



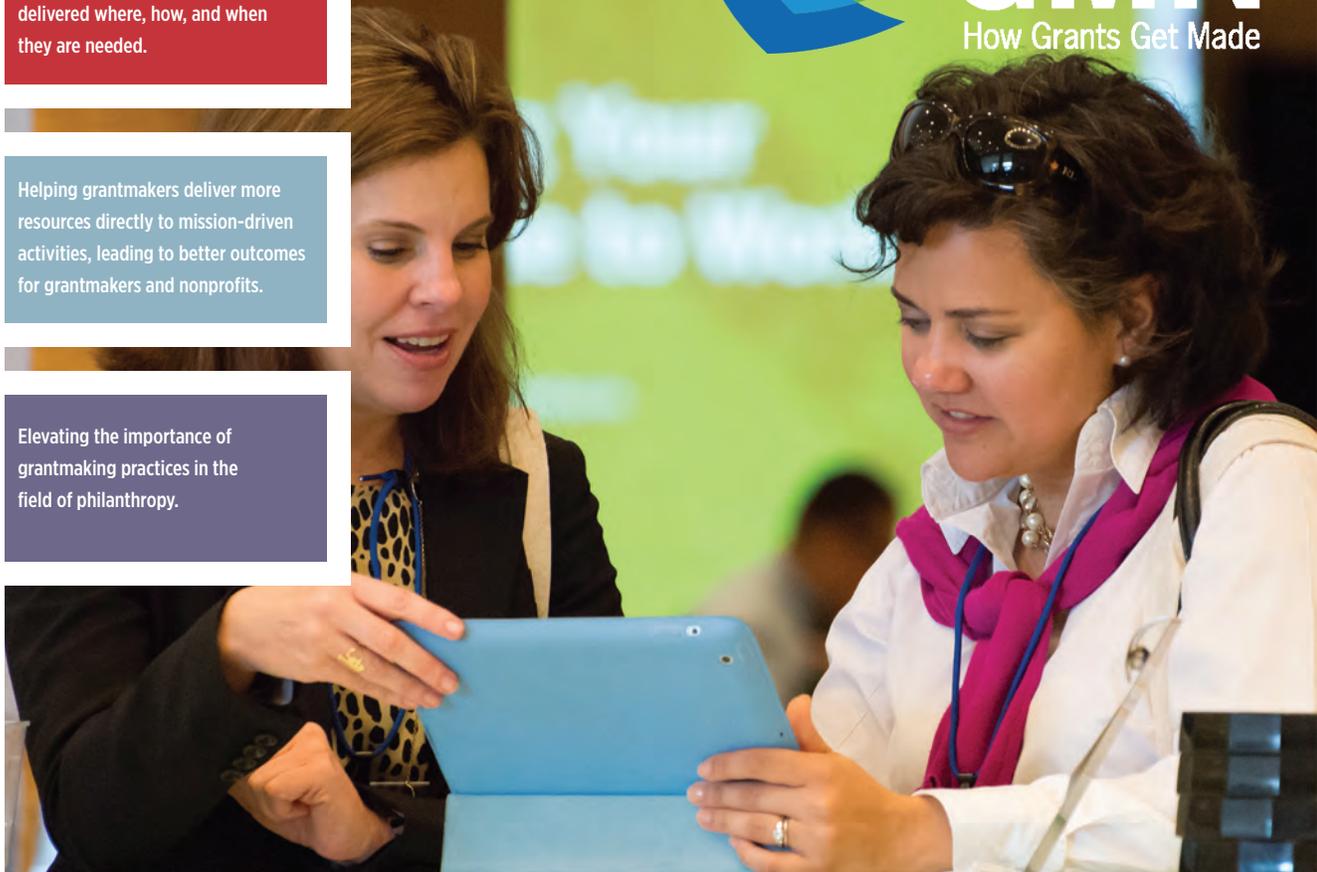
Developing grantmaking experts through learning opportunities delivered where, how, and when they are needed.



Helping grantmakers deliver more resources directly to mission-driven activities, leading to better outcomes for grantmakers and nonprofits.



Elevating the importance of grantmaking practices in the field of philanthropy.



**GMN**  
How Grants Get Made

# grants managers network

# 2014

## Improving How Grants Get Made

Every year, grantmaking organizations across the United States make tens of billions of dollars in grants to important local, national, and international causes. Grants Managers Network, the national leader in advancing the “how” of philanthropy, launched an ambitious three-year plan in 2014 to help grants management professionals and their organizations ensure that grant dollars are delivering great results.

We are investing in bold new efforts to maximize philanthropic impact by:

Accelerating the adoption of proven practices that bring added effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency to grantmaking.

Advancing the knowledge and expertise of grants management professionals so they can lead organizations to better outcomes.

Connecting grants management professionals and the organizations they represent so they can learn from peers and work together to advance the field.

And we are putting the infrastructure and resources in place to ensure GMN's long-term sustainability.

We are pleased to present this report of our 2014 accomplishments towards achieving this plan.

Michelle Greanias  
Executive Director



## Thriving Together

Grants management professionals are playing increasingly important roles in the success of their organizations and philanthropy as a whole. Creating more spaces where the profession can come together to share challenges and solutions is essential to its continued growth and impact.

GMN is intensifying its efforts to grow the network of grants management professionals, strengthen connections among members, and help them develop their leadership abilities and voice in philanthropy.

GMN is building and growing the network of grants management professionals by investing in efforts to attract new members at all levels in their careers. A strong and ever-expanding network of grants management professionals connects GMN members and their organizations to more information and resources, better ideas and, ultimately, better results. Our membership grew by 8 percent in 2014 (379 new members). We retained 94 percent of members, an increase of 4 percent from 2013. GMN's retention rate outperforms the national average by 5 percent.

The ability to connect with and learn from peers is the primary reason why members join GMN. GMN is building innovative ways for members to connect to each other, both virtually and in person. Examples include new features within GMN's learning portal to connect to others with shared interests, new practice groups and learning circles, and creative opportunities for networking at our conferences and events. *Connect with GMN's resources and tools, and encourage your colleagues to join and take advantage of all the network has to offer!*



GMN is the only network for grants management professionals.

## Membership Matters

GMN continues to grow at a rapid pace, and at the end of 2014 the network included 2,874 members. Nearly 80 percent of members are actively engaged with GMN, using the tools and resources we create to help them build their knowledge, skills, and abilities. *Invite a colleague to join GMN and share the knowledge, tools, and resources you've come to rely on.*

## Volunteers in Action

GMN is developing more leaders in the field at both the regional and national levels. The result: more members involved in advancing the practice of grants management and mentoring those who are new to the profession. GMN had 216 active volunteers in 2014, accounting for 8 percent of membership. Volunteers are critically important to the work of GMN and many of our learning programs depend on the work of the dedicated members who give their time and expertise to help share knowledge with their peers and create value for all members. In 2014, we had 95 percent retention of volunteers, and 99 percent of volunteers would recommend volunteering with GMN to other members. *Get involved as a volunteer and grow your experience and your resume! Contact Miriam Williams at [mwilliams@gmnetwork.org](mailto:mwilliams@gmnetwork.org) to learn about your opportunities.*



## Say Hello to GMN's New Website and Member Portal

Investing in GMN's technology is key to achieving our dual mission, and in 2014 we completely overhauled our public website and added a brand new portal for learning and connecting. Our numbers show that nearly 50,000 people per year are visiting our website to use the resources and tools available to members and the public. With that many viewers, we are proud to put forth our new face to the world.

For members only, MY GMN is a re-tooled area where members can interact with one another via our ongoing discussion forums and member directory. Right now this area contains archived discussions from the previous iteration of our discussion forum, plus recorded webinars, publications, conference sessions summaries, and other learning tools. More sophisticated functionality will be implemented in late 2015, enabling members to track and demonstrate progress towards mastery of grants management over time. In addition, the portal will allow members to connect with peer experts and thought leaders as well as other grants management professionals who share their professional development priorities and interests. *Log in to MY GMN ([bit.ly/MYGMN](http://bit.ly/MYGMN)) to make sure your profile is up to date and start connecting with fellow members today. Discussion forums are open and ready for your questions and answers.*



## The Big Deal About Learning with GMN

At GMN, our learning programs come in many shapes and sizes that help you grow the knowledge, skills, and abilities you need to keep current in the grant-making profession. In 2014, those programs reached a record number of learners and helped us achieve more outreach through knowledge sharing than ever before. All told, GMN created 15,209 learning experiences in 2014!

Our largest learning opportunity occurs each spring at the annual conference, and our 2014 conference was our largest to date, with more than 675 participants, speakers, sponsors, and exhibitors on hand in San Diego. By popular request, we introduced a new learning track for seasoned professionals. Attendees continue to be highly satisfied with GMN's conference, with 96 percent of attendees being very satisfied with the conference overall.

In 2014, GMN hired Elizabeth Reed, a training and development professional, and made a significant investment in online technology. With the expansion of our learning program, we have begun creating more personalized content for members, including content that works for members at all points in their careers, in differently sized and organized foundations, and in different areas of specialization.

Another key learning opportunity for members is our monthly webinar program, for those new to the profession to those who are more seasoned and seeking new ideas to enhance their departments and practices. In 2014, our live webinars drew 1,234 viewers. *Check out our upcoming webinars to find one that builds your knowledge: [www.gmnetwork.org/webinars](http://www.gmnetwork.org/webinars).*



## Reaching Across Regional Chapters

Across GMN's 14 chapters, nearly 500 attendees participated in regional meetings in 2014. Content ranged from Communicating with Candor to Expenditure Responsibility to Grantee Feedback: How to Gather It and Effectively Use the Results. Participants reported a 98 percent satisfaction rate with our regional chapter offerings and 88 percent took what they learned back to the office and applied it to their work. *Have you been to a regional chapter meeting this year? Check out their programs for educational and networking opportunities.*

**GMNsight: Advancing Grantmaking** is part of our effective practices work, and in 2014 we took the journal digital ([www.gmnsight.org](http://www.gmnsight.org)). In just nine months, nearly 2,000 unique users generated 4,471 page views of the journal, indicating that readers are finding the content interesting and relevant to their work. GMNsight was also named one of LearnPhilanthropy's top sources of learning about philanthropy. *Share your expertise—join the GMNsight team to help craft future issues of our journal.*





## Improving Grantmaking

In 2014, GMN helped to improve more than 1,300 grantmaking practices in three areas—streamlining, controls, and transparency and information sharing:

- In 2014, we focused attention on streamlining the practices that make the biggest difference to grant-seekers and grantmakers. Online systems that work remains the number one “practice that matters”, leading us to continue to focus on improving and adopting effective systems. We partnered with the Technology Affinity Group to release the 2014 IT Survey Report, a look at the strategic use of technology by grantmakers. Nearly 400 members have accessed the report to help inform their technology decisions to date. We also continued to promote the *Consumers Guide to Grants Management Systems* which has been downloaded 3,696 times since its November 2013 release.
- Strong and sound controls, implemented through effective practices and managed by skilled staff, increase the public’s confidence in private sector philanthropy. We engaged 872 participants in education sessions on compliance issues in 2014, covering key areas like international grantmaking, advocacy, the accounting treatment of grants, and the true legal risks of making grants.
- As grants management professionals increasingly focus on data management and analysis in their work, GMN is helping them to build the skills and participate in the field-wide conversations on generating, sharing, and acting upon data and information in ways that improve grant outcomes. In 2014, we added a new conference track on data intelligence and made it a priority topic in our webinar series. More than 1,650 people participated in this training.

*Ignite effective practices in your organization with Project Streamline guides, tools, and resources.*



## Developing Thought Leaders

GMN is working hard to raise the profile of the profession of grants management and the experts (GMN members!) whose leadership in talking, writing, and presenting on the issues that matter to the field has inspired us to look for thought leaders within the membership. In 2014, GMN launched a pilot program to connect a small cohort of members to the resources and coaching they needed to break through as thought leaders, and the results have been encouraging. They have written blog posts, developed conference session ideas, and increased their social media presence. In 2015, GMN will work to expand the thought leadership program by recruiting a second, larger cohort and working individually and as a group to expand the number of recognized experts among GMN’s membership. If you are interested in participating, contact Nikki Powell at [npowell@gmnetwork.org](mailto:npowell@gmnetwork.org). *Share your expertise and knowledge and help grow the visibility of the profession by joining the thought leadership project.*



## Creating Conversations

GMN is actively reaching out to and beyond our membership to elevate the how of grantmaking throughout the philanthropy sector. Our goal is to create conversations that help raise the visibility of GMN and our members, their expertise, and the message of effective practices.

Our revamped website plays a significant role in increasing our effective communications, and our expanded outreach via regular email newsletters demonstrates our commitment to engaging all audiences in the field of grants management.

GMN’s extensive communication efforts are a significant indicator of the breadth and depth of our reach:

- GMN’s website had 298,333 page views from more than 51,000 users, an increase of more than 15 percent over 2013.
- Our blog had 3,028 visits in 2014.
- The open rate of the monthly newsletter was 38 percent, well above the industry average of 23 percent, and the click through rate outperforms the industry average by about 8 percent.

*Sign up to receive GMN’s communications and newsletters via email at [bit.ly/GMNsignupcc](http://bit.ly/GMNsignupcc)*

## Strong Operations

An effectively managed organization provides the resources for the programs and initiatives to function efficiently and smoothly. In 2014, GMN noted the following achievements:

- We received an unqualified audit opinion
- All revenue targets were met
- Spending was at or below projections

GMN complied in every way with the Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practices in our operations. *Find our audited financial statements on our website at [www.gmnetwork.org/about/annualfinancialreports/](http://www.gmnetwork.org/about/annualfinancialreports/)*

## Mission

To improve grantmaking by advancing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of grants management professionals and leading grantmakers to adopt and incorporate effective practices that benefit the philanthropic community.

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