



Improving Grant Application and Reporting

From website comments to national and local meetings to philanthropic blogs, the response to Project Streamline has spurred conversation, comment, and questions from both grantmakers and grantseekers. Project Streamline would like to share the feedback we've received on the four core principles outlined in the report as we work towards finalizing those principles.

Right-Sizing Requirements

Summarized by Taylor Kate Brown

At the Grants Managers Network Annual Conference, there was a general support for the right-sizing grants principle. Grant managers wanted to match the application and reporting requirements to the grant amount. The question was, however, how to go about right-sizing while avoiding the very thing Project Streamline set out to eliminate: more variability.

At the Association of Fundraising Professionals meeting, many individuals supported the need to match requirements to the potential grant size. On the Project Streamline website, one grantseeker commented that while proportionate applications would be a welcome change, grantseekers should keep in mind that they won't guarantee a positive net grant (i.e., the amount received is more than the cost of applying for it).

Despite the widespread support for right-sizing, some grantmakers who attempted to change their practices have run into barriers. One grantmaker was rebuffed by her auditors who decided to require one process for all grantees. Another organization's attempt to right-size resulted in confused applicants as it then had different requirements for different grantees—contributing to the “variability” in practices cited as a flaw in the Drowning in Paperwork report.

To make right-sizing successful, more thought and work needs to be given to the principle. Proposed solutions so far have included:

- Designing a "right-sized" auditing template that accurately assesses risk when lowering requirements for smaller grants
- Developing grant threshold levels and creating one application and reporting requirement templates for each level

Project Streamline has formed a workgroup to address these challenges, explore these proposed solutions, and develop new solutions that make right-sizing an attractive approach for both grantmakers and grantseekers. We will share the thoughts and products that result from this workgroup as they are available.