



Strategic Leadership Grants: A Call for Proposals

The Community Foundation's vision **to build a vibrant community with great opportunities for all** serves as the basis for our values: **hope and opportunity, particularly for youth; collaborative community goals and decision making; and an inclusive community.**

This vision was reaffirmed in August 2019, when the Community Foundation began a strategic planning process to guide where we could make the largest impact with our investments of grant dollars, community engagement, and advocacy. The process involved surveying our stakeholders, community leaders, donors, trustees, volunteers, and staff to determine the areas of focus. The planning process resulted in three strategic goals:

Advancing Educational Attainment (Education):

- Lifelong literacy, including STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) and financial literacy
- Educational equity (opportunities for every student to achieve their full potential)

Fostering a Dynamic, Local Economy (Community and Economic Development):

- Workforce supports including affordable daycare, housing, and transportation
- Business supports such as entrepreneurship, development, and capacity of local community and economic development partners

Enhancing Community Trust and Promoting Prosperity for All (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion):

- Through cultural competence, dignity, and social justice, catalyze community to embrace inclusive prosperity and promote the development of spaces where all voices are valued

Many of our community members face barriers to success. Here are some data points that support these areas of investment. Note all data is pre-COVID, which has highlighted and exacerbated racial inequities.

- Countywide, only 38.6% of our students are reading at grade-level in third grade, but the ZIP code where a child attends school drastically influences their literacy. Districts less than a few miles apart range from less than 5% of students proficient to over 60%.
- It is estimated that 10%, or 20,000 members, of our adult population are functionally illiterate.
- People of color in Muskegon County are three times less likely to be employed than their white counterparts, based on the national average.
- Muskegon County faces a critical shortage of quality, affordable daycare providers, which are critical both to early childhood development and family economic mobility.
- 36% of our children live in poverty, but if you happen to be an African American child, you have a 65% chance of living in poverty.

These inequities cannot persist in our community if we are to realize a Muskegon County where all people have the opportunity to thrive. The Community Foundation will support programs or projects that implement strategies related to education, community and economic development, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Who can apply: Grant requests must be initiated by nonprofit organizations, including schools, governmental units, and faith-based organizations.

How much is available: Up to \$250,000 will be granted this grant round. We envision multiple grants will be supported, with an average grant size of \$25,000.

Grants are more competitive when they demonstrate:

- Collaboration among community partners, such as nonprofits, schools, faith communities, government, and neighborhood associations.
- Financial support from other sources and a plan to sustain the efforts/programming beyond the life of the grant.
- Use or leverage of existing community assets.
- Data-driven strategies and utilization of local voice in program design and evaluation.

Timeline:

- March 1, 2021 – Application process opens
- March 17, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. – Idea Lab: Education and Lifelong Literacy. Register here: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwpceGhqjwvHtP4NR_wKhvflUwcObsYkOEq
- March 24, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. – Idea Lab: Community and Economic Development. Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUpceqqgTquEtViAPWgeduXaTNjA67ZF4X6>
- March 31, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. – Idea Lab: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEKdeiqpj0iHNAiXYJXcohc3OjOEEGj4bwh>
- April 15, 2021 – Application of Intent due. Visit www.cffmc.submittable.com to view and submit
- April 30, 2021 – Application Deadline
- June 30, 2021 – Grant Decisions, Notification of Awards

We anticipate that successful applicants will have conversations with the Community Foundation and other community partners prior to submitting their Application of Intent. While collaborative conversation during COVID can be a challenge, our community investment staff will help facilitate conversations with potential partners and will host focus-area based **Idea Labs** (via Zoom – register using links above) to help identify potential partnerships. All applicants should plan to attend the focus area-based idea lab that your potential project aligns with or have a conversation with community investment staff.

Measuring impact:

The Strategic Leadership Grant round is designed to achieve measurable impact. Be prepared to share your plan to measure your outputs and outcomes as it relates to the specific focus areas of education, community and economic development, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Grant considerations:

There are a number of factors that will impact your grants consideration, including: Where is your organization in its journey to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion? What efforts are being made within your organization to grow its cultural competency and to ensure your programming promotes opportunities for all? How are you engaging community in your work? As a learning organization, what data and best practices are you demonstrating? We are committed to providing support to organizations that are still building their capacity and fostering these values in their work.

Decisions will be made by our Distribution Committee, a committee of board and community members. Final grant decisions will be made by the Community Foundation's Board of Trustees.

Questions or comments?

To register for an idea lab or for questions or comments, please contact the Community Foundation's community investment department at 231-722-4538 or grants@muskegonfoundation.org.