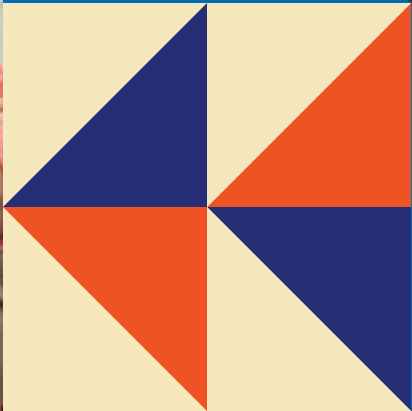
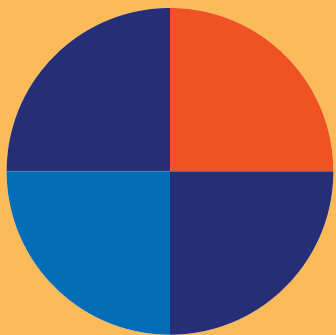




Impact Report 2024



CFLeads

Community Foundations
Leading Change

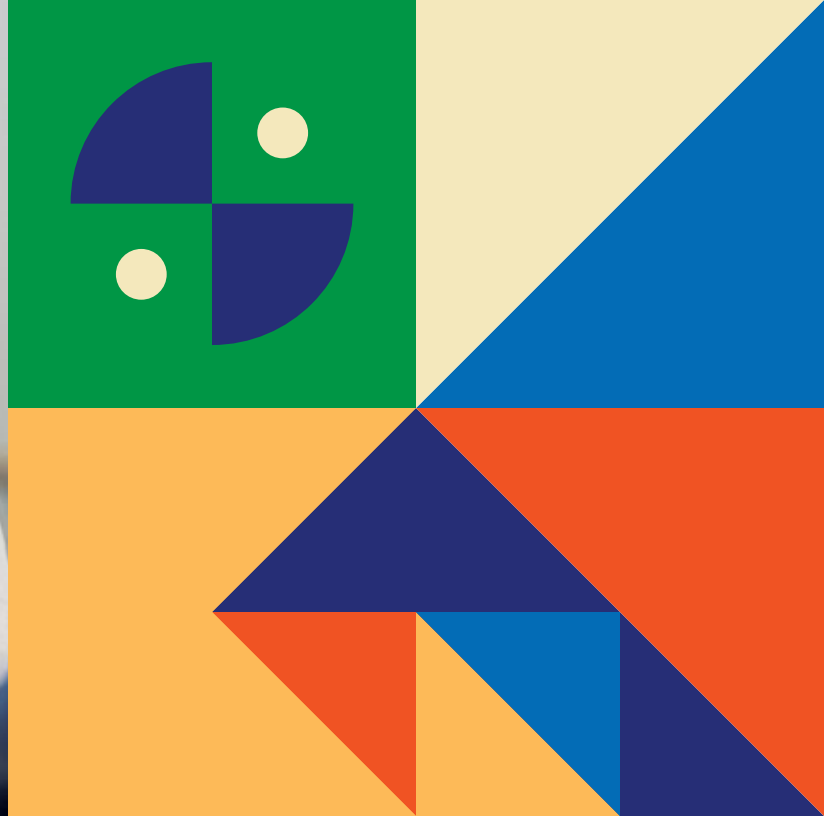


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A Letter to Community Foundation Leaders & Supporters

As we reflect on 2024, a year marked by extraordinary achievements and meaningful progress, we are honored to share highlights of the impact CFLeads has made in partnership with you. Thanks to the unwavering support of the community foundation field – and their shared desire to learn, innovate, increase their impact, and network – CFLeads has experienced a year of growth and deeper collaboration.

At CFLeads, we are driven by the belief that community foundations are among the most powerful vehicles for local and national change. When community foundations are empowered to lead and strengthen their leadership capacity, they catalyze deeper, more equitable, and more lasting change in their communities. When many things around us shift, the steady leadership of community foundations, deeply rooted in place and responsive to community needs, has never been more essential. It is our privilege to walk alongside you on this important journey. In 2024 we showed up for community foundations in vital roles:

- **CHAMPIONING** community leadership in community foundations
- **CONVENING** leaders and institutions, enabling a dynamic, connected ecosystem
 - 27 virtual and in person convenings with 235 CFs participating
- **CREATING A TRUSTED, SAFE PEER LEARNING SPACE** where community foundations quickly move from theory to practice & action through our
 - Peer learning cohorts
 - Communities of Practice
 - Issue-based networks
- **INNOVATING & INCUBATING** community leadership best practices
 - We published innovative work and emerging field strategies in racial equity, economic mobility, and culturally inclusive community engagement
- **BEING AN INTERMEDIARY** by engaging national funders & partners to invest in community foundations
 - Marshaled over \$3.9M in resources to the community foundation field
- **PARTNERING WITH** the broader philanthropic ecosystem, working in coordination with other philanthropy serving organizations to serve community foundations
 - Providing access to and leveraging expertise of 23 partners

Looking ahead, CFLeads is committed to broadening our reach and deepening our impact by inviting even more community foundations to engage in transformative leadership practices in their communities.

To our investors, funders, partners, collaborators, and community foundations leaders: thank you. Your belief in our mission fuels everything we do, and we are deeply grateful for what we have accomplished together. And to those considering joining and experiencing the CFLeads network, we invite you to reach out. Your transformative community leadership journey and connection to like-minded peers is just one email away. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us to connect.

Shaping the Future Together

Who We Are, What We Do, Why it Matters

At CFLeads, we believe that community foundations are the backbone of thriving communities. As the nation's only national network designed solely for community foundations, we are committed to strengthening their community leadership capacity and muscle and thus creating strong, thriving and equitable communities.

What We Do: Supporting Community Foundation Leadership

We focus on helping community foundations elevate their leadership capabilities. Our work is about equipping community foundations with the tools, knowledge, and networks necessary to be effective leaders in their communities. Whether it's grappling with urgent local issues, enhancing strategic decision-making, or expanding community engagement, CFLeads is here to ensure that community foundations become the dynamic partners that foster community transformation.

Why We Do It: Creating Impact During Critical Times

Across the United States, communities are facing unprecedented challenges. From economic instability to social inequality, these issues require immediate, transformative action. Community foundations are uniquely positioned to be catalysts of change, but they need the right support to maximize their impact. CFLeads serves as a critical partner in strengthening community foundations, enabling them to address their communities' most pressing needs. Our work is rooted in the belief that when community foundations lead effectively, they help create sustainable, thriving communities for all.

How We Do It: Connecting, Innovating, and Leading

Our work thrives on a multifaceted approach. We champion community foundations as powerful agents of change, foster connections among leaders, activate peer learning, drive innovation, and act as an intermediary within the broader philanthropic ecosystem. By organizing our efforts around these core roles, we ensure our relevance and influence in shaping the future of philanthropy. Through research, development, and strategic partnerships, CFLeads is making lasting contributions to the ecosystem, empowering leaders and enhancing community foundation impact.

Mary L. Thomas
President & CEO, CFLeads
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Isaiah Oliver
Chair, Board of Directors and
President, The Community
Foundation for Northeast
Florida
ioliver@jaxcf.org

From Coast to Coast: CFLeads 2024 Reach and Results

2024 was a year of expanded reach and deepened impact across the nation. Here’s a snapshot of our engagements and programming impact:



Our Partners

In 2024, CFLeads partnered with forward-thinking organizations to bring the most relevant, expert resources and information to community foundations engaged in our offerings.



Opening Doors to Broader Reach

In 2024, CFLeads hosted a range of webinars and virtual offerings that served as essential touchpoints for community foundations, particularly those in smaller or rural regions who may not have the capacity to attend in-person events.

These virtual learning opportunities brought together experts, thought leaders, and community foundation practitioners, fostering crucial discussions around community leadership and philanthropy. From fostering inclusive communities to exploring the power of shared decision-making, our virtual learning opportunities equipped participants with practical knowledge and tools for immediate use. Explore (below, above, to the right etc.) a few of our virtual offerings:

Welcoming & Belonging Community of Practice

In 2024, CFLeads partnered with Welcoming America to launch a Community of Practice designed to support community foundations in deepening their work around welcoming and belonging, with a particular focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Welcoming America, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering inclusive communities, believes that all people—including immigrants—should feel valued and integral to the success of their communities. Through their Welcoming Network, Welcoming America helps communities develop the tools and frameworks they need to implement welcoming policies and create environments where everyone can truly thrive.



Together, CFLeads and Welcoming America offered community foundations a unique opportunity to participate in a learning cohort that strengthened their capacity to create more inclusive, welcoming communities. The Community of Practice provided a space for community foundations to collaborate, share insights, and expand their knowledge of how to foster belonging and inclusion.

CFLeads x Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Virtual Series

In 2024, CFLeads partnered with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to launch a series of webinars aimed at strengthening communication and coordination between HUD and community foundations. The goal of this series was to foster greater collaboration in addressing pressing issues related to affordable housing and homelessness.


This collaborative effort set the stage for continued learning and partnership, equipping both HUD and community foundations with tools and strategies to drive meaningful change in housing and homelessness solutions.

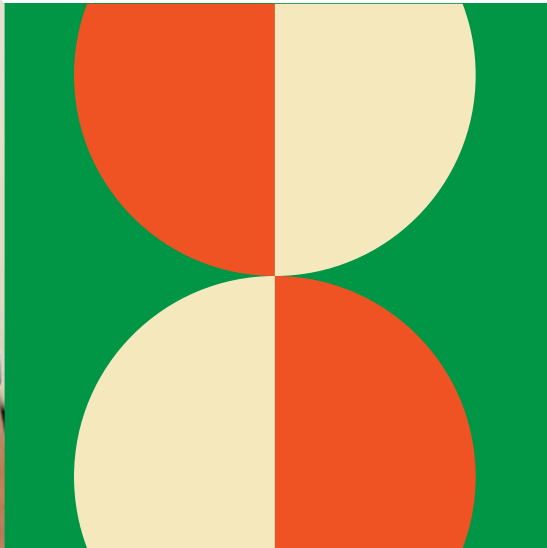
Community Leadership 101: A Collaborative Webinar with Innovia Foundation

In 2024, CFLeads partnered with the Innovia Foundation to host an introductory webinar focused on the foundational principles of community leadership. This session provided valuable insights from community foundation colleagues, highlighting the importance of embracing a community leadership role, particularly in the context of economic mobility work.

Participants learned how community foundations can play a pivotal role in driving positive change by leading with purpose and connecting local assets to address systemic challenges.

By sharing best practices and lessons learned, this webinar laid the groundwork for further exploration of community leadership and its impact on the field’s work in 2024 and beyond.

 Explore our webinar library to gain insights from leading experts nationwide at cfleads.org/community-leadership-resources/



“If you have a chance, be a part of ELI, the Executive Leadership Institute at CFLeads. It’s a fantastic program that pairs you with your peers, where you take a problem that’s unique to you and you work through it with peer feedback and encouragement, and you get to a solution that is fantastic.”

Shelly Prichard
President & CEO,
Wichita Foundation

“As a small community foundation in a rural area, it’s been really impactful to see peers across the country who might be different in geographic and asset size, but we’re all in it together and able to learn from each other. It’s helped me grow both personally in my professional development but also bringing impactful ideas back to my community right in the middle of small town Iowa. It’s been so great to learn from my peers and have that connection to folks from across the country.”

Ellie Moore
Vice President of Community Impact & Outreach,
Community Foundation of Johnson County

“I would absolutely recommend ELI. It’s an extraordinary opportunity to have an extended conversation with peers who are similarly thinking about how to champion community leadership in our institutions.”

LaTida Smith
President, Winston-Salem Foundation

Executive Leadership Institute

The Runway for Exceptional Community Leadership



What makes the Executive Leadership Institute (ELI) so special?

At CFLeads, we know that the ability to solve complex community problems goes beyond traditional grantmaking. To truly drive transformative change, community foundation leaders must embrace a comprehensive set of community leadership skills. That’s why we’ve developed the Executive Leadership Institute (ELI) – a year-long, immersive education program designed specifically for community foundation leaders.

A Unique and Responsive Approach

What sets ELI apart is our commitment to flexibility, nimbleness, and responsiveness to the unique challenges faced by each community foundation leader within their specific context. Whether you’re a CEO, VP, CFO, Chief Impact Officer or Chief of Staff, all participants are united by a common desire to strengthen their foundation’s ability to create lasting community impact. We recognize that no two community foundations are the same, and each ELI cohort adapts to meet leaders where they are by helping them navigate challenges and find solutions that fit their unique organizational and community needs.

Learning in Community

Through ELI, we bring together an exceptional cohort of leaders from community foundations across the country – each one tackling issues like economic mobility, social equity, and local resilience. Despite the diversity in size, asset mix, and regional focus, participants frequently remark on the shared challenges and aspirations that bind them together. This peer learning approach helps leaders identify and adopt effective practices, enabling them to learn from one another in a supportive environment.

Tailored Leadership Development

At its core, the Executive Leadership Institute is about challenging leaders in positive and constructive ways. Through three in-person meetings where we facilitate transformative peer-to-peer coaching sessions, participants engage in deep, focused discussions and activities that strengthen their foundations’ culture, staff skills, and external relationships. The goal is to ensure that each leader leaves the program with a clearer vision, and practical tools to help their foundation thrive and better serve their communities.

Beyond the formal sessions, ELI fosters long-lasting peer-to-peer relationships, creating a network of ongoing support that extends well beyond the program’s duration. As leaders confront new challenges in the future, they know they have a community of trusted peers they can turn to for advice, collaboration, and encouragement.

The Gathering

A Reflective Space for African American Community Foundation CEOs

One of the year’s most significant milestones was the inaugural Gathering of African American community foundation CEOs in Atlanta, Georgia. As envisioned by our CFLeads Board Chairman Isaiah Oliver, The Gathering fostered a safe and empowering space for leaders to share their lived experiences, reflect on their journeys, and collaborate on the challenges and opportunities facing the community foundation field today.

The Gathering specifically catered to the unique leadership challenges faced by African American community foundation leaders, who often navigate systemic barriers and power dynamics. With the goal of building community and acknowledging shared values between African American community foundation leaders, The Gathering was a transformative experience for all participants. It reaffirmed CFLeads’ commitment to uplifting diverse voices in the community foundation field, ensuring that all leaders have the tools to succeed in their work.



Connecting Communities in the Americas (CCA)

A Global Perspective on Local Impact

CFLeads was proud to partner with the Greater Dubuque Community Foundation to host the Connecting Communities in the Americas (CCA) convening in 2024, bringing together 50 leaders from eight countries and five U.S. territories in Dubuque, IA. This convening provided a unique opportunity to share global strategies and insights on place-based community leadership.

Through these rich exchanges, the CCA convening highlighted the critical role of community foundations in fostering resilient, self-determined communities.

Key highlights included:

Rural Philanthropy Insights:

Panel discussions on rural challenges like food security, mental health, and workforce development.

Indigenous Leadership Models:

The Annauma Community Foundation of Nunavut shared how Indigenous decision-making practices inform grantmaking.

Cross-Border Learning:

Delegations from Guam, Puerto Rico, and other U.S. territories engaged with leaders from Peru, Brazil, and Colombia, sharing approaches rooted in their unique regional histories and community philanthropy traditions.

Economic Mobility

Leading Change Through Collaboration and Innovation

In 2024, CFLeads made significant strides in advancing Economic Mobility, a priority area of our work focused on addressing systemic challenges and building capacity within community foundations. Economic mobility ensures that all individuals, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to thrive, particularly those in historically marginalized communities. Our Economic Mobility portfolio reached new heights this year across three engagement tiers:

Light-Touch Engagements

We engaged a wide audience with webinars and blogs, sharing insights into economic mobility strategies and sparking new ideas for foundation leaders. These touchpoints helped expand understanding and fostered conversations about how community foundations can leverage their positions and resources to drive change.

Medium-Touch Engagements

Regional convenings in the U.S. enabled deeper exploration of local economic mobility challenges. Topics like racial equity and systemic barriers to mobility took center stage. These face-to-face interactions allowed for meaningful discussions, fostering connections and the exchange of ideas that resonate with the local context of each region.

High-Touch Engagements

The launch of the Economic Mobility Action Network cohorts marked a major milestone, bringing together 19 community foundations committed to sustained collaboration to implement solutions aimed at racial equity and systemic change. This action network is a cornerstone of our efforts, driving collective action and ensuring that these community foundations have the support, tools, network, and resources needed to lead systemic change in their regions.

“I wanted to say thanks for the fantastic convening and express how fortunate I feel to have attended. I spent the weekend thinking about all of the innovative ideas I heard and how we might apply them to support ‘our community’. I’m so thankful for the opportunity to learn and grow with such a thoughtful group. It’s truly wonderful to have your organization here to promote collaboration & innovation; while still asking the tough questions that push our field forward.”

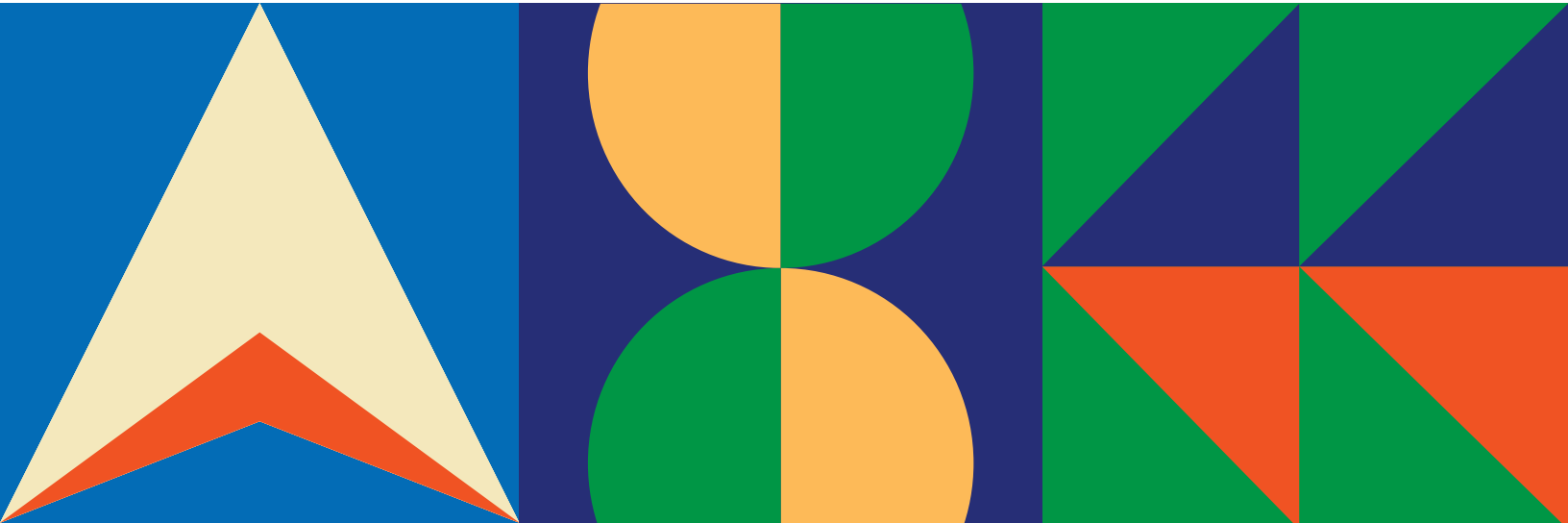
Northwest Economic Mobility Regional Convening Attendee

Working at the Systems Level: Addressing Root Causes

Economic mobility requires more than individual solutions – it requires dismantling systemic barriers like inequitable access to education, housing, and employment. CFLeads helps community foundations tackle the root causes of these disparities by advocating for policy reforms, aligning diverse stakeholders, and focusing on long-term, sustainable change. This systems-level approach creates lasting impact that benefits entire communities, not just individuals.

Strategic Partnerships for Greater Momentum

In 2024, CFLeads deepened its impact by collaborating with Philanthropy Serving Organizations (PSOs), Measurement, Learning, and Evaluation (MLE) leaders, and organizations like Urban Institute that provide evidence-based tools. These partnerships enable us to share knowledge, expand resources, and strengthen the community foundation network, ensuring that foundations are equipped to address complex issues and drive long-term solutions for economic mobility.



Equipping the Field

Tools That Empower Progress

In 2024, CFLeads continued to invest in the strength of the community foundation field by developing and sharing practical tools, insightful research and field-tested resources. Below are resources CFLeads has provided to help community foundations deepen impact, build capacity, and lead with confidence:

[Building meaningful partnerships with our Latine communities](#)

[Connecting Communities in the Americas: A 10-Year Reflection](#)

[CFLeads 2024 Economic Mobility Report: Pathways to Progress](#)

[Advancing Equity: Case Studies from Community Foundations Across the Country](#)



To view more of our resources, visit cflleads.org/community-leadership-resources/



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Albuquerque Community Foundation

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President and CEO
The Pittsburgh Foundation

Tonia Wellons

President and CEO
Greater Washington Community Foundation

We are honored to welcome two new members to the Board of Directors in 2025: Anna María Chávez, President & CEO, Arizona Community Foundation and Dan Templin, Executive Director, DeKalb County Community Foundation.

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Rachel Reiss

Communications and Digital Marketing Manager

Keisha Walker

Director of Finance

Our appreciation to Caroline Merenda, Lisette Holmes, Meghan Cummings, and Len Bartel for their contributions to CFLeads’ program of work in 2024.

Gratitude for the Support that Powers Our Future

At CFLeads, our work would not be possible without the steadfast support of our funders and CFLeads investors - community foundations and partners who believe in the power of community leadership. Their investment fuels our programs, strengthens cross-sector connections, and drives forward the field-wide impact we strive to achieve together. We are deeply grateful for their commitment to CFLeads' mission and vision. If you share our belief in the leadership potential of community foundations, we invite you to join this growing network of investors propelling our field and positive change across the country.

2024 CFLeads Investors

Adirondack Foundation
Albuquerque Community Foundation
Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation
Arkansas Community Foundation, Inc.
Barry Community Foundation
Black Belt Community Foundation
Central New York Community Foundation
Chautauqua Region Community Foundation
Collaboratory
Collier Community Foundation
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo
Community Foundation for Loudoun & Northern Fauquier Counties

Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region
Community Foundation of Broward
Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines
Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque
Community Foundation of Greater Flint
Community Foundation of Johnson County
Community Foundation of Sarasota County
Community Foundation of the Mahoning Valley
Community Foundation of Tompkins County
Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts
Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley
Connecticut Community Foundation
Delaware Community Foundation

Donald C. Johnston Jr
Door County Community Foundation
Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
Foundation For Appalachian Kentucky
Greater Cincinnati Foundation
Greater Green Bay Community Foundation
Greater Milwaukee Foundation
Greater Toledo Community Foundation
Greater Washington Community Foundation
Greater Worcester Community Foundation
Indian River Community Foundation
Innovia Foundation
Kalamazoo Community Foundation
Legacy Foundation

Maine Community Foundation
Manatee Community Foundation
North Texas Community Foundation
Rhode Island Foundation
Rochester Area Community Foundation
San Antonio Area Foundation
San Diego Foundation
Southwest Initiative Foundation
The Chicago Community Trust

The Columbus Foundation
The Community Foundation For Northeast Florida
The Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro
The Denver Foundation
The Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation
The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation
The Indianapolis Foundation
The Minneapolis Foundation

The New York Community Trust
The Philadelphia Foundation
The Pittsburgh Foundation
The Wayne County Community Foundation
The Winston-Salem Foundation
Union County Foundation
Whatcom Community Foundation
Wichita Foundation

 Interested in becoming a CFLeads Investor? To learn more, visit: cflinks.org/who-we-are/supporters/support-our-work/

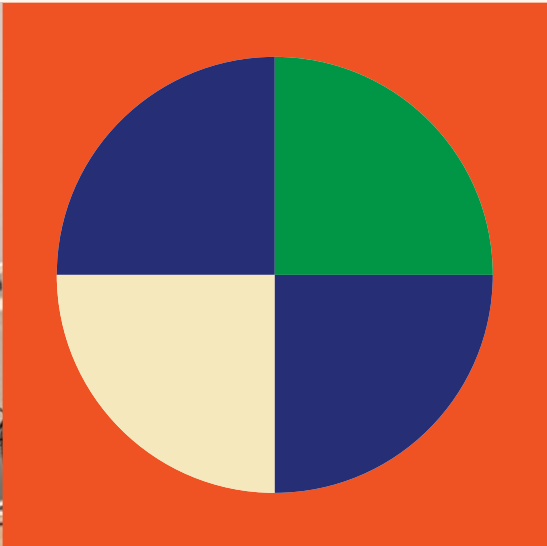
2024 Funders

Borealis Philanthropy
California Wellness Foundation

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
Fidelity Charitable® Catalyst Fund
Gates Foundation
Knight Foundation

Lilly Endowment Inc.
The Joyce Foundation
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
Welcoming America

 For more information about CFLeads' financials, visit: cflinks.org/who-we-are/financials/





Community Foundations
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