

GEO Breakthrough Partnership

Working Through Change

Background

After 25 years of working to transform philanthropy to meet the evolving needs of nonprofits and communities, [Grantmakers for Effective Organizations](#) endeavors to be in deep relationship and push the sector through purposeful programming with varying intensities, commitments, modalities and learning agendas. We keep ourselves the fundamental question: ***What will it take for philanthropic institutions to change?*** Whether it be a fundamental shift in community-driven strategy or a revamp of operating values and norms, GEO has created programs to support grantmakers in the journey to question current practice, approach work with a learning mindset, engage in peer-to-peer learning, and ultimately manage change within complex organizations. The GEO Catalyst is another attempt at supporting grantmakers and creating long-term change in the sector.

The Offering

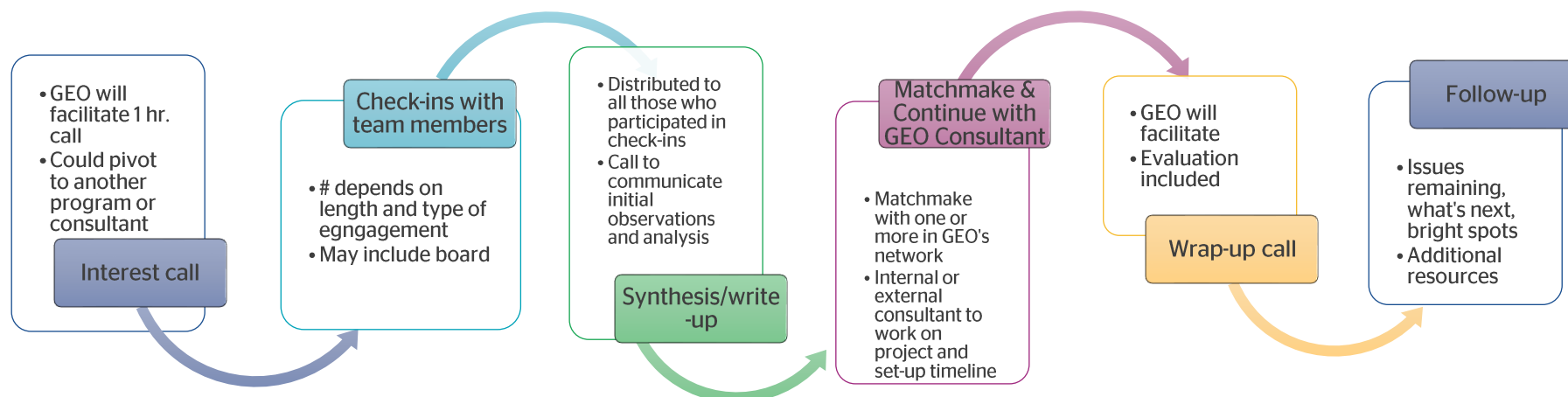
We will be starting small for the pilot program to test assumptions and learn. We would like projects to be contained to 2-3 months of work, including final deliverables.

- GEO facilitates a staff convening/retreat
- GEO facilitates a conversation regarding the role of senior leadership in change management
- GEO works with people managers to do some culture sleuthing regarding underlying values/narratives which are or are not supporting new ways of being.
- GEO leads a tailored workshop focused on capacity building, paying close attention existing program and potential ways to shift power or interrogate underlying values.
- GEO works alongside grantmaker to develop a committee charter which could develop new norms for the organization.

Program Objectives

- GEO and grantmaker build strong, mutually beneficial relationships built on trust and understanding; for example:
 - GEO is able to understand more about the internal and external barriers related to changing philanthropic culture and practice
 - Grantmaker feel equipped with best practices, facilitation techniques, and additional perspective to influence change agenda.
- GEO and grantmaker work on a small-scale project or change agenda which is related to a philanthropic culture or practice challenge.
- Grantmaker makes new relationships in the field by being linked with a grantmaker peer who has gone through or is currently going through a similar change agenda. This peer is there to offer advice, storytelling, and resources.
- Grantmaker is able to provide feedback and help GEO refine program to be able to offer the program to other grantmakers.
- Connect Grantmakers to other resources within the GEO community

Pilot Milestones and Process



Pilot Cost

Example Project	Hours of Partnership	Team Leads	Cost <small>*Depending on timeline and customizations</small>
2-day staff convening at in-person location	17-25 hours	Jaser Alsharhan, Director of Programs Akilah Massey, Vice President of Programs	10,000 - 15,000
Tailored capacity building workshop	17-25 hours	Jaser Alsharhan, Director of Programs Mareeha Niaz, Director of Programs	10,000 - 15,000
Discussions regarding senior leadership roles	10-12 hours	Marcus Walton, President and CEO	7,500 - 11,500
GEO provides support for developing internal norms.	15-20 hours	Jaser Alsharhan, Director of Programs	9,000 - 12,000

Additional Notes on Cost

- Depending on final deliverable, cost may differ than above. All additional costs will be mutually agreed upon.
- Costs do not include travel time/cost which would be billed separately (if in-person is required)
- We will provide a project cost estimate after the interest call (all subject to adjustments based on timeline and customizations)

Benefits of the Program

- Tailored resources given your specific needs and barriers
- Assigned specific GEO staff people to work with
- Flexible timeline that can be adjusted at any moment to fit additional needs
- Matchmaking with a GEO peer example that could help provide additional insight

Things to Know

- **Organization must be a GEO member to participate in the program.** If you are not, we will connect you with membership/development to sign-up as a member after engaging in an interest call.
- **GEO will not take on every project.** Examples of projects that we would not take-on include redesigning your database, advising on investments, matchmaking with nonprofits, communications strategy and design, and fundraising plans.
- **GEO recognizes the positional authority to catalyze change.** While GEO is open to receiving requests from those that sit outside of the senior leader role, we highly encourage folks to consider if they have the authorization to move the specific grantmaking or culture change forward. Without leadership buy-in regarding the issue, it will be harder for GEO to support movement.
- **GEO's other programs are a great place to start.** We offer a range of cohorts, conferences, peer communities, publications, and virtual programming to illustrate our vision for grantmaking. If a longer-term engagement to build community around a specific change challenge is more your goal, explore a cohort. Or if you're just getting started and want something a bit more passive in terms of learning new concepts, consider a remote learning series.
- **GEO's mission is to transform philanthropic culture and practice.** The well-defined issue you are asking GEO staff input, other grantmaker examples, and additional resources should fit within the territory of your culture internally or grantmaking practice. We understand that this may entail working with board members or members of other

departments. If the project you are working is outside of that scope, GEO will refer you to another consultancy.

- **GEO leads with our values.** We have some new values as a part of our new strategic direction. These include Love, Racial Equity in Practice, Community-Centered Collaboration, and Trust & Accountability. We reclaim philanthropy as expressing love for all of humanity by building a culture that centers voices an experience that have traditionally been exploited, invisibilized and othered. We will try our best to thread these values through process, tools, analysis and deliverables.
- **GEO has a point of view.** For 25 years, GEO has focused on a couple of key grantmaking practices we know make the difference for nonprofits: flexible, reliable funding; capacity building; learning and evaluation; community-driven philanthropy; and collaboration. We will coach towards these specific practices and think through pathways for addressing barriers.
- **GEO is dedicated to intersectional racial equity.** We see the construction of race as central to all social issues and actively strive for a just and equitable future. This work is intersection with other dimensions of identity, data-informed, and measurable. We will ask questions around historical context of your foundation, what community you are focused on, what repair could look like through your grantmaking, and what internal, equitable shifts need to be made for you to accomplish your mission.
- **You will do MOST of the work.** Think of GEO as an encouraging coach through your journey of organizational development and transformation. We will be accountable timelines, communications, and deliverables; we expect the same of you.
- **We might uncover something else.** Through a process of check-ins with stakeholders, GEO might uncover hidden (or visible) problems, assumptions, and additional ideas that may or may not need to be addressed directly before or adjacent to the project. Being comfortable with hearing difficult truths related to your culture is necessary.
- **GEO sees matchmaking as transformational.** We believe in peer-to-peer support for change to stick and for you to feel supported. GEO will provide you with a grantmaker to provide a case example on something similar to what you're experiencing.
- **Hypothesize, test, iterate and repeat.** Some of the issues we are trying to tackle appear as unapproachable mammoths. Throughout your experience with GEO, we would like for you to test out small yet meaningful shifts in your work. We will encourage you to approach the work in an experimental playground manner and will expect you to report back what's not working and ideas to continue to refine it.
- **GEO appreciates follow-up and storytelling.** We will come back to check-in on progress and ask what's sticking, what you still need help with and what other ways GEO could be a

resource. We will also want to capture lessons learned along the way so that we can share with our broader community.

- **GEO will offer more than just this program.** If there are other ways to involve your staff in our programming – like offering a peer community or role-based convening – we’d love to reserve a spot to make sure your change management receives the right amount stretch and support from other peer learning spaces.

Contact Us

Need more information or interested in scheduling an interest call to be a part of this pilot? Contact Jaser Alsharhan, Director of Programs, at jaser@geofunders.org.