

Cummins Power Generation Community Involvement Program

Summary of evaluation results

“We have a responsibility to use part of our resources to respond to the needs of the society ... We can be a healthy community only in so far as we exist and serve within an economically and socially healthy society.”

Since making this statement in its 1972 annual report, Cummins Inc. has been committed to contributing to the health and well-being of the communities where they are located.

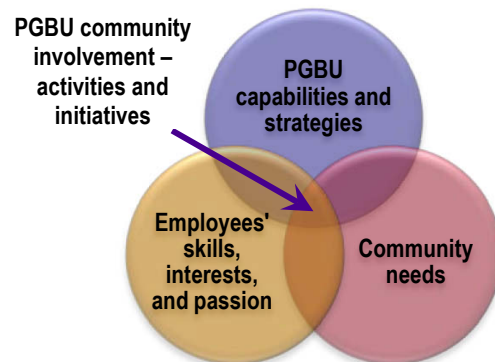
In 2005, Cummins Power Generation (CPG), a business unit of Cummins Inc., led the way in implementing a new model of community engagement. Building on the existing model of a Community Involvement Team, CPG added two key roles – a Global Community Service Leader and a Senior Staff Corporate Responsibility Sponsor to provide direction and maintain positive community relationships. In addition, to maximize impact of limited financial distributions, CPG began to emphasize engaging staff as volunteers. While this model applies to all of CPG’s sites world-wide, the focus of the evaluation is the partnerships surrounding CPG’s headquarters in Fridley, Minnesota.

Results are impressive: Since 2005, CPG has partnered with 21 organizations, conducting about 95 different activities annually in the communities surrounding its headquarters in Fridley, Minnesota. In 2009, they expect to spend \$231,000 providing grants and resources to agencies in the neighboring communities, and to provide 7,200 employee volunteer hours.

About the program

The Community Involvement Program is based on building relationships with community organizations. To enhance the impact of their engagement, CPG chooses partner agencies whose services intersect with the company’s capabilities and strategies, employees’ skills, interests, and passion, and community needs.

CUMMINS MODEL OF CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY



CPG also considers the following criteria when forming community partnerships:

- **Priority needs areas** – Focusing community involvement on affordable housing and homelessness, basic needs, education, and disabilities (with an emphasis on developing employment opportunities for people with disabilities).
- **Leveraging** – Partnering with organizations that can leverage the funds and volunteers’ skills and talents to better support its activities.
- **Employee skills and interests** – Engaging in activities that allow employees to use or build personal and professional interests and skills, including business management skills.
- **Champions** – Manager-level employees committed to an organization who help facilitate CPG’s involvement.

continued

Community engagement activities are classified by levels according to the commitment needed by CPG and community agencies:

Level 1 – Activities are physically focused, involve a large number of CPG volunteers, require less than \$1,000 in funding, and occur on an as needed basis. These activities, which focus on supplying basic needs, beautification, employee education and engagement, or organizational and program support, are an opportunity for CPG and a partner agency to explore future involvement at a higher level.

Level 2 – Activities are more frequent, require between \$1,000 and \$15,000 in funding, and represent an ongoing relationship between CPG and the partnering agency. Activities may be physically focused, but also require planning and project management skills. CPG leadership involvement is encouraged. Level 2 partners may have multiple activities occurring simultaneously.

Level 3 – Activities are characterized by highly engaged volunteers and champions, committed to maintaining a long-term relationship with the community partner agency. Activities occur throughout the year and have a budget of over \$15,000. They emphasize using management skills and business tools to develop projects and provide ongoing support to complete projects. They are also subject to a process of continuous improvement to assess how the activity can better meet the needs of the partners.

Community Involvement Team strategies to encourage employee volunteers

- Offer an array of opportunities for employees.
- Work with company affinity groups to initiate, coordinate, and participate in volunteer projects that benefit populations similar to the affinity group.
- Take advantage of CPG's policy of offering employees four hours of paid time to participate in community activities through its Every Employee Every Community initiative.

The evaluation

Since January 2009, CPG has worked with Wilder Research to better understand the program's impact. The initial evaluation used results from surveys, interviews, and focus groups of staff, and community partners to examine CPG's commitment, partnerships with community agencies, unique approach to funding, and the advantages and disadvantages of their approach to community engagement. The evaluation also looked at suggestions for more effective partnerships with community partners; and identified factors important for replicating CPG's model of engagement.

Findings

The following themes emerged from the evaluation:

Depth of commitment – Respondents repeatedly commented on the depth of commitment CPG management and employees demonstrate. Community partners mentioned the high level of commitment of funding and volunteers, the longevity of projects, the strategic activities, and the willingness to expand involvement. Community Involvement Team members cite that the metrics related to community involvement, developed for staff and departments, serve as a constant indicator of commitment. Partners identified the high commitment level as a factor that makes Cummins Power Generation different from other funders.

Partnerships – Staff maintain that choosing organizations that address specific community issues and building relationships is a cornerstone of their partnerships. Community partners stated that their partnerships with CPG are based on trust, respect, and a common understanding of goals. They were especially pleased with the liaisons who support the partnership through advocacy and communication. In fact, additional communication with liaisons, and other CPG staff, was one of the suggestions for improving partnerships.

Flexibility – Community partners gave high ratings to CPG's flexibility when planning projects and their ability to adapt to the needs of the organization. Community Involvement Team members concur that CPG remains

GPC volunteers help organizations build capacity

Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center (MIWRC)

The Native American Parenting Traditions Revisited Program helps families impacted by Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder through a culturally specific curriculum. As the MIWRC has been developing this program the past few years, CPG volunteers have worked with them to build awareness of the issue and support for this project by helping the organization develop a marketing plan that could expand the project to a national market. Six Sigma methodologies were taught to MIWRC staff and used to define and analyze data in the program implementation.

Bundles of Love

To engage employees in the Shop Operations area as volunteers, especially those who work the evening and night shifts, CPG explored on-site volunteer opportunities. The Community Involvement Team connected with Bundles of Love, an organization which recruits volunteers to make diaper bags, baby clothing and other baby essentials. Using a Six Sigma process, CPG created a mini-manufacturing plant – stocking four areas of the CPG shop with sewing machines and supplies for CPG volunteers. In addition, CPG employees have helped Bundles of Love enhance their capacity by creating durable patterns that can be used repeatedly and streamlining production processes.

flexible by using a continuous improvement process to help adapt involvement to best serve partners and build on successful activities. Partners also mentioned making decisions at the local level, allowing for more flexibility in the activities conducted, makes CPG unique.

Building capacity – Community Involvement Team members are proud of their ability to help organizations increase their internal capacity to make projects self-sustainable by building skills, increasing efficiencies, and connecting them with other funders and agencies. Most of the community partners said CPG volunteers have helped them increase organizational capacity by increasing fundraising, building relationships with funding partners, managing volunteers better, improving technology, or training staff. Some expressed that building skills and strategic partnerships were an unexpected benefit of working with CPG.

Impact – All of the community partners agreed partnering with CPG benefits the organization and its clients. In addition to the capacity building

benefits mentioned above, they said that CPG has helped them more effectively offer a higher quality of service to their clients. Partners also mentioned specific benefits for clients such as increased skills, level of functioning, or feelings of self-worth.

Volunteers – A hallmark of CPG's community involvement program is the volunteers. While the Every Employee Every Community initiative has increased involvement, the varied volunteer activities have offered employees opportunities to develop and use business planning and management skills. Community partners complimented the commitment and skill sets displayed by the staff and the impact their work has on agencies and clients. Both employees and partners discussed the benefits of volunteers learning more about the agencies, clients, and community issues. Suggestions community partners offered for improving volunteer relations included better training about the culture of nonprofits and handling large groups of volunteers as well as more communication and access to liaisons.

Conclusions and next steps

The initial evaluation project for CPG indicates that there is internal and external support and praise for the company's community involvement initiatives.

Informants also identified areas where the program could be improved. Their suggestions and the research findings were used to develop the following recommendations:

- Discuss the merits of pairing multiple liaisons on activities to help facilitate communication with community partners.
- Offer CPG's staff general information about nonprofit organizations' cultures and operations to help increase understanding of what liaisons and volunteers may encounter when partnering with community agencies.
- Continue to build internal communications about volunteer activities, especially success stories, to encourage volunteering at all levels, especially opportunities to lead activities.
- Consider providing trainings for liaisons who organize large groups of volunteers to help events run smoother.
- Discuss what factors may increase management-level support and participation for community involvement initiatives.
- Enhance the system for collecting and tracking data, such as volunteer hours, percent of employees involved, or cost per activity, to include data that would be most useful for describing community involvement activities.
- Continue planning and implementing the next phase of evaluation.

- Use the list of essential factors for replication (highlighted on insert) to enhance the current model of community engagement for easy replication. Discuss what other evidence would help prove that the model works, and consider strategies for disseminating information about replication.

The immediate future plans for the evaluation of Cummins Power Generation's community involvement program will focus on identifying and measuring outcomes for specific Level 2 and 3 activities and identifying strategies to increase employee volunteerism.

During the initial evaluation, CPG employees were surprised to find the extent to which they were able to help organizations build capacity. For example, volunteers said their skills were used to help improve systems and efficiencies.

Future evaluation activities will explore how the following Level 2 and 3 community partners and activities have increased their internal capacity as a result of CPG's volunteers: Bundles of Love; Courage Center (Assistive Technology activities); Wilder Foundation (Mobile Resource Center); Fridley High School (PLUS after school tutoring program); CommonBond (24 hour projects); and Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center (Child Care Consultant and Native American Parenting Traditions Revisited).

CPG will continue its efforts to identify volunteer engagement strategies, and to explore suggestions to use volunteerism as a metric for success, encourage employees of all levels to participate in a variety of ways, emphasize the positive aspects of volunteering, and make opportunities enjoyable, and to invite community partners to talk about how CPG employees have helped their organization and their clients.

As a result of the evaluation process, a survey has been developed that will be administered during volunteer events to help shape future engagement opportunities.

For more information

This summary presents highlights of the *Cummins Power Generation Community Involvement Program* report (www.wilder.org/report.html?id=2256). Additional research about auxiliary activities, such as the Cummins College for Nonprofits, can be found in the full report. Information about replication is on the insert.

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Essential factors for replication

The staff of Cummins Power Generation believe they have built a community involvement program that can serve as a useful model for other business units of Cummins Inc. and other corporations interested in starting or expanding a community engagement program.

The company has developed and implemented a program that is based on three core principles:

- **Targeted involvement** – Choosing to partner with agencies that address the community needs targeted by the company.
- **Flexibility** – Considering flexible methods for selecting and implementing activities that provide a range of experiences to meet the needs and expectations of different employees. Encourage staff to approach activities in a way that will be most beneficial to community partners and employees.
- **Levels of Engagement** – Providing different levels of volunteer, funding, and resource commitment as well as varying levels of resources and commitment from the community agencies.

Using these principles as an overarching guide, CPG identified the following factors as critical for replication. These factors mirror many of the concepts that surveys identified as advantages and unique aspects of CPG's model of community involvement.

Leadership support

- **Management involvement** – Managers throughout the hierarchy of the organization need to demonstrate their support of community involvement by allocating budgets and resources, providing vision and direction, and participating in events.

- **Champions** – Manager-level employees who remove roadblocks and allocate needed resources to facilitate relationships and increase employee volunteer participation.
- **Every Employee Every Community Initiative** – Corporate initiative that encourages employee involvement by financially supporting time they spend on these activities.
- **Metrics** – Support community involvement by creating measurable goals that employees and departments are responsible for meeting.

Employee involvement

- **Staffing** – Provide opportunities for employees at all levels of the company to be involved. Support staff whether they are building relationships, engaging volunteers and leading activities, or if they are working behind the scenes.
- **Staff oversight** – Designate staff to oversee community involvement activities such as budgeting, training and resources, tracking participation, and recognizing accomplishments.
- **Ease of participation** – Offer a variety of volunteer opportunities in terms of times, locations, ability level, and needed skill set. For instance, on-site opportunities increase participation in facilities that operate continuously.
- **Skill development** – Provide opportunities for employees to develop, improve, and use leadership and business planning skills as well as network and work cross-functionally.

Leveraging

- **Leveraging volunteers** – Work with community partners that can use the skills and talents of volunteers to expand their internal capacity by accessing and using additional resources.