



2026 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



BETTER FOREVER



BETTER TOGETHER



Dear Community Foundation Friends,

In my role as president of the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, I have the unique honor of witnessing something extraordinary – people and organizations choosing to weave together community a little tighter. In moments when our fabric can feel tested, Iowans continue to show what it means to deeply care for one another. **We lean in. We reach out. We collaborate.**

Nonprofit organizations are often at the center, working tirelessly to strengthen the places we call home. This year, we saw unparalleled need, and you responded with unprecedented generosity. Together, you helped increase grantmaking across our region, ensuring nonprofits have the resources, trust and encouragement to continue to braid connection, stability and hope.

Your passions and values are the threads that hold us together. Strong communities start with a strong foundation, woven through shared effort, compassion and the belief that we lift each other up. Thank you for showing up, supporting our nonprofit partners and for trusting us as your charitable giving partner.

In 2025, you granted a record-high, nearly \$100 million to over 2,930 charitable causes – a nearly 20% increase over last year. Your partnership enabled us to engage more than 1,100 nonprofit staff and board members in trainings and convenings. You supported us as we served 46 affiliate counties and communities across our great state. And over \$105 million in gifts were made to more than 2,700 Community Foundation charitable giving funds, bringing total assets under administration to \$1.2 billion. Your generous and continued commitment to the communities you love allows us to create lasting impact, together.

These numbers tell only part of the story. Their true meaning is found in the lives changed, the collaborative ingenuity of our local nonprofits to serve our neighbors in need and our vibrant community fabric that is strengthened through your incredible generosity. This work doesn't happen alone; it happens together.

Looking ahead, we know we must continue to be innovative, future-focused and interwoven in our efforts to address the pressing needs and promising opportunities before us. Your Community Foundation stands ready to partner with you in shaping a vibrant, resilient and inclusive future for all who call Iowa home. **Thank you for continuing to make us Better Together.**

With deepest gratitude,

Kristi Knous

Kristi Knous, President



OVER **2,900**
NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS
received support from
charitable giving funds



\$2.9 M
BETTER TOGETHER FUND
dollars were activated to
address our community's
pressing needs and
promising opportunities



OVER **\$1.2 B**
in ASSETS under administration
at the Community Foundation



\$105 M
in GIFTS contributed
to Community Foundation
charitable giving funds



ENGAGED
MORE THAN **1,100**
NONPROFIT STAFF AND
BOARD MEMBERS through
Community Foundation
trainings and convenings



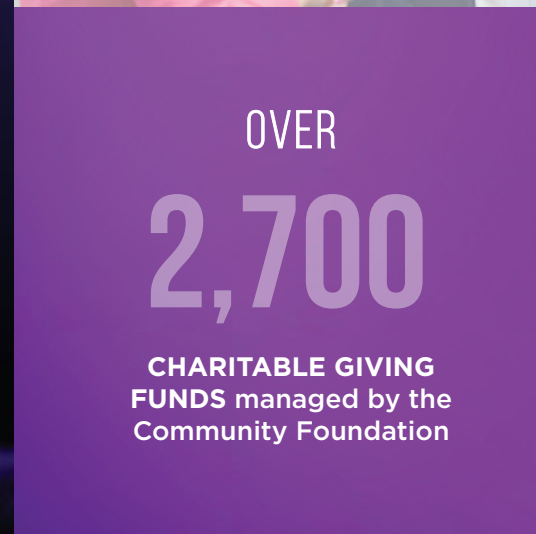
98
CHARITABLE INVESTMENT
PARTNERS helped to grow their
clients' charitable assets



NEARLY
\$100 M
GRANTED from
Community Foundation
charitable giving funds



46
AFFILIATE county and
community foundations
were served statewide



OVER
2,700
CHARITABLE GIVING
FUNDS managed by the
Community Foundation



NEARLY
250
individuals were educated on
key community issues at
DONORCONNECT



Curiosity Sparks Community Impact

A **GIVEdsm** Story

Discovering new opportunities to give back is deeply fulfilling to Nancy, and she found an unexpected tool that helped turn her interests into action. Inquisitive by nature, Nancy enjoys exploring the needs of local nonprofits, their special projects and the root causes they work to address.

After hearing about the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines from a nonprofit partner, Nancy explored the website and discovered GIVEdsm.org. An online resource, GIVEdsm highlights community needs while connecting donors with organizations aligned to their interests.

“The site really feeds my curiosity,” Nancy shares. “Every time I visit GIVEdsm, there are new opportunities. And when I’m ready to do some self-guided research, I can dig in, find a cause or small organization that speaks to me and connect in a meaningful way.”

Having grown up in the Des Moines area, Nancy values a tool that brings her community connections together in one place. GIVEdsm offers hundreds of ways to support local nonprofits while giving those organizations a platform to share their work and amplify their impact.

For nonprofits like Urbandale Food Pantry, GIVEdsm is more than a listing — it’s where curiosity and caring meets real community needs. Urbandale Food Pantry understands that food insecurity is only one piece of the poverty equation. Guided by a philosophy of dignity and respect, their team studied

community plans and wraparound service models. From that learning came a vision of a community hub where nonprofit partners could work together to help individuals navigate comprehensive solutions during challenging times.

To bring this vision to life, the Urbandale Food Pantry launched a capital campaign for a new space designed to better meet the needs of everyone who walks through their doors. They turned to GIVEdsm — the go-to resource to discover and support local nonprofits.

“We live in a generous community filled with people who want to give back and are searching for ways to make a difference,” says Patty Sneddon-Kisting, executive director of the Urbandale Food Pantry. “GIVEdsm allows nonprofits of all sizes to elevate what they’re doing — and the process is simple. It allowed us to share our opportunity and connect with donors we otherwise wouldn’t have met.”

With necessary funding secured, the Urbandale Food Pantry is now able to remove barriers for those seeking support by connecting them on-site with partners such as WIC, Project Iowa and Meals on Wheels. This systems-focused approach reflects the Better Together spirit — made possible in part, by a simple yet powerful resource, GIVEdsm.

Scan here to learn more about local projects seeking support on GIVEdsm.



“GIVEdsm allows nonprofits of all sizes to elevate what they’re doing – and the process is simple. It allowed us to share our opportunity and connect with donors we otherwise wouldn’t have met.”

— PATTY SNEDDON-KISTING, executive director, Urbandale Food Pantry

“The site really feeds my curiosity. Every time I visit GIVEdsm there are new opportunities.”

— NANCY, donor

GET STARTED TODAY
GIVEdsm.org



Pictured: Patty Sneddon-Kisting, executive director of the Urbandale Food Pantry, and Nancy



Pictured: Nancy and Patty tour the Urbandale Food Pantry

Fueling Community

There's one household name in Iowa that's synonymous with pizza and the glow of a small-town gas station – Casey's. Since opening its first store in 1968, Casey's has proudly aimed to make life better for the communities and guests they serve every day. Woven into the rhythm of daily life, their commitment extends to supporting neighbors and towns, making an impact on fundamental needs and building stronger communities through charitable giving.

Casey's has long believed its purpose reaches far beyond its storefronts. Their giving focuses on three pillars that reflect what matters most to their guests and team members: education, hunger and community servants, including veterans and first responders. These priorities recognize that in the towns Casey's calls home, people know one another by name, care for each other and show up when it counts.

"Without our team's commitment, we wouldn't have the impact that we do. When they are engaged, and engaging our guests, that positive impact is amplified to support the community in ways that matter most," said Katie Petru, director of public relations, communications and community for Casey's. "This is what puts Casey's above the rest – that a convenience store can have such positive impact outside of our four walls."

To deepen that impact even further, Casey's turned to the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines. Through their charitable fund, Casey's can focus on strategically supporting nonprofit organizations and charitable causes across their footprint while the Community Foundation provides the expertise and structure to amplify their impact. The partnership allows Casey's to pair its longstanding culture of giving with charitable guidance, intentional grantmaking and a streamlined way to respond to community needs, locally and across Casey's Country.



"Giving back is core to who we are at Casey's," said Darren Rebelez, president and CEO of Casey's, and board member of the Community Foundation. "When our team members, guests and partners come together, the impact is real and meaningful. Working with the Community Foundation gives us trusted, local expertise that allows us to stay focused on what we do best – showing up for our communities and making a difference where it matters most."

As Casey's continues to serve communities across 19 states, the heart of their mission remains unchanged: supporting neighbors, strengthening families and helping communities thrive.

"Casey's has the ability to think big, and that's huge for us," said Bergetta Beardsley, vice president of philanthropy for the Food Bank of Iowa. "We can count on Casey's to help us get food out the door and on the tables of families across their footprint."

Casey's commitment proves that a convenience store can be far more than a place to fuel up. It can be a force for good in the fabric of communities, helping them grow stronger, together.

Scan here to learn more about charitable funds to meet the needs of businesses.



"Working with the Community Foundation gives us trusted, local expertise that allows us to stay focused on what we do best – showing up for our communities and making a difference where it matters most."

– DARREN REBELEZ
president and CEO of Casey's,
and board member of the
Community Foundation



Planting a Gift that Grows



Pictured: David and Denise Bubeck

"Through the partnership with Syverson Strege and the Community Foundation, we now have a giving strategy aligned with our goals to sustain our philanthropy throughout retirement."

– DAVID BUBECK

Community connection led Denise and David Bubeck to a solution they had been seeking for more than a decade.

Raised in the rural Midwest, the couple developed an early appreciation for faith, community and caring for neighbors – values that continue to shape their giving today. So, when Denise began serving on the board of the Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC), it felt natural to build relationships with others who shared the same commitment. Through Denise's community engagement, she connected with like-minded leaders, including Johnne Syverson and Matt Roberts of Syverson Strege, a financial planning firm. A shared passion for addressing food insecurity deepened the connections, and it led Denise to recruit Matt to serve as a fellow board member.

Over time, conversations extended beyond board service to the Bubecks' own charitable giving goals.

"It was a time when David and I were working to refocus more of our finances on charitable giving, and we wanted to be intentional," Denise shares. "Matt understood what we were passionate about and helped us identify additional ways to make even greater impact."

For years, the Bubecks had been searching for solutions to structure their philanthropy so it could grow alongside them, not just today, but throughout retirement. While they had previously established a donor advised fund, they were seeking guidance that aligned with their financial planning, tax strategy and philanthropic goals. Together, with Matt, they explored opportunities that would carry their giving confidently into the next chapter.

David grew up on farms, and today the couple continues to own farmland in Dallas County that remains in active production. With careers of

their own, the couple doesn't depend on the grain income – and that's when they realized a routine harvest held the potential to plant something lasting. By making a gift of grain, the Bubecks can support the organizations that mean the most to them while maximizing the tax benefits.

This opportunity had Denise, David and their advisor Matt, turning to the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines for expertise in accepting non-cash charitable assets, including agricultural gifts. Working together, the process was seamless, and the local co-op turned the Bubecks' fall harvest into a sustainable gift to grow the couple's capacity to give for years to come.



"With people's busy lives, the Community Foundation makes charitable giving accessible and easy," said David. "Through the partnership with Syverson Strege and the Community Foundation, we now have a giving strategy aligned with our goals to sustain our philanthropy throughout retirement."

Scan here to learn more about using non-cash assets as a charitable gift.



A Life and Legacy of Love

Stacey Gibbs Lehr had a gift for noticing life's meaningful moments and celebrating them well. She carried that spirit into everything she did — creative, caring and attentive to others.

Those attributes are what drew Kent Lehr to Stacey and, when the timing was right, they built a life together. Their world grew through friendship, shared dreams and travel. Their joy deepened with the arrival of their three children, Jude, Louis and Olivia.



"That moment stuck with me," Kent says. "Even in the hardest circumstances, Stacey was thinking about how to help someone else."

Stacey passed away in June 2023 after her courageous battle with breast cancer. She was 42.

She left a powerful example of generosity, resilience and love for her family and the community she cared for deeply. For Kent, the question that followed was how to carry her spirit and legacy forward.

When Stacey was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2017, following the birth of their firstborn, Jude, her priority was continuing to grow their family. True to her nature, she faced the journey with grit and grace.

"Stacey was meant to be a mother," Kent shares. "She cared for everyone around her and had a way of making each person feel important and cared for. But there was no more profound love than the love she had for her children and our family."

Her tenacity brought more joy to their family. Louis was conceived just one day after Stacey completed treatment, and daughter Olivia arrived soon after. But their final pregnancy was difficult and brought another cancer diagnosis.

"It became about saving Stacey in that moment," Kent shares. "We coordinated a plan and after some scary moments, Stacey started to improve. We took that opportunity to live life — spending time together, traveling and simply appreciating what we had."

Stacey's appreciation showed up in small but powerful ways. During one treatment, she received a care package meant to ease the burden and immediately asked if it could be given to another family who might need it more.

"Stacey believed deeply in helping people," Kent says. "Creating something that could continue doing that in her name felt like the right way to honor her."

Upon the recommendation of friends, Kent reached out to the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines to help carry Stacey's compassion forward. He established a charitable giving fund supporting causes that mattered to Stacey and their family — particularly organizations serving individuals and families facing cancer.

"Working with the Community Foundation has made it possible to be intentional," Kent says. "They help us think about where support can make the most difference and ensure Stacey's legacy continues in ways that show our children who she was and what mattered most to her."

Through Stacey's fund, the Lehr family distributes grants to organizations providing support and hope to those navigating difficult diagnoses, particularly young women, mothers and children impacted by cancer.

"She lived with so much gratitude and generosity," Kent says. "If we can keep sharing that with others, then her light keeps shining."



Scan here to hear more of the Lehrs' story.

"Working with the Community Foundation has made it possible to be intentional. They help us think about where support can make the most difference and ensure Stacey's legacy continues in ways that show our children who she was and what mattered most to her."

— KENT LEHR



"My greatest satisfaction at this stage of my life is helping others. Every time I break a glass ceiling, I have my hand ready to make sure there's another woman that's going to be following me."

CONNIE WIMER



"My favorite phrase, Better Together, I think that has true meaning. It's always a good outcome when you try to work alongside everyone and try to make this the best community ever."

JOE GONZALEZ



"Everything you do counts, all the way through life. And how you treated people or how you were with people always counts. When one boat rises they all rise, so think of everybody needing to rise."

MARTHA WILLITS



LEGACY LEAVERS

with Kristi Knous

On Legacy Leavers, we sit down with remarkable individuals who have a history of using their influence, vision and resources to leave a lasting legacy in our community and beyond. From personal turning points to powerful acts of giving, we explore what truly drives a life of legacy.

Listen now!



United in Community

Hardin County Community Endowment Foundation is an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines

Thrift stores are filled with pieces of a community. From shirts celebrating long-past high school football championships, to a grandmother's hand-stitched quilt, each item tells a story. At the Church Women United Thrift Store in Iowa Falls, these stories extend beyond where an item came from or where it might go.

Since opening in 1957, the store has grown into more than a place to shop. It has become an essential part of the community, connecting neighbors and supporting local organizations. The thrift store's impact is perhaps best understood through the lifecycle of a donated item: a quilt.

When the quilt arrives at the store, one of the organization's volunteers carefully sorts and prices it for sale.

"Citizens from Iowa Falls and surrounding communities donate items," said Barb Dilsaver, volunteer and store manager. "The store provides a place for people to take their unwanted items, knowing they can trust the items will be used wisely to benefit those who need them."

On a Friday or Saturday, the two days the store is open, one of the approximately 200 shoppers who visit each day may spot the quilt and decide it is exactly what they were looking for. They bring it to the cash register, staffed by volunteers and purchase it.

The proceeds from that sale are directed to the Church Women United of Iowa Falls Thrift Store



Pictured: Barb Dilsaver, store manager and volunteer, works alongside a volunteer to help a customer

Fund, held at the Hardin County Community Endowment Foundation, an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines. The Community Foundation provides investment stewardship, administrative support and grantmaking infrastructure, helping ensure the store's proceeds can be distributed efficiently and continue supporting the community for years to come.

As the fund grows, the Church Women United Thrift Store distributes support to nonprofit organizations serving Iowa Falls and other communities across the county. This process is repeated twice a year, with focus on funding causes that strengthen the community.

One organization that has received support from the Church Women United of Iowa Falls Thrift Store Fund is the Friendship Club, a mental health center where people experiencing brain health challenges, including mental health conditions or developmental disabilities, gather for learning, activities and connection.

"The support helps us cover activities, meals and anything 'extra,'" said Director Mary Nelson. "The funding we receive makes it possible for us to take individuals on fun outings."

The partnership has also created opportunities for connection. Individuals at the Friendship Club often flatten used grocery bags for the thrift store to reuse for purchases.

"It's a really neat activity for them because it gives them a sense of purpose and community involvement," said Mary. "It also allows us to give back to the thrift store as thanks for what they do for our community."

The store is powered by volunteers. Community members of all ages lend their time, including students earning Silver Cord service hours. The thrift store runs on the volunteer energy of the community, resulting in over 90 volunteers and over 400 service hours annually.

Like the items on its shelves, the people of Iowa Falls and Hardin County each have their own connection to the thrift store. From donating goods,



volunteering their time, shopping for treasures or benefiting from the grants made possible through its fund. Together, they are helping transform everyday items, like a quilt, into lasting community impact.

Scan here to learn more about our 46 county and community affiliates.



The Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines is the host foundation for 46 county and community affiliates. While all grantmaking is done at a local level, operational and technical support is provided for the affiliates — so they can focus on making a lasting impact in the places they call home.

The Community Foundation is proud to serve as the host foundation for our affiliate community foundations, and we look forward to all the possibilities waiting for us in the future, knowing we are uniquely equipped to continue to respond to community needs now and for generations to come.



Pictured: Volunteers at the Church Women United Thrift Store

A Shared Path to Impact

Walking a path together is central to the way Benson Wealth Management, a Northwestern Mutual Private Client Group, approaches its work. More than managing finances, the team strives to be a steady resource for clients as they think about the kind of impact they want to make. When the Ankeny-based financial services firm was introduced to the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, they recognized an opportunity to be supported in bringing philanthropic conversations to life across their client base.

The relationship has opened the door to fresh ways of thinking, inviting creativity, flexibility and deeper alignment with clients' values. Together, the partnership has turned intention into action, crafting charitable giving strategies that are both thoughtful and impactful for clients. Benson Wealth Management understands the potential, and that through collaboration, they can elevate client solutions and strengthen their comprehensive planning approach.

For Ruth and Chuck Gassmann, that partnership has brought clarity and confidence to their giving. "We have put together a great team that streamlines the process for us. Charitable giving is important to us now, and we want it to be our legacy forever," they share. "We planned together with our advisor, Doug Benson, and we work through the Community Foundation to support the causes we care about. It truly feels like a win-win-win."

The Community Foundation provides the tools, expertise and local insight to make giving simple



Pictured: Chuck and Ruth Gassmann

and meaningful for financial advisors and their clients. Benson Wealth Management is able to invest a client's charitable dollars into a Community Foundation fund and still maintain assets under management. It's a Better Together service — bringing clients' values to life by giving back in ways that matter most to them.

"We have a core value: 'Sharpen the Saw' — which represents our dedication to staying current on ever-changing industry topics and always learning how to serve our clients more effectively," shares Doug Benson, founder and private wealth advisor at Benson Wealth Management. "Through our relationship with the Community Foundation, we've realized better outcomes for our clients. It is a relationship that is marked by appreciation, joy and greater giving."

Scan here to learn how we support professional advisors to simplify giving and amplify impact.



"Through our relationship with the Community Foundation, we've realized better outcomes for our clients. It is a relationship that is marked by appreciation, joy and greater giving."

— DOUG BENSON, *founder and private wealth advisor, Benson Wealth Management*

Pictured: Doug Benson, founder and private wealth advisor, Benson Wealth Management

Better Together: A Blueprint for Action



Together, through collective action, we can drive progress toward ensuring that one day, everyone in our community has a safe place to call home.

Last year marked a significant step toward that goal when the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines partnered with Homeward, Polk County's homelessness planning organization, to release a five-year strategic vision, *The Blueprint to Address Homelessness*. Shaped by research, national best practices and broad community input, the plan responds to evidence that our local homelessness response system is not scaled to meet the needs. Through funding, staff resources and strategic leadership investment, the Community Foundation is helping bring *The Blueprint* to life.

As a result, more than 250 individuals including business leaders, funders, housing developers, service providers and people with lived experience, engaged in listening and input sessions along with a consultant-led, six-month planning process. Around one table, sectors collided to design a path forward. The culmination of those convenings was shared at a May launch event hosted by the Community Foundation at its C3 Center. More than 200 community members attended the unveiling of this new plan, uniting individuals and sectors to address homelessness in our community.

***The Blueprint* outlines evidence-based strategies designed to close service gaps and better support those experiencing homelessness in our region. The goal: ensure community members not just survive but thrive in stable housing that meets their individual needs.**

"*The Blueprint* widens the scope of who understands the issue and brings new stakeholders to the table. It will take an entire community effort to decrease and end homelessness, and *The Blueprint* sets us on a forward trajectory," said Shelby Ridley, director of programs at Primary Health Care.

Recognizing that plans require structure to succeed, *The Blueprint* called for a new sense of alignment —

"We are grateful for the Community Foundation who stepped up with intention, funding and significant leadership."

— SCOTT JEAN, *president and CEO of EMC Insurance and co-chair of the Housing Solutions Alliance*



resulting in the creation of the Housing Solutions Alliance. This governing body now exists to lead, coordinate and accelerate implementation of *The Blueprint's* recommendations.

"We are grateful for the Community Foundation, who stepped up with intention, funding and significant leadership" said Scott Jean, president and CEO of EMC Insurance and co-chair of the Housing Solutions Alliance. "Their support enables the Housing Solutions Alliance to implement best-practice strategies and strive for long-term success in moving people into stable housing."

Today, the momentum sparked by the Community Foundation continues to grow, powered by collaboration and committed community partners. Through the Housing Solutions Alliance, leaders across sectors are aligning partners, resources and accountability to move our region's plan forward for the benefit of all our neighbors.

Because when a community commits not just to conversation, but to coordination and action, we are truly Better Together.

Scan here to learn more about the plan.



Pictured: Panelists during the launch of *The Blueprint to Address Homelessness*



Aligning for Good



Pictured: Gaby Cox, director of programs for Project Iowa

In times of change, being guided by purpose matters more than ever. Across Greater Des Moines, nonprofits are finding pathways for powerful partnerships that move our community forward together. By aligning operations, sharing resources and deepening partnerships, organizations are building a stronger, more resilient nonprofit ecosystem — designed to meet today’s challenges and tomorrow’s opportunities.

The Community Foundation’s Strategic Alignment Grant program, supported by the Better Together Fund, creates space and funding for this work to happen. These grants empower organizations to step back, ask hard questions and explore what partnership makes possible — building capacity, strengthening leadership, refining strategy and positioning the work for long-term success. Working collectively, nonprofits

are braiding and stacking services to create a seamless, comprehensive network of support that meets people where they are.

When individuals and families experience poverty, knitting together resources can feel overwhelming. Recognizing this gap, IMPACT Community Action Partnership and the Ankeny Service Center’s combined work resulted in the launch of the Community Resource Connection. The centralized co-location space in Ankeny brings services together under one roof to better serve neighbors in need.

“Being in the community together naturally encourages collaboration, and we want to ensure families get what they need as efficiently as possible,” shares Anne Bacon, CEO of IMPACT

Community Action Partnership. “With Strategic Alignment Grant funding, we engaged a consultant to explore a shared space and partnership model, which ultimately enabled us to cost-share and put more money toward our missions.”

Collaboration also takes shape through Project Iowa’s Rooted Model, an approach designed to strengthen community infrastructure by deepening local partnerships. By embedding staff within community spaces and working alongside other nonprofits, Project Iowa enhances programming and improves outcomes.

“Support from the Community Foundation gave us the space to step back from day-to-day program work and focus on strengthening the systems, strategies and partnerships that allow our work to be sustainable long-term,” shares Gaby Cox, director of programs for Project Iowa. “That investment helped bring together organizations whose work intersects with workforce development, allowing us to collaborate more intentionally around shared goals.”

This type of steadfast commitment is what inspired former organizations, YESS and Youth Homes of Mid-America, to identify gaps in services for children in the foster care system. The result was Ellipsis, a unified organization offering comprehensive, full-service care. By combining strengths, programming was expanded and impact was amplified.

“Mission — and ultimately purpose — needed to come first,” shares Chris Koepplin, who previously served as CEO of Ellipsis. “Working with the Community Foundation gave several organizations the space



Pictured: Participants in Project Iowa programming

and facilitative support to explore how our ecosystem could be enhanced, without rushing the process. The grant allowed us to hire a facilitator to consider the possibilities, consult with legal expertise and to mobilize community support. The Community Foundation was with us on every step of the journey, and it made all the difference in building a stronger collective and positioning current leadership to best serve children and families.”

Strategic Alignment Grants help organizations plan wisely, work together and build lasting impact in our community.

When nonprofits have the support and space to reflect, align and grow, our entire region benefits. We are tackling the tough questions and weaving together a Greater Des Moines that is stronger, more connected and resilient because we choose to work Better Together.

Scan here to learn more about the power of partnerships.



“Working with the Community Foundation gave several organizations the space and facilitative support to explore how our ecosystem could be enhanced, without rushing the process. The grant allowed us to hire a facilitator to consider the possibilities, consult with legal expertise and to mobilize community support.”

— CHRIS KOEPLIN
former CEO of Ellipsis



Pictured: Ellipsis employees celebrate the ribbon cutting of the Barbara Lee Noble Campus, a 2024 Leadership Grant recipient



Pictured: Anne Bacon, CEO of IMPACT Community Action Partnership



Pictured: A guest shops at the Community Resource Connection food pantry



2025 Leadership Grant Recipients

Local, nonprofit organizations are at the heart of our community, driving quality of life across the region. Through the Better Together Fund Leadership Grant program, support is directed to the dedicated nonprofit sector working to address root causes, challenge systems and create lasting change.

These 2025 Leadership Grant recipients are designed to activate solutions, not simply fund projects. Leadership Grants are grounded in alignment with the region's shared vision for the future.

Each year, priorities are shaped by more than 20 community plans developed by those closest to the work, including:

- Capital Crossroads Roadmap
- Central Iowa Food Security Plan
- The Blueprint to Address Homelessness
- One Economy Report: A Path Forward
- Safe and Thriving Youth Plan
- and others

This ensures the Community Foundation's grantmaking program is reflective of the community and fosters inclusive engagement to improve quality of life for all. Leadership Grants catalyze and challenge Greater Des Moines to impact systems change and significantly influence community outcomes and opportunities.

Leadership Grants are made possible by the Better Together Fund. The Better Together Fund presents an opportunity for all who love Greater Des Moines to invest in our community now and for the future.

Scan here to learn how the Better Together Fund invests in our community's pressing needs and promising opportunities.



The Community Foundation's Leadership Grantmaking Priorities include:



Expanding Access to Housing and Transportation



Advancing Community Health and Resilience



Fostering inclusive Economic and Workforce Development



Cultivating a Thriving and Inclusive Community

Moving the Needle on Student Success

Strategic expansion of By Degrees Foundation's whole-school K-12 feeder pattern model in north Des Moines, emphasizing long-term student success. Sustained educational programming is paired with tangible financial investments to help close opportunity gaps and promote generational wealth-building.



"Funding from the Community Foundation strategically supports postsecondary and career exploration, early financial investment and authentic family engagement as deliberate components of each student's journey."

— EMILY WESTERGAARD
CEO, By Degrees Foundation

Addressing Homelessness and Affordable Housing

Expansion of affordable housing options for individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability through Greater Des Moines Supportive Housing. Integrated on-site services, including case management, financial literacy, employment support and specialized programming will help residents build a stronger foundation for long-term success.



"Housing is foundational. This investment strengthens our community's housing continuum by expanding supportive units at a time of significant need and creates environments where individuals can stabilize, access services and work toward long-term housing security."

— EMILY OSWEILER
CEO, Greater Des Moines Supportive Housing

Central Iowa Emergency Rental Assistance Study

A local research study activates approximately \$1.7 million in emergency rental assistance for individuals and families experiencing a housing crisis in Polk, Dallas or Warren Counties over a two-year period, supported through a funding collaborative and coordinated by the Mid-Iowa Health Foundation.



"This is an opportunity to improve our current systems by investing in research that provides recommendations to most effectively achieve the desired outcome of keeping community members experiencing a crisis in stable housing."

— DR. NALO JOHNSON
President & CEO, Mid-Iowa Health Foundation

Work that Impacts Housing Coalition

The Polk County Housing Trust Fund implements a pre-apprenticeship program designed to upskill and reskill individuals in the trades while simultaneously completing deferred home maintenance repairs for qualified homeowners.



"This community initiative combines housing and workforce development, while providing support for community members to realize stable careers with livable wages. Simultaneously, the apprentices are helping repair housing in neighborhoods that are often overlooked."

— JULIAN D. NEELY
Director of Advancement and Community Investment, Polk County Housing Trust Fund

Urbandale Food Pantry

The Urbandale Food Pantry's community hub model addresses the root causes of food insecurity by co-locating collaborative service partners, making navigation and access to additional resources easier for individuals and families seeking support.



"This grant is an investment in what matters most: people. The Community Foundation sees our vision for well-rounded support services and is helping reduce food insecurity in more meaningful, dignified and connected ways."

— PATTY SNEDDON-KISTING
CEO, Urbandale Food Pantry

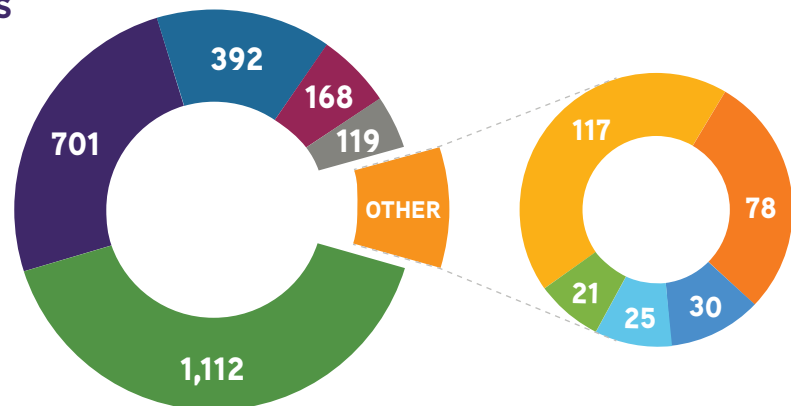


TOTAL NONPROFITS SUPPORTED = 2,930

<p>NEARLY \$100 M</p>	<p>OVER \$105 M</p>	<p>OVER \$1.2 B</p>	<p>2,763 TOTAL</p>
<p>GRANTED from Community Foundation charitable giving funds.</p>	<p>CONTRIBUTED to Community Foundation charitable giving funds.</p>	<p>ASSETS under administration at the Community Foundation.*</p>	<p>CHARITABLE GIVING FUNDS managed by the Community Foundation.</p>

CHARITABLE GIVING FUNDS

- Donor Advised - 1,112
- Agency - 701
- Designated - 392
- Affiliate-Unrestricted - 168
- Legacy - 119
- **OTHER: 271**
 - Committee Advised - 117
 - Additional Funds - 78
 - Better Together - 30
 - Field of Interest - 25
 - Seed - 21

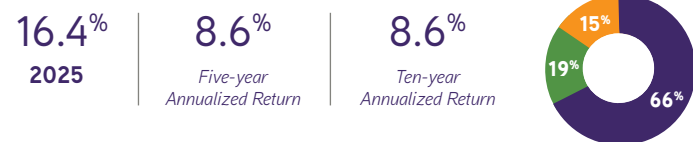


COMMUNITY FOUNDATION INVESTMENT PORTFOLIOS

The Community Foundation offers a variety of investment options to meet a range of charitable goals and time horizons. Each investment portfolio is carefully constructed and diversified across global investment opportunities to maximize return and minimize volatility. Returns are net of all investment fees. Returns for periods greater than one year are annualized.

- Equities
- Fixed Income
- Alternatives

The **Long-Term Growth Portfolio** seeks maximum growth and controlled risk through a diversified portfolio of global stocks, bonds and alternative investment strategies.



The **Indexed Growth Portfolio** seeks maximum growth, primarily through indexed funds, resulting in lower active management risk.



The **Moderate Growth Portfolio** is designed for growth at a more moderate level of risk.



The **Short-Term Cash Portfolio** is 100% invested in cash and cash equivalents to ensure optimal liquidity, risk management and return on investment.



Scan here to learn more about how we steward the charitable assets entrusted to us.

Audited financial statements are available at desmoinesfoundation.org/finance.
*Includes assets administered but not owned by the Community Foundation.



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learn more.

1915 Grand Avenue,
Des Moines, IA 50309
(515) 883-2626

[desmoinesfoundation.org](https://www.desmoinesfoundation.org)



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