

THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

We seek to expand access and opportunity for individuals and families who are vulnerable or have low incomes by strengthening human-services organizations and the networks that support them. We want all individuals to achieve well-being, lead thriving, self-determined lives and join the economic mainstream.

Our Premise

People achieve well-being and thrive when they are connected and mutually support each other. Key to positive outcomes are the values that recognize and honor the voices and perspectives of those most affected by the issues being addressed and the determination to learn from each other. Some 48 million Americans live in poverty. The once reliable paths to economic stability are now filled with barriers due, in part, to fragmented approaches, limited funding, and divided public discourse.

We believe it is necessary to transform the human-services sector so that it focuses on human development and

progress. That transformation is already underway. The challenge is to find the courage to break away from practices that no longer work. We must embrace uncertainty with the confidence that solutions are more enduring and effective when co-created. The characteristics that helped form modern organizations and networks must give way to new methods for deploying assets so that every person and family is supported in their growth and personal fulfillment.

We believe the best role for The Kresge Foundation in supporting this transformation of the human-services sector is through investments in multiservice organizations and their networks. We want to help better position them to foster communities of practice, including next-generation approaches, and build the public will for policies that support these efforts.

Our Goal

We want more people to have the formal and informal supports they need to help them thrive and achieve well-being. We believe these supports should be well integrated, reliable, effective and leverage each other.

Our Approach

We focus on enterprise-level investments in multiservice organizations and their networks to enhance their effectiveness and resilience. Enterprise investments support core functions that improve programs, enhance infrastructure, and bolster people.

Our investments are concentrated in two focus areas:

Advancing the effectiveness and resilience of multiservice organizations

We support multiservice organizations because they provide critically needed assistance to individuals and families living in poverty and anchor us in the reality, challenges and promising and proven practices of human-services work.



Photo: Mission Economic Development Agency

The Kresge Foundation

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Multiservice organizations are entities that offer holistic, integrated services across multiple categories.

Leveraging the effectiveness of networks

We support umbrella organizations and networks striving to re-invent the sector in ways that increase effectiveness and ultimately improve the quality of life and economic security of individuals and families who have low incomes.

We believe these organizations are well positioned to understand their members' opportunities and challenges; they have the capacity to assist small and mid-size entities; and they can be vehicles for creating shared understanding.

How we work

We award general operating and project-support grants and make program-related investments.

We also convene and facilitate conversations to enhance peer-to-peer learning. Our aim is to increase understanding and help build a movement for transforming the human-services sector.

We support multiservice organizations that:

- Have a clear strategic vision and are able to articulate what works and why.
- Employ integrated, innovative, culturally responsive approaches to change the circumstances of people outside the economic mainstream.
- Have inclusive, diverse and adaptive leadership and personnel.
- Have a clear vision of the model or interventions that guide their work.
- Support advocacy efforts and have a record of working on systems and policy change to address the systemic and structural barriers faced by people who have low incomes.

- Demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement that involves individuals served and the community.
- Embrace a learning agenda internally, with constituents, the community and the larger human-services field.
- Have robust mechanisms for community engagement.

We support umbrella organizations and networks that:

- Have missions to enhance the well-being and economic security of people with low incomes and whose members are largely multiservice organizations.
- Can clearly articulate how their work creates value for their members.
- Have a track record of taking what they learn from their members and affiliates, and working on systems and policy change.
- Are data driven and advance evidence-based practices.
- Have leadership and personnel that are diverse and inclusive and representative of the communities they serve.

The Kresge Foundation is a \$3.5 billion private, national foundation that works to expand opportunities in America's cities through grantmaking and investing in arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services and community development efforts in Detroit. In 2013, the Board of Trustees approved 316 awards totaling \$122 million; \$128 million was paid out to grantees over the course of the year. In addition, our Social Investment Practice made commitments totaling \$17.7 million.