



THE KRESGE FOUNDATION
Foundation Overview

“Creating opportunity for people with low incomes is a hallmark of our work at The Kresge Foundation. Our programs reflect the inflection points where we think we can actually make a difference in the life trajectories of people who are disadvantaged or underserved in fundamental ways.”

RIP RAPSON, PRESIDENT AND CEO

ABOUT THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

The Kresge Foundation was founded in 1924 to promote human progress. Today, Kresge fulfills that mission by building and strengthening pathways to opportunity for people with low incomes in America’s cities, seeking to dismantle structural and systemic barriers to equality and justice. Using a full array of grant, loan, and other investment tools, Kresge invests more than \$160 million annually to foster economic and social change.

HISTORY

In 1924, with an initial gift of \$1.6 million, Sebastian Spering Kresge established The Kresge Foundation in Detroit. He did this to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the S.S. Kresge Company, which began as a single five-and-ten-cent store and grew into a nationwide chain. Many years later, the enterprise became known as Kmart Corp. Mr. Kresge served on the foundation board until his death at age 99. By then, he had contributed \$60.5 million to the foundation. All along, he maintained a steadfast commitment to charitable giving.

THE FOUNDATION TODAY

In 2006, we embarked on a multi-year transition to redefine ourselves for the needs of the 21st century. What resulted is a strategic philanthropy. We view issues in their entirety, take measured risks, and employ an array of grantmaking and social investing tools to help expand opportunities for low-income people living in cities.

Since our founding, improving the life circumstances for underserved adults and children has been our constant philanthropic focus. In 2012, we narrowed our geographic focus to the nation’s cities. More than 80 percent of the U.S. population lives in and around urban centers. Working in them offers us the greatest potential to assist the largest groups of people experiencing hardship and poverty.

OUR WORKSPACES

The foundation is based in metropolitan Detroit. Our headquarters consist of an original 1852 farmhouse and barn juxtaposed with a modern aluminum and glass office building and convening center. Our campus reflects our dedication to reducing the environmental impact of our own operations. We also operate a Detroit office in the city’s midtown neighborhood.

HOW WE OPERATE

Six values guide everything we do as a foundation. They are: Creativity, Equity, Opportunity, Partnership, Respect and Stewardship. Embedded within these values is a deep and abiding commitment to transparency and accountability. Both are fundamental to our operations, day-to-day and over the long term.

OUR PROGRAMS

American Cities

We seek to expand opportunity by promoting effective and inclusive community development practice in American cities.

Arts & Culture

We position culture and creativity as drivers of more just communities.

Detroit

We collaborate with cross-sectoral partners to promote and expand long-term, equitable opportunity in Kresge's hometown by centering the priorities of its residents.

Education

We work to increase college access and success while reducing inequitable student outcomes in the U.S. and South Africa.

Environment

We help cities implement climate change mitigation and adaptation approaches grounded in equity.

Health

We help build equity-focused systems of health that create opportunities for all people to achieve well-being.

Human Services

Expanding opportunities in American cities by centering racial equity to advance social and economic mobility for families and communities.

FUNDING METHODS

Central to our work is the ability to draw on an array of versatile, flexible grantmaking and social investing tools.

Grantmaking

Kresge awards operating support, project and planning grants to advance the strategic objectives of its seven programs.

Social Investment Practice

We work across Kresge's seven program teams to strengthen neighborhoods and improve the quality of life in America's cities by addressing barriers to capital.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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