

LONGWOOD FOUNDATION, INC.

100 WEST 10TH STREET, SUITE 1109
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19801-1694
(302) 683-8200

September 23, 2016

Dear Longwood Grantees and Applicants:

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey earlier this year on the effectiveness of Longwood Foundation in the community and, more specifically, the value of our grant making process. Like all of you, we are working with limited resources in our quest to strengthen the fabric of Delaware. So, like many of you, we are striving for continuous improvement to our grant making so that we may make the most of the resources at hand. It may seem obvious, but as the financial markets tighten and the State finds itself more and more financially challenged, we all must find ways to operate differently and better.

We were pleased that 143 of you (86%) replied to the surveys – this is our largest response rate to date and gives us comfort that we can take significant direction from the results. As you know, the Center for Effective Philanthropy administered the survey so complete confidentiality has been maintained and we have only seen the aggregated results. This is the third time in nine years that we have run this survey, so we now have a meaningful history to compare to.

We are encouraged to learn that Longwood's impact on grantee fields of work, their organizations, and the community at large remains in the top decile when compared to CEP's database of hundreds of other Foundations surveyed. We are excited to see that the changes we have made over the past few years are having a positive impact. Specifically, the increase in staffing that allowed us to engage with each applicant in more depth and ensure that everyone gets a site visit helped increase the effectiveness of the grant selection process to the 94th percentile (from the 48th percentile six years ago). Just as significant, your input validates that you find our grant review discussion process (typically 18-20 months after the grant) helpful and not too burdensome. Its rating improved from the 24th percentile six years ago to the 71st percentile this year. It also appears that our new Information Sessions (open to all nonprofits in our geography who are considering a request) are adding some value – a higher percentage of grantees than applicants attended these sessions. Please check our website each December and June for the sessions scheduled in the next two months.

More than six years ago, you requested that Longwood consider broadening our funding to go beyond just capital projects. We are pleased to see that you acknowledge our progress on this front – only half of our grants now are for capital purposes vs. 72% six years ago.

We appreciate your suggestions for improving our processes. A few of you expressed disappointment with the digital only application process. Unfortunately, it is no longer practical to receive paper applications as they make it more difficult to review the materials when convenient and make longer term record keeping more cumbersome.

There were also some concerns that Longwood only funds in two-year intervals. This decision was made in part to minimize our staffing needs, but more significantly to encourage all applicants to focus on the quality of their proposal, the linkage of those plans to their strategic plan, and the timing of the request. While we acknowledge that this is an inconvenience for those who were declined in the past year, we consider the rigor of the process and the improvement in quality of requests far more valuable.

Finally, we acknowledge that a handful of organizations expressed disappointment that we are more active in convening nonprofits and facilitating cooperation. In addition, we understand that many foundations of our scale choose to play active roles in public policy and directly coaching organizations to successful project completion. Philosophically, we prefer to invest our limited resources directly in your organizations rather than ourselves and the government. Nonetheless, we have invested in and remain supportive of many growing systemic organizations such as Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement, the Delaware Grantmakers Association, and the Delaware Community Foundation. It's our intention that these organizations and others can independently support those of you who choose to engage with them more effectively and efficiently than we can.

In response to this survey, we are going to improve the clarity about the "life cycle" of our grant making process and what kinds of organizations we support:

- Please see the attached "Life Cycle" summary which is now posted on our website.
- We accept requests from *any* organization that has a 501c3 certificate in *any* sector.
- After making our annual grant to Longwood Gardens, we have no specific funding priorities – we fund the grant requests that the Trustees believe will have the most compelling credible ambition for the highest impact on Delaware and the specific portion of Pennsylvania that we serve.
- We have further refined the definition of our geographical boundaries – specifically in Pennsylvania where we will now only accept requests from organizations within four miles of Longwood Gardens. As always, we accept requests from any nonprofit in Delaware.
- If your organization lies outside of Delaware or this portion of Pennsylvania, we will consider requests that can establish a nexus of benefit within these boundaries.
- We will begin to publish our grantees and the amount they received on our website within six months of the grant. This is intended to increase everyone's understanding of the organizations we choose to support and at what scale.

We are humbled by your feedback in this survey. We are constantly working to improve our impact on our local communities. Please do not wait for the next survey to share your suggestions with us.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Thère du Pont', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thère du Pont
President