



Community Foundations: Snapshots of Public-Philanthropic Partnerships



### About the Council on Foundations

The Council on Foundations ([www.cof.org](http://www.cof.org)), formed in 1949, is a nonprofit membership association of grantmaking foundations and corporations. Members of the Council include more than 1,700 independent, operating, community, public, and company-sponsored foundations and corporate giving programs in the United States and abroad. The Council's mission is to provide the opportunity, leadership, and tools philanthropic organizations need to expand, enhance, and sustain their ability to advance the common good.

### About the Public-Philanthropic Partnership Initiative

The Public-Philanthropic Partnership Initiative brings together government and philanthropy in new cross-sector partnerships to address the most chronic and severe issues facing our nation.

It does this by:

- ✓ Connecting foundations and government agencies seeking active partnerships
- ✓ Convening philanthropy and government to identify common interests
- ✓ Communicating effective philanthropic practices, resources, and investment interests across the field and to government constituencies
- ✓ Building capacity to strengthen both sectors' leveraging power and achieve greater community impact

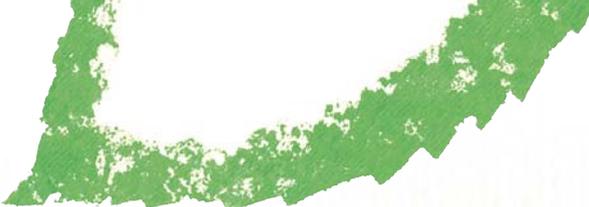
For more information, contact the Public-Philanthropic Partnership Initiative at [partnership@cof.org](mailto:partnership@cof.org) or 703-879-0600.

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## Introduction

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In every part of the country, community foundations of all sizes are partnering with the public sector to leverage philanthropy's intellectual, community, and financial capital to achieve positive change. Members of the Council on Foundations are leading these public-philanthropic partnerships.

The Council is pleased to present "Community Foundations: Snapshots of Public-Philanthropic Partnerships," a publication of the Public-Philanthropic Partnership Initiative. On the following pages, we highlight 20 community foundations that believe in the power of partnering with the public sector. There are many more around the nation! In urban, suburban, and

rural areas, these community foundations have developed partnerships with local, state, and federal governments. Our goal is to connect foundations looking to learn how to leverage public partnerships for greater community impact with those that have lessons to share.

Want to learn more about these partnerships? Visit the Public-Philanthropic Partnership Initiative website at <http://ppp.cof.org> to read narratives and full profiles of these public-philanthropic partnerships and more. If you have a public-philanthropic partnership you would like to share, visit <http://ppp.cof.org/share/> to tell us about your experience and lessons.

**The Council extends its deepest gratitude to the community foundations and national initiatives that contributed their knowledge, time, and experience to this publication. Accounts of their impressive work appear on the following pages.**

This publication is made possible thanks to a generous grant from The Atlantic Philanthropies. The Atlantic Philanthropies are dedicated to bringing about lasting changes in the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people. Atlantic focuses on four critical social problems: Ageing, Children & Youth, Population Health, and Reconciliation & Human Rights. Programmes funded by Atlantic operate in Australia, Bermuda, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, the United States, and Vietnam. To learn more, please visit [www.atlanticphilanthropies.org](http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org).

# Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation

**Priority addressed:** Human services  
**Level of government:** City and county  
**Geography served:** Urban, suburban, rural  
**Partnership launch:** 2010



**Ann Arbor Area**  
community foundation

For good. For ever.™

The Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation (AAACF), the United Way of Washtenaw County, and the Office of Community and Economic Development (representing the city of Ann Arbor, Urban County, and Washtenaw County) have teamed up to coordinate the distribution of funds supporting human services across the county. AAACF has both a leadership and investor role in this initiative, also known as Coordinated Funding.

The partnership, the Washtenaw Coordinated Funders, is seeking to make astute human-service investments, enhance the impact of their combined grant dollars, establish shared priorities for human-service needs, preserve public dollars for human-service nonprofits, and encourage greater collaboration among human-service agencies.

All three partners have adjusted their standard practices to make the collaboration work effectively. These include joint investing and a single decision-making process that will provide \$4.4 million in program and capacity-building grants for human-service agencies in the county. In addition, more than \$300,000 has been distributed to six “planning and coordination” groups that organize cross-agency collaboration in six high-priority areas: early childhood, school-age youth, aging, homelessness, safety-net health and nutrition, and hunger relief.

With \$5 million in grants leveraged from the work of the three partners, the collaboration among AAACF, the

United Way, and the Office of Community Development is already a success based on feedback from grantees.

## Lessons Learned

- ✓ **Deliberate and consistent communication among partners, nonprofits, governing boards, donors, and news media makes a big difference.**
- ✓ **Strong departmental leadership is critical with government partners, given the dynamics and politics within public entities.**
- ✓ **Clarity about shared goals and outcomes is important.**
- ✓ **Strong working relationships at the staff level are a must.**
- ✓ **Balancing the partnership's dynamics with the inevitable heightened bureaucracy that follows public dollars is essential.**



**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Neel Hajra, 734-663-0401

## The Boston Foundation

**Priority addressed:** Education

**Level of government:** Local, state, and federal

**Geography served:** Urban

**Partnership launch:** 2009



The Boston Foundation convened a coalition of 16 leadership groups to advocate for education-reform legislation in 2009. The reforms were a necessary component of the state's application for \$250 million from the highly competitive Race to the Top program administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

The legislative advocacy The Boston Foundation led through the Race to the Top Coalition contributed to passage of the most significant education-reform measure in decades. Massachusetts received the highest score among all states, demonstrating the effectiveness of the law and the state's commitment to an innovative public education system.

For more than 40 years, The Boston Foundation has been deeply involved in education reform through collaboration and partnerships with school administrators and government policymakers. To provide the best possible education for the region's children, the foundation has supported numerous programs within schools, provided research and analysis to support innovation, and convened business and civic leaders to advocate for state and federal reforms that encourage improved student performance.

### Lessons Learned

- ✓ Develop a reputation as a respected third party for civic engagement and advocacy.
- ✓ Commission and publish research.
- ✓ Convene forums to disseminate research.
- ✓ Engage the press and media.
- ✓ Bring together civic and business leaders.

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Keith Mahoney, 617-338-1700

Photo courtesy of Angela Rowlings



## The Chicago Community Trust

**Priority addressed:** Economic and workforce development

**Level of government:** City and federal

**Geography served:** Urban, suburban

**Partnership launch:** 2009

THE  
CHICAGO  
COMMUNITY  
TRUST

AND AFFILIATES

The Chicago Community Trust, the second-oldest and fourth-largest community foundation in the United States, has participated in a number of partnerships with governmental agencies. In 2009, the Trust joined The Recovery Partnership, an 18-month collaboration between the city of Chicago and area foundations and businesses to maximize the impact of more than \$2 billion in federal stimulus funds. The goals of the partnership: align and pool public and private resources, support the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations during a time of economic crisis, and create a lasting impact on the city.

Chicago's mayor invited the Trust to serve as lead convener of foundations because of its unique position as a community foundation and its relationships with area nonprofits. The partnership comprised approximately 70 partners, including 50 foundations. Representatives of the various entities met regularly for strategy and working sessions to accomplish the outlined goals.

The scope of the project made the partnership a unique example of public-private collaboration, as the 50 Chicago-area foundations worked with nearly every agency from city government. Key outcomes of The Recovery Partnership included obtaining funding to revive an under-resourced plan called "The City That Networks," which calls for broadband access to eliminate the digital divide for marginalized low-income Chicago citizens. The partnership also used \$2 million in local funds to leverage \$14 million in federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families emergency funds to improve the long-term employment outlook for chronically jobless Chicagoans. The lead contribution was creation of more than 7,000 summer jobs within two months of initial funding.

### Lessons Learned

- ✓ Aligning governmental priorities with those of foundations can yield important benefits.
- ✓ Commitment has to come from top-level leaders on both sides of the partnership.
- ✓ It is important to highlight the partnership's programs to the public periodically through reports and press conferences.
- ✓ Although foundation dollars constitute a smaller share than public dollars, the collaboration can lead to alignment of strategic priorities.
- ✓ Cross-sector partnerships not only increase foundations' confidence in public officials but also increase understanding of the constraints they face.



**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Terry Mazany and Michelle Martin, 312-616-8000

Photo courtesy of Free Spirit Media

## Communities Foundation of Texas

**Priority addressed:** Education  
**Level of government:** Local and state  
**Geography served:** Urban, suburban, rural  
**Partnership launch:** 2003



The Texas High School Project (THSP) aligns the work of influential public and private groups committed to improving education in Texas. The Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT) serves as a home for THSP through its leadership role as host foundation, grant intermediary, and critical thought partner. By working directly with state agencies, superintendents

and school districts, state and national philanthropy groups, business and civil rights groups, and corporate partners, THSP shares and scales what's working in student learning, teacher effectiveness, and education leadership.

CFT recognizes that to truly change education outcomes in Texas, working with state government is essential. The collaborative efforts of officials from the state legislature, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Office of the Governor in THSP has been integral in shaping state policy to bolster program impact across the state. Without the state's support, guidance, and financial backing, the impact of THSP would be limited.

CFT jump-started THSP by providing staff and facilities that allowed the work to begin much sooner than anticipated. Since 2003, grants, techni-

cal assistance, and support have helped 230 new or redesigned schools—serving approximately 140,000 students—achieve their educational potential.

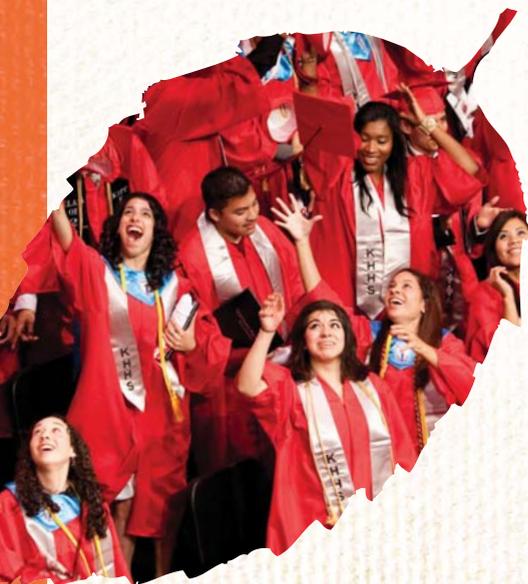
### Lessons Learned

- ✓ **Knowing the organizational structure of government partners is critical in understanding the decision-making process.**
- ✓ **Be aware that factors beyond funding affect the ability of a government partner to participate in specific projects or initiatives.**
- ✓ **Recognize that government partners operate in a public and transparent environment and ultimately answer to the taxpayers of the state.**

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships>

**Learn more:** Gene Acuna and Jessica Dameron, 512-536-1160

Photo courtesy of Bob Daemmrich Photography



## The Community Foundation of South Alabama

**Priority addressed:** Community development  
**Level of government:** Local, county, state, and federal  
**Geography served:** Urban, suburban, rural  
**Partnership launch:** 2009



The Community Foundation of South Alabama is a mid-sized grantmaker that serves a mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities along the Gulf Coast. In 2009, the foundation helped catalyze the South Alabama Community Network, a Web-based platform designed to solve systemic community issues. The initiative unites in a collaborative effort government officials, educators, local nonprofit leaders, and the private sector in the eight-county region anchored by Mobile. The foundation works with all levels of government and receives government funding.

The community network is a \$1.4 million effort supported by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). This public-philanthropic partnership was spurred by the foundation's desire to help build the community network to facilitate disaster response, lit-

eracy, and leadership development. The project has provided a template for communities to solve local issues. This is especially important given the foundation's large rural footprint; some remote areas take two to three hours to reach by car.

CNCS annually provides eight AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers to attend community meetings and gather information for area nonprofits, with an additional eight due in the project's third year. As a result, the foundation has formed strategic partnerships with 19 nonprofit organizations and government agencies. In 2010, it received additional volunteers to respond to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.



### Lessons Learned

- ✓ Incorporate easy-to-use and simple metrics that are meaningful to the project and the entire team.
- ✓ The mission of the foundation should closely match the objectives of the government agency under consideration as a partner.

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Stephanie Ryan, 251-438-5591

## East Bay Community Foundation

**Priority addressed:** Education

**Level of government:** Local, state, and federal

**Geography served:** Urban

**Partnership launch:** 2005



The East Bay Community Foundation has a priority focus on public-private partnerships. One example is the Oakland Education Funders, a project the foundation has initiated, led, managed, and financially supported. The foundation convenes this quarterly funders' forum so that philanthropy has direct engagement with the superintendent of the Oakland Unified School District. The foundation helps to plan meetings, create agendas, produce handouts, and conduct outreach to ensure a good number of community, corporate, and private funders attend and participate. The foundation also champions interests for funding inspired by the meetings and coordinates grant writing, metrics development, donor acknowledgement, donor reports, grant expenditures, and data collection.

East Bay is one of the few community foundations with a department that explores and manages local, state, and federal partnerships. Since May 2010, when East Bay created the Oakland Education Fund—a field-of-interest fund that supports the school district—two community foundations, seven corporate foundations, and nine private foundations have committed more than \$10 million.

The foundation also has been able to host U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.) to share their perspectives on federal education priorities with members of the funders' forum. The foundation recognizes the importance of working with the public sector to ensure that

philanthropic resources are aligned and leveraged with public-sector needs and services and support issues affecting low to moderate-income families.

### Lessons Learned

- ✓ Foundation staff should recognize and understand the perspectives of the ultimate beneficiaries (parents and students, for example).
- ✓ Foundation staff should understand or have work experience in cross-sector environments.
- ✓ Foundation staff should possess skills that reflect knowledge of the issue areas as well as grant writing, grants management, and strong communication skills.

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Darien Louie, 510-836-3223



## The Erie Community Foundation

**Priority addressed:** Health  
**Level of government:** Local, county, and federal  
**Geography served:** Urban, rural  
**Partnership launch:** 2006



*Helping today... Shaping tomorrow*



A massive home run for the community—that's what happened when The Erie Community Foundation in Pennsylvania aligned its partnership goals with local, county, and federal priorities. Motivated by results from a 2006 study it commissioned on poverty in the area, the foundation created

the Access to Care Community Advisory Panel (CAP), a public-philanthropic partnership to bring school-based health centers to the county's low-income communities.

Because of the nature of these health centers, it is critical to work with local school districts. Three districts partner with CAP to provide space, access to the target population, and in-kind support. Comprehensive service delivery to children and families happens thanks to coordination between the centers and such partners as the Erie County Department of Health, which provides public-health data, education, and case-management services.

In helping CAP develop a sustainable model of health care for the uninsured and underinsured, Erie County's Federally Qualified Health Center has served as an essential partner. Adding to invaluable in-kind support from local and county

governments, three proposed health-care centers have received capital improvement grants totaling nearly \$1 million through the federal Affordable Care Act.

### Lessons Learned

- ✓ **Aligning with federal priorities could unlock funding and technical assistance opportunities.**
- ✓ **Public sector partners may not be as nimble as philanthropic partners.**
- ✓ **Expect the political climate to affect project timelines.**
- ✓ **View challenges in the context of the magnitude of the change that the partnership is creating.**
- ✓ **Have a leader capable of taking an idea through the planning process to reality.**

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Michael L. Batchelor, 814-454-0843

Photo courtesy of Gina Rullo

## Foundation for the Mid South

**Priority addressed:** Health

**Level of government:** State

**Geography served:** Urban, rural

**Partnership launch:** 2010

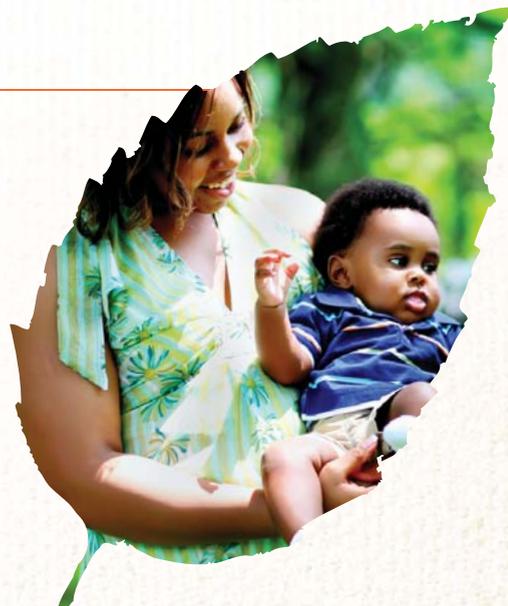


The Foundation for the Mid South played a key leadership and convening role in attracting and leveraging federal dollars to expand the reach of the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program to Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Started in the 1970s and tested, cultivated, and replicated for more than 30 years, NFP sends registered nurses to the homes of low-income, first-time mothers to improve pregnancy outcomes, child health and development, and families' economic self-sufficiency.

Recognizing the success of the NFP program, the foundation partnered with the state departments of health in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi to ensure the states received the maximum allotment of federal funds available through the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. This federal program, designed to implement and expand the NFP model to states, is

housed in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration. The foundation provided support by covering the cost of writers who completed the federal grant applications and with whom the states worked to conduct statewide needs assessments as a basis for their applications.

The foundation's efforts and initial investment of \$30,000 resulted in three successful applications, leveraging \$4 million in federal funding for the Mid South region.



### Lessons Learned

- ✓ Allow ample time for preparation and understand that government processes may not align with the partners' timelines.
- ✓ Help government officials understand the importance of community engagement.
- ✓ View collaboration with government as an opportunity to create new or expand existing partnerships.
- ✓ Focus efforts and pool resources to lead to deeper impact and sustainability.

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Dwanda Moore, 601-355-8167

Photo courtesy of Nurse-Family Partnership

## Grand Rapids Community Foundation



Grand Rapids  
community foundation  
For good. For ever.®

**Priority addressed:** Education

**Level of government:** Local, municipal, county, state, and federal

**Geography served:** Urban

**Partnership launch:** 2006

The Grand Rapids Community Foundation is a mid-sized Michigan grantmaker that serves a primarily urban region. In 2006, the foundation documented that too many local students were scoring low on standardized tests or were chronically absent. Additional school district data revealed that fewer than 50 percent of students graduated on time and more than 80 percent were living in poverty. As a result, the foundation helped incubate the Kent School Services Network (KSSN) to improve academic achievement by removing obstacles to learning.

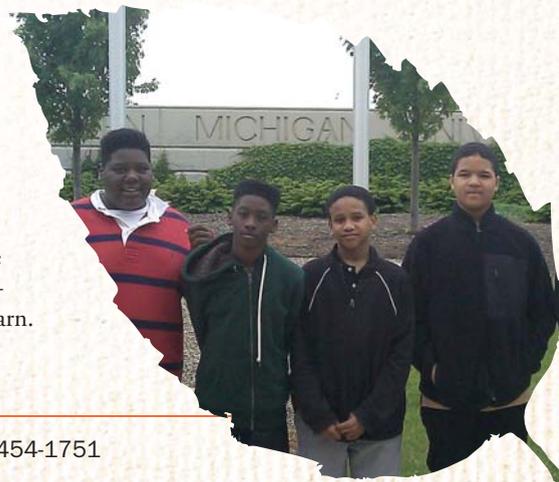
The foundation partners with every level of government and supports the operations of the program, coinvests with other sectors, helps implement programs, and supports research and evaluation. The funding the participating governmental entities provided for the partnership far exceeds and is more sustainable than funding available from the foundations and nonprofits. As a result, the foundation provides grants

to the partnership to support creative activities that public sector agencies cannot fund, thus providing the flexibility necessary to leverage the public sector dollars for greater overall impact.

The federal funds support training, expansion, technical assistance, evaluation, and cultural competence. The state and local government entities include the county government, school districts, courts, local mental health services, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. KSSN partner schools are asked to contribute a minimal amount of funds to demonstrate their commitment to the program. The foundation believes this partnership has resulted in better academic scores and higher attendance levels, thus helping the participating schools meet state and federal performance standards. Students are in school—healthy, motivated, and ready to learn.

### Lessons Learned:

- ✓ Find partners with decision-making power who are willing to share and be creative.
- ✓ Select a program model with demonstrated, verifiable success and be open to change.
- ✓ Include evaluation from the beginning and commit to the program over the long haul.



**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Marcia Rapp, 616-454-1751

Photo courtesy of Geoffery L. Stevens

## The Green and Healthy Homes Initiative



The Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) collaborates with local and federal agencies and philanthropic partners to coordinate funding and programs that create green, healthy, and safe homes in low-income communities nationwide.

Directed by the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning, with support from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Energy, and national and local foundations, GHHI replaces stand-alone programs with a comprehensive strategy to improve health, economic, and social outcomes.

Community foundations play a critical role in GHHI efforts. They convene local partner agencies, support engaged learning networks, and fund GHHI project coordinators who drive the collaborative work and ensure effective implementation. They also support advocacy efforts and ensure results are communicated to local and national policymakers.

The national GHHI team works with local leaders to provide a comprehensive, “whole house” assessment tool, greater access to green jobs in the community, and a single intake portal for green and healthy housing interventions. GHHI provides ongoing technical

support, evaluation, and cost-benefit analyses to achieve innovations in government that reduce expenses, allowing communities to save money.

On the next page, read about the partnership experience between the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo and the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative.



# Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo



Community Foundation  
for Greater Buffalo

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR GENEROSITY.

**Priority addressed:** Health and housing  
**Level of government:** City, county, state, and federal  
**Geography served:** Urban, suburban, rural  
**Partnership launch:** 2008

What started as an effort by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo to organize a coalition to prevent childhood lead poisoning has expanded to an official pilot site in the national Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI). Designation as an official GHHI site comes from the Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

This partnership has targeted key resources for public health, neighborhood revitalization, and weatherization. The foundation leverages housing and neighborhood revitalization dollars and uses its influence to recruit new partners. It provides funds in cooperation with Erie County, which has a staff member working out of the foundation's office to coordinate local programs as well as referrals to the program and enforcement of local health and lead regulations. Designation

as an official GHHI site by the federal government has allowed the partnership to connect with other regions attempting to implement similar programs.

Local, county, state, and federal governments have provided nearly \$2.5 million in support of Greater Buffalo's GHHI site. Strong relationships between foundation staff and key individuals at partner agencies led to early buy-in and wide participation.



## Lessons Learned

- ✓ **Maintain earnest communication and shared commitment to the goal.**
- ✓ **Manage partners' expectations around common goals, recognizing that these goals may be prioritized differently within each organization.**
- ✓ **Understand that government agencies operate within mandates and guidelines and respond to changing political winds.**
- ✓ **Approach potential government partners with an offer rather than a request.**

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Cara Matteliano and Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker, 716-852-2857

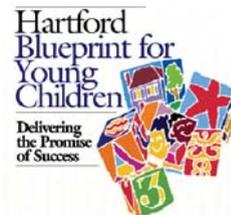
## Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

**Priority addressed:** Early childhood development

**Level of government:** City

**Geography served:** Urban

**Partnership launch:** 2004



Ensure long-term sustainability, maximize impact, and enable the public sector to do more outside of funding stream constraints—these are three reasons why the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving led an effort to join with municipal government to create the Hartford Blueprint for Young Children.



Through this public-philanthropic partnership, the foundation developed a framework to support the implementation of comprehensive, coordinated services for young children and their families. Grants from the foundation and other national and local funders—coupled with in-kind contributions from the city of Hartford, Hartford Public Schools, the Connecticut Commission on Children, and the foundation—supported the creation of a community blueprint for early childhood services.

Most notably, the partnership has developed the mayor's Office for Young Children and subsequently a city Department of Families, Children, Youth, and Recreation. The foundation has maximized its impact by using the bully pulpit of the mayor's office to stress the importance of early childhood education, greater coordination and consolidation of services, and greater citizen engagement on issues relating to young children and families. Through relationships

between municipal and state governments, the partnership is seeking to better align state and local policies and services.

Working in a fragmented, uncoordinated service environment, negotiating organizational cultures, handling decision-making processes, and coping with municipal staff changes have been surmountable challenges, but the foundation has emerged with key lessons for working with the public sector.

### Lessons Learned

- ✓ **Changing the system is essential, but it's not easy and doesn't happen overnight.**
- ✓ **Have the flexibility to make rapid decisions as necessary.**
- ✓ **Local, state, and federal politics will directly affect decision making.**
- ✓ **High-level city staff and budget conditions are likely to change from one administration to another.**

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Richard Sussman, 860-548-1888

## Lincoln Community Foundation

**Priority addressed:** Families and neighborhoods

**Level of government:** City, state, and federal

**Geography served:** Urban, suburban, rural

**Partnership launch:** 1998



Existing at the intersection of the public, private, and philanthropic sectors, community foundations are well-positioned to develop local solutions to growing national challenges. That's been the experience of the Lincoln Community Foundation with Lincoln Community Learning Centers (CLC) in Nebraska. The CLCs have developed a service-delivery model guided by the philosophy that schools and communities must work together to build strong families, healthier neighborhoods, and a brighter future for Lincoln. Originally piloted ten years ago in four schools, CLCs now exist in 25 schools, including all Title I elementary and middle schools and one Title I high school.

The foundation funded the initial grant for a community feasibility study and provided funds to launch the first four pilot CLCs. In addition to philanthropic contributions, the initiative is financed



through a blended public-funding stream composed of contributions from the U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century program, Title I, and the Nebraska departments of Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development, as well as labor and services from the Lincoln Housing Authority and Lincoln Public Schools. Multiple

changes in citywide leadership—including three mayoral and superintendent transitions—challenged the coordination of service delivery and sustainability of funding from public and private sources. Nonetheless, Lincoln CLCs have received local and national recognition.

### Lessons Learned

- ✓ Expect priorities to change with leadership at the federal, state, and local levels.
- ✓ Know that when local budgets are cut and city administration downsizes, service-provider layoffs can disrupt your program.
- ✓ Identify the common mission and keep it at the center of the work.
- ✓ Remember that the successes far exceed the challenges.

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Barbara Bartle, 402-474-2345

## Mason County Community Foundation, Affiliate of Parkersburg Area Community Foundation



Parkersburg Area Community  
Foundation

**Priority addressed:** Youth development

**Level of government:** County

**Geography served:** Rural

**Partnership launch:** 2008

Founded in 2004, the Mason County Community Foundation (MCCF) serves a low-wealth, rural West Virginia community. After receiving numerous requests to support local youth programs and projects, MCCF developed a unique public-philanthropic partnership with the Mason County Commission. To cultivate this partnership and raise community assets to meet this need, foundation leaders secured a challenge grant from a regional private foundation and the West Virginia Grantmakers Association. They also constructed a community challenge program to build a field-of-interest fund—the Mason County Fund for Youth—to support grants for youth development.

The county commissioners typically fund many youth-development projects, so they were enthusiastic when the community foundation wanted to create a permanent youth grant fund. The commissioners have seen firsthand, through their representative on the MCCF advisory committee, how MCCF has used the Mason County Fund for Youth to address the needs of local youngsters. Over the past two years, the county

commission has continued to provide an annual gift to the Mason County Fund for Youth. One commissioner continues as an MCCF advisory committee member. The commission's gift is presented each year with an endorsement of the community foundation's efforts to build a better quality of life for area youth.



### Lessons Learned

- ✓ Make a case by demonstrating the common interests of the public and philanthropic sectors.
- ✓ Building philanthropy and developing partnerships with government take time; patience is important.
- ✓ Understand that local governments have many competing interests.
- ✓ Know that the case to support your cause must be compelling and a high priority.

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Judy Sjostedt, 304-428-4438

## The National Fund for Workforce Solutions

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS) is a public-philanthropic partnership designed to strengthen and expand high-impact workforce-development initiatives to address a critically important issue in America: the crisis in job growth and preparedness. NFWS was established in 2007 to evaluate and bring to national scale innovative ways to prepare disadvantaged workers and job seekers for family-sustaining wages and careers.

The fund has 10 national investors—the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation, Hitachi Foundation, Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation, Prudential Foundation, Walmart Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, the California Endowment, and Microsoft

Corporation. These foundations and grantmakers have provided more than \$30 million to seed the fund's activities.

The U.S. Department of Labor has provided \$500,000 to support a national evaluation of the program's first two years, and the federal government's Social Innovation Fund awarded NFWS a two-year, \$7.7 million grant in 2010 to deepen its work with 10 sites and expand to six additional regions. NFWS currently invests in 31 sites across the country. The Council on Foundations serves as the lead partner for the investors.

The NFWS model incorporates five objectives: (1) creating a regional public-private funder collaborative, (2) organizing workforce partnerships between employers and training providers to meet the needs of workers and businesses, (3)

targeting specific industry sectors, (4) building career-advancement pathways for workers and job seekers, and (5) coordinating local workforce-development activities to align resources. To date, the national investment has leveraged more than \$120 million in resources from nearly 300 local public and philanthropic funding sources, including 140 foundations (29 community foundations), 36 publicly funded workforce-investment boards, 22 United Way agencies, 12 community colleges, and 60 local and state governmental agencies.

Through the unique approach of NFWS, foundations have discovered a valuable way to engage leaders in other fields to address issues of poverty, family stability, and community development, while giving them a front-row seat in stabilizing and rebuilding local economies.

Three community foundations share their partnership experiences on the following pages.



## Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines

**Priority addressed:** Workforce development

**Level of government:** Federal

**Geography served:** Urban, suburban, rural

**Partnership launch:** 2007



The Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines is a mid-size grantmaker serving a metropolitan area with rural, urban, and suburban communities and affiliates. Since 2007, the foundation has provided leadership and funding for the Central Iowa Works Funders Collaborative, a \$400,000 public-private partnership, to identify regional workforce challenges and develop common solutions within each sector. The foundation's funds are matched and/or coinvested with funds from government, business, and other philanthropic donors. The intent is to support education and training programs that meet identified market needs and link unemployed and underemployed workers with high-quality job opportunities. The effort also addresses such issues as adult education, entrepreneurship, and small-business development.

The program focuses on placing people into jobs that have career paths and pay livable wages, and the project has developed workforce partnerships that bring together employers and other key stakeholders from selected industries. Their goal is to develop innovations to improve workforce-development strategies and career-advancement opportunities for low-wage or disenfranchised workers.

Central Iowa Works is one of 31 local affiliates of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS), a \$130 million philanthropy-led, public-private partnership. Through the NFWS, the initiative received funding from the federal government's Social Innovation Fund. The foundation allowed its funding to be leveraged with other dollars to produce greater impact than it could have achieved working on its own. As

a result, the foundation has found that partnering with government agencies provides a significant opportunity to build relationships and leverage resources.

### Lessons Learned

- ✓ **Each partner should have a clear understanding of the other's expectations, funding requirements, and evaluation requirements.**
- ✓ **Leading partnerships without an abundance of best-practice models as a guide can be a challenge.**
- ✓ **Getting financial commitments from the business sector—beyond staffing and in-kind resources—is difficult in hard economic times.**

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Kristi Knous, 515-883-2626



## Greater New Orleans Foundation

**Priority addressed:** Workforce development

**Level of government:** City and federal

**Geography served:** Urban, suburban, rural

**Partnership launch:** 2010



GREATER NEW ORLEANS  
FOUNDATION

*For a vibrant region.*

The Greater New Orleans Foundation serves the 13 parishes of a diverse metropolitan region. Since the historic devastation of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the foundation has played a key role in regional recovery, coordinating efforts with national and local foundations and state and local officials to bring hundreds of millions of dollars in federal aid to the area. The foundation continues to work with city officials and leaders on cross-sector partnerships in housing, education, the environment, and workforce development to ensure philanthropic and public resources complement each other and achieve mutual goals.

In early 2011, the foundation and mayor announced formation of the New Orleans Regional Workforce Funders Collaborative, an initiative designed to prepare the region's workers for sustainable, family-supporting careers in health

care and biosciences, while reducing training and recruitment costs for area employers. Although the partnership is in its early stages, the public and philanthropic funders have reached consensus on the goals and are devising measures of success to evaluate the initiative. The project has attracted the support of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, which awarded the collaborative \$300,000 through a grant from the federal Social Innovation Fund.

### Lessons Learned

- ✓ Understand the politics of government funding, the resulting ramifications, and how best to overcome the obstacles that arise.
- ✓ Respect everyone's opinions and set a common agenda; recognize that one partner may need to take a lead position to advance the partnership's goals.
- ✓ Foundations serving as neutral conveners can help citizens develop trust in their local government.



**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Ellen Lee, 504-598-4663

## The New York Community Trust

**Priority addressed:** Workforce development

**Level of government:** City

**Geography served:** Urban

**Partnership launch:** 2004



The New York Community Trust is one of the oldest and largest community foundations in the United States. In 2004, the Trust, its NYC Workforce Funders Group (composed of 30 foundations and corporate philanthropies), and the NYC Department of Small Business Services joined forces to form the NYC Workforce Innovation Fund.

It aims to help the city's nonprofit workforce-development system better

serve its clients. This project achieves its goals primarily by supporting adult occupational training. The Innovation Fund has received support from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions.

The Innovation Fund developed from the NYC Workforce Funders Group, which was established by The Trust in 2001 for the express purpose of creating better services for New York City job seekers. Its first program, the NYC Sectors Initiative, is a \$3.2 million effort that has endured through political and personnel changes in city government. Although city agencies serve as designers and managers of New York's workforce-development system, they have publicly acknowledged the influence of the first NYC Sectors Initiative in shaping subsequent workforce-development policy, particularly industry-focused, one-stop centers.

In 2011, the Trust, the Funders Group, and the city launched a new initiative, the New York Alliance for Careers in Health

Care, which includes trade associations, unions, health-care employers, and nonprofit workforce-training groups.

### Lessons Learned

- ✓ **Mutual respect and understanding of the differing perspectives of foundation executives and government officials is critical.**
- ✓ **Success depends on the ability of a government agency to act independently, without regard to political concerns, and with the support of high-ranking elected officials.**
- ✓ **Partnerships will not work without commitment from the top rungs of government.**
- ✓ **Willing partners who are able to exercise independence and flexibility are necessary.**

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Patricia Jenny, 212-686-0010

Photo courtesy of Claire Bush

## Oshkosh Area Community Foundation

**Priority addressed:** Environment  
**Level of government:** City, state  
**Geography served:** Urban, rural  
**Partnership launch:** 2009



In 2009, the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation led a comprehensive visioning process for the city of Oshkosh, Wisc. When the surveys and focus groups were completed, the message was clear: 90 percent of participants wanted to see efforts to beautify the city. The foundation decided to make it happen and launched the Taking Root campaign, a tree-planting initiative aimed at improving the quality of life for everyone who lives, works, and plays in Oshkosh.

Not only did the foundation raise the necessary funds and collaborate with businesses and the government to plant the trees and build an endowment, but it also brought the community together as collaborators in a public-private partnership. Between the city of Oshkosh and state of Wisconsin, government funds contributed nearly a third of the total



project budget. In addition to securing public dollars for this project, the foundation's efforts have caused the city government to dramatically increase its funding of community beautification, from \$3,000 annually to \$150,000 over six years.

The partners are gaining recognition for their success. In March 2011, the foundation, the City of Oshkosh Parks and

Forestry Division, and the Ranger Services landscape firm were presented with the Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council's 2011 Award for Project Partnership and Oshkosh's inaugural Community Partner Award. In July 2011, the foundation was awarded the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association's Partnership Award for its work in the community, including the Taking Root project.

### Lesson Learned

- ✓ One of the challenges of frequent partnerships with municipal governments is that the municipality can become dependent on the foundation to accomplish its projects. The foundation has worked hard to maintain equality in our collaborations.

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Joy Wick, 920-426-3993

Photo courtesy of the City of Oshkosh Parks and Forestry Division

## The Pittsburgh Foundation

**Priority addressed:** Human services

**Level of government:** County

**Geography served:** Urban, suburban

**Partnership launch:** 1997



For the past 14 years, The Pittsburgh Foundation has convened local foundations to support the Human Service Integration Fund, a flexible funding source to support projects and activities within the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS). Through this spend-down fund housed at The Pittsburgh Foundation, the funders collaborative directs pooled resources to projects that support DHS policy and planning, research and feasibility studies, project evaluation, fiscal restructuring, and staff and capital investments.

The projects that DHS proposes to the fund follow consistent service priorities, redesign administrative func-

tions and services, and maximize the use of state and federal funds. Since 2009, the fund has distributed almost \$2 million to support countywide activities and leverage national funding for projects and initiatives.

The funding collaborative serves as a mechanism for continuous and open conversation regarding the needs of the community, human-service agencies, and the DHS. The Pittsburgh funding community not only has a legacy of collaboration but a clear understanding of the impact of collaboration in creating community change.

### Lessons Learned

- ✓ Work with county government leaders to convene funders and other stakeholders to discuss community issues.
- ✓ Develop clear goals, guidelines, and expectations for the funding collaborative.
- ✓ Build strong relationships to facilitate open and honest communication.
- ✓ Support human-service agencies when faced with decreased funding and increased needs during times of economic downturn.

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Kevin Jenkins and Lauren Mikus, 412-391-5122

Photo courtesy of Joshua Franzos



## Telluride Foundation

**Priority addressed:** Health, human services, and economic development

**Level of government:** Local, county, state, and federal

**Geography served:** Rural, frontier

**Partnership launch:** 2009



TELLURIDE FOUNDATION

In 2007, the Telluride Foundation in southwest Colorado began focused outreach to the low-wealth, resource-extraction communities of the Paradox Basin. The Paradox Community Trust (PCT) emerged with a goal to be a permanent, regionally focused, locally controlled fund to support the key pillars of development—education, health, human services, and community building—and anticipate the effects of a resource-extraction economy.

In 2009, the Telluride Foundation received stimulus funds to build human and financial capital in the low-wealth Paradox Basin. These funds provided an initial investment to introduce and prove the PCT concept to the local communities.

An advisory committee of seven local leaders, of which at least three are elected officials, oversees the PCT program. The foundation believes the support of the local government is essential in developing communities where entrepreneurship and community-networks can thrive and actively seeks their partnership and input. In addition, with help from the



state of Colorado, the PCT will use a one-time state grant from severance-tax funds to establish an endowment that will guarantee a permanent and locally controlled investment in the Paradox Basin. At a time of tight budgets and limited government services for rural areas, a small state investment will ensure that the region's communities are able to sustain economic development activities and grow their networks.

In the past four years, the PCT partnership has leveraged \$1.5 million from foundations, the federal government, and other partners. Within the next

two years, the PCT hopes to use current funds and proven results to leverage grants and donations from the state of Colorado, the federal government, corporations and businesses, and local estate planning. The PCT has seen the development of eight new nonprofit organizations, five social enterprises, and two cooperatives while providing more than 1,800 hours of training and technical assistance to community-based organizations.

### Lessons Learned

- ✓ **Focus on results; results will be your best marketing tool.**
- ✓ **Leverage assets from multiple sources.**
- ✓ **Localize decision making (the PCT Advisory Committee consists entirely of local leaders from the communities of the Paradox Basin).**

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Karl Shaddock, 970-728-8717

## West Central Initiative

**Priority addressed:** Economic development

**Level of government:** Township, city, county, and federal

**Geography served:** Rural

**Partnership launch:** 1995



When West Central Minnesota's Regional Development Commission dissolved, West Central Initiative (WCI) agreed to step in as an Economic Development District (EDD) designee to provide economic development planning services to the region. Without an EDD designee, local communities would be ineligible to apply for federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding.

An annual EDA planning grant that is matched by WCI ensures staffing for no-cost economic development services to the region's communities and for developing the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. In addition, WCI administers a regional EDD board consisting of local government representatives, elected officials, business representatives, and community members.

WCI offers technical assistance to communities by helping identify potential projects and working with the communities to develop the federal grant application. Because of WCI's EDD designation, communities in the region have been able to access federal dollars that otherwise would not have been available. The funding has helped attract new businesses and many jobs to the region.

While the EDA encourages many grant applications, the reality is many of these

applications are not accepted. WCI helps communities examine their project's likelihood of success before they apply.

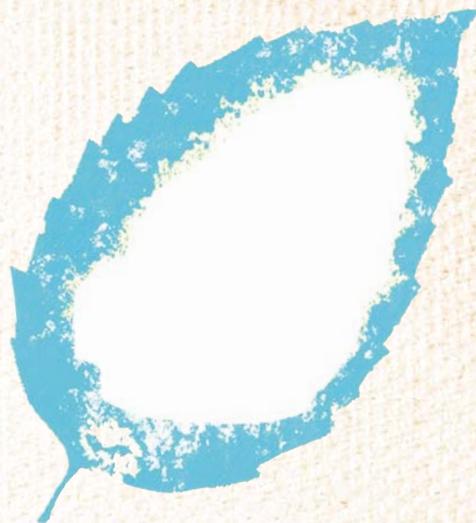
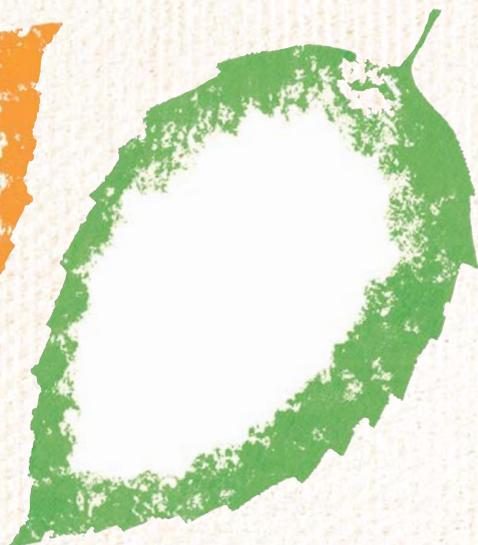
WCI has an organizational and governance structure that allows it to be more flexible than typical EDDs. Sometimes it is a challenge for the foundation's economic development partners to understand and collaborate within this unconventional structure.

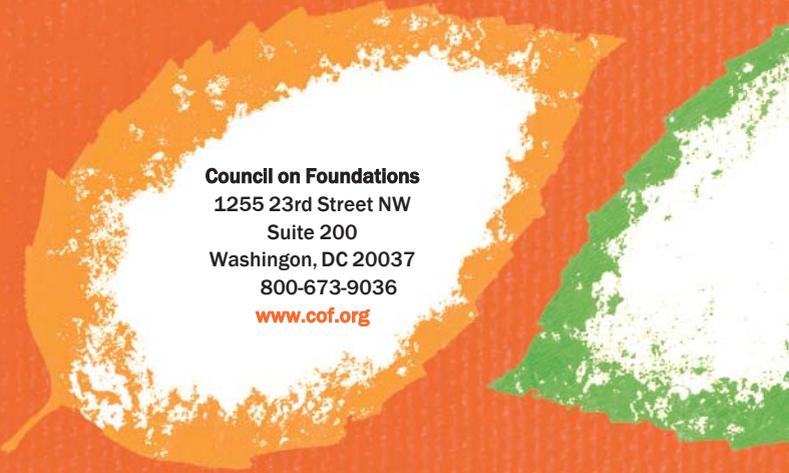
### Lessons Learned

- ✓ It is a tremendous benefit when multiple communities develop effective partnerships—not just financially but to build relationships.
- ✓ Being involved in a partnership is a good way for an organization to be open to a changing environment and not become isolated within its own work.

**Visit:** <http://ppp.cof.org/partnerships> **Learn more:** Nancy Straw, 218-739-2239

Photo courtesy of Sheri Booms Holm





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