

# BETTER TOGETHER FUND IMPACT

The Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines supported our local nonprofit sector in 2025 by investing strategic funding support to a variety of initiatives. Through the generosity of donors to the Better Together Fund, the Community Foundation can take a nimble approach to address pressing needs and promising opportunities, provide leadership on important community issues and support critical work that improves the quality of life for us all.

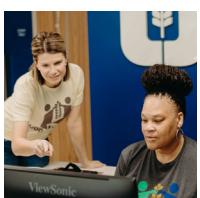
The summary below provides an overview of the grants awarded through the Better Together Fund. Thank you for your generosity and partnership. No matter what the future holds, we know we are simply better together.

## Leadership Grants

In 2025, the Leadership Grant program, funded by the Better Together Fund, invested in four key priority areas: expanding access to affordable housing and transportation, advancing community health and resilience, fostering inclusive economic and workforce development and cultivating a thriving and inclusive community. As a result, the following Leadership Grants were awarded.



**Work That Impacts Housing Coalition:** This grant investment to Polk County Housing Trust Fund supports the establishment of the Work That Impacts Housing Coalition (WTIHC) pre-apprenticeship program, an innovative and collaborative effort to upskill and reskill individuals in the trades. The program's approach addresses a gap in existing owner-occupied repair programs and leverages partnerships across nonprofit, for-profit and local government sectors.



**Community Hub Space:** This grant investment to Urbandale Food Pantry supports their pilot of a community hub model and focuses on addressing root causes of food insecurity by making navigation easier for individuals and families through the co-location of collaborative service partners - a key tactic in the Central Iowa Food Security Plan. Existing collaborative support partners include Project Iowa, Aging Resources and Women Infants and Children (WIC), with potential for growth.



**Moving the Needle on Student Success:** This grant investment to By Degrees Foundation supports strategic expansion of the organization's whole-school K-12 feeder pattern model in North Des Moines. The program emphasizes long-term student success by pairing sustained educational programming with tangible financial investments, designed to close opportunity gaps and promote generational wealth-building.



**Central Iowa Emergency Rental Assistance Study (CIERAS):** This grant investment will support a local research study, led by Mid-Iowa Health Foundation, that activates approximately \$1.7 million in emergency rental assistance over the next two years for individuals and families experiencing a housing crisis by leveraging an existing provider network. The study will generate evidence which could help guide municipalities and nonprofits in optimizing the delivery and effectiveness of emergency rental assistance.



**Addressing Homelessness and Affordable Housing:** This grant investment will support Greater Des Moines Supportive Housing in creating new units of affordable housing for individuals who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, extremely low income or living with a disability. This initiative will add significant new affordable housing capacity to the community and allow for onsite supportive services where residents can stabilize and thrive.

## Capacity Building Grants



To help nonprofits focus on strengthening their overall governance and management and more effectively meet their mission, the Capacity Building Grant program provided 33 grant awards for strategic planning, succession planning, fund development planning and more. One example is a recent grant to **Mainframe Studios**. A grant was awarded for the organization to engage in a strategic planning process as a critical guide in the next phase of growth. Mainframe Studios clarified their long-term vision, strengthened board governance, prepared for financial sustainability and developed leadership succession while refining its diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. Together, these interconnected strategies were essential to expand Mainframe Studio's impact across Greater Des Moines.

## Strategic Alignment Grants



Strategic Alignment Grants were awarded to seven initiatives seeking ways to leverage the strengths of colleague organizations to meet needs and create opportunities in Greater Des Moines. One example of a recent grant is to **Iowa Caregivers Association**. A grant was awarded to advance urgent, statewide systems-change efforts addressing workforce shortages and burnout among direct care workers. Drawing on decades of workforce research, the Iowa Caregivers Association proposed coordinated data analysis, stakeholder convening, and policy that focused on collaboration to elevate voices and catalyze solutions. Ultimately, grant funds supported the facilitation and project consultation exploring the formation of a coalition to advance identified reforms, including portable credentials.

## About the Better Together Fund

No one knows exactly what tomorrow may bring for our community. What needs and opportunities will arise? What critical work will we be called to do to improve quality of life for our community? What can we do now to help assure that future needs are met?

The Better Together Fund was created to address these questions. It presents an opportunity for all who love Greater Des Moines to invest in our community's most important issues, initiatives and needs for generations to come. Think of it as the savings account for the future of our community. The flexible dollars it provides enable the Community Foundation to respond to emerging needs as they arise – and invest significant funding in initiatives and opportunities that strengthen Greater Des Moines.

We can't predict the future. But today, through the Better Together Fund, we can play a role in positioning our community for continued success. We're simply better together.

For more information about the Better Together Fund, contact us at (515) 883-2626 or [info@desmoinesfoundation.org](mailto:info@desmoinesfoundation.org).