
Community Development Grant Program Update: *This grant cycle is briefly on hold as we use information from a recent program evaluation to inform and improve our program over the 2018-2019 fiscal year. We ask for your patience during this time; our goal is to ultimately increase the impact of your work. Stay tuned for more information about our next grant cycle and Community Development strategy, we will share new deadlines and grant information here as it unfolds.*

Since 2013, Triangle Community Foundation has invested more than \$1.2 million in 42 local organizations addressing poverty through our Community Development focus area. This support has included funding for organizational assessments to reveal capacity strengths and challenges, subsequent support of capacity building projects, and leadership development workshops through a peer Learning Cohort. In the summer of 2018, we conducted an evaluation of this focus area with the goal of using what we learned to inform our future strategy.

Our Evaluation Process

- Grant applications and reports from the past 4 grant cycles were examined to identify for trends in applicant and grantee organizations to better understand the organizations and populations we reach through this program, and those we do not.
- A survey of our grant partners was completed to measure perceptions about the grant process, the overall impact of the funds, and the Learning Cohort on their organizational capacity.
- Our grant partners, facilitated by consultants, were offered space to provide their perspective on the process and impact of our program.

What We Learned

1. Investing in capacity building is impactful and important
 - Our grant partners have overwhelmingly benefited from both organization assessments, capacity building projects, and professional networking.
 - Assessments have been an essential learning tool for organizations, providing them with new information or a different focus for their own capacity building efforts.
 - Most grant partners focused their time on multiple capacity areas, showing that capacity projects are needed across the board and more flexible spending is needed for organizations to better tailor efforts.
2. Increased outreach efforts are needed for more inclusive grantmaking and impact
 - Organizations in Chatham and Wake counties are awarded funding at a disproportionately lower rate.
 - Our efforts are notably not reaching LGBTQIA+ serving organizations in the Triangle, a demographic that experience disparities in health, housing, and employment at a high rate.

- Funding has typically been awarded to organizations with larger budgets or that are older in age.
3. Additional research and evaluation is needed to inform this focus area
 - We received mixed feedback on the learning cohort; as we continue investing in leadership development, we plan to engage our nonprofit partners in designing it.
 - There is opportunity for us to improve our evaluation and monitoring practices to more explicitly align our program outcomes to data collection efforts.

What's Next

We are committed to using this information to inform changes and improve our Community Development programs over the 2018-2019 fiscal year. This will change our previous timeline for grants and we ask for your patience as we revamp this program so that we can increase the impact of your work. Our partnership is vital to the health of our region, and we are committed to this ecosystem of change in the Triangle. Stay tuned for more information about our 2018-19 Grant Cycle and our overall Community Development strategy as it unfolds.