



Keep it Up: What to do Between Giving Cycles

You just finished your giving circle's most recent grant cycle — mazel tov! What's next?

The time between cycles is ripe for building community and social connections among your circle. It may be obvious, but social glue and fun are essential ingredients for keeping people engaged and sustaining your giving circle for future grant cycles.

We've compiled some easy-to-implement next steps to keep your giving circle members engaged once

grant decisions are complete. See which of these ideas would work best for your circle, and be creative! The more between-cycle engagement, the stronger your giving circle will be.

Before you jump right into your next cycle, we also encourage you to step back and reflect on your cycle with crucial input from your members. For more on this topic, check out our Giving Circle Reflection Tool.



1

Stay in Touch with Members

Share Grantee Communications

Your giving circle members might be interested in your grantees' annual reports or recent accomplishments. It helps to keep your members engaged and demonstrates that when the giving cycle ends, the impact for grantee organizations really begins.

Recruit New Members

Your current members are your best assets for recruiting new members to your giving circle. They've been through the giving circle experience and know how powerful it can be. They also have friends, colleagues and networks they can tap into that you wouldn't be able to reach otherwise.

Involve Members in Strategic Changes

Think it might work better if half of your meetings were virtual? Looking to incorporate new elements like site visits or recommended readings into giving circle meetings? Let your fellow members know and seek their input and ideas.

Get Feedback on Logistics

One of the biggest challenges giving circles face is getting everyone together. Ask members to host meetings in their homes or offices and send a survey around to see when the best time for a kick-off meeting would be. You can even consider planning the meetings in advance, so members can get them on their calendar early.



2

Get Together for Fun, Social Events

Throw a Potluck or BBQ Meal

Encourage a member to host a brunch or dinner in their home as an opportunity for members to get to know each other better outside of regular giving circle business.

Take a Field Trip

Adults enjoy field trips, too! A change of scenery can help create stronger connections between members. Plan a hike with your giving circle members. If you're more of an indoor crowd, catch a movie instead. Whether or not the film is related to your grant focus area, the main idea is to have fun.

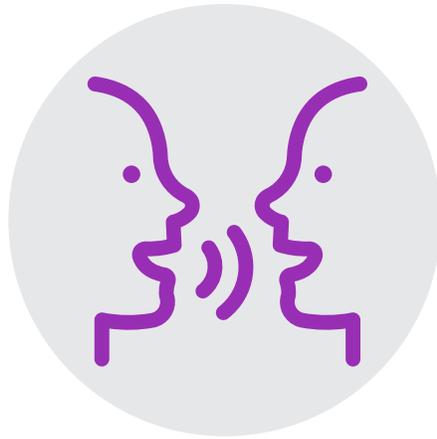
Volunteer Together

Local organizations often hold open volunteer events. You can also arrange a volunteer opportunity directly with an organization, including those you funded or researched during your giving circle's process. Our friends at Repair the World have connections to many volunteer opportunities.

Consider Your Audience

Arrange for babysitting or carpooling if it helps make an outing possible. Think about physical and social accessibility. Consider, for example, whether an event at a loud bar would be appropriate for your members.

Note: If your giving circle is virtual, encourage members who are in the same city to get together. Whether it's two people getting together for coffee or eight for a book discussion, it's worthwhile to encourage your members to connect in person.



3

Continue the Conversation

Start a Conversation Online

Send out thought-provoking articles, videos, and infographics related to your giving circle and encourage members to respond with their thoughts. If you're not sure where to find interesting material, try setting a Google alert for keywords or checking out a site like Goodreads to see what like-minded people have on their bookshelves. These can be related to local giving, your giving circle's issue area or another topic that came up during the course of your cycle.

For sustained engagement, consider starting a new conversation monthly or as often as is appropriate for your group. Also, think of creative ways to engage members in the process. For example, you can try reaching out to an engaged member to ask if they'll start the conversation or invite giving circle members to submit topics that they would want to explore more deeply.

Organize a Book Club

Did your last giving cycle reveal that members are interested in learning more about the issues you're funding together? Find a book or article that covers the topic and get your members together to continue the conversation.

Send Mail to Members

Everyone loves getting exciting things in the mail. Some circle leaders send giving-related gifts like philanthropic values cards, a relevant book, or a t-shirt from one of your circle's grantee organizations. If your circle doesn't have a budget for gifts, you may consider sending handmade thank-you notes for their participation or a print of a group photo.



4

Develop New Leaders

Evaluate Leadership Needs

Think about how the last giving cycle went and what other roles you might need to make the next cycle your best yet. Roles you may want to consider recruiting fellow members to take on include: co-facilitator, host, social event planner and new member recruiter. You can also invent roles unique to your circle: ice-breaker creator, menu planner, or swag orderer.

Identify Potential Leaders

You're looking for dedicated members that have showed they are committed to the giving circle. You may also notice special skills or contributions they've made to the giving circle process. Notice if a giving circle member is known for always bringing the best snacks or having the best connections to local nonprofits.

Approach and Cultivate New Leaders

Ask members to take on a new role for the next giving circle. Tell them why you think they'd be great for the role. Feel free to send them to Amplifier for leadership development opportunities— we'd love have them at our events and programs.
