

African American Women's Giving Circle at Washington Area Women's Foundation

"I Definitely Consider Myself a Philanthropist Now"

In 2004, three board members of Washington Area Women's Foundation founded the African American Women's Giving Circle (AAWGC). The first 25 participants were excited to join other black women, pool their resources, and provide grants especially for women.

By the end of 2008, the AAWGC had allocated nearly \$120,000 to organizations in the southeast quadrant of Washington, D.C. Grants have focused on financial literacy training, mentorship, and leadership development for young African American women.

Funding comes from members' donations. The initial pledge level was \$5,000 over a two-year period, although women can now participate for \$2,000 over a two-year period. AAWGC is flexible in how members fulfill their pledges. Some are sponsored by family members, while others raise money from friends.

The giving circle's impact is profound. Not only has it raised The Women's Foundation's visibility among a key constituency, it is creating a new generation of African American female philanthropists. "Giving circles have leveled the playing field of philanthropy, by giving a voice and leverage to people traditionally left out of philanthropy, particularly women of color," explains Nicole Cozier, The Women's Foundation's Philanthropic Education Officer.

According to a survey of AAWGC participants, the women are giving more money to other organizations, too. They are changing the way they think about philanthropy. As one member said, "I definitely consider myself a philanthropist now."

Find out more about the impact of Washington Area Women's Foundation's African American Women's Giving Circle by visiting <http://community.thewomensfoundation.org/netcommunity/AAWGC> and <http://thewomensfoundation.org/2007/ascensions-talking-families-towards-hope/>.

To learn more about The Women's Foundation, visit www.TheWomensFoundation.org.