

Guiding Principles

Part of our Theory of Change is that when nonprofits are well led, well resourced, and well connected they achieve mission success. As we work toward our mission of fueling the impact and effectiveness of nonprofits with guidance, expertise, and capital, we use these principles as a strategy screen, as accountability markers, and as a handshake, whether you're new through our door or an old Propel friend.

Champion nonprofits

We love nonprofits – their people and their missions. We are optimistic about their ability and believe in their power to change the world because we see their work in action every day. They are experts at connecting communities for change, bold leaders who take risks, and folks who stand up and take action in the face of injustice. Nonprofits are champions of good; we are champions of nonprofits.

Be a mutual and trusted partner

The work of standing up for your mission takes courage, honesty, and a friend who believes in you. We enter our partnerships with respect and kindness, aiming to be the champion in your corner, a trusted confidant, and the one helping identify the elephant in the room when an issue needs to be named. “Be helpful” is one of our mottos, and for us, this means listening first, then supporting nonprofit leaders' expertise with our own. We value honesty with empathy, and usually around a table with coffee.

Advance justice

We power nonprofits because they are helping create more just, equitable communities. Nonprofit leaders work beyond themselves to reshape systems that have historically withheld power, address the immediate gaps left by other institutions, and provide access to resources for all. We stand with them in a shared commitment to social, racial, and economic justice; as a community development financial institution, we collaborate to give nonprofits and their constituents access to capital, resources, and ownership of their decisions.

Stay curious

In an ever-changing world, we believe adaptability and creative problem solving come from always having one more question. We love to learn from each other and from our nonprofit partners, and then

generously share the insights and knowledge we've gained. Nonprofit leaders are experts at what they do, so we're always building upon our own expertise in nonprofit finance, strategy, and governance to best support them through hard decisions, life cycle pivots, and ecosystem shifts.

Have fun

We embrace joy and emit optimism. This means honoring mission moments, celebrating wins and brave decisions, equipping courageous leaders and standing by them, and bringing enthusiasm and a sense of humor to our relationships and work. We take the long view and surround ourselves with people and partnerships who make us smile and help us imagine the world we're working toward.
