

# THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

## American Cities

PROGRAM



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

### WHY WE DO THIS WORK

America's cities are linchpins of socioeconomic mobility and increased opportunity. In many cities, however, access to opportunity is not shared equitably among all people.

This makes our urban centers the frontlines of advancing opportunity including access to quality, affordable housing; vibrant, connected neighborhoods; meaningful workforce preparation and employment opportunities; and reliable transit.

Local leaders and organizations are working across sectors to define challenges, shape solutions and drive catalytic changes that expand opportunity for people with low incomes.

Kresge's American Cities Program is committed to supporting these leaders. We seek to build the capacity of local organizations to create lasting change in communities.

### We invest through these focus areas:

#### Place-based work in Memphis & New Orleans

We steward the foundation's city-focused grantmaking in Memphis and New Orleans, including community development grantmaking, inspired by our work in Detroit. This broad array of grants – from investments in planning and community capacity to neighborhood revitalization – is at the forefront of Kresge's national place-based community development work.

In Memphis and New Orleans, Kresge supports efforts to create neighborhoods of opportunity for residents living with low incomes. This means funding projects and programs that result in sustainable

#### Why Memphis & New Orleans

Memphis and New Orleans are home to both tremendous assets and high levels of need.

Our hometown of Detroit and New Orleans share stories of community resilience – the capacity of communities to recover from disasters and disinvestment. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina proved a galvanizing moment for our work in New Orleans. We increased our support for the city and its people. The result was over \$12 million dedicated to recovery. We've remained engaged ever since.

In Memphis, we have mirrored our Detroit efforts to spur equitable growth by investing in four areas: planning and collaboration; community development systems; neighborhood revitalization; and leadership and organizational development. Our work reflects the belief that investments in systems must happen alongside direct investments in community capacity.



change, such as supporting inclusive planning, building robust community capacity, strengthening key human development systems and bolstering physical revitalization efforts. Our grantmaking balances investments in citywide systems and neighborhood-level capacity to help residents advocate for and sustain inclusive, equitable growth.



### Knowledge Exchange

We fund research, thought leadership and convenings that seek to improve place-based community development practice in cities. We promote the transfer of ideas across urban practitioners, including those from the fields of philanthropy, community organizations, business, and municipal government. Our investments in knowledge exchange aim to strengthen the fields of inclusive community and economic development. We prioritize efforts that seek to improve practices for the benefit of low-income communities.

This work includes:

- Funding research exploring how community development practitioners can work effectively in place.
- Capturing, sharing and facilitating exchange of best practices and new ideas for working in cities and neighborhoods.
- Bringing practitioners who work in cities together to share ideas and develop networks.

### National Intermediaries

Local community development does not occur in a vacuum. Often, national intermediaries with offices in cities are critical on-the-ground partners to local actors. Hence, we support national community-development organizations that work in cities. We particularly partner with national intermediaries focused on advancing equity at the local level. Our investments in national intermediaries aim to strengthen low-income communities. We prioritize organizations that engage authentically and systematically with local communities.

### Multi-City Initiatives

We support initiatives that surface, seed and scale effective approaches to community development. We particularly support projects that pilot a new way of working across a cohort of cities, through grants and social investments.

We've seeded and scaled, for example, the Boston Federal Reserve Bank's Working Cities Challenge, which encourages the use of collaborative and creative approaches to strengthen low-income communities. Reimagining the Civic Commons, an effort to promote engagement, equity, environmental sustainability and economic development in cities, has also been funded as a part of this focus area.

To learn more about the American Cities Program, visit [kresge.org/programs/american-cities](https://kresge.org/programs/american-cities).



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