

Background

COVID-19. Racial reckoning. Extraordinary funding from government. Strategic, operational, and logistical hurdles.

The past year 20 months have been filled with historic challenges that we never could have envisioned when Greenville County-based philanthropic funders formed the Greenville Partnership for Philanthropy in the summer of 2014.

COVID-19 has been difficult for those of us working and volunteering with GPP in the same

way it has for many organizations. However, it has pushed us to expand our role as a place where funders and others can connect with each other, get current information, and collaborate.

We are proud of the way we partnered with nonprofits, community and neighborhood leaders, local consultants and advisors, local government, and each other to support Greenville County residents. We believe it was a strong demonstration of our mission, maximizing the impact of philanthropy.

Accomplishments - July 2020 – October 2021

Networking. We have always held bimonthly sessions to connect with each other, build relationships, and learn and collaborate. We were able to hold one in-person GPP meeting in January 2020 along with a New Year's celebration in partnership with the NonProfit Alliance before COVID-19 sent us all to Zoom. From July 2020 through September 2021, we had almost 400 individuals from 118 different organizations participate in meetings, all of which were online except for one marvelous in-person breakfast in August 2021.

Education. Learning about best practices in philanthropy and about the community as a whole was one of the reasons GPP was established. Our work in education took on new meaning as we helped our members and our colleagues with NonProfit Alliance learn about government funding programs, collected data on ourselves as nonprofits and funders, considered strategic partnerships, and much more.

Descriptions of our 23 sessions held from July 2020 – October 2021 can be seen [here](#).



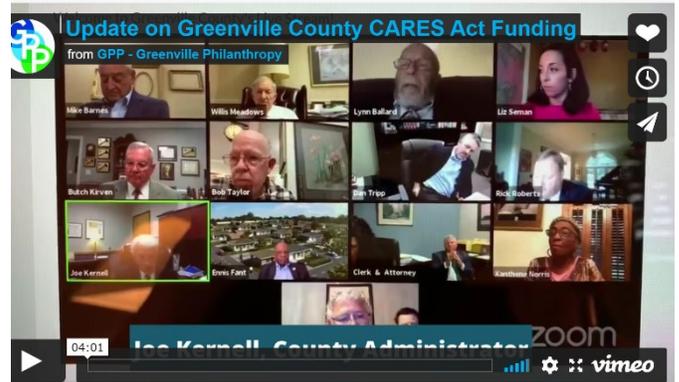
100 funders and nonprofit leaders gathered for this year's Summer Solstice event, held during the brief interlude post-vaccine and pre-Delta variant. We so enjoyed seeing each other in person!

Collaboration. The relationships we established "in real life" before COVID sent us all online paved the way for abundant collaboration, both among funders and with partners at the NonProfit Alliance.

Race, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Last summer, we launched the a [21-day equity challenge](#) with more than 450 GPP and NPA staff and volunteers signed up, and we repeated it again in the fall. We offered coaching for nonprofit and funder boards of directors to support them in a more effective pursuit of equity through their missions. Nine organizations have participated in a half-day retreat with Jessica Sharp of SharpBrain Consulting and have written statements of their intentions for equity in their organizations. They created short term action plans and have already begun to follow through.

Advocacy with Greenville County Council began in the early summer of 2020 after the County \$91 million in CARES Act funding. The conversations, trainings, and coordination resulted in \$31 million going to nonprofit organizations to support community residents and the nonprofit organizations' operations. We've also held a candidate forum with those running for County Council and policy updates on the local, state, and federal level.

Partnerships have continued to grow. We've continued to hold joint meetings with our friends at the NonProfit Alliance and coordinate



Zoom-based County Council meetings were a way to keep apprised of developments with CARES Act funding

on programming and projects. Our partners at Together SC and SC Grantmakers Network have been instrumental in keeping us connected with activities at the state level and with peers in other communities.

In addition to these formal partnerships, staff member Katy Smith represents GPP in community and state activities, including serving on the United Way of Greenville County COVID Relief Fund committee and the Racial Equity and Economic Mobility Commission as the co-chair of the Community Wide Learning Committee. Katy is teaching a class at Furman's OLLI program on *Philanthropy: Giving Money and Your Passion to Create a Better World*, which may be a pilot for other programming in the future - stay tuned!

What's Next?

We have some exciting plans in store for 2022, including much more work on policy, more opportunities for funders to network with each other, and more intentional involvement of new philanthropic partners. We also recognize how much we've accomplished in partnership with our friends at the NonProfit Alliance, and we're in conversations with them to identify ways to further develop a strategic partnership between our organizations to further our missions and those of our members; we look forward to updating you on that work in early 2022.

None of this would be possible without the partnership and investment of our members.



Katy Smith, GPP; Bob Morris, Community Foundation of Greenville; and Catherine Puckett, NonProfit Alliance

We thank all who joined and gave in 2020, and we hope that you will renew that investment or join us for the first time this year.

About

The Greenville Partnership for Philanthropy is a network of foundations, corporations, faith communities, federated funds, and tax supported grantors who provide at least \$50,000 in funding annually to at least two nonprofits operating in Greenville County, SC. We also welcome individuals who give strategically to Greenville County nonprofits and who are interested in deploying social, moral, intellectual, and reputational capital to improve our community.

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