

CFLeads

Community Foundations
Leading Change

Community Leadership Field Guide for Community Foundations

July 2021

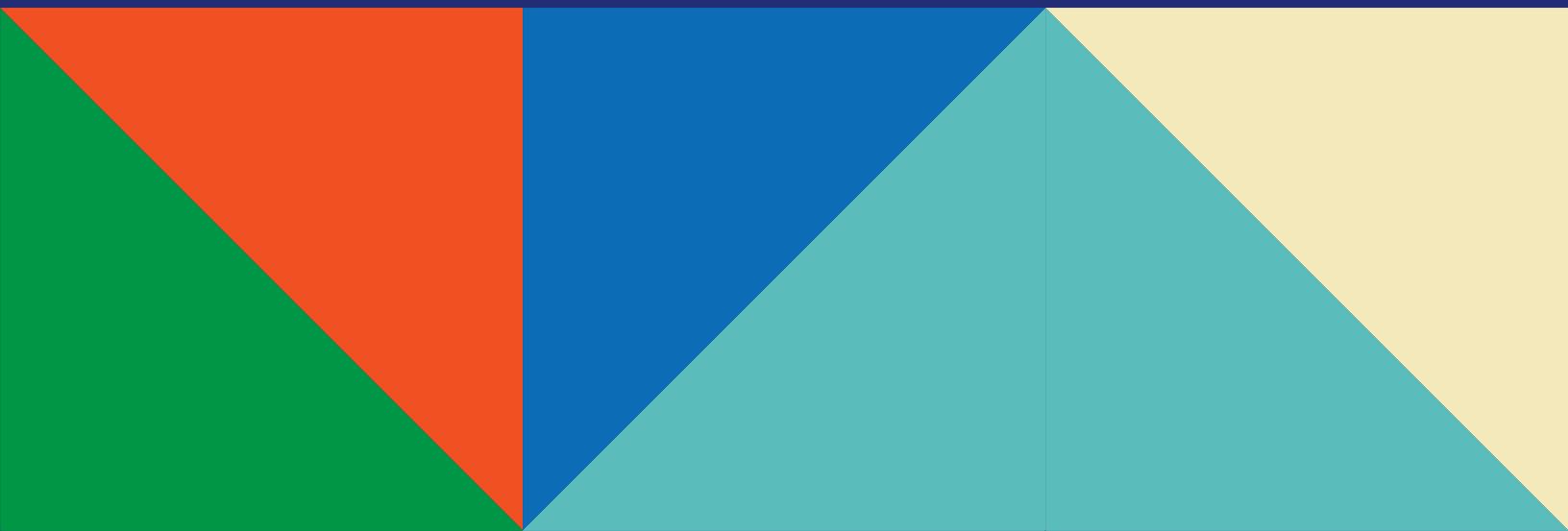




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Community Leadership Field Guide for Community Foundations

This document outlines the core practices, competencies and strategies needed for effective community leadership by community foundations. It serves as a visual explanation for how the different community leadership documents and resources created by CFLeads work together to help community foundations advance their work.

Framework for Community Leadership


The *Framework* serves as a foundational document for the field, using building blocks to outline the **PRACTICES** essential to consistent and effective leadership.

Five Competencies

Building on the practices, the five **COMPETENCIES** represent what is needed to be most effective in advancing community leadership strategies.

Going All In

Going All In highlights three **STRATEGIES** that the community foundation field has identified as having the potential for greatest community impact.

 To learn more about each of these resources, please visit cfleads.org.

Community Leadership Compass



Going All In

Going All In showcases the three community leadership strategies that the community foundation field has identified as having the potential for greatest community impact.

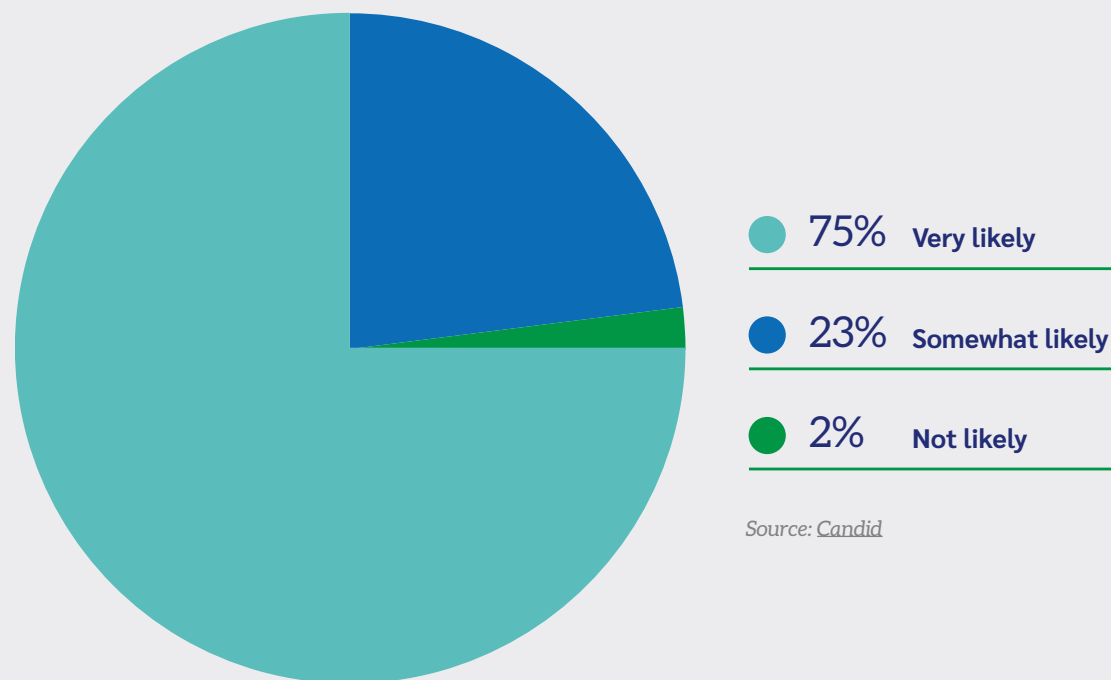
These strategies emerged from a research project conducted by CFLeads in 2019, where we set out to understand the environment in which community foundations are working and where they can add further value. We conducted a field-wide survey in partnership with Candid and heard from 152 community foundation leaders, well distributed by asset size, staff size and geography. We also interviewed dozens of

community foundation leaders and worked with an advisory committee to review, refine and disseminate the input and ideas we received from the field.

Our research unveiled a key finding:

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

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?



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.

With the [Going All In web portal](#), we are lifting up three interdependent areas in which we see momentum in the field.

Community foundation leaders have identified these focus areas that, taken together, are critical to creating resilient, equitable and prosperous communities where all can thrive.

This astonishing finding demonstrates the universal recognition by community foundations of their important community leadership role.

AREAS OF MOMENTUM



Insisting on Racial Equity



Amplifying Community Voice



Influencing Public Policy & Systems

To learn more about each of these resources, please visit cflleads.org.

Five Competencies

As a part of our ongoing community leadership work, we have identified five competencies that are critical to advancing effective community leadership strategies. These competencies build on the practices outlined in our *Framework for Community Leadership*. Taken together, they help community foundations achieve positive community outcomes across issues.



ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP



Engaging residents to hear their concerns, lift up their ambitions and harness their talents.



Commissioning and disseminating local data and research to help understand the nuances of community challenges and provide information to help solve problems



Working across sectors because the challenges facing communities are multifaceted and interconnected and cannot be solved by any one entity or sector



Shaping public policy, recognizing that government systems have a significant impact on the lives of every resident



Marshalling resources beyond the foundation's own grants — from private foundations as well as from local, state and federal government — to address community needs

Framework for Community Leadership by a Community Foundation

The community foundation is a community partner that creates a better future for all by pursuing the community's greatest opportunities and addressing the most critical challenges, inclusively uniting people, institutions and resources from throughout the community, and producing significant, widely shared and lasting results.

The community foundation...

is a community partner

This acknowledges that the community foundation does not act in isolation. It acts in concert with other community members, sometimes taking the lead, sometimes following, sometimes paving the way for new leaders.

that creates a better future for all

This acknowledges that the community foundation's constituency is the entire community. Every issue, every cause it embraces, has some connection to the greater good while being mindful of how race, class, culture and power influence and affect decisions.

by pursuing the community's greatest opportunities and addressing the most critical challenges

This acknowledges that the community foundation can be counted on to pursue the things that matter the most, no matter how challenging or difficult.

inclusively uniting people, institutions and resources from throughout the community

This acknowledges how the community foundation goes about its business: in the open and ensuring broad participation. It also recognizes that the community foundation is well suited to assemble and leverage resources.

and producing significant, widely shared and lasting results

This acknowledges that the community foundation looks beyond quick fixes and innovative pilot projects, and that it has the staying power to reach long-term results.

Community Leadership by a Community Foundation

DEFINITION AND OUTCOME

The community foundation is a community partner that creates a better future for all by pursuing the community's greatest opportunities and addressing the most critical challenges, inclusively uniting people, institutions and resources from throughout the community, and producing significant, widely shared and lasting results.





The *Framework* can be used to bring clarity to the definition and practice of community leadership by individual community foundations.



Building Block A

The community foundation manifests the **VALUES, CULTURE AND WILL** to exercise community leadership.

Second-level building blocks	Third-level building blocks
<p>1 The community foundation is committed to effecting change that advances the common good.</p> <hr/> <p> 2A: Mission</p>	<p>1a The community foundation's mission includes community betterment.</p> <p>1b The community foundation consistently acts on clearly articulated values that undergird community betterment.</p> <p>1c The board, staff and volunteers are passionately committed to creating a better future for all.</p> <p>1d The community foundation subordinates the self-interest of its board, staff, volunteers and donors to the common good.</p>
<p>2 The community foundation is of, by and for the community it serves.</p> <hr/> <p> 4A: Diverse Representation</p>	<p>2a The community foundation supports broad community involvement in and community ownership of the shaping of community visions, possible solutions and collective actions around common concerns.</p> <p>2b The community foundation board and committees are made up of people who have demonstrated a passion for the community's well-being.</p> <p>2c The community foundation board, committees and staff are generally drawn from throughout the community and seen as being part of the community.</p> <p>2d The community foundation staff have an understanding of their community and the ability to work comfortably in multiple settings and places and at multiple levels.</p>
<p>3 The community foundation is fundamentally committed and organized to increase opportunity, diverse participation and fairness.</p> <hr/> <p> 2C: Equity 2C: Inclusion of Underserved Communities 2C: Role of Power 4A: Diverse Representation</p>	<p>3a The community foundation examines and articulates its values of increasing opportunity, diverse participation and fairness.</p> <p>3b The community foundation understands that diversity and inclusion enhance credibility and improve effectiveness.</p> <p>3c The community foundation's internal policies and practices reflect and support diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>3d The community foundation uses inclusion and equity values in choosing its community leadership issues and actions.</p> <p>3e The community foundation recognizes and addresses race, class, culture and other power imbalances in its work with diverse constituencies.</p> <p>3f The community foundation advocates for and commits resources to inclusion and equity in all of its work.</p> <p>3g The community foundation respects and accounts for the differences, needs, resources and interests of specific constituencies.</p>

 **Building Block A** *(continued)*

The community foundation manifests the **VALUES, CULTURE AND WILL** to exercise community leadership.

Second-level building blocks	Third-level building blocks
<p>4 The community foundation is a results-driven learning organization.</p> <hr/> <p> <i>2A: Criteria</i> <i>2A: Goals/Outcomes</i> <i>2D: Influence of Learning Culture</i> <i>2D: Long-Term Focus</i></p>	<p>4a The community foundation focuses its community leadership efforts on issues with significant or long-term impact on the community.</p> <p>4b The community foundation determines the nature and duration of its community leadership engagement in terms of the outcomes it seeks.</p> <p>4c The community foundation examines itself and makes internal changes to increase its impact and effectiveness.</p> <p>4d The community foundation learns from and adapts its actions based on routine examination of successes and failures.</p>
<p>5 The community foundation is humble, respectful and transparent.</p> <hr/> <p> <i>2E: Humility</i></p>	<p>5a The community foundation is prompt, courteous and caring in all of its interactions with the community.</p> <p>5b The community foundation is respectful when it disagrees with others.</p> <p>5c The community foundation shares or declines to take credit when necessary to advance community leadership goals.</p> <p>5d The community foundation accepts criticism and admits mistakes.</p>




 **Building Block B**

The community foundation continuously builds the **RELATIONSHIPS** to exercise community leadership.

Second-level building blocks	Third-level building blocks
<p>1 The community foundation is an engaged and trusted community partner.</p> <hr/> <p> <i>2B: Engagement</i> <i>2E: Community Interactions</i> <i>2E: Response to Feedback</i> <i>3A: Asset-Based (vs. Deficit-Based) Perspective</i> <i>3B: Collaboration</i> <i>3C: Consultation With Community Members</i></p>	<p>1a The community foundation demonstrates respect for the assets (e.g., knowledge, relationships, experience, capacities, etc.) of residents and community partners.</p> <p>1b The community foundation engages diverse people, including people who have not historically been engaged and people who have been under-engaged, from all parts of the community in setting goals and solving community problems.</p> <p>1c The community foundation meets residents and other stakeholders where and when it is convenient for them. The community foundation understands and acknowledges community members' multiple viewpoints and perspectives.</p> <p>1d The community foundation actively listens to the community, creates opportunities for continuous feedback and follows through on commitments made to realize shared goals.</p> <p>1e</p>
<p>2 The community foundation is positioned to join with or convene those involved in, affected by or concerned about an issue.</p> <hr/> <p> <i>2B: Engagement</i> <i>2C: Inclusion of Underserved Communities</i> <i>2E: Community Interactions</i> <i>3B: Collaboration</i> <i>3C: Consultation With Community Members</i> <i>4A: Board Development/Education</i></p>	<p>2a Relationship building and outreach are core expectations for community foundation staff, board and volunteers.</p> <p>2b The community foundation has access to a diverse group of leaders through its board, staff, donors, volunteers, grantees and partners.</p> <p>2c The community foundation is actively and directly involved in those neighborhoods and places where it is doing community leadership work.</p> <p>2d The community foundation engages the vulnerable and voiceless in community problem-solving.</p> <p>2e The community foundation builds relationships with those outside the community whose connections, resources, interests and abilities may support community leadership work.</p>
<p>3 The community foundation engages and supports other community leaders.</p> <hr/> <p> <i>3C: Leadership and Development</i></p>	<p>3a The community foundation follows or joins efforts initiated and led by others.</p> <p>3b The community foundation works to build the capacity of leaders throughout the community.</p> <p>3c The community foundation engages and supports new leaders, especially from groups underrepresented in the community's leadership structure, to succeed and gain influence.</p> <p>3d The community foundation believes that groups within the community should choose their own leaders.</p>



Building Block C

The community foundation accesses and develops the **RESOURCES** necessary to exercise community leadership.

Second-level building blocks	Third-level building blocks
<p>1 The community foundation serves as a place for residents and other stakeholders to connect with intellectual, political, social and financial capital.</p> <p> 3A: Meeting Times and Spaces 3B: Collaboration 3C: Consultation with Private Sector 3C: Leadership and Development 5B: Networks 5B: Coordination Among Networks</p>	<p>1a The community foundation offers convening space while making it clear that they are ready to meet residents and other stakeholders where and when it is convenient for the residents and other stakeholders.</p> <p>1b The community foundation joins with the community in facilitating, creating, commissioning and sharing research, data and metrics that help strengthen planning, advocacy and implementation efforts.</p> <p>1c The community foundation facilitates connections among residents, government, corporate and nonprofit decision makers.</p> <p>1d The community foundation makes connections among people from different cultural, racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.</p> <p>1e The community foundation helps leverage financial and other resources from residents, other private funders and the public sector.</p>
<p>2 The community foundation's internal information and implementation systems maximize its ability to influence community change.</p> <p> 5D: Roles</p>	<p>2a The community foundation integrates its community leadership efforts across all functional areas.</p> <p>2b The community foundation has a consultative process in place to identify emerging, critical or persistent community issues.</p> <p>2c The community foundation has a system to match donor interests with community leadership needs and issues.</p> <p>2d The community foundation aligns its grantmaking systems and operational processes to support community leadership.</p> <p>2e The community foundation is user-friendly in all of its processes.</p> <p>2f The community foundation's information systems are transparent and accessible.</p>
<p>3 The community foundation has the human resources to exercise community leadership.</p> <p> 4A: CEO Evaluation 4A: Staff Structure 4A: Professional Development 4A: Board Development/Education 5E: Capacity to Engage in Policy Change</p>	<p>3a The board, staff, volunteers, donors, grantees and vendors are broadly reflective of the community and its shifting demographics.</p> <p>3b The board uses community leadership as a primary criterion in selecting and evaluating the CEO.</p> <p>3c The board and staff are entrepreneurial, take risks and learn from their mistakes.</p> <p>3d The board and staff take new or courageous stands, when necessary, to move an issue forward.</p> <p>3e The board reflects the diverse points of view and levels of influence necessary to effect change.</p> <p>3f The community foundation provides ongoing professional development for board, staff and volunteers around community leadership.</p> <p>3g The board, staff and volunteers are able to relate to the cultures that make up their community.</p>

Building Block C (continued)

The community foundation accesses and develops the **RESOURCES** necessary to exercise community leadership.

Second-level building blocks	Third-level building blocks
<p>4 The community foundation engages donors and other co-investors in community leadership work.</p> <p> 4B: Donor Education 4B: Donor Leadership</p>	<p>4a The community foundation systematically helps current and prospective donors deepen their understanding of community issues.</p> <p>4b The community foundation connects donors and potential co-investors to opportunities to increase the impact of their investments.</p> <p>4c The community foundation's donors use their influence and connections to advance community leadership efforts.</p> <p>4d The community foundation provides feedback to donors and other co-investors about the impact of their support.</p> <p>4e The community foundation encourages donors to structure gifts in ways that can flexibly address changing community needs over time.</p> <p>4f The community foundation provides donors with philanthropic options outside the community foundation when donor interests are incompatible with its values.</p>
<p>5 The community foundation's business model provides flexible financial resources to support community leadership efforts.</p> <p> 4C: Awareness of Costs for Community Leadership 4C: Support for Community Leadership</p>	<p>5a Operations are efficient, freeing resources for community leadership.</p> <p>5b The community foundation has income-generating, budgeting and leveraging strategies to support community leadership, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees from donor funds • Earned income • Unrestricted endowment income • Public sector funds • Corporate and foundation grants • Annual campaigns and special events <p>5c The community foundation knows the cost of each service it provides relative to the revenue it generates, and aligns subsidies as needed to serve community leadership efforts.</p> <p>5d The community foundation knows how to use community and portfolio investments outside of grantmaking to support community leadership efforts.</p>




Building Block D

The community foundation accesses and develops the **UNDERSTANDING AND SKILLS** to exercise community leadership.

Second-level building blocks	Third-level building blocks
<p>1 The community foundation actively learns about, with and for the community.</p> <p> <i>2D: Influence of Learning Culture</i> <i>3C: Consultation With Community Members</i> <i>5A: Community Context and History</i> <i>5A: Research</i></p>	<p>1a The community foundation has current and historical knowledge of the institutions, leadership, economy, demographics, natural and built environment, and culture of its area.</p> <p>1b The community foundation reaches out to people in the community to understand their perspectives, gain their knowledge and engage them in identifying solutions.</p> <p>1c The community foundation finds or generates objective information it needs but may not have.</p> <p>1d The community foundation looks beyond current strategies for solutions.</p>
<p>2 The community foundation has the skills to help residents and other stakeholders be involved in and drive community improvement efforts.</p> <p> <i>2C: Role of Power</i> <i>3B: Collaboration</i> <i>3C: Consultation with Private Sector</i> <i>5B: Networks</i> <i>5B: Coordination Among Networks</i></p>	<p>2a The community foundation understands the influence of race, class, culture and power, and has the competencies to facilitate ongoing dialogue about these and other issues.</p> <p>2b The community foundation understands the networks of organizations, individuals and associations working on community improvement.</p> <p>2c The community foundation understands the processes (e.g., community organizing, formal public engagement processes, organizational change efforts, etc.) that support community improvement.</p> <p>2d The community foundation is able to cultivate an understanding of relevant systems (e.g., education, public health, community economic development, etc.) that provide services and shape the context for the health and well-being of the community.</p> <p>2e The community foundation helps to ensure coordination and collaboration among processes and systems that support community improvement and when necessary, works to reform or strengthen those systems.</p>
<p>3 The community foundation stimulates dialogue, promotes understanding and builds consensus.</p> <p> <i>2B: Engagement</i> <i>3A: Asset-Based (vs. Deficit-Based Perspective)</i> <i>3C: Consultation With Community Members</i> <i>5C: Communications Strategy</i> <i>5C: Goal and Message Alignment</i> <i>5C: Dissemination</i></p>	<p>3a The community foundation has the skills and ability to use convening to produce results.</p> <p>3b The community foundation has the skills, strategies and capacity to effectively tell community leadership stories.</p> <p>3c The community foundation tailors its communications to diverse audiences.</p> <p>3d The community foundation uses non-traditional communication outlets and new media to ensure community-wide reach and engagement.</p> <p>3e The community foundation frames issues in ways that resonate with those who can make change happen.</p> <p>3f The community foundation stays current with communication technology.</p> <p>3g The community foundation is a trusted source and provider of information about the community.</p>

Building Block D (continued)

The community foundation accesses and develops the **UNDERSTANDING AND SKILLS** to exercise community leadership.

Second-level building blocks	Third-level building blocks
<p>4 The community foundation strategically crafts and acts on community leadership opportunities.</p> <p> <i>2A: Criteria</i> <i>4C: Investments Outside of Grantmaking</i> <i>4C: Social Impact Investing</i> <i>5D: Roles</i></p>	<p>4a The community foundation understands the multiple roles and range of tools it can use to leverage change.</p> <p>4b The community foundation identifies the ways it is willing and able to add value to a community leadership issue.</p> <p>4c The community foundation knows when to work behind the scenes, when to take a stand, when to partner and when to build the capacity of others to effect change.</p> <p>4d The community foundation nimbly anticipates and responds to emerging opportunities and challenges.</p> <p>4e The community foundation sustains its efforts to achieve its outcomes.</p>
<p>5 The community foundation engages in public policy to advance the common good.</p> <p> <i>3C: Consultation With Policymakers</i> <i>5E: Influencing Policy</i> <i>5E: Capacity to Engage in Policy Change</i></p>	<p>5a The community foundation understands the public policy process and resource streams.</p> <p>5b The community foundation cultivates relationships in all three branches of government and at the federal, state and local levels.</p> <p>5c The community foundation knows when and how to effectively participate in the policy process.</p> <p>5d The community foundation knows and takes advantage of the range of advocacy options the law allows to 501(c)(3) organizations.</p>
<p>6 The community foundation evaluates the impact of its community leadership work.</p> <p> <i>2A: Goals and Outcomes</i> <i>2D: Long-Term Focus</i> <i>5E: Evaluation</i></p>	<p>6a The community foundation has a long-range vision, plan and outcome-oriented goals for its community leadership work.</p> <p>6b The community foundation gathers data, information and community feedback to measure, inform and adjust its community leadership work.</p>

Acknowledgments

The practices, competencies and strategies outlined in this guide have emerged through deliberate and organized discussion among community foundation leaders in the field. We are grateful to those that contributed to the development and design of the *Framework for Community Leadership* and the *Going All In* research project.

Framework for Community Leadership

National Task Force on Community Leadership

This task force of community foundation leaders helped create the Framework in 2008.

Ivy Allen, President
Foundation for the Mid South

Brian T. Byrnes, Former President & CEO
The Vermont Community Foundation

Phyllis Campbell, President & CEO
The Seattle Foundation

Emmett D. Carson, CEO & President
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Ellen Gilligan, Vice President Community Investment
The Greater Cincinnati Foundation

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Michael Howe, Chair, National Task Force on Community Leadership
John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, Stanford University

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Stuart Comstock-Gay, President & CEO
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Clotilde Dedecker, President & CEO (Panel Chair)
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

Nick Deychakiwsky, Program Officer
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Cultivating Community Engagement Panel

This panel revised the Framework in 2013, placing a greater emphasis on the importance of resident engagement. This is the current and most widely used version of the Framework today.

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Everyday Democracy

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Kathleen Annette, President & CEO
Blandin Foundation

Ian Bautista, President
United Neighborhood Centers of America

Derek Barker, Program Officer
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Roque Barros, Former Chief Program Officer for the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation
Jacobs Family Foundation

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Christopher Gates, Executive Director
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Going All In

*An advisory committee made up of
community foundation leaders from
across the country helped guide the
research project that led to Going
All In from 2019 to 2020.*

Ivye L. Allen, President
Foundation for the Mid South

Fred Blackwell, President & CEO
San Francisco Foundation

**Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker,
President & CEO**
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The Boston Foundation

Douglas F. Kridler, President & CEO
The Columbus Foundation

Tony Mestres, President & CEO
Seattle Foundation

Shelly O'Quinn, CEO
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Richard Ober, President & CEO
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation

Isaiah M. Oliver, President & CEO
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Pedro A. Ramos, President & CEO
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Randy Royster, President & CEO
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