of THFCM staff, the value of the technical assistance provided, and THFCM's level of responsiveness. The results on this section of the survey were very positive with average scores higher in this area (across all stakeholder groups) than any other area. Staff is perceived as competent, committed, and approachable. Many commented specifically on staff members calling them "terrific," "delightful," and "very helpful." Other positive comments include the staff's level of professionalism, their willingness to attend meetings, and the planful manner in which strategic decisions are made. Qualitative comments in the focus groups and on the open-ended questions revealed some noteworthy issues.

- 1) The communication from THFCM is good but I have noticed some discrepancy in the "two levels of staff." It would be helpful if both were singing from the same page. There is a clear difference in the knowledge between the two levels of staff. (CS 2, CS 2, CS 3, F, FG)
- 2) Program officers are listening to the community but what are they doing with the information? They are everywhere, on boards and committees. I wonder if they are spreading themselves too thin. I sometimes think they should maintain a more distant attitude. (DA 2, CS 2, CS 3, CS 3, F, FG)
- 3) I am impressed that foundation really wants to help us succeed. They go above and beyond what they need to do like sending us information (e.g., articles, related materials) that is helpful in preparing our grant. (PD 2, PD 3, CS 3, FG)
- 4) Sometimes when I have a question, I really don't know who to call. I want to call Jan Yost because she is the leader but I hesitate because I know she must be so busy. Whenever I do call her, she is always pleasant and never seems to mind. (PD 2, DA 2, RA 3, CS 2, FG)
- 5) I am not always sure I get the right information. There needs to be more consistency between the stated process and the practice. We were urged to send in our ideas in an informal concept paper to get feedback early on. Then we were told that it was passed through some staff and the Board who rejected the idea. We had to plead for a second chance. If it were made clear to us that it would be reviewed by all these folks, we would have sent in a more polished piece. (DA 2, CS 2, CS 3)

THFCM as an Effective Partner

In order to determine how effective THFCM is perceived as a partner, the following question was asked:

24. THFCM is an effective partner in helping to implement grants.

Table 7.

Stakeholder Group (N)	Average Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Project Directors (6)	3.4	57%	29%	14%	0%
Declined Applicants (4)	2.5	0%	75%	0%	25%
Recognition/Board Awards (6)	3.3	33%	67%	0%	0%
Funders/Funding Partners (7)	3.5	57%	43%	0%	0%
Community Stakeholders (32)	3.2	40%	44%	16%	0%

These results indicate that most stakeholder groups agree or strongly agree that THFCM is an effective partner. The lowest scores came, again, from those applicants whose proposals were declined. However, only half (N=4) in that stakeholder group answered this question.

A great deal of discussion in each focus group centered on the effectiveness of THFCM as a partner in the early planning meetings. Specifically, the issue of staff’s attendance and level of involvement in planning meetings was brought up in all three focus groups. On one hand, many believe that the presence of a THFCM staff member is likely to negatively affect the planning meetings because the participants may “give them what they want to hear” or the staff’s comments and/or suggestions may be seen as mandates in order to obtain funding. On the other hand, many of the participants were impressed that the funder was in attendance during the planning sessions and seemed to understand the purpose of their involvement. The advantages and disadvantages of THFCM’s involvement in planning meetings were discussed freely among the members in every focus group. One reason for the negative reaction appears to be the lack of experience the participants have with the funder being present during the planning phase. In each focus group, the consensus was that it was probably a good idea to have the funder present, but there should be an understanding that THFCM could be “disinvited” if necessary. In some cases, the participants reported that they called THFCM and asked them not to attend a meeting and that staff had honored that request. The issue is well portrayed in a written comment by one community stakeholder:

“The involvement of the staff of the foundation is very unusual. At first, I wasn’t sure that it didn’t put everyone in an uncomfortable position as to who was directing the project. As time has gone by, I believe it has been extremely helpful. It may be

worthwhile for Foundation staff to better explain their involvement and roles up front so that those involved understand and have clear expectations as to what everyone's role is.”

Application Materials and Processes

Many questions were developed to assess the application materials, the application process, and the usefulness of the technical assistance grants in helping to develop an application. In addition, respondents were asked how helpful they perceived the particular steps to be (e.g., talking with staff, submitting a letter of intent, etc) in the application process. Those who had received feedback from THFCM that their submission had been declined were asked to provide input into the quality of that feedback.

Quantitative data indicate that most agreed that the application procedures are well developed and communicated effectively to potential applicants. In addition, most agreed that the small technical assistance grants provided by THFCM were valuable in completing the application materials. There were many positive comments on the surveys and in the focus groups about the application materials. Positive and negative sentiments are presented below:

- The process of careful planning and continuous assessment is really helpful because it forces us to look at what we are doing. It would be good to know up front how important the evaluation process is going to be. We need some good evaluation tools to do this. (PD 2, PD 3, CS 2, CS 3, CS 3, F, FG)
- I am very happy to see this foundation working to achieve results-oriented grantmaking and not just giving out the money to anyone who wants it. (CS 2, CS 3)
- I have had very little experience in the grant process and have little with which to compare. My fear is that I have started with the premier organization and all others will pale in comparison. From talking to individuals who have experience with foundations, I have learned that the feedback and assistance has been second to none. (CS 2, CS 3)
- This formalized process really adds accountability to THFCM's grantmaking. People are not used to this systems level approach in Worcester. (PD 3, CS 2, CS 3, F, FG)
- I think the application process and materials are overly detailed considering the amount of awards. I believe in thorough information but this application is very time consuming for an activation grant. I want to reiterate how helpful the staff is. (DA 2, CS 1, CS 2, CS 2, CS 3, CS 3, F, FG)
- The application process appears to be very bureaucratic and political. We gave up after realizing what it would entail despite the existence of a needs assessment, a good track record, and quality staff/colleagues to work on the project. (DA 1, CS 2, CS 3)
- The process is very cumbersome—disincentive to apply. (CS 2, CS 3)
- The materials could be streamlined; there is repetition in some of the questions. The application seems relevant to larger, not smaller grants. (DA 2, DA 3, CS 1, CS 3, CS 3, F, FG)

- There should be full electronic submission and full electronic communication for reports. (PD 3, CS 3, CS 3, FG)

Participants were asked to indicate if they had contacted THFCM to discuss the reasons why their letter of intent or application was denied. No one in the project director group or the funder group responded to this question since they had no experience getting feedback about a declined submission. The majority in each of the other three groups reported that they had contacted THFCM: Declined Applicants (67%), Recognition/Board Awards (67%), and Community Stakeholders (77%). While a handful reported positive experiences in this feedback with THFCM staff, most did not. Specifically, respondents indicated that they felt the feedback (e.g., letter, conversation) had been confusing, patronizing, not helpful, or unfair. These more negative comments were most likely to come from the declined applicants and the larger community stakeholder group.

Awareness of THFCM and its Grantmaking Guidelines

All respondents were asked to indicate how they became familiar with THFCM and its grantmaking. They were presented with nine potential ways and were asked to check all those applicable. The results are as follows:

- Approximately 25% of the total sample became familiar with THFCM through its website.
- Approximately 33% of the total sample became familiar with THFCM by attending one of nine workshops presented in Spring 2000.
- About 50% of the respondents reported that they had talked on the phone with a THFCM staff member, read the Annual Report, read about THFCM through the newspaper, or heard about THFCM and its grantmaking through a colleague.
- The most popular ways that the respondents became familiar with THFCM were through the community meeting held in March 2000 to announce THFCM's grantmaking system, by meeting with THFCM staff in person, and reading the THFCM brochure. About 68% of the total sample reported that they had done each of these.

Participants were also asked to rate how helpful they believed the grantmaking steps are in the application system. Although the number of respondents varied widely, all stakeholder groups perceived that conversing by telephone and conversing in person with THFCM about its grantmaking is very helpful. The timeliness of decisions made by THFCM was viewed more negatively. The two major issues here were: the length of time from submission to notification was too long and the uncertainty about what the expected timeline is for notification. As the frequency of Board meetings changes in subsequent years, it will be important to be clear with potential applicants about when they may expect a response by regular updating of this information.

Summary of Results for Evaluation Question #2: Data suggest that the majority of the respondents agree that THFCM has been effective in introducing its grantmaking agenda to potential applicants and in implementing its grantmaking system and guidelines. There were many positive comments about the professionalism of THFCM and the benefit of having a foundation that is planful in its approach, responsive to applicants, and willing to be involved at all levels of grantmaking. Staff competence and availability received the highest quantitative scores across all stakeholder groups. Consideration should be made to providing more clarity of THFCM's role in early planning meetings, continuous review of application materials, and a structured system for feedback to applicants who have been declined.

Suggested Recommendations for THFCM

Data from this formative evaluation suggest that the majority of the respondents agree that THFCM has been effective in developing a comprehensive grantmaking agenda while also implementing a grantmaking system that focuses on promoting accountability and achieving results. In the interest of continuous quality improvement, we provide the following recommendations for consideration by THFCM staff and the Board of Directors. These recommendations are based on the qualitative and quantitative data obtained in this formative evaluation, suggestions from the respondents, and the experience of the evaluation consultants.

EVALUATION QUESTION #1: HOW APPROPRIATE IS THFCM'S GRANTMAKING IN POSITIONING THFCM TO FULFILL ITS MISSION OF IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF THOSE WHO LIVE AND WORK IN CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS?

Policy Level

- 1) Consider equalizing the amounts given in the Recognition Awards. This may come from decreasing the Staff Service and Leadership Recognition Award or increasing the amount for the Youth Public Service Award.
- 2) Two new funding streams were suggested by the participants. These include a Discretionary Fund to be used for smaller nonprofits that may have difficulty competing with larger organizations, and a Grassroots fund to encourage even smaller organizations to apply to THFCM.
- 3) Examine the rationale behind the funding exclusions particularly for capital campaigns and scholarships.
- 4) Ensure that funding opportunities are also available throughout the Central Massachusetts region served by THFCM including the more rural areas.

Administrative Level

- 5) Clarify guidelines and continue to educate the community about what THFCM will fund. This may alleviate the concern that unmet medical needs are being overlooked and that the broad definition of health is too vague.
- 6) Improve community's awareness of the Recognition/Board Awards especially with respect to their existence and how decisions are made to choose the recipient.
- 7) Ensure that all staff members (current and newly hired) are well trained in THFCM's grantmaking agenda, its operations, and general knowledge of the foundation. Periodically assess to make sure that staff members give similar information to all community groups and potential applicants.
- 8) Clarify roles of THFCM staff members when they attend planning meetings. Assure the community that it may be appropriate to disinvite THFCM at certain times.

Policy and Administrative Levels

- 9) Consider ways to increase the community's awareness of the Board of Directors, its role, and its inclusivity. Specific suggestions for this include publishing the geographic location where the board members live and reside, having them participate in site visits, and ensuring that all board members receive ongoing training
- 10) Continue to listen and educate community members about THFCM by seeking input, maintaining community involvement, and addressing incorrect perceptions early on.
- 11) Regularly assess the workload of staff members to ensure that they are not spread too thin.

The following policy and administrative recommendations are offered in order to address the second evaluation question:

EVALUATION QUESTION #2: HOW EFFECTIVE HAS THFCM BEEN IN INTRODUCING ITS GRANTMAKING AGENDA TO POTENTIAL APPLICANTS AND IN IMPLEMENTING ITS GRANTMAKING SYSTEM AND GUIDELINES?

Policy and Administrative Levels

- 12) Determine the grant review schedule and announce it widely. If this changes, make sure to update this information.

Administrative Level

- 13) Examine the best methods to provide feedback to potential applicants whose submissions are declined. It may be worthwhile to contact the applicant rather than waiting to be contacted by them.
- 14) Regularly review the application materials for the funding priorities to ensure that they meet the needs of THFCM but also are straightforward and streamlined for the applicant. Consider electronic submission of applications, and reporting requirements
- 15) As staffing requirements allow, continue to meet with applicants or talk to them by phone to ensure their understanding of THFCM's grantmaking system.

Recommendations for Future Evaluation of THFCM

Given the constructive feedback of this formative evaluation and our experience with evaluation and foundations, we offer several additional recommendations for consideration:

- 16) THFCM should consider regular assessment (e.g., every 18-24 months) of its grantmaking process to determine ongoing community perception about its

- grantmaking, reactions to changes made as a result of this formative evaluation, and further suggestions for refinement.
- 17) A formative evaluation of the individual grant programs being implemented might be undertaken to assess their current level of progress, strengths and weaknesses of implementation, and suggestions for program improvement. Also, they should be examined for their amenability to be combined for an impact evaluation (see Number 18 below).
 - 18) Eventually, THFCM will want to know if their grantmaking initiatives are making a difference in the health impacts of those who live and work in Central Massachusetts. An impact evaluation should occur after a period of several years—after the programs have had time to operate sufficiently, serve an adequate number of clients, and be able to demonstrate the initial outcomes (e.g., changes in attitudes, changes in behavior) of the funded program.

Evaluation Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation survey about the grantmaking practices of The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts (THFCM). The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Please answer all questions candidly to ensure quality feedback for THFCM and return the survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope no later than **May 22, 2001**.

It may be that some questions do not apply to you or to your role with THFCM. If so, please **circle** the category "No Information/Experience"

1. I understand the **mission** of THFCM.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

2. THFCM's **initial grants** seem **appropriate** to its mission.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

3. THFCM's **initial grants** are **substantive** and a **worthy** use of funds.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

4. The grantmaking programs developed by THFCM **complement other funding opportunities** that currently exist in Central Massachusetts.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

5. THFCM's use of "health" in the **broadest sense** (i.e., the World Health Organization's definition that health is the complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or injury) is **appropriate**.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

6. THFCM's emphasis on **larger, multi-year grants** is an **appropriate** approach to addressing health issues in Central Massachusetts.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

7. The **essential concept** of integrating comprehensive public health and medical strategies to address health issues is **clear** in THFCM's *Health Care and Health Promotion Synergy Initiative*.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

8. The **essential concept** of integrating comprehensive public health and medical strategies to address health issues in THFCM's *Health Care and Health Promotion Synergy Initiative* is a **wise approach**.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

9. THFCM's *Activation Fund*, designed to provide smaller, one-year grants to encourage **creative and innovative** community approaches or to support community organization's movement to the **next level of capacity and effectiveness**, is a **good use** of THFCM's resources.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

10. THFCM's *Recognition Awards* provide a **meaningful way** to acknowledge and encourage outstanding **volunteer and professional service**.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

11. THFCM's *Leadership Recognition Award* is \$20,000. Do you believe this is an **appropriate** amount? (check one answer)

Yes
 No (if no, what amount is appropriate?) _____
 No information/experience

- 11a). Are the **criteria and nominating process** for the *Leadership Recognition Award* clear?

Yes
 No
 No information/experience

12. THFCM's *Staff Service Recognition Award* is \$20,000. Do you believe this is an **appropriate** amount?

Yes
 No (if no, what amount is appropriate?) _____
 No information/experience

12a). Are the **criteria and nominating process** for the *Staff Service Recognition Award* clear?

- Yes
- No
- No information/experience

13. THFCM's *Youth Public Service Recognition Award* is \$5,000. Do you believe this is an **appropriate** amount?

- Yes
- No (if no, what amount is appropriate?) _____
- No information/experience

13a). Are the **criteria and nominating process** for the *Youth Public Service Recognition Award* clear?

- Yes
- No
- No information/experience

14. The grant programs funded by THFCM **are not a duplication** of grant programs that already exist to improve the lives of those who live and work in Central Massachusetts.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

15. The grant programs funded by THFCM are likely to lead to **positive results** in the lives of those who live and work in Central Massachusetts.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

16. THFCM **staff have been responsive** to questions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

17. THFCM's **application procedures** (e.g., initial conversation, letter of intent, invitation to apply, etc) are **appropriate and well developed**.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

25. THFCM staff are **competent**.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

26. THFCM staff are **approachable** and **responsive**.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

27. THFCM Board of Directors represents a **broad** and **appropriate skill set**.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

28. THFCM Board of Directors is **inclusive** (e.g., geographic, ethnic, gender) in its representation of Central Massachusetts.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Information/Experience
4	3	2	1	0

29. If your letter of intent or application to THFCM was declined, did you contact THFCM to **discuss the reasons** for the declination?

- No
- Yes (if yes, was the conversation enlightening/helpful?)
- No information/experience

30. How **helpful or productive** are the current **steps** in THFCM's grantmaking processes? Select one number from the categories below.

- 1 – Very
- 2 – Somewhat
- 3 – Appropriate
- 4 – Not at all
- 5 – No information/experience

- Conversing by telephone with THFCM staff about its grantmaking
- Conversing in person with THFCM staff about its grantmaking
- Submitting a Letter of Intent to apply to THFCM
- Submitting an application to THFCM
- The timeliness of decisions made by THFCM
- The reporting requirements
- The progression of planning → pilot → implementation grants under the *Health Care and Health Promotion Synergy Initiative*.

31. Please tell us how you **heard** about THFCM. (Check all that apply)
- Attended the March 9, 2000 community meeting to announce THFCM’s grantmaking programs
 - Attended one of the nine application workshops held in Spring, 2000
 - Talked with THFCM staff by telephone
 - Met with THFCM staff in person
 - Read THFCM’s brochure announcing its grantmaking programs
 - Read THFCM’s Annual Report 2000
 - Visited THFCM’s website(s)
 - Read a newspaper article
 - Was informed by your own staff or other colleagues

32. Stakeholder Status:

Please place a **(1)** in the category that best describes your primary role. If you feel you have more than one role, place a **(2)** in that category.

- Board member of nonprofit agency
- Staff of nonprofit agency
- Elected official
- Funder of another grantmaking organization
- Interested community resident

We are interested in your total experience with grants (e.g., applying for a grant, obtaining a grant, managing a grant) from **any organization**. For each category, indicate approximately **how many grants** you have been involved in by checking the appropriate box. If you have had no involvement with grants in a category, check the “0” box. Please check all that apply.

Grant involvement as a	0 grant	1-5 grants	6-10 grants	11+ grants
Grant Project Director				
Board Member of Grant Project				
Executive Director				
Grant Writer				
Grant Reviewer				
Staff Member				
Other				

33. What improvements in grantmaking or operations do you suggest to THFCM?
(Please print your comments here).

34. What have we not asked in this survey that you would like to tell THFCM?
(Please print your comments here).

Please send this survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope enclosed to:
Pam Imm, Ph.D.
4023 East Langerwood Lane
Syracuse, NY 13215
(315) 488-5579 (for questions or comments)

THANK YOU for helping to inform THFCM!