

**Evaluation Summary: 2006 Grantee Perception Report (GRP)**  
**July 19, 2006**

*Note: This summary distills the key elements of the full survey report prepared by [The Center for Effective Philanthropy \(CEP\)](#).*

Since 2003 The Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) has surveyed more than 35,000 grantees of 180 foundations across the nation. Its survey results provide the only national benchmark against which foundations can measure their performance as grantees perceive it. Lumina Foundation participated in the 2003 CEP survey and again in Spring 2005 and 2006. This year, CEP surveyed 158 grantees that received Lumina Foundation grants in 2005. Of the grantees surveyed, 111 completed the survey, constituting a solid 70 percent response rate.

Among the 180 foundations whose grantees CEP surveyed, 13 are among those that Lumina considers its peer group, based on asset size and the nature of our work. CEP provided three ways of comparing our 2006 scores wherever possible:

- Against our own performance in 2003 and 2005.
- Against the performance of the 13 peer foundations in the survey.
- Against the performance of 180 foundations whose grantees CEP has surveyed.

Overall, Lumina Foundation again scored well against all three sets of benchmarks, on some measures trending higher than in 2005 although not always at a level of statistical significance. A few areas require attention or further inquiry. CEP's research reveals three primary drivers of grantee satisfaction and perceptions of foundation impact:

**1. Foundation's perceived understanding of and ability to advance knowledge and policy in grantees' fields.**

**Finding:** As in 2005, the Foundation received very high marks for impact on grantees' fields. Over half of the grantees consider Lumina to be one of the top three foundations making the most positive impact in their fields. However, the Foundation was rated less positively for its impact on and understanding of grantees' organizations (though we are at the median for the benchmarking group). As expected, Lumina again rated lower than the median foundation for impact on the grantees' communities because our program is not locally focused.

**Lesson:** *Foundations that received non-monetary assistance or, especially, assistance securing funding from other sources gave Lumina higher marks for impact on their organizations. We may improve ratings of Lumina's understanding of grantees' goals by asking more questions about the organization at the proposal stage. Future surveys will focus on all active grantees, which will tell us whether our understanding improves over time.*

**2. The quality of interactions with program staff.**

**Finding:** Lumina Foundation grantees reported slightly higher satisfaction levels this year, and they rate their satisfaction higher than grantees of the median foundation. Lumina again outperformed the median foundation in its peer group on interaction measures. We significantly improved in grantee ratings of comfort in approaching the foundation if a problem arises.

**Lesson:** *Lumina's grantees surveyed in 2006 acknowledged fewer Lumina Foundation program officer site visits during the selection and evaluation processes than was typical of other foundations; however, the ratings of grantees who received site visits did not differ materially*

from those who were not visited. Lumina's allocation of time to site visiting appears to be about right, but quality interaction remains key.

### 3. The clarity of communication about goals and strategies.

**Finding:** Lumina Foundation grantees rated the consistency of our communication significantly improved over 2005. They rated the Foundation's clarity of communication of goals and strategies near the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, in line with the median scores of the foundations in our benchmarking group. About 80 percent of Lumina Foundation's grantees use the Web site, making it our most frequented communication vehicle. It is followed closely by individual communication and published funding guidelines. Grantees rate individual communication and group meetings as the most helpful of the listed resources.

**Lesson:** *Because of lower ratings in communication consistency in 2005, Lumina took steps to improve in that area. Grant-making teams may have contributed to more message consistency among program officers. These efforts appeared to pay off, as grantee ratings of communication consistency improved significantly in 2006.*

#### Other noteworthy results

- **Non-Monetary Assistance.** Nearly 60 percent of Lumina Foundation's grantees reported some form of non-monetary assistance from the Foundation, a notable increase over 2005. Grantees rated the helpfulness of many of the various forms of assistance that they received at an average of 6 or better on a 7-point scale, with seminars, forums and convenings receiving the highest rating (6.5).
- **Assistance Securing Funding from Other Sources.** While Lumina grantees reported receiving less help securing other funding than typical for the benchmarking group, grantees gave the impact of our assistance improved marks.
- **Process Issues.** Lumina's grantees rated selection and evaluation processes helpful in terms of strengthening grantees. Lumina also keeps grantees well-informed about the progress of their requests. However, grantees reported spending more administrative time over the course of a grant than typical, an increase over the high levels reported in 2005. At the same time, Lumina continues to award larger grants than is typical, making for a favorable ratio of time spent to money received.
- **Program Workload.** The number of active grants per professional program staff increased from 2005 to 2006; the load is slightly higher than that of the median foundation. The GPR notes this as an area to watch. Program workloads will likely continue to rise, which may have a negative impact on grantee relations.
- **Grantee Suggestions.** The areas that grantees suggested for improvement are areas that they already rate highly: quality of interactions, clarity of communications, selection processes, and non-monetary assistance.

The primary story of the 2006 GPR is that Lumina's performance continues to be highly rated by grantees on both a relative and absolute basis. However, increasing foundation program workloads and heavy administrative time requirements for grantees should be monitored.