



## COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTMAKING GUIDELINES

In 2003, the Community Foundation identified and began addressing the most pressing needs in Newaygo County. These efforts intensified in 2011 when the Board of Trustees adopted a strategic framework to guide its community investments and outreach. One of these areas was promoting a sustainable local economy through partnering with local organizations. In 2012, the research process began by hiring a graduate-level fellow who gathered data, interviewed stakeholders, and investigated best practices from the field. This learning journey has also included: commissioning a study about the business environment in Newaygo County, program evaluation, and training in rural wealth creation.

In March of 2014, the Community Foundation's Community and Economic Development Committee identified an overall goal and framework based on these inputs, and the Board of Trustees approved the goal to: **reduce the unemployment rate below the national average in the next 10 years while preserving our rural character**. The following grantmaking guidelines reflect the Community and Economic Development framework and support the realization of this goal.

### Grantmaking Guidelines for Community and Economic Development

Proposals that demonstrate proactive and/or proven approaches to systemic change and long-term impact are encouraged. Applicant organizations should provide a rationale for their approach based on past program success and/or relevant local, regional and national data. Proposals that align with one or more of the following priorities will be most competitive.

- **Small Business Development**

The majority of businesses in Newaygo County have less than 10 employees. Through strategic grantmaking the Community Foundation encourages the growth of locally owned businesses, increasing their ability to create jobs and hire unemployed and underemployed residents.

*Example of an appropriate outcome – strengthened small business support systems*

*Example of an appropriate measureable benchmark – small business job creation*

*Example of a targeted strategy – small business technical assistance*

- **Entrepreneurship Development**

Entrepreneurs present new opportunities for our local economy. The Community Foundation supports an entrepreneurial culture that encourages residents to explore their ideas and supports the establishment of new businesses that have local roots.

*Example of an appropriate outcome – strengthened entrepreneurship support systems*

*Example of an appropriate measureable benchmark – new businesses established*

*Example of targeted strategy – wrap-around entrepreneurship services*

- **Workforce Development**

Many people who are unemployed and underemployed are unable to fully participate in the workforce due to a gap between the skill they have acquired and the skill needed for good jobs. The Community Foundation is committed to closing the skills gap by strengthening households economically and increasing the competitiveness of local companies through a stronger workforce.

*Example of an appropriate outcome – increased connections between business and education sectors*

*Example of an appropriate measureable benchmark – workers earning industry certifications*

*Example of targeted strategy – industry certification programs*

Public data will be tracked over time to indicate overall community improvement. Measures will include unemployment rates, poverty rates, number of residents living below self-sufficiency wage level, and education attainment from resources like the Opportunity Index at Opportunity Nation: <http://www.opportunitynation.org>

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- **Capacity of Local Community and Economic Development Partners**

Local community and economic development organizations support the strengthening and growth of the local economy in many ways. The Community Foundation increases the capacity of these organizations to work towards measurable outcomes and collaborate both locally and regionally.

*Example of an appropriate outcome – improved community partners' ability to measure results*

*Example of an appropriate measureable benchmark – implementation of evaluative processes*

*Example of targeted strategy – evaluation capacity building*

- **Natural Resources Promotion and Utilization**

With more than 230 natural lakes, 350 miles of rivers and streams, over 125,000 acres of farmland, and half of the county contained in the Manistee National Forest, Newaygo County clearly boasts a wealth of natural resources. The Community Foundation supports the promotion and utilization of these natural resources in ways that will positively impact the local economy while preserving our rural character.

*Example of an appropriate outcome – increased economic impact of tourism*

*Example of an appropriate measureable benchmark – overnight tourist stays*

*Example of targeted strategy – cross-sector collaboration to develop tourism packages*

Public data will be tracked over time to indicate overall community improvement. Measures will include unemployment rates, poverty rates, number of residents living below self-sufficiency wage level, and education attainment from resources like the Opportunity Index at Opportunity Nation: <http://www.opportunitynation.org>