

**Philanthropic Advising
Competency Model**
2025

Daylight



Daylight equips wealth and philanthropic advisors with the confidence, competence, and cultural dexterity to grow their practices, strengthen client relationships, and lead with impact. Our Certified Impact Philanthropy Advisor (IPA) program and certificate offerings establish a new benchmark for excellence in philanthropic planning education.

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FOREWORD

For too long, philanthropic advising has lacked a clear definition of the advisor's role and a shared standard for what high-quality practice requires.

We are proud to share Daylight's Philanthropic Advising Competency Model to fill that gap. The model brings clarity, consistency, and credibility to a rapidly evolving field and builds on insights from our comprehensive report on philanthropic advisors, [U.S. Philanthropic Advisors 2024: Professional Development, Practice, and Knowledge Gaps](#).

The model comprises thirteen competencies, each with a corresponding list of objectives. It supports advisors in growing their practice with confidence, signaling to clients, employers, and peers that philanthropic advising is not just a personal calling but a field of work grounded in established standards and expertise.

Today, Daylight is among the few organizations that provide professional support for philanthropic advising. This model is one step toward modernizing the field. Our market-building work continues with new professional development programs, business model research, and the first-ever conference focused on philanthropic advising. We invite practitioners, employers, funders, and field builders to join us in shaping the new standard in philanthropic advising.

With Gratitude,

Dien Yuen | 袁詩鈿
CEO
Daylight

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Philanthropic advisors play an increasingly central role in shaping how wealth is directed toward social good. Yet despite the billions of dollars they help guide each year, there is no widely accepted standard for high-quality and effective modern philanthropic advising. The role remains undefined, and expectations vary widely across institutions, clients, and sectors.

Daylight created the *Philanthropic Advising Competency Model* to help build a modern profession grounded in excellence, professionalism, and impact. This groundbreaking framework equips employers, advisors, and practitioners with a shared language for recruitment, hiring, performance evaluation, and professional growth. Organized around thirteen core competencies, the model defines the knowledge, skills, and behaviors required to advise clients and donors effectively. It brings definition to a previously ambiguous role, offering a clear path toward the professionalization of philanthropic advising.

1. INTRODUCTION

Why this model?

The field of philanthropic advising, planning, and consulting is rapidly evolving. Demand for services is rising, driven by unprecedented wealth creation and transfer, the growing complexity of social and environmental challenges, and generational shifts in how individuals and families define purpose, generosity, and social impact.

However, philanthropic advising is not a regulated profession in the U.S., and the field lacks a shared framework for the knowledge, skills, and experience required to deliver high-quality advising services and products. As a result, it can be challenging for:

- Prospective clients to define, compare, and evaluate their options.
- Wealth planners and other professional advisors to make confident, qualified referrals.
- Employers to identify the right mix of competencies when hiring, developing, or promoting staff.
- Aspiring and experienced philanthropic advisors to chart clear and meaningful learning paths.

We offer this **Philanthropic Advisor Competency Model** as a draft to address those challenges. It begins to shape a new narrative around the competencies required for effective, modern philanthropic advising, building on insights from our report, [U.S. Philanthropic Advisors 2024: Professional Development, Practice, and Knowledge Gaps](#).

Who is this model for?

The preliminary draft of the Philanthropic Advising Competency Model is designed to support:

- Employers seeking to hire, develop, or assess staff with philanthropic advising expertise.
- Philanthropic advisors looking to strengthen their skills and stay competitive in a changing field.
- Financial advisors, estate planners, and other professionals seeking to better understand the competencies to look for when partnering with a philanthropic advisor.
- Professional development and membership organizations in designing and delivering relevant and practical continuing education and training programs.

The model was built by practitioners for practitioners and their allies. As such, it may not be written in language that resonates with potential clients, marketing teams, or those unfamiliar with the field.

Daylight engaged LaCire, a consulting firm, to help review competency models from other professions, research best practices in professional advising, conduct expert interviews, and analyze nearly 100 job descriptions related to philanthropic advising and planning. A working group of industry practitioners informed the research and drafting process, and additional reviewers were invited to provide feedback on the draft summary.

This draft illuminates a key blind spot in the broad and fragmented field of philanthropic advising, planning, and consulting. While it won't address every need related to competency development and, it serves as a starting point for a shared understanding and language.

2. ESTABLISHING A SHARED STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

The opportunity for *modern* philanthropic planning

Several trends are reshaping philanthropic advising, moving it far beyond its traditional roots in charitable tax planning and grantmaking. They include:

- Inheritors of the great transfer of wealth—primarily women and younger generations¹—are expanding how they give and create impact. They are more likely to integrate non-charitable tools such as values-aligned investing and purchasing, cause advocacy, and volunteering with peers into their approaches to social impact.
- Rising generations of wealth creators come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. They bring a wider range of traditions and preferences for generosity, mutual aid, and social impact, informed by their faith, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, and other identities.
- The social context is growing more complex. Trust in nonprofits is declining, philanthropists and foundations face heightened public scrutiny, and shifting policy landscapes pose new threats to nonprofits and giving. At the same time, social and environmental problems are becoming increasingly interconnected. In response, many donors and changemakers are pursuing alternative vehicles for impact, including LLCs, public benefit corporations, collaborative funds, and 501(c)(4) organizations.
- Charitable tax, gift, and estate planning services have become increasingly accessible across the advisory landscape. While consistent access to these services remains an issue, they are no longer a differentiator, especially for HNW and UHNW clients.

Advisor as general practitioner

Modern philanthropic advising adapts to these trends, supporting donors and clients in all the ways they hope to lead lives filled with purpose and impact. It also invites more advisors to think and act like general practitioners. The advisor is conversant in a broad range of topics and solutions, offers some solutions, appropriately diagnoses when to refer a client to a specialist, and can help maintain an ongoing big-picture view of a client's goals and progress. Like a general practitioner, the advisor knows to look past the initial issues or ideas the client discusses to find the underlying motivations, challenges, and opportunities.

¹ Cerulli Associates (2025). U.S. High-Net-Worth and Ultra-High-Net-Worth Markets 2024
The Great Wealth Transfer: Capturing Money in Motion.

Connections to other frameworks

We intend for this model to complement and integrate with other competency models and professional services frameworks.

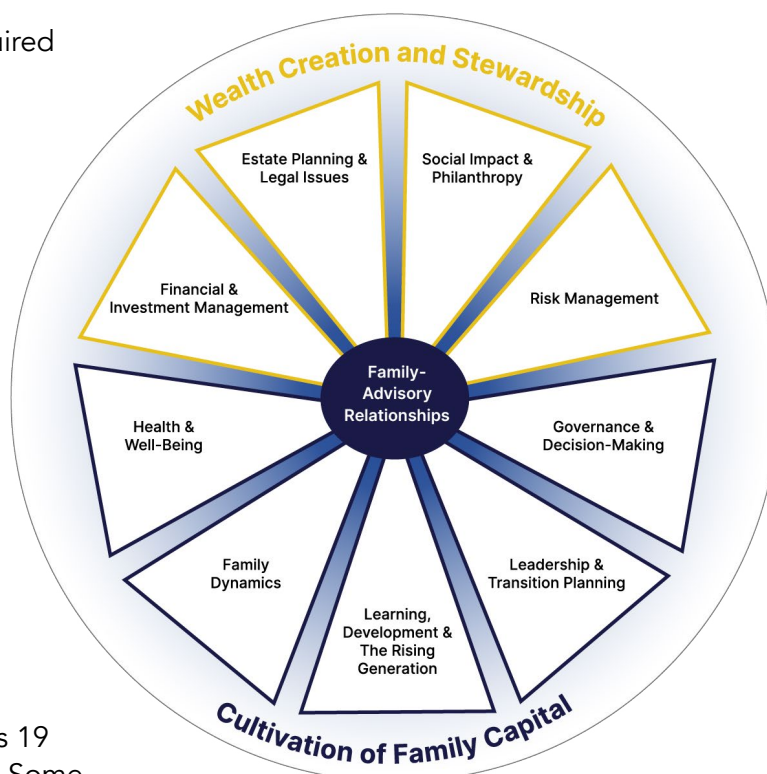
The UHNW Institute's [10 Domains of Family Wealth](#) (2021) outlines the interdisciplinary range of services required to help financially successful families prosper. While not all philanthropic advisors serve UHNW clients, we believe that all advisors should understand how the 10 domains might influence the goals, beliefs, and constraints in clients' philanthropy. Our Philanthropic Advising Competency Model can flesh out the Institute's Social Impact & Philanthropy domain. It also describes how philanthropic advisors perceive their intersections with several other domains.

The Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy's [Program Officer Competency Model](#)® (2022) describes 19 competencies across four dimensions. Some philanthropic advisors perform program officer functions. Our Philanthropic Advising Competency Model shares a similar perspective on relationships, field-building, strategy, and learning. The Program Officer Competency Model provides more details for planning and implementing grantmaking strategies and programs. The Johnson Center is updating its model.

Most philanthropic advisors do not perform the grants management functions described in PEAK Grantmaking's [Grants Professionals Competency Model](#) (2024). However, they often must manage others who do that work, and it may have been part of their professional journey.

The CFP Board's [Financial Planning Competency Framework](#) (2021) and the Financial Planning Association's [The FPA® Competency Model](#)™ (2025) both address a mix of behavioral and technical competencies in our model. However, neither directly addresses charitable or philanthropic planning.

Ten Domains of Family Wealth



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Key Terms

Clients encompass all forms of customers and donors, including individuals, families, businesses, foundations, and nonprofits.

Competencies are general skill areas that can be defined by a set of objectives, which are a collection of specific skills, traits, knowledge, processes, and actions that comprise nearly every facet of that skill area.

A **competency model** is a comprehensive framework for a given position, career path, or field, often established by an authoring organization or entity. These models have a variety of applications, including creating job descriptions, planning professional development pathways, or charting the trajectory of an entire sector.

Philanthropy is “voluntary action for the public good.”² It can be informal or formal and include giving, granting, volunteering, impact investing, building social enterprises, advocacy, and other actions that benefit others or contribute to social impact. It can involve multiple resources (e.g., the “6 T’s” of time, talent, treasure, ties, testimony, and truth). Love, generosity, legacy, social connections, data trends, theories of change, and many other motivations drive philanthropic actions.

Philanthropic advising is a service that helps clients navigate the who, what, why, when, where, and how of philanthropy and social impact. Philanthropic advising includes, but is much more than, charitable tax planning, gift planning, and grantmaking. For most people, philanthropic advising is not a first job.

- There are more than 800 full-time philanthropic advisors and consultants in the U.S. They work as solopreneurs, in firms, and across foundations and nonprofits.
- Thousands more professionals—wealth advisors, gift planners, estate planners, nonprofit consultants, and more—incorporate aspects of philanthropic advising and planning into their work.

Philanthropic plans enable clients to use their resources to support values and causes they care about with greater intention, meaning, and impact. These plans vary in scope and complexity based on each client’s goals, resources, and stage in their philanthropic journey. Ideally, they accelerate the flow of resources toward philanthropy and social impact, making giving more strategic and effective. See Section 4 for more information.

Wealth levels: Many industries classify individuals and households by their levels of net worth, typically defined as liquid assets minus debts, and often excluding illiquid assets such as real estate or retirement accounts. Common categories include mass affluent households (\$250,000-\$1 million), high net worth (HNW, \$1-\$5 million), very high net worth (\$5-\$30 million), and ultra-high net worth (UHNW, over \$30 million). While we use these terms, Daylight’s work is based on the idea that wealth and worth are not the same thing.

2 Payton, Robert L. (1988). *Philanthropy: Voluntary Action for the Public Good*. Bloomsbury Academic.

3. THE COMPETENCY MODEL

How to read the model

Review the information below to understand the format of the Philanthropic Advisory Competency Model's summary in this section and the full model in Section 6.

Each **competency** is categorized as core or specialized, and behavioral or technical:

- **Core:** essential for most advisors.
- **Specialized:** essential for some advisors, depending on their clients and business models.
- **Behavioral:** competencies related to interpersonal and emotional intelligence, often learned through prolonged experience.
- **Technical:** competencies related to applied knowledge and hard skills, often learned through study and practice.

The full model lists a set of **objectives** for each competency.

Caveats

As you review the competency model, follow these guidelines:

1. **Adapt and remix:** The competencies and objectives are numbered and grouped for ease of reference, not in order of importance. The model also distills a diverse field of job descriptions, services, business models, and client segments. Therefore, an employer will need to tailor it to their specific goals, including the levels of proficiency required in each team member.
2. **Add your essentials:** The model doesn't address essential communications, office technology, customer service, group problem-solving, ethical, and managerial competencies, which each employer defines differently.
3. **Define your style:** The model does not address the varying styles of advising and client relationships, which range from servicing client requests to offering expert solutions, and from selling new ideas to coaching clients through mindset and behavioral change. Advisors who hope to use a discernment or coaching style will need higher proficiency in the Cultural Dexterity, Wealth Dexterity, Behavioral Intelligence, and Family Systems and Governance competencies.
4. **Define and then stretch your value proposition:** No person and few, if any, firms will be proficient in all competencies. But increasingly, they'll want to be conversant in some aspects of all competencies, especially if they serve wealthier and more complex clients. The model is designed to spark curiosity about how you might develop new skill sets and services to meet evolving client demographics and philanthropic trends.

Philanthropic Advisor Competency Model Graphic



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Philanthropic Advisor Competency Model Summary

Competency	Description	Categories
1. Relationship & Network Development	Cultivate, strengthen, and expand relationships with clients and their advisors. Grow a dynamic network of relationships with funders, community leaders, nonprofits, and others to improve a client's ability to achieve their philanthropic goals.	Core Behavioral
2. Cultural Dexterity	Recognize and adapt to diverse cultural identities, including varying personal relationships with money, power, wealth, mutual care, and giving, while navigating the cultural norms that shape them.	Core Behavioral
3. Behavioral Intelligence	Adapt to interpersonal dynamics, emotional drivers, and behavioral patterns to ethically influence decision-making and cultivate authentic, values-aligned relationships.	Core Behavioral
4. Sector Knowledge	Develop and apply knowledge of the evolving philanthropy and social impact landscape to effectively guide clients toward achieving their philanthropic goals.	Core Technical
5. Education & Facilitation	Design and facilitate culturally, developmentally, and contextually appropriate strategies, tools, and programs that build philanthropic knowledge, confidence, and capacity among clients and their networks.	Core Technical
6. Purpose & Legacy Identification	Guide clients in clarifying and aligning motivations, values, priorities, and goals related to philanthropy, social impact, and legacy.	Core Technical
7. Strategy Implementation & Assessment	Lead the design, execution, and evaluation of philanthropic strategies and initiatives that align with client purpose and goals, stakeholder expectations, and community impact.	Core Technical
8. Research & Data Analysis	Apply research and analytics to shape strategy, evaluate outcomes, and enhance ongoing philanthropic effectiveness.	Core Technical
9. Family Systems & Governance	Understand and navigate family systems, dynamics, and governance structures to support family alignment and collaboration. Facilitate family decision-making processes that foster cohesive and purpose-driven philanthropic strategies across generations.	Specialized Behavioral
10. Gift Planning	Identify client assets available for philanthropy and understand legal, financial, and regulatory frameworks that govern charitable giving techniques and vehicles. Provide guidance and technical oversight in the design, implementation, and management of gifts.	Specialized Technical
11. Philanthropic & Social Impact Vehicles	Recommend and manage entities that meet the client's philanthropic, financial, and operational goals while anticipating future tax, legal, and administrative issues.	Specialized Technical
12. Investment Acumen	Apply knowledge of investing and impact investing principles, strategies, and governance to support client decision-making, coordinate with financial professionals, and align philanthropic strategies with long-term financial goals and values.	Specialized Technical
13. Risk & Opportunity Management	Understand clients' philanthropic risk profiles and manage strategic risks and opportunities throughout the planning and implementation of philanthropic strategies.	Specialized Technical

4. COMPONENTS OF MODERN PHILANTHROPIC PLANNING

Philanthropic plans enable clients to use their resources to support values and causes they care about with greater intention, meaning, and impact. A range of professionals co-create and implement the plans, including gift planners, wealth advisors, estate planners, foundation staff, family office staff, and independent philanthropic advisors and consultants.

The structure and complexity of a philanthropic plan depend on the advisor's business model and the client's goals, resources, and stage in their giving journey. For example, a couple may need a simple plan with a few components tied to purpose and resource allocation. A foundation or company with a clear social impact focus may require a more detailed and multi-layered plan. In contrast, a wealthy, multi-generational family may need a comprehensive strategy that integrates most or all components.

The chart below outlines the nine common components of philanthropic planning. It provides a few examples of deliverables and suggests the competencies most important for the advisor or advisory team to succeed.

While an advisor or firm may not offer every component or follow a fixed planning sequence, modern philanthropic advisors are increasingly expected to be conversant across all areas. This broad awareness allows them to recognize when to collaborate with other specialists to meet a client's needs.

Components of Philanthropic Planning

Component	Primary Questions	Example Deliverables	Priority Competencies*
1. Purpose Clarification	What is the underlying "why" behind our philanthropy? Which priorities will we focus on?	• Shared values and priorities • Donor intent statement • Mission or vision statement • Meetings with people most affected by a problem	Education & Facilitation Purpose & Legacy Identification
2. Resource Allocation	Which resources will we commit to philanthropy now and in the future?	• A financial plan that includes philanthropic goals • Planned gifts • Budget for gifts/grants or impact investments • Employee volunteerism plan	Purpose & Legacy Identification Gift Planning Investment Acumen
3. Governance Choices	Who will be involved in which decisions with what authority? What policies should be documented?	• Meeting ground rules • Board governance policies • Community advisory committee • Family council structures	Education & Facilitation Strategy Implementation & Assessment Family Systems & Governance

Component	Primary Questions	Example Deliverables	Priority Competencies*
4. Strategy Definition	How might we support progress and impact in the values and priorities we've identified? What is our role within an ecosystem?	- Grantmaking strategy - Impact investing thesis - Advocacy & public policy strategy - Research project	Education & Facilitation Purpose & Legacy Identification Strategy Implementation & Assessment
5. Vehicle Choices	Which legal structures best support the purpose and strategy?	- Unbiased comparison of charitable vehicles such as DAFs and foundations - Help the client choose a non-charitable vehicle such as a purpose trust, B Corp, or 501(c)4 - Analysis of forecasted operational and compliance needs and costs - Incorporation services	Purpose & Legacy Identification Philanthropic & Social Impact Vehicles Investment Acumen Risk & Opportunity Management
6. Social Impact Tactic Choices	How will we implement our strategy? How will we find, develop relationships with, and assess potential partners?	- Develop and manage a grantmaking, disaster relief, or scholarship program - Assessing approaches such as trust-based or participatory philanthropy - Develop and manage a capacity-building or collective impact initiative	Strategy Implementation & Assessment Research & Data Analysis Risk & Opportunity Management
7. Assessment & Learning Program	Are we learning and improving? Are our strategy, social impact tool(s), and partners having the impact we hope for?	- Family learning agenda - Community feedback processes - Conduct a field scan - Research and data collection - Evaluation of grants made	Education & Facilitation Strategy Implementation & Assessment Research & Data Analysis
8. Operational Choices	How will we manage the work? What operational complexity and costs are we willing to tolerate?	- Clarified family volunteer roles - Outsourced foundation staffing - Operational risk assessment - HR policies and practices - Compliance services	Strategy Implementation & Assessment Family Systems & Governance Philanthropic & Social Impact Vehicles Risk & Opportunity Mngmt
9. Legacy Planning	What should happen after the founders are no longer involved?	- Legacy stories and videos - Purpose-infused estate plan or ethical will - Plan for sunseting a foundation - Written succession plan	Purpose & Legacy Identification Gift Planning Philanthropic & Social Impact Vehicles Investment Acumen

* Four competencies are necessary for all the components: Relationship & Network Development, Cultural Dexterity, Behavioral Intelligence, and Sector Knowledge.

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5. WHAT'S NEXT

The field of philanthropic advising is rich with creative professionals who skillfully adapt and build upon existing frameworks to meet the unique needs of their clients. We envision them using this preliminary draft in a variety of ways, including:

- Assessing the mix of competencies in their teams and developing new plans for professional development.
- Identifying and hiring for new positions that can expand a firm's services or attract new clients.
- Updating intake and planning processes to address a broader range of philanthropic and social impact goals.
- Clarifying and expanding the group of collaborators or subcontractors to serve more complex clients, or to develop a more robust peer referral network.
- Advising and mentoring individuals who aspire to become philanthropic advisors.
- Community foundations, donor collaboratives, and other nonprofits are developing new skills to more quickly and effectively move money toward causes.

On [Daylight's website](#), you'll find:

- The **Daylight Philanthropic Advisor Assessment** helps you identify your current level of competency and the skills expected of a philanthropic advisor as they advance in the profession.
- **Planning for the Future** is an exercise that helps you assess the competencies needed for you and your team in the future.

The Daylight team welcomes opportunities to discuss the model, including how it's being used and adapted, and where it can be improved. We invite your feedback and reflections. Please reach out to info@daylightadvisors.com.

6. PHILANTHROPIC ADVISING COMPETENCY MODEL

1. Relationship & Network Development

Core Behavioral

Definition: Cultivate, strengthen, and expand relationships with clients and their advisors. Grow a dynamic network of relationships with funders, community leaders, nonprofits, and others to improve a client's ability to achieve their philanthropic goals.

Objective
1.1. Anticipate client needs and identify the resources, tools, and expertise necessary to address those needs effectively.
1.2. Recognize the boundaries of your expertise and know when a situation or a client's needs fall outside of your training, experience, or scope of practice.
1.3. Define consulting or advising project objectives, scope, deliverables, and success metrics in collaboration with key stakeholders.
1.4. Ensure transparency and client understanding of the fees the advisor earns for designing, advising, and managing philanthropic solutions.
1.5. Create customized stewardship and cultivation plans that deepen connections with clients and inspire their long-term commitments to philanthropy.
1.6. Consistently and proactively communicate with clients to foster trust and ensure alignment on goals and expectations.
1.7. Ensure all key internal stakeholders are regularly informed of client activities, priorities, and progress.
1.8. Demonstrate timely and consistent follow-up and follow-through on client interactions and deliverables to ensure a seamless engagement experience.
1.9. Collaborate with the client's team and/or other advisors to ensure effective assessment and implementation of the client's philanthropic plans and goals.
1.10. Listen for changes in the client's situation that may warrant the involvement of professionals from other domains.
1.11. Identify, engage, cultivate, and steward new donors, strategic partners, and thought leaders to broaden the reach and influence of philanthropic initiatives.
1.12. Expand networks and cultivate relationships that prioritize belonging, access, and representation.

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2. Cultural Dexterity

Core Behavioral

Definition: Recognize and adapt to diverse cultural identities, including varying personal relationships with money, power, wealth, mutual care, and giving, while navigating the cultural norms that shape them.

Objective
2.1. Deepen understanding of clients' intersecting identities—including race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic history, gender, sexuality, politics, and family traditions—to provide respectful and relevant advising.
2.2. Understand how money narratives, cultural traditions, and the origins of wealth influence a client's identity and decisions.
2.3. Understand how your values, assumptions, and biases may affect advisory relationships.
2.4. Practice cultural humility by approaching each client relationship as a learner, honoring lived experiences without judgment.
2.5. Align communication and engagement with clients' cultural expectations and/or individual preferences.
2.6. Connect clients' money stories and wealth histories to empower them to use their financial resources for philanthropic purposes.
2.7. Facilitate inclusive conversations that make space for multiple voices and perspectives, especially those that have historically been marginalized.
2.8. Facilitate conversations about wealth and privilege to help clients deepen empathy, broaden perspectives, and adopt more equitable philanthropic practices.
2.9 Seek out advisors and allied professionals who can bring experience and insight into serving diverse communities.

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3. Behavioral Intelligence

Core Behavioral

Definition: Adapt to interpersonal dynamics, emotional drivers, and behavioral patterns to ethically influence decision-making and cultivate authentic, values-aligned relationships.

Objective
3.1. Identify emotional and behavioral triggers that impact clients' decision-making patterns and psychological barriers to making decisions.
3.2. Ethically develop behaviorally-informed strategies and solutions that respect clients' right to choose.
3.3. Recognize and interpret both verbal and nonverbal cues to understand emotional and relational dynamics in client interactions.
3.4. Build trust through active listening, empathy, and reliable engagement during emotionally complex discussions.
3.5. Tailor communication and guidance to fit clients' emotional states and relational contexts.
3.6. Establish supportive environments where clients are comfortable sharing vulnerabilities and making values-driven decisions.
3.7. Model self-awareness and emotional intelligence to encourage reflective philanthropic leadership.
3.8. Recognize when to consult subject-matter experts to address knowledge gaps and ensure clients receive accurate, comprehensive, and well-informed guidance.
3.9. Adapt techniques from positive psychology, coaching, and similar fields to help clients clarify their intentions, explore their motivations, and navigate internal or interpersonal conflicts.
3.10. Provide compassionate and strategic guidance during emotionally complex life transitions such as succession, death, or divorce.
3.11. Address tensions or misalignments that may disrupt collaborative decision-making or hinder long-term strategic alignment.

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4. Sector Knowledge

Core Technical

Definition: Develop and apply knowledge of the evolving philanthropy and social impact landscape to effectively guide clients toward achieving their philanthropic goals.

Objective
4.1. Maintain current knowledge of nonprofit structures, funding models, tax regulations, and emerging trends relevant to philanthropic advising.
4.2. Maintain up-to-date knowledge of regulations, compliance standards, and ethical guidance related to philanthropic practice.
4.3. Use systems thinking to help clients understand the broader context of their giving and guide them in navigating the interconnected challenges and opportunities.
4.4. Monitor and assess macro-level trends (e.g., economic, environmental, and political changes) for their potential impact on client resources, priorities, and strategies.
4.5. Support clients in designing purpose-aligned, high-impact philanthropic strategies grounded in their values, goals, and resources.
4.6. Advise on various grantmaking approaches, including general operating support, programmatic funding, trust-based philanthropy, and venture philanthropy.
4.7. Interpret philanthropic research, funding trends and patterns, and impact data to guide client decision-making and planning.
4.8. Develop and maintain a working knowledge of issue areas central to clients' philanthropic interests.
4.9. Maintain familiarity with for-profit social impact vehicles, including social enterprises, corporate social responsibility strategies, B Corps, and impact investments.
4.10. Maintain familiarity with policy and advocacy tools, including lobbying activities, 501(c)(4)s, 527 organizations, and grassroots movements.

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5. Education & Facilitation

Core Technical

Definition: Design and facilitate culturally, developmentally, and contextually appropriate strategies, tools, and programs that build philanthropic knowledge, confidence, and capacity among clients and their networks.

Objective
5.1. Assess clients' learning goals, learning preferences, and engagement styles to inform the development of tailored advising and education strategies.
5.2. Curate and develop resources that enhance philanthropic literacy and support intentional giving and legacy planning.
5.3. Design and facilitate customized learning experiences that deepen client understanding and participation in the philanthropic process.
5.4. Translate complex philanthropic and social impact concepts into clear, accessible, and actionable insights for diverse audiences.
5.5. Incorporate age-appropriate learning principles to maximize engagement and retention across all generations.
5.6. Plan for and sustain healthy, inclusive group dynamics in meetings, workshops, and other facilitated experiences.
5.7. Generate thought leadership that equips clients and peers with insights and inspiration, such as case studies, white papers, articles, podcasts, and conference sessions.
5.8. Design programs and tools that engage younger generations in conversations about philanthropy, values, and legacy.
5.9. Conduct workshops, retreats, and facilitated discussions to deepen understanding of philanthropic planning principles, strategies, and best practices.
5.10. Foster a culture of continuous learning by helping clients develop and implement long-term plans for reflection, growth, and learning.

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6. Purpose & Legacy Identification

Core Technical

Definition: Guide clients in clarifying and aligning motivations, values, priorities, and goals related to philanthropy, social impact, and legacy.

Objective
6.1. Assess a client's stage in their philanthropic journey and their readiness to move to the next stage.
6.2. Use intake tools and guided conversations to document a client's history of giving, volunteering, activism, and other social impact activities; invite stories of successful and unsuccessful gifts.
6.3. Facilitate reflective conversations that help clients clarify the motivations, values, and beliefs that inform their philanthropy identity.
6.4. Facilitate conversations that help clients clarify their philanthropic priorities, goals, and definitions of progress and success in their philanthropy.
6.5. Guide clients in articulating their philanthropic priorities and defining what progress and success look like for their successors.
6.6. Develop high-level giving budgets or plans that allocate resources in alignment with the client's values, priorities, and objectives.
6.7. Help clients assess the consistency between their stated values and their current philanthropic activities, and recommend adjustments where needed to their activities.
6.8. Analyze a client's philanthropic history and activities for potential risks or unintended harm to family relationships, business reputation, nonprofit partners, or the community.
6.9. Collaborate with the clients' financial, legal, and estate planning advisors to ensure philanthropic goals and values are fully integrated into broader planning strategies.

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7. Strategy Implementation & Assessment

Core Technical

Definition: Lead the design, execution, and evaluation of philanthropic strategies and initiatives that align with client purpose and goals, stakeholder expectations, and community impact.

Objective
7.1. Assess clients' appetite for complexity in philanthropic strategies and advise on right-sizing plans to match goals, capacity, and risk tolerance.
7.2. Design and implement grant programs or similar initiatives that effectively use the client's resources and align with the client's purpose and goals.
7.3. Develop processes for identifying, vetting, establishing relationships with, and evaluating nonprofits and other philanthropic partners.
7.4. Coordinate with internal and external stakeholders to ensure timely communication, informed decision-making, and shared accountability.
7.5. Integrate evaluation frameworks and data-informed tools to monitor and assess the effectiveness and impact of philanthropic strategies
7.6. Ensure philanthropic strategies remain responsive and adaptive to evolving community needs, macro trends, and shifting contexts.
7.7. Provide ongoing monitoring and reporting to help clients track progress, refine strategies, and adjust expectations.
7.8. Guide comprehensive strategic planning sessions involving a variety of internal and external stakeholders.
7.9. Promote strategies and processes that foster fairness in partner relationships and strengthen the resilience and effectiveness of nonprofits.
7.10. Identify and recommend opportunities to ensure strategies and processes are equitable, ethical, and inclusive of community perspectives.
7.11. Help clients leverage non-financial assets such as time, talent, testimony, and ties to amplify their philanthropic impact and influence systemic change.
7.12. Develop programs that expand their impact beyond grantmaking, such as capacity-building initiatives, collective impact efforts, or multi-stakeholder partnerships.
7.13. Leverage digital tools and innovative funding models to increase efficiency, collaboration, and impact in giving strategies.
7.14. Develop internal systems that enhance policies and practices by leveraging insights from successes and failures.
7.15. Plan for sustainability, scale, or strategic exit as part of program design and implementation.

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8. Research & Data Analysis

Core Technical

Definition: Apply research and analytics to shape strategy, evaluate outcomes, and enhance ongoing philanthropic effectiveness.

Objective
8.1. Assess clients' willingness to invest in evaluation and interest in sharing findings with external audiences.
8.2. Regularly collect, analyze, and interpret data related to philanthropic impact, donor behavior, community needs, and sector trends.
8.3. Use research and evaluation data to guide planning, refine strategies, optimize resource allocation, and enhance client engagement.
8.4. Translate research and data into clear insights and actionable recommendations for clients, stakeholders, and decision-makers.
8.5. Implement robust data management practices that ensure accuracy, confidentiality, compliance, and efficiency across all research and analytical activities.
8.6. Stay current with emerging research methodologies, evaluation frameworks, and analytical tools to maintain best-in-class practices.
8.7. Conduct comparative and benchmarking research to evaluate effectiveness and inform decision-making.
8.8. Design and implement predictive models to forecast programmatic trends, client behavior, and potential impact scenarios.
8.9. Collaborate with clients, funders, academic partners, or research consortia to produce studies that advance sector knowledge and inform practices.
8.10. Develop and maintain dashboards and visualization tools that provide real-time insight into key performance indicators (KPIs) and philanthropic outcomes.

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9. Family Systems & Governance

Specialized Behavioral

Definition: Understand and navigate family systems, dynamics, and governance structures to support family alignment and collaboration. Facilitate family decision-making processes that foster cohesive and purpose-driven philanthropic strategies across generations.

Objective
9.1. Apply family systems concepts to assess how a client family functions and define the advisor's appropriate role within the family system.
9.2. Establish inclusive decision-making structures and governance frameworks that promote transparency, accountability, and stakeholder participation.
9.3. Facilitate intergenerational conversations to explore shared values, surface differences, and co-create a long-term vision for the future.
9.4. Provide individualized consultation to family members, helping them balance individual and collective philanthropic values, goals, and activities.
9.5. Foster healthy and collaborative multi-generational and multicultural family dynamics by building trust and connecting family members with cultural sensitivity and intention.
9.6. Support clients in identifying and addressing governance risks, particularly during leadership transitions or periods of reputational or public scrutiny.
9.7. Guide families through intergenerational transitions in philanthropic leadership, decision-making, and legacy planning.
9.8. Proactively monitor and evaluate family dynamics to anticipate and mitigate potential sources of conflict.
9.9. Conduct regular assessments to evaluate family involvement, governance policies and practices, and their alignment with philanthropic strategy.

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10. Gift Planning

Specialized Technical

Definition: Identify client assets available for philanthropy and understand legal, financial, and regulatory frameworks that govern charitable giving techniques and vehicles. Provide guidance and technical oversight in the design, implementation, and administration of gifts.

Objective
10.1. Maintain a working knowledge of tax rules and regulatory considerations related to donating complex assets (e.g., real estate and business interests) and evaluate their suitability within a client's philanthropic, financial, and estate planning objectives.
10.2. Maintain a working knowledge of planned giving vehicles, including bequests, charitable gift annuities (CGAs), charitable remainder trusts (CRTs), charitable lead trusts (CLTs), retirement accounts, and life insurance, to identify when each may be appropriate for a client's philanthropic goals.
10.3. Collaborate with clients' legal, tax, and financial advisors to ensure that giving strategies align with broader financial, tax, and estate planning objectives.

For Specialists in Charitable Tax Planning and Giving

Objective
10.4. Maintain in-depth knowledge of legal, tax, and regulatory requirements related to planned giving vehicles.
10.5. Assess opportunities to use planned giving vehicles and strategies to optimize philanthropic impact and donor objectives.
10.6. Develop compelling messaging and storytelling techniques to communicate impact, foster donor loyalty, and attract new supporters.
10.7. Provide tailored guidance on the philanthropic implications of estate liquidity, asset types, and generational wealth transfer.
10.8. Utilize CRM systems, donor analytics, and engagement metrics to inform outreach, track relationship growth, and optimize fundraising strategies.
10.9. Create individual engagement and stewardship plans that reflect each client's giving history, motivations, and philanthropic potential.
10.10. Anticipate and mitigate disengagement, giving fatigue, and reputational risks through proactive relationship management practices.
10.11. Track and manage the distribution of gifts in coordination with nonprofit staff, legal, and financial teams.
10.12. Safeguard client intent while ensuring alignment with organizational mission, equity commitments, and evolving community needs.
10.13. Plan for legacy transitions, including engaging successor decision-makers, managing relationships with family members, and honoring long-term commitments after a donor's death.
10.14. Navigate ethical dilemmas in gift acceptance, stewardship, and naming opportunities with transparency and professional integrity.

11. Philanthropic & Social Impact Vehicles

Specialized Technical

Definition: Recommend and manage entities that meet the client's philanthropic, financial, and operational goals while anticipating future tax, legal, and administrative issues.

Objective
11.1. Maintain a working knowledge of charitable, for-profit, and advocacy vehicles, including current trends and public policy developments.
11.2. Assess clients' interest and capacity to govern or manage a social impact vehicle; guide the right-sizing of operational choices.
11.3. Describe the advantages, disadvantages, and applicability of charitable vehicles, including donor-advised funds (DAFs), charitable trusts, private foundations, and supporting organizations.
11.4. Describe the advantages, disadvantages, and applicability of different lifespan options for charitable vehicles.
11.5. Ensure clients receive clear, transparent disclosures regarding any fees earned by the advisor for incorporating or managing a vehicle.
11.6. Translate complex financial, legal, and tax-related concepts into clear and accessible insights for clients.
11.7. Develop and manage operational plans, policies, and practices for charitable vehicles, ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory, and ethical standards.
11.8. Prepare and maintain documentation that satisfies all legal, audit, and internal compliance requirements.
11.9. Plan for potential changes in a client's life and resources that may impact the operational needs of current vehicles, or consider new ones.
11.10. Build and maintain expertise in state and federal income, estate, and gift tax laws, estate and inheritance taxes, and other legal aspects of charitable giving.
11.11. Maintain knowledge of different outsourcing options for managing philanthropic plans, strategies, and vehicles.
11.12. Maintain expertise in the types, policies, and practices of donor-advised fund (DAF) sponsors.
11.14. Describe the advantages, disadvantages, and applicability of for-profit social impact vehicles such as LLCs, social enterprises, public benefit corporations, and purpose trusts.
11.15. Describe the advantages, disadvantages, and applicability of advocacy vehicles such as 501 (c) (4) organizations, 527 organizations, and social movements.
11.16. Manage required minimum distributions (RMD) of private foundations, sending grant checks or wires, and tracking multi-year commitments and requirements.

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12. Investment Acumen

Specialized Technical

Definition: Apply knowledge of investing and impact investing principles, strategies, and governance to support client decision-making, coordinate with financial professionals, and align philanthropic strategies with long-term financial goals and values.

Objective
12.1. Maintain a working knowledge of the use of the full spectrum of capital (the many forms of impact investing) and how they might be appropriate for clients' philanthropic goals.
12.2. Maintain a working knowledge of essential investment terminology, fiduciary responsibility, investment governance, and investment management concepts.
12.3. Educate clients on the full spectrum of impact investing options.
12.4. Guide families in aligning their philanthropic values and goals with impact investing strategies, and, as necessary, align these strategies across multiple philanthropic vehicles.

For Specialists in Impact Investing

Objective
12.5. Maintain current knowledge of constraints, opportunities, and emerging trends in impact investing through donor-advised funds (DAFs), foundations, trusts, and collaborative funds.
12.6. Understand how different forms of capital interact with clients' theories of change and social or environmental impact goals.
12.7. Understand the advantages, limitations, and applicability of common frameworks for measuring impact (e.g., IRIS+, SDGs, GIIRS).
12.8. Assess a client's interest in impact investing, their risk profile, and their desired role in implementation and governance.
12.9. Identify impact investing strategies that align with clients' philanthropic values, goals, and plans. Ensure the strategies complement grantmaking and other activities.
12.10. Develop or revise Investment Policy Statements (IPS) to reflect clients' values, philanthropic goals, and social and environmental objectives.
12.11. Improve client competence and confidence in investment governance, including the interpretation of investment reporting and financial statements.
12.12. Collaborate with investment advisors and managers to identify and evaluate funds that align with both social and environmental objectives and financial goals.

Objective
12.13. Identify and conduct due diligence on funds, partners, or organizations for impact investments such as Program-Related Investments (PRIs) and Mission-Related Investments (MRIs).
12.14. Collaborate with experts to structure and implement impact investing deals.
12.15. Develop and track key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor the performance of impact investments.
12.16. Maintain knowledge of models that promote more just and equitable outcomes (e.g., reparative finance, community-controlled funds).
12.17. Analyze asset types, industry trends, and regulatory considerations relevant to philanthropic and impact investing.
12.18. Help clients assess whether their current investment approach aligns with their long-term financial and impact objectives.

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13. Risk & Opportunity Management

Specialized Technical

Definition: Understand clients' philanthropic risk profiles and manage strategic risks and opportunities throughout the planning and implementation of philanthropic strategies.

Objective
13.1. Conduct comprehensive risk assessments across philanthropic portfolios, examining external, internal, and contextual factors.
13.2. Assess clients' risk tolerance across philanthropic, impact investing, and broader social impact strategies.
13.3. Identify and mitigate reputational risks associated with grantee partners, issue areas, advocacy engagement, or stakeholder perceptions.
13.4. Monitor how political, technological, and cultural shifts may affect client goals or reveal new opportunities for catalytic impact.
13.5. Understand the regulatory and compliance risks associated with charitable vehicles, including private foundations, donor-advised funds (DAFs), and trusts.
13.6. Monitor the ethical, legal, and privacy-related risks associated with using technology tools (e.g., AI, data security, digital infrastructure) in philanthropic advising.
13.7. Conduct scenario planning to assess how political, economic, and social developments may influence philanthropic goals and strategies.
13.8. Cultivate a culture of proactive risk awareness and opportunity readiness among clients, partners, and associated organizations.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Daylight Research Team

Tony Macklin, CAP®, IPA, Director of Advisor Practice

Dien Yuen, JD/LLM, CAP®, AEP®, IPA, CEO

Crystal Thompkins, CSPGCM, CAP®, IPA, Director of Strategic Impact

Megan Lemieux Bell, IPA, Director of Engagement

Lydia Oh, IPA, Manager, Programs & Marketing

Daylight Advisory Board

Dianne Chipps Bailey, JD, CAP®, Managing Director, National Philanthropic Strategy
Executive, Bank of America

Toussaint Bailey, Founder & Managing Partner, Uplifting Capital

Brantley Boyett, JD, President & Co-Founder, Giving Docs

Stephanie Becerra Buckley, JD, LLM, CAP®, Head of Trust & Philanthropic Services, Wells
Fargo Private Bank

Nina L. Cohen, JD, CAP®, Managing Director, DEI Officer, Strategic Advisor, Center for
Family Phil. & Wealth Ed., Glenmede

Karen Mae Cheung, LLM, TEP®, IPA, Reg. Director of Business Dev., APAC Growth Strategy
& Client Mgmt, Equiom Group

Avery T. Fontaine, CAP®, SVP, Head of Philanthropy & Impact, PNC Private Bank Hawthorn

Hugh Lawson, IPA, Principal, Lawson Leadership Advisory Ltd.

Faye Ong, Executive Director, Head of Philanthropy Centre, Singapore & SE Asia, J.P.
Morgan Private Bank

Alisia Robin, CAP®, IPA, Senior Manager, Strategic Partnerships and Nonprofit Outreach,
DAFgiving360

Padric H. B. Scott, MSFP®, CFP®, AEP®, CAP®, CLU®, WMCP®, ChFC®, IPA, CCFC, President
& CEO, Crossroad Capital Partners

Birger Stamperdahl, IPA, President & CEO, Give2Asia; CEO, Myriad Alliance

Edward Wang, 21/64 Certified Advisor, VP, Family Office of Philanthropy, Marin Community
Foundation

Competency Project Working Group

Betsy Erickson, Managing Director & Head of Family and Individual Svcs, Arabella Advisors

Marguerite Griffin, CAP®, IPA, 21/64 Certified Advisor, SVP, Director, Philanthropic Advisory
Services, Northern Trust

Jenna Mulhall-Brereton, 21/64 Certified Advisor, Chief Philanthropy Officer, National
Philanthropic Trust

Yvonne Moore, MSW, Managing Director, Moore Philanthropy; President, Moore Impact

Kyle Peterson, Co-Founder & Managing Partner, Boldly Go Philanthropy

Gregory Ratliff, Senior Vice President, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

Consultants

Jamie Albaum, PMP, Managing Director, LaCire

Zach Maynard, PMP, Junior Project Manager, LaCire

Interviews and Summary Reviewers

Kallie Bauer, Director, Strategy and Planning, Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy

Jessica Bearman, Principal, Jessica Bearman Consulting, LLC

Marion Chebet, Investment Principal for a Private Fund

Dr. James Grubman, ACFWA, CFBA, Owner, Family Wealth Consulting

Dr. Sharilyn Hale, C. Director, MFA-P, President, Watermark Philanthropic Counsel

Kay Linder, Partner, ThinkingAhead Executive Search

Richard Marker, Founder/Co-Principal, Institute for Wise Philanthropy

Tory Martin, Director, Engmt & Knowledge Bldg, Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy

Leslie Pine, Managing Partner, The Philanthropic Initiative

Sarah Welch, Managing Director, Charitable Giving & Philanthropy, ideas42

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The logo features the word "Daylight" in a black, sans-serif font. A small yellow dot is positioned above the letter 'i'. The text is centered within a white circle that has a thin blue border. This central circle is surrounded by four larger, overlapping circles in shades of blue and grey. The background of the entire page is white, with a large, abstract, swirling grey pattern in the upper left corner.

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