



Lake County Funders Call

Wednesday, April 13, 2022
11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Participants

Satori Bailey, Hunter Family Foundation
Frank Baiocchi, Hunter Family Foundation
Angela Baran, Healthcare Foundation of Northern Lake County
Bruce Boyd, Arabella Advisors
Asia Canady, Hunter Family Foundation
Damon Coleman, Lake County Community Development
Courtney Combs, The Lake County Community Foundation
Andrea Danks, North Shore Gas
Catherine Game, Brushwood Center
Gale Graves, United Way
Cassandra Hiller, Lake County Health Department
Willard Hunter, Hunter Family Foundation
Stew Kerr, First Presbyterian Church
Anne King, Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital
Jawanza Malone, Wieboldt Foundation

Maggie Morales, The Lake County Community Foundation
Loretta Namovic, Baum Family Foundation
Brenda O'Connell, Lake County Govt
Terri Olian, Highland Park Community Foundation
Leah Perri, The Lake County Community Foundation
Cheri Richardson, Gorter Family Foundation
Maria Sievert, The Lake County Community Foundation
Quinton Snodgrass, United Way
Mirja Spooner Haffner, Brushwood Center
Jeannette Velazquez, Great Lakes Credit Union
Emily Weber, The Lake County Community Foundation
Greg Weider, Lake County Bar Association
Anna Yankelev, Lake County Health Department

Welcome & Call Goals

Emily Weber, Director of Programs and Community Investment for The Lake County Community Foundation, thanked participants for joining the call and noted the goals for the conversation were to:

- Hear updates on the state of Lake County and how our health and human service providers are responding
- Learn about the Rebuilding IL Health & Human Services Workforce in the Wake of Covid-19

Grantmaking for Impact - Jawanza Malone, Executive Director, The Wieboldt Foundation

- Where are you having impact as a funder? Often we are solving problems downstream. What we need to do is focus on solving problems upstream.
 - Quote shared: "It's not that they can't see the solution. They can't see the problem"

- Quote shared: “Successful people ask better, questions, and as a result, they get better answers”
- The beauty of philanthropy is that it can move more nimbly and responsibly than government. Philanthropy can innovate in ways government can only dream of. What are we doing with that power?
- **Funding Community Organizing**
 - Cost-effective
 - Evidence-based
 - Human-centered

Q & A

What are community organizing best practices the philanthropic sector can do?

- How are we engaging the community experts we give money to in a way that informs our strategy? Conducting focus groups is one way to do this.
- How much room or space do we give to those that we fund to report back to us and collaborate with us?
- How can we give them the same platform as a speaker like me or a donor? How are we hearing the wisdom to those we are granting?
- The key to being a good organizer is being a great listener. How well do we listen to each other?
- Can we align our funding to help certain sectors/groups be able to move further than with our simple, one-time or recurring grants?

Q: Often philanthropy takes on this missionary quality (going into community areas of need, granting money, patting themselves on the back) but in reality, that approach does not empower anyone. Just handing out the money without teaching people the skills is not empowering. When I look at Lake County and the things that are happening in Chicago, I see vast opportunity for small grants programs and for funders to engage with local and smaller leaders to ask them: what are some of the issues you have and how can we give to that and collaborate?

One thing we are launching this year (Wieboldt foundation) is a capacity building cohort. On top of the grant, we bring them together to create some peer-sharing opportunities and then give them individual coaching around community organizing skills and monthly sessions around organizational development. (Time management, fundraising, fiscal management, HR concerns, etc.). We launched it because we know the gen op grants were needed but then the extra help that go beyond the grant that is made to make sure these groups have long-term perpetuity.

Q: Community organizing is most effective way to support affordable housing issues. To secure community support is organizing at the community level. Dollar for dollar, you are not going to match the impact you could have by changing public policy and helping people have greater interest and say in what is going on in their neighborhoods. You can have a series of workshops, but it gets you only so far. The reality is there are laws on the books that prohibit affordable housing in some areas that inhibit innovation needed in other areas, and there are laws that currently don't exist that could help more people. When you look at who has access to public housing, single, adult males are not represented. But when you dig into the decision-making, if single, adult men do not have access to affordable housing, where does that leave us. Research in Chicago – the data shows us that the majority of ppl involved in violent criminal activity are homeless. You can draw a direct correlation there or indirect, but the reality is an underlying cause for why ppl are doing things they shouldn't do is that they are not stably housed.

How can we make affordable housing more accessible? What impact would that have on community violence and safety?

During COVID, philanthropic sector loosened reigns, but as we move away from COVID, we have to retain that. Many times people don't know how to apply, they don't have the resources or know how to apply. I think if we want to get funds into grassroots organizations, we must connect with them and support them. They are impacting the community but often don't know how to frame it in a way funders can receive it.

Affordable housing is one of those key issues that impacts so many other issues. Education for example. We pay for schools based on property taxes. This in at of itself is inequitable and at the top of the river. How do you bring people together to address those issues when it's a huge boulder?

- As I suggested, I believe it is opening the doors to our grantees. One, how do we loosen the reigns in our grant making to allow innovation? I firmly believe our job as funders is to cultivate innovation. The system is not working for vast swaths of our population, but we keep going as if it is. The pandemic while it was a stressor on all of our systems, it also indicated to me, some vulnerabilities that exist. How do we work on these vulnerabilities when we aren't faced with a global pandemic? Cultivating innovation by opening the door to our grantees to support what they want to work on. Second, by opening the doors to the grantees, that also helps to broaden our horizons. There are groups who have been changing education system, there are groups who have been wanting to do this on the ground. It is a bit of an indicator of what is possible. As many times people told me I can't change things, it propelled me to try and change things. By allowing vulnerability and opening the doors to the ppl we support and maybe those we don't support but are in the field, what can we learn from that exchange?

What have you changed within the foundation to align with how community organizing works?

This foundation has been supporting community organizing for decades. One thing that is different is how we look at the impact we have. The strategy we had historically employed was to support groups long-term (not multi-year but how can we be as much support as possible) and unless something crazy happens, once you're in you're in. But as I dug into the past reports and applications, I began to see patterns. There were groups who began to just excel. They leveraged the support to get bigger and better. There were other groups that were largely flat, the way they came in they stayed. And other groups not performing. Looking at it with 5 indicators allowed us to see the collateral impact these groups were able to have. How is the community as a whole form that community being there? Similar to having a child in your home, there. What is the role of that organization in the broader community other than the metrics they are saying they will accomplish?

How has community organizing changed in light of digital access?

Allowed for innovation and reaching people in ways we couldn't before. More and more groups are relying more on social media and digital media. But there is a lot we miss when we aren't in person. Relying on relationships built on a digital platform is real but there is an element that is missing. The magic of organizing is in-person collaboration.

Next Lake County Funders Call - 11 a.m. on Wednesday, May 11, 2022