Kensington Community Resilience Fund

Mary Ricchezza

Executive Master of Public Administration Candidate
Fels Institute of Government
University of Pennsylvania
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An Evaluation of Giving Power Back to the People

Taller Puertorriqueño

Table of Contents

Introduction & Acknowledgements

> ## "The community knows what the community needs…"
>
> Beyond the Bars,
> Kensington Community Resilience Fund Grant Recipient

Trusting the community is at the heart of the Kensington Community Resilience (KCR) Fund model. The KCR Fund was founded with the mission to **give power back to residents** of the greater Kensington neighborhood of Northeast Philadelphia.

Residents of the Kensington, Harrowgate, and Fairhill neighborhoods have been plagued by the relentless opioid epidemic, disinvestment, stigma, and lack of economic opportunity. The KCR Fund was created to tackle these harmful issues affecting the quality of life of countless residents who are proud of their neighborhood, embrace its diversity, and who simply want to see children playing safely outside in a community where neighbors trust and support one another.

I had the privilege of evaluating the first two grant cycles of the KCR Fund. I synthesize my evaluation of this transformative model in the following report. Many thanks go to Ashley Feuer-Edwards for trusting me to conduct this work and connect with the many KCR Fund stakeholders. I also extend my gratitude to Claire Robertson-Kraft and Joseph Moorman for their support and guidance throughout the process of building this program evaluation.

The KCR Fund targets a neighborhood where things are often done **TO** rather than **WITH**. I hope throughout this report readers feel the spirit of this community focused philanthropic model.

Taller Puertorriqueño

Program Overview

Kensington Community Resilience Fund Inception and Structure

Rich in civic pride, cultural diversity, and neighbors who care deeply about one another and their community, the Greater Kensington neighborhood of Eastern North Philadelphia embodies the meaning of community resilience. However, after years of disinvestment and lack of economic opportunity, this community has been particularly devastated by the ongoing opioid epidemic in Philadelphia. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these conditions while bringing significant economic challenges for families and local businesses.

Through these challenges, residents and community-based organizations have joined together to support one another and advocate for the quality-of-life improvements and opportunities they deserve. Area CDCs, social services agencies, faith-based organizations, and civic associations work tirelessly to build a community where community members can live safely and provide for themselves but have been asked to do far too much with far too few resources.

The Kensington Community Resilience Fund (KCR Fund) answers the needs of the Kensington, Fairhill, and Harrowgate communities through grants that advance three key pillars: **community empowerment, neighborhood investment, and economic opportunity.** Core to its approach is a **participatory grantmaking process** that elevates resident and community member experiences and gives them the power to direct funding to the programs, organizations, and initiatives that best reflect their priorities for improving the quality of life in the Kensington, Fairhill, and Harrowgate communities.

A public-private-community partnership between the community, regional funders and the City of Philadelphia, the KCR Fund advances the following goals:

- **Promote wellness, build resilience, and improve the quality of life** in the Kensington, Harrowgate, and Fairhill communities
- **Increase agency and support equity and racial/social justice** by having community partners and residents direct funding decisions
- **Build cohesion and connectivity** among community providers, residents, and city agencies to support collaboration, information sharing, and alignment of services
- **Expand capacity of participants** – both organizations and individuals to pursue sustainable, quality-of life focused programming to support the community
- **Serve as a catalyst and build the infrastructure** to support long-term, sustained investment and partnership with funders in the Kensington community

The KCR Fund completed two grant rounds since its inception. Rounds one and two were operated by the Bread & Roses Community Fund. In early 2023 the Fund administration transitioned to the Thomas Scattergood Behavioral Health Foundation. Scattergood was actively involved in the first two rounds as a funder and is will lead as operations entering into the third and future rounds. To further facilitate this participatory grantmaking process the KCR Fund involves several groups that are aligned and support each other.

Steering Committee

1. Funders
2. City of Philadelphia Representatives

- Provide oversight and guidance, manage fund administration
- Inform grantmaking strategy and structure
- Provide funding and support for fundraising and outreach

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

1. Non Profit, Civic, and Faith Leaders (many of whom are also residents)

- Refine grantmaking focus areas informed by resident surveys
- Determine grant eligibility, structure, size, requirements, etc
- Information sharing

Community Granting Group (CGG)

1. Residents
2. Providers who live in the community

- Review and evaluate grant applications
- Recommend slate of grantees

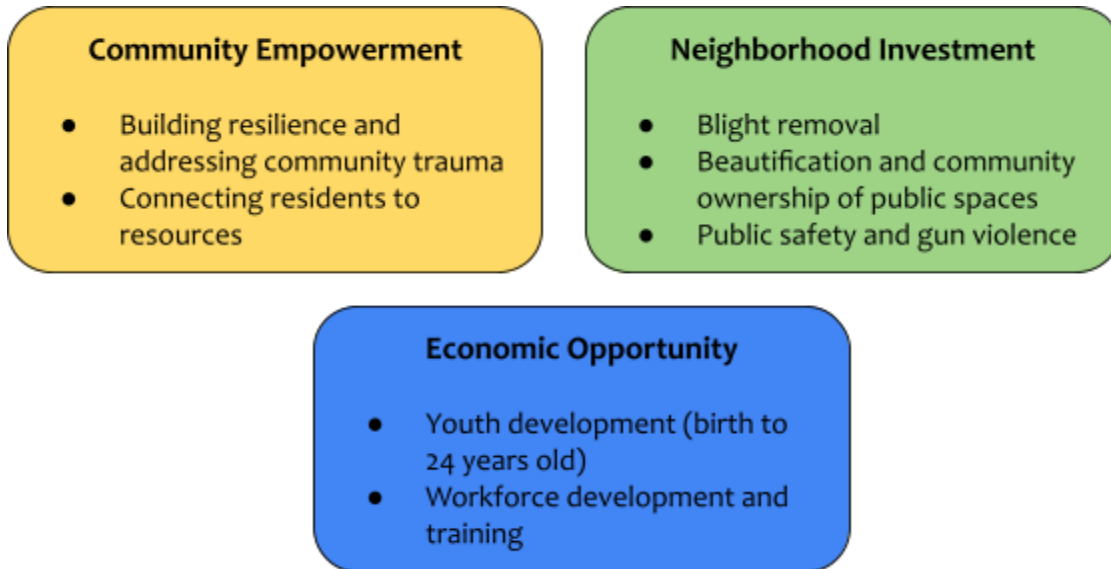## Fund Operations, Management, Facilitation

1. Scattergood Foundation
2. AFE Strategies LLC
3. Strategy Arts

- Strategy Arts facilitates the Peer Learning Community meetings

The Steering Committee contributes funds to a pool over which the CGG has the decision-making power to fund the organizations and programs most important to them. **Trust is at the foundation** of the KCR Fund model. The City of Philadelphia trusts CGG members to decide where to allocate funds. The CGG in turn also trusts the grantee organizations will apply the general operating funds to the specific need of their organization with no requirements for how to use the funds once dispersed.

The KCR Fund follows **six guiding principles** in its mission of meeting the aforementioned goals.

1) Advancing equity and racial and social justice
2) Being informed by community voices
3) Being informed by data, evidence, and best practices
4) Building social cohesion, collaboration, and connectivity
5) Demonstrating cultural competency and relevance
6) Utilizing trauma-informed principles and practices, Being informed by data, evidence, and best practices

The KCR Fund maintains **three focus areas** targeting specific issues faced by the community. These issues outlined below were identified by residents through surveys prior to the launch of the KCR Fund as the most important areas to address.

Community Empowerment

- Building resilience and addressing community trauma
- Connecting residents to resources

Neighborhood Investment

- Blight removal
- Beautification and community ownership of public spaces
- Public safety and gun violence

Economic Opportunity

- Youth development (birth to 24 years old)
- Workforce development and training

KCR Fund Grant Rounds One and Two

The KCR Fund has completed two rounds of grant cycles

- In **July 2021** the KCR Fund awarded $200,000 to community-based organizations and projects serving residents of the Kensington, Fairhill, and Harrowgate neighborhoods via twenty (20) $10,000 general operating grants ($200,000 total).
- In **March 2022** the KCR Fund awarded its second round of twenty (20) $10,000 general operating grants ($200,000 total).
- There were a total of 40 unique organizations awarded KCR Fund grants. Many of the organizations were small grassroots groups that applied with Impact Services and other larger organizations as their fiscal sponsor.

$10,000
general operating grants

40
organizations

$400,000
invested

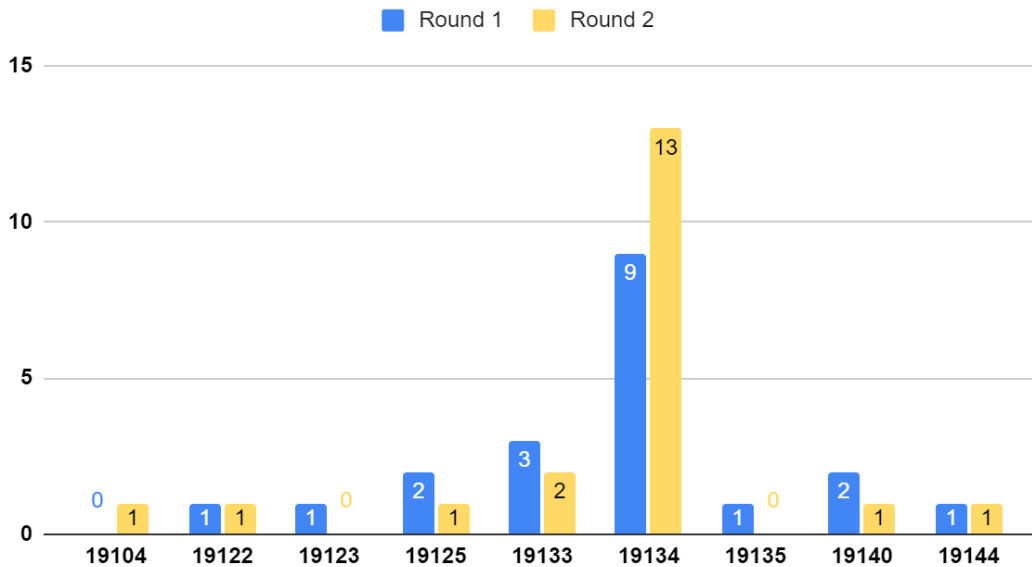| Round One Grantees	Round Two Grantees
Community Center at Visitation	Centro Nueva Creación
Good Host Plants, LLC	By Faith, Health and Healing
Harrowgate Civic Association	Centro Nueva Creación
DBA Kensington Soccer Club	Ed Snider Youth Hockey Foundation : After School Excellence Program at Scanlon Recreation Center
Papermill Food Hub. Inc.	Fab Youth Philly
Hart Lane Neighborhood Farm	Firm Hope Baptist Church
Photography Without Borders	Greater Philadelphia Diaper Bank
Power Street Theatre of Culture Trust Greater Philadelphia	Historic Fair Hill
Providence Center	Kensington Meals Program
Ride Free	Kensington Voice
Rock Ministries of Philadelphia	Klean Kensington
Sisters of Saint Joseph Welcome Center	Mad Beatz Philly
Sisters Returning Home	Mother of Mercy House
Taller Puertorriqueño	Rebel Arts Movement
Team NAS	Somerset Neighbors for Better Living
The Block Gives Back	Stay True
The Salvation Army	Visitation BVM School
The Simple Way	We Love Philly
Urban Extreme Youth Development	Yoga 4 Philly (Yoga 4 The World)
Youth United for Change	Zerbe Artz

KCR Fund Footprint Target Area
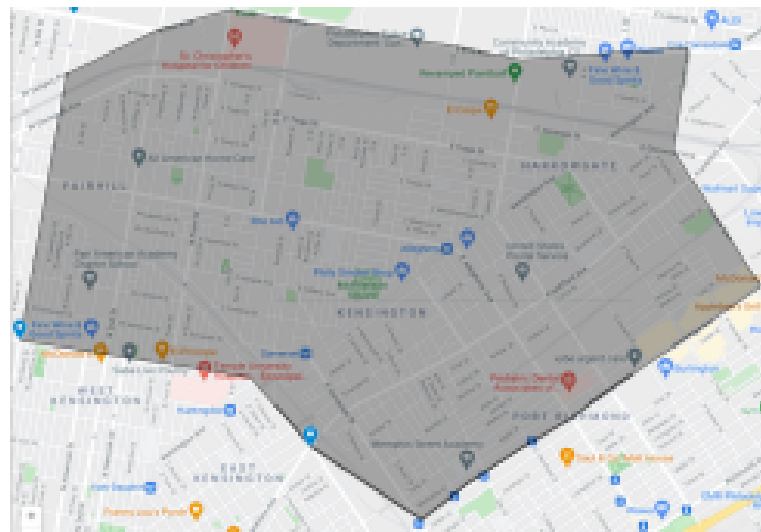
Rounds One and Two Grantee Organizations

Grantee Organization Location

- 55% of round one and round two grantee organizations are located in the **19134 ZIP code** (22 grantees). More grantee organizations were located in 19134 in round two (13) compared to round one (9). The remaining grantees were located across eight other ZIP codes.

KCR Fund Rounds One & Two Organization ZIP Codes

Round 1 ■ Round 2 ■

ZIP	Round 1	Round 2
19104	0	1
19122	1	1
19123	1	0
19125	2	1
19133	3	2
19134	9	13
19135	1	0
19140	2	1
19144	1	1

Areas Impacted by KCR Fund Grantee Organizations

- 37 grantees from rounds one and two provide services in the 19134 ZIP code (93%). Followed by 19133 (63%), 19125 (50%), and 19124 (35%).

KCR Fund ZIP Codes Served by Round One & Two Grantees

Round 1 ■ Round 2 ■

ZIP	Round 1	Round 2
19124	8	6
19125	12	8
19133	13	12
19134	18	19
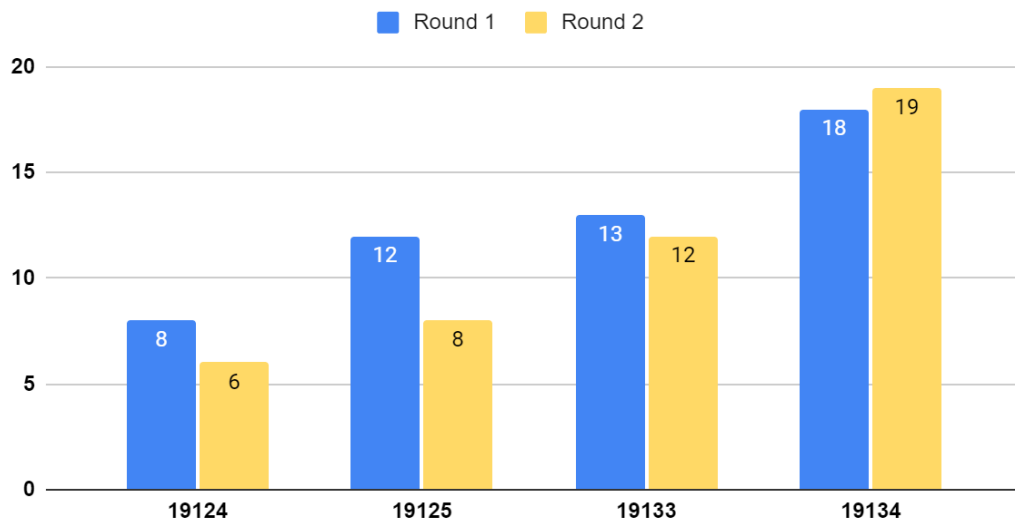
Issue Areas Addressed by Round One and Two Grantee Organizations

- Youth Development (birth to age 24) was the most frequently reported issue area addressed by 29 grantees (73%).
- Building Resilience & Addressing Community Trauma and Connecting Residents to Resources were equally reported as the second most frequent issue area addressed by 27 grantees for each issue area (68% each).
- Beautification and Blight Removal was identified by half of round one and round two grantee organizations (50%). Followed by Workforce Development and Training (45%).
- Public Safety and Gun Violence was the least frequent issue area addressed by 13 round one and round two grantees (33%).
- Note: round two grantees checked off more issue areas than round one

KCR Fund Round 1 & 2 Issue Areas Addressed
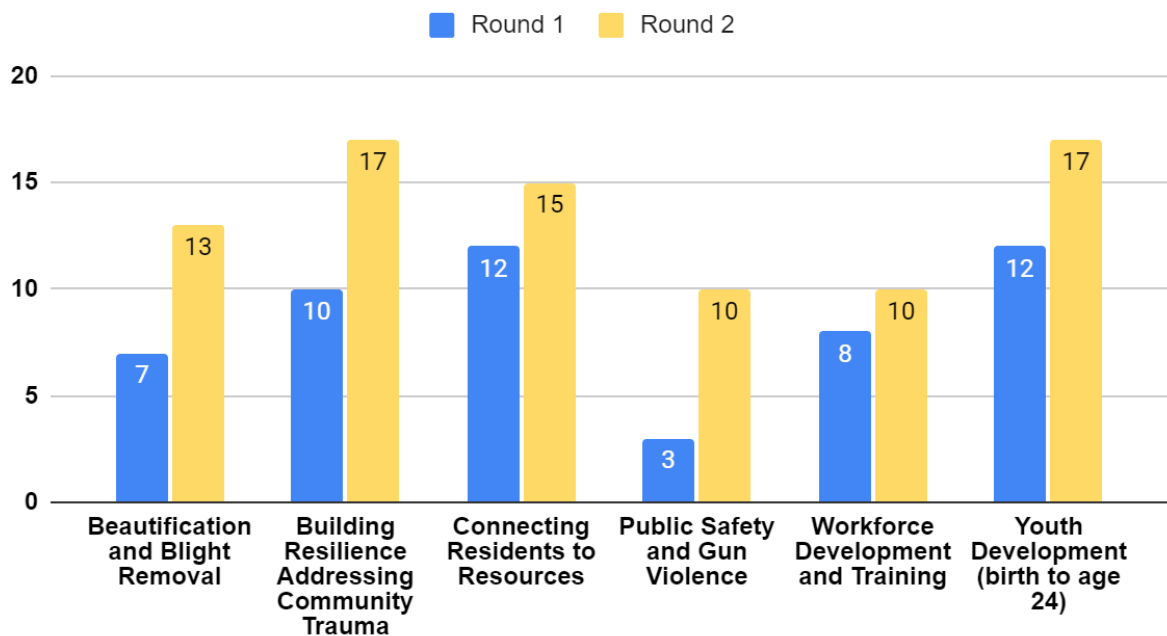
Peer Learning Community

The Kensington Community Resilience Fund in collaboration with Strategy Arts supports grantees in providing peer learning opportunities through a learning community to understand grantee implementation challenges, successes, and impact. The lightly-guided 2-hour monthly conversations began in April 2022 for round one grantees and June 2022 for round two grantees. Round one and two grantees met virtually with their respective granting group for the first four sessions. These sessions ran concurrently and both rounds of grantees received the same curriculum. The fifth session in November 2022 combined both rounds virtually. The sixth and final meeting was held as

part of the Grantee Celebration and Showcase on December 7th, 2022 where grantees gathered in person. Each conversation centered on one of the grant guiding principles:

- Building social cohesion, collaboration, and connectivity
- Utilizing trauma-informed principles and practices
- Being informed by community voices
- Advancing equity and racial and social justice
- Demonstrating cultural competency and relevance
- Being informed by data, evidence, and best practices

These conversations supported grantees in generating connective ideas of lived experience as members of Kensington and as grantees from community organizations. The cohort assisted grantees in developing their stories as organizations engaged in work in the community.

Evaluation Goals & Questions

In early 2022, the Kensington Community Resilience Fund worked with ImpactED and a research team of Public Administration students from the University of Pennsylvania's Fels Institute of Government on an evaluation of the participatory process used to develop the strategy and carry out grantmaking for the Fund.

This evaluation expands upon this by assessing the impacts of grant dollars allocated within the community and outcomes of capacity building programming carried out through the KCR Fund's learning community.

Evaluation Goals	Evaluation Questions
• Determine the impact of the grant dollars allocated through the KCR Fund within the community.	**What are the impacts of the allocated grant dollars?** • Is the KCR Fund reaching the grantees in a way that is meeting their needs? • Is the KCR Fund being implemented as intended? • What are the grantees perceptions of how KCR Fund impacted their programming? • To what extent is the grantee's work being elevated because of the funding?
• Assess the KCR Fund's learning community impact on grantees capacity building.	**How were grantees impacted by the participatory grantmaking process and the peer learning communities?** • What are the outcomes of capacity building programming carried out through the KCR Fund's learning community? • Is the KCR Fund reaching its key programmatic outcomes?
• Use the data gathered to develop recommendations for the implementation of a sustainability plan. • Explore the challenges and successes faced by grantees and understand how these can influence donor engagement efforts.	**How do grantees rate the quality and usefulness of the KCR Fund? What do we want to see going forward and what needs to happen next?** • What are the key recommendations to inform the implementation of a sustainability plan? • What aspects do they find most beneficial? • What aspects do they find least beneficial?

Methodology

Quantitative Methodology

Quantitative Data from Grantee Fiscal and Progress Reports

The evaluator assessed which questions from the grant reports could be quantified and ran descriptive statistics for the following questions and prompts:

- ZIP codes of where each grantee organization is located
- ZIP codes of where each grantee organization provides services
- Issue areas addressed or advanced by each organizations work or programming
- Areas of interest that grantee organizations of how grantees would like to stay engaged with the KCR Fund

Peer Learning Community Pre and Post Surveys

AFE Strategies coordinated and Dr. Cynthia (Cindy) Estremera Gauthier of Strategy Arts facilitated the Peer Learning Community meetings. They created and distributed pre and post surveys for grantees who chose to participate in the optional Peer Learning Community. These surveys provide both quantitative and qualitative data. Please see below for a description of the quantitative data collected from these surveys.

Pre Survey
The facilitators distributed two pre-surveys, one for each round of grantees as they started on different cycles. The first round submitted their responses in late April 2022 and the second round submitted their survey in late June 2022.

Round One Pre-Survey Respondents
There were 12 responses from round one grantees representing seven different grantee organizations.

- Kensington Soccer Club (4 respondents)
- Power Street Theatre (2 respondents)
- Sisters Returning Home

- SSJ Welcome Center (2 respondents)
- Taller Puertorriqueño
- The Block Gives Back
- The Simple Way

Round Two Pre-Survey Respondents
There were seven responses from round two grantees representing seven different grantee organizations.

- Beyond the Bars

- By Faith Health and Healing, Inc.

- Kensington Voice
- Klean Kensington
- Snider Hockey
- Visitation BVM
- Yoga 4 The World (Yoga 4 Philly)

The pre-survey asked respondents to rate their familiarity with other KCR Fund grantees, comfortability partnering with other grantees, and if they have been able to incorporate the KCR Fund guiding principles into their work on a scale of one to five.

KCR Fund Peer Learning Community Pre-Survey Responses
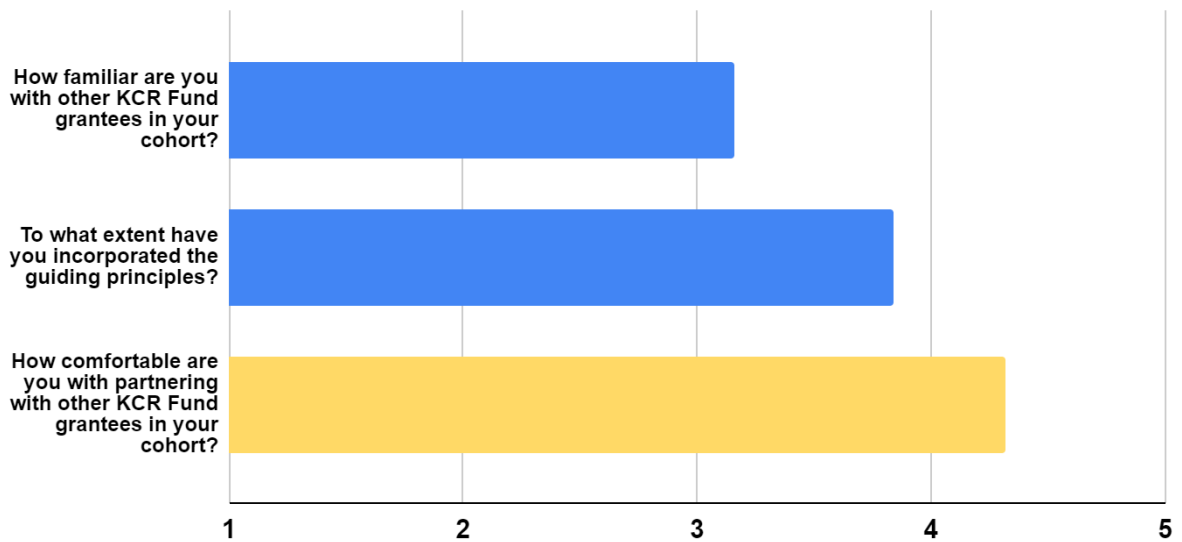
Post Survey

There was one post-survey administered during the second to last Peer Learning Cohort session on November 3, 2022. Eleven responses were recorded for the post-survey from 10 distinct organizations.

- By Faith Health and Healing lnc.
- Community Center at Visitation
- Firm Hope Baptist Church
- Kensington Soccer Club
- Kensington Voice
- Power Street Theatre (2 respondents)
- Power Street Theatre
- Snider Hockey & Education
- SSJ Welcome Center
- The Simple Way
- The Simple Way
- Visitation BVM School

The post survey asked respondents to reflect on their added understanding of the KCR Fund guiding principles by rating each guiding principle on a scale of one to five. These results were quantified using their averages across all respondents and are reflected in the findings section of this report.

The post survey also asked respondents to rate their familiarity with other KCR Fund grantees, comfortability partnering with other grantees, and if they made connections through their

participation in the Peer Learning Community that will help them in their work (personally or for their organization) on a scale of one to five respectively.

KCR Fund Peer Learning Community Post-Survey Responses
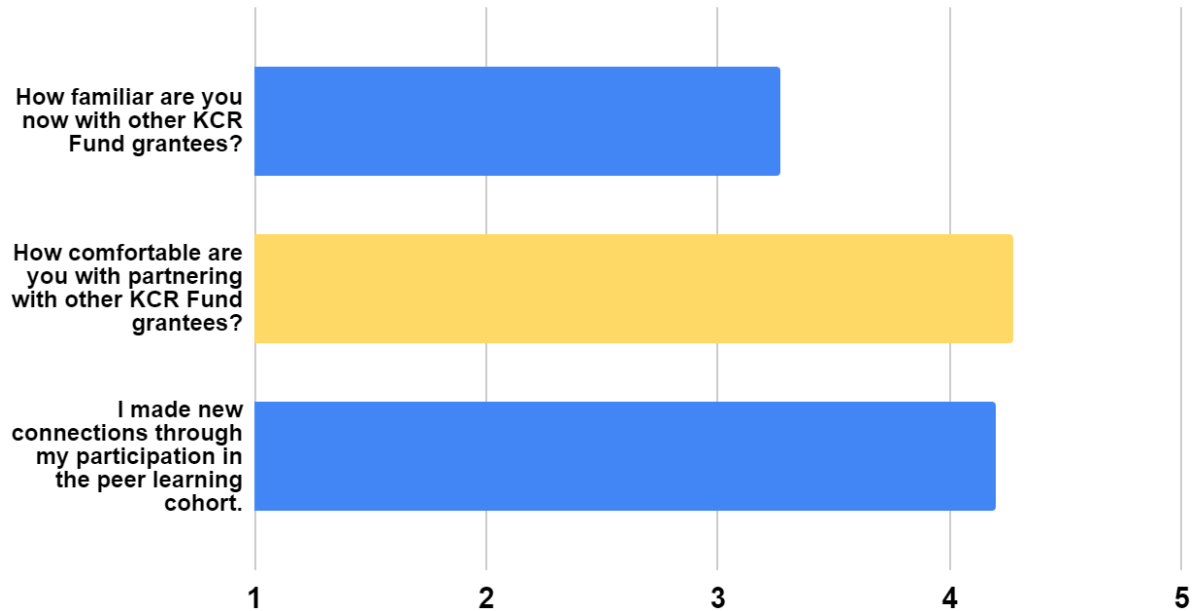
Qualitative Methodology

Grantee Fiscal and Progress Reports

These reports provide information from each participating organization. The grantees responded to prompts focused on the following:

- Grant expenditures
- Number of people served
- Victories
- Success stories
- Challenges
- Learnings - what approaches/strategies worked or did not work
- Other organizational impacts as a result of the KCR Fund grant

There were 17 of the 20 round one Grantee Fiscal and Progress Reports submitted. At the end of February 2023, 16 of the 20 round two grantee organizations submitted their reports to be included in this evaluation . These 33 (82% of grantees) reports provide the bulk of qualitative data used in this evaluation.

Peer Learning Community Pre and Post Surveys

The pre and post surveys from the Peer Learning Community provide qualitative data in addition to quantitative data.

Pre-Survey
The evaluator reviewed the following open ended questions from the pre-survey and incorporated the responses into the findings:

1) What are some organizational topics or areas of expertise you would like to learn more about?
2) How important is it to scale the impact of your work to grow the reach of your organization?

Post-Survey
The evaluator reviewed the following open ended questions from the post-survey and incorporated the responses into the findings:

1) Please share any other takeaways or knowledge you gained from participation in the Peer Learning Cohort.
2) Are there any other topics or areas of expertise you would like to learn more about?
3) Please share any other comments or feedback on the structure and format of the Peer Learning Cohort.
4) Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience in the peer learning community or ways to improve the peer learning community moving forward?

Observations

The evaluator observed and took notes during three KCR Fund events and meetings. Information gleaned from these observations are incorporated into many of the findings supporting much of what grantees noted in their reports.

The first was an in-person event at round one grantee, Taller Puertorriqueno's new building in Kensington. This event was the KCR Fund Grantee Showcase & Celebration of the first two rounds of the KCR Fund filled with food from a local vendor, performances by grantee organizations, and an opportunity for KCR Fund stakeholders to come together in person as a community. The second and third observations were Community Advisory Committee planning meetings held virtually on Zoom. These meetings were an opportunity for members of the Steering Committee and Fund Administrators to reconnect with CAC members and focus on the planning process for the next rounds of the KCR Fund grant cycle.

KCR Fund Grantee Showcase & Celebration

On December 7, 2022 AFE Strategies, Strategy Arts, and the City of Philadelphia hosted a wonderful night of sharing, gathering, and networking for KCR Fund grantees. During this event grantees had the opportunity and space to reflect on their work and their experiences with the KCR Fund. This event represented the final Peer Learning Community meeting held in person with a large turn out of KCR Fund stakeholders.

Dr. Cindy led the group in a discussion and reflection of the KCR Fund. She asked participants to write on a large shared flip-chart their responses to the following questions. Then as a community all attendees were encouraged to speak to the group about their answers.

1. In 5 Years, what would success look like for the KCR Fund?
2. What do you need to partner more effectively with organizations in your community?
3. What role beyond funding should the KCR Fund play for community members? What else should it do?

Community Advisory Committee Meetings

At the end of February 2023 AFE Strategies, on behalf of the City of Philadelphia, held two planning sessions with members of the Community Advisory Committee.

The planning meetings began with a recap of the KCR Fund and reflections on what has worked well so far, successes and challenges, and what the CAC would like to see look different going forward. The bulk of the meetings focused on the 2023 Grant Strategy. This strategy included reviewing the following elements of the Fund:

- Focus Areas
- Footprint

- Grant Size/Type
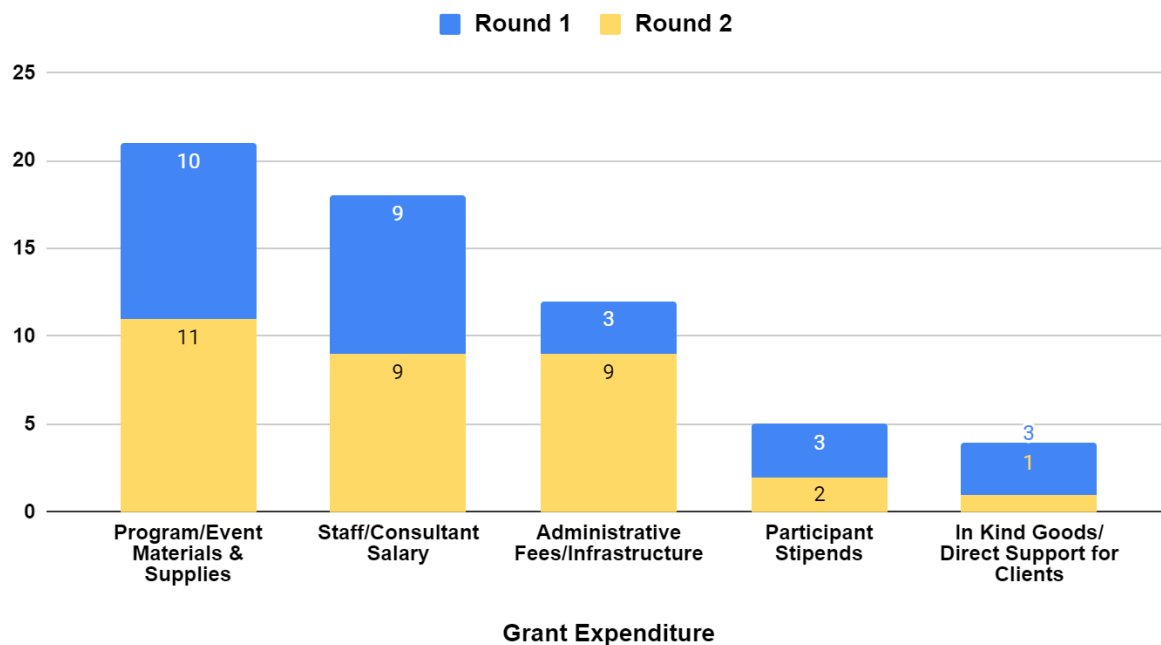- Eligibility
- Application Process/ Reporting

The Block Gives Back

Findings

Evaluation Question 1

What are the impacts of the allocated grant dollars?

Grants were largely used for operational expenses. Many organizations applied their $10,000 grants across multiple financial needs. Program Materials & Supplies (64%) and Staff or Consultant Salary (55%) were the most frequently mentioned grant expenditures from round one and two grantee organizations.

- Administrative fees/ Infrastructure (i.e. rent, utility bills, fees, software, etc.) represented 36% of grantee expenditures. Five organizations (15%) noted that they used the funds to pay their program participants or interns. Lastly, four organizations (12%) used KCR Fund dollars to provide direct support (i.e. food, diapers, rental/utility assistance) to individuals they serve.

KCR Fund Rounds One & Two Grant Expenditures

Legend: ■ Round 1 ■ Round 2

Bar chart data ("Grant Expenditure"):
- Program/Event Materials & Supplies: Round 2 = 11, Round 1 = 10 (total 21)
- Staff/Consultant Salary: Round 2 = 9, Round 1 = 9 (total 18)
- Administrative Fees/Infrastructure: Round 2 = 9, Round 1 = 3 (total 12)
- Participant Stipends: Round 2 = 2, Round 1 = 3 (total 5)
- In Kind Goods/ Direct Support for Clients: Round 2 = 1, Round 1 = 3 (total 4)

Some organizations included in their Grantee Fiscal and Progress Reports testimonials regarding how they used their KCR Fund grant dollars and viewed it as a victory for their organization.

> "We are thrilled with what we have managed to achieve with this grant money! We **expanded the number of families** receiving weekly grocery deliveries from 80 to 104."
>
> - Papermill Food Hub, Inc.

> "**This grant allowed us to hire a dedicated staff person** (a facilitator) to support programming at McPherson Square Library and **supplement Free Library staff up** to three days per week."
>
> - Fab Youth Philly

Fab Youth Philly

Many organizations attributed their success in providing services to their target population because the KCR Fund grant dollars were able to be applied to their basic operational expenses and support their capacity building. This then freed other funds to cover direct support and programs or events.

> Another victory, which was **indirectly attributable to our grant,** was the success of our annual Christmas giveaway event. We had planned to add winter coat distribution to our annual toy drive but, **the local businessperson who offered to donate coats ended up unable to fulfill the donation.** In any other year, we would not have had any emergency funds to overcome this last-minute setback; **but with KCRF funds that covered utility bills in the fall and winter, we were able to use [other] funds to purchase new winter coats** at Walmart to bring to our event.
>
> - Firm Hope Baptist Church

Zerbe Artz shared one victory story of working with a growing artist youth named Justin. Justin benefited from the consistent and individualized attention and support Zerbe was able to provide as a result of the KCR Fund grant.

> There are two major facets of this successful story. The first is **consistency**. The funding provided allowed Zerbe to offer his engagement on a consistent basis, which facilitated the **trust building** process with Justin. The second is having **time and safe space for 1:1 interactions**. The funding provided allowed Zerbe to dedicate special time to Justin's learning and progress.
>
> - Zerbe Artz

KCR Fund grantees served thousands of youth and reached thousands more adults through programming, community events, media, exhibitions/showcases, and food/clothing/diaper distribution.

- Youth Development was the most commonly addressed issue area by KCR Fund grantees. Round one and two grantees served **3,276 youth**.
- Grantees reached and or served an additional **17,247 individuals** through many events and platforms.

> "Through our journalism, we reached 9,600 people via our print newspapers and 58,000 users via our news website. That was a **92% increase in print reach and a 20% increase in digital reach since the year before we received this funding.** We also increased our print distribution stream from eight to 24 locations (a 200% increase)."
>
> - Kensington Voice

Many grantees noted in their reports they expanded the reach and awareness of their organization in the neighborhood, which in return helped many organizations establish themselves better within the community.

- The KCR Fund expanded Urban Extreme Youth Development's work in the community. They are now partnering with Kensington Health Sciences and Quest Trauma Healing Center. Rock Ministries of Philadelphia also enhanced their reputation in the community through partnerships for their Wellness Center.

> "**This grant helped validate our Wellness Center as a partnership site** for a variety of other medical organizations. Though small and grassroots, our facility is now used by volunteer doctors and podiatrists offering free services, City programs for HIV testing and HepC vaccination, visiting nursing students from local colleges and more"
>
> - Rock Ministries of Philadelphia

> "...we have been able to **expand awareness of our work** in the Kensington Community which has shown an impact tenfold. By forming partnerships in this community, we were able to **continue hosting larger events catering to the community members** in Kensington alongside dedicated partners such as clean-ups, giveaways, and antiviolence initiatives."
>
> - The Block Gives Back

- A few grantees specifically referenced the official event launching the KCR Fund as a reason for increased visibility in the community.

> "We're thankful for the **increased visibility** for our programming and our organization as a whole due to the **press conference announcement of grantees.**"
>
> - Providence Center

About a quarter of grantees noted participation in the KCR Fund influenced their ability to attract and find additional funding sources and grant opportunities.

- Grantees made connections and received funding from various sources including:

  - Targeted Community Investment Grant
  - The Philadelphia Activities Fund
  - State Representatives
  - Overdose Prevention and Community Healing Fund
  - Nelson Foundation
  - William Penn Foundation
  - Home4Good

Kensington Soccer Club

"At the KCRF announcement, we were introduced to the Nelson Foundation which **later funded us**. When applying for other grants, **mentioning our KCRF grant helped increased out credibility.**"

- Kensington Soccer Club

"The KCR Fund award has also been a **springboard for additional funding and grant awards**, allowing us to continue providing and expanding our services."

- Sisters of Saint Joseph Welcome Center

"Seeing how we were able to expand our charitable work through receiving such a grant has **made us consider whether we can find other ways to increase donations** beyond the contributions of congregation members."

- Firm Hope Baptist Church

"[We] had inspiring participation with El Barrio es Nuestro thanks to the connection with the KCRF... This experience led to an interview with Kensington Voice... The momentum of creating this new class **attracted more funding opportunities and engagement with the community.**"

- Photography Without Borders

All grantee organizations provided testimonials detailing how the KCR Fund positively impacted and elevated their programming.

- Many grantees used the KCR Fund grant to fill funding gaps that would have otherwise impeded their ability to provide services and continue their programming.
- The funding allowed many organizations to establish themselves as consistent partners in the neighborhood and build trust with community members.

Community Center at Visitation

"Since receiving the grant, **we were able to see an impact on our organization.** Because of the scholarship program, **interest in our programming had grown in the community of Kensington.** We were able to see an increase in enrollment for our other youth programs and were also able to start adult classes for parents. In addition, we were able to **develop long lasting partnerships** between schools in Kensington who promoted our programs as well as other dance studios who provided the technique classes for us."

- Rebel Arts Movement

"Because our **staff had consistently been present** during the spring, when we transitioned into summer programming, we were known among the youth in the neighborhood. This is important, especially in Kensington, because so many groups swoop in to drop off backpacks, take a photo on the front of the library steps and then don't come back."

- Fab Youth Philly

"Because we've been able to open a permanent location, we've been able to really **establish ourselves in the community.**"

- Papermill Food Hub

Evaluation Question 2

How were grantees impacted by the participatory grantmaking process and the peer learning communities?

Overwhelmingly, grantees reported an increase in connection and partnership with other grantee organizations.
- Many grantees commented in their reports the specific connections they made with other grantee organizations. As a direct result of the participatory framework of the KCR Fund, organizations aligned their services and partnered to host community events and share resources with residents.

"Through this grant period, we have learned the **power of collaboration** and continuing to grow momentum with other community groups surrounding shared goals. We have seen the consequences of siloed efforts, such as limited capacity and competing efforts that could otherwise work in alignment. We have also seen the **benefits of engaging through our various networks** and inspiring curiosity among neighbors who are not yet active members of a community group."

- Team NAS

"We couldn't be more **grateful for the connection to more amazing community based orgs.** We believe that **systemic problems require systemic solutions** and are always looking to build and collaborate with additional community based organizations **providing resources for our students that we do not.** Getting to consistently meet and find ways to amplify and support each other's work was incredible and we are deeply grateful to be working together."

- Beyond the Bars

"The Block Gives Back learned the **importance of joining and creating community coalitions.** Joining a Kensington local coalition assisted in **forming partnerships and creating events inclusive of resources that would benefit the community members.** Partnering with **like-minded organizations** made it possible to host our larger events in Kensington…"

- The Block Gives Back

"As a result of [our] attendance at one of the KCRF in-person events for grantees, **Yoga for Philly, a fellow grant recipient, will be conducting a community workshop with HFH for Fairhill residents!** This is a terrific connection, and we appreciate the opportunity to network with other community based nonprofits serving the area."

- Historic Fair Hill

Grantees who attended the Peer Learning Community sessions rated their experience very highly. A few organizations specifically shared the "Telling Your Story with Data" session was particularly helpful.
- Grantees found it impactful to gather together with each other to share ideas and discuss common challenges.
- A few grantees commented that they appreciated the importance of understanding data and storytelling and would welcome follow-up sessions on storytelling for funders vs. the community.
- There were a few comments specifically applauding Dr. Cindy for her facilitation of the meetings.

"The peer workshops were wonderful! **Cynthia did an amazing job encouraging participants to think creatively and brainstorm ideas.** She is the reason why I desired more coaching because I thought the peer workshops were helpful."
- Rebel Arts Movement

"The facilitation was amazing and was always meaningful. The orgs that were there provided further great insight and knowledge and **we loved learning from them and together.**"
- Beyond the Bars

"[We] thought the sessions were **insightful and helpful** to expanding our programming to the youth population in the Kensington community. It was **valuable to connect with other organizations in the community** and recognize that many organizations are facing similar challenges that could benefit from unique **collaboration to tackle issues.**"
- Ed Snider Youth Hockey Foundation

Bandwidth and time constraints were most noted by grantees as the reason for not attending the Learning Community. A few organizations shared communication between the KCR Fund and their staff may have been an issue leaving them unaware of the opportunity.

- Round two grantees received specific questions regarding the Peer Learning Community in their Grantee Fiscal and Progress Report that round one grantees did not receive. From the round two submissions eight organizations cited timing, staff, and bandwidth constraints as to why they were unable to participate.
- Three organizations shared they were unaware of the Peer Learning Community.

"We weren't able to participate in most of the Learning Community meetings due to **timing and staff bandwidth. The few** times that I did attend, the **facilitation was very good, topic was of interest and there was good engagement from the group**"

-   Fab Youth Philly

"Unfortunately, the **timing** of the learning community programming conflicted with our staff's schedule or they simply did not have the **bandwidth** at the time. Communication may also have been an issue, **some emails seem to have gone to the wrong mailbox and not to our listed primary contact.**"

-   Centro Nueva Creación

"We did not participate in a learning community program. Frankly, we were **not aware that there was a learning cohort, to begin with.** However, we did attend one event with all of the grantees, and we made some new connections there and are grateful for that opportunity."

-   Kensington Voice

Grantees expressed they want Peer Learning Community sessions to be held in person during the evening and shared suggestions for the future.

-   Some grantees shared they wish the sessions were held in person rather than over Zoom in order to build better rapport. One grantee suggested that organizations with the capacity or meeting space could take turns hosting the sessions.
-   A few grantees noted after work hours is preferable to meeting during the day.
-   Building social cohesion, collaboration, and connectivity is the most frequently mentioned guiding principle grantees who completed the Peer Learning Community post-survey would like to learn more about (6 out of 10). Followed by advancing equity and racial and social justice (5 out of 10), and utilizing trauma-informed principles and practices (4 out of 10).
-   Another grantee indicated they would like more activities focusing on the future to remain focused on the community.

"If the learning community involved visiting different Kensington sites for meetings in the future and **allowing the different grantees to teach other grantees skills so that it became a community of mutual learning,** it could become a space that I would be more deeply interested in participating!"

-   Klean Kensington

"Suggestion: host more programming/ workshops **after work hours, perhaps in the evening.** It was difficult for any of our representatives to attend workshops that were during daytime school hours/work hours."

-   We Love Philly

All round two grantees reported a very positive reflection of the KCR Fund Participatory Model in their Grantee Fiscal & Progress reports. (Note: round one did not receive these specific participatory model questions in their report, but all round one grantees who volunteered comments on the process in their report also had only positive reflections).

- Grantees felt the participatory model truly meets the needs of the community and builds trust between the community and organizations working for residents.
- "Community" and "collaboration" were two of the most commonly used words when grantees reflected on the KCR Fund's participatory model.
- There was general agreement that this process gives members of the community a voice that has long been missing in the Kensington community.
- A few grantees also commented on the personal pride and honor they felt to be selected by members of the community directly. One shared that it provided a morale boost to have their work recognized as having an impact on community resilience.

"**The community knows what the community needs** and we could not be more grateful for this model. Knowing that the funding came from our community selecting us meant so much and **pushed us to ensure that we were providing the best programming that we could to ensure that each dollar was stretched** to ensure that our amazing young people were getting access to the most amount of resources that we could support."
- Beyond the Bars

"As a grantee, **it was an honor to be selected by members of our community.** The participatory model also helped to **hold us accountable.** Instead of requiring us to file detailed monthly reports to prove that we are doing the work we said we would do, those same community members are there to witness us doing it."
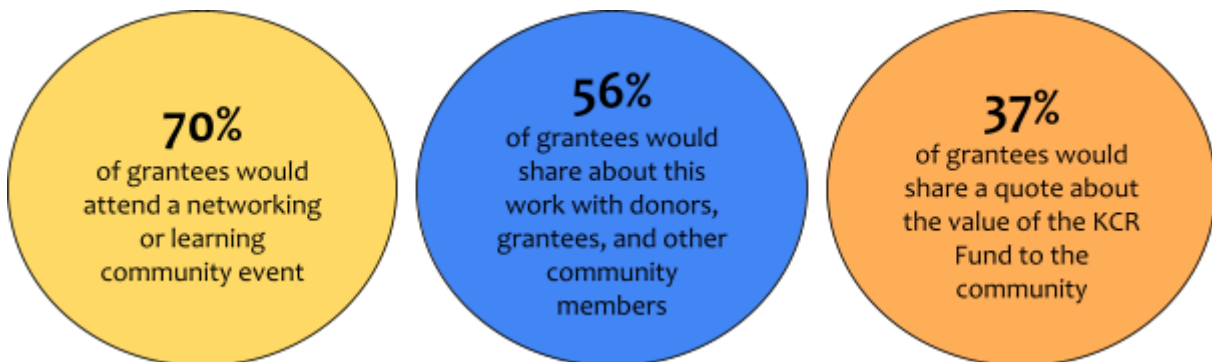- Kensington Voice

Evaluation Question 3

How do grantees rate the quality and usefulness of the KCR Fund? What do we want to see going forward and what needs to happen next?

When asked what kind of engagement activities members of grantee organizations are interested in participating in the future, the majority (70%) indicated they are interested in attending a networking or learning community event offered by the KCR Fund.
- More than half of grantees who submitted their Grantee Fiscal and Progress Report (56%) would be interested in sharing about their work at a KCR Fund event to donors, grantees, or other community members. Grantees are least interested in sharing a quote or comment about the value of the KCR Fund to the community (37%).

70%
of grantees would attend a networking or learning community event

56%
of grantees would share about this work with donors, grantees, and other community members

37%
of grantees would share a quote about the value of the KCR Fund to the community

Grantees all gave positive ratings for the quality and usefulness of the KCR Fund.
- Grantees pointed directly to the administration of the KCR Fund and Ashley Feuer-Edwards as being a large reason for the success of the Fund. Grantees appreciated the communication and support offered by the KCR Fund team. A few grantees commented that it was clear from all levels (the fund administrators, steering committee, application, facilitators) that the KCR Fund is rooted in ensuring the community receives the support it deserves.
- Approximately five organizations noted in their reports that the KCR Fund grant was the first grant their organization has ever received. The structure of the KCR Fund allowed these smaller organizations a chance to learn the processes and become more established.
- A few grantees commented that they appreciated the low reporting requirements for the KCR Fund grant and were grateful that the grant did not require them to attend monthly meetings or trainings.

"KCRF experience was amazing. I've applied and been on the grant selection committee and **the entire process truly accomplishes the learning model intention**. From residents having to organize and present on higher levels, think strategically, learn how to partner on levels that otherwise we wouldn't and for the funders and those considering funding, **they were able to see what are priorities in our community to help guide them for future funding projects**."

- Kensington Meals Program

"The grant application was easy for us to navigate - the **questions seemed to be geared toward telling the story of our history and impact in Kensington neighborhoods**."

- Mad Beatz Philly

"The **questions in the application allowed us to focus on our passion behind the program** instead of just the potential numbers. You could tell that this was **more about the impact than data**."

- Rebel Arts Movement

While many grantee organizations reported an increase in partnership building, many continued to express that they want to continue to grow these partnerships and attend more networking events.

- Grantees expressed high interest in continued support from the KCR Fund in building additional relationships through more in person meet and greets with practitioners, grantees, and funders.
- Most frequently mentioned is in person opportunities for grantees to connect with one another like they did at the Grantee Celebration and Showcase. These gatherings could be an opportunity for grantees to collaborate and find solutions to shared problems.
- One grantee suggested the KCR Fund could hold monthly meetings to inform grantees of additional funding opportunities.

"We learned that CVV can meet only a few of the needs of our neighbors. When we feel like we cannot assist them, **we must have a network of partners available who they can go to**. To that end, we've built stronger partnerships with other nonprofits and community organizations who can address issues that are out of CCV's expertise. **We will continue to expand our roster of partners who join us at community events to inform the public of their services**."

- Community Center at Visitation

"As we continue working towards more equitable neighborhood conditions, **we are interested in identifying partners who can support research and data collection** to further illuminate the inequitable impacts (e.g. health and wellness, crime and safety, continued deprivation of wealth from historically redlined communities)"

- Team NAS

Grantees expressed a wide array of support and ideas they have for the future of the KCR Fund in their grant reports as well as during the Grantee Celebration & Showcase event.

Capacity Building Support	Connection to Growth Opportunities
Professional resources like photography and other storytelling tools	Support in spreading the word about what organizations do
Recruiting volunteers and learning best practices for volunteer management	Coordinating drives for multiple organizations to collect in kind donations like clothes, diapers, food etc.
Grantees and the Community Advisory Committee both agreed that grantees may benefit from touchpoints throughout the process to ensure deadlines are met	Connections to the greater Philadelphia media entities who can highlight grantee work and provide exposure beyond the Kensington region
Grantees and the Community Advisory Committee both agreed that grantees may benefit from touchpoints throughout the process to ensure deadlines are met	Support in better understanding and creating new internal models and standard operating procedures (i.e. internal communication, customer relationship management database)
A few grantees indicated they are interested in larger grants from the KCR Fund	Facilitate partnerships with organizations who can support research and data collection

At the Grantee Celebration & Showcase event Dr. Cindy led the group in a discussion reflecting on the KCR Fund with multiple stakeholders present. This brainstorming session allowed grantees to share their thoughts that were then recorded in the graphic (found on the following page) in real time during the event. Additional ideas from this discussion are:

- More resident participation in driving change
- Regular community programming held throughout the neighborhood
- Leadership development
- More youth involvement within the Fund
- Physical hubs for organizations to connect and learn from each other
- More collaboration and interaction between local organizations
- Make the arts more accessible

GRAPHIC RECORDING by HALEY McDEVITT of ILLUSTRATING PROGRESS

A few grantees shared their ideas for enhancing the sustainability of the Fund within the neighborhood by creating a cyclical process of investing and involving more residents and businesses. One grantee suggested creating incentives for organizations to buy materials from local businesses within the footprint or to partner with other private businesses or hire educators from the area.

"A creative suggestion would be that KCRF would **create incentives for organizations receiving funds to spend money IN the community** - whether through buying equipment or materials from local businesses, or through hiring local people, or paying other grantees for their help. I believe creating a **circular economy locally is important for the health of Kensington.**"

- Klean Kensington

"Moving forward, we believe **sharing more resources and connections could help projects like ours.** Thinking back, we would have loved to **hire trade educators from the area to keep the award funds within the community.** Networks and resources that aid in this type of connection could be powerful."

- We Love Philly

Limitations

Data Availability Challenges & Inconsistencies

Inconsistencies within the Peer Learning Community Data

- Both rounds of grantees received the same curriculum and their sessions ran separately except for the final virtual meeting in November 2022 where both rounds were combined and rounding out the cohort meetings was the Grantee Celebration and Showcase in person in December 2022.
  - The biggest limitation of attempting to use the Peer Learning Community data is that attendance records were not maintained.
  - The meetings were not consistently attended and many participants would join the calls late and leave early.
- Less than half of grantee organizations from both rounds (35%) submitted pre-surveys. Only 10 grantee organizations (25%) submitted post-surveys.
- Social Desirability Bias
  - The surveys asked respondents to include their full name and organization they represented. It is possible that participants may have withheld criticism and responded more positively as a result. Participants may have feared that negative comments could jeopardize the future of their status with the KCR Fund. The social desirability bias could produce an overly positive result and hinder this evaluation in more fully determining key areas for improvement.

Inconsistencies with the Community Advisory Committee Meetings

- The Community Advisory Committee meetings held at the end of February 2023 were not consistently attended. There were two meetings and not all CAC members were able to attend both sessions in full. This limited the amount of feedback received and resulted in a few voices being heard the most.

Grantee Fiscal & Progress Reports Challenges

- The round two grant reports were due on March 10, 2023 and 16 out of the 20 grant reports were submitted on time and used in this evaluation. Due to the time constraints of submitting this evaluation 20% of round two grantees are not represented in the findings.
- The number of individuals served is slightly nuanced. Some organizations did not provide any clear numbers of individuals they served and others only noted that it was difficult to quantify how the KCR Fund directly translated into a quantifiable increase in individuals. The evaluator used best estimates to quantify the numbers provided in the grant reports.
  - Many of the numbers provided are the total number of individuals served/reached by the organization over the grant period and not necessarily solely because of the KCR Fund grant.

- The KCR Fund is based on a low-barrier trust based model. This model lends itself to limited data collection as the grant amounts were only $10,000 and they were not designated for any specific purpose. The grant reports do not directly ask about the sustainability of projects since the funds could be used for anything including general operating expenses. Many of the questions asked were very general and allowed for a range of responses, which made it difficult to make definitive claims on themes.
    - If grantees were asked specific questions regarding partnership or attracting new grant dollars for example it would be easier to quantify.
    - It is possible that some grantees may have just not thought to answer the question with certain information as they were all open-ended questions.
- The evaluator reviewed the round one grant reports in the fall and winter of 2022 - 2023. From this review she recommended changes to the round two grant report to better address the goals of the evaluation and what the KCR Fund administrators hoped to learn. Additional questions were added for round two grantees that round one did not receive. As a result, the data collected is not consistent for both rounds and the results from the additional questions answered by round two can only be attributed to round two grantees.

Recommendations

Recommendations for KCR Fund Administration

Application and Reporting Recommendations
- Simplify the way of asking organizations to provide their financial information in the grantee application. The applications can include an option to either upload existing documents or complete a template provided by the KCR Fund.
- Include dropdown or multiple choice options in the Grantee Fiscal & Progress Report with an option to include comments for some questions as the report is heavy on the open-ended questions. Questions to specifically focus on could be grant expenditures, the number of individuals reached, and the impacts to the organization from receiving the KCR Fund grant.
  - Some grantees included their full financial statements as indication of how the KCR Fund grant was spent. This does not give a clear picture of how the funds were used. The report could include an option for organizations to select all options that apply as well as space for additional comments if needed. The options could be:
    - Administrative Fees/Infrastructure
    - In Kind Goods/ Direct Support for Clients
    - Participant Stipends
    - Program/Event Materials & Supplies
    - Staff/Consultant Salary
  - Individuals reached as a result of the grant could be grouped in options: A) 1 - 99, B) 100 - 250, C) 251 - 400 etc…
  - Grantees could be presented with a list of possible results participating in the KCR Fund had on their organization. This allows them to check-off those that apply to them and can also include a comment box for any other effects that were not listed. Options could include:
    - Increased awareness of your organization in the community
    - Increased connections with other grantee organizations
    - Exposure to new funding opportunities
    - New resident participation
- Add a question to the application regarding scheduling for the Peer Learning Community meetings. Ask grantees in the application what time of day and which day of the week they are most available to attend the Peer Learning Community meetings. This can be done through a "check all that apply" option.

KCR Fund Administrative Support and Organization
- Conduct a mid-point check-in with all grantees during the grant cycle to address any concerns and collect feedback. In addition, offer the option for more frequent check-in meetings with grantees who desire more individualized attention.

- Track attendance at the Peer Learning Cohort meetings consistently. If the meetings continue to be held over Zoom the facilitator can run a report at the end of each meeting showing who attended and for how long they attended. If meetings are transitioned to in person sessions there can be a sign-in sheet for all grantees to record their attendance.
- Create a database or Google Group of grantees to facilitate communication. These platforms could hold grantee contact information and a brief description of their work. Fab Youth Philly indicated in their report that they created a database of nonprofits in the 19134 ZIP code and are happy to share it with the KCR Fund. This may be an opportunity for the KCR Fund to find new organizations as well as build off of pre-existing resources.
- The CAC discussed the idea of inviting alumni grantees to serve as mentors for new applicants. There is a lot of opportunity to keep grantees engaged after their grant cycle. The KCR Fund in its structure creates opportunities for partnership and relationship building between organizations and people who are deeply dedicated to the work. Identifying individuals who want to serve as mentors for new applicants is a benefit for the new applicant who receives guidance and the mentor who continues to expand their network.
- Define what it means to be a "grassroots" organization within the KCR Fund. It could be measured by the number of staff, budget size, or individuals served/reached.

Recommendations for KCR Fund Program Activities

Hold More In-Person Events
- Networking opportunities and spaces for grantees and funders to gather together.
- Community events/fairs for grantees to gather together and share resources and information about their organizations to the community.
- In person Peer Learning Community meetings.

Future Peer Learning Community Meeting Topics & Invite Grantees to Present
- Potential Future Peer Learning Community Session Topics
  - Data tracking: Many grantees indicated wanting to learn more about data collection and how to use information regarding their programs to enhance other grant applications and marketing.
  - Volunteer recruitment/management: Some grantees indicated that they are interested in gaining more support or knowledge on how to recruit and manage volunteers to assist with bandwidth issues.
  - Trauma informed practices: Some organizations noted the importance of continuing to ensure their programs are trauma informed and others are very well versed in this topic. This could be a good opportunity for peer-to-peer learning and give organizations the opportunity to present and share best practices to the larger group.

- Invite former grantees who are subject matter experts (i.e. in submitting grants, fundraising, data use, volunteer engagement etc.) to present at Peer Learning Community meetings alongside the facilitator.

Recommendations for Future Research

- Future Grant Reports should continue to include the questions added to the round two grantee reports
- Send a survey to all round one grantees regarding their feedback on the Peer Learning Cohort because they did not have the same opportunity to provide feedback as round two did.
- Create a working group of CAC members to discuss the grant amount for round four.
- Survey grantees and/or have discussions with grantees to learn about ways they would like to stay engaged with the KCR Fund after they complete their cycle. Some potential continued engagement opportunities are:
  - Serve as CAC members
  - Server as mentors to new KCR Fund applicants
  - Present in Peer Learning Cohort meetings

Photography Without Borders

Appendices

Appendix A: Peer Learning Community Potential Future Grantee Interview/Focus Group Questions

1. How would you describe the participatory grantmaking process to a colleague who has no experience with this model?
   - Do you think the KCR Fund participatory structure meets the needs of organizations in the area?
   - Do you see value in a participatory model?
   - If you could change one thing about the KCR Fund structure what would it be?
   - What challenges and/or opportunities does the participatory model create?
2. What was your experience with the Peer Learning Group? (use probing questions dependent on if the individual attended the peer learning or not)
   - What kind of effect, if at all, did your participation in the peer learning group have on your capacity building?
   - Were the topics relevant to your work?
   - What value or learnings did you take away from the cohort?
   - Is there anything you would like to change about the Peer Learning Group?
   - What barriers kept you from participating in the cohort?
3. Were there any challenges or barriers for your organization during the logistics/administration of the grant? Or fulfilling the requirements of the grant?
   - Do you wish anything was different?
   - What can and should be done to ensure the sustainability of the KCR Fund towards a community owned and administered fund?

Appendix B: Additional Questions Added to Round Two Grant Reports

1) KCRF Model: Please share any thoughts you have regarding the KCR Fund's participatory grantmaking model. Do you have any reflections on the funding being awarded and selected by other members of your community?

2) KCRF Processes: Please share:
   a) How did this grant process compare to other funding you've applied for and received?
   b) How was your experience working with the KCR Fund?
   c) Did you have any challenges with the systems that were used or how you received or used the funds?

3) KCRF Experience Continued: Please share:
   a) Did you feel supported going through the process and how could we be more supportive of you?
   b) Do you have any recommendations for how to improve the grantee experience?
   c) What ways would you like to see the Fund support you? Are there more resources we could provide? For example, additional capacity building, building connections, technical assistance etc.

4) Learning Community:
   a) If you were able to participate in learning community programming (Peer Learning Cohort or a standalone workshop) please share any reflections on how they were helpful, and/or suggestions on how to improve the sessions going forward.
   b) If you did not participate we would still love to hear what kept you from participating (timing, lack of relevance/interest in topics, bandwidth constraints, etc). Is there anything that would make you more likely to participate in the future?

Appendix C: Additional Grantee Quotes

"The KCR Fund's participatory grantmaking model was unique and unlike funding models our team has seen before. Being selected to receive funding by members of our community was a tremendous honor. Snider is continuing to build deeper roots in the Kensington community and believes that this award has shown progress towards that goal." - Ed Snider Youth Hockey Foundation

"Being awarded confirms that we know what is lacking and needed and if given the opportunity, we will do the work to ensure gaps are filled." - Kensington Meals Program

"The Kensington Community Resilience Fund is an action-oriented, grassroots driven philanthropy that deeply understands the challenges facing the Kensington/Fairhill area. Through their thoughtful and generous grant making program, KCRF supports the neighborhood's hard-working leaders and organizations and recognizes that we need a range of creative strategies to tackle problems, lift up solutions, and band together to fight for the people. Historic Fair Hill thanks the KCRF for its support and encourages all Philadelphians to learn more about the Fund and its grantees" - Historic Fair Hill

"It is said that people do not care about how much you know, until they know how much you care. The Kensington Community Resilience Fund and the ton of volunteers who serve the Kensington Community demonstrates on a daily basis just how much they care for their community." - Firm Hope Baptist Church

""The community needs the organizations they rely on to show up consistently, meeting individuals where they are and recognizing they may not want to divulge personal information in exchange for a human interaction. This grant allowed us to do just that, and more." - The Block Gives Back

"The conversation and connection with other organization leaders have helped me feel seen and validated in the hard work it is to lead an organization in our particular neighborhood. It has helped also to feel a connection to the neighborhood at large as I know we were chosen by a wider network of residents of Kensington as recipients of this particular grant." - The Simple Way

"We learned this year that, when you change the way you look at things, things begin to change. Receiving this grant showed us that what we are trying to create for our community is something that is recognized as having a value by peer organizations and those with a much larger reach." - Firm Hope Baptist Church

"The culminating event at Taller Puertorriqueno was a joy to attend; it was so inspiring to meet others from Kensington passionate about equity and improving quality of life for all neighbors." - Mad Beatz Philly

"We are working hard to engage residents we have been building a relationship with to participate in the next round to expand the people who are at the table, and thus expanding the perspectives of people who review the applications." - Fab Youth Philly

"Another thing we learned throughout the grant period is the importance of data collection. This is an area were we would like to continue to strengthen our organization so we can implement more data into communications to increase awareness and support for our work, as well as improve our programs and opportunities." Sisters of Saint Joseph Welcome Center

"I recognize that we need to do a better job of telling the story, as a team we are often busy doing the work that we don't capture the moments to share with current and potential funders." - Sisters Returning Home