

Going All In:

**Insisting on Racial Equity
Amplifying Community Voice
Influencing Public Policy &
Systems**

About This Project

Going All In is the result of CFLeads' *Igniting the Future of Community Foundations* research project, launched in 2019. It builds on the significant progress community foundations have made in the previous decade and responds to the growing desire for a common path forward to achieve better outcomes for all.

This progress is in part a response to the challenge that the Monitor Institute issued to the field in 2005 when it published [On The Brink of New Promise: The Future of U.S. Community Foundations](#). *On the Brink* urged the field to make three critical shifts to stay relevant: from institution to the community; from financial assets to long-term leadership; and from competitive independence to coordinated impact.

CFLeads took up the challenge, creating a national network of community foundations eager to increase their impact and advance their community leadership practice. Together, we created a [Framework for Community Leadership](#), identified [five core competencies](#), and developed powerful [peer learning opportunities](#) to advance that practice.

Since we first embarked on our research last fall, the world has dramatically changed. The focus of community foundations' work has shifted with the emergence of COVID-19 and the need to respond rapidly to a growing public health crisis and economic devastation. At the same time, community foundations across the country have spoken out about the need to remedy the racial injustices that have sparked nationwide protests.

This document serves as a printable summary that community foundations can reference and share with their boards and staff. It provides an overview of our findings and select examples from our Advisory Committee members of the work being done across the country in the three areas of momentum outlined in this summary.

We encourage all to visit our *Going All In* web portal for many more examples and details about our research.

www.cfleads.org/going-all-in

AREAS OF MOMENTUM

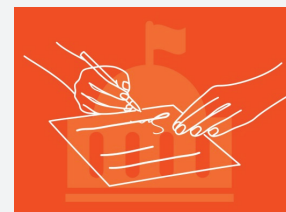
With *Going All In*, we are lifting up three interdependent areas where we see momentum in the community foundation sector. Community foundation leaders have identified these focus areas that, taken together, are critical to creating resilient, equitable and prosperous communities where all can thrive.



Insisting on Racial Equity



Amplifying Community Voice



Influencing Public Policy & Systems

Going All In on Community Leadership

Building on their unique attributes—including their local relationships, independence, permanence, broad community betterment missions and public charity status—community foundations are stepping up to serve as vital partners, problem-solvers and leaders in the local landscape.

Our research unveiled a key finding:

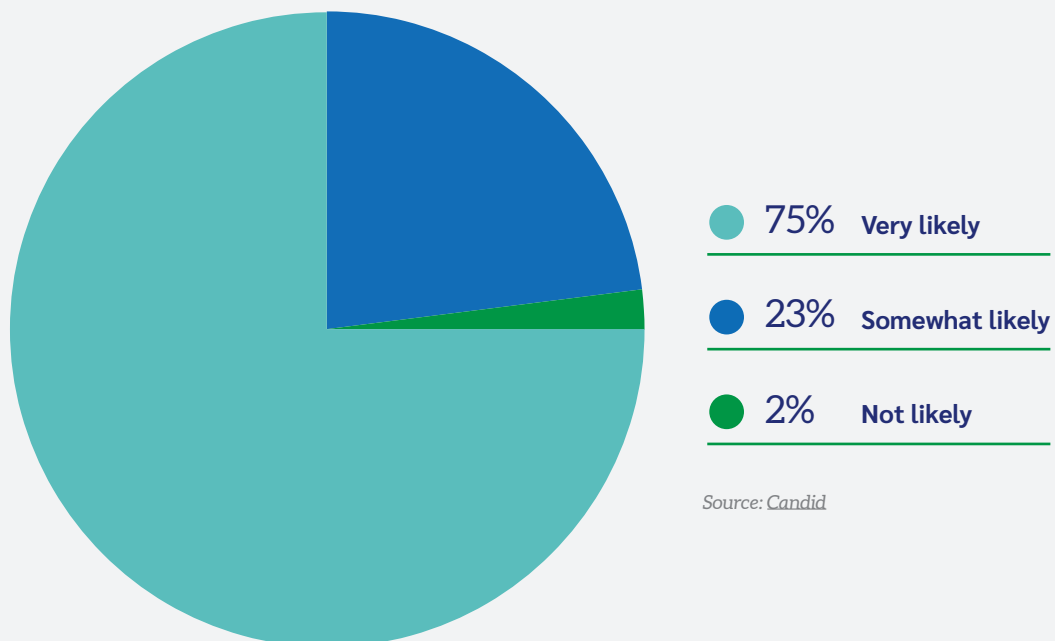
98% of community foundations plan to expand or deepen their community leadership work over the next few years.

This astonishing finding demonstrates the universal recognition by community foundations of their important community leadership role. No longer focused solely on

good grantmaking and serving as charitable banks, community foundations from coast to coast are leaning into the many other actions they can take to help build strong communities and push for better outcomes for all.

Notably, this is not limited to those community foundations with greater assets; the commitment to community leadership is sector-wide. This progress has been supported by bold leadership across the field, important investment in the sector by national philanthropy, and the willingness of community foundation leaders to invest time and talent in building their community leadership muscle.

How likely is it that your foundation will be expanding or deepening its work in the area of community leadership in the next few years?



Source: Candid

Insisting on Racial Equity

By 2050, people of color will become the majority in the United States. A diverse, multicultural workforce will be a boon to our economy—increasing the GDP by up to [6 percent](#) by 2028 and by up to [\\$8 trillion](#) by 2050—if we can ensure widespread equity and shared prosperity for all. But currently, in nearly every measure of well-being—income, health, education, safety—the outcomes for people of color are far worse than those for White people.

There is significant documentation that these inequities are the result of systems, policies and practices that have created barriers to prosperity for people of color, such as [redlining](#) and the implementation of the [GI Bill](#). These policies and practices created a more challenging path to higher education which, combined with discrimination in hiring and housing, has limited the creation of generational wealth for people of color across the country.

Insisting on racial equity matters to community foundations because our communities are increasingly diverse, and the persistent racial inequities that exist across the country call for race-conscious strategies that eliminate barriers and build a stronger society for all.

Reorienting Around Racial Equity

Community foundations are responding by re-shaping their missions around racial equity. **The Chicago Community Trust** is addressing the region's racial wealth gap between Latinx, Black and White households. The Trust has identified closing that gap as its “moonshot” and has fully integrated this commitment into its [strategic plan](#).

Taking a Leadership Role

Community foundations are also assuming a leadership role in engaging donors, stakeholders and residents around racial equity. The **Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo** was an early

Median net worth of households in 2016:

\$171,000 White

\$21,000 Latinx

\$17,000 Black

Prosperity Now, 2020

leader with its report, [The Racial Equity Dividend: Buffalo's Greatest Opportunity](#), which identified an equity divide that was preventing all residents from prospering, and now convenes 250 partners focused on targeted systems change through its [Racial Equity Roundtable](#).

Operationalizing Equity Internally

Community foundations are also beginning to address racial equity within their internal operations, but there is still much work to be done. Sixty-three percent of community foundations have committed to greater diversity at the board level but lag in other areas, including staff (32%), senior management (15%), and vendor (14%) diversity.

However, almost all (89%) said they learn about community aspirations and needs from their staff's participation in civic life. Isaiah Oliver, President & CEO of the **Community Foundation of Greater Flint** asks the question, ***“If we get most of our information from staff, and they are not diverse, who are we in touch with?”***

More than half (52%) of our survey respondents ask grant-seekers to provide demographic or diversity data. Sixty percent of respondents screen applicants for competitive grants for values aligning with their mission and about half of that group do the same screening for recipients of grants from donor-advised funds.

Amplifying Community Voice

A strong democracy depends on an engaged and informed citizenry. However, the current lack of trust in government and other institutions is threatening the effective functioning of society.

Amplifying community voice matters to community foundations because they exist to serve their communities. As local leaders and connectors, community foundations must ensure there is active, meaningful participation by the people whose lives are most affected by the policies, systems and structures in the communities they serve.

Convening Community Conversations

Bringing the community together to discuss common challenges has been a core function of community foundations for some time. Seventy-six percent of community foundations intend to increase their capacity to hold these convenings.

The **Columbus Foundation** hosts [The Big Table](#), an annual day of conversation and community building across the central Ohio region. Ivey Allen from the **Foundation for the Mid South** always strives to have more than one voice at the table representing a particular sector, community or issue, noting that: ***"If you want to convene and have effective community conversations, you need to include various voices and perspectives."***

Elevating Resident Voice & Power

Community foundations are recognizing the need to ensure that residents, particularly those

who have previously been excluded from local decisionmaking, should help inform and lead local action, as this often results in more effective and sustainable solutions. The **Innovia Foundation** established [local leadership councils](#) in Eastern Washington and North Idaho to advise its work, recognizing that local leaders are best equipped to diagnose and solve their problems.

Investing in Local Journalism

Local journalism is vital to a well-functioning democracy and community foundations are supporting community journalism in creative ways. The **Seattle Foundation** partnered with the *Seattle Times* to create a new community-focused [investigative journalism fund](#) in 2019. The **Philadelphia Foundation** partnered to create the [Lenfest Institute for Journalism](#), advancing sustainable and quality local journalism in the digital age.

Fueling Participation in Democracy

As independent organizations with broad community betterment missions, community foundations are helping to bolster key democratic structures and processes, such as voter registration and Census 2020 completion initiatives. The **Albuquerque Community Foundation** helped form a coalition of funders called [New Mexico Counts](#) to help ensure all New Mexicans are counted in the census, securing funding for outreach to Indigenous communities and others historically difficult to reach.

59%

of Americans are not satisfied with the way democracy is working in the United States

Pew Research Center, 2020

50%

of all Americans have "hardly any confidence in the press"

General Social Survey, 2016

1/2

of local journalist positions in the U.S. have vanished over the past 15 years.

Expanding News Deserts

Influencing Public Policy & Systems

Government policies and programs affect almost every aspect of our lives, from housing, healthcare and the environment to education, transportation and safety. If we want to create equitable, inclusive and prosperous communities, it is necessary to focus on strengthening and/or reimagining policies and systems.

Influencing public policy and systems matters to community foundations because the challenges their communities face are too large to be solved by any one organization—or sector—alone. Community foundations' local connections, knowledge and resources give them the power to leverage long-lasting change in their communities.

Commissioning and Sharing Local Data

Good policy depends on good data. Forty-one percent of community foundations plan to increase their staff allocation for commissioning research. [Boston Indicators](#), hosted by **The Boston Foundation**, annually generates several major publications and curates ongoing data maps and tools. These efforts inform local policy discussions, program investments, and advocacy efforts that have influenced the passage of more than a dozen state laws.

Mobilizing Stakeholders Across Sectors

Recognizing that systems change requires multiple perspectives, community foundations plan to leverage their convening role to dedicate more time and staff resources to cross-sector partnerships than any other activity listed in our survey.

To address the COVID-19 pandemic, the **Greater Milwaukee Foundation** has mobilized a [Civic Response Team](#) made up of government, philanthropy, educators, nonprofits, healthcare and community representatives who are taking a collective approach to the public health crisis. The **Central Valley Community Foundation** is a lead funder of [Fresno DRIVE](#), an exhaustive

community process involving 150 civic entities and community-based organizations working to develop a 10-year investment plan to reduce economic racial disparities in Fresno.

Advocating for Public Policy Change

As public charities, community foundations are legally allowed to use their resources to help shape public policy. Over the past two decades, community foundations have increasingly funded policy advocacy and have spoken out themselves on specific public policy issues.

Forty-two percent of our survey respondents plan to devote more staff resources to policy advocacy. To do this well, community foundations need internal policies: the **Arizona Community Foundation** has created clear [guiding principles for policy engagement](#) across several issue areas, including arts and culture, health, education and community improvement.

As part of its [Substance Use Disorders Portfolio](#), **New Hampshire Charitable Foundation** is participating in a statewide comprehensive public-private initiative to tackle addiction. In California, the **San Francisco Foundation** recently worked across sectors to support the passage of [11 statewide bills](#) that will prevent homelessness, protect renters, preserve existing affordable housing and create new affordable homes in the region.

30%

of community foundation leaders said they gained more donors than they lost as a result of their policy work.

70% neither gained nor lost a substantial number of donors.

Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2020



Advisory Committee

Ivye L. Allen

Foundation for the Mid South

Fred Blackwell

The San Francisco Foundation

Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker

Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

Helene D. Gayle

The Chicago Community Trust

Ellen M. Gilligan

*Greater Milwaukee Foundation,
Advisory Committee Chair*

Paul S. Grogan

The Boston Foundation

Douglas F. Kridler

The Columbus Foundation

Tony Mestres

Seattle Foundation

Shelly O'Quinn

Innovia Foundation

Richard Ober

New Hampshire Charitable Foundation

Isaiah M. Oliver

Community Foundation of Greater Flint

Pedro A. Ramos

The Philadelphia Foundation

Randy Royster

Albuquerque Community Foundation

Ashley Swearengin

Central Valley Community Foundation

Steven G. Seleznow

Arizona Community Foundation

This project was guided by an Advisory Committee made up of 15 community foundation CEOs from across the country. It was informed by survey feedback from more than 150 community foundation leaders, conducted by Candid, and dozens of interviews conducted by CFLeads.

Thank you to CFLeads staff and to Project Director James Rooney for managing this project. Thank you to our supporters, including our community foundation investors and national funders, whose unrestricted support made this project possible.

What You Can Do



Visit the *Going All In* portal on our website for more promising illustrations, resources, and recommendations for building on this progress.

We feature numerous resources, including lists of organizations working to advance the community foundation sector.

We also offer many of our own resources including some specific tips for community foundations just getting started on their

community leadership journey, as well as for those further along the path, and for those ready to break barriers.

www.cfleads.org/going-all-in

CFLeads

Community Foundations
Leading Change

617-854-3547
info@cfleads.org