



THE KRESGE FOUNDATION  
**Human Services**  
PROGRAM

We support the advancement of human services to accelerate social and economic mobility for people with low-incomes in America's cities.

The Human Services Program is laser focused on achieving person-centered systems change that accelerates social and economic mobility for children and families using a racial equity lens. To accomplish this primary goal, we work with local, state and national partners who are reimagining support systems and co-creating solutions with children, families and community partners to meet them where they are and provide the support they need to build well-being and reach their full potential.

Though the human services sector is facing significant challenges in our current social and political environment, the sector is maintaining its momentum and realizing outcomes that help children, families and communities in cities around the nation achieve their dreams.

We apply a racial equity lens to our grantmaking and investments in these focus areas:

- Fostering the next generation of human services organizations
- Building place-based opportunity ecosystems

**Fostering the Next Generation of Human Services**

Recognizing the power, influence and impact of direct service organizations in helping families obtain mobility, Kresge's Human Services Program is committed to developing this important element of the human services system. Our support of direct service community-based and public sector human service organizations focuses on helping the sector improve its effectiveness through better practices, policy development and advocacy.

Through our NextGen Initiative, we provide high-performing direct service organizations that are committed to person-centered, outcomes-based, data-driven work that advances racial equity with the training and tools to improve their leadership development, advance a community of practice and develop and execute action plans that use a two-generation, whole-family approach that clearly reflects the importance of including fathers.

With this work, we seek to support and accelerate an organization's journey toward improving outcomes for children and families, increasing social and economic mobility and achieving policy and systems change.

**Building Place-Based Opportunity Ecosystems**

Local "place-based opportunity ecosystems" – comprising mutually-reinforcing public and nonprofit organizations



working across systems – hold enormous promise in advancing social and economic mobility for people living in cities. We focus our efforts in select cities to create sustainable, integrated and person-centered systems of supports and services anchored by public and private human services organizations.

We define “Opportunity Ecosystems” as systems work within communities that is: strategic; action-oriented; shaped by people and partners; enduring; and aligned by a shared purpose and set of values that supports the advancement and acceleration of social and economic mobility for children, and families. We seek to promote collaborations across sectors and integrate service delivery, community engagement and economic development at local levels.

We also support cross-cutting investments. We believe several factors influence a person’s ability to access opportunity and that one sector alone can’t address all social problems. We seek to pinpoint what policies, regulations and practices impede moving people out of poverty. We want to help groundbreaking ideas enter the mainstream and encourage collaboration across multiple sectors including the public sector, private sector, philanthropy and nonprofit organizations. These investments include:

- Developing supportive, aligned public policy: We invest in efforts that advance public policies that help people achieve well-being and social and economic mobility.
- Building a more robust human services field: We support a range of activities to that address and change the narrative about the “working poor” and advance evidence-based, practitioner-informed best practices and policy work.

We invest in efforts that:

- Focus on advancing and accelerating social and economic mobility.
- Offer innovative and effective approaches that can provide lessons for the field.
- Have a clear strategic vision and can articulate what works and why.
- Have shared and adaptive leadership.
- Recognize racial equity as an orienting principle and seek to operationalize racial equity.
- Are intensely person-centered in their approach and utilize best practices (e.g. brain science informed, two-generation, whole-family approaches etc.)
- Are outcomes focused and data driven.
- Measure organizational and programmatic efforts against the Human Service Value Curve.
- Are committed to person-centered systems change that addresses structural barriers through policy solutions; are positioned to inform and influence communities of practice; and builds the public will for supportive policies.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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