

## **Asian American Giving Circles: Building Bridges between Philanthropy and Our Communities**

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- A giving circle involves three basic elements: 1) a group of individuals, 2) a pool of their funds, and 3) a group decision on how to give away those funds.
- Asian American giving circles are a group of majority Asian American individuals living in one city or associated with one city, pooling together their funds in a consistent manner, usually in the same city (but not limited to) where the giving circle originates. Many Asian American giving circles are also predominantly populated with highly educated, urban, young professionals seeking to give back to immigrant communities that either they or their parents were raised in.
- Asian American giving circles are working in a gap left by larger foundations and wealthy individual donors: giving to the Asian American community organizations, often with very small budgets.
- Data collected from eleven prominent Asian American giving circles across the United States included interviews, surveys, and literature research. These giving circles ranged from 8 members to over 150 members, and gave grants of \$9,000 to \$36,000 in one year.
- The Asian American giving circles studied can be grouped by a lifecycle of giving circles involving four stages: emerging, growing, mature, and adaptation. Each stage involves varying tasks, leadership, and organizational needs.
- Asian American demographic trends shows that the philanthropic potential is significant based on continuing growth in population, education, and wealth, but tapping into this potential is elusive for giving circles.
- The community response to grants received from these giving circles is tremendously valued and meaningful in spite of the relative small amounts of grant funding, because the community groups want to be recognized and supported by Asian American donors.
- While many had intentions to give back to the community and be part of a philanthropic group of Asian Americans, there was simply not enough time on the part of many giving circle participants to do more and learn more about philanthropy, which affected fundraising and new member recruitment efforts.
- Giving circles work for the Asian American community; it is creating connections and creating awareness of resources and needs.
- More research is needed to further the knowledge of Asian American philanthropy: the motive, the means, the identity, and the future.

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Download and read the paper, post feedback, and explore other resources on Asian American philanthropy at <http://www.asianamericangiving.com/asian-american-giving-circles-study.html>